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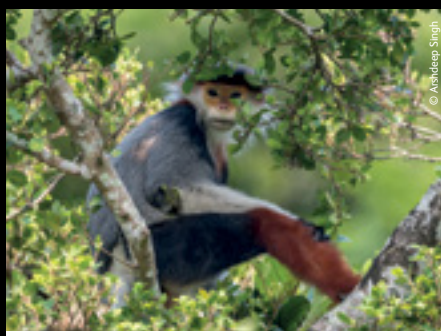
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Advertising and Sponsorship Policy



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1 Introduction

1.1 The council has a [Corporate Strategy](#) which details the contribution that we will make to the city. It informs everything we do and sets out our key priorities from 2025 to 2030. It reflects our role as one organisation within a complex city-wide system, where everyone has a role to play. It is aligned to Bristol's [One City Plan](#), a long-term city-wide plan which helps us organise ourselves around our people, our needs and creating the city we want to live in.

The vision for our city is shared across public and private sector organisations, large charities, voluntary groups and grassroots communities – all striving to deliver Bristol's vision of becoming a fairer, healthier and safer city: a city of hope an aspiration, where everyone can share in its success. Achieving this alongside running a sustainable, resilient local authority may involve placing and accepting advertising where appropriate, as well as seeking sponsorship or acting as a sponsor for certain initiatives or services.

To ensure we remain true to our values and deliver the very best of our city, this Advertising and Sponsorship Policy provides a framework for how we are promoted and how we promote others: ethically, consistently and aligned to our values and principles.

1.2 By applying this policy we will:

Be consistent

- Establish a consistent approach and set of standards
- Provide a framework of controls
- Ensure compliance with legislation, advertising industry codes and other council policies, including our Communications Strategy and brand guidelines

Protect reputations

- Safeguard and steward the image and environment of the city
- Uphold the council's reputation and corporate identity
- Further our strategic vision and support our priorities by facilitating communication

Boost opportunities

- Secure best value for money and maximise income
- Support development of our commercial partnerships with the private sector

2 Context and definitions

2.1 Advertising and sponsorship encompasses goods, services, ideas, causes, opportunities, prizes and gifts.

2.2 Advertising

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.

The council's own use of advertising is part of our ongoing commitment to communicate openly; provide important public information; raise awareness of the council's role, work and successes; encourage positive behaviour change and promote opportunities for people to engage with the council and local decision-making. Examples include promoting local consultations, encouraging people to vote and promoting public health campaigns.

Advertising messages can take a variety of forms and can be viewed via a variety of media channels (e.g. newspapers, magazines, television commercial, radio advertisement, outdoor advertising, for example on billboards and contracted bus services, direct mail, blogs, websites, social media and text messages etc.)

A person who consumes advertising is anyone who is likely to receive a given marketing communication, whether in the course of business or not.

2.3 Advertising definition

Advertising is defined within this policy as:

“an agreement between the council (or its intermediaries) and an advertiser, whereby the council receives money from an organisation or individual in consideration of which the advertiser gains publicity in the form of an advertisement in council-controlled print, outdoor, broadcast or electronic media.”

Or

“an agreement between the council (or its intermediaries) and a provider, whereby the council pays money to an organisation or individual in consideration of which the council gains publicity in the form of an advertisement in externally-controlled print, outdoor, broadcast or electronic media.”

2.4 Sponsorship

To sponsor something is to support an event, activity, person, or organisation 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. grants.

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. For example, when Bristol hosted the Global Parliament of Mayors Annual Summit in 2018, corporate sponsorship raised £156,000 towards the running costs in return for opportunities to host and present relevant content to delegates.

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.

2.5 Sponsorship definition

Sponsorship is defined within this policy as:

“an agreement between the council and the sponsor, where the council receives either money or a benefit in kind for an event, campaign or initiative from an organisation or individual which in turn gains publicity or other benefits.”

Or

“an agreement between the council and the sponsored party, where the council provides either money or a benefit in kind for an event, campaign or initiative which is fully owned by another organisation or individual and which in turn provides publicity or other benefits to the council.”

