SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY
2016 - 2019

June 2016

Contents

Appendices

1. Background

1.1. Since the Council's first Social Media Strategy (2013-15), the reach of the corporate social media channels has grown considerably and continues to grow steadily each month. In line with that Strategy, the Council has also moved from simply broadcasting information through its social media channels to using them to engage with customers as an additional digital channel.

1.2. The growth of online audience and use of social media channels enables the Council to work more effectively in three ways:

- **Communication**   Directly communicate important and timely messages, news and information, promote events and improve awareness of services by providing direct digital access to them.

- **Engagement**   Seek opinions, share conversations and better engage with residents. We can help to improve residents' knowledge and correct misconceptions.

- **Collaboration**   Find more efficient ways of working together and sharing information across strategic partners which can enhance partnership working and demonstrate the effectiveness of working together.

1.3. Messaging through social media is instant and can be wide reaching. In addition to reaching the registered followers of a social media account, if these followers share messages with their own networks, the reach for messaging can be substantial. It is therefore essential that the Council's Social Media accounts are effectively managed, monitored and administered.

1.4. When the Council's social media accounts were first established, information was simply broadcast with no interaction with or response to comments from followers. The investment in a social media management tool has enabled the Council to engage with customers in a two way process, responding to enquiries and comments through social media in line with their approach to phone and email enquiries.

1.5. In addition to defining this Council's approach to social media management and use, this strategy also includes four appendices comprising a social media policy statement and guidelines on the use of social media for employees and for elected members as follows:

- Appendix 1: Social Media Policy Statement
- Appendix 2: Guidelines for employees – Administrators and those who use the Council's Social Media accounts
- Appendix 3: Guidelines for employees – Personal use of Social Media
- Appendix 4: Guidelines for Elected Members

2. Channels

2.1. Twitter and Facebook and YouTube remain the widest used social media channels with hundreds of millions of users across the world. They are the most used channels by local government across the UK and are the ones Council operates corporate accounts across all three. The Council's Twitter account has 6,369 followers and Facebook 8,609 (to end of May 2016). Key Council information and campaigns are promoted through these channels and Customer Services now respond to customer enquiries in the same way they might respond by email or online, as part of our digital customer services approach.

2.2. The Council also maintains a YouTube account which can host video footage for the website and provide a link to video content from the Council for Customers to access.

2.3. Feedback and use figures from Audiobook (an audio social media channel) and Flikr (a channel for hosting and sharing photographs), previously considered by the Council for adoption, indicate that these channels do not have the substantial followings, therefore they have not been developed.

3. Use

3.1. With a now well-established social media presence, sustaining steady growth, the focus for future social media development for the Council is to build on the customer service response element and to better use social media for consultation.

3.2. This is consistent with the digital by default approach to customer services and will further enhance the opportunity for customers to engage with the Council at a time and place that suits them. Customers should experience the same service standards of response across all digital channels, including social media, website and email.

3.3. In addition to using Social Media channels for day to day publicity and campaigns, this Social Media Strategy 2016-19 defines that social media channels will be used for the following:

- Broadcasting information (Communications & Engagement)
- Campaigns (Communications & Engagement)
- Emergency communications (Communications & Engagement)
- Responding to requests and enquiries (Customer Services)
- Engagement and consultation (Communications, ICT and other Services)

4. Management and Administration of corporate accounts

4.1. A social media management tool is used for the effective administration of the Council's Corporate social media accounts. Such a tool brings all three accounts together on one platform, with a dashboard that can readily show current posts both from and to the Council and a comprehensive analysis element.

4.2.   This approach ensures that an audit trail is in place for who posts what and when. The analysis and metrics element of the tool can measure the reach and popularity of posts and can be set up to analyse individual campaigns as well as overall performance across social media channels

4.3.   The tool automatically removes posts using offensive language and enables those with access to the tool to effectively carry out two way communications and take action as appropriate. A tender process is currently underway to replace or renew the current contract as outlined in the Action Plan (section 7).

4.4.   The Communication & Engagement Team will continue to manage the Council's Social Media channels using the social media management tool. This includes providing access rights to employees in other service areas to communicate through the Council's social media accounts and supporting them on it use and providing monitoring traffic and dealing with posts and comments that are not automatically deleted through the management tool filter but which give concern.

4.5.   This approach manages risk and ensures that all those involved in delivering communications and engagement through social media management are aware of appropriate use, know what to do and when and can escalate issues to communications and engagement as required.

