

ANNUAL COUNCIL

Date: Wednesday, 11 May 2022

Title: Civility & Respect Project

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk, Adam Clapton

Background

Throughout the town and parish council sector, there are growing concerns about the impact of bullying, harassment, and intimidation are having on councils, councillors, clerks and council staff and the resulting effectiveness of local councils.

The National Association of Local Councils (NALC), One Voice Wales, the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and county associations have responded to this by setting up a Civility and Respect Group to oversee the Civility & Respect Project.

Current Situation

The Civility & Respect Project Mission Statement is:

‘Civility and respect should be at the heart of public life, and good governance is fundamental to ensuring an effective and well-functioning democracy at all levels.

The intimidation, abuse, bullying and harassment of councillors, clerks, and council staff, in person or online, is unacceptable, whether by councillors, clerks, council staff or public members.

This can prevent councils from functioning effectively, councillors from representing local people, discourage people from getting involved, including standing for election, and undermine public confidence and trust in local democracy.’

The group has identified a significant number of changes and improvements considered vital to provide support to help reduce and manage the issues relating to bullying and harassment in the sector. Work continues on six project streams which include training, governance, intervention, legislative, collaboration and enabling.

The Town Council has already supported suggestions on the Councillor Code of Conduct and an Early Day Motion on sanctions for Councillors which are related to this project. The Council should also consider adopting and publishing the attached model ‘Bullying and harassment statement’ (Appendix A) stating the bullying, harassment and intimidation will not be tolerated.

Environmental impact

There is no environmental impact pertaining to this report.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

The risks to the effectiveness of the Council are noted in the report above. The Council has a duty to protect its members and all its staff from bullying, intimidation, and harassment.

Financial implications

There are no financial implications pertaining from this report.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the contents of the report and consider the following:

1. Adopting and publishing the Civility & Respect Projects 'Bullying and harassment statement'.