3 Policy scope and application

3.1 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

3.2 Recruitment advertising placed by the council should take account of this policy but is covered by a separate process and contract. Please contact the HR Resourcing team for advice on all recruitment advertising related matters. They will liaise with the council's contracted supplier on your behalf.

3.3 In certain instances, advertising of some notices is a requirement by law. This includes Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) notices and is covered by a separate process. For information on how to place statutory notices, look on the Source or email external.communications@bristol.gov.uk

3.4 Any historical sponsorship, advertising or contractual arrangements affected by this policy should be reviewed at the next contractually available juncture.

3.5 This policy applies to Bristol City Council, including when working in formal partnership or collaboration with another body. **It also applies to the council's internal communications.** The policy does not apply to the council's wholly-owned companies.

4 General principles

4.1 When working with an advertiser or sponsor, it will be essential that:

- Any agreement supports the council's strategic vision set out in its Corporate Strategy.
- It is compatible with its wider strategy and policy framework, including the Constitution and Equality and Inclusion Policy.

4.2 The council will not permit advertising or sponsorship arrangements in the following situations:

- In all scenarios where it is legally permissible, the council will refuse applications from companies who are in dispute with the council or where there is pending/active legal action.
- When companies are in contract negotiation with the council where acceptance or advertising or sponsorship arrangements may be viewed as an endorsement of a bid.

4.3 In addition the council will uphold the national Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity. This means that the council is not able to enter into an advertising or sponsorship agreement which connects the council with lending support to any political party.

4.4 Whether advertising and/or sponsorship is a suitable method for achieving our objectives, 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.

4.5 The council may advertise its own services 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 companies including the council's wholly-owned companies. In both these circumstances the council will comply with the Local Authority Supply of Goods and Services Act (1970)

4.6 The council must ensure a return on investment when it is a sponsor. The appropriate lead officer must consult the council's External Communications service before deciding whether the council should be a sponsor or whether sponsorship of a council product/service is the best marketing communications method.

4.7 The use of branding and logos of any sponsoring company must be compatible with the council's corporate brand guidelines and the Bristol city brand guidelines.

4.8 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 External Communications team.

4.9 Where advertising is generated by the council, the content will be commissioned via the council's Bristol Design agency (part of the External Communications service) and only outsourced where Bristol Design confirms it cannot provide the service.



5 Advertising and sponsorship content requirements

5.1 The council welcomes all opportunities to work with sponsors or advertisers (or consider acting as a sponsor or advertiser) where such arrangements support its values, strategic goals, corporate objectives and/or helps drive forward the council's aspirations.

5.2 The council will not permit any advertising and/or sponsorship that represents a conflict of interest or is likely to cause serious or widespread offence. Particular care will be taken in relation to race, age, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or gender expression, pregnancy or maternity and marriage or civil partnership.

5.3 Content that is **not** permitted for advertising and/or sponsorship includes, but is not limited to, advertising that contains, implies or suggests any of the following:

- Advocacy of, or opposition to, any party political purpose
- Disparagement of any person or class of persons
- Promotion or incitement of illegal acts
- Promotion or availability of sexually orientated entertainment materials
- Promotion or availability of tobacco products or substitute tobacco products, or depictions that represent or imply affiliation or association with the tobacco industry. Substitutes include nicotine-containing products such as electronic cigarettes ('vapes'), heat-not-burn devices, nicotine pouches.
- Advertising of loan advancers which meet the Financial Standards Authority's definition of 'High Cost Short Term (HCST)'
- Advertising of organisations who offer ways to avoid paying legitimate tax in the UK
- Promotion or availability of foods and drinks that are high in fat, salt and/or sugar (HFSS) as defined by the Department of Health and Social Care's nutrient profiling model, without exceptions¹. This includes advertisements where there is a range of food/drink featured, some of which is HFSS.
- Promotion or availability of alcoholic drinks. This includes advertisements where there is a range of drinks featured, some of which are alcoholic.
- Promotion of a food or drink brand (including food and drink service companies or ordering services) where no food or drink product is featured directly². These brands and services will only be able to place advertisements if the advertisement promotes healthier options (i.e. non-HFSS products) as the basis of the copy.

