

Guidance note on types of information that can be included in members' profiles on social networking sites/blogs

There is no restriction on you describing yourself as a councillor on your profile. You should set out clearly in your profile whether you are acting in your capacity as a councillor or not.

Identifying the intended nature of your site will enable readers to better understand if you are seeking to act in your official capacity or not. However, even if you do not describe yourself as a councillor you may still be acting in this capacity if, for example, you discuss Council business on your social networking site or blog.

The significance of this for you is that if you are acting as a councillor, or as a representative of the authority, you will be covered by the Code of Conduct. These issues are set out in more detail in the Social Media Protocol.

You should not include any information which you think might be confidential (other than your own information) on your profile. If in doubt you should check with the owner of the information.

You should not use the Harrow Council logo on your personal social networking accounts or blogs. Such sites are for your own personal opinions and comments.

If you use the logo this could give the impression that you are speaking on behalf of Harrow Council when you are really expressing your own opinions. This could lead to confusion on the part of the public and complaints that the Council is supporting a particular party or viewpoint when it does not do so.

If you have a blog which you hand over to another individual or business you should make clear on that blog before you hand it over that you are doing so and that you disassociate yourself from any comments made on it after that time. You should also delete any links to that site from any other networking sites or blogs which belong to you.

You may also find 'Connected councillors: a Guide to using social media' produced by the Local Government Group, helpful for general issues on this subject.

This guide can be found at:

<http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/aio/28632240>

The Council's Social Media Protocol and a link to the above guide have been added to the Member Development pages on the HUB.