



Advertising and sponsorship policy

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to:

- provide a corporate framework, including best practice and compliance with legislation and advertising industry codes
- uphold the council's reputation
- secure best value for money and maximise income, while giving appropriate weight to environmental and social factors

For the purposes of this policy:

- advertising is the purchase of display advertising space within any council asset, including but not limited to print, out of home advertising and online
- sponsorship is any arrangement involving a partnership between the council and the sponsor where the council receives money or a benefit in kind in exchange for promotion of the sponsor's brand or products, it would be expected to include a range of opportunities over a set timeframe such as branding opportunities at events or physical assets in the city, advertising space and media activity

2. Scope

This policy relates to:

- the council's role as owner of advertising platforms, including but not limited to digital assets, physical sites such as billboards, hoardings, vehicles, and printed materials, including our magazines
- the council's role as owner of sponsorship opportunities, including but not limited to physical assets, services, projects and events Exclusions: property that is subject to lease arrangements

2.1 Exclusions: property that is subject to lease arrangements

This policy does not apply to advertising on property that belongs to the council but that is leased to a third party, including (but not limited to) billboards that are leased to a third party, land and commercial property.

2.2 Variations: advertising on the Highway in Portsmouth.

Portsmouth City Council's PFI highways contract designates Colas Ensign responsibility for all aspects of 'fence to fence' highways maintenance throughout the city, including the right to advertising on the highway.

Advertising opportunities managed via the PFI highways contract include, but are not limited to, advertising on roundabouts (managed by CP Media on behalf of Ensign Colas), advertising on lamp columns (managed by Bay Media on behalf of Ensign Colas), and advertising on bus shelters (managed by Clear Channel on behalf of the council's transport department).

Advertising on roundabouts and on lamp columns is covered by this policy.

Bus shelter advertising is covered by provision in the contract, which specifies that advertising must be compliant with the ASA code, and be legal, decent, honest and truthful, and suitable for public display. The contract makes provision for any advert deemed unacceptable by the council, following a complaint, to be removed within 12 hours. The council's view on what is deemed unacceptable will be informed by this policy.

3. Objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

- to provide clear guidance on the type of advertisements and the sponsorship relationships that are acceptable to the council, ensuring the council's position and reputation are adequately protected
- to ensure that we adopt a consistent and professional approach towards sponsorship and advertising, and to mitigate the risk of allegations of inappropriate dealings or relationships
- to ensure the council obtains best value from its advertising and sponsorship opportunities, and that due consideration is given to the council's wider strategic objectives

4. Overall policy

As a general principle, the council will seek to align its advertising and sponsorship activity with the corporate approach set out in the overall treasury management policy which aims to ensure environmental, social and governance factors are given due consideration in making investment decisions.

In respect of environmental factors and in line with the council's declaration of a climate emergency, the council will not accept advertising or sponsorship linked to fossil fuel companies, or for petrol or diesel cars or vans, or that explicitly promotes single-use plastics.

The council will not accept advertising or sponsorship that represents a conflict of interest, for example it would not be acceptable to accept significant advertising or sponsorship where the council is in contract negotiations with a company and the advertising or sponsorship could be viewed as an endorsement of a bid.

The council will not accept any advertising or sponsorship that conflicts with its policies/strategies, or conflicts with its public health responsibility.

With due regard to its economic development strategy, the council reserves the right to decline advertising/sponsorship that conflicts with its objectives around tourism (for example, visitor/leisure attractions/hotels from outside the city) and economic development (for example, retail destinations/high streets from outside the city).

The council reserves the right to decline advertising/sponsorship that conflicts with its environmental policies/strategies.

Whether advertising or sponsorship is suitable will be decided on a case by case basis, focusing on the merits of each opportunity.

Where advertising space is over-subscribed, we will prioritise positive advertising that aligns with council priorities.

5. Advertising policy

All advertising must fall within the rules and guidelines laid out by the [Advertising Standards Authority \(ASA\)](#) and upholds the rules laid out in the [British Codes of Advertising and Sales Promotion](#). Full copies of the codes are available on the ASA website.

