EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Partial Assessment Form

Policy, practice, function or project assessed	Social media policy
Lead Officer	Emma Lowther
Team	Tara Crabtree and Eleanor Pasfield
Start date of assessment	08.02.11
Completion of assessment	

Please use this form to record your findings in relation to the assessment of an existing policy, function, service or practice.

A. POLICY, PRACTICE, FUNCTION OR PROJECT TO BE ASSESSED

A1. Please describe what are the main aims, objectives, purpose and intended outcomes of the policy or function?

Aims, as outlined in the Social Media Strategy are to use social media channels (such as Face Book, Twitter, Flickr) to aid:

- Recruitment, staff retention and strengthening professional relationships
- Public engagement and consultation
- Reaching new, disengaged audiences, especially young people
- Personalisation and co-design of services
- Engaging citizens and service users to help with service delivery
- Petitions and awareness campaigns
- Social marketing and behaviour change
- PR and reputation management
- Public accountability and open government

The intended outcome is that all social media channels used by the council are used in accordance with the policy. The policy seeks to add an element of control over the number of social media channels we use and how they're used to ensure we give the best possible service to our users.

A2. Is this policy or function associated with any other Council policy or priority?

It is associated with aim A and E of our council priorities:
A: We are committed to being a listening council, providing first class services for all
E: We are committed to providing a voice for rural life

A3. Who are the intended beneficiaries/stakeholders of the policy or function? How many people are affected and from what sections of the community? All current and future residents of South Cambridgeshire. Specifically, we hope this will engage more young people with council actions. It also affects all current and future employees of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
A4. Is the policy/function corporate and far-reaching? This is a corporate policy, for a corporate function which will reach across the entire council and district.
A5. Are you expecting to make any significant change to the policy or service in the near future? If so, please give details. I expect to alter the policy every six months initially, until the service is embedded as part of business as usual. This is a new policy, about new council communications tools and we will want to review our practices in line with evolving knowledge and best practice guidance.
A6.   Is this a new or existing policy or function? This is a new policy, first drafted in January 2011.

B. EVIDENCE/ DATA and CONSULTATION
It is important to consider all information that is available in determining whether the policy or function could have a differential impact. Please attach examples of monitoring information, research or consultation reports.

B1. What monitoring or other information do you have about relevant target groups, which will show the impact of the policy or function?

Social media use will complement SCDC's existing communications channels. The growth in online communities and the increased numbers of local government organisations using social media is a reflection of how many residents can now expect to find information out about their local council. Data from the Office for National Statistics (10/2010) shows that 73% homes have internet access, adults spend 14.2 hours online a month and 44% of internet users have a social network profile. Although we are mindful of the risks of using social media/networks, we need to engage with these audiences. Conversations are already taking place, and will continue to take place about SCDC online whether or not we have an official presence.

A recent (January 2011) customer satisfaction survey showed 22.5% of people liked to communicate with us via the internet. This shows that the social media is going to hit that target group that might be being missed by South Cambs etc.

B2. Have you compared the data you have with the equality profile of the local population? What does it show?
I do not have access to anything which looks at equality profiling *and* use of social media.

B3. Have you identified any improvements or other changes that could be made from monitoring the data?

This is a new policy which is at an early stage. We will need to wait until the social media channels are fully functioning before identifying improvements or other changes.

B4. Have you consulted or involved external stakeholders about the policy or function? If so, what were their views?

This is an internal policy, but this policy has been written from best practice policies from outside of this council.

B5. Have you undertaken any consultation with staff to assess their perception of any impacts of the policy or function? If so, what has been learnt from them?

At the end of 2010 a staff survey was carried out to obtain employees' views of the organisation using social media. A total of 98 employees completed the survey.

A large proportion of those surveyed (78.7%) thought SCDC should have a presence on social media sites, especially as members of the public are using them to get quick and easy access to news.

The general consensus was that it would give SCDC the opportunity to reach wider audiences and would be a useful way of publishing information and receiving feedback. Participants thought that it would help to promote a positive image of the council and reach members of the community that might not look at the website or read the South Cambs magazine.

There were concerns about how sites would be managed as SCDC's policies restricted staff usage whilst at work, although recently these controls have been loosened.

Numerous responses also expressed that it must be monitored closely as we would have limited control over what was placed on the site by members of the public. Having said this, most acknowledged that despite this they thought that SCDC should still have a presence in social media.

Most thought it would give us the opportunity to reach wider audiences and would be a useful way of publishing information and receiving feedback. The results of the survey will be weaved into the strategy and policy.

Because of the feedback, written into the policy is how we will monitor our social media channels.

B6. Please provide information about any other consultation, research, or involvement undertaken in relation to this impact assessment.

