

ETHICS AND ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Monday, 15 January 2018

6.00 pm

Committee Room 1, City Hall

Membership: Councillors Geoff Ellis (Chair), Adrianna McNulty (Vice-Chair), Liz Maxwell, Ronald Hills, Ric Metcalfe, Edmund Strengiel, Naomi Twedde, Lorraine Woolley and Gill Clayton-Hewson

Substitute member(s): Councillors Ralph Toofany

Independent Person(s): Chris Elkington and Roger Vine

Officers attending: Democratic Services and Becky Scott

A G E N D A

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Please note that, in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, when declaring interests members must disclose the existence and nature of the interest, and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest (DPI) or personal and/or pecuniary.	
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Present: Councillor Geoff Ellis (*in the Chair*)

Councillors: Paul Gowen (*substitute for Naomi Tweddle*), Liz Maxwell, Adrianna McNulty, Ric Metcalfe, Edmund Strengiel, Pat Vaughan (*substitute Gill Clayton-Hewson*) and Loraine Woolley

Independent Person(s): Chris Elkington

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Ronald Hills and Councillor Gill Clayton-Hewson

1. Confirmation of Minutes - 6 March 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2017 be confirmed.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

3. Appointment of Independent Person and Reserve Independent Person

The Principal Democratic Officer presented a report which informed members that the Ethics and Engagement Appointments Panel had appointed Chris Elkington as the Council's Independent Person and Roger Vine as the Council's Reserve Independent Person for a three year term of office.

The Chair congratulated Mr Elkington and Mr Vine on their reappointments, adding that they were both valuable members of the Ethics and Engagement Committee.

The Ethics and Engagement Committee noted the report.

4. Support to Elected Members - Ward Surgery Promotion

The Principal Democratic Officer:

- a) presented a report to consider the manner in which the Council supported the promotion of elected members' ward surgeries through the provision of leaflets, as requested at the previous meeting of the Ethics and Engagement Committee.
- b) took into account the comments raised by members at the previous meeting of the Ethics and Engagement Committee, acknowledging that members regarded the provision of leaflets as an important way of ensuring that residents knew who their local members were and how to get in touch with them.
- c) was not proposing to remove the provision of leaflets to members, but requested that the Ethics and Engagement Committee considered the following ways in which the cost of leaflets could be reduced:
 - use of lower quality of paper
 - printing leaflets in black and white

- ensuring that leaflets were ordered at certain parts of the year in order that bulk orders could be placed to secure a cheaper price
 - placing leaflets in community spaces rather than delivering to properties in a ward
 - setting a limit on the number of leaflets each member or ward was entitled to
 - more utilisation of the Council's social media facilities and communications team to promote ward surgeries
- d) acknowledged that each ward was different with regard to the way in which surgeries were held and leaflets were used, particularly where a ward was represented by members from different political groups.
- e) invited members' questions and comments.

Discussion ensued on the ways in which the cost of leaflets could be reduced. It was agreed that changes to colour printing and the quality of paper was not likely to make a huge impact to the cost and that the leaflets should be of a reasonable quality to ensure that they portrayed professionalism. The Chair agreed that facilitating bulk orders through ordering leaflets three or four times a year, rather than upon request, would enable the Democratic Services team to submit orders in bulk and secure a much cheaper price. The Committee agreed with this approach and asked the Principal Democratic Officer to ensure that deadlines associated with placing orders in this manner be communicated to members.

Reference was made to the 'Your Lincoln' magazine which was delivered to all properties in Lincoln three times a year. It was noted that the member information section in the latest edition was not prominent enough, with a suggestion made that it should include photographs and contact details for all 33 City of Lincoln Council members. The Committee agreed with this point and the Leader of the Council committed to raise this with the Council's Communications team.

RESOLVED that the provision of leaflets for members be continued but that these be ordered at certain parts of the year, to be determined by the Council's Democratic Services team, rather than upon request in order to achieve a cheaper price for orders in bulk.

5. Code of Conduct: Cases Review

The Principal Democratic Officer:

- a) presented a report containing information on recent cases in relation to other local authorities' Code of Conduct.
- b) summarised the cases within the report, noting the particular areas which members may wish to consider.
- c) provided the Ethics and Engagement Committee with a copy of 'Setting the Standard' recently published by the Committee on Standards in Public Life and included a copy of its annual report for 2016/17.
- d) outlined that the Committee on Standards in Public Life intended to undertake a review of local government standards as part of its 2017/18 work programme, based around a consultation scheduled to be launched early in 2018.

- e) invited members' questions and comments.

It was noted that the year of the annual report referred to at paragraph 4.1 of the report should have read 2016-17, rather than 2017-18.

The Independent Person made the point that cases involving social media were becoming more and more prevalent across the country.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

6. Member Development and the People Strategy

The Principal Democratic Officer:

- a) presented a report which set out the options available to the Council in respect of member training in conjunction with the recently adopted People Strategy.
- b) acknowledged that, in order to meet the needs of the community, the Council needed to be committed to member development.
- c) highlighted that the current member development programme was set on an adhoc basis, with a range of sessions currently scheduled for the municipal year.
- d) highlighted that, through the People Strategy, the 'Your Performance Matters' strand was focussed on linking appraisals with objective setting to support the delivery of the Council's Vision 2020. It seemed appropriate to have the same process for members, given that they were ambassadors of Vision 2020 out in the community. Workshops for members were therefore being planning on Vision 2020, which would enable members to fully understand the projects associated with the Vision and help identify any training needs.
- e) reported that the Council was a member of East Midlands Councils, which delivered a comprehensive tailored development programme specifically to support members.
- f) highlighted that there would be opportunities for members to use the Netconsent software, which was an e-learning facility, should they have missed any face to face development sessions on certain topics.

RESOLVED that the principles set out in the report to link member development with delivery of the Council's Vision 2020 be supported.

7. Local Democracy Week

The Principal Democratic Officer:

- a) reported that Local Democracy Week this year was the week commencing 9 October 2017.
- b) highlighted that the Democratic Services team had in previous years invested some resource in engagement with local schools to support Local Democracy Week, but that this had not resulted in high levels of engagement.

- c) invited members' questions and comments.

The Chair was keen to build upon the keen interest that young people in particular had demonstrated at the Parliamentary General Election and felt that the Council should be seen to be doing something to attempt to engage with the City's young people as part of Local Democracy Week. Members agreed that a letter be sent to all Lincoln secondary schools by the Chair, encouraging engagement as part of Local Democracy Week.

RESOLVED that a letter from the Chair of the Ethics and Engagement Committee be sent to all secondary schools in Lincoln, outlining the principles of Local Democracy Week and offering visits from members of the Committee as part of the event.

8. Electoral Registration Update

The Principal Democratic Officer:

- a) provided an update on the Individual Electoral Registration system since its inception on 10 June 2014.
- b) reported that, following the 2016 canvass, the register was published on 1 December 2016 with a total electorate of 61,551. It was noted that further work had been undertaken to further maximise registration, which included:
 - mapping of empty properties
 - issuing of household notification letters
 - use of social media
- c) reported that the electorate prior to the County Council elections in May 2017 stood at 62,479.
- d) reported that the electorate prior to the Parliamentary General Election in June stood at 66,841.
- e) reported that the maximising registration work would continue as part of the 2017 canvas, with the City of Lincoln's electorate standing at 66,214 as of 1 July 2017.

In response to a question as to why the electorate had dropped after the Parliamentary General Election, it was noted that this drop was consistent with previous General Elections and the EU Referendum. A number of deletions from the register throughout June, due to deaths or people moving house, for example, took effect in July's register hence the electorate being slightly lower when published on 1 July 2017 than the register used for the General Election in June 2017. Members also noted the significant increase in registration as a result of the General Election. The Principal Democratic Officer reported that approximately 2,500 applications were received on the deadline day for registration alone.

A question was raised as to instances of duplicate registrations for the General Election. It was noted that there had been numerous cases of applications submitted by people who were already registered, resulting in duplicate applications. The Principal Democratic Officer explained that these applications had not resulted in a person appearing on the register twice and would have been picked up as part of their processing due to the person already having been registered.

Discussion ensued on student registration and the fact that students were entitled to register on the electoral roll at their home address as well as at their student accommodation. It was noted that it was an offence for a person to vote more than once at the same election and that applications had to be processed at face value, with the onus on the elector as to where they decided to cast their vote.

The Principal Democratic Officer explained that the Electoral Commission was currently in the process of undertaking a number of pilot schemes via other local authorities across the country, one of which involved the use of photographic identification at polling stations.

A question was asked as to what the Council could do to assist its new tenants with registering to vote, suggesting that an application form or registration information could be made available to them as part of a welcome pack. The Principal Democratic Officer reported that £41,142 had been received by the government as part of its Individual Electoral Registration fund, which could be used to resource a number of projects to encourage registration. It was anticipated that student and Council tenant registration would be two areas of focus for such projects over the coming year.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

9. Work Programme Update

The Democratic Services Officer:

- a) presented the current Ethics and Engagement Committee work programme for consideration by members.
- b) invited members' questions and comments.

RESOLVED that the work programme be approved, subject to an update report on Local Democracy Week being included for the Committee's meeting scheduled to be held on 2 October 2017.

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SUBJECT:	A REVIEW OF THE CONSULTATION STRATEGY AND HOW THE COUNCIL ENGAGES WITH THE PUBLIC
DIRECTORATE:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK
REPORT AUTHOR:	LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the methods by which the Council engages with the public, assist with the review of the Consultation Strategy and providing comments to shape engagement with communities in the future.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 In order to review the methods and success of engagement with the community, by way of background, the public sector equality duty is relevant as well as the current Consultation Strategy and Guidelines. The Strategy and Guidelines are up for a review later in 2018 and 2020 respectively and therefore member's comments on these documents would be welcomed. It is an opportunity to review the larger consultation exercises undertaken as well and to explore current methods of engagement and explore new ways of linking with communities for both officers and members.

3. Engagement with communities

- 3.1 The Council undertakes a variety of work with communities, both by staff and members.

3.2 Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

The PSED means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work – in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

There is a requirement for the Council to pay particular attention to this and for officers to complete an Equality & Diversity Analysis for decisions relating to changes in policy/new services made by the Council or at the very least a statement confirming that this has been considered.

3.3 Consultation Strategy 2015-2018

This was updated in March 2017 with a light touch review to include the Vision 2020, and is attached at Appendix A. There will be a fuller review in June 2018 with a view to ensuring it spans the next 3 years. Members comments on this document would be welcomed. Any outcomes from this meeting will be fed back to the Policy team to incorporate into their review.

3.4 General Consultation tools

(1) Citizens Panel

The Council's Citizens Panel has approximately 640 members. The responses are analysed and inputted as an IMPS measure. The response rates are around 50% over the past 3 years. In the survey a question is asked as follows: *The City of Lincoln Council provides many services. Overall, considering all contact you have had with the council, how satisfied are you (with 5 different aspects of contact)?* In July there was also a question asking "Do you feel that CLC acts upon the concerns of residents?"

Attached at Appendix B is the breakdown of these responses received in July 2017 for member's consideration.

The Panel for November 2017 included questions specifically related to how residents feel about living in their community. The questions are attached at Appendix C and the responses will be tabled at the meeting.

(2) Housing – bi-annual Star survey

This survey is carried out every two years and is known as the STAR survey. The survey is conducted by an independent company called BMG research. This was last carried between October and November in 2016. Overall results showed that:

• Satisfied with overall service	88%
• Satisfied with quality of home	88%
• Satisfied with neighbourhood as a place to live	82%
• Satisfied that rent provides value for money	89%
• Satisfied with repairs and maintenance	86%
• Satisfied that views are taken into account ¹	70%

(3) Customer Mystery Shopping and Customer Services Surveys

There are two sections to the mystery shopping carried out by tenants. They carry out 'traditional' mystery shopping over the phone and also carry out exit surveys with residents in the reception area. In 2016/17 our tenant mystery shoppers got busy with their shopping. They made a total of 53 calls and completed 130 surveys with customers. Their feedback showed that you could don't see the ticket screen from all areas of reception and as a result an extra screen was installed. In addition to this it was noticed that the property shop counter was particularly busy on a Wednesday morning and as a result an extra member of staff was made available.

