

Subject:	Review of the Social Media Protocol for Members		
Date of Meeting:	23rd July 2019		
Report of:	Head of Law and Monitoring Officer		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Thomas Davies Victoria Simpson	Tel: 29-1045 29-4687
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

1.1 This report seeks Member approval for a revised Social Media Protocol.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That this Committee considers the draft revised Social Media Protocol for Members appended to this Report and approves it, subject to any changes this Committee considers necessary or appropriate.

3. SOCIAL MEDIA PROTOCOL FOR MEMBERS**3.1 Review of the Social Media Protocol for Members**

The Social Media Protocol aims to facilitate members' use of social media by providing clear guidance on how it may be used by members to discharge their public duties. The Protocol is intended to be read alongside the practice note on [Publicity and the Use of Council Facilities](#), which forms part of the Council's Constitution. Although the Protocol does not itself form part of the Constitution, it provides guidance on how members may use social media in a way that ensures they comply with the [Code of Conduct for Members](#).

3.2 The above Protocol was last reviewed in early 2017 and a revised version of it was approved by this Committee on 25 July 2017. Since then, social media has continued to evolve and updating the Protocol is considered to be appropriate.

3.3 The revised Protocol is attached at Appendix 1 and reflects the following changes:

- the removal of outdated social media terminology and references
- updated guidance regarding the usage of services such as WhatsApp
- additional background about the democratic and political risk of social media.

The revised draft also reflects an ambition to refine the Protocol to make its key messages as clear as possible.

3.4 Given that the draft Protocol has been re-organised in its entirety, it has not been possible to provide a tracked changes version which highlights the proposed changes in a clear way. In view of this, members may wish to consider reviewing the draft alongside the version which is currently in place. This may be found from page 113 onward of [the published report pack](#) of the meeting of the July 2017 Audit and Standards Committee.

3.5 The draft revised Protocol was generated by officers in the Communications team and has been reviewed by the Legal team. This Committee is invited to consider the proposed amendments and – if minded to do so – to approve them subject to any changes it considers appropriate, this with a view to the circulation of a revised protocol to all elected members of the council.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 The Council is obliged under the Localism Act to make arrangements for maintaining high standards of conduct among members and to make arrangements for the investigation of complaints. The proposal in this Report reflects this direction of travel. No alternative proposals are suggested.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

5.1 No need to consult with the local community has been identified.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Members are asked to agree the revised draft version of the Social Media Protocol in its capacity as the Committee with delegated responsibility for overseeing that high standards of conduct are maintained by members.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

8.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation in this Report.

Finance Officer Consulted: James Hengeveld Date: 19/06/19.

Legal Implications:

8.2 These are covered in the body of the Report

Lawyer Consulted: Victoria Simpson

Date: 3/07/19

Equalities Implications:

10.3 There are no equalities implications arising from this Report

Sustainability Implications:

10.4 There are no sustainability implications arising from this Report

Any Other Significant Implications:

10.5 None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Revised draft Social Media Protocol for Members.

Background Documents:

None