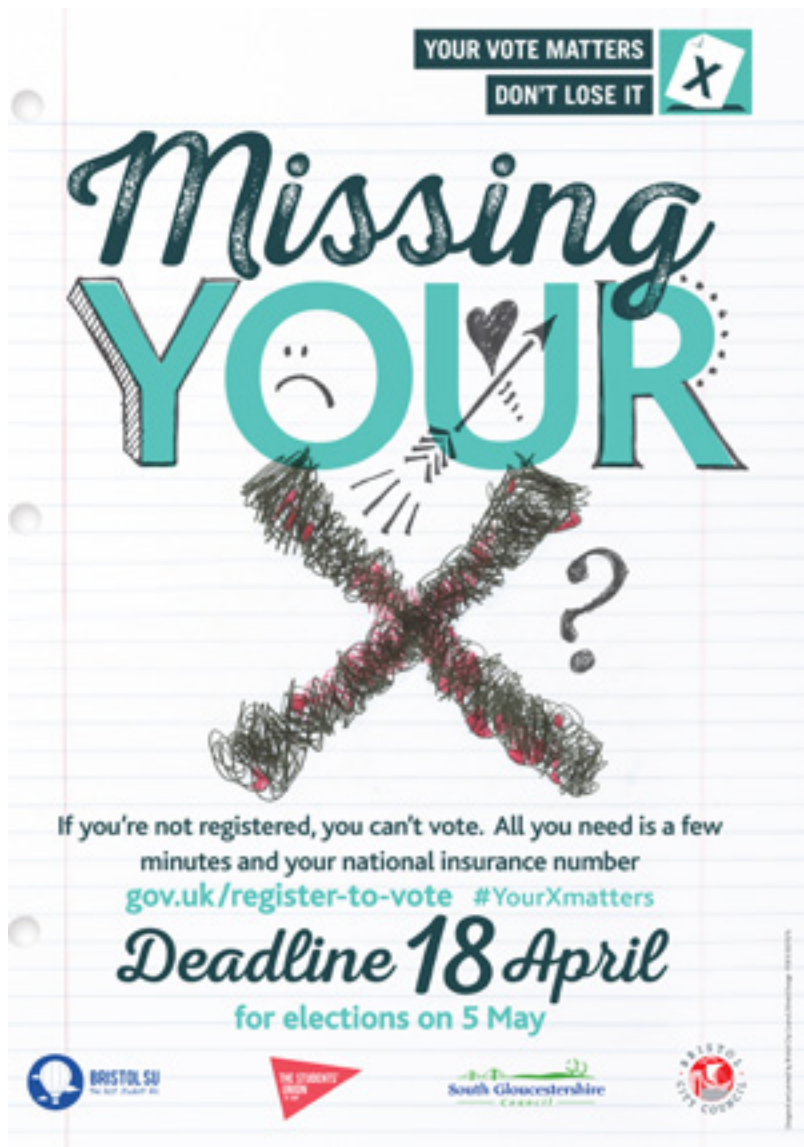
¹ Bristol City Council or its representatives may request evidence of nutrition information of food and drink products advertised, and in line with the Food Standards Agency recommendations, Bristol City Council expects any laboratory used for nutrition analysis to have ISO 17025 accreditation and this should be by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS).

² Examples may include:
 – advertisements where the brand's logo is included but no products, such as a brand values campaign,
 – directional signage to a store, app or website,
 – promotional advertising which is price-led but features no products such as '50% off everything' or similar,
 – advertising about a business or its performance.

