



**Royal Borough of
Windsor & Maidenhead**

**Advertising and
Sponsorship Policy
August 2026**

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Introduction

The Royal Borough is fortunate to have a number of large, multi-national companies operating in the area and this policy sets out the principles and procedures for aimed at maximising opportunities and benefits from the council's commercial advertising and sponsorship arrangements.

It sits alongside other policies, that together, seek to maximise the value of different potential forms of funding and support. This includes the council's [Social Value Procurement Policy](#) and the Corporate Social Responsibility Framework, currently being developed, which will work together to support delivery of the council's priorities and values through partnership working.

Implementation of this policy will allow for consistency in the decision making for the advertising and sponsorship contracts the council will enter into and ensure alignment with the council's priorities of creating a borough of safer, greener and cleaner communities, with opportunity for all.

This policy gives guidance on the principles and procedures related to advertising and sponsorship carried by the council - ensuring consistency in the council's approach, defining what advertising and sponsorship means for the council and its ambitions.

It applies to all council owned assets, including bus stop shelters, free-standing street units and lampposts, and any other asset that lends itself to carrying advertising and/or sponsorship.

The council will ask contractors in existing contracts to voluntarily adopt the policy, and it will be written into new contracts that cover the leasing or use of council-controlled advertising space.

Royal Borough advertising and sponsorship opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- Roundabouts
- Car parks
- Boundary 'Welcome' boards
- Flag poles and litter bins
- TV screens in the Town Hall reception and libraries
- Temporary assets, such as seasonal light displays like Christmas trees and lights
- Temporary hoardings on development sites

Context

This Advertising and Sponsorship Policy aims to:

- maximise the opportunities to attract commercial sponsorship and advertising for appropriate council owned assets, and also any appropriate events, campaigns or initiatives - ensuring an appropriate return is generated from these opportunities
identify the types of sponsorship, advertising and support that are appropriate
- provide clear guidance on the industry categories that are appropriate for achieving the council's partnership (sponsorship and advertising) objectives
- ensure that a consistent and professional approach is adopted to the development of advertising and sponsorship agreements
- ensure the council's position and reputation is adequately protected and not be brought into disrepute - by ensuring that advertising is in line with the council's commitments, above and beyond the advertising industry's codes of practice
- protect councillors and officers from potential allegations of inappropriate dealings or favouritism with sponsors

Definitions:

Advertising: an agreement between the council and the advertiser, where the council receives either money or a benefit in kind for the advertiser to use council owned space or publication to promote themselves or a product.

Sponsorship: a mutually beneficial business relationship between a provider of funds, resources or services and the Royal Borough. The sponsor is provided with rights and association with the council, across assets such as events; programmes; and venues; in return for the finance, goods and/or services that have been provided by the sponsor.

To sponsor something is to support an event, activity, person, or organisation financially or by providing products or services. Sponsorship should not be confused with other types of funding which the council administers.

This policy covers:

- the council as an advertiser or sponsor
- the council as an owner of an advertising platform or sponsorship opportunity which an external individual, group or organisation may use

Advertising and sponsorship of a 'product' includes goods, services, ideas, cause, opportunities, prizes and gifts.

Advertising and sponsor messages can take a variety of forms and can be viewed via a variety of traditional and new media (for example, newspapers, magazines, television commercial, radio advertisement, outdoor advertising, direct mail, social media, websites and text messages).

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

Principles

The Royal Borough welcomes opportunities to work with advertisers and sponsors where these arrangements support its core values. However, we will not enter into a sponsorship agreement if, in the reasonable opinion of the council, the agreement:

- may be perceived as potentially influencing the council or its officers in carrying out its statutory functions in order to gain favourable terms from the council on any business or other agreement
- aligns the council with any organisation or individual which conflicts with its values and priorities.

The council will want to exclude advertising of certain products from particular industries being advertised on its assets. The industry categories that are not considered acceptable for entering into an advertising or sponsorship agreement include:

- Tobacco/cigarettes
- Gambling
- adult-oriented products/services
- Armaments
- Petrochemical
- Payday Loans
- Advertising which promotes an unhealthy body shape or is likely to cause issues with body confidence, especially in children and young people
- Food or drink that is defined as being high in fat, salt or sugar
- Advertising which could have a negative impact on community cohesion

The council will also not enter into agreements with organisations that:

- do not comply with the council's advertising and sponsorship policy or the Advertising Standards Authority code of practice
- 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
- have a political purpose, including pressure groups and trade unions
- are involved in any prejudice or discrimination related to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010
- through which, in our opinion, their operations are involved in any illegal or immoral activities
- where an agreement will damage the reputation of the council

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The list is not exhaustive, and the council retains the right to refuse advertising or sponsorship opportunities from any organisation or individual (including from third party suppliers) on the grounds that, in the council's opinion, it is inappropriate, or it conflicts with services already provided by the organisation.

