

<b>Title of Report</b>	<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION - DEBATE NOT HATE CAMPAIGN</b>	
<b>Presented by</b>	Councillor Keith Merrie Infrastructure Portfolio Holder	
<b>Background Papers</b>	None	<b>Public Report:</b> Yes
<b>Financial Implications</b>	No financial implications are known at this time. Any implications will be identified as the working party draft their action plan. An annual budget is set aside for member development that would cover costs of any training that may be identified during the work. Officers will liaise with Finance as the work progresses should any additional costs be identified.	
	<b>Signed off by the Section 151 Officer:</b> Yes	
<b>Legal Implications</b>	There are no direct legal implications from the report	
	<b>Signed off by the Monitoring Officer:</b> Yes	
<b>Staffing and Corporate Implications</b>	There are no implications	
	<b>Signed off by the Head of Paid Service:</b> Yes	
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To seek Council's agreement to establishing and appointing a working party to engage in completing the assessments and drafting an action plan in response to the Local Government Association (LGA) toolkit.	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>THAT</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. COUNCIL CONSIDERS IF IT WISHES TO CARRY OUT A PIECE OF WORK ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION'S DEBATE NOT HATE TOOLKIT</b></li> </ol> <p><b>AND</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>2. SUBJECT TO RECOMMENDATION ONE, A CROSS PARTY WORKING GROUP BE ESTABLISHED TO CARRY OUT THE WORK.</b></li> </ol>	

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The LGA commissioned consultants to work with councils and relevant partners, in order to consider how to deal with the growing issue of abuse and intimidation and its negative impact on councillors and local democracy. The project culminated in the publication of the

LGA's findings in July 2023, titled [Debate Not Hate: Ending abuse in Public Life for councillors](#). The document suggested how councils can better support councillors to prevent and handle abuse and intimidation. It set out the main challenges faced by councillors, and proposed principles to assist councils in dealing with these challenges, including a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and a clearly defined process for raising concerns. The document also sets out 'top tips', and good practice case studies, which illustrate how councils can support their members.

- 1.2 Following on from this and, after further work, in May this year, the LGA published their [Ending abuse in public life council self assessment toolkit](#).
- 1.3 Councillors at authorities across the country are faced with different issues and the support that those councils put in place will be personalised to meet these issues.
- 1.4 The toolkit has been designed to aid councils in supporting councillors in their role and supporting them to be safe, whilst mitigating the impact and risks of abuse and intimidation that they may encounter. It is suggested in the toolkit, that a starting point will be for Councils to consider and complete the self-assessment to establish the current issues which are being experienced by their councillors, what is currently being done to support councillors, and how improvements can be made. The toolkit is structured around the principles detailed in the July 2023 publication discussed above and advises how councils can implement these principles.

## **2.0 PROPOSALS**

- 2.1 Council is being asked to consider if it wishes to carry out some work around the Debate not Hate toolkit, and if so, establish a cross-party working group to carry out the work.
- 2.2 Should Council be minded to establish the working group, officers will seek nominations with a view to holding the first meeting by the end of November 2024. The Terms of Reference will be agreed at this first meeting. It is proposed that the working party is made up of three Alliance members, two Labour members and one Independent member.
- 2.3 It is envisaged that, should a working group be created, the members of the group will wish to complete the self-assessment, understand more about any issues affecting NWLDC members and complete the assessments at its first meeting and, with the support of officers draft an action plan to address any issues that the working party identifies.
- 2.4 Depending on the content, it is proposed to bring the action plan, when drafted, back to Council for consideration and support in its implementation.

<b>Policies and other considerations, as appropriate</b>	
Council Priorities:	A well-run council
Policy Considerations:	None at this time
Safeguarding:	None at this time
Equalities/Diversity:	None at this time
Customer Impact:	None at this time
Economic and Social Impact:	None at this time
Environment, Climate Change and zero carbon:	None at this time
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Leaders of Political Groups
Risks:	None arising from this report. Will be considered as part of a future report to Council
Officer Contact	Elizabeth Warhurst Head of Legal and Support Services <a href="mailto:elizabeth.warhurst@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">elizabeth.warhurst@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>