4.6.   The Communications & Engagement Team will continue to provide training and support in order to promote best practice and help maximise engagement though social media, including training and the provision and review of standard responses, to ensure customer enquiries, comments and requests on social media are responded to as they would be by telephone or email during operating hours.

5.   Analytics and Reporting

5.1.   The Social Media Management Tool enables reports to be prepared as required, to assess the effectiveness of social media channels in reaching customers. The numbers of people following the Council on Facebook and Twitter are reported monthly, quarterly and through HGIOS with campaigns and themes of particular interest are highlighted.

5.2.   Social media analysis of individual campaigns will also be carried out and is used to measure and report on the effectiveness of this channel alongside other communications channels, to ensure an effective mix of communications across digital and more traditional approaches is used.

5.3.   Social media can also be used to encourage participation in consultations and surveys and to drive traffic to the Council website. Website statistics will be analysed to determine how much traffic has been generated through social media to determine the effectiveness of our digital approach and inform future activity.

5.4.   Month surveys of customer communications are carried out online and by phone to determine how customers currently engage with the Council and their preference for future communications. The findings will be used to inform future strategies.

6.   Employee engagement and communications

6.1.   To ensure that employees are aware of this updated Social Media Strategy a Leadership Information Pack will be issued to the Council's Leadership cohort. This will be followed by and Employee News and managers and team leaders will be asked to discuss the social media use guidelines in team meeting and ensure that employees remain aware of those guidelines.

6.2.   The Strategy has been shared with Trades Union colleagues through our approach to Partnership at Work.

7.   Social Media Action Plan 2016/17

DATE	ACTION	WHO
June/July 2016	Complete tender process for replacement/renewal of social media management tool	Communications ICT Customer Services Procurement
July 2016	Subject to Council approval, issue Social Media Leadership Information Pack to managers/Team Leaders with guidance	Communications People Development
End July 2016	Issue Employee News advising of Social Media Guidance	Communications
July/August 2016	Managers/Team Leaders to hold discussions at Team Meetings and issue guidance on social media use to team members	Leadership cohort
August 2016	Liaise with EDLC Trust and agree timeline for migration of identified Trust employees managing their accounts (through the central management tool)	Communications EDLC Trust
October 2016/Ongoing	In line with consultation & Engagement Strategy, identify key campaigns and planned consultation/engagement activity across council Services for Social Media delivery	Communications
October 2016/ongoing	Social Media update on statistics and success included in Communications & Engagement 6 month HGIOS report for 2016/17	Communications
May/June 2017	Offer Social Media for Elected Member training for any new elected members following local government elections	Communications People Development
May/June 2017	Review Social Media Action Plan, provide update and prepare action plan for 2017/18	Communications
June 2017	Social Media update on statistics and success included in Communications & Engagement 6 month HGIOS report for 2016/17	Communications

Appendix 1

Social Media Policy Statement 2016-19

The following Social Media Policy statement defines how the Council will manage its social media presence and will be published on the Council website www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk, and a link to this page provided on all Council Social Media accounts.

1.   Social Media Accounts

1.1.   East Dunbartonshire Council manages the following social media accounts:

Channel	Type	Account name
Twitter	Written word, restricted to 140 characters (links possible)	@EDCouncil
Facebook	Written word, can also post photos/video (links possible)	www.facebook.com/edunbartonshirecouncil
YouTube	Video, including film, animation, power point (links possible)	www.youtube.com/user/EastDunCouncil

1.2.   In addition, the following accounts are managed by the council on behalf of EDLC Trust:

Channel	Type	Account name
Twitter	Written word, restricted to 140 characters (links possible)	*@EDLC_culture* *@EDLC_leisure*
Facebook	Written word, can also post photos/video (links possible)	www.facebook.com/EDLCCulture www.**facebook**.com/**EDLCLeisure**

2.   Content

2.1.   Written Word

The Council will issue written messages through Twitter and Facebook, instantly during the working day and also by scheduling messages through social media management software out-with these times. Emergency information will be issued 24/7 as required.

Those who follow/ like the Council's Twitter and Facebook accounts can expect the following:

Issuing information

- Direct and scheduled massages on key issues and campaigns
- Information on Council activities and events
- Information on road closures and traffic disruptions
- Emergency information on all issues including service disruptions, school closures, adverse weather etc
- Shared information from other organisations that the Council feels is relevant to its customers

Engaging with Customers

- Invitations to provide feedback on specific issues on which we are consulting
- Occasional live coverage of events (e.g. election counts)
- Responses to enquiries or acknowledgement of comments posted in relation to Council services

2.2. Video
Video content will be produced to promote key issues and support key Council campaigns and policies through the YouTube account. Visualisation of messages through video can increase customer understanding and enhances messages issued through other communications channels. Video content can also be posted on the television monitors in Council reception areas and in the Community Hubs.

