

WIRRAL COUNCIL

TRANSFORMATION & RESOURCES POLICY & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

3 DECEMBER 2015

SUBJECT:	SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY
WARD/S AFFECTED	ALL
REPORT OF:	ACTING HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
RESPONSIBLE PORFOLIO HOLDER	CLLR A JONES
KEY DECISION	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals for a new Social Media Policy for Council employees.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The Council's Human Resources policies are subject to an ongoing review to ensure that they remain fit for purpose, legally compliant and provide a valuable and workable resource for employees and managers on employment related issues in the workplace.
- 2.2 The Council uses social media sites to proactively promote and market the Council's communication messages related to campaigns, events and services, as well as interact with its customers and residents. As 87% of Wirral Council staff live in Wirral, a very high percentage of our employees (and in turn their families and friends) are also our customers.
- 2.3 Currently, only a limited number of Council employees with a proven business need can access social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter on their council PCs. Another number have permission, based on a business case, to run and manage social media feeds on behalf of council services. This is a historical position but does not reflect how social media has changed.
- 2.4 As a consequence of this we are not able to use the same channels of communication that we use externally with our own staff or utilise the full opportunities that social media offers. This includes promotional council videos hosted on the council's You Tube channel.
- 2.5 The Council's Senior Leadership Team has agreed to broaden access to social media sites for all employees. This means that employees will be able to use their Wirral Council IT equipment to access social media sites, including Council marketing campaigns and promotional information.
- 2.6 This presents an opportunity to improve staff engagement through the sharing of Council news and information and by giving employees more opportunities

to feedback and offer ideas using the modern channels that employees and residents are using outside of work.

- 2.7 The Council wishes to maximise the benefits and opportunities social media offers. The aim of the Social Media policy is primarily to safeguard both our staff and our service users while using social media, to protect the Council from the legal risks of social media and also to ensure the reputation of the authority is protected. Many organisations have Social Media Policies to ensure that employees are clear about the rules and that the organisation effectively manages the corporate use of social media.
- 2.8 This policy sets out what is expected of employees when accessing social media for personal use, while at work and also officially on behalf of the Council.
- 2.9 The policy refers to existing and related HR and IT policies. It remains the case that employees should limit their use of social media to their official rest breaks such as their lunch break/times and any serious breaches of the social media policy could result in disciplinary action being taken.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 3.1 There are various risks associated with the use of social media such as disclosure of confidential information, damage to the reputation of the Council, and breach of legislation. In light of these risks, there is a need for the Council to provide guidance so that employees operate within existing policies, guidelines and relevant legislation, and to ensure a consistent approach is adopted and maintained in the use of social media.
- 3.2 The Council recognises that there is potential for some employees to abuse the use of social media within the workplace for personal use. The policy provides guidance on acceptable use and outlines the implications for misuse.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 As use of Social Media as a communication tool continues to grow and evolve, there is a requirement for a policy to safeguard employees and the Council and this is therefore the most appropriate option.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Trade Unions were formally consulted on the draft Policy.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

- 6.1 There are no specific implications arising out of this report.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

- 7.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. The IT implications of opening up access to social media have been discussed with IT

Services. The Social Media Policy will be applicable to all Council staff. The policy applies to employees whether they are using social media personally, on behalf of the Council, or in other ways. It sets out what is expected of employees when accessing social media for personal use, while at work and also officially on behalf of the Council.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no specific legal implications arising out of this report.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

(a) Is an EIA required? Yes

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments/equality-impact-assessments-2014-15-0>

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific implications arising out of this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no specific implications arising out of this report.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 That Policy and Performance Committee recommends to Council;

a) Approval of the Social Media Policy.

13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 To maximise the benefits and opportunities social media offers as a modern approach to communication.

13.2 To safeguard staff while using social media.

13.3 To ensure the reputation of the Council is protected arising from use of social media

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Draft Social Media Policy

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date