

Maidstone Culture and Leisure Sponsorship and Advertising Policy

Introduction

The purpose of the policy is to set out the terms upon which advertising and sponsorship may be sought and accepted by Maidstone Culture and Leisure (MCL) a business unit within Maidstone Borough Council (the "Council").

The Council is committed to developing appropriate advertising and sponsorship opportunities to support its core activities either directly or indirectly. It will encourage commercial relationships which do not conflict with the delivery of its strategic goals.

The policy aims to provide helpful advice to Council employees and prospective advertisers and sponsors on what is, and is not, acceptable form of advertising for the Council.

This policy relates to advertising and sponsorship opportunities connected to the Council's assets, services, events and other activities that Maidstone Culture and Leisure (MCL) has responsibility for. This includes Museums, Parks and Open Spaces, tourism, poster sites and park and ride buses.

Context

Advertising and sponsorship of a 'product' encompasses goods, services, ideas, causes, opportunities, prizes and gifts.

The policy will:

- Uphold the Council's reputation and corporate identity.
- Further the Council's strategic vision and support its priorities (by facilitating communication messages).
- Support the Maidstone Culture and Leisure Business Plan.
- Secure best value for money and maximise income.
- Provide a framework and control measures.
- Establish a corporate approach and standards (including best practice).

- Ensure compliance with legislation, advertising industry codes and other Council policies.
- Support development of commercial partnerships with the private sector.
- Safeguard the image and environment of the Borough.

Principles

The Council will refuse applications from companies who 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 or have a planning application pending with the Council where this may be viewed as an endorsement of this bid.

The Council will uphold the Publicity Code of recommended practice on local authority publicity. This means the council is not able to enter into an advertising or sponsorship agreement which connects the Council with lending support to any political party.

Whether advertising and/or sponsorship is a suitable method 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.

Sponsorship

Sponsorship is defined as:

“A commercial arrangement in which a sponsor provides a contribution in goods, services or funding to support a council activity in return for specified benefits, usually public acknowledgement and recognition”.

To sponsor something is to support an event, activity, person, or organization financially or by providing products or services. It should be mutually beneficial.

There can be cross over between how advertising and sponsorship works in practice. For example, sponsorship can support the cost of installing a new exhibition but the sponsor may also receive an advertisement in the printed

publication as part of the sponsorship arrangement. Further advice should be sought from the Council's MCL Marketing team.

Responses to the council's call for sponsors, or unsolicited sponsorship offers, must be assessed against the criteria set out in this policy. If a sponsorship offer is approved by a council officer, a formal agreement setting out the terms and conditions of the sponsorship must be signed with the successful applicant. Flow charts showing the key points of the sponsorship process are provided to assist. (See appendix 1 and 2)

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.

Organisations that will not be considered or approved for sponsorship opportunities include, but are not limited to, those which represent a conflict of interest or are connected directly or indirectly with the following:

- Advocacy of, or opposition to, any politically, environmentally or socially controversial subjects or issues
- Disparagement or promotion of any person or class of persons
- Promotion or incitement of illegal, violent or socially undesirable acts
- Promotion or availability of tobacco products, weapons, gambling or illegal drugs
- Financial organisations and loan advancers with punitive interest rates
- Promotion or availability of adult or sexually orientated entertainment materials
- An infringement on any trademark, copyright or patent rights of another company

Any organisation wishing to sponsor a Council owned product or service must adhere to this policy.

The use of branding and logos of any sponsoring company must not interfere with the Council's Corporate Policy or Brand Guidelines.

The size and positioning of sponsors' logos on any promotional material, goods or signage must be considered by the appropriate MCL lead officer in conjunction with the Council's Communications section.

The policy does not include fundraising activities and donations. There are not commercial business transactions requiring public acknowledgement or recognition. Fundraising includes applications to grant giving bodies, statutory funds, legacies and donations. A donation is a product, service or funding that is given to the council by an organisation, company or individual with no return benefit other than personal recognition (e.g. letter of thanks) and a receipt for taxation purposes.