- Advertising that infringes on any trademark, copyright or patent rights of another company
- Claims or representations in violation of advertising or consumer protection laws.
- Promotion or availability of weapons and weapons manufacturers, gambling or illegal drugs and unlicensed drugs, or drugs where advertising is already prohibited by law
- Promotion or availability of food and drinks marketed at 6–36-month-olds that are deemed to be harmful to babies and infants, defined by the World Health Organisation's Nutrient and Promotion Profile Model. This includes advertisements where there is a range of food/drink featured, some of which fails the NPPM evaluation
- Promotion or availability of petrol, diesel and hybrid electric plug-in vehicles, and all vehicles where the DVLA manufacture-reported model is an 'SUV' (including EV models and different styles of SUV, such as 'SUV Coupe', 'SUV Estate', or others)
- Promotion or availability of flights, airports, cruise holidays and travel agents
- Promotion of firms and associated sub-brands or lobbying organisations that extract, refine, produce, supply, distribute or sell any fossil fuels
- Marketing campaigns that encourage excessive consumption of fashion products or trends, defined as: campaigns that centre on mass markdowns, limited time offers and offer codes, influencer promotions, limited time collections or 'drops', and mass sales (including 'Black Friday' promotions).'

5.4 The restrictions above apply both to the explicit promotion of goods and services, and implicit promotion as part of advertising or sponsorship of other types of goods, products, or services. Additional policy guidance on restrictions is available in the Council's Advertising and Sponsorship Policy Guidance.

5.5 In addition, the council retains the right to refuse advertising on the grounds that, in the council's opinion, it is inappropriate, it conflicts with services already provided by the organisation or it is incompatible with the council's values and strategic goals as set out in its [Corporate Strategy](#). The council reserves the right to remove non-compliant advertising at any time without reference to the advertiser.



5.6 The council will not permit advertising in its parks and green spaces unless for an outlet or event operating within that space. If other advertising is required during an event, it should be within the boundaries of the event space and form part of the hire agreement. Any potential deviation from the food and drink restrictions listed above for a specific event should be considered as part of this process, referred to the Head of Policy, Strategy and Communications for decision, and made explicit in the hire agreement.

5.7 Advertising on the highway is prohibited, unless:

- Already permitted via a planning decision under Town and Country Planning Act
- It clearly promotes a not-profit and charitable event. Exceptions will be granted on a case-by-case basis
- In all exceptional instances, advertising must not be intrusive, permanent and should never include advertising on over bridges

6 Other considerations

6.1 When considering advertising and/or sponsorship opportunities, we will ensure that:

- It maximises the opportunities to attract commercial revenue for appropriate events, campaigns or initiatives
- The council's position and reputation is adequately protected
- An appropriate return on investment is sought
- A consistent and professional approach is adopted in the development of sponsorship agreements
- It protects elected members and officers from potential allegations of inappropriate dealings or favouritism with sponsors
- It fulfils the council's operating principles set out in its Corporate Strategy
- Where applicable it fulfils and complies with the council's Procurement Rules and in particular the Concessions Procedural Note.

6.2 All sponsorship and/or advertising arrangements (excluding those made by a third party under a formally procured contract or concession arrangement) must be governed by a signed Sponsorship or Advertising Agreement and logged with the council's External Communications team.

6.3 Bristol City Council will consider exceptions to the policy if depictions of certain products (listed in 5.3) are used for the purposes of Public Health approved cessation or information campaigns (e.g. anti-drinks spiking or smoking cessation) or campaigns which promote positive and healthy lifestyle choices that are in line with the council's Corporate Strategy priorities (e.g. depicting a car as part of the Clean Air Zone marketing material). The Director of Public Health and Director of Policy, Strategy and Digital should be consulted on any such exceptions.

7 Responsibilities

7.1 All council services, employees and elected members (when acting in an official capacity for or on behalf of the council) must comply with this policy.

7.2 The council holds personal data of service users and compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and this will be adhered to in all cases. Careful consideration will be given to whether it is appropriate and legal for specific data to be used for any advertising or direct marketing purposes. When required, people will be asked whether they are willing to 'opt in' to receive news, information or advertising messages from the council to ensure compliance when personal data is gathered and used.

7.3 The External Communications service is responsible for the implementation of the Advertising and Sponsorship Policy as well as the council's terms and conditions for advertisers and sponsors. They can provide expertise on advertising and sponsorship matters.

7.4 The council's External Communications service is responsible for advising on all advertising opportunities and enquiries unless these are discharged by a third party under a formally procured contract or concession arrangement. Where this is the case, any third party must apply this policy and this should be reflected in contractual arrangements.

