

Notice of Motion – Labour Motion
Council 18 September 2024

Council notes:

- Honesty in politics is critical to maintaining public trust in democracy, and in today's digital age, social media platforms have become key in public discourse and political engagement.
- Social media has facilitated a new method of communicating with residents, allowing information to be disseminated rapidly and to broad audiences.
- Social media is also a powerful and influential tool for local community engagement to and from elected members.
- Councillors and social media companies must do all they can to prevent the spread of misinformation and protect residents and Councillors from exposure to harassment, abuse or personal attacks online.
- Social media content posted or reposted by Councillors should be free from defamatory or discriminatory language and avoid any form of harassment or bullying of residents and Councillors.
- The detrimental effect of a locally toxic social media environment on the willingness of talented, qualified and committed individuals to stand for election.
- The responsibility of all Councillors to lead by example in their usage of social media.

Council condemns:

- The use of anonymous online social media accounts by Councillors or potential Councillor candidates to specifically target other Councillors or other elected members in public office.
- The sharing or resharing of social media posts from unaccountable, anonymous online accounts, which may target local people or locally elected members.
- The former anonymous online account @HammondWatch on the social media platform X

Council resolves to:

- Advocate for greater accountability and transparency from social media companies in addressing the spread of harmful content and abuse.
- Hold to the highest professional standard when using social media.
- Avoid promoting anonymous social media accounts without a clear or identifiable link to an organisation or individual.
- Avoid sharing social media content that may toxify or undermine the integrity of the local political climate in Merton.
- Uphold the 'Social Media Guidance for Councillors' based on the Nolan Principles of Public Life, first resolved by Council in 2020, and to introduce training for councillors in accordance with this guidance.

Cllr Sheri-Ann Bhim

Cllr Shuile Syeda

Cllr Stuart Neaverson

This page is intentionally left blank