



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET - 16 APRIL 2026
Subject	ADVERTISING, SPONSORSHIP & ENDORSEMENT POLICY
Wards affected	All
Accountable member	Cllr Mike Evely, Leader of the Council Email: mike.evely@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Angela Claridge, Director of Governance & Development (Monitoring Officer) Email: angela.claridge@cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Angela Claridge, Director of Governance & Development (Monitoring Officer) Email: angela.claridge@cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	This report presents the Council's Advertising, Sponsorship and Endorsement Policy for approval.
Annexes	Annex A – Advertising, Sponsorship & Endorsement Policy
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to: 1. Approve the Advertising, Sponsorship & Endorsement Policy
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preparing for the future• Delivering Good Services• Supporting the Economy
Key Decision	No
Exempt	No
Consultees/ Consultation	The Leader and key officers



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** This report introduces the Council's Advertising, Sponsorship & Endorsement Policy, designed to provide a clear, consistent and transparent framework for managing all commercial partnerships and promotional activities. The policy seeks to ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements and protect the Council's reputation by preventing conflicts of interest or perceptions of undue influence.
- 1.2** Local authorities are widely regarded as trusted organisations and their endorsement can offer a competitive advantage to businesses. While such promotion can support regeneration and job creation, it also carries risks where organisations do not align with the Council's values.
- 1.3** The policy defines the Council's approach to advertising, sponsorship and endorsement, outlining mandatory requirements, categories of acceptable and unacceptable proposals, governance controls and approval thresholds. It reinforces the need for objective decision-making appropriate risk assessment and annual review of all agreements. The policy also includes a governance checklist to ensure impartiality and compliance with statutory guidance such as the Local Government Act 1986 and the associated Publicity Code.
- 1.4** Approval of this policy will strengthen the Council's commercial practice, the management of promotional activities and provide assurance that such activities uphold the Council's values, corporate priorities and legal obligations.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** The Council increasingly engages with external organisations through promotion, sponsorship and endorsement opportunities. New or expanding business are highlighted to acknowledge their positive impact on local employment and regeneration.
- 2.2** As these interactions can generate valuable income and community benefits, it is essential that they are managed within a robust governance framework.
- 2.3** Historically, approaches to such opportunities have varied across services, creating inconsistency in how proposals are evaluated, approved and monitored. In addition, national guidance, particularly the Publicity Code, requires councils to ensure all communications are lawful, objective, politically impartial and aligned with the public interest.



- 2.4** To address these requirements, the Council has developed a comprehensive policy that sets out clear definitions, principles and expectations for officers and members. This includes ensuring proposals comply with legislation, adhere to corporate branding standards, avoid reputational risks and support transparency in decision-making.
- 2.5** The policy also formalises approval routes, clarifies responsibilities and establishes a central register for monitoring purposes. This strengthens governance and reduces the risk of perceived or actual conflicts of interest.

3. KEY POINTS FROM THE POLICY

3.1 Clear Definitions & Scope

- The policy distinguishes between advertising, sponsorship and endorsement, ensuring all parties understand the nature and implications of each arrangement.
- It applies both to the Council as a provider of promotional opportunities and as a participant in external promotional activity.

3.2 Principles & Legal Compliance

- All arrangements must align with the Council's core values, strategic priorities and legal obligations.
- Compliance with the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) codes and relevant legislation is mandatory.
- The Council retains the right to decline proposals that may be inappropriate or damaging to its reputation.

3.3 Acceptable & Unacceptable Categories

- The policy identifies types of advertising or sponsorship the Council may accept, focusing on alignment with community and organisational values.
- It prohibits opportunities that may cause harm, promote illegal activities or undermine public confidence.

3.4 Mandatory Governance Requirements

- All agreements must be documented in writing and reviewed by Legal Services.



- Branding, logo use and promotional content must comply with corporate guidelines.
- Agreements must include a defined duration, obligations, benefits and risk assessment

3.5 Approval & Oversight

- High value agreements (over £50,000) require Cabinet Member approval.
- A central register will record all agreements, ensuring transparency, auditability and regular review.

3.6 Impartiality & Conflict of Interest Controls

- Officers and Members must declare all relevant interests.
- Commercial relationships must not influence decision making or create real or perceived bias.

3.7 Monitoring & Review

- All agreements are subject to annual review to ensure continued appropriateness and compliance.
- The policy itself will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This report does not have any direct financial implications.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Legal implications have been covered in the body of the report.

5.2 These activities need to be open and justified to avoid any suggestions of partiality, bribery or pre-determination on other matters.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1 Providing a competitive advantage to an organisation carries several risks for a local authority, including the perception of favouritism, which can undermine public trust and the authority's reputation for fairness and impartiality. Such promotion may create actual or perceived conflicts of interest, particularly if the business appears



connected to an elected member or officer and may prompt complaints or challenge from competitors who feel disadvantaged. It can also distort the local market by influencing consumer behaviour in favour of one provider and risks misalignment with the Council's values if the organisation's practices later prove inconsistent with ethical, environmental or social standards. Additionally, endorsement may inadvertently signal bias in future procurement activity, blur the boundaries between economic development and commercial promotion and expose the authority to reputational harm should the organisation face controversy or operational failure.

- 6.2** These risks can be mitigated by adopting a clear and consistently applied policy that sets out transparent criteria for any promotional activity, ensuring decisions are based on objective public-interest considerations rather than individual preference. Robust governance arrangements, including documented decision-making, declarations and management of interests as well as separation of roles between elected members and officers, help prevent actual or perceived conflicts. Undertaking due diligence on organisations before entering any promotional relationship ensures alignment with the Council's values and minimises reputational exposure. Providing equal access to opportunities, avoiding exclusive endorsements and maintaining clear boundaries between economic development support and commercial promotion further reduce the risk of market distortion or perceptions of unfair advantage. Regular review of these arrangements and clear communication with stakeholders support ongoing public confidence.

7. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 7.1** There are no direct equalities impacts arising from the adoption of an Advertising, Sponsorship and Endorsement Policy; however, the policy, if adopted, reinforces the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty by ensuring that any promotional activity is applied transparently and without discrimination.

8. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1** The adoption of the Advertising, Sponsorship and Endorsement Policy does not in itself give rise to direct ecological or climate-emergency impacts. However, the manner in which advertising, sponsorship and endorsement opportunities are managed may have indirect implications for the Council's environmental objectives.



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As part of the due-diligence process, consideration should be given to whether prospective partners operate in a way that is consistent with the Council's climate-emergency commitments and wider sustainability principles. This approach will help ensure that the Council does not enter into promotional arrangements with organisations whose activities or values could undermine its environmental priorities or compromise its leadership position on climate action. Alignment with the Council's ecological and climate objectives should therefore form a routine element of the assessment of all proposed partnerships.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None

(END)