



Report of the Economic Development and Corporate Issues Scrutiny Panel

Review of council media and advertisements

June 2008

The Economic Development and Corporate Issues Scrutiny Panel's role is to monitor or examine corporate, strategic, economic development or cross-cutting services delivered by the council and its partners. It also monitors the work of the Cabinet and individual Cabinet Members within these terms of reference.

This report is the end result of a review into a particular subject. It sums up how the review was carried out, the panel's findings, consideration, conclusion and recommendations for any improvements that could be made.

SCRUTINY REPORT

COUNCIL MEDIA AND ADVERTISEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CORPORATE ISSUES SCRUTINY PANEL

I have pleasure in presenting this report detailing the Economic Development and Corporate Issues Scrutiny Panel's review into council media and advertisements.

I would like to thank the Vice-Chair and all of the current and former members who contributed throughout the review for their hard work and commitment. The subject matter was an interesting one, and explored important issues around what the public wants from the council, the relationship between funding and services, and the direction we believe the council should be taking.

Examining the possibility of using council media to host advertisements showed that there were costs and benefits. These were recognised by the public, with many highlighting the potential for additional money that could be used to provide services. However, both the public and the panel had serious concerns over being seen to endorse products or a possible reduction in the ability of the council to pass on information.

After careful consideration of the evidence, we are making recommendations that the council should not seek advertisements from private companies. Whilst the council does raise revenue from a number of sources, our prime and over-arching role is to provide services and support to the people of North Lincolnshire, and we believe that this is where we should be concentrating our efforts.

One method of doing this could be to involve our partners, particularly in the public and voluntary and community sectors, more in how we use our media. As partnership working becomes increasingly seen as the norm, increased co-ordination ensures that information is provided in a multi-agency way that matches the public's expectations, rather than being delivered along traditional organisation-based boundaries. Again, this is addressed within our recommendations.

Clearly, it is always important to explore any option for adding value into service delivery. I believe therefore that this was a very useful and comprehensive piece of work. I commend the report and look forward to Cabinet's response.

Cllr Allan Smith
Chair, Economic Development and Corporate Issues Scrutiny Panel

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

Membership of the Economic Development and Corporate Issues Scrutiny Panel

Councillors Smith (Chair)
 Wardle (Vice-Chair)
 Ali
 Bainbridge
 Barkworth
 Berry
 Waltham

The following members and co-opted members were also involved in this review:

Councillors T Foster (former Vice-Chair)
 Collinson
 Davison
 Ellerby
 Vickers

1. ROLE OF THE PANEL AND THE SELECTION AND SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

North Lincolnshire Council's Economic Development and Corporate Issues Scrutiny Panel is a group of seven elected councillors. The role of the panel is to monitor and examine corporate, strategic, economic development or cross-cutting services delivered by the council and its partners. It also plays a key role in holding decision-makers to account for the decisions. The panel does this by working closely with figures from across the council, the voluntary and community sector, outside partners, users of services, and the wider public.

The panel was keen to conduct a short but comprehensive review. The panel is very aware that, where the council can generate income, this can potentially result in increased services, lower rates of tax or efficiency savings. Members were aware that hosting advertising on council media was a topic of debate within local government, so agreed to gather evidence and reach conclusions about whether this might be a beneficial move for North Lincolnshire Council, and local people.

2. HOW THE REVIEW WAS CARRIED OUT

The Economic Development and Corporate Issues Scrutiny Panel agreed a brief:

(i)

- To examine the feasibility of generating income from the council's various media.
- To gather views and reach conclusions about whether this would be a beneficial move.
- To speak to other councils and agencies who have considered these matters, and to learn lessons.
- Seek the views of current users of the council's website and readers of *Direct* magazine.
- Consider other potential uses for the website and *Direct* magazine.

(ii)

- Make recommendations to cabinet, via full council, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 and the council's constitution.

Desktop research

The panel received documentation and other evidence from the following:

- Lincolnshire County Council.
- A range of other councils that hosted advertisements in their council magazines and publications.
- Informal discussions on the local government website Public Sector Forums, including a summary in the *Local Government Chronicle*.
- Information within the local, regional, national and international media.