2.3. Photo
Photos used on the Council's social media pages will have the relevant permissions for use in place in line with all publications.

3. Engagement with other organisations through social media

3.1. The Council follows or likes the social media accounts of other relevant organisations, including but not exclusive to:

- Scottish Government
- COSLA
- Community Planning partners,
- Other councils
- Partner organisation
- Media organisations
- Organisations relevant to key initiatives and campaigns

3.2. Organisations or individuals who follow us on Twitter or like us on Facebook, will not automatically be followed or liked back.

3.3. Being followed or liked by the Council does not imply endorsement of any kind.

4.   Administration and Availability

4.1.   The Council's Social Media accounts are managed by the Communications & Engagement Service and are available to customers 24 hours a day.

4.2.   Communications and Engagement have access to the administration of the accounts. Access to these accounts for Council employees is managed through hosted social media management software.

4.3.   Information is issued through the social media accounts directly during office hours and 24/7 using message schedule tools. Emergency information is also issued live 24/7 as required by the duty Communications Officer.

4.4.   Customer Services monitor customer comments and feedback and respond accordingly during Community Hub operating hours.

5.   Feedback, Reporting, Complaints and Comments

5.1.   In line with the Council's priority to promote the click, call, come in approach to customer services, social media channels provide an additional communication channel for customers to engage with the Council.

5.2.   Customer Services will monitor the social media accounts for reports, comments and complaints and deal with these in line with existing customer service standards. Replies to customers will be provided in line with approved guidelines, detailed in the relevant section of this policy.

6.   Replies to Customers

6.1.   Guidelines for employees who manage and administer the Council's social media accounts have been produced (Social Media Strategy Appendix 2 – Guidelines for Employees who administer the Council's accounts).

6.2.   Template responses have been prepared to respond to customer feedback and enquiries and training will be provided to all those who respond to customers through social media, to ensure consistency in language, tone, content and timing of responses. All training will also include guidance on when issues need to be escalated through the appropriate channels.

6.3.   Replies to customers will be made within a target of 24 hours and where appropriate, customers will be advised, where appropriate, that further engagement will continue through private messaging or other communications channels such as email and telephone to ensure the protection of personal information and details.

7.   Access to Social Media by Council Employees

7.1.   In line with the Council's ICT Strategy, all Council employees with access to the Council's ICT systems will be able to access social media from September 2013.

7.2.   Guidelines on the personal use of Social Media have been produced (see Appendix 3 of the Social Media Strategy). These include:

   ● Being aware of content people may post to their social media accounts (directly and indirectly through other associations)
   ● Who they accept as friends of their accounts
   ● Awareness that people may know they work for the Council even if they do not include this information on their account

7.3.   Employees involved in the administration and management of the Council's social media accounts must also follow the relevant ICT and information security policies and the Employee Guidance for administering and managing the Council's social media accounts. Employees who do not comply with the guidelines set out for managing and administrating the Council's social media accounts may be referred through the Council's Discipline at Work Policy and Procedures.

7.4.   Any breaches of the social media guidance for personal use will also be dealt with through the Council's usual Discipline at Work Policy and Procedures and Grievance Policy and Procedures (as detailed in the Personal Use Guidelines).

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Social Media Strategy 2016/19

Appendix 2

Social Media guidelines for Employees – Administrators and users of the Council's Social Media Accounts

1. Introduction

1.1. The Council's Social Media Strategy 2016/19 sets out how the Council will use Social Media to communicate and engage with customers through its established social media accounts.   These are:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- You Tube

1.2. Whilst social media increases the range of communications channels which the Council can use to engage with residents and customers, there are also risks attached. The onward distribution of material cannot be controlled, and once posted to an initial target audience, material can be posted anywhere through the networks of each individual in that audience and beyond.

1.3. For this reason it is essential that the Council has a clear strategy for social media use and these guidelines, which form part of that strategy, have been developed to ensure appropriate use of social media in the workplace and through personal use.

2. Overview

2.1. These guidelines have been developed to protect the reputation of the Council and provide guidance to employees on the effective and safe use of the Council's social media accounts for their own protection.

2.2. These guidelines apply to all those who are involved in the management and administration of the Council's social media accounts. These employees are based in the Council's Communications & Engagement and Customer Services teams.

3. Management of Council Social Media accounts

3.1. The Council's corporate profiles on social media channels are established and managed by the Communications & Engagement Team.