The document was drafted based on research carried out by Cambridgeshire County Council when they drafted similar documents. The Communities of Practice site (run by the IdeA) has been used heavily to help research the development of SCDC's policies, in particular this has helped to us to make contact with colleagues at a number of other local authorities for advice and research for the documents, as well as contact with key figures in the local government social media arena.

C1. IMPACT OF THE POLICY OR FUNCTION

Assess the potential impact on each of the following protected characteristics. The impact could be negative, positive or neutral. If you assess a negative impact for any of the groups then you will need to assess whether that impact is low, medium or high. Refer to the evidence you use.

DESCRIPTION OF IMPACT	Nature of Impact (Positive, Neutral, Adverse)	Extent of Impact (Low, Medium, High)
AGE: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on different age groups.		
This policy outlines the use of social media which will reach new audiences, especially young people. However, it doesn't replace other channels, it's to use alongside them.	Positive	
DISABILITY: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on disabled people.		
The policy is aware of not using jargon and writing in plain English, in an easy to understand way	Neutral	
GENDER REASSIGNMENT: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on people that have changed gender identity.		
The social media policy will benefit those who have changed gender identification but is not specific to them.	Neutral	
MARRIAGE AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on people who are married or in a civil partnership.		
The social media policy will benefit those who are married or in a civil partnership but is not specific to them.	Neutral	
PREGNANCY AND MATERNITY: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on pregnant or maternal mothers and those women who wish to breastfeed.		
The social media policy will benefit those who are pregnant or on maternity but is not specific to them.	Neutral	

RACE: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on different ethnic groups, including national origins, colour and nationality.		
The social media policy will benefit different ethnic groups but is not specific to them.	Neutral	
RELIGION/BELIEF: Identify the potential impact the policy or function on different religious/faith groups.		
The social media policy will benefit those who belong to different religious or faith groups but is not specific to them.	Neutral	
SEX: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on men and women.		
The social media policy will benefit those of either sex but is not specific to them.	Neutral	
SEXUAL ORIENTATION: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on lesbian, gay men, bisexual or heterosexual people.		
The social media policy will benefit those of any sexual orientation but is not specific to them.	Neutral	
OTHER CHARACTERISTIC SPECIFIC TO SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE – RURALITY: Identify the potential impact of the policy or function on people who are rurally isolated.		
Rural locations could benefit from additional channels and complement South Cambs magazine which is sent to all homes.	Neutral	

PLEASE NOTE: Following completion of the section above, if the nature of the impact is adverse then you may need to proceed to a full equality impact assessment.

C2. Could you minimise or remove any adverse or potential impact that is high, medium or low significance, in advance of a full impact assessment? Explain how.
N/a
C3. Does the policy or function actively promote equal opportunities and good community relations? Or could changes be made so that it does so?
This policy and function promote equal opportunities and good community relations. All sections of the community will be treated fairly and equally as all can access the service and benefit from the policy.
C4. Please provide any further information, qualitative or quantitative that does not fit into the questions but you feel has a likely impact on this assessment.
Social media will be monitored regularly and the use of social media by others in the council will be monitored to ensure the policy is adhered to.

D. CONCLUSIONS			
D1. Was there sufficient data to complete the partial assessment?	Yes?	Yes	**If "NO", what arrangements are in place for evidence gathering and continuing with the assessment?**
D2. Is the outcome of the partial assessment that the policy or function would have an adverse impact (medium or high impact) on one or more target group?			**If "YES", will you proceed to a full assessment? If so, what arrangements are in place to carry out the full assessment?**
	No?	No	
D3. Is the outcome of the partial assessment that the policy or function would have a neutral or positive impact on equalities?	Yes?	Yes	**If "YES", have you included proposals in the Action Plan to further improve the impact of the policy or function on equalities?** Action plans are being written for each social media channel. They will be monitored and actioned in accordance with the policy. **Do you plan to review the service or policy again in future to assess whether there has been any change? If so, when?** Yes, every six months initially. **Has the Equalities Steering Group and the Consultative Forum reviewed the assessment? If so what were their comments?** Not as yet.

D4. Do you have any other conclusions/outcomes from the partial assessment?

ACTION PLAN for enhancing existing practice

Recommendation/ issue to be addressed	Planned Milestone	Planned completion of milestone (date)	Officer Responsible	Progress

RESOURCES

Does the above action plan require any additional resources?

ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONITORING

Please give your plans for monitoring the achievement of the above actions.

SIGN OFF: The officers below confirm that this partial assessment has been completed in accordance with the Council's guidance		
Signature of Lead Officer		**Date:**
Signature of Corporate Manager or Chief Officer:		**Date:**

Please retain the original form on your service area and return a copy of the completed form to the Equality & Diversity Officer.