Interviews and discussions

Members would like to thank the following witnesses for agreeing to speak or provide evidence to the panel.

Mr Peter Barton, Head of Web and Information Services, Lincolnshire County Council

John Bullivent, Manager Digital Inclusion Team

Adrian Capon, Strategic Marketing Manager

Barry Fleetwood, Head of Public Relations and Communications

Mike Jackson, Head of E-Services and Information Management

Sally McDavid, Digital Solutions Manager

Richard Stiff, Deputy Chief Executive – Individuals

Councillor Steve Swift, Corporate Service Cabinet Member

Public Consultation

The panel set up a web-based public consultation on the council's website inviting views and comments from the public. A range of existing groups were contacted to draw attention to this survey, and to invite comment. These included Town and Parish Councils, the Liaison Committee and the Seniors' Forums.

The Fresh Start team engaged a large number of older people, who filled in copies of the survey. A total of 146 responses were returned.

Panel meetings

A series of public meetings of the panel were held for witness interviews, together with planning and evaluation sessions to consider information gathered or presented to the panel. These sessions also allowed for analysis and evaluation, or to discuss the panel's conclusions and recommendations.

3. THE PANEL'S FINDINGS / CONSIDERATIONS

The programme of work carried out by the panel enabled members to use different techniques and perspectives to comprehensively examine the issue. The considerations and findings of the panel are outlined below.

Background

North Lincolnshire Council already gathers a substantial amount of funding from a number of sources. These range from council tax and business rates to charges in leisure centres. This money can then be used to provide services in line with the council's budget and normal operating procedures.

The council is required to find year-on-year efficiency savings, arising from the 2004 review of public sector efficiency review by Sir Peter Gershon. The council has already made significant savings of around £11 million since the Gershon Report was published, but the government continues to require local authorities to find further savings. There is a national efficiency target of making savings of £30 billion across the whole public sector by 2011. North Lincolnshire Council must contribute to this.

In December 2007, Minister for Local Government John Healey said "Councils must balance their books just like business, but rather than simply depending on Government grants and local tax-payers, I want them to be more ambitious and innovative using revenue raising powers."

In recent months, informal discussions amongst councils throughout the country have explored various options for raising revenue. As all councils have websites, and most typically provide some form of council publication, it is possible to sell commercial advertisements. This would raise revenue that could be reinvested in services or that could be used to fund the required efficiency savings. However, during these discussions concern has been raised about issues such as set-up costs, impartiality and councils being seen to endorse products advertised on their media. It could also be that, because space is allocated to adverts, then less space is available to provide information to local residents.

Council media

The two main sources of information to the public that are produced by North Lincolnshire Council are *Direct* magazine and the council's

website - www.northlincs.gov.uk The council also produces a range of other publications for service units, numbering over 300 a year.

Direct magazine is issued to every home in North Lincolnshire (with a very limited “overspill” into nearby areas). There are 11 editions a year. A total of 75,000 copies of each edition are produced. Research shows that 89% of people read at least part of the magazine. It is held in high regard locally as a reliable source of information on the work of the council and its services.

The council’s website is also held in high regard. Furthermore, its role has a key council communications channel for recruitment for the council, offering excellent value for money. The Society of Information Technology Management (SOCITM) rates it as a “transactional” site – which is the highest level attainable. There were more than a million visits to the site last year - a figure that has increased by 400% since 2004.

Options open to the council

There are various options open to the council should it decide to adopt this course of action. Advertisements could be placed on the council’s website and/or in *Direct* magazine. Alternatively, there is the possibility of local firms or national companies “sponsoring” publications or events. An example could be, say, a pet food company approached to financially support the annual Good Dog Day in return for placement of their logo on publicity material.

If it was decided to include paid-for adverts, exactly how this would be done is also a consideration. There are a number of companies that specialise in engaging suitable companies seeking to place adverts. However, whilst this reduces the need for in-house personnel to undertake this task, they obviously charge a fee for their services. If council staff (existing or new posts) were given this task, there would be implications for workloads and funding.