3.2. Council employees considering the use of, or wishing to use, social media as a channel for a Council project or campaign should refer to the Social Media Strategy. The creation of all new social media channels for projects must be approved by the Communications & Engagement Team. In most instances, it will be appropriate for a Council campaign or project to be delivered through the Council's corporate account.

3.3. Where a project specific campaign is to be established on a separate social media channel, this must be developed in discussion with the Communications team who will advise on which channels are most appropriate. It must be required for a specific and defined period of time, comply with the Council's logo and brand guidelines and have clearly established management and monitoring procedures in place.

3.4. The Communications& Engagement Team will check it is suitable for the target audience and that you can maintain and develop it.

3.5. Once you begin maintaining your social media identity, the Communications & Engagement Team will be able to provide support and guidance. However, failure to maintain social media channels to the agreed standard will result in the channel being deleted.

4.   Engaging with customers through Council Social Media accounts

4.1. Council employees with administration responsibilities for the Council's social media accounts, and who reply directly to customer enquiries, comments and requests, will be based in the Communications and Customer Service Teams. They should all observe the following:

- Do not use their personal social media identities for this purpose. Log-in to the accounts should be:
  - Directly to the account (Communications & Engagement Team only)
  - Through the appropriate social media management used to manage the accounts (All other designated employees)
- Be aware that an organisation may be held responsible for something an employee has written or said if it is on behalf of the organisation or on organisation-sanctioned space
- Check the validity and appropriateness of statements from other websites or social media channels that are being re-tweeted, re-posted or linked to the Council's corporate accounts
- Be aware of when to escalate an issue that has been notified through social media, through usual escalation channels
- Never request or disclose personal information or details through social media channels
- Be aware of when to advise customers to communicate through more secure channels such as private messaging, email and telephone
- Try to take difficult conversations out of the public domain and on to a private channel
- Do not write or comment on anything political or about policy proposals
- Contact the Communications & Engagement Team if you are unsure about how to deal with an issue.

4.2. Access to the Council's social media accounts and permission to respond to customers through these channels will only be provided once the relevant training has been undertaken.

5.   Training

5.1.   Training will be provided to all those who will be involved in engaging with and responding to the public through social media. This is currently the Customer Services Team and in future may include EDLC Trust employees identified to engage with customers through the EDLC Trust social media channels.

Training will include:

Overview
An overview of social media and the social media accounts that the Council operates.

Language and Tone
A guide to the language and tone to be used in Council responses will be provided. Social media traditionally uses less formal language than some written communications and guidance on this whilst meeting Council standards and customer expectations will be provided.

Template Responses
Template responses will be provided to enable standard responses to common enquiries to be issued. The bank of template responses will be continually reviewed and added to in line with the nature of enquiries and requests received through social media. These will be stored in the Council's social media management tool.

When not to respond
The Council will not respond to spam postings or abusive postings and guidance will be provided on whether to respond or not, and where to seek further guidance if in doubt. Inappropriate or abusive social media accounts can be blocked from posting to the Council's account.

Escalation of issues
The usual escalation channels when dealing with customers will apply, and those responding to customers through social media will be reminded of this.

Security and Data Protection
The nature of social media requires extra vigilance in the avoidance of disclosure of personal details and confidential information.

6.   Complying with Guidelines

6.1.   Employees involved in the administration and management of the Council's social media accounts must also follow the relevant ICT and information security policies.

6.2.   Any employee who does not comply with the guidelines set out for managing and administrating the Council's social media accounts may be referred through the Council's Discipline at Work Policy and Procedures.

6.3.   Any breaches of the social media guidance for personal use will also be dealt with through the Council's usual Discipline at Work Policy and Procedures and Grievance Policy and Procedures (as detailed in the Personal Use Guidelines.)

Social Media guidelines for Employees – Personal Use

1.   Introduction

1.1.   The Council's Social Media Strategy 2016-19 sets out how the Council will use Social Media to engage with customers and identifies the social media platforms where Council accounts will be established. These are:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- You Tube

1.2.   Whilst social media increases the range of communications channels which the Council can use to engage with residents and customers, there are also risks attached. The distribution of material cannot be controlled, and once posted to an initial target audience, material can be posted anywhere through the networks of each individual in that audience and beyond.

1.3.   For this reason it is essential that the Council has a clear strategy for social media use and these guidelines, which form part of that strategy, have been developed to ensure appropriate use of social media in the workplace and through personal use.

2.   Overview

2.1.   These guidelines have been developed to protect the reputation of the Council and provide guidance to employees on the effective and safe use of social media for their own protection.

