

Councillors vote to explore option of quitting social media site X

Edinburgh Council could be advised to quit the social media site X after councillors voted to explore options including a move away from the site.

If the council left the platform, previously known as Twitter, it would join the ranks of several others in the UK that have already done so – however, some worry it may make it harder for some constituents to access city services.

Introducing his motion, Green councillor Chas Booth said: “The site has become lawless, and a place of abuse and vitriol. Members of the public should not have to wade through that in order to report issues to us or to read our updates

“Secondly, the owner appears to be a fascist, and the council should have no dealings with an organisation owned by a fascist.”

Council officers have now been ordered to prepare a report evaluating ‘options and timescales’ for getting the city’s social media presence away from X. It also asks officers to determine whether residents would be willing to use other means besides the site to interact with the council.

The council currently has more than 80 accounts on X, representing a range of departments and services. One of the

most prominent is @edinhelp, which allows residents to make complaints.

Liberal Democrat group leader Kevin Lang pointed out that several group leaders still used X. He said: "We've got a motion from the Green group that effectively wants to end the use of Twitter, even though one of their group co-conveners still uses Twitter.

"That's backed by the SNP, even though their group leader still uses Twitter. We've got an amendment from the Labour Party that encourages councillors to stop using Twitter, even though at least two of their conveners still use Twitter.

"We have got a housing emergency, we've got a climate emergency, we've got a crisis in social care. We've got 101 things that are more important than this, I don't want council officers spending time on it."

The final motion asks for a report to be delivered to a meeting of the Policy and Sustainability committee in mid-March. It contains language from a Labour amendment which asked councillors to 'seriously consider' their continued use of the platform.

Further, the council has asked officers to consider the council's wider social media presence, including the other platforms on which it has accounts.

Cllr Booth said: "I'm glad that my motion was approved, and I'm grateful to colleagues from SNP and Labour groups for their support and for helpful amendments.

"I certainly acknowledge that with more than 80 accounts on X, it won't be a quick or easy process to end our involvement with the channel, but I'm glad that council has agreed it's the right thing to do."

By Joe Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter