

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIP POLICY

1. Purpose of the Policy

- 1.1. Cambridgeshire County Council aspires to maximise the use of its assets and build positive relationships with businesses through advertising and sponsorship.
- 1.2. The purpose of this policy is to set out the terms upon which advertising and sponsorship may be sought and accepted by Cambridgeshire County Council (the Council).
- 1.3. The Policy:
 - a) outlines the rules and guidelines that the Council and its potential sponsors and advertisers must follow;
 - b) assesses risk and managing potential conflicts of interest;
 - c) clarifies public accountability and transparency of decision making.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. Advertising, for the purposes of this policy, is defined as a transaction between the Council and an external organisation in which the organisation can display informative and/or persuasive content about its products, services, causes or ideas in/on Council assets in exchange for a previously agreed financial sum.
- 2.2. Advertising opportunities fall into two specific categories, which carry the potential of different levels of reputational risk to the Council, and which will therefore be treated differently
 - a) those channels which are most clearly associated with the Council, including, but not exhaustively, its main and associated websites; intranet, corporate and service publications; and vehicles.
 - b) those channels where the Council acts as landlord or operator, but which may be managed for the Council under transparent and tendered arrangements, including, but not limited to, outdoor advertising such as billboards, hoardings on Council properties or land, and public transport.
- 2.3. Sponsorship, for the purposes of this policy, is defined as a relationship between the Council and an external organisation in which the organisation supplies funding, resources or other services in exchange for recognition from the Council, either through the offer of association with a project or event that may be used for commercial advantage, naming rights or another mutually beneficial agreement.
- 2.4. In practice, the two terms can overlap. Advertising on roundabouts may be called sponsorship because the income raised from the advertisements is used to cover the cost of maintaining the roundabouts.

- 2.5. Sponsorship may also refer to the Council, or one of its traded services, acting in the sponsor role by providing resources to an external organisation in exchange for recognition.
- 2.6. Forms of recognition can include, but are not limited to, appropriate signage, inclusion of the sponsor's name and logo on Council publications/assets and other external publications and naming rights for an event or building for the term of the sponsorship.

3. Rules on Sponsorship and Advertising

3.1. All advertising must fall within the guidelines and rules laid out by:

- the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority publicity <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recommended-code-of-practice-for-local-authority-publicity>
 - In the case of any ambiguity, please refer to this document for guidance.
- the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) www.asa.org.uk;
- 'The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations' and 'The Business Protection from Misleading Marketing Regulations 2008' (all of which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/marketing-advertising-law/regulations-that-affect-advertising>);

3.2. Any existing advertising or sponsorship arrangements must be reviewed against this policy and the above listed documents at the end of any contractual term.

3.3. Without any limitation on the Council's ability to exercise its discretion, the Council does not consider the following companies, partnerships, organisations or individuals as suitable for entering into advertising or sponsorship agreements with:

- a) those involved in the manufacture, distribution or wholesaling of tobacco-related products, alcohol, fossil fuels, pornography or addictive drugs;
- b) those whose services or products are considered to be injurious to health, or are seen to be in conflict with the Council's Public Health policies and responsibilities to the community concerning healthy lifestyles;
- c) those whose business activities/practices do not align with the Council's wider values, corporate objectives and strategic goals, such as the environment and carbon accounting;
- d) providers of gambling or betting services;
- e) financial organisations and loan advancers with punitive interest rates;
- f) providers that appear to promote discrimination against any individual or group on the basis of any protected characteristic detailed in the Equality Act 2010;

- g) providers with active or pending legal actions concerning the Council, or those found guilty of illegal or improper conduct by any other legal authority;
 - h) advocacy of, or opposition to, any political party or any socially inflammatory or controversial subjects or issues;
 - i) advertising that infringes on any trademark, copyright or patent rights of another company;
 - j) claims or representations in violation of advertising or consumer protection laws; those that have been found, or are suspected, to have failed to comply with the guidelines laid out by the Advertising Standards Authority
 - k) those whose advertising may result in the Council being subject to prosecution.
- 3.4. The Council reserves the right to remove advertising deemed to be objectionable.
- 3.5. The Council also reserves the right to remove advertising at short notice should the subject matter be likely to appear insensitive/cause offence, particularly, but not exclusively, in the light of local or national events e.g., natural disasters, missing children, etc.
- 3.6. Sponsorship recognition should be tasteful and discrete and must not create situations of potential embarrassment or criticism of the Council.
- 3.7. There may be times when the Council's Traded Services want to sponsor local events or services. The list of unsuitable partners for sponsorship (at 3.3) applies and if the Council is not the sole sponsor for an event / service, the team should also ensure that the other sponsors are not 'unsuitable partners for sponsorship'.
- 3.8. Services must comply with the Council's branding guidelines when acknowledging sponsors.
- 3.9. Exceptions may be considered if the companies, partnerships, organisations or individuals involved can prove that less than 5% of their overall income is derived from any of the excluded items detailed in 3.3. This decision will be made on a case by case basis by the Head of Procurement and Commercial and the Service Director for Finance and Procurement.
- 3.10. If any advertising or sponsorship agreements concerning Council assets are managed by a third party, this party must also ensure that these rules and exclusions are followed.

