

Cabinet – 12 December 2018

Walsall Council Advertising and Sponsorship Policy

Portfolio: Councillor Harrison – Clean and Green

Related portfolios:

Service: Economy and Environment

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Summary

- 1.1 The report recommends the introduction of an Advertising and Sponsorship Policy. This would enable the council to utilise its assets to maximise opportunities for advertising and sponsorship, which would assist with the finance of specific activities and/or support the costs of service provision.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the Advertising and Sponsorship Policy.

3. Report detail

- 3.1 Walsall Council has a wealth of assets that can be utilised to maximise advertising and sponsorship opportunities, which would assist with the finance of specific activities and/or support the cost of service provision. Finding new ways of providing financial support to services that are valued by Walsall residents is essential.
- 3.2 The council currently has an ad hoc approach to advertising and sponsorship. A more structured, committed and commercial approach to the advertising and sponsorship of the council's assets should generate opportunities to support the maintenance of existing assets. It can also provide synergies between the council's values and strategic objectives and the advertising and/or sponsorship needs of external organisations and businesses.
- 3.3 The council has secured c£200k of funding for its Rethinking Parks project from the Big Lottery Fund, National Lottery Fund and Nesta (a UK charity that, amongst other things, backs new ideas to help government reform public services and improve citizen engagement). The project is one of eight nationally and the only one in the West Midlands Region. Running for two years from August 2018, it focuses on six of the 19 strategic green spaces: Aldridge Airport, Kings Hill Park, Palfrey Park, Reedswood Park, Willenhall Memorial Park and Walsall Arboretum.

The project will be reviewed annually to determine whether it can become sustainable.

3.4 The aims of Rethinking Parks are to:

- engage with local businesses to develop corporate social responsibility (CSR)
- develop CSR packages (including advertising / sponsorship agreements for the six strategic green spaces)
- support volunteering and learning events within the community
- develop alternative ways of financing parks through public and private partnerships

Advertising and Sponsorship Policy

3.5 The council currently receives income from arrangements such as traffic island sponsorship, which is organised through the current provider. It has been proven that local businesses like to advertise close to their location. Income received supports the council's funding commitments. Although advertising and sponsorship activity has increased in the past few years, it has not been part of any council-wide strategy to grow or manage the opportunity.

3.6 This report proposes to develop a formal approach towards advertising and sponsorship that will seek to maximise the opportunities throughout the council. The Advertising and Sponsorship Policy may be found at Appendix 1.

3.7 The policy outlines what is acceptable to the council in terms of potential advertisers, advertising and sponsors; for example, not accepting advertising or sponsorship from companies involved in products associated with unhealthy behaviours or negative impacts on health or the environment. It details the procedures that need to be followed by service areas should they wish to enter into an agreement and makes clear where the responsibility for any decision lies.

Suitable Assets

3.8 Proposed assets include buildings, parks, other open spaces, traffic islands, communications and publications on appropriate campaigns, events and/or initiatives for which it is responsible.

3.9 Several assets have effective systems of monitoring and evaluation, which can demonstrate the potential public footfall exposure (e.g. Heritage Lottery Fund and Public Health have recently funded people counters in certain parks – Walsall Arboretum has one million visitors / year) and engagement with key target groups.

4. Council Corporate Plan priorities

4.1 The Advertising and Sponsorship Policy will contribute to the following strategic priorities in the Corporate Plan 2018/21:

- Economic Growth for all people, communities and businesses. An infrastructure and business environment that supports job creation and

accessibility throughout Walsall, supporting company expansion, relocation and competitiveness through sustainable job creation.

- Communities are prospering and resilient with all housing needs met in safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion. Access and use of green spaces improves health and wellbeing, and reduces social isolation.

5. Risk management

- 5.1 It is proposed that any standards relating to sponsorship will utilise rules and guidelines laid out by the Advertising Standards Agency (ASA), the British Codes of Advertising and Sales Promotion and the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity. Each advertising and/or sponsorship proposal would also be subject to an evaluation. The basic principles are contained in Appendix 1.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 This report has clearly outlined that it is recommending the council work to further develop its advertising and sponsorship opportunities. This should not be to the financial detriment of service areas directly in receipt of funds generated in this manner, but recognises that the council is in need to reduce the overall cost of service delivery. Existing contracts would need to be reviewed in order to incorporate them in a council-wide approach.
- 6.2 It is proposed that income generated is retained within the appropriate service area to assist with the finance of specific activities and/or support the costs of service provision.
- 6.3 The council has secured c£200k of funding for its Rethinking Parks project from the Big Lottery Fund, National Lottery Fund and Nesta for two years from August 2018. One part of this covers advertising and sponsorship agreements.

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 All advertising and sponsorship opportunities will be progressed in accordance with relevant legislation.

8. Procurement implications/Social Value

- 8.1 All advertising and sponsorship opportunities will be procured in accordance with the Council's financial regulations and tendering procedures.

9. Property implications

- 9.1 All advertising and sponsorship opportunities will be for council-owned assets.

10. Health and wellbeing implications

- 10.1 The Policy contains positive aspects relating to health and wellbeing. Advertising or sponsorship will not be accepted from companies that produce goods / services that promote unhealthy behaviours.

10.2 Where appropriate, revenue will be invested in local assets (e.g. parks and green spaces) that will support improvements in health and wellbeing.

11. Staffing implications

11.1 None, as the management of the policy would be incorporated within existing staff resources.

12. Reducing inequalities

12.1 All advertising or sponsorship would be governed by the Advertising and Sponsorship Policy and would be applied equably throughout the Borough

13. Consultation

13.1 Internal stakeholders only.

Background papers

Advertising and Sponsorship Policy

Author

Stephen Johnson
Service Manager
☎ 654227
✉ stephen.johnson@walsall.gov.uk

Mark Holden
Head of Clean and Green
☎ 654201
✉ mark.holden@walsall.gov.uk



Simon Neilson
Executive Director
Economy & Environment



Councillor Harrison
Portfolio Holder
Clean and Green

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