



Derby City Council

**Personnel Committee**  
**23 November 2018**

**ITEM 06**

Report of the Strategic Director of Corporate Resources

## **Social Media Policy**

### **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The current Electronic Communication and Social Media Policy was last updated in 2015. Given the fast changing nature and use of social media, it is now considerably out of date and no longer fit for purpose.
- 1.2 A report by Internal Audit in late 2017 recommended that the existing policy be updated to reflect the changes in our use of social media and changes to the platforms themselves.
- 1.3 Social media is a key communications channel and needs to be adequately managed and monitored to both protect and positively enhance our reputation. The recommendations in this new Policy will enable this.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 To approve the new Social Media Policy for implementation subject to final ratification at Corporate Joint Committee on 19.12.18.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Policy will set clear standards and provide simple guidance regarding the acceptable use of social media by employees as a business tool, as well as their personal use both within and outside of work.
- 3.2 The policy also covers acceptable use of social media by residents who choose to interact with us in this way. Implementation of the policy will enable us to protect employees and residents from unacceptable criticism and abuse on the Council's social media channels.

### **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 4.1 There has been an increasing use of social media as a communication channel to reach residents, partner organisations and other key stakeholders. Several services now have their own social media channels which are used effectively to share messages and updates and interact with residents. Key examples include:
  - Families Information Service on Facebook
  - Community Protection Team on Twitter.

- 4.2 Whilst most colleagues and residents use social media responsibly and positively, there are, unfortunately, a small minority who do not. Where employees get it wrong either personally or on behalf of the Council, this can present a reputational risk. The new policy will help to mitigate this by clearly setting out what is and is not acceptable and the steps we may take to safeguard our reputation and protect our employees from unacceptable criticism or abuse.
- 4.3 Recent incidents on our social media channels have indicated a clear need for formal standards to be set that enable us to take action, legal or otherwise, against unacceptable behaviour.
- 4.4 The Policy was presented to Trade Unions on 5 October at the Policy Working Group. It was well received and Unions representatives were given the option to comment further.

**OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

5.1 None. This is an Internal Audit recommendation.

**IMPLICATIONS**

**Legal**

Emerging legal precedents identify that the misuse of social media both professionally as well as in a private capacity could amount to misconduct where such action impacts negatively on the Council as an employer and on its reputation.

As a mandatory policy for all employees to adhere to both in terms of identifying acceptable standards as well as in the interest of consistency, a breach of the policy could result in disciplinary action.

**Personnel**

If the Policy is approved this policy will affect all Council employees. A communications plan will be used to promote the policy and benefits to employees and residents.

**Equalities Impact**

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed with support from the Lead on Equalities and Diversity. The assessment showed that the new policy will have a number of positive impacts for those with protected characteristics, including our own employees.

**This report has been approved by the following officers:**

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| <b>Legal</b><br><b>Finance</b><br><b>Human Resources</b><br><b>Estates/Property</b><br><b>Service Director(s)</b> | Olu Idowu<br>NA<br>Liz Moore<br>NA |
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|                 |  |
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| <b>Other(s)</b> |  |
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| <b>For more information contact:</b><br><b>Background papers:</b><br><b>List of appendices:</b> | Georgia Pulford 01332 643013 georgia.pulford@derby.gov.uk<br>None<br>Appendix 1 – Implications<br>Appendix 2 – Draft Social Media Policy<br>Appendix 3 – EIA |
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