

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

This matter is a key decision within the council's definition and has been included in the relevant forward plan.

**Report of the Executive
Director of Core Services**

Barnsley Council's social media policy 2018-2020

1. Purpose of report

The purpose of this report to cabinet is to gain approval of the social media policy 2018-2020, and allow its implementation to take place from November 2018.

2. Recommendations

It's recommended that cabinet approves the social media policy (Appendix A) and agrees that this can be presented to Full Council for approval.

3. Introduction

3.1 Social media is a key channel in helping us to communicate and engage with our residents and customers. The priority now is to use social media more strategically to ensure good engagement with our residents, better customer service, and wider sharing of information on the services most important to our customers.

3.2 Social media enables us to:

- engage with our residents and customers
- promote our services at low/no financial cost compared to other communications channels
- listen to what people are saying about Barnsley and the council
- offer another channel where our customers can contact us.

3.3 We currently have three main social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) which are managed by the communications and marketing service. We also have approximately 50 service level accounts which are

managed at a service level, including Barnsley Helps, our customer service accounts.

4. Proposal and justification

It's proposed that we implement the social media policy for 2018-2020 (Appendix A)

- 4.1 Social media channels are developing at an increasing rate and our current social media policy isn't robust enough to cover these changes. We want our employees and elected members to feel confident in using social media to engage with their customers and have a policy which defines their role in managing and monitoring their sites.
- 4.2 Many of our employees and elected members are also residents of Barnsley. We want them to have clear guidance on using social media for their personal use at home and feel safe in sharing information about what's happening in Barnsley with their family and friends.
- 4.3 The policy includes information and guidance for our employees and elected members on:
 - using social media at work to engage with residents/customers
 - using social media for personal use at home
 - using personal social media sites at work
 - legal information
 - roles and responsibilities of employees, elected members, managers, human resources and communications and marketing
- 4.4 The proposed policy also includes a site owner's policy. This guidance will support employees who are managing/monitoring a council-owned social media channel. This has been included to mitigate and manage the risk of inappropriate use of a council site.
- 4.5 The communications and marketing service is running training sessions for site owners on how to effectively manage their work accounts, including best practice on how to engage with their audiences. The service is also developing guidance for employees on how to use social media more generally, along with an online learning course and specific guidance for elected members. This proposed policy is a key part of that training and follows the same design.
- 4.6 The proposed policy also takes into account advances in technology and legal regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulations.

- 4.7 The proposed policy provides information on the council's zero tolerance approach to violent or aggressive behaviour or discriminatory comments towards a council employee or elected member. It details how employees and elected members can report violent or aggressive behaviour or discriminatory comments made via social media.
- 4.8 The policy also supports the use of social media advertising as a cost effective channel for sharing information to targeted audiences.
- 4.9 The policy has been redrafted using plain and engaging language which makes the guidance easier to understand and use. It also includes hyperlinks to key policies and documents.

5. Consideration of alternative approaches

- 5.1 The alternative approach is to continue working under the existing social media policy. This is not recommended as it gives employees and elected members outdated information on channels, their roles and responsibilities and legal aspects of using social media.

6. Implications for local people / customers

No implications identified

7. Financial impacts

No impacts identified

8. Employee impacts

- 8.1 The recommended social media policy gives clear guidance on how employees and elected members should use social media platforms at both home and at work and their responsibilities as an employee or elected member of Barnsley Council.
- 8.2 The policy also supports employees and elected members in managing their service social media platforms to make sure that they're engaging with customers effectively.
- 8.3 The proposed policy provides information on the council's zero tolerance approach to violent or aggressive behaviour towards a council employee or elected member. It details how employees and elected members can report violent or aggressive behaviour on social media.

9. IT impacts

- 9.1 The recommended policy includes links to GDPR regulations and also covers SharePoint and is flexible to include future developments in social platforms.

10. Communications activity

- 10.1 If approved, the social media policy will be communicated internally to all employees and elected members (both networked and non-networked). A section on the intranet will be created to give employees and elected members access to information and guidance on social media. The communications and marketing service will communicate with site owners around training opportunities.

11. Promoting equality, diversity and social inclusion

- 11.1 The policy considers the effect of harassment, bullying, violent or aggressive behaviour, or discriminatory/hate crime comments on social media. It provides guidance to employees and elected members on dealing with these incidents.

12. Consultations

The following people have been consulted in the development of the social media policy:

- Communications and Marketing service
- Senior Management Team
- Trade Unions (consulted on Social Media Policy)
- Human Resources
- IT
- Legal services
- Equalities and Incusion

13. List of appendices

- Appendix A – Social media policy 2018-2020

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Financial impacts / Consultation

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*(To be signed by senior financial services officer where
no financial impacts)*