



Non-key Decision Committee Report

KEY DECISION OR FOR INFORMATION: Non-key Decision Report

COMMITTEE: Children and Young People Committee

DATE: 28 August 2025

TITLE: Concerns about social media use

Ward(s): Citywide

Officer presenting the report: Hannah Woodhouse **Job title:** Executive Director Children and Education (DCS)

Committee Chair: Cllr Christine Townsend

Executive Director lead: Hannah Woodhouse: Executive Director for Childrens and Education

Proposal origin: Committee Chair

Purpose of Report: To update members following concerns about inappropriate use of social media by staff and to reach a decision on the way forward.

Background

1. In July 2022 concerns were raised about the use of social media by council staff and the legal team were asked to carry out an investigation by the then Chief Executive. The report was presented to People Scrutiny Commission on the 26 September 2022 and can be found here: [3. SEND Fact-finding report - Amended 13.10.22_Redacted.pdf](#)
2. Further to the completion of the report, Members voted in a golden motion on the 18 October 2022 to request the Mayor to commission an independent investigation. This was not taken forward by the then Cabinet.
3. Since then, ongoing concerns have been raised that the matter was not fully addressed through an independent investigation, leaving uncertainty about the extent of social media use by staff. There have been ongoing requests for an external investigation.
4. In July 2025 in the Children and Young People's Committee the request was again made in public forum to consider an external investigation and a debate ensued. As a consequence, the Chair of the committee has asked that a report be brought to the August Committee to consider the matter further.



5. Improving the support we provide to children and young people with SEND is an urgent priority for the Council. We have strengthened how we work together with all stakeholders and continue to refine our approach, with the aim that that children, young people, and their families are able to experience real and lasting improvements in their lives.
6. Since July 2022, there have been significant changes across the council, and the culture of collaboration and partnership has strengthened. Co-production is now at the heart of our work, supported by our Co-Production Charter, Memorandum of Understanding, and jointly developed SEND and Inclusion policy. We are determined that these developments should continue to underpin the positive partnerships that guide our approach to SEND and inclusion.
7. There is no evidence to suggest that the concerns raised in 2022 continue today. Should any concerns arise related to current practice, families are invited to bring these to the attention of senior officers.

Recommendation:

That the Committee for Children and Young People consider/approve one of the following two options:

1. To request the Executive Director: Children and Education to commission an independent investigation into the issues identified in 2021/2 within the report as well as more widely; and to delegate authority to the Executive Director: Children and Education to identify a suitably qualified reviewer, and determine the specific terms of reference/scope of the investigation in consultation with the members of the Children and Young People Policy Committee.

Should this option be selected we will work closely and confidentially with any parents or staff directly affected in the spirit of confidentiality and transparency. We will also return to update the Committee with outcomes of the investigation.

Or

2. That no further action be taken on this matter.

Corporate Strategy alignment: This report demonstrate the values and behaviours which underpin our organisational culture and are set out in the Corporate Strategy.

We are Dedicated: we strive to make a difference.

We take Ownership: we accept personal accountability.

We are Collaborative: we come together to reach shared goals.

We are Curious: we ask questions and explore possibilities.

We show Respect: we treat each other fairly.



City Benefits: A key part of reaching our vision for a sustainable, equal and thriving city is that we work together, both internally as one council and with partner organisations and communities.

Consultation Details: Informal conversations have taken place with members resulting in this report to committee.

Background Documents:

[3. SEND Fact-finding report - Amended 13.10.22_Redacted.pdf](#)

Revenue Cost	£N/A	Source of Revenue Funding	N/A
Capital Cost	£N/A	Source of Capital Funding	N/A
One off cost ☐ Ongoing cost ☒		Saving Proposal ☐ If yes - existing or new saving? N/A OR Income generation proposal ☐	

Professional comments section:

- Finance Advice:** This Non-Key Decision Report asks the Committee to consider and then approve one of two options. If Option 1 is approved this will result in additional expenditure being incurred by the council. The Report does not provide any detail of the potential scale of this expenditure and also does not define any source of revenue funding for this cost. It is therefore not possible to determine the financial implications of this Non-Key Decision.

Finance Business Partner: Guy Marshall Finance Business Partner 19 August 2025. I confirm I have provided comments on the full and final report.

- Legal Advice:** The report from the legal services team commissioned by the then Chief Executive looked at the lawfulness of the actions taken. The report contains the legal view at that time. Any independent review is likely to also consider the lawfulness of the actions taken.

Legal Team Leader: Tim O’Gara Director Legal and Democratic Services 19 August 2025

- Implications on IT:** N/A

IT Team Leader: N/A

- HR Advice:** N/A

HR Partner: N/A



APPENDICES

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal	NO
Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)	NO
Appendix C – Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)	NO
Appendix D - Decision Risk Assessment	NO
Appendix E – Exempt Information	NO
Appendix F – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	NO
Appendix G – Options appraisal matrix	NO
Appendix H – Business case / financial analysis	NO