



## Media Policy

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| <b>Policy Type:</b>   | <b>Policy</b>                               |                                |  |
| <b>Approved By:</b>   | <b>Resources &amp; Governance Committee</b> | <b>Decision No:</b>            | <b>0548/2020</b>   |
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| <b>Department:</b>    | <b>Business Excellence</b>                  | <b>Division:</b>               | <b>Communications &amp; Customer Relations</b>           |
| <b>Function:</b>      | <b>Media Relations</b>                      | <b>Responsible Officer:</b>    | <b>Manager, Community Experience &amp; Relationships</b> |

### A - PREAMBLE

The City of Salisbury is committed to providing exceptional community experience. We place it at the forefront of everything we do.

With this comes an approach more reflective of a contemporary organisation in its interactions with the community and stakeholders. Our Community Experience Charter articulates the way in which we conduct ourselves with our community, stakeholders, staff, volunteers and Elected Members through the values of the organisation.

The delivery of exceptional community experience is a key success factor for the organisation toward the fulfilment of Council's vision for the City – "a flourishing City with opportunity for all". This Charter forms the basis of all our communications and its intent should be maintained in the spirit in which it was developed.

The City of Salisbury utilises various digital and traditional media channels to communicate and engage with our community. By ensuring our communications are consistent, accurate and appropriate to the target audience, our corporate values will be upheld. It is important that Elected Members, staff, volunteers and contractors embrace the City of Salisbury Community Experience Charter and communicate in a way that reflects the organisation's vision, values, purpose and drivers.

Having a media policy is about how we communicate, and being cognisant of our responsibilities in whatever role we undertake with the City, be it as an Elected Member, a member of staff, a volunteer or contractor.

### B - SCOPE

This policy sets out how Elected Members, staff, volunteers and contractors interact with the media and media representatives, and the use of both the City of Salisbury and official Elected Member social media accounts and private social media accounts.

## C – POLICY PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES

1. City of Salisbury will use media channels to:
  - 1.1 Increase community engagement and interaction with our audience
  - 1.2 Provide timely responses and commentary on Council related matters
  - 1.3 Inform our community about matters that directly affect them
  - 1.4 Build and strengthen City of Salisbury’s brand/image
2. The policy is not intended to curtail (nor be construed as curtailing) an individual’s right to free speech or the use of traditional media or social media to publish information in their personal capacity. Nor is this policy intended to curtail (nor be construed as curtailing) an elected member’s right to make comments to the media and other public comments on Council decisions and other matters provided the elected member clearly indicates it is a private view and not that of the Council.
3. The policy provides guidelines and direction for the appropriate use of social media platforms and other media channels and tools to conduct Council business by Elected Members, staff, volunteers, contractors or any other group who use official City of Salisbury accounts.

The Policy highlights the need to respect confidentiality, governance, legal, privacy and regulatory parameters when using social and other media to conduct Council business. It aims to:

- 3.1. Inform appropriate use of social and other media tools for City of Salisbury
  - 3.2. Promote effective, positive and productive community engagement through social and other media; and
  - 3.3. Minimise miscommunication of, or communications that do not support the City of Salisbury Community Experience Charter, or are contrary to the Elected Members’ Code of Conduct
4. In order for the City of Salisbury to be able to actively monitor and respond to media issues that best represent the community’s interests it is regarded as good practice and therefore recommended that all media liaison by the City of Salisbury takes place via a central point of contact, namely the Community Experience & Relationships team. On occasions when this is not possible, it is preferable that the Community Experience & Relationships team is notified as soon as is practical following media contact:
    - To ensure a single spokesperson is providing Council based comment and information to media outlets, so that the Council has a better opportunity to provide consistent and factual information to its community.
    - To provide guidance and support to Elected Members identified as an approved spokesperson, and;
    - To provide guidelines for Elected Members, employees, volunteers and contractors for media interactions that are consistent with our City of Salisbury Community Experience Charter.
  5. It is recognised that the initiation of media relations and corporate communication activities does not rest solely with the Community Experience & Relationships team, but indeed more widely across the Mayor, Elected Members, Executive, and staff. Executive and staff should inform the Community Experience & Relationships team of any potential corporate media relations or communications initiative for the City of Salisbury as soon as is practical, for

further facilitation. Elected Members are encouraged to inform the Community Experience and Relationships team of potential corporate media relations or communications where appropriate as soon as practicable.

## **D – DEFINITIONS**

Corporate Media Channels – Refers to all official City of Salisbury social media accounts including but not limited to all Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter and all other forms of media, or communication methods introduced beyond these mentioned here.

