



REPORT TO:	ENVIRONMENT & PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	7 SEPTEMBER 2021
SUBJECT:	SOCIAL MEDIA ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY
KEY DECISION:	NO
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	COUNCILLOR PAUL SKINNER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
REPORT AUTHOR:	RACHEL ROBINSON, ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERVICE MANAGER
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	NO
EXEMPT REPORT?	NO

SUMMARY

Social media is one of the Council's key mechanisms to communicate with the community. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram are all used as tools to provide information and service updates from the Council, engaging with thousands of people each week.

Social media provides a means for the community to provide direct feedback to the Council by commenting on posts. On occasions replies to posts are inappropriate or misleading and as such the Social Media Acceptable Use Policy (at Appendix A) has been developed to provide a governance framework to enable the Council to proactively manage its social media accounts.

Having such a policy will give officers the ability to deal with inappropriate or misleading comments in an effective manner and in a way that protects users of the accounts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That Environment & Performance Scrutiny Committee is asked to provide feedback to shape the draft Policy's development.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To put in place a clear policy to support the management of the Council's social media accounts and protect users of those accounts.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not to have a policy. This was discounted as there is a need for a mechanism for the Council to manage comments made on posts that fall within the parameters of the proposed policy.

REPORT

1. Social media is a key mechanism for the Council to engage with local people. It provides the ability for the Council to push information to the community about services and activities whilst also hearing the views of local people and answering questions.
2. At present the Council uses Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram as its primary social media channels, all of which reach thousands of people each week.
3. It has become apparent that from time to time a small number of users make posts on the accounts that fall into categories that are considered inappropriate, as defined in Appendix A.
4. Whilst social media sites do have their own mechanisms for reporting posts that breach their own guidelines, many organisations adopt their own local approach that takes into account the audience their accounts serve.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council has various legal obligations that are relevant to the management of its social media channels. There are statutory requirements and/or common law obligations around publicity

(preventing the use of Council resources to promote political groups, etc.), data protection, the Public Sector Equality Duty and defamation. The proposed Policy makes it clear that the Council will remove inappropriate content, and this will help to mitigate the risk of the Council acting unlawfully by permitting posts to remain on its social media in breach of any of these legal obligations.

RISK IMPLICATIONS

The policy aims to manage the reputational risk across the Council's Social Media account and protect the users of the accounts.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None

EQUALITY AND SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS

The policy includes actions to be taken if any comments target or disparage any protected groups as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

CONSULTATION

APPENDICES

Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report: -

APPENDIX A

Social Media Acceptable Use Policy

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers as defined in Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the production of this report.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

A report on this item has not been previously considered by a Council body.

REPORT APPROVAL

Report author:	Rachel Robinson, Organisation Development Service Manager
Signed off by:	James Gilbert, Interim Deputy Chief Executive (People)
Approved for publication:	James Gilbert, Interim Deputy Chief Executive (People)

FINANCE PROFORMA

PROFORMA FOR APPROVAL OF THE RELEASE OF RESOURCES

(CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUDGETS)

FROM:

THIS PROFORMA PROVIDES THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS
IN RESPECT OF THE ATTACHED

REPORT:

REPORT DATE:

OPTION 1	£ Year 1 2020/21	£ Year 2 2021/22	£ Year 3 2022/23	£ Year 4 2023/24	£ Year 5 2024/25
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Revenue

Total Revenue Cost

Funding required:

Total capital cost £

Revenue cost £

Considered by:

Enter committee here

Enter Council or
Cabinet/Executive here

Date:

Financial Services Comments

Risk

Procurement

Value for Money Efficiency

This FP is valid for 3 months from FP date	If this FP is no longer required please advise Finance	If there are changes to the original report it may invalidate this document, it must be reviewed by Finance.