4. Principles

- 4.1. Any consideration given to the establishment of advertising or sponsorship agreements shall have regard to the following principles:
- a) any arrangement must be compatible with the values and goals in the Council's Corporate Strategy

- b) the commercial and/or social value of any arrangement must be clear for both parties;
- c) an arrangement cannot be perceived to influence or hinder how the Council operates or makes decisions.
- d) arrangements must not impose or imply conditions that would limit or appear to limit the Council's ability to carry out its functions fully or impartially;
- e) the reputation and credibility of the Council is not damaged by making agreements with unsuitable third parties;
- f) the form of sponsorship is consistent with the stated objectives of the Council which includes the Council's image;
- g) agreements are formed with regard to public accountability and transparency with clear statements of objectives and benefits achieved;
- h) any advertising or sponsorship proposal does not anticipate explicit endorsement of the sponsor or the sponsor's products, as this form of proposal is not acceptable to the Council;
- i) the extent of recognition is to be determined in relation to the level and nature of the sponsorship; and is subject to written agreement specifying the benefits and costs.

5. Conflict of Interest

- 5.1. Council Officers and Members are required to declare in advance if they have any personal interests, involvement, or potential conflict of interest with any potential sponsor. In the event of a potential conflict of interest, that Officer or Member will take no part in the consideration of advertising or sponsorship with that organisation.
- 5.2. Every advertising or sponsorship proposal will be assessed against the possibility of a conflict of interest and will be refused or terminated where during the life of the advertising or sponsorship the sponsor:
 - a) has a current development application or planning matter before the Council, or the Council is aware of the possibility of an application or matter coming before the Council in the near future;
 - b) is, or is likely to be, subject to regulation or inspection by the Council which may impose or imply conditions; and where the sponsorship may limit the Council's ability to carry out its functions fully and impartially.
- 5.3. It is required that any individual or organisation with an advertising or sponsorship agreement with the Council will disclose the agreement if there is a current development application or planning matter relating to them, or if the individual or organisation is subject to regulation or inspection by the Council. If such a conflict is not declared, this is grounds for termination of the contract.

6. Agreements

- 6.1. There should be a Council approved written form of agreement which clearly sets out:
- a) the benefits, including economic benefits, available to the Council and the sponsor and the nature of the benefits e.g., naming rights;
 - b) any personal benefits available to the sponsor's employees and their relatives;
 - c) the form or forms of sponsorship which will be available;
 - d) the scope of uses which the sponsor can make of the advertising or sponsorship arrangement;
 - e) the term of the advertising or sponsorship agreement and any conditions regarding renewal;
 - f) consequences of change which may occur over time e.g. a shift in the relationship, new policies, new corporate missions or objectives;
 - g) financial accountability requirements;
 - h) provision for termination or suspension of the agreement.
- 6.2. The agreement must include a statement that "the Council's function will continue to be carried out fully and impartially, notwithstanding the existence of an advertising or sponsorship arrangement."
- 6.3. The agreement must include a statement to the effect that any attempted influence of the Council's regulatory functions will result in an automatic review and/or termination of the agreement.

7. Public Accountability / Reporting

- 7.1. The Council is committed to principles of open government and of public accountability, transparency and accessibility. To meet these objectives, the Council agrees that:
- a) advertising and sponsorship agreements must be in the form of written agreements;
 - b) the Council's Sponsorship and Advertising Policy is publicly available on the Council's website;
 - c) a public register of advertising and sponsorship agreements is maintained by the Council and is publicly available on the Council's website.

8. Marketing and Media Relations

- 8.1. The Council's Communications and Information Team must be notified from the outset of all agreements to be entered into by the Council.
- 8.2. Media relations for all agreements are undertaken by the Council's Communications team.

- 8.3. All media information produced by the sponsor must be approved by the Council's Communication and Information team before circulation.
- 8.4. The use of sponsors' logos and other branding must not interfere or conflict with the Council's own corporate identity.
- 8.5. The use of the Council's corporate identity on any sponsors' publicity must be approved by the Council's Communication and Information team.

9. Disclaimer

- 9.1. All agreements for advertising and sponsorship should operate under the provision that the Council is not explicitly endorsing the product.
- 9.2. Advertising on Council assets should be clearly labelled as such.
- 9.3. Recognition of sponsorship should include phrases such as "sponsored by/ funded by/ in partnership with" to reflect that the Council's contribution is distinct from that of the business partner.
- 9.4. All advertising and sponsorship should include a disclaimer stating the following: "This advertisement is not an official endorsement by Cambridgeshire County Council for this product/service. It is a paid-for advertisement/recognition of sponsorship. All efforts have been made to ensure that the content of this advertisement is compliant with the Council's Advertising and Sponsorship Policy, available on the Council's website. If you have any concerns about the content of this advert, please use the [Feedback Form](#) on the CCC website."

10. Policy Implementation

- 10.1. This version of the policy will come into effect from [Jan 2023] and will be applied to all current Advertising and Sponsorship agreements as and when they are due for renewal.
- 10.2. Voluntary adoption of this policy in the middle of a contractual arrangement will be encouraged but not enforced if it would result in claims against the Council or additional costs.

11. Policy Review

- 11.1. This policy will operate in tandem with the Council's Corporate Strategy and is subject to review in 2025.