

Report To: Standards Committee

Date of Meeting: 10th July 2018

Lead Member / Officer: Gary Williams, Monitoring Officer

Report Author: Gary Williams, Monitoring Officer

Title: **Guidance on the use of Social Media**

1. What is the report about?

The report is about the draft Denbighshire County Council Social Media Guide for Staff and Members and a WLGA draft guidance document on the use of social media

2. What is the reason for making this report?

To inform the Committee about the draft guidance on the use of social media by staff and members, and the WLGA draft guidance and seek their comments

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee considers the contents of the draft Denbighshire County Council Social Media Guide for Staff and Members and the WLGA draft guidance document and provide their comments.

4. Report details

Members of the Committee will be aware of the increased use of social media as a means of communication and dissemination of information. Social media are increasingly used by members of the public to communicate with the Council and with elected members.

The Council has an increasing presence on social media and uses these channels to communicate with residents. Many elected members make use of social media to keep in contact with their constituents and to inform them of issues that may be of interest to them.

The Council has had a guidance document on the use of social media. The social media channels that are available change and develop at a great pace and the previous guidance was felt to be in need of updating. Indeed some of the latest social media channels were not yet in existence when the guidance was initially introduced.

A working group of staff and elected members has met on a number of occasions to discuss the guidance that is needed. The draft Social Media Guide attached as Appendix 1 to this report has been developed by the council's Communications Team following these discussions.

The guide seeks to provide staff and elected members with some helpful tips on how to use social media in an effective, lawful and respectful way. Page 10 of the Guide sets out some helpful dos and don'ts for elected members.

Members of the Committee will be aware from the Ombudsman's Guidance documents on the Code of Conduct that he stresses the need for elected members to apply the principles of the Code in their use of social media. It is hoped that this Denbighshire Guidance will assist elected members in this regard.

The WLGA has also had a guidance document in existence for some time and is in the process of updating that document. The draft revised WLGA document is appended to this report as Appendix 2. This document is much longer than the Denbighshire guide and includes a lot of explanatory information regarding the different social media channels that are available.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

This report has no direct impact on the corporate priorities but effective and respectful use of social media will assist both staff and elected members to communicate effectively.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

There are no direct costs associated with this report.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

An impact assessment is not required for this report.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

A working group of officers and elected members has been consulted on the contents of the draft guidance.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

There is a risk that inappropriate use of social media by staff or elected members can have an adverse impact on the reputation of the Council. For elected members there is a risk that such use may lead to complaints being made to the Ombudsman about their conduct.

11. Power to make the Decision

There is no decision required