7.5 Decisions on sponsorship opportunities will be taken by the appropriate third-tier manager for the specific service area, but this must be in consultation with External Communications and, where relevant, with other Business Partners, including but not limited to Legal Services, Procurement, Risk and Insurance.

7.6 All decisions will be made in line with the council's established Decision Pathway and Schemes of Delegation. Where decisions are made by officers under delegated powers, the Chief Executive delegates to the Director: Policy, Strategy and Partnerships to make a binding final decision and/or exercise veto over advertising and sponsorship decisions made by other officers.



8 The council's role as local planning authority

8.1 Advertising infrastructure or platforms which require consent under planning legislation are also subject of applications to Bristol City Council as local planning authority. In accordance with planning law, applications are considered having regard to considerations of amenity and public safety.

They may be considered to have an unacceptable impact on amenity or public safety where they would:

- Create or reinforce an incongruous feature in, or result in a negative visual impact on, its immediate neighbourhood;
- Detract from the character or setting of any feature of scenic, historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest;
- Be harmfully prominent in medium or long distance views;
- Cause a noise or other nuisance;
- Result in a negative impact on residents' living conditions by reason of its siting or illumination; or
- Would be likely to distract the attention of motorists and other road users.

8.2 Some advertising infrastructure or platforms benefit from 'deemed consent', which means permission is not needed from the local planning authority, depending on the size, position and illumination of the advert. Where the council proposes to install advertisements under deemed consent it will ensure there is no harm to amenity and public safety by applying the criteria above.

9 Industry codes

9.1 The advertising industry operates within a heavily legislated and regulated landscape with strict industry codes. The council will always adhere to the terms of any current legislation and relevant nationally recognised industry codes, and in this policy chooses to go further in some areas such as restrictions on high fat, salt and/or sugar products.

9.2 The Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) is the UK's independent regulator of advertising across all online and offline media. The UK advertising codes lay down rules for advertisers, agencies and media owners to follow. The ASA proactively monitors advertising for compliance as well as responding to complaints, and issues rules on its investigations.

9.3 The ASA codes of practice are the 'rule books' which cover two areas:

- non-broadcast advertising and direct and promotional marketing (CAP code): the central principle of this code for all marketing communications is that they should be legal, decent, honest and truthful. All marketing communications should be prepared with a sense of responsibility to consumers and society and should reflect the spirit, not merely the letter, of the code; and
- broadcast media (BCAP code): the overarching principles of this code are that advertisements should not mislead or cause serious or widespread offence or harm, especially to children or the vulnerable.

9.4 The ASA codes cover a wide range of guidance including:

- misleading advertising;
- harm and offence;
- political advertisements;
- environmental claims;
- medicines, medical devices, health-related products and beauty products;
- weight control and slimming;
- financial products;
- gambling;
- lotteries;
- alcohol;
- tobacco, rolling papers and filters;
- electronic cigarettes; and
- specific guidance when featuring or addressing children.

10 Further information

Relevant codes of practice and policies have informed this policy:

- [The Advertising Standards Authority \(ASA\)](#).
- [UK Code of Non-broadcast Advertising and Direct & Promotional Marketing \(CAP code\)](#).
- [Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority publicity](#)
- [Department of Health and Social Care nutrient profiling model](#)
- [The Equalities Act 2010](#)
- [Local Authority Supply of Goods and Services Act \(1970\)](#)
- [Bristol City Council Brand Guidelines](#) (Internal only)
- [Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#)
- [Data Protection Act 2018](#)

For any queries about this policy please contact External Communications and Consultation on 0117 922 2650 or corporate.communications@bristol.gov.uk

11 Disclaimer

Acceptance of advertising or sponsorship does not imply endorsement of products and services by Bristol City Council. In order to make this clear all council-owned and branded publications, or other media, containing advertising or sponsorship should carry the following disclaimer:

“Bristol City Council cannot accept liability for errors or omissions contained in any advertising provided by an advertiser or sponsor. Bristol City Council does not accept any liability for any information or claims made by the advertisement or by the advertiser or sponsor. Any inclusion of Bristol City Council's name on a publication should not be taken as an endorsement by Bristol City Council.”