

ETHICAL GOVERNANCE AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE –

THE INTRODUCTION OF A POLICY ON THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE DIRECTION)



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

A Borough to be proud of

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To present the proposed policy on the use of “Social Media”.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the proposed “Social Media Policy” is adopted.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

3.1 The increase in the use of social media has the potential to impact on all organisations both positively or negatively. This has come about by the development and popularity of smart phone and tablet technologies making access to internet services possible at any time and from any location. This level of access has the potential to impact on the management of employee activities during contracted hours and possibly beyond. This increased access to online social media has exposed employers to the risk of breaches of confidentiality as well as that of reputational damage as a result of careless and or inappropriate ‘posts’.

3.2 Establishing a policy that is both fair and reasonable to all those associated with HBBC, has the potential to limit third party claims as individuals will know, and understand what is expected of them when engaging in the use of social media. It also provides a mechanism for dealing with inappropriate conduct whilst engaging in the use of social media.

3.3 Existing HR policies will be updated to incorporate recent case law and will be submitted for consideration during the next 12 months.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The introduction of the policy has the potential to limit the costs of litigation and place responsibility on the individual authors. There will be a requirement for communication and training for staff. The costs of this are unknown at this stage. Once the costs are known they will be approved in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (AB)

The Social Media Policy will have the effect of mitigating against any potentially actionable statements made on employees social media accounts.

In drafting the policy Article 10 of the Human Rights Act 1998. The right of Freedom of Expression has been taken into account.

6. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

This policy supports the Short/Medium Term People Strategy.

7. CONSULTATION

Consultation took place with the local branch of Unison and GMB and suggestions have been included with this policy.

8. **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives and / or damage its reputation.

It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time, and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

None

9. **KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

The policy reflects Equality legislation.

10. **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

HR implications.

Background papers: None

Contact Officer: Julie Stay, HR and Transformation Manager

Executive Member: Cllr B Witherford