

Non-Executive Report of the: Standards Advisory Committee 24 October 2018	
Report of: Asmat Hussain	Classification: Unrestricted
Councillor Safety Update	

Originating Officer(s)	Beverley McKenzie, Head of Members' Support
Wards affected	All wards

Executive Summary

An important role of Councillors is to interact with members of the local community and represent constituents. Councillors often act as a bridge between their community and the Council, both representing residents in their dealings with the Council and in representing the Council at ward level.

Guidance has been provided and reviewed with Councillors to ensure their safety when working in the local community, with an emphasis on the Councillor' surgery.

Recommendations:

The Standards Advisory Committee is recommended to note:

1. The progress on ensuring Councillors are advised of the personal safety guidelines.
2. To note the safety measure implemented to mitigate the risks to Councillors when conducting surgeries.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Councillors may on rare occasions find themselves in situations where they become anxious for their safety.
- 1.2 Personal safety guidance has been published on the Members hub and provided to all Councillors to ensure they are reminded of good practice and where appropriate take preventative action to reduce the likelihood of these situations occurring.
- 1.3 In the unlikely event that a Councillor experiences difficulty the guidance provides information on reporting incidents and sets out the further assistance available from the Council.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Members were previously provided with guidance in March 2018. The Standards Advisory Committee could recommend that there is no need to provide further guidance.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Personal Safety Guidance as agreed by the SAC has been published on the Members hub and has again been made available to all Councillors, following the Council elections in May 2018.
- 3.2 All Councillors have been reminded of the safety practices at the initial open afternoon of the induction programme.
- 3.3 Many of the Councillors have identified new venues for holding their Councillor surgery, and others have confirmed an ongoing requirement. Updated risk assessments have been requested and completed by 53 of the 73 proposed venues. Of these 23 have been approved and 32 have been approved with conditions. Follow up action is being done regarding the outstanding risk assessments, however it is noted that most of these are Council venues or Community venues that have previously completed risk assessments and been used for Councillor surgeries.
- 3.4 Councillors are advised of the outcome of the risk assessment and the measures recommended to ensure their safety at the venue.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This report is for noting and there are no equality implications arising.

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council has a duty of care to the Councillors to ensure their safety. Measures have been taken to support Councillor's surgery activities and ensure that the venues utilised provide adequate safety and security.
- 5.2 Safe operating practices have been provided to Councillors and these have also been highlighted as part of the Induction programme.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 This is a noting report and there are no financial implications arising from this report.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 As indicated in this report the Member Induction Programme has been used to reinforce the need for safe operating practices.

In addition, section 12 of the personal safety guidance, issued to Councillors provides that requests by Councillors for assistance from Legal Services in dealing with personal safety issues will be considered by the Corporate Director Governance or the Divisional Director – Legal.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- none

Appendices

- none

Local Government Act, 1972 Section 100D (As amended)

List of "Background Papers" used in the preparation of this report

- none

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A