

Bolsover District Council

Standards

11th March 2019

Social Media Guidance for Councillors
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Report of the Head of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer

This report is public

Purpose of the Report

- To consider the introduction of a Social Media Guidance document for Councillors.

1 Report Details

- 1.1 Social media is the collective term used to describe online tools, websites and interactive media that enables users to interact with each other by sharing information, opinions, knowledge and interest.
- 1.2 Social media increases access to audiences and improves accessibility of communication. It is a powerful and effective method for Councillors to interact with residents, however guidelines are needed.
- 1.3 The draft social media guidance for councillors is attached as appendix A but can be summarised as follows;
 - (a) The guidance is designed to encourage the use of social media sensibly and responsibly and to ensure that use does not adversely affect the Council or its business, nor be damaging to the Councils reputation and credibility or otherwise violate any council policies.
 - (b) The guidance is to advise Councillors with particular regard to issues such as standards, libel, copyright, data protection, bias and pre-determination as well as encouraging good manners online.
 - (c) The guidance makes explicit reference to how aspects of the Code of Conduct for Members will apply to online activity in the same way as they do to any other councillor's use. This is important especially where an individual has a social media account and they comment both as a councillor and as an individual.

2 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 It is considered good practice to have guidance on councillor's use of social media, and the draft guidance builds upon guidance issues by the Local Government Association. It will provide clarification and guidance to members as to how they should be conducted themselves in their use of social media.

3 Consultation and Equality Impact

- 3.1 None.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 We do not have any current guidance on the use of social media by councillors. This use of social media is on the increase as this becomes a popular method of communication for councillors to be able to engage with residents, guidance is needed for the protection of councillors and the Council.

5 Implications

5.1 Finance and Risk Implications

- 5.1.1 None

5.2 Legal Implications including Data Protection

- 5.2.1 As in the report.

5.3 Human Resources Implications

- 5.3.1 None

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 That the Social Media Guidance for Councillors as set out in Appendix A be considered and recommended to Council for adoption as part of the Review of the Constitution.

7 Decision Information

Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds: BDC: Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/> NEDDC: Revenue - £100,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £250,000 <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please indicate which threshold applies	No
Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)	No
District Wards Affected	All
Links to Corporate Plan priorities or Policy Framework	N/A

8 Document Information

Appendix No	Title
A	Draft Social Media Guidance for Councillors
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
None	
Report Author	Contact Number
V Dawson	2231