

COUNCIL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA - UPDATE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Social media is an increasingly popular way for members of the public, younger and older, to source information from the Council.

In order to improve communication and engagement with our communities, the Council is developing opportunities for customers to access information they need via social media. We provide a number of service specific sites, such as the 'Weathering the Storm' and leisure/libraries Facebook pages, a corporate Twitter site, and in June launched a corporate Facebook page.

The corporate Facebook page provides members of the public with an additional source of information on Council services and another means in which to contact the Council with service enquiries and requests.

Introducing a corporate Facebook page satisfies actions identified in the council's communications strategy, the Customer Services Development Plan 2013/14 and the Council's Accounts Commission/Audit Scotland Action Plan.

In line with the Accounts Commission Action Plan, this report provides an update on the Council's use of social media as part of our work to broaden/improve engagement with local communities.

It is recommended that the Policy & Resources Committee notes the progress of the Council's use of social media platforms as customer service and communication channels.

COUNCIL USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA – UPDATE

2. SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the Council's use of social media to support customer service and communication with our communities.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is recommended that the Policy & Resources Committee:

- Notes the progress of the Council's use of social media platforms as customer service and communication channels

4. DETAIL

4.1. Social media is an increasingly popular way for members of the public, younger and older, to source information from the Council.

4.2 The Council accordingly provides a number of social media sites on Twitter and Facebook, including a well-established corporate Twitter site, and 'Weathering the Storm' and Leisure and Libraries Facebook pages. To date more than 12,000 people follow these sites.

4.3 In addition on 30 June 2014 the Council launched a corporate Facebook page, in line with:

- an action in the council's communications strategy to expand our use of web-based networking tools as a low cost way of contacting our customers
- an action in the Customer Services Development Plan 2013/14 to develop a Facebook page
- and the action in the Council's Accounts Commission/Audit Scotland Action Plan to develop a site as part of our work to explore opportunities to broaden and improve engagement with our communities

4.4 The corporate page provides another information channel for members of the public, and is designed also to give customers an additional way in which to contact the Customer Service Centre: messages sent through the 'message' option go directly to the Centre for response.

- 4.5 Promotion of the site to date has been low key to date in order to embed council use of it. Between its launch and beginning of October it has attracted a steadily growing number of followers (235), with use being made also of the 'message' function as a route to the Customer Service Centre.
- 4.6 Information from across Council Services has been promoted on the page, from the Queen's Baton Relay to promotion of the Council's weekly news round up, and support for businesses. As an example of impact, information on three recruitment fayres reached around 4,500 people.
- 4.7 The majority of current page followers come from across Argyll and Bute. A smaller number come from England, America, Canada and New Zealand. The potential for information on the page to reach such a wide spread audience demonstrates its potential to support the Single Outcome Agreement objectives by raising awareness of Argyll and Bute as a desirable location to visit, live and work.
- 4.8 The corporate Facebook page has received a positive response from those using the site, whether for information or to submit service requests to the Customer Service Centre.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Council continues to develop opportunities for our communities to access information and customer service via social media, with steadily increasing use being made of our service-specific and corporate social media sites.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – None
- 6.2 Financial – None
- 6.3 Legal - None
- 6.4 HR – None
- 6.5 Equalities – None
- 6.6 Risk – Given the growing use of social media, the corporate Facebook page fills a gap in the social media channels used by the Council for the benefit of our communities.
- 6.7 Customer Service – The page provides an additional route for customers to access information they need.

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