

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

**Report to:** Standards Committee – Thursday 19 March 2020

**Subject:** Social Media Guidance for Members update

**Report of:** City Solicitor

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**Summary**

To update the Committee on the operation and efficacy of the Social Media Guidance for Members ('the Guidance') as well as the provision of training for members on the Guidance.

**Recommendations**

That the Committee note the report.

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**Wards Affected:** All

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<b>Environmental Impact Assessment</b> - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city
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Not directly applicable
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Our Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Not directly applicable
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Not directly applicable
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	This report contributes towards promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct among members and towards promoting fairness by members in their conduct towards members of the public and other Members.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Not directly applicable

A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Not directly applicable
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**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

None

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Committee last received a report on the operation and efficacy of the Social Media Guidance for Members ('the Guidance') at its meeting in March 2019. As requested by the Standards Committee at that meeting the Social Media Guidance for Members was circulated to all Members and to candidates prior to the local Elections in 2019. The Guidance is also available on the Members' Google Drive.
- 1.2 At the meeting on 15 March 2018 the Committee agreed a very minor revision to the wording in paragraph 5.3 of the Guidance to take account of changes to data protection law which came into effect on 25 May 2018. On review in 2019 it was not considered that further revision of the Guidance was required. A copy of the Guidance is contained in the Appendix to this report. It is not considered that further amendments are required to the Guidance at this stage.

## **2. Operation of the Guidance**

- 2.1 In terms of the operation of the Guidance of the 28 complaints received about Manchester City Councillors between 1 October and 30 September (reported to this Committee as part of its Annual Standards Report in October 2019) only one made reference to social media use. This complaint was wide ranging and social media use was one of many miscellaneous issues dating back over a number of years. This complaint was rejected at stage 1 following consultation with the Council's Independent Person on the basis that it would not be in the public interest to expend further resources on carrying out an investigation into this matter.
- 2.2 There has been one complaint against a member regarding social media use since October 2019 but this was subsequently withdrawn. This compares with one complaint relating to use of social media in 2017 and 6 complaints during the period October 2015 to October 2016. The low figure suggests that the use of social media by Members remains less of a concern than it was in 2016 however as this is an area where care is needed a further copy of the Social Media Guidance will be sent to all Members again shortly and as part of their information pack to all candidates for the forthcoming local elections.

## **3. Training**

- 3.1 The Members Development Working Group ('MDWG') established to champion, develop and improve members' development is responsible for sourcing training on the main types of social media as part of its annual training programme. As highlighted in the report on member training elsewhere on the Agenda Training on Social Media is intended to form part of the Training Programme for 2020- 21

#### **4. Recommendation**

That the Committee note the report.