3.5 Other general surveys which are carried out

These include:-

- Christmas Market
- Other Events Team led surveys or questionnaires

3.6 Christmas Market

The University of Lincoln conduct a survey of visitors to the event, which has been done each year since 2013. The latest figures of the results received are from 2015 and are appended to this report. Unfortunately the results from 2016 and 2017 have not yet been received but should be available in the next few months.

A copy of the two different types of questionnaires issued at the 2017 market are also appended to the report.

Members

Members are continuously engaging with their constituents through direct contact, ward surgeries and attending meetings within their areas.

This committee considered how the council's members engage with communities in December 2016, the minute of which stated:-

The Reserve Independent Person noted that public appetite for involvement with local councils was limited unless motivated by an issue directly relevant to particular residents. Equally, many prominent local services were offered by different bodies, which made engagement more challenging. The Council appeared to be doing everything it could to improve engagement and had faced similar challenges in improving engagement through Local Democracy Week activities with local schools.

The Independent Person highlighted the differences between attendance levels for city-wide meetings and parish-level meetings, with the possibility of higher attendance levels for meetings with a more local focus.

Members:

- ☐ *discussed the considerable efforts made by the Council to engage with people.*
- ☐ *noted that there remained confusion about which councils were responsible for which services.*

- *agreed that people tended only to be interested in council services when a problem had been encountered.*
- *discussed how neighbourhood panels could feed into engagement.*
- *considered whether it was more appropriate for the Council or for political groups to take a lead on engaging with the public.*
- *highlighted the difficulty in ensuring that councillors did not divulge exempt or confidential information to people while engaging with the public.*
- *noted the varying attendance levels at local meetings across the city.*
- *questioned whether there was any evidence that the availability of neighbourhood working support made a difference to community participation levels.*

The Legal and Democratic Services Manager advised that she would relay members' queries regarding neighbourhood working to the relevant team.

RESOLVED that members would continue to oversee the manner in which the Council engaged with local communities and highlight any potential future improvements.

It was therefore felt appropriate that this committee specifically considers the Consultation Strategy and more details about what the council does to shape its policies and services.

A review is being undertaken by CMT early in the year as to how members are able to engage further with Vision 2020.

A report specifically on methods of carrying out casework appears separately on this agenda.

4. Other engagement with communities

4.1 Corporate Peer Challenge

The Corporate Peer Challenge took place in early 2017 where an inward review by a peer group of the Council was undertaken on 6 different external partners, a range of internal staff (Management, Members and officers) and focus groups including tenants residents and voluntary services. The outcomes were positive with only 6 key recommendations, which have all been incorporated into ongoing work programmes.

4.2 Lincoln Tenants' Panel

The Lincoln Tenants' Panel (LTP) is a group of tenants and a Leaseholder whose aim is to ensure your views are represented at the council. They work hard and put in many unpaid hours to help improve the service tenants receive.

In 2016/17 they have:

- Helped us to develop our anti-social behaviour service with the aim of achieving Accreditation

- Monitored performance on areas including, rent, repairs and customer services
- Discussed all housing related Executive Committee reports and informed the decision making process
- Attended Housing Scrutiny Committee meetings to ensure tenants' views were Considered
- Reviewed the empty property process and made recommendations for Improvements
- Recruited further members to the panel.

4.3 Leaseholders Forum

Throughout 2016/17 several meetings of the leaseholder's forum were held. Leaseholders attended and discussed topics including anti-social behaviour, fly tipping and service charges. The aim of the forum is to encourage closer links between leaseholders and the council.

4.4 Tenant empty property inspectors

The tenant empty property inspectors check 10 per cent of all empty properties before they are let. This is to see if they are meeting the lettings standard. Last year a total of 53 properties were inspected and 31 fully met the standard. Further work was carried out to those that didn't. One thing the inspectors noticed was that the standard of cleaning had reduced and we were able to use their results to get our contractors to improve

It should also be noted that as the way we communicate with our residents, businesses and workers changes, we have added more social media into the mix – e.g. advertised the presence of a current survey through Twitter, Facebook and Instagram

4.5 As well as the more regular things outlined above, there have been recent consultations relating to the following changes of services:

- Neighbourhood Working Service
- Western Growth Corridor
- Sincil Bank regeneration project
- Birchwood Leisure Centre
- Residential Parking

4.6 There is much ongoing work with partners on projects, including:-

- Ongoing support for the Community Cohesion Steering Group with strategy currently being refreshed by a sub-group of the Steering Group
- Promotion of World Hello Day on 21 November each year, co-ordinating events and supporting partners in organising activities
- The Community Leadership Scrutiny Committee has become involved with determining the scope of the Skills Project

- The ongoing Living Wage and anti-poverty campaign
- Engagement with the voluntary sector, including the recent extension of the Volunteer Policy to include opportunities for staff
- Support to local charities such as helping make Food Bank referrals sustainable
- Various Vision 2020 projects such as Lincoln's Social Responsibility Charter
- The proposed Lottery project
- Links with the university, including Fresher's Week, have been improved

4.7 The council continues to support the neighbourhood boards and following the review of neighbourhood working, Urban Challenge have been appointed to support the eight neighbourhood boards that we have across the city. This contract started on the 1st November 2017 and a specific element of this contract is to:

"Hold a workshop with members to identify their role in the boards, and their relationship between the board, the community and the council"

4.8 The Council recently held a disability forum to establish a way to improve consultation opportunities on council services/policies in respect of disability and is working with Peoples' Partnership to establish ongoing links.

4.9 Corporate monitoring form will be reviewed in 2018 which captures data about individuals and this will feed into engagement with the communities.

4.10 Improved the website access to encourage more engagement with the Council, particularly in line with the Customer Experience Strategy (previously Channel Shift)

5. Suggested methods to improve engagement with communities

5.1 There will be a review soon by the Policy team of how the Panel reflects the diversity of the city and what steps need to be taken, if any.

5.2 For staff and members to continue to link with partners, residents, and businesses as outlined above.

6. Strategic Priorities

6.1 High Performing Services

By engaging with the communities in Lincoln, the Council can ensure that their services are high performing and therefore meet residents' needs.

7. Organisational Impacts

7.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

There are no financial implications in this report.

7.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are no legal implications in this report.

7.3 Equality and Diversity implications

This report raises awareness for the requirement for consideration of equality and diversity under the Equality Act 2010 when undertaking consultation.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 That members note the report, consider the Consultation Strategy and provide comments to feed into the review, note the current ways in which the Council engages with its communities and consider ways to improve these.

Is this a key decision? No

Do the exempt information categories apply? No

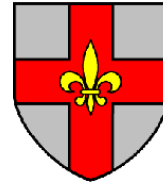
Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply? No

How many appendices does the report contain? 6

List of Background Papers: None

Lead Officer: Becky Scott, LDSM
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CITY OF
Lincoln
COUNCIL

CORPORATE CONSULTATION and ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

2015 - 2018

Business Manager Policy Unit (CX)



**Together, let's deliver
Lincoln's ambitious future**

Strategic priorities as of January 2017

- Let's drive economic growth
- Let's reduce inequality
- Let's deliver quality Housing
- Let's enhance our remarkable place

Plus

- Professional, high performing service delivery

Document control

Organisation	City of Lincoln Council
Title	Corporate Consultation and Engagement Strategy
Author - name and title	Pat Jukes, Business Manager, Policy Unit
Owner - name and title	Pat Jukes, Business Manager, Policy Unit
Date	November 2014
Approvals	AD Group/CMT/Policy Scrutiny
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Next review date	June 2018

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Revision	Originator of change	Date of change	Change description
V.02	Pat Jukes	24 th March 2017	Amendments to reflect new Vision 2020

Distribution and training history

Details	Date
Tbc when dates agreed	

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Foreword

This strategy is provided for the purpose of enabling staff to understand the way in which the City of Lincoln Council wishes to undertake consultation with our citizens and customers of our services.

An abbreviated overview containing the key points will be made available for all on the City of Lincoln website.

Like all councils, the City of Lincoln Council has a statutory duty to provide relevant, cost effective and efficient services and to consult with our communities on service delivery (Local Government Act 1999). In order to achieve and maintain the best quality services at the least cost, our stakeholders must have the opportunity to provide feedback on current service provision and have a say in the planning and delivery of future services.

The council's three year Strategic Plan – Vision 2020, identifies our key priorities, and sets out how we see the priorities being delivered. Engaging the local community is essential if the Council is to achieve its aspirations and deliver efficient, effective, and targeted services.

This strategy outlines the way we will consult with the local community and citizens in making decisions that affect their lives. It also seeks to outline how we will manage our consultation programme in line with our Strategic Priorities, best contemporary consultation practice in local government and any central government requirements.

Aims and Objectives of the strategy

The aim of the city council is to comprehensively engage with users of the city council services – that includes residents, businesses, the third sector, visitors and other stakeholders and partners in a meaningful and cost effective way, delivering outcomes that demonstrate real benefits for the community and value for money for the authority.

Consultation in Lincoln is designed around the following principles, it should be:

- Bespoke – one size does not fit all, and consultation should be developed to meet the specific policy, project or service need
- Timely – consultation should be undertaken early on in decision making
- Appropriate – there should be a defined need for the consultation, which should be proportionate, relevant and accessible
- Inclusive – all affected groups should have the right to express their views including those harder to reach groups
- Effective – the outcomes from consultation should inform decision-making and service delivery
- Co-ordinated – a consistent and co-ordinated approach

Key considerations

There may be a number of reasons to consult – for example to gather views and preferences, to understand possible unintended consequences of a policy or to get views on implementation plans. Increasing the level of transparency and engagement improves the quality of our policy making by bringing together expertise and alternative perspectives; as well as identifying unintended effects and practical problems.

WHO – Decision makers should be able to demonstrate that they have considered who needs to be consulted and ensure that the consultation captures the full range of stakeholders affected. In particular, if a policy or decision will affect hard to reach or vulnerable groups, they should take the necessary actions to engage effectively with these groups. Further information on which groups to contact is available in the consultation guidelines.

Information should be presented in a way that will be accessible and useful to the key stakeholders. The form of consultation will largely depend on the issues under consideration, who needs to be consulted, as well as the available time and resources.

WHEN - Engagement should begin early in policy development when it is still under consideration and views can genuinely be taken into account. The objectives of any consultation should be clear, and will depend to a great extent on the type of issue and the stage in the policy-making process – from gathering new ideas to testing options.

Consultation exercises should not generally be launched or published during local or national election periods unless there are exceptional circumstances which make a consultation absolutely essential.

HOW - Information provided to stakeholders should be easily understandable –, it should use plain language and clarify the key messages or issues, particularly where the consultation deals with complex subject matter. If you are engaging with children, it may be appropriate to make the surveys more ‘youngster friendly’ e.g. using more pictorial background. Consideration should be given to more informal forms of consultation that may be appropriate – for example, email or web-based forums, social media public meetings, working groups, focus groups, and surveys – rather than always reverting to a written consultation.

Modern communications technologies enable us to engage in such discussions more quickly and in a more targeted way than before, and mean that the traditional written consultation is not always the best way of getting those who know most and care most about a particular issue to engage in fruitful dialogue

FEEDBACK – When consultation is undertaken, it is critical that it is used in the decision making process as well as being fed back to those taking part. Feedback should be provided directly to those who took part in the survey; Service Manager(s) organising the survey; as well as the wider public and Members (where appropriate). How this is done will depend on the method used to some degree – but using the

website is acceptable for most. However, if you have been consulting with hard to reach groups such as children or vulnerable people, then you may have to make a special effort to ensure the feedback is given in an appropriate way to suit their needs.

