

SOCIAL MEDIA

Recommendations:		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That council cease to operate a Twitter account, 2. That council operate an Instagram account linked to its existing Facebook page, and 3. That council consider adopting another channel, such as WhatsApp, for reporting of incidents or requests for service. 		
	Yes	No
Does the decision involve new expenditure?		No
Is there an existing budget for the proposed expenditure (insert code)	N/A	
What procurement level is required?	N/A	
Are there equalities impacts / an equalities assessment required?		No
Does this require a full council decision? (Reports for full council decision should still be sent to the relevant committee where possible.)	Yes	
Is there a background paper or papers? (provide links below).		No
Rationale		
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council should periodically review the means by which it communicates with the public it serves. 2. The approach adopted since 2016 has been of reviewing the impact of communications, and observing best practice elsewhere, while also seeking to manage the council's reputation. 3. Members may wish to form their own opinion about the changes envisaged by Twitter in the near future, and the changes in current levels of user engagement. These are not issues on which officers have an opinion. 4. However, there are issues of reputation associated with any engagement with a platform. Broadly speaking, participation in a platform implies an endorsement of the platform as a suitable place for a local authority to operate. 5. It is hard not to form the conclusion that Twitter, as a platform, thrives on dispute and conflict rather than on consensus and impartiality. To paraphrase Jessica Maddox of the University of Alabama, Twitter is "a space for millions of [self appointed] town criersnot a town square for people to come together and debate". Officers are increasingly of the view that remaining on Twitter runs the risk of appearing to endorse or turn a blind eye to the frequent abuse of figures like J K Rowling, Rachel Riley or Diane Abbott who report receiving considerable levels of abuse on Twitter. 6. Officers have compared the engagement levels of our use of Twitter and Facebook, and have formed the conclusion that there is no overwhelming reason why Twitter should continue to be used. 7. Engagement figures for Facebook continue to show that council is reaching more women than men, and more older residents than younger. Officers believe that a more visual approach is required, and would suggest that the use of an Instagram account, linked to the existing Facebook account, may be the solution. 		
Issues arising from proposal.		
None.		
Rationale for recommendation.		
Not applicable.		