



**Policy, Finance &
Development
Committee**

**Tuesday 27th
October 2015**

Matter for Decision

Title: **Social Media Policy**

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1. Introduction

This report is intended to give an overview of a proposed social media policy and plan. Social media represents a powerful communication tool for the Council to reach out to the community and share both informative and promotional news about what is going on in the Borough. Likewise it gives residents a new dimension and avenue to interact and reach-out to their Council. At a member induction evening earlier this year an outline was presented on how the increased use of social media can benefit the Council. The following were identified by members as key elements of any proposed policy:-

- Strong endorsement that social media would be an important part of external communications moving forward.
- Emphasis on the importance the required safeguards and the need to create operational documents for staff and members on acceptable and recommended usage.

The main objective of this report is to seek approval to initiate the consultant's proposed project as detailed below.

2. Recommendations

That Members:-

- 2.1** Approve the proposals within the report as the basis for a social media policy.

3. Information

3.1 Why social media?

- To raise awareness for Oadby & Wigston Borough Council, allowing them to engage with the local residents whilst create a platform on which the two can communicate with each other to maximise all aspects of the Borough including safety, inclusion and community spirit.
- Create an online presence with a clear strategy, on which residents of all ages and backgrounds can communicate with the council to improve their community.

- Connect with the local people through social media, making this one of the primary tools through which to engage with, hear from and communicate any news to residents and other stakeholders.
- This can be taken forward as part of the ongoing Customer Services Transformation project.

3.2 OWBC's current online presence

Unlike press releases and blog posts, social media has the added bonus of updating residents as and when things happen, such as events, closures and good news. Oadby & Wigston currently use social media in the following ways:

- OWBC Twitter account: A successful Twitter account with 593 followers to date. The account covers mostly local news and updates within the Borough, such as car park closures and road blocks. The account also engages the online audience in Council initiatives.
- Brocks Hill official Facebook Page: The official page covers the surrounding area, predominantly highlighting local events. With 1,874 likes, the Facebook account is receiving a good standard of engagement.

3.3 Objectives for developing social media

- Create a clear and precise tone of voice for the social media accounts which will reflect how the residents want their Council to be; Confident, approachable, understanding, focussed on the residents.
- Nominate a specific representative (or group of representatives) to post on behalf of the Council.
- Promote the Council and share positive news stories, upcoming events and Council initiatives.
- Focus on customer service. Engage with residents and promote a two way channel for them to contact the Council and comment on certain issues, events and opinions.
- Share content such as; news stories, photos, videos, newsletters, announcements, events etc.

3.4 Suggest social media platforms

- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Street Life

3.5 Safeguarding and social media policies

- Social media will need to align with the existing acceptable use policy from both an IT and HR point of view.

- As one of the first steps of the social media project, the existing acceptable use policy will be reviewed to ensure it has a robust policies in place to prevent mis-use and inappropriate use of social media

3.6 Reporting and measurement

- Central to the success of social media is regular measurement and reporting. Regular statistics to show engagement levels, audience numbers and suggested actions on how to improve moving forward will be provided.

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Background Papers:-

Implications	
Financial (JD)	No significant financial implications known at present, which can if necessary be met through the management of change reserve.
Risk (AC)	CR4 : Reputational damage.
Equalities (AC)	No significant implications.
Legal (AC)	No significant implications.