

**REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL****UPDATE ON SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY AND POLICY****Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an update on the revised Social Media Policy and associated Strategy and Guidance documents.

**Information and Advice**

2. Social media is the term commonly given to online tools, channels and interactive media which allow people to interact with individuals, groups or organisations by sharing information, opinions, knowledge, interests and asking questions or participating in online discussion and conversations.
3. The Council also recognises that there are a number of risks with using social media and it brings professional responsibilities that all Council employees need to understand. The Social Media Policy provides a framework to manage such risks to ensure the benefits of using social media are maximised with minimum risk.
4. Policy Committee approved the new Social Media Policy and associated strategy and guidance in November 2015.

**Social Media Policy**

5. The purpose of the new Policy was to ensure that social media activity is safe, appropriate, purposeful and legal.
6. This Policy has been reviewed and is still in line with various best practice and guidance documents published by other local authorities, the Local Government Association (LGA), the Cabinet Office, and takes account of legal and regulatory requirements related to digital and social media.
7. A key update to this Policy included the commitment that the Council would make access to social and streaming media open by default from devices on the Council's network. This has been actioned and to date has not raised any concerns or issues.
8. One of key areas of the Policy are to reflect a higher focus on effective risk management. In order to do this social media needs to be monitored. In order to support this activity we have introduced new social media monitoring and management software called Bizvue. This

software allows the council to monitor any mentions as well as control the publishing of social media updates by staff to Council social media channels.

9. The Policy will be annually reviewed and any future updates will be brought back to Policy Committee for approval.

## Social Media Strategy

10. The Social Media Strategy supports the Council’s Communications Strategy and sets out the strategic approach to how Council will use social media more effectively to ensure it directly supports business objectives.

11. The Strategy outlines that there are three strategic aims to using social media:

- Achieve value for money and cost savings
- Increase positive reputation through customer satisfaction and service take-up
- Increase participation in the democratic process – including using social media to gather information to support improved service delivery

12. The Strategy set out the following timetable for implementation:

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Brief details</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
Rationalisation and basic housekeeping – of existing social media counts	Delete old/unnecessary profiles Ensure appropriate branding Ensure digital team has access	End of October 2015 <b>Complete</b>
Implement content strategy across corporate social media accounts	Ensure content/publishing schedule is in place	End of November 2015 <b>Complete</b>
Communication of basic standards	Proactively communicate and promote the Social Media Policy and Social Media Guidelines	End of December 2015 <b>Complete in CSC, further rollout in May</b>
Implementation of standards (for profiles not already meeting them)	Address with individual services as needed	End of January 2016 <b>Complete</b>
Support	Provide bespoke training to relevant individuals/services Establish digital e-learning module for all staff to include social media standards	End of March 2016 <b>Delayed until May 2016</b>

13. The strategy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and the outcomes of which will be reported back

## Social Media Guidelines

14. The guidelines cover the practicalities of using social media. The guidelines were specifically developed to provide full and comprehensive guidance around the standards expected in relation to both work-related and personal use of social media.
15. The guidelines have formed the basis for a new e-learning package that explains the appropriate use of Social Media as well as highlighting the key aspects of the Council's Social Media Policy. The e-learning package is currently being tested and will be rolled out at the beginning of May.

### **Social Media Outcomes**

16. The Council is seeing considerable growth in activity on its social media channels:
- Facebook page likes increased **46%** between April 2015 and April 2016
  - Twitter **34%** more profile views in Quarter 1 2016 compared to Quarter 1 2015 and the number of followers has increased **38%**
  - YouTube video watch time has increased **38%** compared with the same period in 2015, and views have increased by **36%**

### **Other Options Considered**

17. None – It was agreed that Policy Committee should be updated on the implementation of the policy

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

18. To keep members updated on the progress of the implementation of the Social Media Policy and related guidance.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

19. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

### **Financial Implications**

20. All expenditure attached with the social media Digital First work stream is contained within existing budgets. Any divergence from this position will be brought back before Members.

### **Equalities Implications**

21. Equalities implications have been considered as part of compiling this report. Social media is one of many communications channels used by the Council, so is not exclusive to any protected groups. As there are no negative impacts on any protected group, an Equality Impact Assessment has not been deemed necessary.

## **RECOMMENDATION/S**

It is recommended that Policy Committee:

- 1) Notes the progress made in the implementation Council's Social Media Policy and related guidance.

**Alan Rhodes**  
**Leader of the Council**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact: Martin Done/Mark Knight**

### **Constitutional Comments**

22. Constitutional Comments are not required as the report is for noting only.

### **Financial Comments (SES 10/05/16)**

23. The financial implications are set out in the report.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All