



City of Westminster Standards Committee

Date: 6 December 2018

Classification: General Release

Title: Guidance on use of social media by Members

Financial Summary: There are no financial implications arising from this report

Report of: Monitoring Officer

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The committee is asked to consider a draft guidance note for members on the use of social media. Members of the Standards Committee are keen to ensure that Members conduct themselves appropriately at all times including when engaging in social media.
- 1.2 Therefore the Committee asked officers to draft a guide for consideration. The proposed Guide on Use of Social Media by Elected Members is attached to this report as **Appendix 1**.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To consider and approve the draft guidance on the use of social media by Members

3. Background Information

- 3.1 On 4 July 2018 the Committee considered the use of social media by Members and issues that arise from such use. Unwise comments on social media can have an adverse impact on the Member's and the Council's reputation. It can also be very distressing for others who may be the subject of the comments. This in turn could lead to potential litigation against the Member or the Council.
- 3.2 Regardless of the reputational or legal consequences the Committee felt that each Member should display the highest standard of conduct when engaging in social media, just as they would be expected to when engaging in other areas of Council business.
- 3.3 When engaging in social media activities Members need to make clear if they are acting in their capacity as a Councillor or in private capacity. Furthermore, Members need to understand that even if they are acting in private capacity any adverse publicity could also potentially reflect adversely on the Council's reputation and the Member may be in breach of their Code of Conduct.

- 3.4 Therefore, the Committee agreed that it would be helpful for the City of Westminster to have a guidance note for members on the use of social Media in both their role as a Member and in their personal use.
- 3.5 The Committee further agreed that it would be helpful for a list of dos and don'ts for Councillors to follow.
- 3.6 The Committee is asked to consider and comment on the draft report on social media guidelines for Members, which includes examples of the parts of the Code of Conduct, which may be engaged in the context of social media activities.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications

5. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications arising from this report

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the
Background Papers please contact:**

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix one – Guidance on use of social media for Members