

SUBJECT:	WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE
REPORT BY:	DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
LEAD OFFICER:	CAROLYN WHEATER – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (LEGAL AND CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To put forward the current Ethics and Engagement Committee work programme for consideration by members.

2. Work Programme Summary

- 2.1 The work programme is attached as **Appendix A**, and was agreed at the meeting of the Ethics and Engagement Committee on 31 January 2013.

- 2.2 A significant number of unscheduled items are contained within the work programme. These items are not currently scheduled owing either to a lack of capacity within the meetings available or because the timing at which key information will become available is unclear.

- 2.3 Members are encouraged to put forward any proposals for relevant matters of concern or interest to them or the residents of their ward which the Ethics and Engagement Committee may be able to consider.

3. Changes Made to the Work Programme

- 3.1 Following discussion by members at the last meeting the wording of the work programme item relating to increasing the diversity of electoral candidates has been changed to incorporate a clear reference to the control that political parties exert over the selection of their candidates for election, as separate from any input the Council may have in this area.

- 3.2 To address members' concerns regarding the scope for the Council to become more involved in this area, some preliminary scoping work has been undertaken to establish the likely remit for the Committee when the topic is considered in due course. Again, it is valuable to emphasise that the Council should not and would not ever seek to become involved in either championing the election of independent candidates or interfering with the party political process for the selection of party candidates. However, the Council as a whole and this Committee in particular have a clear role to play in ensuring that all sections of Lincoln's society are aware of the role that councillors have in their communities and how members of the public can stand for election.

- 3.3 By way of examining good practice from other local authorities, members may wish to consider the findings of an academic report produced at the request of the Department for Communities and Local Government, [Improving the Representativeness of Councillors](#). The report identifies five councils as being particularly worthy of emulation, and also specifically addresses the concerns previously raised by members regarding the extent of the Council's role in this area given the leading role which political parties also play:

'Much like political parties, local councils can assume an active role in promoting representativeness. Whilst in each of the case study areas considered it is the parties that have been central to the recruitment of traditionally under-represented groups, the local authorities themselves also played an important supporting role.'

- 3.4 In summary, when approaching this area of business the Committee may wish to direct its attention towards improving the awareness of the role of councillors within Lincoln and ensuring that its citizens are fully aware of their rights, opportunities, and the means for becoming an electoral candidate. By assessing areas such as the extent and suitability of member support, the support offered to candidates and councillors by local employers, and the information made available on the role of councillors, members will be able to examine current arrangements and identify any possible improvements.

4. Finance Implications

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Any additions to the work programme should be made in accordance with the scope of the Committee as established within its terms of reference.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 That the Committee consider the work programme and propose any suitable changes if necessary.
- 6.2 That the Committee consider items scheduled for the next meeting and any necessary arrangements relating to them.