Roles and responsibilities

Consultation is not simply the job of the Service Manager to arrange – there are roles for all levels of officers right across the organisation:

- Decision makers (Executive and Senior Management)need to ensure consultation has occurred and have a duty to question the absence of consultation
- The consultation owner (the Service Manager or team leader usually) is responsible for ensuring consultation is conducted within our corporate guidelines and standards
- Consultation owners need to understand their service users so that they are aware of all the groups that should be contacted during a consultation
- Statutory Officers and Assistant Directors – need to have knowledge of the consultations underway within their teams so that they can avoid duplication, ensure standards are applied, monitor progress to the planned schedule, and most importantly ensure that the outcome informs the plans for the service.
- Policy Unit – will produce the Corporate Strategy, Guidance and advice for those operating consultation activities; offer advice to officers embarking on consultation, run the Citizens Panel (accessible by any service); and conduct corporate consultation, such as a Place Shaper style survey when needed. Policy Unit will not be running service consultations - full details of what support is available is included in the Consultation Guidelines
- The Policy Unit, working with the Communications Team will act as a central co-ordination body, monitoring corporate standards, helping to avoid duplication, offering advice on content and quality as well as collating information on what consultations have been completed.

The approach

All consultation should ideally be passed through the Corporate Policy Unit during the set up stages – time should be built into the project plan to allow for this. The purpose of this is to:

- Apply corporate standards to all consultation
- Ensure there is no duplication/contradictory activity
- Spot opportunities for joint consultation
- Ensure there is no consultation fatigue with specific groups
- Monitor and collate information on all consultation activity

The first consideration of consultation is to decide what is needed to be achieved as this will inform the decision on which aspect of consultation is the most appropriate. (See table 1 below)

For consultation to be effective it must include communication of the outcome of the activity to the participants and other stakeholders. People who have taken the time to participate should be informed of how this information will feed into the decision making process and how participants views have influenced the Council.

It is the responsibility of the consultation owner/service manager to ensure this feedback takes place and that it is undertaken in a timely fashion

	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE
Why	To give people information about plans and services.	To collect information about attitudes, opinions and preferences, and ask for views that will assist our understanding, policy making and decision making	To actively involve people and encourage participation, in improving existing services and designing new services In partnerships - To maintain an equal and effective working relationship
What	Information provided will be accurate, balanced and up-dated as necessary.	Information collected will be used responsibly and reported honestly. Feedback will be taken seriously, and decisions influenced. Customers will be informed of the influence they have had.	Local people will be able to help shape processes. There will be transparency, and they will have some influence over decisions. Possibly some resources will be held in common
How	City People Website, Your Lincoln, Lincoln Fact sheets, Specified information sharing sessions, Social media, Tenants 'Home' magazine	Citizens Panel Surveys, Surveys from services, Ward based surveys, other questionnaires, Focus groups, "You Choose", Place Shaper, Public meetings, service user panels, social media and member's surgeries.	Theme Groups, Workshops, stakeholder conferences, service user panels, public meetings Other local partnership arrangements,

Existing Corporate consultation vehicles

The council uses a wide variety of consultation mechanisms to ensure that all citizens and stakeholders in Lincoln can influence the development of policies and inform the way in which services are delivered.

Some of the key consultation methods regularly used by council are:

Elected Members

Elected Members play a key role in council's consultative processes through their representative, scrutiny and community leadership functions and in furthering the development of democratic processes within local government.

In particular Members have a crucial awareness role and form a link between the community and council. Through their regular consultation with constituents, citizens, groups, Neighbourhood Boards and other stakeholders, Members are able to positively influence the level of participation and impact of consultation outcomes on the local community.

Surveys

Services across the council conduct numerous surveys during each year depending on their requirements. Survey techniques may involve questionnaires, telephone or face to face interviews. From time to time comprehensive large-scale surveys such as Neighbourhood Surveys or the Place Survey equivalent are conducted.

Citizens' Panel

The panel comprises up to 1,000 residents who are consulted on a range of strategic and service issues via postal and electronic surveys approximately three times per year. The results are analysed centrally and fed back into services for action. Panel members are provided with feedback via a regular newsletter. The panel membership is refreshed on a regular basis and the council aims for the panel to reflect the diversity of the people of Lincoln.

Focus Groups

A more traditional but still highly significant public consultation method is to hold focus groups. This provides an opportunity to talk to people face to face and answer questions as well as provide more detail on the issue being consulted on. The council often holds a series of focus groups to consult on Council Tax levels in the first two months of the year.

City of Lincoln website

A page on the CoLC website called "Community Voice" where on line surveys can be accessed, results can be disseminated and links to specialist areas can be made.

Social Media

In today's technologically savvy world, it is more important than ever to approach people in a way that they understand and may consider their norm. Social media will attract a different audience to standard paper surveys, but used together they are more likely to cover a broader base

Consultation updates in Your Lincoln and the tenants' Home magazine

We will use both of the council's newsletters - the citywide 'Your Lincoln' newsletter and the tenants' Home' magazine to inform residents and other stakeholders of forthcoming planned consultations as well as results and outcomes of public consultation initiatives where appropriate

City People (staff intranet)

Pages on City People will contain links to the Corporate Consultation and Engagement Strategy; the forward plan of consultation to be undertaken; and the library of past consultation results, reports and feedback (to be developed).

Neighbourhood working

In Lincoln we have eight Neighbourhood areas covering parts of the city, and a key function of the Neighbourhood Working teams is to conduct detailed consultation with their neighbourhoods on a myriad of subjects.

Government legislation and guidance

Equality and Diversity

The Council is firmly committed to promoting equality for its employees and the community and to avoiding all forms of discrimination. The Council aims to ensure that the services it provides are non-discriminatory and free from prejudice.

Following the introduction of the Equality Act 2010, the Council implemented the use of Equality Analyses for all new and changed policy and services. The analysis ensures that consideration is given to all nine protected characteristics as defined under the Act, as well as Safeguarding issues.

There is a corporate 'Monitoring form' available on the E&D section of City People which can be used to capture demographic detail. However, it should be noted that the corporate recommendation is to capture ONLY the data that is necessary and appropriate for the consultation being undertaken.

Best Value Statutory Guidance

Local authorities are under a general Duty of Best Value to *"make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness."*

The "Best Value Statutory Guidance (2012)" makes recommendations on how to consult when dealing with changes in services where Voluntary Services or small businesses are the prime providers

The Housing Act 1985

The council has a different relationship with council tenants than it does with other citizens living within its boundaries as there is a legal contract – the tenancy agreement – in place, covered by the Housing Act. (Part iv; section 105)

This legislation gives the statutory right of consultation to all secured council tenants on matters that effect them especially on housing management. A matter is one of housing management if, in the opinion of the landlord authority, it relates to:

- a) The management, maintenance, improvement or demolition of dwelling-houses let by the authority under secure tenancies
- b) The provision of services or amenities in connection with such dwelling-houses

But the right to consultation does not cover the rent payable under a secure tenancy or to charges for services or facilities provided by the authority.

Data protection

Personal information obtained by council as part of its consultation responsibilities must be dealt with properly irrespective of how it is collected, recorded and used – whether on paper, by computer, or on any other material.

The City of Lincoln Council has adopted strict safeguards in its Information Management Policies to ensure that data is treated properly in accordance with the *Data Protection Act 1998*.

In all cases the consultation lead will protect the privacy of those involved in a consultation and will only accredit responses to individuals when permission has been given by that individual, or has been clearly identified as part of the consultation information.

Section 11 of the Children's Act.

This is a duty under the Children Act 2004 that requires all agencies with responsibilities towards children to discharge their functions with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. They must also ensure that any body providing services on their behalf must do the same.

Services at the City of Lincoln Council that should have particular care for this including all services where children are involved. Children should be asked to help shape the services that they use, and thus special effort may be required to consult them during initiation stages. Consultation with children does require a little more care as there is a need to gain parental agreement, as well as ensuring the consultation is undertaken in clear and appropriate language

Legal Services

For key corporate decisions whereby there is a substantial change proposed to any service or policy, or the impact of any decision introducing or changing something may be controversial, have major equality impacts or large financial implications, Legal Services advice must be sought. This is to ensure that the consultation is robust and could withstand a legal challenge. Decisions must be lawful, reasonable and fair to avoid a 'Judicial Review', however this is an area where many councils are challenged. For further information see the Decision Making Guidance on City People. (<http://citypeople/intranet/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Decision-making-guidance.pdf>)

Local Statutory requirements

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) outlines how the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee (CLJPC) expects to involve and consult the public and stakeholders when preparing planning policy documents, namely local plans and supplementary planning documents. In addition it also outlines how and when the public can have their say on planning applications and provides brief commentary on neighbourhood planning.

The Vision for Community Involvement is “To comprehensively engage with users of the City and Districts, including residents, service users, stakeholders and partners, in a meaningful, appropriate and cost effective way”

The commitments made in the SCI are legally binding on CLJPC and its constituent district authorities (in compliance with the Town and Country Planning Act).

Review of strategy

The council will undertake regular evaluation of whether our public consultation is meeting its objectives and what service improvements are being achieved as a result. This will include a review of progress on the Strategy's Action Plan, to be presented to the Council's Performance Scrutiny Committee annually.

The implementation of the Corporate Consultation and Engagement Strategy will help Lincoln continue to grow and develop to meet the changing needs of service users and citizens.

Links to useful documents

[Lincoln Drivers report](#)

Communications Strategy (to be completed in 2016/17)

[Engagement and the Equality Duty](#)

[Statement of Community Involvement](#)

[The Housing Act 1985](#)

[Corporate Monitoring form](#)

Forward action plan

Ref	Description	Expected start	Expected completion
1	Develop a communications strategy for the roll out of the new strategy and guidelines	2016/17	
2	Roll out of new strategy to AD Group; CMT; DMT's; Policy scrutiny and Exec	Jun 2015	
3	Complete consultation guidance for staff and implement	Sep 2017	
4	Agree, implement and then ensure compliance of new corporate standards	Jul 2017	
5	Consider a virtual internal network group for those with regular consultations	Aug 2015	
6	Complete a revamp of the Corporate Monitoring form	June 2017	
7	Scope, plan and implement a refresh of the Citizens panel	Sep 2015	
8	Undertake up to four Citizens Panel surveys annually (two permanent ones for trended data)	Ongoing	
9	Undertake consultation on any major service change both internally or externally focussed	As required	
10	Undertake consultation on all major policy changes	As required	
11	Undertake face to face consultation on Council Tax annually (if required)	Annually in January	
12	Develop a forward calendar of consultations and publish on the website	Sep 2017	
13	Revamp the consultation section of the website	Sep 2015	
14	Ensure there is a clear route to the staff guidelines and strategy on City People	Sep 2017	
15	Progress reports to Performance Scrutiny Committee	Oct 2015	
16	Review the consultation strategy with a view to merging with the Communications Strategy	Mar 2017	
17	Continuous review of legislation and government guidelines	Ongoing	
18	3 year review of the Consultation Strategy and guidelines	June 2018	

CHECKLIST FOR ENGAGEMENT

Appendix 1

Taken from 'Engagement and the equality duty':

The following actions can help public authorities undertake successful engagement and give proper consideration to the aims of the general equality duty:

- **Leadership:** Engagement should be built on genuine commitment from all participants to the values and principles of citizen engagement. Leadership plays an important role in ensuring that engagement is a success and leaders, senior managers and staff with a scrutiny role need to commit the necessary time, effort and financial resources to deliver it effectively. This may include providing support and training for participants, and staff, so everyone can participate effectively.
- **Proportionality:** Engagement should be proportionate to the size and resources of your organisation, as well as to the significance of the policy. This means that the greater the impact of your policy on equality of opportunity and good relations, the more likely you are to need significant public or tailored engagement.
- **Evidence base:** Consider how engagement can help you to fill information gaps, interpret qualitative data, assess the impact on equality of your policies, and evaluate how successful your initiatives are.
- **Decision-making:** It is important to integrate engagement procedures and outcomes into your decision-making and service design. This will ensure that engagement becomes part of evidenced-based policy making across your organisation. It also demonstrates to stakeholders that their contribution has a real value and purpose.
- **Timing:** Engagement is most successful when people are engaged at an early stage, prior to key decisions being made. Aim to incorporate engagement through the different stages of developing or reviewing a policy. Respond to the stakeholders that you have engaged with.
- **Partnerships:** Drawing on the skills and networks of voluntary and community organisations and Trade Unions can help you to plan and carry out your engagement activity. They often have positive relationships with the groups of people that they serve, so working with them can lead to higher participation and better outcomes. Engagement can be undertaken with other public authorities to make better use of resources and reduce the burden on participants.
- **Accessible engagement:** Public authorities should ensure that their engagement methods take into account the needs of people with all the protected characteristics, and enable them to fully participate. Take steps to capture the views of people with protected characteristics who are rarely or never heard. Ensure that participants have clear and sufficient information in order to be able to participate effectively. Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities are obliged to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people, including during engagement.
- **Transparency:** If you are covered by the specific duties, consider what engagement information (e.g. your methods, participants and findings) would be useful for you to publish as part of your equality information. Build engagement with key stakeholders into the development and prioritisation of your equality objectives.

