



1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

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

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

That the proposed “Social Media Policy” and guidelines are 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 policies will be updated and submitted over the next year to incorporate references to social media. The introduction of this policy should not to be confused with the Council’s current Whistle Blowing policy, which can be accessed should an employee wish to make a confidential or anonymous complaint.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (AB)**

Potential costs of litigation whilst unlikely the risk does exist

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (AB)**

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) may be held vicariously liable, for unlawful actions of employees. This applies whether or not HBBC knows or approves of them. The speed and coverage potential of social media exposes all organisation to the risk of litigation as a result of inappropriate content and use of social media. To manage these risks the proposed social media policy sets out the conduct and behaviours expected of all those associated with HBBC.

6. **CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

This policy supports the People Strategy.

7. **CONSULTATION**

Consultation has taken place with the local branch of Unison and GMB and suggestions have been included within this policy. This policy has also been approved by the joint board (SLB/COB).

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:

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
HBBC could be vicariously liable for unlawful actions of its employees. Inappropriate posting of data via social media exposes the Council to risk of litigation	Implement policy and raise awareness of staff of the inappropriate use of social media	Julie Stay

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

None.

10. **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account the HR implications.

Background papers: None

Contact Officer: Julie Stay, HR and Transformation Manager

Executive Member: Cllr B Witherford