Advertising

Advertising is defined as:

"An agreement between the Council and the 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 MCL controlled print or digital media.

Advertising is a form of communication used to raise awareness, encourage or persuade an audience – viewers or readers or a specific group of people – to do or believe something. Advertising is usually paid for by advertisers or sponsors.

Advertising messages can take a variety of forms and can be viewed via a variety of traditional and digital media (e.g. newspapers, magazines, television commercial, radio advertisement, outdoor advertising, direct mail, blogs, websites and text messages).

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

An advertisement will not be accepted if it, in the reasonable opinion of the Council:

- Is inappropriate or objectionable.
- May result in the Council being subject to prosecution.
- Promotes gambling.
- Promotes payday loans.
- Refers to tobacco or similar products.
- Promotes the misuse of alcohol or promotes the use of alcohol to children.
- Might be deemed inappropriate for children, for example violent films, pornography and so on.
- Appears to influence support for a political party/candidate.
- Appears to conflict with the Council's wider promotion of healthy and active lifestyles.
- Appears to promote racial or sexual discrimination, or discrimination on the basis of disability, faith, gender or age.
- Is the subject of a complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority and upheld by such Authority as a legitimate complaint.

The above list is not exhaustive, and the Council retains the right to refuse advertising on the grounds that, in the Council's opinion, it is inappropriate, or it conflicts with services already provided by the organisation. The Council reserves the right to remove advertising without reference to the advertiser.

All advertising must:

- Fall within the guidelines laid out by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) www.asa.org.uk.
- Uphold the rules laid out in the UK Code of Non-broadcast Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing (CAP Code).
<http://www.cap.org.uk/Advertising-Codes/Non-broadcast-HTML.aspx>
- Follow the Code of recommended practice on Local Authority publicity
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recommended-code-of-practice-for-local-authority-publicity>.

In line with the codes referred to above, advertisements should be:

- Legal, decent, honest and truthful.
- Created with a sense of responsibility to consumers and 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.

The Council abides by the Town and Country Planning Act. The Control of Advertisements Regulations provides the rules on displaying advertising. The Council has the duty to ensure all advertising on Council owned platforms falls within this legislation.

The Council's MCL marketing section will advertise its own services events and attractions as appropriate using its own platforms to attract visitors into the borough.

MCL will offer advertising to other council departments and may include adverts relating to services which generate an income. This might include advertising messages on safety, healthy living and environmental sustainability; or messages which support local businesses.

All applicants wishing to utilise Council owned advertising media must adhere to this policy.

Sponsorship and Advertising Opportunities

MCL Service	Sponsorship Opportunity
Museum	Naming of a permanent gallery
Museum	Headline Sponsor of temporary exhibitions
Museum	Secondary sponsor of temporary exhibitions
Museum	Corporate Social responsibility – e.g. Sponsorship of social inclusion programme
Museum	Education programme – provide s funding for staff or materials
Museum	Special events such as Dino Day

Events	Product placement at venues e.g. car dealer
Events	Headline sponsor of event e.g. Proms, Mela, Open Air Cinema
Events	Secondary Sponsor of events
Parks and Open Spaces	Individual Sponsored trees/shrubs/benches/ nest boxes
Parks and open Spaces	Corporate sponsorship of bedding and hanging baskets, flower displays, carpet bed. Future central areas such as lavender beds, roundabouts, verges
Mote Park	Proposed Adventure Zone
Christmas light	Sponsorship of lights scheme or Christmas tree
MCL Service	Advertising Opportunity
Visit Maidstone	Website Banner advertising
Visit Maidstone	Website listing
Visit Maidstone	Visit Maidstone annual guide , listing and display advertising
Visit Maidstone	What's on around Maidstone – adverts - publication 3 editions per year
Conference Maidstone	Website listing
Conference Maidstone	Website banner advertising
Museum	Website banner advertising
Museum	Museum What's on guide – adverts - 3 edition per year
Events	Events programme e.g. Proms, Mela, Open Air cinema
Parks	Event Banners
Commercial posters sites	24 A0 poster sites
Park and Ride Buses	Bus backs Internal panels

