

REPORT TO:		Management Review Committee	
DATE:		20 March 2018	
PORTFOLIO:		Cllr Gareth Molineux - Resources	
REPORT AUTHOR:		Kirsten Burnett	
TITLE OF REPORT:		Draft Communications Policy	
EXEMPT REPORT (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A)	Options	Not applicable	
KEY DECISION:	No	If yes, date of publication:	

1. **Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To present a draft Communications Policy (Appendix 1).

2. **Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Management Review Committee considers and agrees the proposed draft Policy.

3. **Reasons for Recommendations and Background**

- 3.1 This policy was last updated in February 2014 and was due for review. This was carried out jointly by the Head of HR, the Head of Audit and Investigations and the Principal ICT Officer. When reviewing it, we had in mind cases that have been dealt with concerning the policy and also the need to keep it up to date with ICT security measures.
- 3.2 The main changes are:
- (i) Changes in S1.2 to reflect that staff approach the Head of Audit and Investigations rather than the Head of Legal Services. This has been agreed with both officers.
 - (ii) S1.10 covers the loss of suspected loss of Council equipment and the need to report this as soon as possible.
 - (iii) S2.1(d) includes using a Council email.
 - (iv) S2.1(f) reflects that managers should be able to access the email account of a team member where necessary if the person is absent from work, for example for unplanned sickness absence.
 - (v) S2.1(p) broadens the point to include any discriminatory material and also asks for Audit as well as ICT to be informed if a website is visited accidentally.
 - (vi) S2.1(s) reflects that there may be authorised occasions for employees to access or amend their own data.

- (vii) S2.1(t) is about taking care to protect the Council from viruses etc, and specifically gives the example of not plugging a mobile phone into a Council PC.
- (viii) S7 gives a line manager as the first point of contact for raising concerns.
- (ix) S4.3 of Appendix 1, Social Media Guidelines, cautions employees that even if one social media site does not list Hyndburn Borough Council as their employer, another might. It is therefore fairly easy to work out that offensive statements, for example, are being made by one of our employees.
- (x) S4.5 of the Social Media Guidelines is about considering how working relationships might be affected – this can include “liking” or retweeting a post.

4. Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 We could retain the existing arrangements but we believe changes are required as detailed within this report.

5. Consultations

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place and the Trade Unions are in agreement with the proposed changes.

6. Implications

Financial implications (including any future financial commitments for the Council)	
Legal and human rights implications	Breaches of the Communications policy could lead to further investigation under other HR policies, e.g. Disciplinary, Grievance, Dignity at Work. There are also links with Data Protection. Defamatory postings on social media could give rise to legal claims.
Assessment of risk	N/a
Equality and diversity implications <i>A Customer First Analysis should be completed in relation to policy decisions and should be attached as an appendix to the report.</i>	A CFA is attached.

1. Purpose

- What are you trying to achieve with the policy / service / function?

Review of Communications Policy to ensure there is clear guidance on the use and misuse of the council's communications equipment and also use of personal equipment connected with work. It sets out how the council will monitor use of communications equipment.

- Who defines and manages it?

Jointly between ICT, Audit and HR.

- Who do you intend to benefit from it and how?

The Council, its staff and service users, by having a robust policy in place.

- What could prevent people from getting the most out of the policy / service / function?

Lack of awareness of the rules in place.

- How will you get your customers involved in the analysis and how will you tell people about it?

Staff briefing through Newsround.

2. Evidence

- How will you know if the policy delivers its intended outcome / benefits?

Reduced cases of misuse. Avoiding cases where employees' use of social networking cause difficulties at work.

- What existing data do you have on the people that use the service and the wider population?

We have data relating to employees and know who has access to particular equipment or applications. We have data regarding disciplinary cases relating to misuse.

- What other information would it be useful to have? How could you get this?

n/a

- Are you breaking down data by equality groups where relevant (such as by gender, age, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, marital status, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity)?

Yes

3. Impact

The policy applies to all staff and will be communicated across all teams. Data on disciplinary cases does not suggest that a particular group / characteristic is experiencing a different impact.

4. Actions

- If the evidence suggests that the policy / service / function benefits a particular group – or disadvantages another - is there a justifiable reason for this and if so, what is it?

n/a

- Is it discriminatory in any way?

No

- Do you need to consult further?

Yes, with Management Team, Trade Unions, Management Review Committee.

Kirsten Burnett
Head of HR
November 2017