Advertisements or sponsorship will not be accepted if, in the reasonable opinion of the council, it:

- is inappropriate or objectionable
- may result in the council being subject to prosecution
- might be deemed inappropriate for children, for example, violent films
- could promote goods or services that contradict the climate change and air quality strategy for examples promotion of fossil fuels
- appears to influence support for a political party or candidate
- appears to conflict with the council's wider promotion of healthy and active lifestyles
- appears to promote discrimination related to any of the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.

The council is committed to principles of open government and of public accountability, transparency and accessibility. To meet these objectives, the council will ensure:

- the council's Advertising and Sponsorship Policy is publicly available and listed on the council's website
- sponsorship and advertising agreements are in the form of written agreement
- a register of sponsorship and advertising agreements is maintained by the council

Advertising

The council is keen to maximise revenue from advertising, and so rather than define all specific permitted advertising, we work on the basis that advertising is permitted unless it falls into a number of prohibited categories in the previous section, but the council still retains the right to reject inappropriate advertising, especially where this conflicts with its priorities.

This policy assumes that all advertising presented falls within the Advertising Standards Authority rules and guidelines and that all advertising complies with the British Code of Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing.

The central principle of all advertising (marketing communications) is that it should be legal, decent, honest and truthful; must not bring advertising into disrepute; must conform to the code; and must respect the principles of fair competition.

The council abides by the Town and Country Planning Act, of which the Control of Advertisement Regulations provides the rules on displaying advertising and has a duty to ensure all advertising on council owned platforms falls within this legislation, and also complies with planning law relating to the display of advertisement.

Advertising is also subject to the [Local Government Publicity Code under the Local Government Act 1986](#), especially the period of extra sensitivity before local or national elections, and the Financial Services Authority.

The council will advertise its own services and offers as appropriate using its own platform. This may include adverts relating to traded services or quasi-trading services, which generate an income.

The council encourages advertising on its own platform that supports its strategic vision for the borough. This may 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 borough. All applicants wishing to utilise council owned advertising media must adhere to this policy.

The council has a duty to seek best value for money when placing advertising and the council's Communications team will provide expertise on whether advertising is the most appropriate marketing communications method.

Sponsorship

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.

Any organisation wishing to sponsor a council owned product or service must adhere to this policy and all sponsorship deals will be subject to a signed legal agreement between the council and the sponsoring organisation.

Sponsoring opportunities will be advertised by the council via its website.

The council must ensure a return on investment or objectives when it is a sponsor or considers a sponsorship opportunity. The appropriate council lead officer must consult the council's:

- Communications team before deciding whether the council should be a sponsor to ensure this is the best marketing communications method
- Advertising and Sponsorship Board for approval for any sponsorship of a council product/service

To ensure appropriate levels of scrutiny are in place, there will be a series of thresholds applied to sponsorship and donations, based on existing thresholds set around gifts (£25), spending control panel (£500) and procurement (£30,000):

Any sponsorship or donation below £25 in value will not require any formal assessment or recording as it should be considered low risk.

- Between £25 and £500, proposals can be reviewed and determined locally by the service and recorded on the register of advertising and sponsorship.
- Between £500 and £30,000 requires Assistant Director sign off and will be recorded on the register of advertising and sponsorship.
- Over £30,000 the proposals will be required to be taken for discussion at Executive Leadership team and final sign off by the relevant Executive Director.

The board will regularly review the register at its meetings to ensure that due process is being followed. It will also identify if there are opportunities to package smaller opportunities together to maximise value to the council and whether there are regular partners that could be contacted to discuss a more strategic approach.

Publicity

Any publicity and media engagement will be arranged by the council's Communications team, in partnership with the sponsor, for all appropriate sponsorship deals.

The use of branding and logos of any sponsoring company must not interfere with the council's branding rules and any use of the Royal Borough's IP must be approved by the council's Communication's team prior to its use.

