

Standards Committee

7 June 2018



Social Media Guidance

Report of Helen Lynch, Head of Legal and Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer

Purpose of the Report

1. To discuss draft Social Media Guidance and approve for consultation.

Background

2. Members will recall that in December they agreed to pursue a proposal to develop social media guidance, and asked the Monitoring Officer to bring a draft of that guidance to a subsequent meeting. Draft Guidance was brought to the March meeting of this Committee and deferred for changes to be made following the input of the Council's Communications Unit.
3. As before, it is proposed to issue the draft Guidance for consultation with County Councillors, CDALC, the Independent Persons.
4. Draft Guidance is attached at **Appendix 2**.
5. It is proposed to issue the Guidance for consultation for a period of six weeks, which should give sufficient time for adequate consideration by consultees, and would enable the Committee to consider the outcome of the consultation at its next meeting in September 2018.
6. As before, it is proposed that the Guidance will have the status of guidance issued by the Standards Committee, pursuant to the Committee's constitutional function of promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by Members and Co-Opted Members of the Council and Parish and Town Council Members.
7. If that is agreed by the Committee, the Guidance would not constitute formal policy adopted by the Council but the Committee could have regard to the guidance when determining complaints against Councillors.

8. If the Committee instead consider that the Guidance ought to have the status of policy then it would need to go through full Council in order to be binding upon Members as part of the Code of Conduct. It is proposed that this question will also be asked as part of the consultation exercise.

Recommendation

9. Members are asked to agree the draft Guidance for consultation as set out in the report. The consultation will last for six weeks and will invite views both on the content of the draft Guidance and the status it ought to have.

Contact: Laura Renaudon, Governance Solicitor Tel: 03000 269886

Appendix 1: Implications

Finance - None

Staffing - None

Risk - None

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty - None

Accommodation - None

Crime and Disorder - None

Human Rights - None

Consultation - None

Procurement - None

Disability Issues - None

Legal Implications - The Council has a duty under s. 27 of the Localism Act 2011 to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by its members and to adopt a code of conduct that is consistent with the Nolan Principles. It is anticipated that specific guidance on the use of social media by Members will help achieve compliance with this duty as well as potentially reducing the number of related complaints received about Councillors.