

RISK ASSESSMENT – COUNCILLOR CHATS

THE ACTIVITY

A conversation with residents in the public space of the Country Market or the Town Hall prior to the Town Council meetings.

OBJECTIVE

To give residents the opportunity to raise issues of concern or interest with Councillors. Councillors are there to represent the residents and this is an important opportunity to do this.

POTENTIAL RISKS

Physical or abusive threat or behaviour from residents to Councillors, (or vice versa).

Reputational risk to the Council from information supplied to the resident from the Councillor.

Litigious risk from misinterpretation or incorrect information supplied to the resident from the Councillor.

MITIGATIONS TO BE PUT IN PLACE

All meetings only in public.

Meetings ideally with more than once Councillor present

Recording of the meeting through written or audio means with permission of the resident where possible.

Councillors to commit to conduct these meetings as largely LISTENING exercise to identify the issues our residents are concerned about or interested in.

Councillors to be aware they cannot represent the views of the Council, only themselves as individuals and therefore not to give information that could be misinterpreted or mislead the residents.

The only undertaking a Councillor can make is to investigate the issues for the resident where appropriate or put the issue to the Council for debate and consideration.

ASSESSMENT OF RISK

Physical or verbal threat. Low likelihood in public space. Any Councillor who feels uncomfortable for any reason should immediately withdraw from the situation.

Reputational risk or litigation liability. Low risk as Councillors cannot speak on behalf of the Council. All Councillors to be aware that they are simply there to take the information and make the resident aware of their available routes to redress or to put the issues before the Council meeting.

SUMMARY

The exercise of listening to residents is good practice. The Councillors are making themselves available to the public in exactly the same way the officers do when they are performing their duties. We put sensible precautions in place in both situations.

REVIEW

The risk assessment to be reviewed by the end of January 2026.

Kay Montandon 20/11/2024