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| Report to | Democratic Services Committee |
| Date of meeting | 4 October 2019 |
| Lead Member / Officer | Councillor Richard Mainon / Gary Williams (Head of Legal, HR and Democratic Services) |
| Report author | Steve Price (Democratic Services Manager) |
| Title | Personal Safety for Councillors |

1. What is the report about?

The report aims to provide information and guidance to members on safely undertaking their roles.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

Members of the County Council have public profiles within their wards and across the county. They are sometimes required to take or be involved in difficult and controversial decisions and regularly interact with members of the public, often face-to-face, on a range of issues and problems.

Generally these contacts are positive or non-adversarial and the role of being a councillor is generally regarded as being rewarding. Incidents of violence against public figures are rare but their public profile and roles can potentially attract abuse, harassment and the fear of violence. The Committee has therefore requested information on personal safety issues for councillors.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Democratic Services Committee considers the guidance available on personal safety for councillors and its application in Denbighshire.

4. Report details

Whilst acknowledging that the likelihood of a councillor experiencing a dangerous or distressing incident is very low, there are a number of situations where an awareness of risk and personal safety issues can be helpful or reassuring. The following represent potential areas of risk the Committee may wish to comment on:

- Visiting people in their homes
- Receiving callers to your home
- Holding surgeries
- Receiving malicious or nuisance telephone calls or online messages
- Dealing with emotional constituents
- Travelling
- Communicating online
- Door-to-door canvassing

Lone working can pose or heighten the risks connected with a number of the areas identified above, such as holding surgeries alone in an otherwise empty building or visiting a constituent in their home. The Council has in place lone worker procedures on its Intranet site that can be applicable to both staff and members.

Some local authorities have produced 'councillor-specific' guidance that may sit alongside specific lone worker guidance. Appendix 1 is an extract from Swansea Council's guidance. The Welsh Local Government Association has published a 'Councillors Guide to Handling Online Abuse' and this is attached as appendix 2.

The Suzy Lamplugh trust has a range of personal safety guidance notes including canvassing and campaigning, dealing with aggression, lone working, hate crime and personal alarms that councillors may find useful whilst undertaking their role as councillors or while campaigning or working on behalf of a political party. These are available from this link: [Suzy Lamplugh guidance](#).

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

This report does not directly contribute to the corporate priorities

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

No cost implications have been identified for this report.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

An impact assessment is not required for this report.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

None. This report was commissioned by the Democratic Services Committee.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

Not required for this report.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

This report concerns the risks to members' personal safety and the measures to mitigate those risks.

11. Power to make the Decision

No decision is required.