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 team.

In the case of sponsorship, the council will have the right of approval on all appropriate sponsorship related activity, including:

- use of the council IP (trademark and logos), which includes council owned venues, events and programmes
- publicity and promotion of the sponsorship in sponsor's own advertising, media and marketing materials, including in digital and social media
- appropriate sponsor events at council owned venues

All sponsorship activity will be agreed between the sponsor and council prior to implementation. There are several types of partnerships that the council will consider, these include with a partner who provides:

- a cash fee in exchange for an association and an agreed package of rights and benefits (including advertising rights)
- its products or services (for free or at a reduced rate) in exchange for an association and an agreed package of rights and benefits
- access and awareness opportunities to an audience through their marketing or media channels, including in the form of a promotion of a council owned asset, event or venue

Procedures and responsibilities

Before agreeing advertising or sponsorship, council officers will consider the policy document and follow the guidelines provided. Any proposed donations to the council will be considered through the same process to ensure appropriate due diligence and conflict of interest checks have been completed.

The council's Advertising and Sponsorship Board provides expertise on and is the guardian of the Advertising and Sponsorship Policy. It will make recommendations to the relevant decision maker within the council constitution. The board membership is included in the terms of reference but as a minimum it will include the following:

- Executive Director of Resources (S151 Officer)
- Assistant Chief Executive
- Deputy Director of Law and Governance
- Assistant Director of Placemaking, Partnerships and Sustainability
- Strategic Lead – Contract and Service Improvement
- Procurement Manager
- Service Lead – Business and Commercial Partnerships
- Service Lead – Economic Development and Civic
- Library and Resident Contacts Lead

Any proposal for advertising and sponsorship will be reviewed for potential conflicts of interest. Types of conflict of interest that will be considered include:

- Personal interests: A council officer or councillor having a personal interest in a potential advertiser or sponsor.
- Organisational conflict: An organisation that is in a legal or financial dispute with the Council.
- Operational conflict: anything that may limit the Council's ability to carry out its statutory functions fully and impartially.
- Strategic conflict: Advertising that goes against the Council's core values, other policies, or strategic priorities.

Council officers and members will be required to declare in advance if they have any personal interests, involvement, or potential conflict of interest with any potential sponsor. In the event of a potential conflict of interest, that officer or member will take no part in the consideration of advertising or sponsorship with that organisation.

It is expected that any individual or organisation entering into, or already in, a sponsorship or advertising agreement with the council will disclose whether there is a current planning application or planning matter relating to them, or if the individual or organisation is involved in any current dispute with the council.

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The overall coordination of advertising and sponsorship agreements across the council will be the responsibility of the relevant team, in conjunction with procurement, communications, licencing, planning and legal teams, as appropriate.

Whether advertising and/or sponsorship is a suitable method and 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 requests. All potential sponsors should be referred to the policy for information and guidance.

Planning or advertising consent may be also required for some outdoor advertisements. This policy does not cover the considerations made when granting planning applications. Applications for planning or advertising consent will need to be made separately to the council as the planning authority. Decisions relating to the application of this policy and to planning or advertising consent will be made separately.

The public highway is strictly regulated under the Highways Act 1980 and advertising on the highway can be an offence under this Act. For more information visit the highways information on the council's website. Legal advice should always be sought regarding advertising on the highway.

All sponsorship bids must be approved in consultation with the relevant service Executive Director and the relevant Cabinet Member – and approved by the Advertising and Sponsorship Board.

Sponsorship and advertising agreements must be referred to Legal Services for review, prior to signing.

More information

For any questions on this policy contact business@rbwm.gov.uk

For advertising and communications guidance email communications@rbwm.gov.uk

Disclaimer

Acceptance of advertising or sponsorship does not imply endorsement of products and services by The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead - all publications, or other media, with advertising or sponsorship should carry the following disclaimer: 'Whilst every effort has been made to make sure the accuracy of the content of the advertisements contained in this publication, the Royal Borough cannot accept any liability for errors or omissions contained in any of the advertisements provided by an advertiser or sponsor.

The Royal Borough does not accept any liability for any information or claims made by the advertisement or by the advertisers and does not endorse or recommend any advertiser or sponsor.

Any inclusion of the Royal Borough's name on a publication should not be taken as an endorsement by the Royal Borough.

This document will be reviewed annually from the date of adoption.