



**Committee and Date**  
**Council – 14<sup>th</sup> May 2026**

Item

Public



## Adoption of the Jo Cox Civility Pledge

<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	Tim Collard, Service Director – Legal and Governance		
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<b>Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):</b>	Councillor Heather Kidd		

### 1. Synopsis

To encourage all members of the Council to sign up to the “Jo Cox Civility Pledge”

### 2. Executive Summary

2.1. This report does not address the increasing prevalence of the wider abuse and intimidation of councillors online and in person (please see the following link for information on Member Safety and what steps to take in those circumstances [The Members’ Gateway - Member safety - All Documents](#)) but focuses on the internal activities of the Council and the work of the Jo Cox Foundation (members will be aware the MP Jo Cox was murdered in 2016) to promote the Jo Cox Civility Pledges which are designed to create a more respectful relationship between members. It is a commonly held view that if we are to expect decent standards of behaviour from members of the public when they engage with councillors, then good standards of behaviour need to be modelled within the council itself.

2.2. Whilst the behaviour of Shropshire Councillors when debating issues in Council meetings is generally very good, and the Council’s Code of Conduct - which requires that all members treat other members (and officers) with respect – is generally complied with, the Leader believes that it would be beneficial if all members signed up to the Jo Cox Civility Pledge.

- 2.3. The Pledge is signed up to online and Ellie Taylor, Members Assistant will be located outside the Council Chamber on the 14<sup>th</sup> May to assist members with the process should you decide to sign up. Link to sign up: [Civility Pledge - The Jo Cox Foundation](#)

### 3. Recommendations

- 3.1. The Leader supports the Jo Cox Foundation and Compassion in Politics' Civility Pledge, and encourages all members sign up to the following commitments:

**“to**

- ***use a civil and constructive tone in debate;***
- ***act with integrity, honesty and compassion;***
- ***behave respectfully towards others, including those you disagree with.”***

- 3.2. That the Pledge is referenced on all Cabinet and Committee agendas as a reminder to members.

## Report

### 4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1. Wide cross-Council support for the Civility Pledges will encourage respectful and civil debate which is clearly an appropriate way for the Council to conduct its business especially with public scrutiny.
- 4.2. If members do not sign up to the Civility Pledge it may undermine the public's confidence in the way in which the Council complies with the seven Nolan Principles of Public Life.

### 5. Financial Implications

- 5.1. There are no financial implications to adopting the Recommendation above.

### 6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1. There are no Climate Change implications of adopting the Recommendation above.

### 7. Background

- 7.1. The Jo Cox Foundation was set up following the murder of Jo Cox MP in 2016. In January 2024 the Jo Cox Civility Commission launched a call for nationwide action

to address the growing threat to democracy posed by abuse, harassment and intimidation of MPs and councillors.

- 7.2. As part of its campaign Jo Cox Civility Commission promotes the principle that all elected representatives, especially those in leadership roles, should model good behaviour. The underlying principle is that member behaviour, including towards each other, should model the respect with which they expect to be treated by the general public.
- 7.3. Member communication with each other, residents and officers is underpinned by the Code of Conduct, centred on the 7 Nolan Principles of conduct that apply to every holder of public office i.e. Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership.
- 7.4. To reinforce these principles, the Leader recommends that all Members sign up to the Pledge set out above.
- 7.5. The recommendations in the report will support the Council to comply with its obligations under Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 to promote and maintain high standards of conduct.

**List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)**

None [www.jocoxfoundation.org/  
Civility Pledge - Compassion in Politics](http://www.jocoxfoundation.org/Civility_Pledge_-_Compassion_in_Politics)

**Local Member:** All

**Appendices**