

General Purposes Committee Meeting	
Meeting Date	30 October 2019
Report Title	Updating media guidance for members
Cabinet Member	Cllr Roger Truelove, Leader of the Council
SMT Lead	David Clifford, Head of Policy
Head of Service	David Clifford, Head of Policy
Lead Officer	Philip Sutcliffe, Communications Manager
Key Decision	Yes/No
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. That the media guidance in the constitution be replaced with the updated guidance in the latest members handbook

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report asks members to agree to replace the current constitutional advice on media for members with updated guidance that reflects the modern media landscape.

2 Background

- 2.1 The current constitutional advice (appendix I) was last updated in June 2014 and has a focus on traditional print and broadcast media. Given the widespread adoption of social media, the guidance needs to be updated to better advise members on the use of these platforms.
- 2.2 Social media has become an every-day communications tool and the potential benefits for members and the people they represent is huge.
- 2.3 However, using social media platforms is not without risk, and members need to be mindful of the potential pitfalls of using them, including libel, data protection and potential members' code of conduct issues.
- 2.4 Updating the guidance will help members understand more about how these matters affect them when they are posting on social media, helping prevent issues arising.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 Replace the existing media guidance note in the constitution with appendix II to better reflect the modern media landscape.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 Leaving the existing advice as it is, and assuming members will be aware of the issues surrounding social media.
- 4.2 This is not recommended due to the potential risks to the council's reputation from members not being mindful of the advice.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The updated guidance was drawn up by the monitoring officer and communications manager looking at best practice in the sector, whilst taking into consideration local use/adoption of social media.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Effective communication underpins all the council's corporate priorities.
Financial, Resource and Property	None identified at this stage.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	Updated guidance will help ensure compliance with the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authority Publicity, and provide further clarity to keep member and group communications distinct from official council communications.
Crime and Disorder	None identified at this stage.
Environment and Sustainability	None identified at this stage.
Health and Wellbeing	None identified at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Updated guidance will help mitigate the risk of damage to the council's reputation through inappropriate use of modern media tools.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Privacy and Data Protection	The updated guidance includes advice on how members manage personal information, helping reinforce their data protection obligations.

7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I: Guidance Note for Members Media Issues
- Appendix II: Updated guidance note for members media issues