

# WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

2 December 2021

## Councillor Mike Hallam: Cabinet Member for HR & Corporate Services

Report Title	Personal Safety for Councillors
Report Author	Paul Hanson, Democratic Services Manager

### Contributors/Checkers/Approvers

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### List of Appendices

#### Appendix A – Personal Safety Guide for Councillors

##### 1. Purpose of Report

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- 1.1. This report summarises the steps the Council has taken to ensure members are aware of their personal safety and are able to access appropriate advice and resources, as well as steps being taken by the Council to ensure the safety of members.

##### 2. Executive Summary

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- 1.2. The personal safety guide for West Northamptonshire Councillors, attached at Appendix A, was developed over the summer but has been included on this agenda to raise awareness amongst members following the murder of Sir David Amess MP on 15 October 2021.

- 1.3. The report also details other action being taken by the Council to ensure members can have confidence in arrangements to ensure their safety while not limiting opportunities for the electorate to engage with their elected representatives.

### **3. Recommendations**

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3.1 It is recommended that the Council:

- a) notes the Personal Safety Guide for Councillors, attached at Appendix 1 of the report; and
- b) notes action being taken by the Council in a few areas related to the safety of members, as set out in Section 6 below.

### **4. Reason for Recommendations**

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4.1 The Council encourages all its members to familiarise themselves with the personal safety guidance made available by the Council and also to make use of resources available from other organisations. The Local Government Association (LGA) and the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) have also issued guidance documents, both of which are available on their respective websites as set out in Section 8 below.

### **5. Report Background**

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5.1 The murder of Sir David Amess MP during a constituency surgery has highlighted the issue of security for all UK politicians. Although such incidents are thankfully rare, the murder of Sir David Amess MP follows the murder of Jo Cox MP in 2016 and the attack on Nigel Jones MP, in which Gloucestershire County Councillor Andy Pennington was killed, in 2000. In light of these events, members may naturally feel concerned about their personal safety.

### **6. Issues and Choices**

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6.1 The Council's guidance on Personal Safety for Councillors, set out at Appendix 1, covers a range of topics, including:

- Holding ward surgeries safely;
- Dealing with people who are emotional or upset;
- Safety during home visits;
- Lone working;
- Malicious and nuisance telephone calls;
- Car safety and parking;
- Attendance at meetings; and
- Reporting incidents.

6.2 In addition to the guidance, information about personal safety was also included the Member Briefing circulated on 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

- 6.3 Members are also encouraged to take advantage of some of the training material available on the Council's i-Learn portal (which includes a module on personal safety) available here: <https://northwestnorthants.learningpool.com/totara/dashboard/index.php> (login required). Online courses are also available via organisations such as the LGIU and the Council encourages members to participate in learning opportunities such as these. Notification of such a course was circulated to all members on 21<sup>st</sup> October.
- 6.4 The Council has also responded to the LGA's request for views on several areas relevant to the safety of members, including the publication of address details for members. In light of this issue, the revised constitution (submitted for approval elsewhere on this agenda) includes revisions to the Code of Conduct in relation to sensitive interests, making it clear than in granting dispensations under this section (i.e., in relation to publishing home address details) the overriding concern should be the safety of members and their families.
- 6.5 In addition to this, officers carry out and maintain risk assessments for public meetings. A risk assessment pro forma has also been developed for members to complete and maintain for surgeries or other events for which they feel it would be beneficial. This is set out at the end of Appendix 1.

## **7. Implications (including financial implications)**

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### **7.2 Resources and Financial**

7.2.1 There are no resources or financial implications arising from the proposals.

### **7.3 Legal**

7.3.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

### **7.4 Risk**

7.4.1 As referred to above, the Council carries out risk assessments where it is appropriate to do so. There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

### **7.5 Consultation**

7.5.1 No statutory or other consultation is required as a result of the recommendations in this report.

### **7.6 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny**

7.6.1 The report is for consideration by Full Council and so no scrutiny is required.

### **7.7 Climate Impact**

7.7.1 There is no climate impact arising from the proposals.

## **7.8 Community Impact**

7.8.1 There is no community impact arising from the proposals.

## **7.9 Communications**

7.9.1 There is no communications impact arising from the proposals.

## **8 Background Papers**

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8.2 LGA 'Personal Safety': [Personal safety Local Government Association](#)

8.3 LGIU publication 'Personal Safety for Councillors': [Personal safety for councillors – LGIU](#)