

DECISION-MAKER:	Council		
SUBJECT:	Social Media Policy for Members		
DATE OF DECISION:	19 th September 2018		
REPORT OF:	Director of Legal and Governance		
<u>CONTACT DETAILS</u>			
AUTHOR:	Name:	Richard Ivory	Tel: 023 8083 2794
	E-mail:	Richard.ivory@southampton.gov.uk	
Director	Name:	Richard Ivory	Tel: 023 8083 2794
	E-mail:	Richard.ivory@southampton.gov.uk	
STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY			
None			
BRIEF SUMMARY			
To consider formally adopting a Social Media Policy for Members which would become a supplementary document forming part of the overall Members Code of Conduct			
RECOMMENDATIONS:			
	(i)	To consider the draft Social Media Policy, any recommendations from Governance Committee and resolve to adopt as a core Member guidance document	
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS			
1.	To adopt a formal policy and provide guidance given the increase in social media activity		
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED			
2.	To not do so and rely on implied obligations		
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)			
3.	<p>Members' increasing use of social media is welcomed; it is now a way of life for many people, however there is a wide recognition that there are potential issues which the use of social media raises. Over the past couple of years the Monitoring Officer has had to increasingly consider more issues and instances regarding the use of social media by members when carrying out their duties. At the moment there is no adopted guidance so common sense and members own judgement has to prevail. To help support and facilitate Members in the correct use of Social Media in their roles as elected members this advice and guidance document has been produced. This guidance provides a summary of the main issues for Members to consider, some 'Do's and Don'ts' and further more detailed information about the legal framework and examples of how social media activity might fall within and the scope of the Members' Code of Conduct. It is based on a core document from the LGA and has been adopted by many other local authorities.</p> <p>It is not a requirement for members to have any social media account or use other forms of social media. However, If members are already using or planning to use social media in connection with their work as a Councillor, or are already using such media in a private capacity, these guidelines will be</p>		

	<p>relevant. Naturally, any form of communication is capable of being misunderstood. While the use of social media should not be any more susceptible to this problem than any other form of communication, the immediacy of social media and informal language can magnify misunderstandings. By the nature of such media “misfiring”, or being misunderstood (particularly with regard to something that is perceived as being more controversial than it was intended to be), it is likely to lead to rapid and wide broadcasting of that apparently “controversial” or misunderstood matter with reputational implications for members as individuals and the authority and/or its partners.</p> <p>There are no special, additional legal or ethical burdens relating to the use of social media. The same rules apply that govern the rest of the behaviour as a councillor, it is though important that members consider their social media activity within this context. The best use of social media is conversational in tone, however publishing information on social media is still publishing. What is said in published material on the web is written down and it is permanent. Most pitfalls will be avoided if online content is accurate, respectful, informative, balanced and objective. This does not mean that members cannot, in the appropriate context, communicate politically. This is expected of an elected representative, but members should be careful not to say anything that they wouldn't be comfortable repeating or justifying, for example, at a public meeting.</p> <p>The intention is that the policy will become one of the suite of supplementary guidance policies which link directly to the Members Code of Conduct. Training and awareness sessions have already taken place for most Cabinet Members and this is being rolled out as an invitation to all members.</p> <p>The report was considered by Governance Committee on 10th September 2018 who fully supported its adoption but recommended that additional wording stressing that once published on the internet any comments made can be captured even if later deleted by the author so utmost circumspection was required. This has been done.</p>
--	---

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

4. None

Property/Other

5. None

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

6. Localism Act 2011

Other Legal Implications:

7. None

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

8. None

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS		
9.	None	
KEY DECISION		No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:		none
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>		
Appendices		
1.	Draft Social Media policy for members	
Documents In Members' Rooms		
1.	None	
Equality Impact Assessment		
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.		No
Data Protection Impact Assessment		
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) to be carried out.		No
Other Background Documents		
Other Background documents available for inspection at:		
Title of Background Paper(s)		Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable)
1.	LGA documentation on social media	