

## Guidelines for Members when Using Social Media

**Social media** is a collective term used to describe easy ways to create and publish on the internet. People generally use the term to describe how organisations and individuals share content – text, video and pictures – and create conversations on the web. Examples of social media tools include blogs, Twitter, Facebook, Google+, Flickr and YouTube. The Council recognises the benefits that these new methods of communication can bring, but reminds all Members to use social media responsibly.

The Council has produced the below simple guidelines to help Members:-

- ✓ **Do** – listen to what people are saying online, consider it and only respond if you feel it is appropriate
- ✗ **Don't** – publish anything you would not say in traditional media, for example during the pre-election period, or saying how you will vote on a particular issue
- ✓ **Do** – remember libel and copyright laws still apply to things you post on social media sites and what you publish is widely accessible and will be around permanently
- ✗ **Don't** – bring the Council, or your Member role, into disrepute
- ✓ **Do** – make it clear whether you are speaking from a personal perspective or as a Member representing the Council or a Member representing your political party
- ✗ **Don't** – use social media during Committee meetings if you are a member of the Committee or taking part in the meeting
- ✓ **Do** – think about how the public might perceive who you follow on Twitter or befriend on Facebook etc
- ✗ **Don't** – disclose any information which you have received in confidence
- ✓ **Do** – be respectful in your communications with others. Avoid personal attacks and disrespectful, rude or offensive comments. Think before you publish!
- ✗ **Don't** – assume that everyone shares your sense of humour. Others may be offended by the joke you thought was hilarious, or may not realise when you are being sarcastic or ironic.
- ✓ **Do** – avoid using social media when under the influence of alcohol

**Remember** - inappropriate use of social media could amount to a breach of the Member Code of Conduct and/or a criminal offence.