2.2.   These guidelines apply to all Council service areas, all employees engaged on Council business (including those working with partners), and personal use of social media where it could be deemed to have an impact on the Council's reputation.

3.   Council accounts on Social Media channels

3.1.   The Council's social media accounts will be established and managed by the Corporate Communications Team.

3.2.   Council employees considering the use of, or wishing to use social media as a channel for a Council project or campaign should discuss their requirements with Corporate Communications. The creation of all new social media channels for projects must be approved by the Communications team.   In most instances it will be appropriate for the campaign or project to be delivered through the Council's corporate account.

3.3.   Where a project specific campaign is to be established on a social media channel, this must be developed in discussion with the e Communications team who will advise on which channels are most appropriate. It must comply with the Council's logo and brand guidelines and have clearly established management and monitoring procedures in place. The Communications Team will check it is suitable for the target audience and that you can maintain and develop it.

3.4.   Once you begin maintaining your social media identity, the Communications Team will be able to provide support and guidance. However, failure to maintain social media channels to the agreed standard will result in the channel being deleted.

4.   Personal use of social media channels

4.1.   It is important that employees are aware that posting information about the Council cannot be isolated from their working life. Any information published through social media can be accessed around the world within seconds and will be publicly available for all to see.

4.2.   The Council's ICT Strategy will allow employees to access social media channels from their work computers. This strategy will be rolled out from September 2013.

4.3.   These guidelines apply whether you access and comment through your social media accounts from a Council computer or your own device.

4.4.   If you already make reference to your employment in the Council on a personal social media site, or you intend to create such a site, you should follow the advice below:

- Be aware of the Council's Social Media Strategy, Policy Statement and guidelines for using social media
- Having identified yourself as a Council employee, do not engage in activities through social media channels that might bring the Council into disrepute
- Never reveal information which is confidential to the Council and never include contact details or photographs of service users or employees without their permission. Consult your manager if you are unsure
- Where possible, do not accept service users or ex-service users as 'friends' on your site or engage with them
- There are specific safeguarding issues that employees who work closely with children or vulnerable adults need to be aware of. It is recommended that any employee with concerns regarding these service users should seek further advice from their line manager, both for the protection of their service user(s) and themselves
- Under no circumstance should offensive comments be made about the Council, Members, service users or colleagues
- Be mindful of the time of day you make comments or posts through your social media accounts and the perceptions others may make from this
- Consider setting up separate role specific social media accounts to represent your views for any particular role you carry out/represent, rather than use a generic personal account

- Declare somewhere on your page or biography that the views expressed are yours alone.

4.5. In using a social media site for personal use, you should also be aware of the following:

- Even if you do not identify that you work for the Council on your social media accounts, people who know you or know of you may be aware of this and associate any comments you make with the Council.

- Be aware of the potential risk of accepting friends to your account. The comments of friends or friends of friends may be visible through your social media account and you may therefore be associated with these comments.

- Be mindful of the security of your social media account. Ensure you use a secure password, never share your password with anyone and if you believe your password has been compromised, ensure that you change it.

- Although you may not directly copy the Council in, the Council's social media monitoring software will flag up any reference you may make to East Dunbartonshire (the area or the Council)

4.6. Use of social media, and the roll out of internet access through Council computers will be incorporated into the Council's ICT acceptable use policy and employees will be asked to sign up to that. This is current practice on joining the Council.

4.7. Any breaches of the social media guidance will be dealt with through the Council's usual Discipline at Work Policy and Procedures and Grievance Policy and Procedures.

Guidance on Social Media for Elected Members

In October 2015, the National Communications Advisory Group (Scotland) and the Improvement Service established a working group to develop social media guidance for Elected Members.

The guide: Follow Me: Guide to Social Media for Elected Members was produced by The National Communications Advisory Group (Scotland) and the Improvement Service in collaboration with creative communications specialists Comms2point0.

The National Communications Advisory Group (Scotland) is a collective voice for the communications industry in local government. Members, drawn from councils across Scotland, promote best practice, support and challenge, provide training and deliver specific communications advice to national bodies on request.

The Improvement Service works with councils and their partners to help improve the efficiency, quality and accountability of local public services in Scotland by providing advice, consultancy and support. A key aspect of the Improvement Service's work is to support elected member development.

The Follow Me Guide is available on the Improvement Service Website:

http://www.improvementservice.org.uk/followme-a-guide-to-social-media-for-elected-members.html

Copies were distributed to elected members electronically by the Improvement Service and the Guide can be downloaded from the website and printed as a PDF document.