

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE & LEGAL SERVICES
AND MONITORING OFFICER**

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDANCE FOR COUNCILLORS

Reason for this Report

1. To allow the Committee to consider the Social Media Guidance for Councillors issued by the Welsh Local Government Association ('WLGA').

Background

2. The growing use of social media presents varied opportunities and challenges for Councillors. In recognition of this, in July 2014 the Standards and Ethics Committee issued Social Media Guidance for Councillors ('the Council's Guidance'), following consultation with political Group Leaders and Whips .
3. The Committee reviewed its Social Media Guidance in July 2016 and again in March 2018.
4. In March 2018 the Committee noted that a number of amendments were required to update the Guidance to reflect changes in the social media landscape. It was agreed that an updated draft would be prepared with advice from the Council's Head of Communications and circulated to all Committee members for any further comments. The Monitoring Officer was given delegated authority, in consultation with the Chair, to update the Guidance, having regard to Committee members' comments and to issue it to all Members.
5. An updated draft of the Guidance was circulated to Committee members in June 2018 for comments.

Issues

6. The WLGA has also produced guidance for Councillors on Social Media. In the March 2018 report to Committee on this issue, it was noted that the WLGA's guidance (2013) was being updated, but there was, at that time, no indication of the timescale for issue of their revised guidance.
7. In July 2018 the WLGA issued a draft of their updated social media guidance; and the finalised WLGA 'Social Media: A Guide for Councillors' was issued in October 2018. The WLGA Guidance is attached as **Appendix A**.

8. Members will note that the WLGA Social Media Guidance is very comprehensive and well presented, with lots of helpful tips for Councillors. It also has the advantage of being national guidance, having been produced in consultation with a wide range of individuals and bodies across Wales and the UK.
9. The Committee has previously discussed the advice regarding use of separate social media accounts to differentiate a Councillor's personal comments from those relating to their role as Councillor. In this regard, Members may wish to note that the WLGA guidance (at the bottom of page 16) notes the different views on this issue and advises Councillors to consider and take their own view. This accords with the advice previously agreed by the Committee.
10. Members are invited to consider the WLGA Social Media Guidance and agree whether to circulate it to all Cardiff Councillors instead of the draft guidance previously emailed to the Committee, which is appended as **Appendix B**.

Legal Implications

10. There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

Financial Implications

11. There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations of the report.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is recommended to consider the WLGA's 'Social Media: A Guide for Councillors' (October 2018) attached as **Appendix A**; and agree to circulate it to all Cardiff Councillors, and to reach a view as to whether to do so instead of the Committee's updated guidance (**Appendix B**), as they cover the same material.

Davina Fiore

Director of Governance and Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

26th November 2018

APPENDICES

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| Appendix A | WLGA 'Social Media: A Guide for Solicitors, October 2018 |
| Appendix B | Cardiff Council, updated draft Social Media Guidance for Councillors |

Background papers

Standards and Ethics Committee report 'Social Media Guidance for Councillors', 28 March 2018