
DEPUTY MAYOR AND EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

A meeting of the Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Children's Services was held on Thursday 8 September 2022.

PRESENT: Councillors , M Smiles

PRESENT BY INVITATION: Councillors

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

OFFICERS: S Blood and A. Glover

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: C

21/2 **ADVERTISING ON COUNCIL WEBSITE**

The Director of Regeneration submitted a report which sought approval of the Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Children's Services to allow advertising space to be sold on the new Council website and to note the associated policy.

The report outlined that the Council's ICT and Marketing and Communications teams were currently working on a project to develop a new Council website. This will replace www.middlesbrough.gov.uk.

The refresh was necessary as the current website has become outdated in terms of functionality and design. It was hoped the new website will be operational in 2023-24.

The introduction of a new Council website presents the opportunity to introduce new features, including advertising space.

The report stated that a focus group of residents had been established as part of the wider website project. The group has been asked its opinion on the use of adverts on the website. Analysis shows 65% of respondents were happy for adverts to be used, providing usability of the website wasn't compromised.

Officers have spoken to the Council Advertising Network (CAN) as part of the research for the new website. The network generates income for public sector bodies by selling advertising on websites – at no cost to the organisations. CAN works with the web and IT teams at the organisations it partners with to introduce simple technology that sells advertising space to quality brands. The advertising income is paid directly to the organisation quarterly. Councils working with CAN have control over the type of advertising that appears on their websites. This is important from a reputational point of view. Councils can also promote local businesses or their own campaigns using CAN's technology.

CAN automatically blocks certain categories of advert including political, adult content, gambling, alcohol, fast food and payday loans. Organisations on the network can choose which categories they allow. Organisations can request an advert is removed at any time.

Appendix 1 of the report sets out the policy what the Council's approach would be on the suitability of potential advertisers and positioning of any adverts. Should approval be given to sell advertising space, the Council would consider a partner such as CAN.

OPTIONS

Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended

The alternative would be to develop the new Council website without the ability to sell advertising. This wasn't recommended as the decision would cut off a potential revenue stream.

ORDERED

- 1. That the Executive member gives approval for advertising space to be sold on the new Council website;**
- 2. That the Executive member notes the associated policy to be used by the Marketing and Communications team when making decisions on advertising.**

REASON

The decision was supported by the following reason:

Allowing advertising on the new Council website opens the potential to raise money that would support the overall budget position of the Council.

The decision(s) will come into force after five working days following the day the decision(s) were published unless the decision becomes subject to the call in procedures.