WILTSHIRE COUNCIL

STAFFING POLICY COMMITTEE
4 July 2012

PERSONAL USE OR SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Purpose of Report

1. To present the newly developed "personal use of social media policy" for review and agreement.

Background

2. A requirement was identified for a policy to cover the personal use of social media by employees.

3. This policy applies when staff are using social media in their own time (i.e. not within their council job role)

4. It applies at all times, whether they are using council equipment (e.g. during lunch breaks) or their own personal equipment (e.g. home PC or personal smartphone).

5. Where employees are using social media on behalf of the council the "Social media and blogging" policy (developed by the Information assurance and Communication team) applies.

6. The requirement for this policy came from several sources including:

   • Employees contacting the communications team for guidance;

   • Managers asking for guidance on how to manage inappropriate social media content;

   • Both operational HR and legal team based on recent cases relating to social media where existing policies were not deemed to be strong enough to underpin the appropriate disciplinary action;

   • Recent case law which confirms the need for a policy which is clear and specific and makes employees aware of the consequences of posting inappropriate content

7. ACAS best practice advice is to have a policy on social media and this policy takes into account the guidance they provide, together with other best practice guidance.

Main considerations

Policy consultation

8. It was recognised that this policy would be one that could cause concern amongst staff and therefore full consultation has been carried out in order to ensure that an appropriate and "fit for purpose" policy was developed for Wiltshire.

9. The first draft of the policy was circulated to the unions, stakeholder panel, communications, IT, legal and other key stakeholders and generated a lot of feedback.

10. Main points from initial consultation were that the policy was too restrictive, too "big brother" and put people off using social media which is not the aim of the council.

11. Additional consultation was conducted, including the use of focus groups which were attended by a mixture of managers and staff from a variety of service areas as well as representatives from Unison and communications.

12. At the focus groups there was 100% support for a policy being needed and there was valuable discussion and feedback about the style, content and focus, as a result of which the policy was changed quite significantly.

13. The emphasis is now much more on employees protecting themselves and specific advice being contained within the FAQ's.section of the policy.

14. The revised policy went back to those who attended the focus groups, unions, equality impact assessment panel and stakeholder panel.

Policy roll out

15. Throughout the development process we have worked closely with the Communications team. The aim is to roll out this policy alongside the launch of access to additional webpages for all staff.

16. The Communication team plan to run training sessions on elements covered by this policy, including the use of privacy settings

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

17. None

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

18. No negative impacts were identified.

Risk Assessment

19. None

Recommendation

20. To approve the personal use of social media policy

**Barry Pirie
Service Director
HR & OD**

Report Author: Paula Marsh, Human Resources Policy & Reward team

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report: None