

West Suffolk Council

Sponsorship and Advertising Policy

March 2015

1 DEFINITION

'Sponsorship' - is a contract between parties in which one party meets all or part of the costs of the project or activity, usually in exchange for commercial benefit.

'Advertising' – is a contract between parties promoting a product (or service) to potential and current customers. Advertising is typically displayed on signs, brochures, websites, direct mailings or e-mail messages etc.

2 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 In entering into agreements for sponsorship or advertising, there must be transparency of process in order to protect the council's reputation and to manage expectations.
- 2.2 The council's constitution and policy framework, and in particular, the code of conduct for councillors and employees must be observed. Sponsorship and advertising agreements must also comply with the council's equality and diversity policies.
- 2.3 The council actively seeks local and national opportunities of mutual benefit and welcomes sponsorship and advertising where:
 - a) the opportunity aligns with the council's values;
 - b) it does not, and could not reasonably be perceived as, influencing the way the council exercises a statutory function;
 - c) it does not, and could not reasonably be perceived as, attempting to influence the outcome of a decision to be made by the council;
 - d) it does not, and could not reasonably be perceived as, influencing the council's allocation of resources; and
 - e) it could not reasonably be perceived as being used by the sponsor to gain favourable terms.
- 2.4 Therefore the council will not consider sponsorship or advertising which:
 - a)
 - i) is against the Advertising Standards Authority's advertising code; www.asa.org.uk
 - ii) does not uphold the rules laid out in the UK Code of Non-broadcast Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing (CAP Code) www.cap.org.uk/Advertising-Codes/Non-broadcast-HTML.aspx

iii) does not follow the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority publicity
www.gov.uk/government/publications/recommended-code-of-practice-for-local-authority-publicity

- b) creates legal or financial conflict with the interests of the council;
- c) has party-political associations;
- d) conflicts with the council's branding;
- e) involves unlawful prejudice and/or discrimination;
- f) promotes smoking;
- g) promotes irresponsible consumption of alcohol;
- h) involves sexual content;
- i) involves violent content; or
- j) could otherwise bring the council into disrepute or conflict with contractual obligations.

This is not an exhaustive list and any approach can be declined at the council's sole discretion by an officer of the council.

- 2.5 While it is expected that most sponsorship will be offered on the basis that it is in return for publicity or an advertising platform, the council will of course welcome any sponsorship that is offered with no expectation of any benefit to the donor.

3 CO-ORDINATION AND APPROVAL PROCEDURE

- 3.1 Approaches to or by potential sponsors/advertisers must be co-ordinated through the council's Corporate Communications Team. The value of the sponsorship or advertising and the criteria for selection of a sponsor must be agreed with the Corporate Communications Team.

3.2 Depending on the value of the sponsorship or advertising, different approval and thresholds apply, as shown in the table below.

Value		Level of approval				
	Publicise	Corporate Comms Manager*	Assistant Director	Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder	Cabinet
£1 - £1,000	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
£1,001 - £10,000	Open invitation through e.g Suffolk sourcing	Yes	No	No	No	No
£10,001 - £50,000	Open invitation through e.g Suffolk sourcing	Yes	Yes	Yes possible referral to Cabinet	Yes	Possibly
£50,001 and above	Open invitation through e.g Suffolk sourcing	Yes	Yes	Yes possible referral to Cabinet	Yes	Possibly

*In the absence of the Corporate Communications Manager, the Assistant Director for Families and Communities will be available for approvals.

3.3

The council will agree with the sponsor/advertiser the nature and content of the publicity and will retain the right to approve all advertising material and to remove any material which has not received such approval.

3.4

Where a request for sponsorship or advertising is connected to a matter of current policy with particular sensitivity (for example, a current council decision) the officer handling the request is required to consult the Leadership Team who may recommend a referral to the relevant Cabinet.

3.5

For significant sponsorship or advertising a named officer must be nominated as the sponsor/advertiser's contact.

3.6

All potential sponsors and advertisers must sign a declaration (as part of the financial form – see paragraph 4.2 below) to say that they are not in arrears on any payments to the councils or the subject of investigation or enforcement by the councils or any other statutory body. The councils reserve the right to refuse sponsorship if the potential sponsor does not fulfil these requirements.

4 FINANCIAL PROCEDURE

4.1 Payment terms must be agreed by the Corporate Communications Team on a case by case basis and in line with other payment policies.

4.2 An account (Sponsorship-Customer info request) form is available on request. The description of any agreement must be attached to this form. This must be completed and signed by both parties before any agreement starts.

4.3 When the council incurs any direct costs payment must be received in advance.

5

TRANSPARENCY

A list of sponsors and details of what they have sponsored will be published on the council's website except where the donor wishes to remain anonymous (and the council agrees to the anonymity).

6

MARKETING AND MEDIA RELATIONS

6.1 Sponsors should refer all media enquiries about sponsorship and advertising to the council's Corporate Communications Team.

6.2 Any use of West Suffolk's corporate branding must be approved by the Corporate Communications Team.

7.0

DISCLAIMER

7.1 Acceptance of advertising or sponsorship does not imply endorsement by the council of products and services. In order to make this clear all publications, or other media, with advertising or sponsorship should carry the following disclaimer:

'Whilst every effort has been made to ensure advertising within this publication complies with all relevant legislation, West Suffolk Council cannot accept any liability for errors or omissions contained in any material provided by an advertiser. The council does not accept any liability for any information or claims made by the advertisement or by the advertisers. Any inclusion of the council's name on a publication should not be taken as an endorsement by the council.

7.2

Where it is not possible to print a disclaimer, for example in the case of an advertising hoarding, the material should identify the West Suffolk Council as being the owner and that this policy is available on the council's website.

8. COUNCILLORS AS SPONSORS OF COUNCIL EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

- 8.1 There is no bar on county, district and parish councillors offering sponsorship to the council either by sponsoring council events or activities as individuals or through a business. However, apart from the conditions that apply to all potential sponsors, care must be taken that the sponsorship would not contravene the councillors' Code of Conduct or the restrictions on council publicity, particularly during the sensitive pre-election period. The advice of the Monitoring Officer will therefore be sought when a councillor puts forward a sponsorship proposal.

9 CONTACTS

- 9.1 Media relations and corporate identity:
Corporate Communications Team
01284 757034
communications@westsuffolk.gov.uk