Not only that, but space taken in the council’s magazine would be at the expense of council services. At present most editions have to turn away copy due to limited space. Any income generated by advertisements would need to at least cover the cost of printing and distributing the magazine.

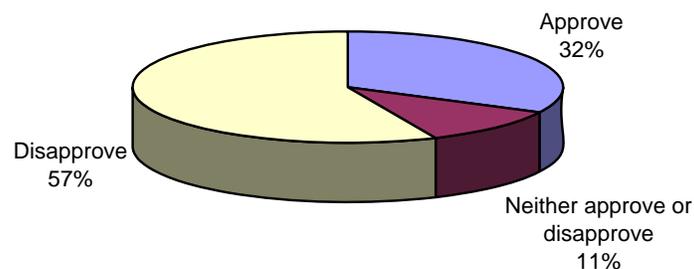
Another option would be to “open” the council media to other groups or voluntary and community or public sector bodies. This would have the advantage of providing potentially useful, not-for-profit information to local people. However, this may dilute the council’s key messages as it would, of necessity, involve less space for providing information on the council and its services. This option could involve selling space on the media, providing subsidised rates, or for example, allocating a community section of *Direct* magazine for free.

It should be borne in mind that the magazine already provides, at no charge, to a range of organisations, in the form of the popular two-page “What’s on in North Lincolnshire”.

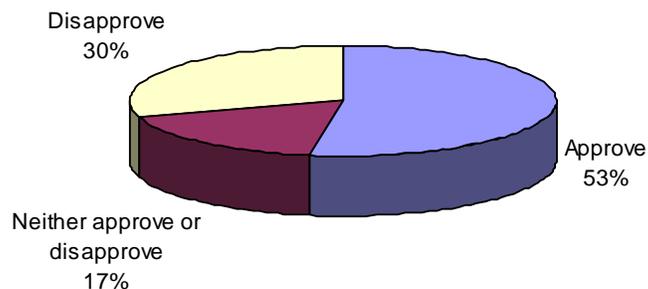
Public consultation.

As described on page 7, the panel carried out a public consultation exercise in order to assess how local people feel about the options. Two questions were asked, and supporting comments were also invited. The panel received 146 responses in all: 119 from the website and 27 from other sources. Further information on the process and a summary of these comments are included in appendix 1.

1. Would you approve or disapprove having non-council advertisements on the council’s website?



2. Would you approve or disapprove having non-council advertisements in *Direct* magazine?



As can be seen from the charts, nearly six out of ten (47%) are not in favour of advertising on the council website, but a small majority (just over five out of ten) support advertising in *Direct* magazine.

In line with the discussion set out on page 8, respondents highlighted the potential for raising money to provide services as the main benefit of selling advertising space. However, members of the public were concerned that

- council media should be limited to council information;
- that web adverts are annoying, and
- it could be seen that the council is recommending the goods or services that are advertised.

Lincolnshire County Council example

While many councils advertise in their council magazines, website advertising is only in its infancy stage in local government. Some councils, for example, Milton Keynes, Hampshire County and Fylde Borough Council have so far conducted early experiments, These have met with limited success.

However, a much more ambitious approach has been agreed at Lincolnshire County Council. The council is expected shortly to roll out adverts on its website. These are organised and sold via an external company. The panel spoke to Lincolnshire's Head of Web and Information Services as part of the review. At this stage, it is estimated

income of around £50,000 is possible. Of course, it is necessary to be cautious and remember the council is considerably larger than North Lincolnshire Council.

It has not been possible to identify figures for possible advertisement income for local government websites other than this example.

4. THE PANEL'S CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

We are aware that a far-reaching review of the council's use of IT and technology is under way. A Digital Development Group comprising officers from across the council is currently drawing up a digital inclusion strategy. This will set out practical measures for the use of technology to improve residents' lives, provide more customer-focused services and to enable better access. The panel was impressed with the scope of the work under way, and would like to praise the group for its comprehensive, long-term vision.

Recommendation 1: The panel recommends that ongoing and co-ordinated support be given to the work of the Digital Development Group.

