

Advertising and Sponsorship Policy



Adopted: April 2025

Review: April 2028

1. Introduction

Biggleswade Town Council (BTC) recognises the importance of responsible advertising and corporate sponsorship. The Council appreciates that safeguarding the Council's finances and assets is economically, socially and environmentally important. Sponsorship can help by providing more sustainable or disability-friendly products than could normally be afforded. This policy provides a positive framework for proactively seeking and accepting sponsorship, while providing the necessary controls to protect the Town Council's reputation and to ensure any related advertising is appropriate.

This policy is in place 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.
- Support development of commercial partnerships with the private sector.

2. Context

In the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

'Advertising'

This 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. It is a contractual arrangement between parties for the promoting of a product or service to current and potential customers and is typically displayed on physical signs, murals, websites, social media, emails etc.

'Sponsorship'

3. This is a contractual arrangement between parties whereby one meets all the costs of an activity or project, usually in exchange for a benefit such as advertising.

4. Principles

This section provides a list of general principles which will be applied to advertising and sponsorship arrangements.

- a. The Town Council reserves its right in all circumstances to refuse or apply any conditions.
- b. The Town Council welcomes local and national opportunities of mutual benefit and welcomes sponsorship and advertising where this saves money for the precept payer and helps provide added value for services to the public.
- c. Sponsorship is for additions and improvements, not for the Town Council's statutory and core contractual and service obligations.

- d. Transparency of process will apply to protect the Council's reputation and manage expectations.
- e. When working with an advertiser or sponsor, it is important that any agreement supports the Town Council's strategic vision and Constitution.
- f. The Town Council reserves the right to refuse any offer of sponsorship.
- g. The Town Council will uphold the Publicity Code of recommended practice on local authority publicity, meaning that it cannot enter into an advertising or sponsorship agreement which connects the Town Council with lending support to any political party.
- h. 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.

5. Advertising

- a. All advertising on Town Council owned advertising platforms must adhere to the British Code of Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing which provides the rules for non-broadcast advertisements, sales promotions and direct marketing communications.
- b. The Town 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 Town Council will consider paid-for advertising on some of the platforms it owns, and this may include advertising from for-profit companies. The Town Council will comply with the Supply of Goods and Services Act.
- c. The Town Council welcomes responsible advertising on its own platforms that supports its strategic vision for Biggleswade.
- d. The Town Council will not permit any advertising that represents a conflict of interest or is likely to cause serious or widespread offence. Care should be taken to avoid causing offence on the grounds of race, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership or disability. As per the Equality Act 2010.
- e. The Town Council has a duty to seek best value for money when placing advertising. The Town Clerk will provide expertise on whether advertising is the most appropriate marketing communications method.
- f. 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.

6. Sponsorship

- It is accepted that most sponsorship will be offered on the basis that it is in return for publicity or an advertising platform. However, the Town Council warmly welcomes any philanthropic sponsorship (donation) that is offered with no expectation of any benefit to the donor.
- All potential sponsors and advertisers must sign a declaration to confirm that they are not in arrears on any payments to the Town Council or the subject of investigation or legal dispute with the Town Council or any other statutory body.
- Sponsorship is not a way for any company or organisation to be viewed favourably by the Town Council in any other business arrangements they might be a party to.
- 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.
- The Town Council will arrange publicity and media coverage for all appropriate sponsorship deals.
- The use of branding and logos of any sponsoring company must not interfere with the Council's Corporate Identity or Brand Guidelines.
- 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 Town Council's Communications and Events Officer.

7. Responsibility

- This policy applies to all Employees, Volunteers and Councillors.
- The Town 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 Town Council when personal data is gathered.

- c. 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.
- d. Approaches to or by potential sponsors/advertisers must be through the Town Clerk who will determine the route for decision in line with this policy.
- e. Decisions on sponsorship opportunities will be taken by an appropriate Committee.