

Record of Decisions

Notice of Motion - Debate not Hate Campaign

Decision Taker

Cabinet on 21 March 2023.

Decision

1. That the Council signs up to the Local Government Association's Debate Not Hate campaign;
2. that the Leader of the Council writes to the local Members of Parliament to ask them to support the Debate Not Hate campaign;
3. that the Leader of the Council writes to the Government to ask them to work with the Local Government Association to develop and implement a plan to address abuse and intimidation of politicians;
4. that the Head of Governance Support reminds all Councillors of the process to report incidents of harassment and abuse of Councillors via the Governance Support Team; and
5. that support available and relevant training to Councillors in relation to abuse and intimidation and Councillor safety is included as part of the 2023 Member Induction Programme.

Reason for the Decision

To respond to the motion and challenge the normalisation of abuse against Councillors and officers.

Implementation

This decision will come into force and may be implemented on Monday, 3 April 2023 unless the call-in procedure is triggered (as set out in Standing Orders in relation to Overview and Scrutiny).

Information

Members considered a motion in relation to a campaign against the intimidation and abuse of Councillors, notice of which was given in accordance with Standing Order A14.

Councillor Carter proposed and Councillor Cowell seconded a motion, as set out below which was agreed unanimously by the Cabinet:

The intimidation and abuse of Councillors, in person or otherwise, undermines democracy, preventing elected members from representing the communities they serve, deterring individuals from standing for elections, and undermining public life in democratic processes.

This Council notes that increasing levels of toxicity in public and political discourse is having a detrimental impact on local democracy and that prevention, support and responses to abuse

and intimidation of local politicians must improve to ensure Councillors feel safe and able to continue representing their residents.

Torbay Council therefore commits to challenge the normalisation of abuse against Councillors and officers and uphold exemplary standards of public life and political debate in all it does. To support this the Local Government Association's has launched its Debate Not Hate campaign with the aim to raise public awareness of the role of Councillors in local communities, encourage healthy debate and improve the response to and support those in public life facing abuse and intimidation.

Therefore, the Cabinet resolves:

1. That the Council signs up to the Local Government Association's Debate Not Hate campaign.
2. that the Leader of the Council writes to the local Members of Parliament to ask them to support the Debate Not Hate campaign;
3. that the Leader of the Council writes to the Government to ask them to work with the Local Government Association to develop and implement a plan to address abuse and intimidation of politicians;
4. that the Head of Governance Support reminds all Councillors of the process to report incidents of harassment and abuse of Councillors via the Governance Support Team; and
5. that support available and relevant training to Councillors in relation to abuse and intimidation and Councillor safety is included as part of the 2023 Member Induction Programme.

Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision

None.

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Does the call-in procedure apply?

Yes

Declarations of interest (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None.

Published

24 March 2023

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Leader of Torbay Council on behalf of the Cabinet