

# ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

## REPORT TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE ON 3 DECEMBER 2020

**SUBJECT: New Social Media Guidance for Councillors**

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Nicholas Bennett – Acting Monitoring Officer  
**DATE:** November 2020  
**EXTN:** via 01903 737601

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

This report seeks further views of the Standards Committee relating to a new Social Media Guidance document for Councillors. It is open to Standards Committee to recommend that Cabinet endorse the Guidance in whole, or with amendments.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Committee is asked to recommend to Cabinet that:

- 1) The new Social Media Guidance for Councillors be endorsed, replacing the previous version endorsed by Cabinet on 31 May 2016; and
- 2) To authorise the Acting Monitoring Officer to make any consequential changes arising from the adoption of a new Members Code of Conduct.

### **1. BACKGROUND:**

1.1. Standards Committee received a report on the draft Social Media Guidance for Councillors at their meeting on 24 September 2020 (see item 8. Background Papers).

1.2. The Committee agreed the following Recommendation to Cabinet:-

RECOMMEND TO CABINET – That

(1) The new Social Media Guidance for Councillors be endorsed, replacing the previous version endorsed by Cabinet on 31 May 2016; and

(2) The Acting Monitoring Officer be authorised to make any consequential changes arising from the adoption of a new Members Code of Conduct.

1.3. At the Cabinet meeting on 19 October 2020, Cabinet broadly supported the document. However, non-Cabinet Councillors expressed some concerns about the recommendations within the document. Cabinet then:-

RESOLVED

That the new Social Media Guidance for Councillors be referred back to the next meeting of the Standards Committee for further discussion and debate.

1.4. The Committee are therefore requested to further debate the content of the draft Guidance, in line with concerns expressed at the Cabinet meeting.

1.5. The Draft Social Media Guidance for Councillors as attached to this report at Appendix 1.

**2. PROPOSAL(S):**

The new Social Media Guidance for Councillors be endorsed, replacing the previous version endorsed by Cabinet on 31 May 2016.

The Acting Monitoring Officer be authorised to make any consequential changes arising from the adoption of a new Members Code of Conduct.

**3. OPTIONS:**

- (i) To endorse the new Social Media Guidance for Councillors; or
- (ii) Not to endorse the new Social Media Guidance for Councillors

**4. CONSULTATION:**

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		✓
Relevant District Ward Councillors		✓
Other groups/persons (please specify)		

5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)	YES	NO
Financial		✓
Legal	✓	✓
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		✓
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		✓
Sustainability		✓
Asset Management/Property/Land		✓
Technology		✓
Other (please explain)		✓

**6. IMPLICATIONS:**

Legal

Section 27(1) of the Localism Act 2011 (the Act) provides that the authority must promote and maintain high standards of conduct by Members of the authority.

Section 27(2) of the Act provides that the authority must adopt a Code of Conduct that is expected of Members when acting in that capacity.

This guidance will support Members in maintaining high standards of conduct and create awareness of how the Code of Conduct may apply to social media communications.

## **7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:**

To provide updated guidance for Councillors as to how to approach social media communications, and how the Code of Conduct may apply to those communications.

## **8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

1. [Report to Standards Committee 24.09.20](#)
2. Current Social Media Guidance for Councillors



SM Policy 2016  
Final - Councillors.p

3. [Minutes from Cabinet 19.10.20](#)
4. Appendix 1 – Draft Social Media Guidance



20.12.03 Appendix  
1 Social Media Guid