



Advertising, Sponsorship & Endorsement Policy

1 Purpose

This policy provides a consistent framework for managing advertising, sponsorship and endorsement opportunities in a way that maximises income generation, protects the Council's reputation, ensures compliance with legislation, promotes transparency and safeguards officers and elected members from allegations of bias or impropriety.

2 Scope

This policy applies to:

- The Council as an advertiser, sponsor or endorser.
- The Council as an owner of advertising platforms or sponsorship/endorsement opportunities offered to external organisations.

3 Definitions

- Advertising: An arrangement where the Council provides space or media for promotional content in exchange for money or benefits in kind.
- Sponsorship: A mutually beneficial arrangement where an organisation provides funds, goods or services to support council activities in return for agreed recognition or benefits.
- Endorsement: An official statement or action of formal support, approval or validation for a person, project, policy or product, signifying the Council recognises its merit, suitability or alignment with public interest.

4 Principles

- All advertising, sponsorship and endorsement must align with the Council's core values, strategic objectives and legal obligations.
- Agreements must comply with Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) codes and relevant legislation.
- The Council retains the absolute right to decline any opportunity deemed inappropriate or damaging to its reputation.
- The Council will not favour one business over another but its approach may be different when dealing with not-for-profit organisations.

5 Acceptable & Unacceptable Categories

- Acceptable categories are those activities or initiatives that align with Council and community values and promote positive engagement.
- Unacceptable categories are those activities, products or services that could cause harm, promote illegal or unethical behaviour or conflict with Council values.

6 Mandatory Requirements

- All agreements must be in writing, reviewed by Legal Services and signed by authorised officers.
- Sponsorship, advertising and endorsements must not influence Council decisions or create conflicts of interest.
- Branding and logo use must comply with the Council's Corporate Guidelines.
- Agreements must specify duration, obligations, benefits and include a risk assessment.

7 Procedures

- Opportunities will be published on the Council's website.
- Proposals must be assessed by the relevant Head of Service and Communications Team particularly considering any sensitivities.
- High-value agreements (eg, over £50,000) require Cabinet Member approval.
- All agreements logged in a central register and reviewed annually for compliance and conflicts.

8 Monitoring & Review

- Annual review of all agreements to ensure continued appropriateness.
- Policy reviewed every three years (or sooner if required).

9 Disclaimer

Acceptance of advertising or sponsorship does not imply endorsement of products or services by the Council. All materials must carry the disclaimer: 'Whilst every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, the Council does not endorse or accept liability for any claims made by advertisers or sponsors.'

10 Contact

For any queries, please contact the Communications Team.

Checklist for Impartial Business Promotion by Local Authorities

1 Governance & Compliance

- Confirm compliance with the Local Government Act 1986 and Publicity Code.
- Ensure all publicity is objective, factual and politically impartial.
- Verify that promotion serves a clear public interest purpose (eg, economic development, carbon reduction or other corporate priorities of the Council).

2 Equal Access & Fairness

- Use open calls for participation in promotional activities (eg, directories, events).
- Publish clear eligibility criteria for inclusion.
- Avoid exclusive arrangements unless justified by procurement rules or competitive tendering.

3 Transparency

- Document the decision-making process for selecting businesses or other organisations the Council works with.
- Record the rationale for inclusion (eg, job creation, sustainability).
- Make records available for audit and scrutiny.

4 Conflict of Interest

- Require officers and councillors to declare interests.
- Ensure no personal or financial gain influences decisions.
- Apply the Member Code of Conduct consistently.

5 Inclusive Promotion

- Promote business sectors or clusters, not individual firms where possible.
- Highlight social values and community-wide benefits (eg, skills development, local employment, environmental outcomes, etc).
- Use neutral language; avoid endorsements or advertising tone.

6 Monitoring & Review

- Regularly review promotional activities for compliance, fairness and adherence with Council corporate values and priorities.
- Include impartiality checks in internal audit or governance reviews.
- Capture lessons learned for future campaigns.