

Item:

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Report to Partnership Meeting 7 February 2020

PARTNERSHIP

Social Media Policy

Summary

This report outlines a proposed Social Media Policy and invites Members to adopt the policy as part of the HITRANS's governance arrangements.

Introduction

The term 'social media' is commonly used to describe any number of web-based and mobile technologies that allow users to communicate and interact with each other.

In recent years HITRANS has developed a limited social media presence primarily through the @HITRANS_RTP twitter account but is now also developing a wider social media profile to help promote the Scottish Island Passport initiative.

Appendix 1 attached to this report sets out a proposed Social Media Policy for HITRANS that outlines both general guidance and acceptable use of social media platforms by HITRANS employees, Board members, advisors and all other individuals and third parties who have access to HITRANS profiles on Social Media, hereafter "associates".

This policy will also apply to all Social Media interactions related to HITRANS, regardless of its format or whether it was created within or outwith HITRANS.

Recommendations

Members are invited to:

1. note this report.
2. approve the adoption of the Social Media Policy outlined in the appendix attached to this report.

RISK REGISTER

RTS Delivery

Impact – the effective use of Social Media can help HITRANS support the delivery of the RTS through improving communication, consultation and information sharing of priorities and projects

Policy

Impact – The adoption of a social media policy is an important means of ensuring corporate governance is kept up to date

Financial

Impact – None

Budget line and value – This item has no financial cost

Equality

Impact – None

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Designation: Partnership Manager / Office Manager
Date: 29th January 2020

DRAFT



Appendix 1: Highlands and Islands Transport Partnership

Social Media Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out the way in which Social Media is used by HITRANS, as required to achieve sound and effective corporate governance.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to HITRANS employees, Board members, advisors and all other individuals and third parties who have access to HITRANS profiles on Social Media, hereafter “associates”.

2.2 This policy applies to all Social Media interactions related to HITRANS, regardless of its format or whether it was created within or outwith HITRANS.

3. Social Media and Social Networking Definitions

3.1 The term ‘social media’ is commonly used to describe any number of web-based and mobile technologies that allow users to communicate and interact with each other.

‘Social networking’, meanwhile, is a term commonly used to describe the process of using these channels.

Increasingly, social networking is being used by businesses and organisations to communicate and engage with customers on a number of levels.

At a basic level, organisations may simply want to use social media to direct users to a corporate website, as a news outlet, or to promote job opportunities.

At a more advanced level, social media can be used as a means to respond to comments and complaints, consult and engage with customers, and to monitor and respond to feedback on an organisation.

3.2 Some popular examples of social media platforms include:

Facebook: Allows users to share information, images and links with others. Users can view, comment upon or ‘like’ other profiles, depending on privacy settings. From a business perspective, organisations can communicate and engage directly with customers via the platform.

Twitter: Like Facebook, users can share a range of information with others. This is done via status updates, known as “tweets”, of no more than 140 characters. Users “follow” other profiles that appear in a constantly updated news feed. Updates can be “re-tweeted” and shared with others.

LinkedIn: Aimed at the business community, LinkedIn allows users to connect with fellow professionals, share expertise, enter discussions and seek or promote job opportunities.

flickr: One of a number of image hosting sites that allow users to share images with others. Images can also be searched by keywords and themes.

Wordpress: One of a number of websites that allow users to create a ‘blog’, whereby diary-style entries can be created and shared with others. Some blogs are personal in nature, while others are specialist or offer a ‘behind the scenes’ look at an organisation.

YouTube: One of several websites that hosts video footage that can be shared with others. Links to such clips are often shared via other social media channels.

Communities of Practice: An online discussion forum commonly used by professionals to share experiences and expertise.

Wikipedia: An information website which allows people to create or add information to a communal document.

Most social networking sites require users to register and create a profile, although users can generally control how much information is shared with others.

It is common for individuals and organisations to use a number of social media platforms for different purposes and to engage with different audiences.

3.3 HITRANS recognises that social media has become a part of everyday life for many of our employees and can be used positively. This Policy provides information on how social media can be used to help teams and services engage with new and wider audiences.

4. General Usage Guidelines

4.1 HITRANS will update Social Media when the following occur:

- A news article is published on the website
- New documents are uploaded to the website
- Forthcoming events/consultations are announced
- A major project bill is made law or announced
- News or an event related to the partnership’s work becomes known

- In order to promote the work/services enabled/provided by HITRANS

This list is not exhaustive, and there may be other information that would be appropriate to upload to social media.

4.2 Direct Messages

HITRANS will endeavour to respond to direct messages received through Social Media, except where these are marketing queries or of a frivolous nature. Responses may not be immediate as it can sometimes take time to ensure that the best possible answer is obtained, although target response time of three working days should act as a reasonable maximum. For formal enquiries members of the public will be advised to contact HITRANS by email, post or telephone.

4.3 Monitoring

Social Media in use by HITRANS will be monitored during office hours (typically 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday). There will be no requirement for Social Media monitoring outside of these times.

5. Social Media specific Guidance

5.1 Twitter

- HITRANS will not automatically “follow” back everyone who “follows” @HITRANS_RTP. This is to discourage the use of direct messaging, avoid resource wasting spam handling and so that members of the public can easily identify other key Twitter users that we think are relevant and who we “follow”. However, being “followed” by HITRANS does not imply endorsement of any kind.
- HITRANS may also “retweet” from other sources or on other subjects when these are deemed to be of interest to our stakeholders, for example news from our partners, government, and other bodies.
- In addition to @HITRANS_RTP, HITRANS Project Manager overseeing the implementation of LEADER Scottish Islands Passport project is developing a twitter profile to support the promotion of initiative.

5.2 Facebook

- HITRANS does not currently have a facebook account. In the event of an account being established, HITRANS will not automatically “like” back everyone who “likes” the HITRANS Facebook page. This is to discourage the use of direct messaging, avoid resource wasting spam handling and so that members of the public can easily identify other key Facebook users that we think are relevant and who we “like”. However, being “liked” by HITRANS does not imply endorsement of any kind.

- #### 5.3
- Where a social media presence is being developed on other platforms similar guidance to that set out in this policy will apply.

6. Unacceptable Use

6.1 Overview

As a basic rule, if an associate is not happy for others to see particular comments, media or information they simply do not post it in a public forum online. This applies even where privacy settings are applied to personal profiles.

All HITRANS associates who have their own personal profile on a social media website should be aware of their conduct on these sites and their responsibilities to HITRANS. This applies equally to content posted in associates' own time.

6.2 Associates must not post:

- Any information, media, image or comment which could cause offence or which may be considered discriminatory or may be considered as bullying or harassment.
- Comments, content, media or information that could bring HITRANS into disrepute.
- Any confidential or personal information, their own, or service users, other associates, stakeholders or partners, such as contact details
- Photographs or video footage without express permission from the subject and/or owner
- Offensive comments in relation to any HITRANS employee including management and other colleagues
- Discriminatory comments
- Comments which bring HITRANS into disrepute
- Confidential information regarding an incident or decision at work
- Derogatory or malicious comments about HITRANS
- Comments which may be harmful to employees, service users, associates, stakeholders or partners of HITRANS

This list is not exhaustive. Disciplinary action may be taken in the event of a breach of these guidelines.

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