POLICY, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

26 JANUARY 2011

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA REVIEW

REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS

1.0 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To update on the use of Social Media at the Council , and make recommendations for future development of Social Media

2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 **It is recommended that:**

a) **Social Media is included in the Communication Policy and accepted as an alternative means of communication.**
b) **The Social Media Policy is approved and adopted by the Authority**
c) **Head of Communications have delegated authority to make amendments to the policy in line with legislation and good practice.**

3.0 **KEY ISSUES**

3.1 Social media is any form of online publication or presence that allows end users to engage in multi-directional conversations. It allows for sharing of information, content, views as well as on line discussions and can take many different formats including videos, images, blogs, forums and message boards. It is a recognised means of communication and a growing trend.

3.2 Social Media can take several formats with Facebook, Twitter and You Tube being amongst the most popular in use as the moment.

3.3 The Authority is currently using Facebook to communicate information and images in relation to Parkside as well as advertise Town Centre activity and engage with Fairmead residents.

3.4 You Tube was used during the Young Mayor elections along side both Facebook and Twitter.

3.5 For the last 12 months the HR Officer has been using Twitter to communicate updates on the website, promote events and activities and provide updates on disruptions to service caused by severe winter weather and circulate articles from the Melton Times and Leicester Mercury. There are currently approx 150 people or organisations following MBC via Twitter

3.6 Social Media is becoming increasing popular for both social and work purposes. Many employees do have an account of some sort whether it be LinkedIn, Facebook, MySpace or Twitter. Whilst most of these accounts are being used for social and personal issues there has been recent media attention drawn to cases where personal social media use has impacted on work.

3.7 The implementation of a Social Media Policy aims to ensure staff are aware of the advantages and risks in using social media in both a work and personal capacity. It provides guidelines for its use and aims to protect employees and the Authority from the risk of challenge and inappropriate conduct whilst on line.

3.8 Sites like Facebook and Twitter are relatively easy and free to set up however they do

need to be managed with content kept up to date and relevant. Inappropriate use of logos and other images as well as detrimental information could give a negative perception of the authority. The Communication Policy should acknowledge Social Media as a recognised communication method in order to ensure it is managed and co-ordinated in line with the needs and requirements of the Council. .

4.0   POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

4.1   Existing Communications policy will require updating to include the use of Social Media however this is within the delegated authority of the Head of Communications.

5.0   FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1   The are no financial implications as a result of this report.

6.0   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

6.1   There are no legal implications as a result of this report

7.0   COMMUNITY SAFETY

7.1   There are no direct Community Safety implications

8.0   EQUALITIES

8.1   The use of Social Media as another means of communication should result in wider communication with the community in particular young people and other hard to reach groups. The use of Social Media should continue to be monitored and any impact noted through the Equality Impact Assessment.

9.0   RISKS

9.1   There is a potential risk of abuse of Social Media if no policy is in place to ensure the correct management and monitoring of usage.

10.0   CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1   Social Media is an electronic, online means of communicating with a wider audience therefore does not require the use of paper or transport and is an environmentally friendly means of communication.

11.0   CONSULTATION

11.1   The Unions have been kept informed of progress with the use of Social Media and have been consulted in the production of the draft policy. The Social Media Policy has been to Joint Staff Working Group with no adverse comments.

12.0   WARDS AFFECTED

12.1   All wards benefit from an additional means of communication

Angela Tebbutt
Head of Communications
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