

Present: Councillor Adrianna McNulty (*in the Chair*)

Councillors: Liz Bushell, Thomas Dyer, Gary Hewson, Jane Loffhagen, Laura McWilliams, Christopher Reid and Loraine Woolley

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Ric Metcalfe and Roger Vine

1. Confirmation of Minutes - 11 January 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Social Media Policy

Consideration was given to a report by Steve Welsby (Communications Manager), which invited comments on the proposed amended Social Media Policy, which incorporated provisions such as the council accounts available for use, employee wellbeing, the best use of social media, personal accounts and councillor use of social media. The report also sought a recommendation from the Committee to the Executive for the policy's approval.

Further to the Committee's consideration of the draft Social Media Policy in January 2020, the comments of the Committee had been incorporated into the latest version. It was explained that the revised draft policy was being considered at this stage, as the Covid-19 Pandemic had meant that it had not been possible to make progress, owing to other pressures.

The main changes involved the separation of the policy into three distinct areas: covering general advice; advice to councillors; and advice to employees. This would make it clear where the advice was aimed at.

The Communications Team had worked alongside partners, such as the NHS and Lincolnshire County Council, during the Covid-19 Pandemic to promote key messages. The Council used Facebook and Twitter and was exploring the possibility of using TikTok.

During consideration of the draft Policy, the following points were noted:

- It was suggested that all councillors received a copy of the Social Media Policy prior to it being submitted to the Executive for approval.
- The Policy should include advice to 'dual-hatters' – those councillors who served on both the City of Lincoln Council and Lincolnshire County Council, as these councillors tended to operate joint social media accounts for both roles they undertook.
- It was confirmed that this policy related to any personal social media accounts and not the social media accounts of any organisation a councillor may sit on, for example Development Plus.

- Under section 10 – *To block or not to block*, it was requested that the suggested courses of action for Twitter and Facebook were the same.
- Under section 11 – *Photography and video*, it was requested that the wording on seeking permissions for photos was clarified, particularly the difference between taking photos of individuals compared to photos taken in a public place.
- Under section 12 – *How the council will ensure the best use of its social media*, the last bullet point should be amended to reflect that no derogatory comments should be made about anyone or the council as a whole.
- It was requested that additional detail be added to the sentence *The council will not continue with poor performing accounts* so that the intended meaning behind this statement was clear.
- It was acknowledged that councillors were responsible for any content on their social media accounts, including comments of others. Further to this, it was requested that the section on the Council's social media accounts was updated to reflect that it too was responsible for any content on its social media account, including comments of others. It was noted that the Communications Team continually monitored the Council's social media accounts, including outside of office hours. The Council also utilised filters on its accounts to block any inappropriate content posted by others.
- It was requested that the policy included which department councillors could contact for support should they receive threats via social media.
- It was confirmed that comments and direct messages sent to the Council's social media accounts were responded typically within a timeframe of 24 hours. However, this could sometimes take longer if the Communications Team had to obtain information from departments. It was also confirmed that any incorrect statements posted by others were corrected by the Team, provided it was appropriate to do so.
- It was noted that the policy stated the Council's logo should not be used as part of a profile photo. However, it was highlighted that certain social media platforms, such as LinkedIn automatically added logos. It was confirmed this wording would be revisited.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the revised draft Social Media Policy be supported, provided that the above suggested comments and amendments be incorporated.
- (2) That subject to (1) all councillors be sent a copy of the updated Social Media Policy, prior to it being submitted to the Executive for approval.

4. **Work Programme**

Consideration was given to the work programme for the coming months.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the meeting scheduled to be held on 10 January 2022 be cancelled.
- (2) That the work programme be approved.