Ethics and Engagement Committee Work Programme 2012/13

12 December 2012

Topic	Matter for Consideration	Outcome
Revised Terms of Reference	To highlight the terms of reference agreed by Council on 27 November 2012.	▪ To note the changes to the operation of the Committee.
Dispensations for Members Holding Licences to Occupy Land within the City	To consider the granting of dispensations for members in accordance with the Committee's terms of reference.	▪ To consider the proposed dispensation.
Code of Conduct: Cases Review	To examine national developments of relevance to the Members' Code of Conduct.	▪ To note the issues raised and consider a suitable response if required.
Member Role Descriptions	Clarifying the role of councillors could potentially be of benefit to both councillors, prospective councillors, and the public.	▪ To consider proposals for member role descriptions and to recommend alterations or approval as required.
Public Involvement at Committees and Webcasting	The Council does not regularly record or broadcast its meetings, but does allow public participation in a variety of meetings.	▪ To consider whether webcasting of committee meetings would be beneficial and good value for money. ▪ To examine current arrangements for public participation in meetings.
Member-Officer Protocol	The Member-Officer Protocol forms part of the Council's Constitution and governs the relationship between councillors and officers. The protocol has been in place for a number of years without review.	▪ To assess the ongoing suitability of the Member-Officer Protocol.
Work Programme Update	The Committee's work programme is agreed on an ongoing basis in consultation with the Chair and the Committee.	▪ To agree the work programme. ▪ To consider the arrangements for the next meeting.

21 January 2013

Topic	Matter for Consideration	Outcome
Code of Conduct: Cases Review	To examine national developments of relevance to the Members' Code of Conduct.	▪ To note the issues raised and consider suitable a suitable response if required.
E-Democracy	The Council provides a number of online democratic functions for both councillors and the public. The nature and extent of these services is an area for continued consideration.	▪ To consider the effectiveness of current online democratic functions and to offer views on future provision.
Councillors' Use of Social Media	Members have access to an increasing number of online tools for communicating with each other, officers and the public. In particular, councillors' use of Twitter, Facebook, and blogging provides a new set of opportunities and challenges, offering new ways to engage with people but also changing the manner and means by which information can be communicated	▪ To consider the current and future impact of social media upon councillors and whether any guidance or revision to existing procedures is necessary.
Independent Person Protocol	Following the approval of the Localism Act 2011, a role for an independent person was created; the Committee is therefore recommended to consider the adoption of a protocol covering the working relationship with the Council's Independent Person.	▪ To consider the adoption of a protocol relating to the role of the Independent Person.
Work Programme Update	The Committee's work programme is agreed on an ongoing basis in consultation with the Chair and the Committee.	▪ To agree the work programme. ▪ To consider the arrangements for the next meeting.

11 March 2013

Topic	Matter for Consideration	Outcome
Code of Conduct: Cases Review	To examine national developments of relevance to the Members' Code of Conduct.	▪ To note the issues raised and consider suitable a suitable response if required.
Member Development Review	Member development has become increasingly important in recent years as the Council seeks to ensure elected members have the skills and knowledge to perform their roles as effectively as possible.	▪ To consider the current operation of member development.
The Promotion of Citizenship within Schools	Following consideration of related topics at the meeting of 12 December 2012, members requested that the Committee consider the provision of citizenship lessons within schools.	▪ To consider the status of citizenship within schools and whether the Committee can contribute towards this locally.
Member Code of Conduct & Terms of Reference Revision: The Principles of Public Life	The Committee on Standards in Public Life changed its seven principles of public life, often known as the Nolan Principles. As these are incorporated in the Member Code of Conduct, consideration should be given to updating the Code.	▪ To consider whether the Member Code of Conduct should be updated to accommodate the revised Nolan Principles.
Qualified Privilege	Following the receipt of a Social Media Protocol, members requested a briefing note regarding the situations in which qualified privilege provided a potential defence against defamation.	▪ To consider the briefing note and the potential value in circulating it to all councillors.
Work Programme Update	The Committee's work programme is agreed on an ongoing basis in consultation with the Chair and the Committee.	▪ To agree the work programme. ▪ To consider the arrangements for the next meeting.

Unscheduled Topics

Topic	Matter for Consideration	Outcome
Assistant Portfolio Holders	Currently, the Executive comprises six portfolio holders. In order to encourage greater links with the scrutiny process and to develop non-Executive members' experience, it would be possible to create assistant portfolio holder roles.	▪ To assess the potential advantages and disadvantages of introducing the role of assistant portfolio holder.
Encouraging Electoral Engagement	Turnout in Lincoln's local government elections, in common with many other areas of the country, is often below 30%, meaning that the majority of electors are choosing not to exercise their right to vote, while others entitled to vote may not even be registering to do so.	▪ To examine voter registration and electoral turnout, and to discuss the manner in which this can be improved.
Increasing the Diversity of Electoral Candidates	Across the United Kingdom, elected members in local government are often disproportionately drawn from certain sections of the population, with significant disparities existing in areas such as race, gender, and age.	▪ To determine whether any barriers to a broader range of electoral candidates exist that the Council could reasonably address, noting that the Council has no role in influencing the selection process of political parties.
Promoting Constructive Debate Within Meetings	The manner in which debate is conducted at meetings has a significant bearing on the quality of outcomes and the working relationships between members and officers.	▪ To review the Council's standing orders and to consider the manner in which a high standard of debate can be secured.
Standards Post-Implementation Review	The Localism Act 2011 provided for a considerable revision of arrangements for member standards, including changes to members' declarations of interests and the Members' Code of Conduct.	▪ To consider the impact of changes to the standards regime introduced through the Localism Act 2011.
Ward Budgets	The Ward Budgets scheme, allowing councillors to offer financial support to projects benefitting their wards, has been operating since 2009/10.	▪ To assess the operation of the Ward Budgets scheme.

Topic	Matter for Consideration	Outcome
Whistle-Blowing Policy	The Council's Whistle-Blowing Policy seeks to ensure that legitimate concerns regarding the operation of the Council can be raised in a confidential and effective manner.	▪ To assess the Whistle-Blowing Policy with particular regard to its impact upon councillors.