

**Medway Council**  
**Meeting of Councillor Conduct Committee**  
**Wednesday, 11 May 2016**  
**6.00pm to 6.30pm**

**Record of the meeting**

**Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next meeting of this committee**

- Present:** Councillors: Brown-Reckless, Godwin, Hicks (Chairman), Kemp, Shaw and Wicks
- Substitutes:** Councillors:  
Howard (Substitute for Carr)  
Willey (Substitute for Mrs Diane Chambers)
- In Attendance:** Jan Guylar, Head of Legal Services/Deputy Monitoring Officer  
Teri Reynolds, Democratic Services Officer

**992 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Carr and Mrs Diane Chambers.

**993 Record of meeting**

The record of the meeting held on 19 August 2015 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

**994 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances**

There were none.

**995 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests and other interests**

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other interests

There were none.

**996 Social Media and the Code of Conduct for Councillors**

**Discussion:**

## **Councillor Conduct Committee, 11 May 2016**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer introduced the report which requested the Committee to consider whether the Member Code of Conduct should be amended to have an explicit reference to the use of social media. She also drew the Committee's attention to the advice on using social media which was referenced in the guidance for Members on the use of Council resources.

In relation to the guidance which stated that, "councillors should be aware that their use of social media as a councillor could potentially be subject to the Member Code of Conduct", a member asked whether this direct quote needed to be strengthened. However, it was explained that Councillors may use social media when acting in their private capacity, which would then not be subject to the Code of Conduct.

A comment was made that the addition of a reference to social media was unnecessary as the Code was clear that it applied when Councillors acted in their capacity as a Councillor and that this included every action of a Councillor, not just social media. However, it was considered by the Committee that on balance a direct reference around the use of social media would be useful to help highlight and safeguard against potentially inappropriate use. It was also suggested that the social media training provided to all Councillors should be compulsory.

It was suggested that the reference to the use of social media should be a stand alone point in the Code and that the Monitoring Officer should draft some wording, following research into what references have been included in other local authority codes of conduct, which should then be referred to full Council for approval.

### **Decision:**

The Committee agreed that an explicit reference to the use of social media should be included in the Member Code of Conduct and requested the Monitoring Officer to provide a suggested amendment, in consultation with Councillor Conduct Committee members, which should then be forwarded to full Council for approval.

## **997 Updated Guidance for Councillors Appointed to Outside Bodies and Organisations**

### **Discussion:**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer introduced the report which provided the Committee with proposed updated guidance for appointees to outside bodies and organisations.

In response to a question about liability insurances in place the Deputy Monitoring Officer confirmed that Members appointed to outside bodies by the Council were covered but those appointed separately were not, which was outlined in the guidance at section 9.

## **Councillor Conduct Committee, 11 May 2016**

In relation to the following quote, “trustees remain personally liable when they retire”, clarification was sought as to whether this referred to retirement as a Councillor or as a trustee. It was confirmed that this related to retirement as a trustee.

### **Decision:**

The Committee agreed to:

- 1) Approve the proposed guidance for Councillors appointed to outside bodies and organisations attached at Annex A to the report;
- 2) Authorise the Monitoring Officer to reissue the guidance to all Councillors and co-opted members with immediate effect.

### **998 Exclusion of Press and Public**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the exempt material relating to agenda item 8 because consideration of these matters in public would disclose information falling within Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as specified in agenda item 7, and, in all the circumstances of the case, the Committee considers that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

### **999 Screening of complaint - CCC/2016/001**

#### **Discussion**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer introduced the report which informed the Committee of a formal complaint relating to the conduct of a Parish Councillor which had been received but subsequently withdrawn.

#### **Decision:**

The Committee noted the report.

**Chairman**

**Date:**

**Teri Reynolds, Democratic Services Officer**

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