

# Social Media Policy for City Council

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## Recommendation

That the January 26, 2021, Office of the Integrity Commissioner report OCC00174, be received for information.

## Previous Council/Committee Action

At the November 3, 2020, Council Services Committee meeting, the following motion was passed:

That development of a draft Social Media Policy for City Council be referred to the Code of Conduct Sub-Committee for discussion and possible recommendations to Council Services Committee.

## Report

At October 19, 2020, City Council meeting, the Office of the Integrity Commissioner presented its annual report to City Council. The report included the following:

Arising out of some of the Code of Conduct complaints and inquiries, the Integrity Commissioner provided the following commentary and interpretations:

(...)

4. Social Media Policy. For Council's awareness, Councils in other jurisdictions across Canada are implementing Social Media Policies with respect to Councillor Members' activities on social media. In some instances, this is done as the other jurisdictions do not have a code that explicitly covers activity on social media as does the City of Edmonton's Code.

However, an area that is not explicitly covered by the City of Edmonton's Code and which issue has repeatedly arisen in the past year, is Council Members deleting or blocking commentators on the Council Member's social media pages. In the Integrity Commissioner's view, members of the public should not be blocked on Council Member's social media pages simply because they disagree with the Council Member on a topic.

Currently, Council members use their discretion when deciding whether to block or delete. Typically, a social media policy would provide consistent guidelines

around when blocking or deleting is permitted, such as when the activity is threatening, harassing, discriminatory, etc. or when the page is hijacked through trolling, spamming, using bots etc. Council may consider whether these sorts of guidelines would assist them in managing their social media activity.

At the meeting, City Council passed the following motion:

That the October 19, 2020, Office of the Integrity Commissioner report OCM00059 be referred to the next Council Services Committee meeting to discuss potential amendments to Council Code of Conduct Bylaw 18483 to remove the requirement that admission to events be offered by the entity or its representative, and to explore a potential social media policy for Elected Officials.

On November 3, 2020, the Integrity Commissioner's report was before Council Services Committee, which directed:

That development of a draft Social Media Policy for City Council be referred to the Code of Conduct Sub-Committee for discussion and possible recommendations to Council Services Committee.

To inform this discussion, the Integrity Commissioner has provided information regarding a possible policy or set of guidelines for Council Members related to social media (see Attachment 1).

### **Attachment**

1. Potential Social Media Policy or Guidelines for City Council for the City of Edmonton