

Wiltshire Council

Policy for the placing of advertisements and the sponsorship of third party events

1. **Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of the policy is to set out the terms upon which advertising and sponsorship may be agreed for external advertising and the support of third party events and activities, by Wiltshire Council (the “council”).
- 1.2 The council is committed to identifying the most effective and efficient means of procuring the advertising necessary to support its activities, and to ensure the sponsorship it enters into in respect of external activities, is consistent with its overarching vision and goals.
- 1.3 The policy aims to clarify the organisation’s criteria and expectations in relation to these activities and ensure that officers are equipped to make informed decisions on these matters.

2. **External Advertising**

- 2.1 External advertising is defined as,

“An agreement between the council and an advertising provider, whereby the council will pay for publicity and advertising in the form of an advertisement in print, broadcast or electronic media.”

- 2.2 The policy is not designed to be an exhaustive list of rules regarding advertising behaviour, as the starting point is that all council advertising will fall within the guidelines laid out by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) www.asa.org.uk and upholds the rules laid out in the British Codes of Advertising and Sales Promotion www.asa.org.uk/asa/codes/capcode and the code of recommended practice on local authority publicity www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/coderecommended
- 2.3 In line with the codes referred to above, advertisements should be:
 - Legal, decent, honest and truthful
 - Created with a sense of responsibility to consumers and society
 - In line with the principles of fair competition generally accepted in business
 - The codes are applied in the spirit as well as the letter
- 2.4 External advertising should be fit for purpose, and every care should be taken to avoid any perception that the council, through its advertising,

is promoting behaviours or practices that are contrary to its stated corporate goals. Furthermore, no advertisement should:

- Appear to influence support for a political party/candidate
- be inappropriate or objectionable
- put the council at risk of prosecution
- appear to promote racial or sexual discrimination, or discrimination on the basis of disability.

- 2.5 The above list is not exhaustive, and due regard should be given to issues that emerge from time to time that may influence what the organisation might consider to be inappropriate or objectionable. In such instances, judgement should be exercised to ensure that advertisements do not inadvertently create reputational damage for the organisation or compromise the successful delivery of its services and functions.
- 2.6 With regard to advertising which may affect public support for a political party (section 2 of the Local Government Act 1986, as amended by section 27 of the Local Government Act 1988) the law requires that regard is given to the content, style, timing and other circumstances of the publication. Also, the likely effect on those to whom it is directed and:
- 2.6.1 whether the material refers to a political party or persons identified with a such party
- 2.6.2 promotes or opposes a point of view on a question of political controversy which is identifiable as the view of one party and not another, or,
- 2.6.3 where the material is part of a campaign, the effect which the campaigning appears to be designed to achieve
- 2.7 Advertisements will not be placed with organisations that are in financial or legal conflict with the Council.

3. **External Sponsorship**

- 3.1 External sponsorship is defined as,

“An agreement between the council and an external body, organisation or individual, where the council provides money or a benefit in kind in support of an event, campaign or initiative, which in turn provides the council with publicity or other benefits.”

- 3.2 The policy aims to
- 3.2.1 clarify the criteria by which the council will consider sponsorship opportunities
- 3.2.2 ensure that the council's position and reputation is adequately protected
- 3.2.3 ensure that sponsorship opportunities are considered in terms of their alignment with corporate goals
- 3.2.4 ensure a consistent and professional approach is adopted to the development of external sponsorship agreements

- 3.2.5 protect councillors and officers from potential allegations of inappropriate dealings or favouritism with potential recipients of sponsorship funding.
- 3.3 The council will consider all requests for sponsorship where such arrangements support its core values. However, it will not enter into a sponsorship agreement if, in the reasonable opinion of the council, the agreement,
 - 3.3.1 may be perceived as potentially influencing the council or its officers in carrying out its statutory functions in order to gain favourable terms from the council on any business or other agreement
 - 3.3.2 aligns the council with any organisation or individual which conflicts with its values and priorities.
- 3.4 Furthermore, assessments for suitability will be based on the event's ability to deliver against Wiltshire Council's strategic goals. Specific criteria relating to timing, economic and social benefits, image, sustainability, requirement for non-monetary council support and cost/benefit analysis will also be considerations.
- 3.5 Priority will be given to the sponsorship of events that meet **two or more** of the following criteria:
 - 3.5.1 deliver national or international profile
 - 3.5.2 leverage significant external financial support
 - 3.5.3 deliver brand/image benefits to the county
 - 3.5.4 deliver strategic fit with the stakeholder agenda
 - 3.5.5 reflect and celebrate the cultural heritage of the county
- 3.6 As a general rule, the council will **not** sponsor,
 - 3.6.1 Business events and conferences (including awards dinners)
 - 3.6.2 Venue based exhibitions
 - 3.6.3 Solely commercial activities
 - 3.6.4 Events or activities retrospectively
 - 3.6.5 More than 50%* of the total cost of an event (* includes all other sources of Wiltshire Council funding that may have been agreed for an event)
- 3.7 The above list is not exhaustive, and the council reserves the right to refuse sponsorship on the grounds that , in the council's opinion, it is inappropriate, or it conflicts with services already provided by the organisation.
- 3.8 An application can be made by an individual, community group or organisation. It will be necessary for the applicant to have a bank or building society account into which funding can be paid. If an application is successful it will also be necessary for the applicant to provide supporting material as requested (eg, status of the organisation, constitution, references etc..)
- 3.9 Only events or initiatives taking place within Wiltshire Council's boundaries and which comply with Wiltshire Council's licensing conditions are normally eligible for funding. The provision of

appropriate risk assessments and method statements, no later than 14 days prior to the event taking place, will be a condition of receiving council funding.

- 3.10 The council will not sponsor events connected to organisations that it is in financial or legal conflict with.
- 3.11 The council will agree with the recipient of sponsorship funding the nature and content of publicity that it will receive from being involved with an event, and will retain the right to approve all sponsorship material. The council has a strong brand identity and material relating to sponsorship agreements must not conflict with, or compromise this.

4. **Procedures**

- 4.1 All advertising and sponsorship requests will be considered in light of the policy.
- 4.2 The overall coordination of advertising and sponsorship agreements across the council will be the responsibility of the Policy, Research and Communications service, although individual relationships and agreements may continue to be managed by service unit staff.
- 4.3 All potential sponsorship applicants should be referred to the policy for information and guidance.
- 4.4 All requests for sponsorship will be approved by the Service Director for Policy, Research and Communications in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet member.
- 4.5 External sponsorship agreements must be referred to Legal Services for review, prior to signing.
- 4.6 The distribution of sponsorship funding to successful applicants will be subject to the terms of individually negotiated agreements. The terms will be influenced by the various circumstances that will apply to individual applications, and consequently may vary from case to case.

5. **Disclaimer**

- 5.1 Agreement by the council to sponsorship requests does not imply endorsement of products and services by the recipient organisation or individual. In order to make this clear all publications, or other media, connected to sponsored events should carry the following disclaimer:
- 5.2 “Whilst Wiltshire Council has made every effort to satisfy itself of the status and capabilities of the organisers of this event, it cannot accept any liability for claims made by third parties for activities or outcomes beyond its control, and a sponsorship agreement should not be taken as an endorsement by Wiltshire Council of the organisers, their agents or contractors”