

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Standards Committee – 18 March 2021

Subject: Social Media Guidance for Members update

Report of: City Solicitor

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.

Wards Affected: All

Financial Consequences – Revenue None

Financial Consequences – Capital None

Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city

Not directly applicable

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 homegrown 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

Contact Officers:

Name: Fiona Ledden
 Position: City Solicitor
 Telephone: 0161 234 3087
 Email: fiona.ledden@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Poornima Karkera
 Position: Head of Governance Legal Services.
 Telephone: 0161 234 3719
 E-mail: p.karkera@manchester.gov.uk

Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact one of the contact officers above.

None

1.0 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 there were 23 complaints relating to Manchester City Councillors between October 2019 and 31 January 2021, 7 of which related to social media use. Excluding cases that were withdrawn or were discontinued only one complaint proceeded to initial investigation and following consultation with the Council's Independent Person the Monitoring Officer took the view that the Member in question was not acting in an official capacity.
- 2.2 In the circumstances use of social media by Members is not considered to be of particular current concern. 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 is proposed to be sent 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 2021.

4. Recommendation

That the Committee note the report.