

Debate Not Hate – Communications Plan

Background Information

The Local Government Association are building a picture of the level of abuse and intimidation councillors receive on a daily basis for simply carrying out the role in their community.

Anyone, regardless of their background or political affiliation, should feel safe to become a councillor and be proud to represent their community.

But their 2025 Debate not Hate survey of councillors found more than half report being victims of misinformation, while rates of abuse and threats remain high across local government.

The increasing level of abuse and intimidation aimed at local politicians is preventing elected members from representing the communities they serve, deterring individuals from standing for election and undermining local democracy.

Aim

The Debate Not Hate campaign aims to raise public awareness of the role of councillors in their communities, encourage healthy debate and improve the responses and support for local politicians facing abuse and intimidation.

Audiences

Councillors

Residents

Key officers

Corporate Communications

Democratic Services

Campaign deliverables

Date to go live	Channel	Action	Further information	Suppliers	Budget	Lead officer	Status
Immediate and free communication actions							
ASAP	Website	Upload information about the Debate Not Hate campaign to the main NSDC website.	Councillors and committees Newark & Sherwood District Council	N/A	N/A	BF	
ASAP	Intranet	Upload information about the Debate Not Hate campaign to the Member's intranet	Any article that goes on the member's intranet also automatically goes on the staff one	N/A	N/A	BF	
ASAP	Email	Email to all Councillors regarding the Debate Not Hate campaign	Directing them to the page on the intranet	N/A	N/A	BF	
ASAP	Press release	Press release to announce our support for the campaign		N/A	N/A	BF	
ASAP	Social media	Social media schedule	Posts to go out every couple of weeks / month, and more frequently during key times such as elections.	N/A	N/A	BF	
September	Posters	Display posters around Castle House and in the Civic Suites during Committee Meetings	A4 – produced internally to avoid external costs	N/A	N/A	BF	
Throughout the year	Newsletters	Article about the campaign	Can be included in all newsletters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Resident • Business • Tenant 	N/A	N/A	BF	
Other free activity to consider							
ASAP	Email signature banners	Staff, or selected staff and councillors to add these to signatures	Subject to check via Transformation Team and our email signature policy	N/A	N/A	BF	
ASAP	Virtual meeting background	Add the background to the intranet for people to download	This could only be for a select period of time such as elections like when we do a background for Armed Forces reasons.	N/A	N/A	BF	

APPENDIX

Budget pending communication actions							
TBC	Posters	Professionally print off some posters to have in committee meetings and around CH and to send to other offices	Anything bigger than A4 will need professionally printed. Additionally, the print quality will be enhanced.	Ultimate Print	A3 glossy posters cost £4 each but specific costs TBC	BF	
TBC	Standees	To display in the Civic Suites during committee meetings.	LGA have already designed these so it would be just printing them up. These can also be taken to specific events	TBC	Approximately £75 plus VAT each	BF	