Social Media Strategy







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Introduction

This strategy sets out how Tendring District Council will use its social media channels to maximum effect in its aims of engaging with a wider audience.

It should be read in conjunction with the Council's Social Media Policy (which sets out the rules for social media use) and the Social Media Guidelines (which provide best practice on producing strong, engaging content).

It focuses on Facebook and Twitter, as the Council's two primary social media channels. YouTube is used as a supporting tool for video content.

facebook.











Proactive posts

Social media offers an opportunity to promote the work of the Council to a wider audience than is reached by traditional methods, such as press releases.

Frequency – On both Facebook and Twitter, several posts should be done each day (with a few less at weekends). Scheduling tools should be used to do these throughout the day, with a focus on key times (6-7am, 12-1pm, 6-9pm) for the strongest messages.

Key messages – To begin with, this will be co-ordinated by the Communications Team. Using the Communications Group calendar and with input from team reps, messages around key themes can be posted weekly. Going forward, individual services will be asked to 'buy' into the process and schedule their own messages directly, which can then be approved by the Communications Team. The Communications Team will rule over any scheduling conflicts.

Additional posts – Top up posts can be delivered during the working week, such as posts around press releases, issues that arise, or emergency planning incidents.

'Roving' posts/community engagement – Some staff roles may lend themselves to posting directly from 'on the ground', particularly to show them around the District or tackling a particular issue. These may include, but are not limited to, Dog Wardens, Beach Patrol or Enforcement Officers. Those who indicate a willingness to do so must first obtain approval from the

Communications Manager, who will check that this is appropriate, and to assess any training needs before posting commences.

Sharing – Under the Social Media Policy, staff are encouraged to share Council posts on their own timelines or into community groups they are part of. However, the Communications Team will undertake to share posts with relevant community groups, where appropriate to do so.



Proactive posts (continued)

Comments – As this strategy is first introduced, corporate Facebook posts will not allow commenting. This will be reviewed over time and a decision may be made to allow comments to increase community engagement. However, some posts will not be appropriate to allow commenting on, due to the risk of negative or even illegal comments – these may include, but are not limited to, posts about traveller sites or ongoing court cases.

Sharing (external) – The Council will share relevant messages from partners, if appropriate to do so and if they align with the Council's own Corporate Plan or Community Leadership objectives.





Reactive actions

Reactive actions

Social media also provides a new channel for customers to engage directly with the Council, which should be promoted under the channel shift agenda.

Customer services – The new customer services team, once established, will be responsible for responding to enquiries made via direct messages. They will have the knowledge to respond directly, or to connect with the right people to get a response.

Operating hours – Accounts will clearly state they are monitored only within office hours. On Facebook an auto-reply will be set up indicating this for any messages received out-of-hours. Ad hoc responses by staff outside of working hours is discouraged outside of Council events, as it risks setting a precedent and leave customers expecting a response sooner than is practicable.

Challenging misinformation – As a general principle it is usually best not to respond to smaller errors communicated by the public. It is not time-efficient, and frequently unnecessary as others will respond on the Council's behalf. However, in instances of wide-spread misinformation or major factual errors, the Communications Team (working with the relevant service) may issue a clarification statement on social media.

Monitoring

The Communications Team will monitor social media channels, though as per the Social Media Policy all staff are expected to flag up any potential issues they see.