## **E – POLICY STATEMENT**

1. All City of Salisbury based / driven media contact (ie not individual Elected Member personal comment) should be coordinated via, and undertaken by the Community Experience & Relationships team to ensure all messaging is in line with the City of Salisbury Community Engagement Charter.
2. General Managers, can provide factually based information to the media when no attributable quotes are required, via the Communications Team with the approval of the CEO.
3. Any official corporate media statement / comment, or pro-active approach to the media requires approval by both the Mayor and the CEO.
4. Communication via the City of Salisbury’s social media accounts (including responding to public queries) is the responsibility of the CEO or delegate in consultation with other departments within the organisation. Communications will be undertaken in line with Council’s Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.
5. The introduction of new official City of Salisbury media accounts will require approval from the CEO or delegate.

## **F - SPOKESPERSONS**

1. Official spokespeople for the City of Salisbury are:
  - 1.1. The Mayor and CEO - The Mayor is the principal spokesperson in accordance with section 58 (1) (c) of the Local Government Act 1999, however where appropriate the CEO in consultation with the Mayor may be the preferred spokesperson.
  - 1.2. The Deputy Mayor - If the Mayor is unavailable, the Deputy Mayor will assume the responsibilities as described for the Mayor.
  - 1.3. Standing Committee Chairs – If neither the Mayor or Deputy Mayor is available, the spokesperson will be the Standing Committee Chair for issues concerning the deliberations and decisions made by that Committee and subsequently endorsed by Council. For matters unrelated to committee decisions, the CEO will determine who the nominated spokesperson will be.
2. Official spokespeople will have support from the Community Experience & Relationships team in the form of drafting and dissemination of media releases, arranging of photo and interview opportunities, and briefings before interviews.
3. As Local Government representatives, Elected Members are entitled to speak on any topic, and in doing so must ensure their personal comments to the media, or other public comments such as in social media in relation to Council decisions and other Council matters, are clearly identified as being their own private view, and not that of the Council.

## **G – MONITORING**

1. It is appropriate for Council to keep itself abreast of media coverage, and to ensure it remains updated with the media's commentary around Council matters. In order to provide that service, an external media monitoring provider has been contracted to provide daily reports.
2. These reports are distributed on weekdays to all relevant parties. If coverage relates to a specific officer and / or manager, the daily monitor will also be forwarded to them.
3. The Community Experience & Relationships team will endeavour to make Elected Members aware of any potential media stories that are likely to generate significant public and/or media interest.
4. Monitoring of Council's own social media channels is conducted by the Community Experience & Relationships team. Posts containing the following will not be responded to, and will be removed from the relevant page:
  - 4.1. Racist, sexist or sexual discrimination,
  - 4.2. Harassment or bullying,
  - 4.3. Profanity,
  - 4.4. Personal, confidential, or copyrighted material,
  - 4.5. Potential defamatory material or threatening or abusive behaviour.
5. During election periods, social media accounts more broadly are monitored for risk management and adherence to the Caretaker Policy.

## **H – MEDIA REPORTING ON COUNCIL ACTIVITY**

1. Media representatives are welcome to report on Council projects, events and decisions, and to interview nominated Council spokespeople or Elected Member as outlined in Section F. 1. It is preferable that all enquiries are directed to the Community Experience & Relationships team to facilitate.
2. Copies of all Media Releases issued will be provided to all Elected Members.
3. Council expects that all media taking photographs or filming at Council facilities and events abide by privacy laws, especially those relating to photographing minors, and seeks permission from anyone they wish to photograph or film, including non-Council employees.

## **I – COUNCIL RESOURCES**

Elected Members must not use Council resources, including services of Council staff, for private purposes unless legally or properly authorised to do so, and payments are made where appropriate. This includes but is not limited to the use of the City of Salisbury logo. All media engagements must ensure that no copyrighted or trademarked material is published without permission.

## **J – SOCIAL MEDIA – OFFICIAL ELECTED MEMBER ACCOUNTS**

1. Elected Members wanting to utilise social media in their capacity as a Councillor are encouraged to set up an official Elected Member social media account that is separate from their private account/s for interactions with the community and Council's social media profiles.
2. Guidelines for Elected Members:

- 2.1. Official Elected Member social media accounts are clearly labelled as being owned by an Elected Member. For Facebook, it is advisable to use a Facebook Page instead of a personal account to engage the public.
- 2.2. Elected Members need to be aware that they are directly and legally responsible for any comments that are posted to their own social media accounts by members of the public. If a member of the public posts material that is defamatory, obscene, racist, sexist or likely to cause offence, it is in the Elected Member’s best interest to immediately remove such material to avoid possible legal action being taken against them.
- 2.3. Elected Members are encouraged to share content from City of Salisbury social media accounts to their own accounts. Likewise, City of Salisbury may share Elected Member posts regarding Council initiatives as appropriate.
- 2.4. Elected Members may tag themselves in any City of Salisbury photo where they appear.
3. Elected Member social media accounts should be deactivated as soon as an individual is no longer an elected representative of the City of Salisbury, and return to utilising their personal social media accounts.

**K – ASSOCIATED POLICIES**

1. Council’s Code of Conduct
2. Employee Code of Conduct Policy
3. Fair Treatment Policy

**J – ATTACHMENTS**

1. Community Experience Charter

**Document Control**

|                        |                                       |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
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