

10 December 2021

Cllr P Bradbury  
Chairman,  
Governance Committee  
County Hall  
Chichester  
West Sussex  
P019 1RZ

Dear Cllr Bradbury,

At its meeting on 6 December 2021, Member Development Group (MDG) received a report on Councillors' Safety and discussed of elements relating to members' personal safety including lone working, malicious communications and verbal abuse, hate crime and the safety implications caused by easy access to details of members' home addresses on the County Council's 'Councillor' webpages.

MDG noted that following the 2021 elections, the County Council has seen a marked increase in the number of County Councillors choosing to have their contact address listed on the County Council's website as care of County Hall rather than having their home address made publicly available (you will recall that the personal details form completed by every member in May 2021 had a specific question 'Do you want your postal address to be published on the website?' with a yes or no response required). MDG raised, in particular, concerns about incidents of members being approached at their homes unexpectedly by residents and the unease that this has caused many members who have been faced with upset or irate residents at their door. MDG recommends that the default position of the County Council should be that members' addresses are **not** shown on the County Council's public facing 'Councillors' webpages and that it should instead be for individual members to opt in to have their home address published. MDG did acknowledge that some members will wish to have their home address clearly visible, so that residents can see that their County Councillor lives in their electoral division and is eligible to represent their local communities and the people that live there. It was also discussed and acknowledged that should someone wish to search elsewhere to find a member's address then it is usually relatively easy to find, e.g. on registers of interest (either on the County Council's website or elsewhere if the individual is a dual or triple hatter) and on electoral registration forms, but that the removal of addresses from the most obvious sources on the Council's 'County Councillor' pages would be helpful and may discourage those who are minded to approach a member at home and become abusive or threatening.

MDG, therefore, would be grateful if Governance Committee would formally consider the recommendation of Member Development Group, as follows:

That the default position of the County Council should be that members' addresses are **not** shown on the County Council's public facing 'Councillors'

webpages, either on an individual councillor's webpage or on the list of members addresses published in the library on the Council's website and that it should instead be for individual members to opt in to have their home address published.

Yours sincerely,

CLLr Sujana Wickremaratchi  
Chairman, Member Development Group