

TITLE OF REPORT: Employee Social Media Policy**REPORT OF: Mike Barker, Strategic Director, Corporate Services & Governance****Purpose of the Report**

1. To agree an Employee Social Media Policy for approval by the Council as set out at Appendix 2 to this report.

Background

2. The Council currently does not have a policy which covers personal use of social media for its workforce.
3. A separate policy is in development by the Communications and Engagement Team in relation to use of social media for business purposes for staff who manage social media accounts on behalf of the Council.
4. Significant research and benchmarking have been undertaken in the development of this policy and numerous stakeholders have been engaged in its development

Proposal

5. Social media has changed the way we engage and communicate with others (individuals, groups, organisations etc.) which provides an alternative and broad reaching approach to communication, and subsequently many benefits. However, the way in which social media works also means that this way of sharing and receiving information has risks. The draft policy (appendix 1) aims to ensure all employees are familiar with good practice when using social media for personal use and provides a framework to enable them to use it safely, as well as the consequences should an employee not work within the policy.
6. The policy is intended to support employees to ensure that the actions they take online using social media, while at work (in their own time) or at home, do not adversely impact the Council or their continued employment with the Council.
7. Employees are only permitted to access social media in their own time using their own devices. The only exception is where there is an emergency situation and the Council directs employees to key information and updates via social media channels.

8. A communication plan will be developed to ensure that all managers and employees are aware of the policy and its implications and references to the policy will be included within Corporate Induction.

Recommendations

9. It is recommended that the Employee Social Media Policy is agreed by Cabinet and referred to the Council for approval at its meeting on 21 November 2024.

For the following reason:

- (i) To ensure that the Council has an appropriate policy in place within its human resources framework.

CONTACT: Caroline Judson

extension: 2226

APPENDIX 1

Policy Context

1. The proposed Employee Social Media Policy updates the HR framework to enable the Council to manage workforce matters in support of the objectives of the Corporate Plan.

Background

2. The Council currently does not have a policy which covers personal use of social media for its workforce.
3. The policy is intended to support employees to ensure that the actions they take online using social media, while at work (in their own time) or at home, do not adversely impact the Council or their continued employment with the Council.

Consultation

4. The views of the portfolio holder for Communication and Engagement have been sought in drafting this report. The Council's recognised non-teaching Trade Unions (UNISON, Unite and GMB) have also been consulted and the revised policy incorporates some of their proposed amendments.
5. Consultation has also taken place with the following:
 - Corporate Communications and Engagement
 - IT Services
 - The Council's Data Protection Officer (DPO)

Alternative Options

6. No alternative options have been proposed other than those presented for Cabinet consideration.

Implications of Recommended Option

7. **Resources:**
 - a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director Finance and ICT confirms that there are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
 - b) **Human Resources Implications** – The policy will form part of the Council's overall human resources policy framework, through which it aims to be an exemplary employer.

- c) **Property Implications** - there are no property implications arising from the recommendations within this report.
8. **Risk Management Implication** - The policy as recommended in the report is not considered to introduce any new risk and is aimed at mitigating risk where reasonably possible.
9. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken to analyse the impact of the proposed policy in relation to the nine protected characteristics. Overall the policy will have a positive impact for employees with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 as it enables employees to raise any concerns relating to inappropriate comments posted on social media and cyber-bullying which may relate to a protected characteristic.
10. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no crime and disorder implications.
11. **Health Implications** - There are no health implications.
12. **Climate Emergency and Sustainability Implications** - There are no climate and sustainability implications.
13. **Human Rights Implications** - There are no human rights implications.
14. **Ward Implications** - There are no ward implications.
15. **Background Information:**