The basic principles of the codes are that advertisements should be:

- Legal, decent, honest and truthful
- Created with a sense of responsibility to consumers and to society, in-line with the principles of fair competition generally accepted in business and that:
- The codes are applied in the spirit as well as the letter

All advertising must uphold the rules laid out in the [Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority publicity](#).

The council will not accept advertising that we consider reasonably objectionable, or is likely to cause serious or widespread offence and will take particular care to avoid causing offence on the grounds of race, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation or disability.

The council will not accept advertising of products, services or organisations that are likely to damage the council's reputation by association.

Content that is not permitted includes, but is not limited to, advertising that contains, suggests or infers, in either written or pictorial form, any of the following:

- content disparaging or promoting a person/group of people on the grounds of race, religion or any other protected characteristic
- content expressing a political view
- content promoting tobacco products or tobacco
- content promoting weapons
- content promoting fossil fuel companies
- content promoting petrol or diesel vehicles¹
- content explicitly promoting single-use plastics
- content promoting alcohol
- content promoting 'junk food'²
- content promoting gambling (except where profits go to charity/voluntary and community sector organisations/social enterprises)
- content promoting financial products and services with exploitative interest rates, for example payday loans/lenders
- content promoting/inciting illegal, violent or anti-social behaviours
- content that could be construed as promoting services of a sexual nature

As the council is the local education authority, the council will not accept advertising designed to promote individual schools/groups of schools.

This policy should be considered before any advertising is accepted.

All advertisers wishing to utilise council owned advertising media must adhere to this policy and the council's terms and conditions for advertisers.

Where services or advertisers are unsure or in doubt about the policy, please consult marketing and communications. T: 023 9268 8073 or E: communications@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

6. Sponsorship policy

The council will seek opportunities to work with local and national organisations with a view to securing sponsorship of appropriate council assets, projects, services and events.

¹ Excluding maritime vessels and public transport vehicles

² Junk food refers to products classified as less healthy food or drink under UK regulations. These are typically items high in fat, salt, or sugar (HFSS) and are assessed using the Nutrient Profiling Model (NPM) developed by the UK Department of Health. For the purposes of this policy, junk food includes, but is not limited to: pre-packaged products, such as sugary soft drinks, confectionery, sweet biscuits, cakes, pastries, ice cream, savoury snacks, pizzas, and processed ready meals; and fast food and restaurant items, including burgers, fries, fried chicken, and other menu items typically high in calories, saturated fat, salt or sugar. or less healthy food or drink

The council will seek to identify opportunities that are of mutual benefit to the organisation and potential sponsors, that are in keeping with the council strategies/policies/responsibilities, and that will not damage the council's reputation.

The council will seek to ensure sponsorship opportunities give due consideration to environmental, social and governance factors, as set out in the treasury management strategy.

Sponsorship is not a way for a company or organisation to be viewed more favourably by the council in any other business arrangement they may be party to. Organisations that will not be considered or approved for sponsorship opportunities include, but are not limited to, those that represent a conflict of interest, or that are connected directly or indirectly with any of the content that is not permitted for advertising (set out in section 5 above).

In developing sponsorship relationships, the council will retain the rights to the use of its brand/corporate identity, and will retain the right to approve all marketing and communications activity in relation to the sponsorship.

Before seeking sponsorship, council officers must consider this policy and follow the guidelines provided. It is recommended that potential advertisers and sponsors are referred to this policy.

Sponsorship bids should be subject to a financial appraisal, a review by legal services, and a review by marketing and communications to identify potential reputational issues.

Sponsorship bids must be approved by the appropriate director and Cabinet Member.

All sponsorship arrangements must be subject to a signed legal agreement between the council and the sponsoring organisation.

7. Disclaimer notice

Acceptance of advertising or sponsorship does not imply endorsement of products and service by Portsmouth City Council.

In order to make this clear, the council website and all publications with advertising or sponsorship should carry the following disclaimer: 'Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of advertisements contained in the publication, Portsmouth City Council cannot accept any liability for errors and omissions. Portsmouth City Council cannot accept any responsibility for claims made by advertisers and their inclusion in (name of publication) should not be taken as an endorsement by Portsmouth City Council.'

8. Further information

For any queries around this policy, contact marketing and communications in the first instance: communications@portsmouthcc.gov.uk.