

TRANSFORMATION AND RESOURCES POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

3 DECEMBER 2015

25 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

The Acting Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development introduced a report which set out proposals for a new Social Media Policy for Council employees.

The Council's Human Resources policies were subject to an ongoing review to ensure that they remained fit for purpose, legally compliant and provided a valuable and workable resource for employees and managers on employment related issues in the workplace.

The Council used 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 lived in Wirral, a very high percentage of the Council's employees (and in turn their families and friends) were also the Council's customers. Currently, only a limited number of Council employees with a proven business need could access social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter on their council PCs. Another number had permission, based on a business case, to run and manage social media feeds on behalf of council services. This was a historical position but did not reflect how social media had changed.

The Council's Senior Leadership Team had agreed to broaden access to social media sites for all employees. This meant that employees would be able to use their Wirral Council IT equipment to access social media sites, including Council marketing campaigns and promotional information.

The aim of the Social Media policy was primarily to safeguard both Council staff and service users whilst using social media, to protect the Council from the legal risks of social media and also to ensure the reputation of the authority was protected. Many organisations had Social Media Policies to ensure that employees were clear about the rules and that the organisation effectively managed the corporate use of social media. This policy set out what was expected of employees when accessing social media for personal use, whilst at work and also officially on behalf of the Council.

It remained 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.

Responding to comments from Members the Acting Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development made a number of points, including:

- Use of the internet and in future of social media sites would be monitored if there were concerns and the Council's IT systems did support the ability to see what pages had been visited by staff.
- Discussions had been held with the Council's IT managers and they had said that increased traffic to social media sites at the peak period of lunchtimes would not present any particular issues.
- The policy wouldn't apply in its entirety to Members as there were separate guidelines and there were also separate processes for use in libraries.

The Chair reminded Members that they were also bound by the Members' Code of Conduct.

Resolved – That this Committee recommends to Council approval of the Social Media Policy.