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Appendix B

June/July Citizens Panel 2017

Number of respondents - 323

Council Services

Q2 The City of Lincoln Council provides many services. Overall, considering all contact you have with the city of Lincoln council, how satisfied are you:

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not used
In the way that the council handled your enquiries	81	114	19	11	7	89
In the ways in which the council keeps you updated on what is happening	38	154	62	29	6	27
In the ways in which you can contact the council	86	156	32	12	4	27
That the council is helping to drive the city forward	44	152	74	25	10	8
In the value for money offered by the city council	36	132	92	36	9	9

Other Comments – See appendix 1

Q3 Do you feel that City of Lincoln Council acts upon the concerns of local residents,

- Always 21
- Most of the time 159
- Not very often 72
- Never 3
- I don't know 52

Appendix 1 – Q2 The City of Lincoln Council provides many services.

Overall, considering all contact you have with the city of Lincoln council, how satisfied are you: - Other comments

- I would like to see a more person to person approach having being passed on from one to another i find it annoying that no one seems to know anything
- N/A
- Reported anti social behaviour, very poor response from the Environmental Dept
- The council tax keeps increasing and services decreasing
- Turning all the lights out after midnight is unsafe, cause accidents to happen and makes it easy for criminals to target without being seen
- not aware of anything which i use or to which my money gets spent on
- Value you for money- what a joke. Council tax has risen yet services aren't getting any better in fact you're actively trying to close services. In addition closing half of Pelham bridge to up date the flower arrangements! Do you really not think that money would be better spent elsewhere? Perhaps on saving monks rd walk in centre or grass cutting services particular on areas of Lincolnshires roads where there are plenty of black spots
- Some of the priorities for spending are very questionable
- I continue to support a local authorities' set up for 'Lincolnshire' of three unitary areas and a parish / ward (several combined as in Boston and West Lindsey) local council. Within this is a clearer division of what services should be provided by each level of central government and local government more akin to Redcliffe Maud
- Poor communication around additional road closures the weekend of the cycle race this year. access to westgate school was blocked on the friday afternoon.
- need to be more forward thinking, to many committees lead to slow decision making
- Because of health issues I rarely get into the city so all my contacts are by post
- I'm unhappy that I keep getting emails from the City Council through Aggresso Mail asking for a booking when I've retired from the Foundation of Christ's Hospital 18 months ago and I have been in touch three times or more about it. Driving the city forward without due consideration to the citizens eg industrial sites in residential areas, lack of urban village, lack of car parking.
- Re: Council keeping me updated - in the last few years ward boundaries were changed - I was in Boultham ward and am now in Park Ward. However, the Council never informed me of this change, I found out by default
- Green bins cost more and more. Never see Police around our local area.
- Will be a good thing when the transport hub is completed.
- the city just cant cope with the amount of traffic.
- The one thing that our city lacks is lack of shops. BHS has gone, Dorothy Perkins gone. Although I know this is not the council's fault, this is the one thing the city lacks, it's all coffee and milkshake shops now.
- I am 88 years old - my only methods of contact for repairs are on foot to City Hall or by landline. The first is becoming physically too difficult. The second too expensive. I do not own a computer which I REFUSE to own. I DREAD telephoning City Hall - too expensive due to excessive waiting on the phone.
- asked the street light to be repaired, myself and several neighbours. Council wouldn't repair it. the light was only repaired following canvassing for election an attempt to

gain votes by fixing what we has been paying for, for nearly 12 months. Not acceptable.

- the council does not take forward any complaints about their services or tenants, especially from private households neighbouring council properties. The services are in decline and the taxes are increasing. The increase in green bin prices equated to a 38% increase
- Lincoln has been ruined by the changes that have been made. I have spoken to many visitors about the city and around 80% are not going to return. not everybody wants to visit up hill and preferred coming to the town centre because it was different, now they can see the same shops in there own town. Pitty you cant but the clocks back 2 years.
- I do not like the new plans for Lincoln, too many high rise building
- I am dissatisfied with charge for green bins, I feel it is not necessary for collections during winter months its certain that theres not much garden rubbish to collect during he months of Oct-Mar as the collection lorry comes very early where as the rest of the year when its an afternoon collection
- The efforts of the council is appreciated
- I was told by the housing agent he was looking into pulling my garage down as its asbestos. Its been up since 1969, its cracked and almost falling down. I have not heard anything about it and my son works with asbestos at Rilmac!
- Sometimes response from the council is very slow, e.g. when I reported a faulty street light in my area as did many other local residents, it was months before the problem was resolved
- Received little information to be able to comment. I know how to find the information should I want to.
- question 1 - most issues would be very satisfied , One issue (tree cutting from 2-3 years ago) brought this down
- COUNCIL TAX RAISED FOR FEWER SERVICES. MONEY PAYING WORKERS WHO GIVE YOU NO - OR MAYBE ANSWERS.
- Long term residents are being forgotten, commercial interests are being courted over the interests of residents. Market changes, bus station and road changes are adversely affecting residents. Where are the benefits for the residents? Lack of provision of public toilets, with residents getting older more thought should have been given to providing this service, now more problems as charging 20 p inconvenient. How can we attracting tourists with this poor service.
- I was very pleased with the councils services. I reported that our street light was out and it was fixed in two days.
- Waited 5 weeks now for a call back from the garden bin dept
- See email
- Planning Dreadful! biased, arrogant and completely lacking in transparency. complacent - no checks on their work or how competently it is being done. Law into themselves - probably because its a specialised area no one from outside independent of this department has relevant expertise to monitor/ review/ access.
- maybe promote more council work through emails or social media
- Concerned that the High Street from the railway crossing to the Stonebow will die. With the advent of the St Marks development I would like to see car parking for the disabled nearer to the shopping area, particularly areas of all who just want/need to 'pop in' somewhere. Short stay at minimal charge or even free.
- Information given was incorrect

- I fail to see a real long-term aim for the city; I think the Council focusses too much on the short - to -medium term.
- the problem with so many rough sleepers is not helping to drive our city forward



Citizens Panel Survey - November 2017

Out of the 316 respondents, the following number/percentage of people answered each of the “Living in your Community” questions.

Q3 Thinking about your local area, which of the things below, do you think most need improving? (Select as many boxes as you need to)

98 (31.2%) Activities for teenagers	65 (20.7%) Job prospects	55 (17.5%) The level of pollution
204 (65.0%) The level of traffic congestion	86 (27.4%) Public transport	39 (12.4%) Shopping facilities
193 (61.5%) Road and Pavement repairs	79 (25.2%) Wage levels and costs of living	33 (10.5%) Cultural facilities
68 (21.7%) The level of crime	135 (43.0%) Affordable decent housing	28 (8.9%) Access to nature
81 (25.8%) Clean streets	41 (13.1%) Community Activities	26 (8.3%) Educational provision
58 (18.5%) Facilities for young children	55 (17.5%) Parks and Open Spaces	20 (6.4%) Race relations
55 (17.5%) Sports and Leisure facilities	117 (37.3%) Health services	25 (8.0%) Other
44 (100.0%)		

If other, please explain

Q4 To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together?

49 (16.1%) Definitely agree
216 (70.8%) Tend to agree
35 (11.5%) Tend to disagree
5 (1.6%) Definitely disagree

Q5 In your local area, how much of a problem do you think there is with people not treating each other with respect and consideration?

18 (5.8%) A very big problem
55 (17.7%) A fairly big problem
184 (59.4%) Not a very big problem
53 (17.1%) Not a problem at all

Q6 How safe or unsafe do you feel when outside in your local area after dark?

38 (12.5%) Very safe
179 (59.1%) Fairly safe
57 (18.8%) Fairly unsafe
29 (9.6%) Very unsafe

Q7 Overall, how satisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?

144 (46.0%) Very satisfied
146 (46.6%) Fairly satisfied
15 (4.8%) Fairly dissatisfied
8 (2.6%) Very dissatisfied

Q8 How strongly do you feel you belong to your immediate neighbourhood?

89 (28.6%) Very strongly
144 (46.3%) Fairly strongly
65 (20.9%) Not very strongly
13 (4.2%) Not at all strongly

- There is a growing homeless problem and people high on drink / drugs in the City Centre which has really increased lately, and I don't feel this is being dealt with effectively. Aggressive begging has become a real nuisance to shoppers and visitors.
- Noise control for HMOS, especially student housing.
- Night time light levels (street lighting)
- Street lighting, although I believe improvements are being made.
- Getting rid of beggar's drug takers and the like off the streets!
- Lots of leaves on pavements
- Affordable rented housing needed
- I think the street lighting going off overnight is just plain wrong. I totally disagree with one councillor who was on television stating that it had no impact on crime levels, etc. It must do and certainly impacts on the young women (in particular) with whom I have spoken who say they are fearful for their personal safety.
- Parking Facilities for residents - we are fed up with our street being used as free parking for people who do not live here and often leave their vehicles all day or longer
- Street lighting - either change to low usage bulbs or only switch off every other street light
- Far too much student accommodation being approved in the area in which I live, which is beginning to unbalance the mix of residents in the area
- Help for the homeless
- More seats for the old and dodderly
- The paving slabs along Hillside Avenue east to west on both sides, are cracked, broken, raised, with gaps as much as 2 inches. They are in a very dangerous state of repair. I have reported this on many occasions & with the exception of the previous MP when minor attempt was made there has been no further work undertaken
- Street parking on estate roads. Trade vehicles and private vehicles blocking driveways, turning areas and pavements. Caravans in driveways with owners cars blocking roads that they don't even live on. This is a major cause of lowering householder's quality of life.
- Our recycling bin is not big enough for all the recycling items we placed in them.
- I am now 70 years old & find it hard to get rid of garden rubbish, old garden tools, old furniture from the house etc.
- There is an increasing amount of rough sleepers in Lincoln. Also small groups on benches in the uphill area consuming alcohol.
- More activities for disabled people.
- Planning Department - needs to act in the interest of Lincoln's citizens, be transparent and not above the democratic process. Needs proper oversight.
- Needs to keep neighbourhood office.
- Obvious concerns around cyclists disregarding road users and road law, concerns around people still using mobiles at the wheel, audio hi fi noise and exhausts when passing (Doddington Road area) speeding on Doddington Road, no active police presence, reluctance police to take action etc. Loss of walk in centre
- Urgently needed - double yellow lines needed to stop parking at the top of Hainton Road/Rookery Lane this is an accident waiting to happen when you turn in off Rookery Lane and cars are parked on grass verges. - Waste Management Black Bin: They leave the bin blocking the drive when it is emptied. - Garden Waste: Need more collections between June-Sept. - Food Health & Safety: Too many places with nail polish on and hair not in net e.g. Elite Fish and Chips and Sunnys Place Brant Rd.
- I would like to tell you about the bins they are too far away from the door. Plus sometimes they are fast together I can't even move them apart. Plus the lids are heavy and heavy for me also to height I am small with curled fingers which get in the way. Sorry about this but it is hard for me.
- Mosque on Dixon St should not have been built there its out of place, these things should not be in the UK. At all. Anywhere. This is England and I believe in keeping it English.
- The Council should be proactive in ensuring householders keep hedges to the required height as hedges in excess of the specified height block light, ruin neighbours gardens and lowers quality of life of the neighbourhood.
- Deal with the amount of drug dealers living in the area.
- Don't go out after dark not because of my safety but because of my age (89 yrs.)
- Parking Facilities
- We need a crossing at top of Roman Pavement as there is so much traffic I am terrified to cross when I get of bus. We need bus stop outside Carlton Centre.
- Skellingthorpe Road always traffic build up going past Birchwood to the crossing. Housing built but the railway holds up mainly. Plenty of 66 buses but do not pass Swanpool (next to coop) so only 29 going past for Skellingthorpe every 1.5 hr or so.
- Extra congestion caused by 1) Cars parking on yellow lines outside school. 2) Closure of level crossing adds to already congested arterial road into city. Happens too often.
- More council housing for disabled, improved LCC support services.
- Graffiti
- Street lighting after midnight. Council owned tree management (pruning, felling etc.) Parking on grass verges
- Street lighting
- Parking, residents, 2 hour limits. Driving up on pavements, cycling on pavements, also parking outside shops on pavement, private and delivery
- Parking, private and public, parking permit areas, cycling in and round Lincoln away from traffic, people parking outside shops on corners, on pavements, delivery vans during busy periods and cars and cyclists driving/riding on pavements and speeding/noisy vehicles.
- Need for speed calming on Longdales Road - Possibly signs or cameras
- Pedestrian refuse needed on Pershore Way opposite Abingdon Avenue for people and children to cross safely to school. In busy periods traffic is really bad between 8:30a.m - 9:30a.m.
- Keep fit equipment for over 65's in the parks.
- The situation regarding beggars on the street most of whom are not homeless. The selling of goods from mobile carts in the High Street.
- Weeds growing in the gutter.
- Community Social Club AKA Birchwood Centre

