North Tyneside Council
Report to Standards Committee
Date: 30 November 2023

ITEM
Title: Review of Social Media Training for Elected Members

Report from Service Area:	**Legal Services**
Report Author:	**Stephen Ballantyne, Head of Law and Monitoring Officer** (Tel: 643 5329)
Wards affected:	**All**

1.1 Purpose:

To provide a report outlining the recent training provided to elected members on the use of social media by an external training provider and provide an opportunity to members to give feedback and direction for future training.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Committee:

(1) note the contents of this report, together with a verbal update provided in the meeting; and
(2) provide feedback to officers regarding the recent training and any additional training needs

1.3 Information

1.3.1 The Standards Committee is responsible for the Authority's statutory duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by the Elected Mayor, Councillors and Co-opted Members.

1.3.2 The terms of reference of the Standards Committee include the responsibility to advise, train or arrange to train the Elected Mayor, Councillors and Co-opted Members on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct.

1.3.3 The Action Plan/Work Programme for Standards Committee in this municipal year includes an action to support and promote an external training session for all elected members on the use of social media and the risks. The purpose of the training is to increase awareness of the risks and to promote high standards of conduct.

1.3.4 The Action Plan/Work Programme for Standards Committee also includes an action to keep under review training available to all Council Members on ethical governance, ethical standards issues including arrangements with respect to the Code of Conduct and the use of Social Media. To purpose of this is to ensure all members receive information

on ethical governance, ethical standards to minimise risk of unwitting breaches of the Code of Conduct.

1.3.5   With the above 2 items from the work programme in mind an external training provider was sourced to deliver specialist training to elected members on the use of social media.

1.3.6   Two social media training sessions for elected members were scheduled to take place on Wednesday 29th November. One session was scheduled in the afternoon and the other in the evening. Each session was provided with a 2 hour time slot, with an additional optional 30 minute session for beginners wanting to learn more about the topic. The sessions were led by a trainer with more than 20 year experience working with local authorities and with a specialism in digital marketing.

1.3.7   The two-hour courses were designed at the request of and following consultation with the Authority's Chair of Standards Committee and the Monitoring Officer. The training is intended to assist elected members wishing to improve their use of social media to engage with the public, as well as complying with Code Of Conduct requirements. The programme was designed to include many elements including the use of Facebook and X (previously Twitter), as well as creating content using Canva.

1.3.8   The sessions were promoted to elected members in a number of ways including via a Members Briefing and e-mails from Human Resources and the Monitoring Officer.

1.3.9   A verbal update on the sessions will be provided in the meeting, together with any feedback provided by members on the evening of the training sessions.

1.3.10 Committee members may wish to provide feedback to officers regarding the recent training and any additional training needs either during the meeting or directly to the Monitoring Officer.

1.4   Appendices:

None.

1.5   Contact officers:

Louise Watson, Senior Manager Legal & Registration Services, Deputy   (0191) 643 5325
Monitoring Officer

Joanne Holmes, Democratic Services   (0191) 643 5315

1.6   Background information:
- Council Constitution
- Code of Conduct for Members and Co-opted Members.
- The Localism Act 2011.