



## Advertising and Sponsorship Policy

### Introduction

1. Nottinghamshire County Council has a policy on advertising and sponsorship in order to:
  - Uphold the Council's reputation and corporate identity
  - Further the Council's strategic vision and support its priorities (by facilitating communication messages)
  - Secure best value for money and maximise income
  - Provide a framework and control measures
  - Establish a corporate approach and standards (including best practice)
  - Ensure compliance with legislation, advertising industry codes and other Council policies (e.g. Corporate Identity Policy)
  - Support development of commercial partnerships with the private sector
  - Safeguard the image and environment of the county

### Context

2. Advertising and sponsorship of a 'product' encompasses goods, services, ideas, causes, opportunities, prizes and gifts.
3. Advertising is a form of communication used to raise awareness, encourage or persuade an audience - viewers, readers or listeners or a specific group of people - to do or believe something. Advertising is usually paid for by advertisers or sponsors.
4. Advertising messages can take a variety of forms and can be viewed via a variety of traditional and new media (e.g. newspapers, magazines, television commercial, radio advertisement, outdoor advertising, direct mail, blogs, websites and text messages).
5. A person who consumes advertising is anyone who is likely to receive a given marketing communication, whether in the course of business or not.
6. To sponsor something is to support an event, activity, person, or organization financially or by providing products or services. It should be mutually beneficial. Sponsorship should not be confused with other types of funding which the Council administers e.g. Grand Aid or Councillors' Divisional Fund.
7. Sponsorship is a business relationship between a provider of funds, resources or services and an individual, event or organisation which offers in return rights and association that may be used for commercial advantage in return for the sponsorship investment (*BDS Sponsorship Ltd*).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.sponsorship.co.uk/in\\_sponsorship/in\\_sponsorship.htm](http://www.sponsorship.co.uk/in_sponsorship/in_sponsorship.htm)

8. There can be cross over between how advertising and sponsorship works in practice. For example, advertising on roundabouts is usually called sponsorship because the funds support the cost of maintaining these sites. Further advice should be sought from the Council's Communications and Marketing service.

## **Scope**

9. This policy is two-fold, covering:
  - The Council as an advertiser or sponsor; and
  - The Council as an owner of an advertising platform or sponsorship opportunity which an external individual, group or organisation may wish to take up.
10. This policy is supported by the following documents, which are managed by the Council's Communications and Marketing service:
  - An advertising and sponsorship procedure.
  - Terms and conditions for advertisers wishing to use Council owned platforms;
  - Terms and conditions for sponsors of Council products or services; and
11. Recruitment advertising placed by the Council should take account of this policy but is covered by a separate procedure.
12. Any historical sponsorship or advertising arrangements will be reviewed.

## **Principles**

13. When working with an advertiser or sponsor, it is important that any agreement supports the Council's strategic vision, Constitution and Equality Policy.
14. The Council will refuse applications from companies who are in dispute with the Council or where there is pending/active legal action. We will also not accept advertising or sponsorship from companies who are in contract negotiation with the Council where this may be viewed as an endorsement of this bid.
15. The Council will uphold the Publicity Code of recommended practice on local authority publicity. This means the Council is not able to enter into an advertising or sponsorship agreement which connects the Council with lending support to any political party.
16. Whether advertising and/or sponsorship is a suitable method or whether external requests to use council-owned platforms should be approved, will be decided on a case by case basis on the merits of each opportunity or request.

## **Advertising policy**

17. The Council abides by national guidance published by the Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) - the UK's independent regulator of advertising across all online and offline media. The central principle for all advertising (marketing communications) is

that it should be legal, decent, honest and truthful. For more information visit: [www.asa.org.uk](http://www.asa.org.uk)

