

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a **MEETING** of the **STANDARDS WORKING GROUP** held on 21 January 2020 at 5.55 pm

Present Councillors

C J Eginton, L D Taylor, A Wilce and
Mrs N Woollatt

Also Present

Officer(s): Kathryn Tebbey (Head of Legal (Monitoring Officer) and
Sally Gabriel (Member Services Manager)

1 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

2 SOCIAL MEDIA

The Standards Committee had requested that the working group be reconvened to consider the need for a policy on the use of social media by members.

The working group had before it a selection of information documents which consisted of the following:

- Civility in public life – programme of work which would in time bring forward a revised code of conduct
- The Council's Social Media Guide
- Connected Councillors – a guide to using social media produced by the i&Dea (2010)
- Stratford-on-Avon District Council – social media policy
- Medway Council – an amended code of conduct to include social media use

The Monitoring Officer informed the meeting that the LGA were reviewing and updating the member model Code of Conduct (expected Summer 2020, with a possible consultation in the Spring) in response to the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life and that it was likely that social media use would form part of an updated model code. The Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) was also expected to be providing guidance on Social Media and Local Government in the next few weeks.

Consideration was given to:

- the information attached to the agenda
- The LLG guidance and the new model code that was expected
- Whether an amendment to the Mid Devon code referring to social media use could be made in the interim
- Members needed to be clear when using social media whether they were commenting in a private or public capacity

- Whether the Monitoring Officer had received complaints with regard to the misuse of social media
- Acceptable and non-acceptable behaviour
- A social media member briefing taking place on 29 January
- The possibility of re-circulating the Mid Devon guidance to newly elected members
- The wording within the current code which made mention of ‘acting in your capacity as a councillor...’

It was therefore **AGREED** that no action be taken at the current time and that the working group be reconvened when the guidance from the LLG and the model code of conduct were made available. In the meantime the Mid Devon guidance be recirculated to all members and that they be encouraged to attend the member briefing on 29 January 2020.

3 **NEXT STEPS**

The working group would be reconvened when further information was available.

(The meeting ended at 6.15 pm)

CHAIRMAN