

SUBJECT: DRAFT GUIDANCE FROM THE WLGA ON PERSONAL SAFETY FOR MEMBERS AND HANDLING ONLINE ABUSE

MEETING: STANDARDS COMMITTEE

DATE: 19TH MARCH 2018

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

For Standards Committee to note 2 pieces of draft guidance from the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) on personal safety and handling online abuse and provide any comment.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

To note the WLGA draft guidance documents on personal safety and handling online abuse.

3. KEY ISSUES:

The WLGA has very recently produced 2 draft guidance documents on the important issues of the personal safety for members and handling online abuse. Both documents can be found attached to the report at appendix 1 and 2. Both pieces of guidance are in draft format at present and when finalised will be available on the Welsh Local Government Association website.

The guidance covers 2 areas of particular importance for elected members. Whilst instances of physical violence to elected members are thankfully rare, the tragedy of the murder of Jo Cox MP in 2016 gives a horrific example of what can happen. At the very least the guidance on personal safety will give members the opportunity to reflect and think about their personal safety when planning and undertaking their constituency work.

The problem of online abuse is a more common problem as the figures in the guidance show. Unfortunately this issue is likely to become more of a problem over time with the increase in use of social media. The guidance gives many useful hints and tips in dealing with this problem and provides a useful reference for where to find guidance from other areas.

When the final versions of both guidance documents are available, I will make all members aware. The guidance will also be drawn to attention of the council's Democratic Services Committee.

4. REASONS:

The guidance is useful to elected members as a source of important information in 2 areas of significance in their roles as councillors.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

None.

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

No significant equality impacts have been identified.

7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS:

NONE, BUT THE GUIDANCE GIVES A USEFUL RESOURCE TO MEMBERS TO ENSURE THEIR SAFETY AND WELLBEING.

8. CONSULTEES:

None.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None.

10. AUTHOR:

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