The council has been moving in this direction for several years. For example, it took the decision in 2005 to move its job vacancies from the traditional local and national newspaper-based approach to concentrate its advertising on its website. This has resulted in an impressive 70% saving to the council over the period 2003/04 to 2006/07. The council also achieved over a thousand responses in five weeks to a recent public web-based consultation on the future of the Baths Hall.

Advertising on the council's website

The panel has carefully considered the costs and benefits of advertising on the council's website. It believes that the potential income estimated by Lincolnshire County Council would certainly provide much-needed resources. However, Lincolnshire County Council covers a much larger area and population. As such, it is clearly a much more attractive option as far as both local and national advertisers are concerned. It is estimated the level of income for North Lincolnshire Council would be maybe less than a third of the £50k figure.

There would also be initial set-up costs to enable the website to handle advertisements. If either council employees or an external company sold the advertisements, this would reduce the level of income generated.

Given the strong feelings by members of the public, and the limited revenue, the panel does not feel the council should adopt this course of action in the short term.

Recommendation 2: The panel recommends that the council should not pursue non-council web-based advertisements based on current public perception.

Despite this, we believe that it would be foolish to rule the option out completely. If Lincolnshire County Council raise incomes above expectations without a subsequent dip in public satisfaction, then it might be wise to re-evaluate the situation.

Recommendation 3: The panel recommends that dialogue with Lincolnshire County Council be maintained, and the situation be reviewed in the summer of 2009, taking into consideration income levels and website satisfaction levels.

Advertising in *Direct* magazine.

Similar arguments exist when considering the situation with *Direct* magazine. Despite this, other councils do utilise advertisements in their printed media and the public consultation showed a shift in acceptability (see page 10)

Again, any income is likely to be limited and would almost certainly entail in-house or externally commissioned staff selling the space to advertisers.

After carefully considering all of the evidence, the panel believes, at the present time, the current approach is the right one. The panel is concerned about the potential for being seen to endorse specific products and the possibility of duplication of council-provided services. Members are also aware that local residents hold *Direct* magazine in very high regard.

Recommendation 4: The panel recommends that *Direct* magazine should not carry commercial advertisements.

Other advertising

As part of the review, members considered the costs and benefits of using council media to promote community or public sector organisations, in order to help address the shared ambitions for North Lincolnshire. As the

council media is very well-utilised, this is a role the panel would like to see strengthened. As links between the council, health services, police, the voluntary and community sectors and others become closer, the panel feels this provides an opportunity for a more co-ordinated approach. Local people are, quite rightly, unwilling to accept the barriers that exist between public sector organisations and the voluntary and community sectors as an excuse for a lack of joined up services.

There are a number of examples where this could prove beneficial. Some fictional examples are listed below, for illustrative purposes.

- Local, non-profit making, sports and community clubs could highlight important dates or events that would be of interest to the public.
- Details of neighbourhood policing, priorities and community meetings could be published.
- If the council is working jointly with the fire service to tackle arson, this could be given space on the website and in *Direct*.
- An article in *Direct* magazine jointly written by the Primary Care Trust and the council could provide information to older people on how to prevent falls.

Clearly, there would be a need for some editorial guidance and for a mechanism to co-ordinate usage. The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) brings together all key agencies, including the voluntary and community sector, so it would be sensible to utilise this group to co-ordinate content.

That said, it should be borne in mind that the magazine is first and foremost a publication for council services, paid for by the council taxpayers. The council must maintain editorial control and the final decision on what does and does not appear in the publication.

We believe that, as there are wider benefits to the community, it may well be appropriate to offer free or heavily subsidised rates for not-for-profit or voluntary sector organisations placing information in the council's media.

In making this point, the panel recognises that the magazine already offers two pages in each edition for voluntary groups as part of the popular "What's on in North Lincolnshire" section.

Recommendation 5: The panel recommends that a more co-ordinated and inclusive approach to utilising council media is adopted, seeking guidance from relevant bodies if required.

Review

The panel gives notice that it will be revisiting this subject in 12 months' time to monitor progress on our recommendations.

Appendix 1.