Lincoln Christmas Market Visitor Profile

Visitors to Lincoln Christmas Market were asked a number of questions about their personal characteristics and the reasons for their visit. The table opposite presents the visitor profile that has been generated from the combined results of the 2013 and 2014 surveys.

More than half (56%) of respondents were visitors to Lincoln, and the majority (72%) had made the trip to Lincoln specifically to visit the Christmas Market. The profile has a strong female representation, with women accounting for almost two thirds (63%) of visitors. All age groups are represented in the profile. Around 60% of visitors to the market had an annual household income that fell between £15,000-44,999; this is similar to the UK as a whole where the median household income is £23,200 (ONS, 2013).

		Percent
Resident or Visitor	Resident	41.4
	Visitor	56.2
Purpose of Visit	To visit Christmas Market	75.0
	To visit Christmas market amongst other things	25.7
	Other	2.0
Gender	Male	37.2
	Female	62.8
Age	22 years or less	9.9
	23-35 years	23.2
	36-50 years	26.3
	51-64 years	26.3
	65 years and over	14.2
Household income	£0-£14,999	9.3
	£15,000-£25,999	28.7
	£26,000-£44,999	30.0
	£45,000-£59,999	17.0
	£60,000-£79,999	9.3
	£80,000 plus	5.7
N=2112		

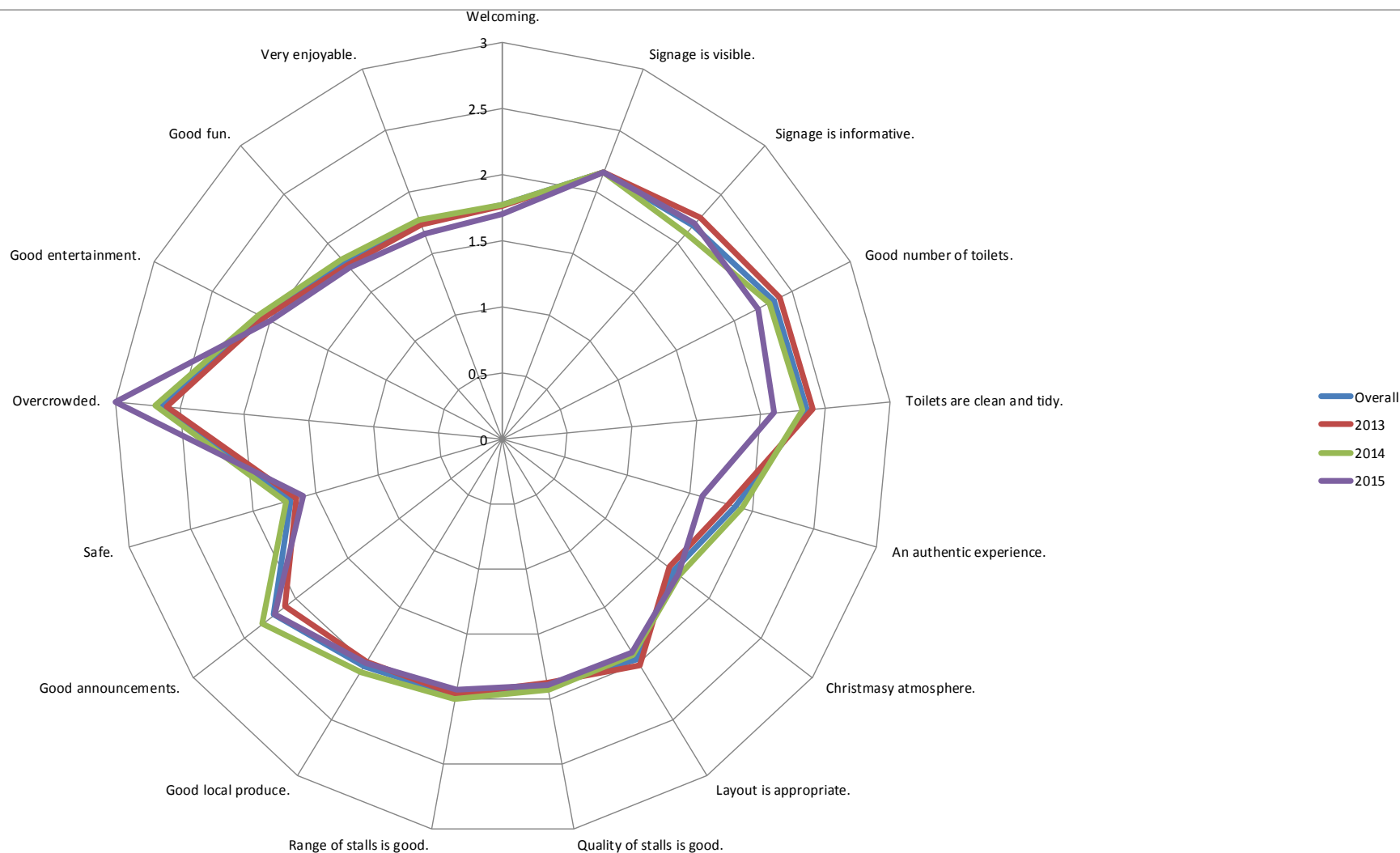
Lincoln Christmas Market Satisfaction: Trends

Visitor attitudes were measured on a scale of 1 to 5: for all indicators apart from crowding a score of 1 is the most positive. Generally visitors are positive. The table includes both years separately, an indicator of change and combined score. The table is ordered from most to least positive. Although change is represented we should not over interpret as the survey carries a potential +/-3% accuracy. Grey shading represents indicators with below average performance. Average overall satisfaction scores 1.66; increasing from 1.68 in 2013 to 1.64 in 2014.

KPI	Overall	2013	2014	2015
Christmassy atmosphere.	1.66	1.61	1.71	1.7
Safety	1.7	1.65	1.74	2.16
Enjoyable.	1.75	1.74	1.77	2.2
Welcome.	1.77	1.76	1.77	2.2
Fun.	1.81	1.78	1.84	2.1
Authentic experience.	1.87	1.81	1.92	1.6
Quality of stalls	1.9	1.88	1.93	1.7
Appropriate Layout	1.97	2.02	1.92	1.9
Range of stalls	1.98	1.97	2	1.9
Local produce.	2.03	1.99	2.08	1.93
Entertainment.	2.08	2.05	2.1	2
Signage visibility	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.2
Signage information	2.18	2.26	2.1	1.6
Announcements.	2.21	2.1	2.32	3
Toilet facilities: Number	2.34	2.39	2.3	2
Toilets: Clean & Tidy	2.36	2.4	2.32	1.75
Crowding	2.65	2.6	2.69	1.66
		N=708	N=707	N=610

Lincoln Christmas Market: Visitor Satisfaction Graphic

The graphic indicate visitor attitudes to the market - as a combined average and for each year separately. The closer to the centre the better the rating: with the exception of overcrowding where a score



to the outer edge is preferable. Although the previous table indicated fluctuations between 2013 and 2014, the diagram indicates some stability.

Expenditure Analysis: Lincoln Christmas Market

Average expenditure per visitor has increased to around £53 per visitor. For every pound spent by visitors to the market only 11 pence can be regarded as additional income to the Lincolnshire Economy. The additional income accruing to the city will be less given the origin of both visitors and stallholders. Whilst, it may seem sensible to compare the net economic benefit (£6.00 per visitor) to the losses reported in the outturn report for the market, strictly speaking we would also need to conduct a wider cost benefit analysis.

		Visitor Scenarios		
		160000	200000	250000
Average Expenditure per capita	£53.00	£8,480,000	£10,600,000	£13,250,000
of which				
Food & Drink	£16.00	£2,560,000	£3,200,000	£4,000,000
Shopping	£23.00	£3,680,000	£4,600,000	£5,750,000
Entertainment	£6.00	£960,000	£1,200,000	£1,500,000
Accommodation	£8.00	£1,280,000	£1,600,000	£2,000,000
% Change in Average Expenditure 2013-14	17.00%			
Additional Average Expenditure per capita Resulting from Market (removing residents & casual visitors and allowing for family groups)	£27.00	£4,320,000	£5,400,000	£6,750,000
Direct Expenditure per capita Retained in Local Economy - allowing for origin of stall holders, accommodation and 10% spend outside market	£14.00	£2,240,000	£2,800,000	£3,500,000
Gross Retained Expenditure inc. multiplier (direct, induced and indirect)	£18.00	£2,880,000	£3,600,000	£4,500,000
Net Income per visitor accruing to local economy after leakage	£6.00	£960,000	£1,200,000	£1,500,000

Notes and caveats

1. Overall visitor expenditure must be treated with extreme caution due to the absence of reliable footfall data. We are of the view that numbers are less than 200,000 but this requires further modeling.

2. In calculating economic impact we have assumed that 10% of visitor spend takes place outside the market; this is based on best estimates from a 2009 survey but the sample size then was less than 150.. This increases the local benefit over and above that from assuming all expenditure is at the market.
3. Multipliers and Leakages are consistent with those used in STEAM models used for the County.

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Lincoln Christmas Market 2017

Lincoln Christmas Market – Visitor Satisfaction Survey (Including Transport)

Hello, could you please spare a few minutes of your time? We're undergraduate students of the University of Lincoln, working on behalf of the City of Lincoln Council. We are carrying out a survey of visitors to the Lincoln Christmas Market 2017 and their impact.

All information will remain confidential, with questionnaires being held securely. The survey should take no more than 5-10 minutes. If you wish to not take part at any point during the survey, you are welcome to end your participation.

Questionnaire Information:

Date: Time: Zone: Name: Day:

1. Are you a resident of Lincoln? Yes ☐ No ☐

Could you please state your postcode (All to answer): .

2. Could you tell me the **main** purpose of your visit to Lincoln?

To visit the Lincoln Christmas Market 2017 ☐

To visit the Lincoln Christmas Market amongst other things ☐

Other ☐ (Please specify:)

3. Have you ever visited the Lincoln Christmas Market before? Yes ☐ No ☐ (Go to Q4)

If yes, how many times have you previously visited? times.

4. Could you please tell us how you travelled to the Lincoln Christmas Market (Please only state your main mode of travel and tick one)

Car ☐ Train ☐ Coach ☐ Public Bus ☐ Walked/Cycled ☐ Other ☐

If by car, did you use the Park & Ride? Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Applicable ☐

Approximately, how far did you travel to the Lincoln Christmas Market? miles.

