



Electronic Communication and Social Media Policy

SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report seeks to introduce a new electronic communication and social media policy that is more consistent with our email and internet use policies and with a digitally engaged workforce.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To adopt the new policy subject to the required consultation with the trade unions.
- 2.2 To reduce the email and internet filtering and firewall rules that currently prevent staff accessing social media sites.
- 2.3 To reduce the email and internet filtering and firewall rules that currently prevent staff accessing web adverts.
- 2.4 To promote this new policy through the In Touch cascade process, noting it allows staff more freedom but carries with it obligations and that misuse of social media can result in civil or criminal proceedings.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Our current policy restricts use of social media and requires it to be approved on a case by case basis. This is no longer practical in a digital world where many of our customers, partners and peers have an active social media presence; as do our staff outside of work.
- 3.2 The risk of abuse through social media has been considered and unlike email or internet access the fact that this is a broadcast medium that can spread more quickly has been a consideration. This is reflected in the policy.
- 3.3 The blocking of email and internet activity is increasingly becoming a barrier to the business operations. One example is it would block adverts we intend to promote on our own website, thus reducing income that could be achieved. It would also mean we cannot easily test the adverts in advance.
- 3.4 We will continue to use category based filtering and can block suspected pornographic, illegal drug use, and possible terrorist related sites and emails identified as junk or spam or websites reported by others.

- 3.5 The policy has been developed based on similar policies introduced by a number of central and local government bodies; it is in accordance with the Government Digital Strategy.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 There are increasing occasions when our crude filtering rules are blocking genuine communications sent to the Council but not received by the recipient. These include communications from government departments, from suppliers and from community groups. Having to set up such organisations or users each time on a permitted use list is time consuming and often the intended recipient does not know they had missed an important communication.
- 4.2 The Council has been successful on a number of twitter campaigns, with a high following and an ability to get an instant message out. Relaxing of current controls would allow for use of channels such as You Tube, access to which is currently blocked, to promote our services through film/video supporting more traditional means. A more holistic approach to the use of social media would enable greater reach of Council messages to those who prefer to receive their information in this way

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Maintain the current controls and restrictions and fall further behind in the digital economy.
- 5.2 Relax all controls and increase the risks which, should an incident occur, lead to action against the Council for not having relevant controls and a clear policy.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	Janie Berry – Director of Legal and Democratic Services Not Applicable Karen Jewell, Director of Human Resources Not applicable Kath Gruber – Director of Customer Services Yvonne Wilkinson – Head of Communications Richard Boneham – Head of Audit and Governance
For more information contact: Background papers: List of appendices:	Nick O'Reilly 01332 64-3254 nick.oreilly@derby.gov.uk None Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Baseline Personnel Security Standards

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 There are no financial implications.

Legal

- 2.1 There are no direct legal implications.
- 2.2 The policy does however highlight some legal issues for individuals in how their use of social media at work could result in legal action; including the possibility that certain types of misuse of social media channels are covered by media law such as libel.

Personnel

- 3.1 The policy will apply to all staff, and as such, will go through the agreed consultation procedures with the trade unions.
- 3.2 If staff follow the code of conduct then there are no additional personnel implications, this brings the use of electronic communications and social media into line with other policies whereas currently it is more restricted.

IT

- 4.1 The IT Implications are covered in the body of the report.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 Social media is a very accessible method of communication for Deaf people and so removing restrictions can only be a positive move. In addition, there have been many times where for example our LGBT community has had difficulty in sending us electronic information and this is very embarrassing for the Council, particularly as Stonewall Diversity Champions.

Health and Safety

- 6.1 None

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.1 None.

Property and Asset Management

- 8.1 None.

Risk Management

- 9.1 We will monitor activity such that, if we receive complaints from within or outside the Council, we can re-assess the balance of controls versus trust and management oversight. There is a potential increased impact of a social media incident as it can spread more quickly than, for example, email; but the policy seeks to contain this with clear rules and guidance to all staff.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 10.1 The Council aims to be a leading digital organisation, with a modern way of working that facilitates staff, customers and partners. Embracing social media rather than seeking to control it is the right approach, and is what successful digital organisations embrace.