Scrutiny Panel – Advertising Survey

Q2 – Please explain why you approve or disapprove of having non-council advertisements on the council's website?

Approve

- Raise money to cut council tax
- More info on local services
- It generates more money and providing it only across the top or side (in a bar)
- It doesn't affect the viewing of the site
- Bring in money to help council
- It would be ok provided there weren't any pop ups
- Generate income for the council, offsetting cost and potentially made a positive contribution to the council funds, reducing the need for tax increases or improving services
- I would approve as long as it doesn't take over the whole website. I also feel the website should have this money invested into it to improve it and make its actions more up to date
- Bring in revenue, reduce cost to tax payer
- Bit of variety
- Provide income for Council
- Help with cost of running site
- Providing varied info to readers
- Generate revenue
- Extra revenue into the council to offset the cost of certain things such as the magazine
- Any money saving ideas should always be considered.
- This would link the council with the wider community
- Hopefully to save costs
- Income
- Hopefully the revenue generated will help fund all services
- Choice and revenue
- More money in the pot
- Increased income
- Revenue increase
- Anything to raise income
- Choice
- Revenue
- Choice
- May be helpful
- Extra income
- It would provide interest and information about external products/services.

- Information sharing brings in revenue.
- Why not earn money?
- It would help fund a good website, meaning less cost for council tax payers.
- Money to be reinvested into information services and more online council services

Disapprove

- I find advertising on website very annoying
- GETS ON MY NERVES!
- Would imply that the Council endorsed / favoured those companies over and above others.
- Gives wrong message, dilutes other information
- Would likely to be irrelevant to most and site is poorly designed enough without distracting rubbish on it.
- It is very difficult to navigate through web pages that have a lot of adverts on them, and as the website contains a lot of information anyway it would be very overwhelming.
- You search the website for information, not advertisements. They are annoying and get in the way. Don't do it, please.
- It should remain a council only website and not seem to be affiliated with any outside source
- It would look as if the council was endorsing any advertisers. The council should always be seen as impartial.
- It would soon become cluttered with advertisements and at the moment everything is clear and easy to find.
- People would think the council endorsed it
- When I go to the council's website I expect to see clearly presented council information. If it had non-council advertising I think it would de-value the site and reduce confidence in the council information being correct and up-to-date.
- Online adverts are just a pain.
- What is the point?
- Why would I want to be bombarded with adverts for god knows what when I visit my council's website!
- It is hard enough finding information without having to navigate through adverts.
- It may appear as though the Council is endorsing those particular products or services and may also hamper use of the website by the public.
- I use the council website to find info about the council. I don't want to have adverts clogging the site up. There is also a risk to the council that some people may think the ads are approved by the council
- You must be JOKING!!!!
- Reduced service to the public
- The council's web site is award winning it is easy to use and comprehensive adverts will only dilute the content and confuse the messages
- Because I use the website to specifically find out council information
- It would not be right, period, the council, has always been about the people (well, hopefully) not about selling or making money on advertisements. At least from what the public see, would be a shame to see it when visiting the website, plainly stated, it would just not be right.