5. Who are you visiting with?

On your own ☐ (Go to Q8) With friends/colleagues ☐ (Go to Q6)

With family ☐ (Go to Q6) With friends and family ☐ (Go to Q6)

6. In total, how many people are you with at the Lincoln Christmas Market? people.

7. Do you have any children with you today who are under the age of 12? Yes ☐ No ☐



Lincoln Christmas Market 2017

8. If you are a visitor, are you here just for the day, or for longer? Day Visit ☐ (Go to Q9)
Longer Stay ☐

If staying for longer than a day, how long are you staying for days.

What accommodation type is this: Hotel ☐ B&B ☐ VFR ☐ Other ☐

9. Can you please estimate the amount of money that you will spend or have spent on this trip to the Lincoln Christmas Market?

Market Expenditure	
Type	Amount (£)
Food and Drink	
Accommodation	
Shopping	
Entertainment	

Total Expenditure = Pounds Sterling.

10. Overall, please rate your satisfaction with the Lincoln Christmas Market 2017?

Very satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied ☐ Dissatisfied ☐
Very Dissatisfied ☐

Demographics: Now could I please ask a few questions about you?

11. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

12. Age: 22 years or less ☐ 23 to 35 years ☐ 36 to 50 years ☐ 51 to 64 years ☐ 65 years and over ☐

13. Household Income (per annum): £0 - £14,999 ☐ £15,000 - £25,999 ☐ £26,000 - £44,999 ☐
£45,000 - £59,999 ☐ £60,000 - £79,999 ☐ £80,000 + ☐

Thank you very much for your time.



Lincoln Christmas Market – Visitor Satisfaction Survey

Hello, could you please spare a few minutes of your time? We're undergraduate students of the University of Lincoln, working on behalf of the City of Lincoln Council. We are carrying out a survey of visitors to the Lincoln Christmas Market 2017 and their satisfaction levels.

All information will remain confidential, with questionnaires being held securely. The survey should take no more than 5-10 minutes. If you wish to not take part at any point during the survey, you are welcome to end your participation.

Questionnaire Information:

Date: Time: Zone: Name: Day:

1. Are you a resident of Lincoln? Yes ☐ No ☐

Could you please state your postcode (All to answer): .

2. Could you tell me the **main** purpose of your visit to Lincoln?

To visit the Lincoln Christmas Market 2017 ☐

To visit the Lincoln Christmas Market amongst other things ☐

Other ☐ (Please specify:)

3. Have you ever visited the Lincoln Christmas Market before? Yes ☐ No ☐ (Go to Q4)

If yes, how many times have you previously visited? times.

4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Lincoln Christmas market?

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Do not know / Did not use
Welcoming						
Signage is visible						
Signage is informative						
Good number of toilets						
Toilets are clean & tidy						
An authentic experience						
Christmasy atmosphere						
Layout is appropriate						
Quality of stalls is good						
Range of stalls is good						
Good local produce						
Good announcements						
Safe						
Overcrowded						
Good entertainment						



Lincoln Christmas Market 2017

Good fun						
Very enjoyable						

5. Who are you visiting with?

On your own ☐ (Go to Q8) With friends/colleagues ☐ (Go to Q6)

With family ☐ (Go to Q6) With friends and family ☐ (Go to Q6)

6. In total, how many people are you with at the Lincoln Christmas Market? people.

7. Do you have any children with you today who are under the age of 12? Yes ☐ No ☐

8. If you are a visitor, are you here just for the day, or for longer? Day Visit ☐ (Go to Q9)
Longer Stay ☐

If staying for longer than a day, how long are you staying for days.

What accommodation type is this: Hotel ☐ B&B ☐ VFR ☐ Other ☐

9. Can you please estimate the amount of money that you will spend or have spent on this trip to the Lincoln Christmas Market?

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Very satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied ☐ Dissatisfied ☐
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11. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

12. Age: 22 years or less ☐ 23 to 35 years ☐ 36 to 50 years ☐ 51 to 64 years ☐ 65 years and over ☐

13. Household Income (per annum): £0 - £14,999 ☐ £15,000 - £25,999 ☐ £26,000 - £44,999 ☐
£45,000 - £59,999 ☐ £60,000 - £79,999 ☐ £80,000 + ☐

Thank you very much for your time.

SUBJECT: GUIDANCE ON CASEWORK FOR COUNCILLORS

DIRECTORATE: CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND TOWN CLERK

REPORT AUTHOR: LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To review the casework guidelines published by the LGA and the methods used by members to support their constituents.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 In order to review the methods and success of engagement with the community, as confirmed in the meeting of this committee in December 2016, it was felt that the LGA Guidelines may be a useful tool for all members to try to ensure that casework is dealt with as consistently as possible.

3. Further details

- 3.1 Attached at Appendix A are the guidelines from the LGA on casework for councillors for consideration which were published in November 2017 and give a framework for how to deal with enquiries from constituents.
- 3.2 Whilst considering this, it is also worth noting, for completeness, the Constitution's Member-Officer Protocol, attached at Appendix B.

4. Strategic Priorities

4.1 High Performing Services

By engaging with the communities in Lincoln, the Council can ensure that their services are high performing and therefore meet residents' needs.

5. Organisational Impacts

5.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

There are no financial implications in this report.

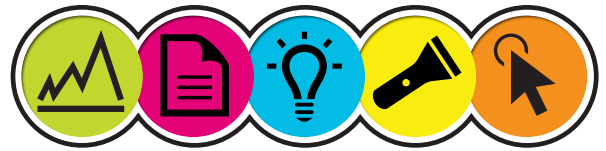
5.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are no legal implications in this report.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 That members note the LGA guidelines, protocol and internal guidelines and provide comments and suggestions as to how to implement them for all members.

Is this a key decision?	No
Do the exempt information categories apply?	No
Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?	No
How many appendices does the report contain?	2
List of Background Papers:	None
Lead Officer:	Becky Scott, LDSM Telephone (01522) 873441



A councillor's workbook on handling casework



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There are a number of complementary workbooks and elearning modules which will also assist you when looking at the issue of casework and how to deal with it effectively. Topics such as community leadership, neighbourhood and community engagement and facilitation and conflict resolution will also enable you to look at your wider ward councillor role and how best to consider matters brought to you as a community leader or advocate for others. The councillor workbooks can be found at

<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/highlighting-political-leadership/community-leadership/councillor-workbooks>

To access the elearning modules please go to <https://lms.learningnexus.co.uk/LGA/>

A list of useful additional information and support is also set out in the Appendix to the workbook.

Introduction

This workbook has been designed as a distance learning aid for local councillors. It is intended to provide councillors with insight and assistance with the key skills which will help you to be most effective in your role. Some of the content may be of most use to more newly elected councillors, but nonetheless if you have been a councillor for some time, the workbook should serve as a useful reminder of some of the key skills, approaches and tactics that make for an effective ward councillor and in dealing with the casework you may receive in that role. It may even challenge you to reconsider how you have approached aspects of the role to date.

Those councillors who are new to local government will recognise that there are many aspects to being an effective ward or division councillor. The workbook will help you to get up to speed on the main areas that require focus and attention. In effect, when dealing with casework. It should provide you with some pointers on how to develop a style and approach that you are comfortable with, and that enables you to be most effective in your day to day duties.

The workbook can be used as a standalone learning aid or alongside other material you may cover such as e learning modules or sessions within your own council. It is recognised that each individual must decide how best to use and develop their influencing skills, based on individual preference and confidence.

You do not need to complete it all in one session and may prefer to work through the material at your own pace. The key requirement is to think about your own approach and how the material relates to your local situation, the people you serve and the council you represent. In working through the material contained in this workbook you will encounter a number of features designed to help you think about your role in handling casework.

These features are represented by the symbols shown below:



Guidance – this is used to indicate guidance, research, quotations, explanations and definitions that you may find helpful.



Challenges – these are questions or queries raised in the text which ask you to reflect on your role or approach – in essence, they are designed to be thought-provokers.



Case studies – these are ‘pen pictures’ of approaches used by councils elsewhere.



Useful links – these are signposts to sources of further information that may help with principles, processes, methods and approaches. A full list of useful additional information and support is also set out in the appendices to the workbook.

What is casework?

Dealing with the people in your community, understanding the issues and concerns they face, and being equipped with the skills, confidence and ability to take action in response to their queries, is an important and valued role for any councillor. The problems and issues local people raise with you are often referred to as 'casework'.

Casework can sometimes lead on to policy development or issue campaigning, but can be distinguished from these by virtue of the fact that casework usually deals with the resolution of an individual problem.

Where does your casework come from?

Casework will often be picked up by councillors through their day to day activities as an elected representative of the area, ie through letters, telephone calls, emails and door knocking. The period before, during and after an election is likely to be a particularly popular time for people to raise issues or concerns.

The amount of casework you receive can vary considerably and it is probably true to say that the higher the level of deprivation in your area, the more casework you are likely to face. But if the casework in your in-tray is consistently sparse, ask yourself the crucial question – is this because you represent a very self-sufficient community, or is it because your profile is too low?

However it is important to know how your casework might be generated and to be aware of the likely issues in your ward which could give rise to increased casework referrals.



Casework – some examples

Direct query – a neighbour asks if you could find out what progress has been made in processing her application for a renovation grant.

Indirect query – a daughter, ringing up on behalf of her frail, elderly parent, asks if her mother is entitled to claim council tax benefit.

Complaint – a local housing tenant e-mails you to complain about the repeated vandalism to her council property.

Service request – a shopkeeper asks if you could arrange for an extra trade waste collection at his premises.

Community issue – a group of parents lobby you to prompt the council to remove a burnt out vehicle from a nearby park.



The role of a councillor has many facets. When residents contact you, they are frequently at their lowest ebb, have exhausted all avenues open to them and are desperate for help. Sometimes it is the first time someone has really listened to them, often I visit them in their own homes, allowing them to feel comfortable. Being a councillor isn't clinical, we occupy the rough, blurred edges of council work; the butter in the sandwich, not always necessary, but can help to keep the pieces of bread together!

Casework comes in all shapes and sizes, from the right size bin and its collection to supporting a family to receive the right school placement. When a child has specific needs, whether educational or medical, the views of parents are often ignored. They deal with the situation 24/7, yet their point of view can weigh so little. The prospect of months and years of uncertainty, tribunal, and professionals making decisions can be all too overwhelming. Councillors can bridge that gap, listen, relay information and support, but most are not in a position to make decisions.

Councillors also attend meetings, reading and digesting copious amounts of material. No one warns you! Councillors must take their role seriously, participate in scrutiny, and attend events that effect people and local government. A need for a general understanding of what's happening.

The highlights include being invited to the foster carers excellent tea party for our looked after children and succeeding in resolving residents problems.

Councillor Liz Hazell
Walsall council



Challenge 1 – your recent casework

Using your existing knowledge or any research you are able to carry out on the council's behalf, think about the nature of any casework you have dealt with in recent months. Briefly describe any examples you can think of under the headings below and summarise any action you took to tackle the queries or concerns raised:

Direct query	Action taken
Indirect query	Action taken
Complaint	Action taken
Service request	Action taken
Community Issue	Action taken

Reflect on the examples you have given. Do you feel comfortable that you did everything you could to resolve these matters? To what extent were your residents satisfied with your help and advice? Have you made any efforts to check whether the matters raised affected other local people who may not have approached you for help?

Raising your profile – prompting others to get in touch

Raising your profile is not just about being honest enough to admit that many people in your ward will not know who you are and may be even less likely to recognise that you are their local councillor. Taking steps to make yourself known, and available, to local people should help you to ensure that the bulk of the casework you deal with represents the issues of greatest concern to local residents.

It is likely that you will have tried some of the more traditional ways of raising your profile in the community, eg media and press coverage, meetings with community groups, posters or leaflet drops. But are you also using, or considering, other, more interactive, approaches to prompt others to get in touch?

