

## FULL COUNCIL

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**Date:** Monday, 3 October 2022

**Title:** Civility & Respect Pledge

**Contact Officer:** Deputy Town Clerk – Adam Clapton

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### Background

Members will recall that at the Annual Council Meeting on 11 May, the Council agreed to adopt the National Association of Local Council (NALC) Civility & Respect Bullying & Harassment Statement as Council Policy (minute number 213 refers).

### Current Situation

Further work continues to be carried out by NALC on this project and all Councils are being encouraged to sign up to the Civility & Respect Pledge,

*‘NALC, SLCC, and OVW believe now is the time to put civility and respect at the top of the agenda and start a culture change for the local council sector.*

*The Civility and Respect Pledge is being introduced because there is no place for bullying, harassment, and intimidation within our sector. The pledge is easy for councils to sign up for and it will enable councils to demonstrate that they are committed to standing up to poor behaviour across our sector and to driving through positive changes which support civil and respectful conduct.’*

By signing the Pledge, the Council would be agreeing that it will treat councillors, clerks, employees, members of the public, and representatives of partner organisations and volunteers with civility and respect in their roles and that it:

- Has put in place a training programme for councillors and staff
- Has signed up to the Code of Conduct for councillors
- Has good governance arrangements in place including staff contracts and a dignity at work policy
- Will seek professional help at the early stages should civility and respect issues arise
- Will commit to calling out bullying and harassment if and when it happens
- Will continue to learn from best practices in the sector and aspire to be a role model/champion council through for example the local **Local Council Award Scheme**
- Supports the continued lobbying for change in legislation to support the Civility and Respect Pledge including sanctions for elected members where appropriate

As adoption of the new Oxfordshire Councillor Code of Conduct is being considered, it would seem an opportune time to consider signing Witney Town Council up to the pledge, if members are agreeable.

**Environmental impact**

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

**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.

**Financial implications**

There are no financial implications pertaining to this issue.

**Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and consider Signing Witney Town Council up to the NALC Civility & Respect pledge.