

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Standards Committee – 17 March 2022
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.

Recommendation

That the Committee note the report.

Wards Affected: All

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

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 2021. As requested by the Standards Committee at that meeting the Social Media Guidance for Members was circulated to all Members prior to the local Elections in 2021. In respect of sharing the Council's Social Media Guidance for Members with candidates, it has been confirmed that the Returning Officer (the separate statutory office holder responsible for the delivery of elections and independent from the Council) does not provide guidance to candidates on campaigning matters or on conduct should candidates be elected. Guidance on campaigning matters is provided by the Electoral Commission and shared with candidates and agents by the Returning Officer's staff. In the circumstances inclusion of the Council's Social Media Guidance for Members in the candidates' briefing pack was not considered appropriate. Social Media Guidance is, as members will be aware, covered in the first Induction Session with new members and new members are given a copy of the Social Media Guidance following Induction.
- 1.2 On review in 2021 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 other than remove the reference to the Email and Internet policies on the last page of the guidance now shown as [...] because these have been replaced by new Digital Media Policy which only relates to officers and to refresh the review date are required to the Guidance at this stage.

2.0 Operation of the Guidance

- 2.1 In terms of the operation of the Guidance there were 12 complaints relating to Manchester City Councillors between 1 February 2021 and 31 January 2022. None of these complaints related to Social Media use .
- 2.2 In the circumstances use of social media by Members is not presently 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.

3.0 Training

- 3.1 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 2022.

4.0 Recommendation

That the Committee note the report.