For example:

Advice surgeries – these enable you to meet residents, discuss their concerns and build an understanding of what can be done to tackle the issues raised. In a traditional advice surgery, councillors advertise a time and place when they will be available to speak to residents, eg perhaps a couple of hours on a Saturday in a local library or village hall. An alternative is to run a street surgery, where councillors knock on doors to solicit casework. Both approaches require careful planning and good advertising to ensure that opportunities for engaging with local people are maximised.



Case study

I believe that casework is the most important work we do as local councillors – it's the work which most closely connects us with the residents who make up our electorate, and whom we have a duty to represent.

Although I attend residents' associations and community meetings, I don't hold my own surgeries. I prefer to go looking for casework – I gather most of my casework by knocking on doors and asking whether there is anything I can help with. This way I get to speak to the many people who, for all sorts of reasons, would never come to meetings – or who think the problem they have is too small to bother anyone with.

For my first few months as a councillor, I kept a notebook and gave each item of casework a single page. I would carry it about with me and quickly note things like names, addresses, phone numbers, and progress updates – and then finally strikethrough the page when the issue was dealt with. I was on my third notebook after a few months, and decided I needed a better system. I spoke with one of my more experienced colleagues from another local authority, and he sent me a customised spreadsheet he'd made to record casework, which I've been using now for well over six months. The way we record casework is really important – because it's essential that we have the information to hand in order to follow things up, chase loose ends, and keep contact information easily to hand.

Cllr Niall Hodson, Sunderland City Council



The Local Government Association's (LGA) Councillors Guide and the workbooks on Effective ward councillor, Community leadership and Neighbourhood and community engagement provide some useful complementary advice on whether to hold advice surgeries, the alternatives you may wish to consider and how to engage with your community effectively.



Alternatives to surgeries

- Being super-visible at local meetings
- 'Rolling surgeries'
- Encourage telephone calls (or even video calls!)
- Liaison with local agencies such as schools, children's centres, advice agencies
- Social media
- Are you seen as the 'go to' person?

Councillor Ed Turner
Oxford City Council



Keeping a high profile

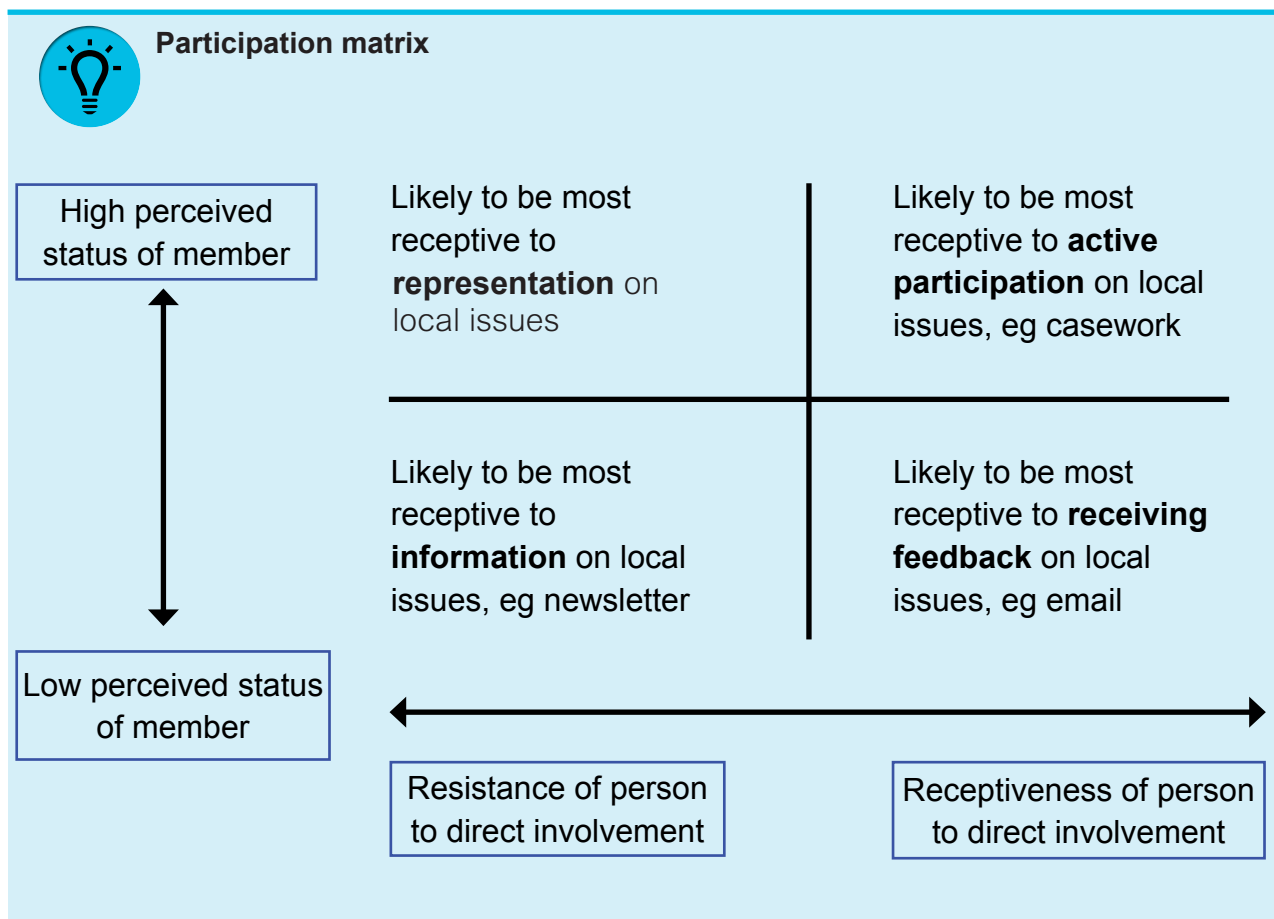
Publish a regular newsletter, liaise with the local press, keep our website up-to-date, and hold surgeries and consultations. Getting a response may take time for your residents to get to know you if you are newly elected

Blogging/ Vlogging – a weblog, 'blog', or video blog (Vlog) are online versions of journals updated on a regular basis, like a diary. Visually it looks just like a website, but usually has a simpler design and fewer pages. A growing number of ward councillors are now using blogs/vlogs to publish reports of their activities on the web and to solicit responses from their residents via e-mail or online surveys. Blogging can help to prompt local people to raise issues of concern and can enable others to give their views on any matters identified.

As community leaders, ward councillors must do what they can to represent the voices of all sections of the community. This may include championing the interests of people who often find it difficult or uncomfortable to articulate their issues or concerns, eg some younger, older or disabled citizens or some people from minority ethnic groups. A proportion of your casework is therefore likely to be concerned with 'speaking for the unheard.'

But don't imagine that everyone will want to come to you with their casework queries. While some people will want to engage with you and actively participate in a dialogue about their issues and concerns, others will be content to let you represent their interests or just keep them informed about what is going on locally. Much of this will depend on each person's perception of 'authority' figures generally, and their receptiveness to direct engagement.

The participation matrix below shows levels of participation that residents like. For example, if one constituent has a high opinion of the councillor but is resistant to direct involvement then they will prefer to receive information about local issues rather than direct feedback. It is worth considering this when you are in your ward.



Dealing effectively with the casework you generate

Dealing with casework will require you to develop your own simple, but effective, ways of managing both the information and paper flow. If you have been a councillor for some time, you have probably developed systems for doing this by default, ie finding out, by trial and error, what works well for you and what doesn't.

Some councils have begun to explore the use of technology-based solutions to help councillors – so-called e-Casework systems. But a sensible use of the equipment you already have available in your home or office and an efficient paper-based record system will serve just as well. Good note-keeping and diary management are essential, as well as a good filing system.

For those councillors that like to make use of technology, spreadsheets and databases can help to store, search and retrieve details of individual cases, alongside the use of email as an essential communication tool. It is also worth noting that many electoral rolls are now available electronically, offering you the possibility of being able to merge this information with a proprietary data management system to cut down on the time required to search for people's names and addresses.

Whatever your preferred approach and regardless of the systems you employ, there will be a number of general steps that you will need to take in handling the casework you generate. These are discussed in the sections below.



Three tips for dealing with casework

Install a dedicated telephone line – use an answering machine or service for calls outside of normal hours.

Use a simple form to capture the key facts about each case, i.e. names, addresses, contact details, casework history, others involved etc.

Make a record of all calls, conversations and action taken – it doesn't have to be onerous, a simple diary 'log' is usually sufficient.



Handling casework in a digital environment

The use of information and communications technology can also assist councillors by enabling residents to send electronic documents and photographic evidence relevant to some casework situations, eg it is not uncommon for residents to send councillors digital photographs of potholes in the road or community sites that have been blighted by vandalism.

Like many people, a growing number of councillors are finding that the use of social media tools like Facebook and Twitter is helping them to raise their profile and build engagement with their residents. While blogging/vlogging, emailing and the use of social media may not be every councillor's preferred route for generating casework, it is likely that some people who might be unwilling or unable to attend an advice surgery may prefer the ease and comfort of corresponding with their ward councillor from their own home and at a time that suits them.

As with any work a councillor does it is an ever changing landscape. In the context of large cuts to local government financing as well as councillors working harder than ever before to make sure their communities are represented casework too has changed. Broadly speaking councillors received queries from the residents via telephone, letters or ward surgeries; this was certainly still very much the case in 2011 when I first became a councillor.

Recently we have seen a channel shift towards emails and social media with it being much less common now to receive a letter or surgery request. As times change we are receiving more enquiries through social media, sometimes in a direct message through Facebook or Twitter, these are what I refer to as reactive inquiries. A resident asks you for advice or help and you react. The other way to engage with residents is if you keep an eye on some of your local community groups on Facebook. There will sometime be queries or complaints about how the council has taken a decision or a concern about their personal situation; If you can support them, why not pop on a post advising that you can help and ask them to call or private message you. This is how I proactively seek to help residents where possible.

The final important principle of handling casework is never promise what you cannot deliver. Managing expectations is now essential, whether that be how long it will take to get back to a constituent with a response or what and can be done due to financial or legal restraints. If we cannot help the resident in the way they wish is there an alternative and if not explain why something cannot be done. Never offer advice that you are unsure is accurate, if you do not know the answer to a query just explain you need further clarity on the matter before giving a response. I find most people appreciate honesty from their councillor and are happy to work with you within the constraints of local government if you explain this to them from the outset.

Cllr Amy Cross Blackpool Council



Challenge 2 – the casework challenge

Think about the systems you employ for handling casework. Write down how you would find out the following information about the cases you have dealt with in the past year:

The proportion of cases successfully resolved?

The number of people under 30 that have contacted you with casework queries?

Look again at what you have written. Could you make any changes to the systems you employ to enable you to extract this and other useful information more readily?

Identify what the problem is

You will need to establish the facts and find out how your constituent wants you to help. This will include identifying whether there is a long history to the problem and who has been approached in the past. It is worth approaching each case with a degree of humility – some residents with evidence of failure by ‘the council’ may see you as their last resort and some may be angry about the way they have been treated.

Avoid promising to sort out every problem, but do offer a sympathetic ear. While you can use your knowledge, contacts and advocacy skills to assist people, it is best to try and get people to help themselves. And keep the discussion focused on solutions and what can be done, rather than looking for scapegoats and people to blame.

Your residents will be looking for support, but they’ll be looking for answers and solutions even more. Understanding the nature and scale of the problem presented will often require you to use your judgement. Some people may try to use you or may avoid telling you everything you need to know. Before you can assist, you need to get all of the relevant facts and information.

Refer the problem to the appropriate council department

Having identified what the problem is, you should communicate with the council officers who handle councillors’ enquiries or relevant service officers, if that is how your council operates. You may want to put your concerns or questions in writing, although most councillors find that a quick face to face discussion, telephone call or email is quicker and easier in sorting out casework problems.

Remember also to give clear instructions to the council officers, either to write to your constituent with a copy for you, or to work through you. Don’t leave them to decide which approach you favour. And remember to copy the constituent in on what you have sent to officers unless it is confidential.