- There is an obvious obligation on the Council to behave in a fair and equitable manner in all its dealings. There could easily be an appearance of confusion or favouritism if a heavy advertiser was seen to get favourable treatment in say a planning application. Further, in an era when profit margins are being shaved how could the Council be certain that they were advertising legitimate, ethical and honest businesses?
- I don't want to waste my time looking at advertising when it has nothing to do with the council
- North Lincs website should just be about North Lincs
- Advertisers may not be in keeping with the values of the Council as a whole and may have a detrimental effect on the reputation of the council
- MOST ANNOYING THING ON THE WEB
- Great idea NOT
- We are bombarded with advertising everywhere why do we need more?
- No way
- Gets in the way of finding important information, makes it very difficult for elderly and sight impaired people to pick out what they are looking for.
- I hate adverts on websites
- You must be joking - online advertising is ruining the web
- Would be confusing
- WASTE OF TIME AND MY MONEY
- Which idiot thought this idea - online adverts are just annoying
- Just gets in the way of using the website
- Pointless I always ignore adverts on the web
- Complete waste of time!
- You're having a laugh
- Council should be seen to be totally independent and impartial of business or seen to be promoting the services of a commercial business
- Could be falsely seen as an endorsement
- Society is already saturated with advertising, the website should remain a helpful, direct and non-commercialised tool for local citizens.
- There is nothing more annoying than having to constantly close down 'pop up' boxes on a web site.
- Advertising on web sites is very off putting when browsing online content. I doubt very much that the council would also have the resources required to sell and edit advertising space, I know there are scant resources available to publish content to the web in its present guise. The whole issue of advertising would have to sustain additional posts to manage and publish adverts, negating the income stream they would generate.
- Online adverts are really annoying and would put me off visiting your site
- Would put me off visiting
- The council should be seen as impartial service. Advertising could be seen as some as showing preference to certain business in some people's eyes
- Council info
- What you see is what you get. Keep it that way.
- Having pop-up or other adverts on some websites (especially the likes of the council) can be very annoying and may stop people using it. If the adverts slowed the site down for me I certainly would stop using it.

- Day by day we get advertisements rammed down our throats, leaflets put through our doors, adverts on the beginning of dvd's, this website should be related to Council issues and nothing else
- When I visit a web page I want to see the information I need not lots of other advertising
- It is the COUNCIL'S website!
- Do you want me to visit your website?
- Very annoying
- I hate online adverts just get in the way
- There is too great a risk of advertising taking on an associative nature which would potentially confuse and mislead visitors to the site.
- The council website is for the council's news.
- The Council should remain non-partisan
- This is a public service not a commercial concern.
- It could be perceived that the council is recommending those goods/services advertised
- Totally unprofessional + would be seen as endorsing their service
- Online adverts are the scourge of the web, really off putting
- What would it add?
- Really, really annoying
- Who would want to advertise on your website?

Other

- Only if it was for companies or businesses that compliment council services or are of actual use to residents, companies such as North Lincolnshire Homes, Citizens advice etc. Anything other than that would dilute messages from the council, people would not pay attention and possibly be put off visiting the website or reading the magazine. They must be partners with a genuine interest in serving/helping the community.
- Providing they are companies offering relevant services to compliment the articles
- Its good to get advertising from companies external from the Council. Its good for general info, but wouldn't want to be bombarded with more advertising than
- The council website is quick and easy to use because it holds only the council information. You don't have to sift out the junk, close down pop-ups, or be misdirected several times for the sake of advertising to find what you want.
- I wouldn't mind a few local advertisements, but too many would take over
- Why?
- Local publications should provide balanced local provision
- Only if it reduced our bill for council tax, and was not blatant, disrupting our viewing of the site, by pop ups.
- So long as the extra revenue was used correctly, ie to actively reduce council tax
- Providing it does increase income.
- Who will benefit?
- I would need to know what kind of advertising before I came to a decision.

Scrutiny Panel – Advertising Survey

Q4 – Please explain why you approve or disapprove of having non-council advertisements in *Direct* magazine?

Approve

- Gives Authority support for product of service
- More info on local services
- Real money rather than recycling council cash
- Helps local businesses get known to people in the community and would help with the production costs of the direct magazine
- The Evening Telegraph & Target have little competition and that would be healthy for north lincs companies, as it would reduce the Telegraph's monopoly
- Bring in revenue, reduce cost to tax payer
- It would help fund a good magazine meaning less cost for council tax payers.
- Direct is something to browse through. Adverts wouldn't be out of keeping.
- Funding towards magazine
- Provide income for Council
- To bring in income for the council, possibly to off-set the costs of producing the magazine. However, it should be made clear that the council does not endorse the products/services advertised
- Generate revenue
- I feel that Direct is a better media for adds
- I would approve with this providing the income was greater than the costs incurred, it is much easier to avoid adverts in a magazine, in fact it is almost expected, and would not detract from the publication.
- Any money saving ideas should always be considered.
- Improved linkages with the wider community
- Direct goes to more than one town/city etc. so it can be a good way of advertising in the Lincolnshire area.
- As an organ of the council it is useful to know all information in this magazine is council related. Will dilute the usefulness of Direct.
- This is a public service not a commercial concern.
- Hopefully the revenue generated will help all services
- To save costs
- Income
- To increase income
- Choice
- Revenue
- Choice
- Anything to raise income
- Revenue increase
- A bit more interesting
- More interesting
- Choice and revenue
- Why not earn money?
- Information sharing brings in revenue.

