

Apendix II

Draft Social media – Customer Use Policy

Introduction

The Council's social media accounts are managed by officers of the Council who will abide by these service standards at all times.

Service standards

Residents/users can expect regular updates from our Facebook and Twitter pages, covering some or all of the following:

- service information and updates;
- news and events;
- invitations to take get involved in consultations; and
- re-tweets and shares from our partners and additional accounts.

All Council social media accounts are to be monitored daily and will be active Monday - Thursday 9am to 5pm, Friday 9am to 4.30pm (except Bank holidays and public holidays). They are not expected to be monitored twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

Occasionally information will be posted during non-office hours, for example, in cases of emergencies, bad weather, traffic incidents, stray dogs, and at events that the Council has an interest in.

We welcome feedback and ideas from all our followers, and endeavour to join the conversation where possible. However, we may not be able to reply individually to all the messages we receive.

We will aim to respond to comments that include misinformation, but will not respond to any communication that breaks the rules in the 'blocking and unfollowing' section of this Policy.

If you have a query that needs a detailed response it is best to contact us by email at mediaservices@swale.gov.uk , or if your query is urgent, serious or involves personal details please contact us via our website Contact Us page or call our Customer Service Centre 01795 417 850.

Responding and replying

Direct questions in comments to posts will, when necessary, be given to Customer Services or to the relevant departments to find out information for the user. This means that it might sometimes take a while before an answer can be given.

We will endeavour to provide full answers to specific queries within two working days. However, if your request amounts to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request, or Subject Access Request, they will be acknowledged within 2 working days and responses will be provided within the statutory time frames.

If many comments / suggestions are made on any one post with a similar theme in the chain of comments, a generic answer will be provided.

If a query is posted and the answer is too detailed for a response, this will be explained to the user and an alternative way to contact us will be suggested (direct message for example). A response to the query will still be given, as soon as possible.

For complaints and compliments the user will be directed with a link to those particular sections on www.swale.gov.uk.

Only departmental email addresses and contact telephone numbers will be given in a response to a query.

Moderation

We will follow the rules and guidance put in place by the social media sites that we use, and rely on the measures of protection and intervention that they have in place, e.g. against illegal, harmful or offensive content.

We expect contributions to be civil, tasteful and relevant, and reserve the right to remove any contributions that break the rules of the site or any of the following:

- posting messages that are unlawful, defamatory or libellous, abusive, threatening, harmful, obscene, profane, sexually oriented or racially offensive, including abbreviations of any such word;
- bullying, harassment or intimidation of any individual or organisation;
- content copied from elsewhere, for which the contributor does not own the copyright;
- the contributor's, or anyone else's, personal information, such as contact details;
- impersonating someone else; and
- advertisement of products in a commercial fashion.

Liking, following, sharing and re-tweeting

The Council 'like' or 'follow' organisation profiles who provide information that is pertinent to our work as a local authority (for example central government accounts, local press, partners and voluntary groups) or those whose information we can pass on for the benefit of our residents.

There will also be times the Council will need to 'like' or 'follow' an account, individual, or business in order to take part in conversations (via direct messages).

Just because the Council likes or follow someone, retweets or share their information, does not necessarily mean that we endorse them or their activities.

The Council aims to share or re-tweet information that we think will be of interest or of use to the residents of Swale, for example; KCC Highways information regarding traffic incidents within Swale.

Blocking and unfollowing

The Council reserves the right to unfollow an individual. This may simply be as a result of a review or rationalisation of contacts.

However, if an account is blocked, this will probably be because the rules have been contravened on a particular social media site, for example because of use of harmful, illegal or offensive content within comments. Such posts will be reported via the site's internal link.

Pre-election period

In the six-week run up to an election - local, general or European - all councils have to very careful not to do or say anything that could seen in any way to support any political party or candidate. This will apply to all of our social media communications.

The Council will continue to publish important service announcements using social media, but may have to remove responses if they are overtly party-political during this period.