

REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE.

Councillors Tony Humphrys

PORTFOLIO COORDINATING

STRATEGIC HEAD OF SERVICE: Asad Laher

This report updates the Council Forum on the work of the Standards Committee.

Personal Safety Guidance for Councillors

In relation to personal safety of Councillors, the Committee on 27 October 2021 discussed and approved the Local Guide to handling intimidation to supplement the Local Government Association (LGA) Guide published on 4th July 2021 (and updated in October 2021).

The Committee noted that personal safety is nationally a serious issue for all elected representatives, in light of the sad and tragic death of David Amess MP after he was fatally stabbed outside his constituency surgery in October 2021.

The guide covers topics such as how to handle abuse, both face-to-face, letters or online, and the legal and practical remedies, including the nature of the criminal offences involved. The LGA have confirmed that this will be regularly updated with the latest advice and information available.

The Local Guide can be viewed from the web link below:

[Personalsafetyforelectedmembers.pdf \(blackburn.gov.uk\)](https://www.blackburn.gov.uk/PersonalSafetyForElectedMembers.pdf)

Recommendation: The Council formally endorses the Local Guide; 'Personal Safety for elected members'.

Social Media and Councillors.

At the meeting of the Standards Committee on 27 October 2021, the Monitoring Officer presented an update on the complaints received. The Committee noted that the issues related to the use of social media. The Monitoring Officer has since received a number of other complaints, which again had arisen from the use of social media. The complaints will be considered in accordance with the adopted arrangements for dealing with Members complaints, and the Standards Committee will be updated. However, it seems apparent that there is a general wider problem (locally and nationally) relating to councillor use of social media (Twitter, Facebook WhatsApp etc). Social media is a very a useful tool for councillors to communicate with residents and for getting their feedback. However, councillors are still subject to the Member code of conduct, and the content of any communications or activity on social media must not breach the code. The LGA has provided some guidance for councillors on social media: [Councillors and social media | Local Government Association](#)

Recommendation:

1. All members consider the Code of Conduct and the LGA Guidance.
2. Member training programme continues to include guidance on use of social media.

Councillor Tony Humphrys
Chair of Standards Committee

January 2022