

PUBLICITY AND MEDIA RELATIONS POLICY

STANDARDS COMMITTEE PERSPECTIVE

- (i) What was the rationale behind the recommendation from the Standards Committee (Hearings Panel) to review the Media and Publicity Policy

The Panel wanted to ensure that an updated policy was in place so that all members, particularly those new into office, had a policy that they could turn to for guidance. The build-up to local elections was seen as a period where such guidance would prove particularly beneficial to members especially during the period of heightened sensitivity ('purdah'). Also, it was felt that the revised policy should strongly reference the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, which is cross referenced in the members' Code of Conduct and Constitution.

- (ii) Any panel recommendations raised by the Standards Committee members.

The recommendation made by the Panel is as reflected in the minutes of the Standards Hearing panel, as recently received by Council (6 May 2022).

- (iii) What is the volume and frequency of 'standards' complaints regarding potential Media breaches (broadly over recent years)?

In the last 2 years there have been three complaints over ward correspondence, which it has been alleged breached the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity.

- (iv) Why, specifically, was the Governance Scrutiny Panel referred to in the decision of the Standards Committee?

The reference to the Governance Scrutiny Panel was made to enable there to be a cross party opportunity for the draft policy to be considered before being referred to the Executive for consideration. The Standards Hearing Panel made this referral unanimously.

- (v) Additional concerns (if any)

The overriding motive of the Panel was to ensure that a policy was in place to assist and guide all members to help mitigate any further complaints.