



Date 17th October 2025

Agenda Brief Town Hall Sensitive Booking

Content and Purpose of Events

All bookings must align with the lawful, inclusive, and community-focused values of the council. The content of any film, performance, or presentation must comply with legal standards and must not promote hate, violence, or unlawful activity.

Political and Sensitive Bookings

The council may lawfully **refuse venue hire** only when:

- The event is likely to incite hatred, violence, or criminal conduct.
- The organiser or group is proscribed or banned.
- The event poses a significant risk to public safety or community cohesion.
- The booking would breach council policies on equality, inclusivity, or safeguarding (including the **Prevent Duty**).

However, councils **cannot** refuse bookings merely because political views are controversial or unpopular, provided they are lawful.

Council's Role in Expression and Communication

The council must balance freedom of expression with its duties under equality and safeguarding legislation. It should facilitate lawful speech and debate while preventing harm, extremism, or discrimination.

Town Hall Function in Speech and Expression

Town Hall and council venues are civic spaces for lawful public use, debate, and cultural expression. These venues must not be used for unlawful activity, hate speech, or extremist promotion.

Restrictions on Media, Art, and Hirers

Content shown or performed on council property must comply with:

- The **Equality Act 2010**,
- The **Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)**, and
- Council policies promoting equality, inclusion, and safeguarding.

Hirers must not use council venues for discriminatory, extremist, or unlawful purposes.

Ensuring Consistency

Decisions must be made transparently, fairly, and consistently, based on clear eligibility criteria, published terms, and proper process. Councillors and officers must avoid **predetermination** and **political bias**.

Compromises and Boundaries

In cases where issues are ambiguous (“grey areas”), decisions should be guided by proportionality, public safety, and legal compliance.

Clear-cut boundaries include:

- **Prohibited:** incitement to violence or hate, promotion of terrorism, unlawful discrimination.
- **Permissible:** lawful political discussion, artistic expression, and debate, even if controversial.

Approach Moving Forward

- Maintain transparent, lawful decision-making procedures.
- Apply policies consistently and document all reasoning.
- Conduct regular reviews of venue hire policies to ensure alignment with legislation and community expectations.
- Encourage open dialogue, while safeguarding against harm and extremism.

Key Legislative References

- **Equality Act 2010** – prohibits discrimination based on protected characteristics.
- **Localism Act 2011 (s.25)** – requires open-minded, fair decision-making.
- **Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (Prevent Duty)** – mandates prevention of extremist use of venues.
- **Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021** – ensures transparency and accountability.
- **LGA Guidance** – promotes fairness, safeguarding, and consistency in public venue management.