# Reform Party challenges Bristol City Council over controversial campaign slogan ban



Reform Party has found itself at the centre of a significant controversy following Bristol City Council's decision to ban the slogan “Banksy for Bristol,” used by their West of England mayoral candidate Arron Banks. Mr Banks, a prominent figure associated with UKIP and the Brexit movement, was recently unveiled as the party's candidate for the mayoral race in his home constituency of Bristol and West England.

The controversy erupted when, only one hour before the council's deadline for submitting campaign materials, Mr Banks received notification from Bristol City Council that his chosen slogan was not permitted. The council's reasoning for this abrupt decision centred around concerns of copyright infringement, specifically relating to the use of the name “Banksy,” which is associated with the city’s renowned street artist whose true identity remains a mystery.

In response to the council’s ruling, Reform Party launched a staunch criticism, arguing that the intervention was intended to undermine their candidate’s prospects in the upcoming election. They characterised the last-minute notification as both "legally misconceived" and "unjustified." Reform advised that the timing of the council’s intervention left Mr Banks with little ability to contest the decision, effectively putting his campaign in jeopardy.

Reform described the action taken by the council in a correspondence addressed to Mr Banks. The party's letter articulated concern that this decision was reached without any prior notice, suggesting that the council had been aware of potential issues with the slogan yet had not brought them to light until it was too late for the campaign to adapt. "To compound matters, this was flagged to Mr Banks and his team with an hour to go before the deadline," they stated.

The letter continued to argue that if the artist Banksy had any reservations about the slogan in question, he would have had ample opportunity to communicate those concerns ahead of the deadline. Reform further contended that no objection had been raised by Banksy, asserting, “the suggestion that someone could mistake campaign materials featuring pictures and text from Arron Banks as intending to be a public ‘reveal’ of the long-held secret identity of the artist Banksy is laughable at best."

They maintained that the slogan was a distinct linguistic inversion of Mr Banks's surname, positioning it as a form of political expression rather than a commercial claim. The party added that there was no equivalent damage or confusion that could arise from the use of the slogan, asserting that the legal principles of passing off were not applicable in this instance.

As the situation unfolds, the Reform Party's challenge against Bristol City Council's ruling represents a significant flashpoint in the lead-up to the local elections, highlighting the tensions between political candidates and regulatory authorities over campaign branding.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.instagram.com/imdmilo/> - This source mentions Arron Banks in a political context, though it does not directly address the 'Banksy for Bristol' controversy.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk> - BBC often covers local UK news and controversies, which might include the Bristol City Council decision and the Reform Party's response, but specific coverage would depend on recent articles.
* <https://www.theguardian.com> - The Guardian frequently reports on UK political events, including local controversies and political campaigns, which could include coverage of the Reform Party and Arron Banks.
* <https://www.bristolpost.co.uk> - As a local news source, Bristol Post might cover city council decisions and political controversies like the 'Banksy for Bristol' slogan issue.
* <https://www.ipwatchdog.com> - IP Watchdog provides information on intellectual property issues, including copyright concerns, which are relevant to the Bristol City Council's objections over the 'Banksy for Bristol' slogan.