18. All advertising on Council owned advertising platforms must adhere to the British Code of Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing. This code provides the rules for non-broadcast advertisements, sales promotions and direct marketing communications. For further details visit: [http://www.asa.org.uk/asa/codes/cap\\_code/CodeIndex.htm](http://www.asa.org.uk/asa/codes/cap_code/CodeIndex.htm)
19. The Council abides by the Town and Country Planning Act. The Control of Advertisements Regulations provides the rules on displaying advertising. The Council has the duty to ensure all advertising on Council owned platforms falls within this legislation and will liaise with the appropriate authority/district council to ensure planning law relating to the display of advertisements is complied with.
20. The Council will advertise its own services and offers as appropriate using its own platforms. This may include adverts relating to traded services or quasi-trading services, which generate an income. The Council permits paid-for advertising on some of the platforms it owns and this may include advertising from for-profit companies. In both these circumstances the Council will comply with the Supply of Goods and Services Act.
21. The Council encourages advertising on its own platforms that supports its strategic vision for Nottinghamshire. This might include advertising messages on safety, healthy living and environmental sustainability; messages which support local businesses; and promotion of events and attractions that would attract visitors into the county.
22. The Council will not permit any advertising that represents a conflict of interest or is likely to cause serious or widespread offence. Particular care should be taken to avoid causing offence on the grounds of race, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation or disability. Content that is not permitted for advertising includes, but is not limited to, advertising that contains, infers or suggests any of the following:
  - Advocacy of, or opposition to, any politically, environmentally or socially controversial subjects or issues
  - Disparagement or promotion of any person or class of persons
  - Promotion or incitement of illegal, violent or socially undesirable acts
  - Promotion or availability of tobacco products, weapons, gambling or illegal drugs
  - Advertising of financial organisations and loan advancers with punitive interest rates
  - Promotion or availability of adult or sexually orientated entertainment materials
  - Advertising that infringes on any trademark, copyright or patent rights of another company
  - Claims or representations in violation of advertising or consumer protection laws.
23. All applicants wishing to utilise Council owned advertising media must adhere to this policy and the Council's **Terms and Conditions for Advertisers**.
24. The Council has a duty to seek best value for money when placing advertising. The Council's Communications and Marketing service will provide expertise on whether advertising is the most appropriate marketing communications method.

25. The Council holds personal data of service users and careful consideration needs to be given to whether it is appropriate and legal (Data Protection Act) for this to be used for any advertising or direct marketing purposes. Wherever possible people should be asked whether they are willing to 'opt in' to receive news, information or advertising messages from the Council when personal data is gathered.

### **Sponsorship policy**

26. Sponsorship is not a way for any company or organisation to be viewed favourably by the Council in any other business arrangements they might be a party to.
27. Organisations that will not be considered or approved for sponsorship opportunities include, but are not limited to, those which represent a conflict of interest or are connected directly or indirectly with the following:
- Advocacy of, or opposition to, any politically, environmentally or socially controversial subjects or issues
  - Disparagement or promotion of any person or class of persons
  - Promotion or incitement of illegal, violent or socially undesirable acts
  - Promotion or availability of tobacco products, weapons, gambling or illegal drugs
  - Financial organisations and loan advancers with punitive interest rates
  - Promotion or availability of adult or sexually orientated entertainment materials
  - An infringement on any trademark, copyright or patent rights of another company
28. Any organisation wishing to sponsor a Council owned product or service must adhere to this policy and the Council's **Terms and Conditions for Sponsors**.
29. A sponsorship briefing form must be completed to define any sponsorship opportunity for a potential sponsor.
30. All sponsorship deals will be subject to a signed legal agreement between the Council and the sponsoring organisation. For smaller projects this might be in the form of the Council's standard **Terms and Conditions for Sponsors**; for larger or more complex arrangements, a document may be drawn up relating specifically to that project.
31. The Council must ensure a return on investment when it is a sponsor. The appropriate lead officer must consult the Council's Communications and Marketing service before deciding whether the Council should be a sponsor or whether sponsorship of a Council product/service is the best marketing communications method.
32. Publicity and media coverage will be arranged by the Council for all appropriate sponsorship deals.
33. The use of branding and logos of any sponsoring company must not interfere with the Council's Corporate Identity Policy or Brand Guidelines.
34. The size and positioning of sponsors' logos on any promotional material, goods or signage must be considered by the appropriate lead officer in conjunction with the Council's Communications and Marketing service.

### **Responsibility**

35. The Council's Communications and Marketing service provides expertise on and is the guardian of the Advertising and Sponsorship Policy (as well as the Council's Terms and Conditions for Advertisers and Terms and Conditions for Sponsors).
36. All council services and employees must comply with this policy and the commercial advertising and sponsorship procedure.
37. Whether advertising and/or sponsorship is a suitable method or whether external requests to use council-owned platforms should be approved, will be decided on a case by case basis on the merits of each opportunity or request.
38. The Council's Communications and Marketing service is the gatekeeper for all advertising opportunities and enquiries. Decisions on sponsorship opportunities will be taken by an appropriate lead officer, in conjunction with the expertise provided by the Council's Communications and Marketing service.

### **Further information**

39. For any queries about this policy contact the Council's Communications and Marketing service. Call 0115 9773851 or email: [marketing@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:marketing@nottsc.gov.uk)

*[This document was approved by Policy Committee on 18/7/12]*