Social media guidance

We monitor engagement across our digital 'owned' channels each month, to understand what works and where adjustments are needed. This learning, alongside the channel mapping work (see appendix A), will shape how we use social media in the future.

In general terms, the following applies.

- Facebook – strongest reach, particularly for community events, services and activities. Audience is highly engaged with family, neighbourhood and day-to-day service content.
- Instagram – performs best with visual-led content. Topics such as city aesthetics, infrastructure projects and sustainability resonate strongly.
- LinkedIn – effective for professional content, including jobs, business initiatives and economic development.
- NextDoor – enables hyper-local targeting by wards. Reach is positive, but audience engagement tends to be lower.
- X (formerly Twitter) – corporate account remains dormant, retained only for emergency planning duties around warning and informing.

The Council does not currently operate other channels such as TikTok. Instead, our approach is to identify and work with advocates already active in those spaces.

Working principles of our approach to social media

- Apply the audience segmentation learning from the channel mapping work to both content and the channel selection.
- Timing and frequency should follow audience engagement patterns identified through ongoing monitoring.
- When content is likely to generate significant interactions, scheduling should ensure the comms team is able to monitor and response effectively.

Frequency of content

Currently, the following is a guide for when posts perform best in terms of audience engagement. This will be updated during the period for this strategy as part of the channel mapping work.

- Facebook - no more than six times per day – 7am, 9am, midday, 3pm, 5pm, 7pm
- Instagram - no more than three times per day – 8am, 1pm, 6pm [using stories where possible, and instead of posts]
- LinkedIn - no more than four times per day – 7am, midday, 5pm, 9pm

Dealing with social media comments

We want our online spaces to be safe places for community discussion. We need some rules to ensure this is the case. Our existing social media policy sets out the organisation's management of these channels.

During the period of this strategy, we will review our approach to responding to social media comments. This will be done in line with the council's managing customer relations policy and the social media policy. Currently, a decision on whether or not to comment is taken by a communication manager and/or Head of Communications, based on the potential impact of the comment. For example, as a rebuttal to untrue information about the issue on which we're posted. The decision seeks to consider resources versus impact of taking this action.

All posts on our social media channels should be posted with comments open, as part of our commitment to listening to the community. There are, however, exceptions. In the following cases we will close down the ability of people to comment. This is in line with the existing categories within the social media policy, but adds a consideration around resources.

- When posts attract abusive or harmful content
    - Comments that include hate speech, discrimination, threats or harassment.
    - Comments that may provoke personal attacks on colleagues, councillors or other platform users
- To prevent misinformation or content targeting individuals
    - Comments that attract repeated false claims
    - When users post off-topic comments that derails constructive discussions
- For sensitive topics
    - Posts relating to tragic events or legal matters, such as defamation or contempt of court.
    - Where protection needs to be given for individuals involved
- When moderation resources are limited
    - Posts where we believe the risk of harmful content in the comments or responses is high, but we do not have the resources to be able to effectively moderate
- Careful consideration should be given to posts during the pre-election period if these attract political comments and narrative.