

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Standards Committee – 21 March 2019
Subject: Social Media Guidance for Members update
Report of: City Solicitor

Purpose of the Report

To update the Committee on the operation/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 Background

- 1.1 The Committee last received a report on Revision of the Social Media Guidance for Members ('the Guidance') at its meeting held 15 March 2018. Prior to this the Guidance was considered and reviewed in March 2017. As requested by the Standards Committee the Social Media Guidance for Members was circulated again to all Members in June 2018. The Guidance will be added to the proposed 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. A copy of the Guidance is attached.

2.0 Operation of the Guidance

- 2.1 In terms of the operation of the Guidance as indicated in the Annual Standards Committee Report ('Annual Report') considered by this Committee in November 2018 although 3 complaints made to the Council's Monitoring Officer under the Council's Code of Conduct for Members were linked to social media use 2 of these largely related to postings made before the Member in question became a Councillor. Where they related to conduct in an official capacity the complaints were in connection with tweets made some considerable time before. There have been no complaints against members regarding social media since November 2018 and no decision notices have been made in relation to social media complaints since November 2018. This compares with one complaint made in 2017 and six during the period October 2015 to October 2016. The view of the Council's Monitoring Officer is that complaints relating to Social media use are not at a level that give rise to specific concerns in this area. However, as a refresher the Social Media Guidance will be sent to all Members again shortly.

3.0 Training

- 3.1 The Members Development Working Group ('MDWG') established to champion, develop and improve members' development has been sourcing training on the main types of social media as part of its annual training programme. As indicated in the Annual Report, Social Media Training arranged for September 2018 unfortunately had to be rescheduled due to circumstances beyond the Council's control. It was rearranged for 11 December 2018 and was delivered by external providers with an introductory session from the Council's Communications Team.
- 3.2 16 members expressed an interest in attending this training, 13 accepted an invite to attend and 7 members attended on the day. Apologies were received in advance of the event from members who could not attend in response to a reminder email. The reasons given varied from ill health to pressing work/council issues. There was excellent feedback from the members who were able to attend in relation to this training and the external trainers were

very complimentary about the Council's Social Media Guidance which they commended to all members.

4.0 Recommendation

4.1 That the Committee note the report.