

**SUPPORT FOR AN EARLY DAY MOTION PRESENTED BY DR JULIAN LEWIS MP TO CALL FOR TOUGHER SANCTIONS TO DEAL WITH POOR BEHAVIOUR IN LOCAL COUNCILS**

**1.0 Early Day Motions (EDM)**

1.1 EDM's are motions submitted for debate in the House of Commons for which no day has been fixed. Few are debated, but many attract a great deal of public interest and media coverage. They are used to record individual MPs' views or draw attention to specific events or campaigns. By attracting the signatures of other MPs, they can demonstrate the level of parliamentary support for a particular cause or point of view.

**2.0 Dr Julian Lewis EDM – Call for Tougher Sanctions to Deal with Poor Behaviour in Local Councils**

- 2.1 Poor standards of behaviour has been a particular issue in local councils for quite a while. We could view many examples of poor behaviour during the Covid pandemic when local councils were being held virtually.
- 2.2 Poor behaviour in local councils has led to NALC establishing its Civility & Respect Committee, of which this Council adopted the Committee's pledge (See Annex A).
- 2.3 Dr Julian Lewis MP submitted an EDM in November 2022 which has now expired. He has now submitted another EDM calling on the government to re-visit its response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life report on local government ethical standards and to deal with poor behaviour in local councils.
- 2.4 The Council is being asked to consider writing to MK South's MP, Iain Stewart, requesting that he supports the EDM. The more signatures obtained, the better chance the matter will be debated in the House of Commons.

**3.0 The Motion**

**3.1** The EDM text is as follows:

“That this House expresses its support and appreciation for local community, parish and town councils which are the first tier of local government in England and Wales and play a vital role in our communities; notes with concern that whilst the vast majority of local councils are well run, there remain behavioural issues in a small minority of councils and by members of the public which involve bullying, intimidation and harassment of both councillors and their staff, as confirmed through a dedicated Civility and Respect project led by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), One Voice Wales (OVW), county associations of local councils, and also highlighted by the Association of Local Council Clerks (ALCC); further notes with concern this is leading to councillors and staff leaving the sector and is creating difficulties in recruiting to those roles; and calls on the Government to re-visit its response to the Committee on Standards in Public Life report on local government ethical standards and introduce the report's

recommendations in full including tougher sanctions such as suspension for poorly behaving councillors.”

#### **4.0 Support for the EDM**

- 4.1 NALC has produced a template letter (Annex B) which can be used to write to the MP. The letter also highlights some of the issues that are faced by some staff and councillors in the local council sector. Councillors can decide to write to MK South’s MP as a Council, or they could write as individuals.