

**SOCIAL MEDIA CODE FOR COUNCILLORS**

*To:* **Constitution and Ethics Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **27 June 2019**

*From:* **Monitoring Officer**

*Purpose:* **Consider the introduction of a social media code for members and if agreed to consider cross-referencing it in the Members' Code of Conduct**

*Recommendation:*

- 1) To agree the Social Media Code with any appropriate amendments**
- 2) To issue it to all members of council with immediate effect**
- 3) To recommend to Full Council associated amendments to the Members' Code of Conduct**

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 This report is submitted to the Constitution and Ethics Committee for consideration as part of its role in overseeing compliance with the Members' Code of Conduct and in promoting high standards of conduct by Members.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to seek the approval of the Constitution and Ethics Committee for a formal Social Media Code for Members, subject to any amendments considered necessary, and to issue this Code to all members of Council.
- 1.3 This report is for the Constitution and Ethics Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference: "Authority to oversee the operation of the Council's Constitution and authority to make recommendations to Full Council as to amendments and improvements to the Council's Constitution, including the codes and protocols" and "Authority to oversee and approve the operation of the Council's functions relating to the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct amongst members and co-opted members of the County Council including:
  - approving and issuing guidance to Members
  - making recommendations to Full Council regarding the suggested amendment of the Members' Code of Conduct
  - approving training to be provided to members in the Code of Conduct
  - monitoring the operation of the Code of Conduct".
- 1.4 With the continuing rise in use of social media it is increasingly important that public sector organisations review existing policies and procedures to raise awareness of their expectations when social media is being used as an official and in some instances personal platform for public communications. The Committee has requested that it receives a draft social media code for members to consider. The recommendations within this report are intended to give effect to that requirement.

## **2. MAIN ISSUES**

- 2.1 A draft Social Media Code is attached for the consideration of the Committee as Appendix 1. As a guidance document the Committee can issue this directly to members in accordance with its terms of reference in order to complement the Members' Code of Conduct and to set clear guidelines to members as to expected standards.
- 2.2 If members agree to the introduction of a social media code consideration should be given to cross referencing it in the council's code of conduct for members. This could be done by the introduction of a new Part 3 of the Code which would cross-reference the new social media code along with other relevant documents members should consider alongside the code of conduct (which are not currently cross-referenced). The proposed addition is detailed below:

### **"PART 3 - RELATED DOCUMENTS**

**The following documents also provide guidance on the standards of conduct expected of members and can assist in the interpretation of this**

**Code of Conduct. These documents can be found in the Council's Constitution.**

- 1. Members' Code of Conduct – Guidance on Confidentiality which can be found at Part 5.1(a) of the Constitution**
- 2. Cambridgeshire County Council's Protocol on Member/Officer Relations which sets out how members and officers should work together which can be found at Part 5.3 of the Constitution**
- 3. Cambridgeshire County Council's Social Media Code for members sets out appropriate behaviour when using social media and acting, or appearing to act, in your capacity as a councillor**
- 4. Cambridgeshire County Council's Gifts and Hospitality Policy which sets out the procedures under which registration and declaration of interests, gifts and hospitality are to be made."**

- 2.3 If agreed a recommendation would need to be made to Full Council to change the Constitution as set out above.

Source Documents	Location
None	