

Cabinet

21 March 2023

Debate Not Hate Campaign

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.

Proposer Councillor Carter
Secunder Councillor Cowell