- It would provide interest and information about external products/services.
- Extra income.
- Helpful.

Disapprove

- I hate to get junk mail in the post and feel that if the magazine was full of advertisements I would be less likely to read it as I would consider it as 'junk' and put it straight into my recycling box!
- Direct is an independent NLC publication, promoting NLC point of view, if adverts are included, articles and policy may shift in order not to upset the advertisers and therefore reduce income. For example if the council wanted to promote natural nappies because of the detrimental effect on landfill of disposable nappies, how would this play if Kimberley Clark wanted to advertise?
- It was set up as a Council magazine for all householders in North Lincolnshire, it is unique and admired, do not spoil it by becoming subject to external influences. It provides good, relative information for all residents
- It would also take space needed for more useful information.
- The extra money raised would be minimal.
- I think it should just be council information in the magazine.
- As above, it may appear that the council is endorsing or promoting these products or services, it would take up valuable space in the magazine for more informative articles and it may also put some members of the public off reading the magazine altogether.
- Reduced service to the public
- In a world of diminishing resources do we really need more unnecessary advertising?
- Not have to think or see any outside advertisements, a breath of fresh air, with everything currently sent out containing sales/advertisements. I think the council magazine should remain local news-advice, support only.
- It is a council magazine
- If it takes up space which is needed for local issues
- New and events should solely be to do with North Lincs council
- Will increase paper getting thrown out. It will spoil the magazine. The council has plenty of money without selling advert space in its own publication.
- Same old adverts seen in lots of publications and because of this, the likelihood of it just being binned rather than kept for a while.
- Council should be seen to be totally independent and impartial of business or seen to be promoting the services of a commercial business
- Could be falsely seen as an endorsement
- Again, society is already saturated with advertisements, with junk mail etc. coming through the door! Why turn a perfectly good and helpful magazine into a marketing tool!
- The council is primarily a not for profit organisation. Undertaking commercial activities is not in keeping with what a council should be focusing on.
- Again, at the moment it is simple and easy to use. We throw enough unwanted, unsolicited "information" straight into the recycling bin without reading it. If you're looking for things, that what the Evening Telegraph is for.
- It is the COUNCIL's website!

Other

- Adverts in magazines are easier to flick past if they do not interest you.
- Would only like to see non-profit making organisations advertising in the magazine.
- I believe that this needs to be balanced, with sufficient space, although the cost will be paid for.
- I only read it for the bin collection dates.
- Adverts which relating to some of the council's business may be an idea to generate revenue. Again this should be subject to scrutiny
- You can't find room for the voluntary sector to put notices up but you would find room for paid adverts. You should remember that the Council taxpayers are paying for this mag and should be able to air their views in there without having to pay extra for the privilege
- Providing they are companies offering relevant services to compliment the articles in that particular issue
- I doubt very much that the council would also have the resources required to sell and edit advertising space. The whole issue of advertising would have to sustain additional posts to manage and publish adverts, negating the income stream they would generate.
- As long as they are relevant to local people and are not sales adverts buyers and sellers make use of the services
- Its good to get advertising from companies external from the Council. Its good for general info, but wouldn't want to be bombarded with more advertising than Council info
- I wouldn't mind a few local advertisements, but too many would take over
- It is easier to disassociate council content from the adverts in a printed medium. However, the council would have to be very careful about the type and nature of the advertised content. Stringent rules would have to be applied to ensure that no misleading content appeared e.g. Adverts with (or by organisations with) a political bias, companies that may become associated with the council and taken as "recommendations" like mortgage companies specialising in Right to Buy services.
- Only if it reduced our council tax bills,
- Who will benefit?
- I would need to know what kind of advertising before I came to a decision.