

## HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

24 SEPTEMBER 2018

### REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE SERVICES)

#### A.3 **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

(Report prepared by Will Lodge)

#### **PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION**

##### **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

To provide the Committee with an updated Social Media Policy.

##### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The new Social Media Policy aims to codify best practice with regards to the Council's use of social media channels.

It covers broadly three areas: staff members' personal use of social media; use of corporate social media accounts; and processes associated with corporate social media accounts. The Policy specifically sets out that inappropriate use of social media by staff may potentially result in disciplinary action, and what may constitute inappropriate use. Currently any such inappropriate use of social media, either personally or professionally, would be considered in a wider disciplinary context. It also builds in safeguards for the Council by enshrining best practice, such as having multiple account admins, into policy.

##### **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- a) **That the Human Resources Committee formally approves and adopts the introduction of the new Officers' Social Media Policy.**
- b) **That delegation is given to the Deputy Chief Executive to update the policy with any future legislative or best practice changes in consultation with the Council's Communications Manager and the Head of People, Performance and Projects.**

#### **PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION**

##### **DELIVERING PRIORITIES**

The Social Media Policy is part of the wider Communications Strategy of the Council. As such it helps to deliver all of the Council's priorities by providing effective and timely communication of news, events and policies of the Council. By informing people of new ways of working and interacting with the Council it also helps to drive behaviour change, such as the channel shift agenda.

In addition, increased communication of things the Council is doing, and doing well, was a key theme arising from the Local Government Association's Peer Review conducted in February 2018.

## **FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK**

### **Finance and other resources**

There are no finance implications arising from this policy – training is being developed in-house for those who will be using social media. Social media channels are maintained and updated using existing resource.

### **Risk**

The adoption of a Social Media Policy should reduce the reputational risk to the Council by making staff better aware of their responsibilities when using social media, either professionally or personally.

In addition, by enshrining that the Communications Manager and the Head of Service have full administration rights to accounts, it strengthens the Council's resilience in the event of staff absence or departure.

## **LEGAL**

There is no legal requirement to have a Social Media Policy. However, it is considered best practice. The Social Media Policy does uphold legal requirements in other areas, such as those involving Data Protection.

## **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

**Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.**

**Crime and Disorder / Equality and Diversity / Health Inequalities / Area or Ward affected / Consultation/Public Engagement.**

Although there are no direct equality or diversity issues, the Policy recognises social media is a good way of potentially getting the Council's message to harder-to-reach communities, thus improving consultation and public engagement.

## **PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **BACKGROUND**

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The Policy does not seek to control staff members' own personal social media accounts. However, it does remind staff to be careful about what information they share about themselves online, and the potential impact their profile and posts can have not only on themselves, but on the Council.

With regards to business use of social media, the Policy sets out the basic principles the Council – through its staff – should adhere to. This covers areas such as copyright and defamation.

It also builds in safeguards for the Council by enshrining best practice, such as having multiple account admins, into policy. By establishing a clear process for establishing social media channels and running them – such as who is authorised to do so – it allows the Council to speak with a consistent message. The Policy also places an emphasis on training of staff to use social media correctly and effectively, and on managers to identify training needs.

Also attached to this report for reference are the new Social Media Guidelines, which capture essential best practice in the practical use of social media, and the Social Media Strategy, which sets out how the Council will use social media. However, it is the Policy which the Committee is being asked to review, comment on and adopt.

#### **CURRENT POSITION**

The Council currently has Social Media Guidelines, which encompass some of the points raised in the new Policy, and in the new Guidelines.

Tendring District Council has a corporate Twitter account, while several services also have Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn accounts. Work is ongoing to establish a corporate Facebook page by October 2018.

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION**

None

#### **APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1 – Social Media Policy**

**Appendix 2 – Social Media Guidelines**

**Appendix 3 – Social Media Strategy**