

## **Protocol between North Lincolnshire Council (Elected Members) and Humberside Police**

1. Research by the Local Government Association (LGA) and others has found that the abuse, harassment, and intimidation of elected members by members of the public is unfortunately common, and increasing as a problem. This is particularly so for members with protected characteristics. This can lead to councillors choosing to stand down from public life, or prospective candidates choosing not to stand for office.
2. Humberside Police and North Lincolnshire Council's Standards Committee have taken a number of steps to improve the situation within North Lincolnshire. This builds upon recommendations from the LGA for local authorities to strengthen their local arrangements, and for police forces to improve the consistency of responses to abuse and threats made against councillors, and to take a risk-based approach that accounts for the specific risks that councillors face.
3. This protocol is intended to build upon this positive, proactive work and to provide a framework to allow North Lincolnshire Council staff to pass on serious threats and abuse directed to elected members onto Humberside Police's Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for assessment and appropriate action.
4. The protocol includes a short form for elected members or political group office staff to record any instances of serious threats, intimidation or harassment. This should then be passed onto the SPOC.
5. Upon receipt of an incident report being passed to Humberside Police, the SPOC will assess this by balancing the contents of the communication with malicious communications legislation and the Right to Freedom of Expression. It is recognised that not all incidents will result in formal action.
6. It is anticipated that the Standards Committee will be kept regularly informed of any significant referrals or other relevant information.
7. None of the above is intended to prevent elected members, or others, from reporting immediate threats to personal safety to the police via 999, or non-urgent issues via 101. In such cases, it would be appropriate to update the Monitoring Officer after the event, to ensure that the SPOC is aware.

**Abuse, Intimidation and Harassment Incident Report Form – to be completed  
by Group Office Staff or the Relevant Elected Member, and passed to the  
Single Point of Contact.**

Name:	Telephone:
Member involved <sup>1</sup>	Email:
Details of the incident <sup>2</sup> (continue on separate sheet if required)	
What form did the incident take? (i.e. verbal, telephone, written, social media)	
Do you have supporting evidence? If so, please retain and describe. <sup>3</sup>	
Do you have details of the identity person making the threat or abuse? <sup>4</sup> If so, list here:	
Are there any other relevant details?	
If you require any support or assistance as part of dealing with this matter, please approach your line manager / Group Secretary, or include details here.	

<sup>1</sup> (state 'general' if no specific member is named)

<sup>2</sup> Please note – an offence is only likely where there the communication is indecent or grossly offensive, threatening, known to be false, or intended to cause distress or anxiety.

<sup>3</sup> If written or via social media, please retain copies, screenshots, etc. If via telephone and there are others in the vicinity, seek to place the call on loudspeaker, setting out details here.

<sup>4</sup> Include any social media username and platform.

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