The LGA’s workbook on Handling complaints for service improvement, written in partnership with the Local Government Ombudsman, will provide you with useful information on what matters should be dealt with by you directly and what should be referred on to other agencies such as government departments or statutory bodies

Get in the habit of taking copies of all correspondence and treat your residents’ affairs with appropriate confidentiality, ie always ask permission before sharing their information or views with a third party and take steps to protect the information you store about them. If you are in any doubt about your legal responsibilities regarding data protection, speak to your council’s legal department.

Casework – dealing with anger

People who approach members about serious or intractable problems can often be stressed or angry. Remember:

- be polite and assertive but never aggressive – this will only increase the tension
- don’t promise more than you can deliver – this will create problems in the long run
- avoid taking personal responsibility for a problem – the blame and hostility may shift on to you
- approach the council if you need help or training in dealing with awkward customers
- don’t respond to racist, sexist or offensive remarks – draw the discussion to a close.



Challenge 3 – the casework challenge

Consider the following casework example. Write down the steps you might take to tackle the issues presented:

The Oaks is a council estate in your ward. It was built in the 1960s and is made up of three streets arranged in a horseshoe, down the centre of which run some old garages which were originally designed for residents' use. The estate gets its name from the woodland which once covered the site. You have been approached by Mrs Dyer, an elderly constituent on the estate, who wants the council to take some action to tackle her concerns. You already know that parts of the estate are run down and can look untidy. You are now being told that the garages on The Oaks have become a 'no go' area for local people. Cars are apparently being abandoned on a regular basis and the empty garages have become a haven for groups of teenagers who create noise and havoc into the night. She also tells you that the buildings are being used for drug dealing and storing stolen cars.

Look again at the ideas you have written down. To what extent have you rushed into a list of possible 'solutions' to the problems presented before checking out the relevant facts?

If the problems presented are widespread, you might expect to have received comments or complaints from other residents. Could you speak to others on the estate, of different ages, to get a more balanced view? If the alleged cases of noise, drug taking and vehicle abandonment are a reality, isn't it likely that the council or other partner agencies (eg the police) will have some evidence for this? It may be that Mrs Dyer is correct in her assessment and that action is needed to tackle a growing community problem, but some early legwork and a few reality checks might help to strengthen your understanding of what is really going on.

Data protection – some considerations

The Data Protection Act 1998 gives people rights regarding personal information that others hold about them and imposes controls on individuals and organisations that use personal information.

The act applies to councillors in the same way that it does to council employees and covers paper records and computerised systems using equipment owned by councillors or provided by the council.

Councillors are regarded as data controllers if they process personal data and are required to notify the information commissioner of the reasons why they hold and process personal data. Councillors using personal data must keep it secure and misuse of data is a punishable offence.



Registering as a data controller

As a councillor there are three distinct roles you perform where you may process personal data and therefore are required to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 and to register as Data Controller.

1. Council committees and council meetings work (this is covered by your council's notification).
2. Campaigning for election or otherwise acting on behalf of a political party (you should be covered by the party's notification), but check with your constituency chairperson or secretary. Councillors who do not belong to a party will not be covered and therefore will need to notify.

3. Carrying out ward casework eg acting as a representative, in which case, in addition to complying with the requirements for processing personal data, you are the 'data controller' and are required to notify the Information Commissioners Office. In 2011 the Information Commissioners Office wrote to councillors urging them to check their data protection obligations, as failure to register by councillors who handle personal data risks a fine of up to £5,000.

The ICO has issued data protection guidance for elected and prospective members of local authorities:
www.ico.gov.uk/for_organisations/sector_guides/political.aspx

Thus as a councillor you should decide if you are processing personal data and the role in which you are doing so. If you are make sure you comply with the Act and also check if you need to notify.

This is a complex subject and councillors seeking more information should visit the Information Commissioner Office website for further information at <https://ico.org.uk/>

The Data Protection Act 1998 legislation will be replaced with the General Data Protection Regulation as of May 2018. However at the point of publication of this workbook, the LGA is not yet aware if any of the information above will be subject to change or amendment. However it is assumed that the requirements affecting the need for councillors to register as data controllers will be heightened if anything.



Challenge 4 – helping people to help themselves

Consider the following examples of casework. Write down the steps you would take in helping people to resolve the issues presented.

Two older residents who have complained to you about the ‘inappropriate language’ used by staff in their local library.

A single mother, with literacy problems, who has come to you asking if you can help her to fill out various benefit claim forms from the council.

An elderly resident who says he cannot afford to continue with his council tax payments and wants you to let the council know that ‘he would rather go to prison than ‘pay up’

Reflect on your answers to the cases above. Is there a risk that you are taking on too much personal responsibility in seeking to resolve these matters? To what extent are some of the issues raised outside of your control or influence?

Provide feedback

After you have made initial enquiries, let the constituent know what you are doing and keep them up to date with progress and eventual outcomes. They will not know what is going on unless you tell them.

Consider the wider issues

Reflect on the issues raised by the casework and let your co-councillors know. A number of similar concerns raised with councillors may suggest that an issue needs to be dealt with by a new or revised policy or a scrutiny review. Where you have had a success, it is worth letting your fellow ward councillors know in case they face a similar situation. And always try and publicise your success to local residents through leaflets and newsletters.

Some of your casework queries should prompt you to think about 'the bigger picture', ie why problems have occurred in the first place, whether the issues presented by your residents are just the 'tip of the iceberg' in terms of wider community concerns or whether the case is likely to affect other local people.

A good example might be a sudden increase in the numbers of people coming to you with complaints about housing benefits payments. It is possible that the four or five people you find yourself talking to have isolated and unrelated problems. But equally the cases may be symptomatic of a wider concern – the introduction of a new computer system perhaps, or a change in the rules surrounding benefit entitlement. Your efforts may be focused on tackling the symptoms of the difficulty, when you really need to be speaking to officers about the cause of the problem.

Monitoring your effectiveness

Periodically, it is always sensible to review your approach to casework and consider whether what you do could be improved. For example:

- ask your councillor colleagues how they tackle the information and paper flow and whether they have any good tips you haven't thought of
- ask your residents for feedback on what they felt you did well in responding to their queries and anything you could do to improve
- look up the websites of other councils or individual councillors' blogs to see what others are doing to improve their response to casework
- monitor a number of key facts and statistics about your casework to ensure that you are targeting the people that need the most help and are being effective in resolving as many queries as you can.

It may be that your periodic reviews will highlight weaknesses in your systems for recording and storing information which you can address. Perhaps it will flag concerns about the volume of cases you are dealing with, which should prompt you to think about ways of getting other councillors or officers to help you with some of the burden. Equally, the activity might demonstrate how much of a difference you have made to people's lives through your casework interventions and underline the importance of being visible and accessible to local people as a ward councillor.

Monitoring your performance

How many people contacted you with problems in the last year?

Who were these people – gender, ethnicity, age, class, employment status?

How did people contact you?

How many cases were you able to resolve satisfactorily?

How does this compare with previous years?

What was the profile of the problem, eg housing, social services, benefits etc.?

How does your casework load and type compare to that of other councillors?



Challenge 5 – seeing the bigger picture

Look at the individual cases presented below and write down some of the potential 'big picture' issues that might underlie each.

Four separate cases reported to you of wheeled bins not being emptied on one estate.

A number of complaints about the long queue in the council's main reception area.

A rise in the number of queries you have received about on-street parking by people commuting in from areas outside of the ward.

Look again at the examples above. How often do you think about the potential 'big picture' issues when you are dealing with your real casework queries?

Casework can be both rewarding and frustrating in equal measure. Each case will be different and each must be handled with a degree of humility as residents with evidence of failure by 'the council' may see their ward councillor as a last resort. The reasons for any real or perceived failures by the council can be many and varied, eg the unhelpfulness of staff, some of the jargon in council literature or the unavailability of services at hours that suit people's busy lives.

In presenting their issues to you, residents may have multiple problems or deprivations: illiteracy, lack of numeracy, illness or fear of authority. In providing casework support you should act as a 'one-stop shop', wherever possible, in listening to and responding to their concerns. This ability to make a difference to the lives of local people sits at the very heart of your community leadership role.

For further advice on this particularly difficult area there is a councillor workbook entitled Supporting residents with complex issues. Along with an accompanying elearning module of the same name this will enable you to look at this area to consider how best to advise and assist with issues raised by your ward residents

Final summary

Where do you go from here?



Challenge 6

Look back over the material contained in earlier sections of this workbook and consider the following:

a) What key action points can you identify to improve your effectiveness as a ward councillor in dealing with casework, ie what three or four things might you start doing, keep doing or stop doing?

b) Have you identified any gaps in your knowledge or shortcomings in your personal skills? If so, please set these out below and identify how any further training development might help you, eg further reading/research, attending courses, coaching, mentoring, work shadowing, etc.

Appendix – sources of further information and support

Printed publications

The Councillors' Guide, Local Government Association www.local.gov.uk

The LGA website has many pages discussing community leadership and a number of publications, a series of case studies, the Knowledge Hub, and development programmes for councillors and council officers. For more information please go to www.local.gov.uk/our-support/highlighting-political-leadership

Useful websites

The LGA website is an invaluable source of help and advice for all those in local government and contains guidance and case studies on the community leadership role of councillors. It further provides advice on the effective use of social media and communication with your local residents or businesses. www.local.gov.uk



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please contact us on 020 7664 3000.
We consider requests on an individual basis.

Part 7: Member-Officer Protocol

A Protocol for Relationships between Members and Staff

1. Introduction

1.1 Mutual trust and respect between members and officers is at the heart of a Council's good governance. They are essential if the partnership necessary for the effective running of a local authority is to succeed.

1.2 In order to ensure that partnership continues both members and officers may benefit from guidance and a mechanism to address concerns before they are allowed to grow. This protocol aims to:-

- promote trust, openness, fairness and honesty by establishing some ground rules;
- to define roles so as:
 - o to clarify responsibilities (i.e. who does what),
 - o to avoid conflict, and
 - o to prevent duplication or omission;
- to secure compliance with the law, codes of conduct and a council's own practices; and
- to lay down procedures for dealing with concerns by members or officers.

1.3 A protocol should be recognised both as a central element of a Council's corporate governance, and as a commitment to upholding standards of conduct in public life. It is one way of demonstrating to the public at large that local government is serious about protecting and enhancing its integrity and reputation.

2. Principles

2.1 Members and officers must at all times observe this protocol.

2.2 The protocol has been approved by the Council and the Ethics and Engagement Committee will monitor its operation.

2.3 The protocol seeks to maintain and enhance the integrity of local government which demands the highest standards of personal conduct.

2.4 Members and officers must always respect the roles and duties of each other. They must show respect in all their dealings by observing reasonable standards of courtesy, and by not seeking to take unfair advantage by virtue of their position.

- 2.5 Whilst members and officers are indispensable to one another, their responsibilities are distinct. Members are accountable to the electorate and serve only as long as their term of office lasts. Officers are accountable to the Council as a whole. Their job is to give advice to members (individually and collectively) and to carry out the Council's work under the direction of the Council.
- 2.6 The Council has adopted codes of conduct for both members and officers. Both represent best practice. The members' code follows the national code which in turn is based on the general principles governing members' conduct enshrined in law:
- Selflessness – serving only the public interest.
 - Integrity – not allowing this to be questioned.
 - Objectivity – taking decisions on merit.
 - Accountability – to the public; being open to scrutiny.
 - Openness – giving reasons for decisions.
 - Honesty - not behaving improperly.
 - Leadership – acting in a way which has public confidence.
- 2.7 These principles underpin this protocol. They are also reflected in the code of conduct for employees .
- 2.8 Some officers are also bound by the codes of their professional associations.
- 2.9 Breaches of this protocol by a member may result in a complaint to the Ethics and Engagement Committee if it appears the members' code has also been breached. Breaches of the protocol by an officer may lead to disciplinary action if it appears that there has been a breach of discipline.

3. The role of members

- 3.1 Members have a number of roles and need to be alert to the potential for conflicts of interest which may arise between the roles. Where such conflicts are likely, members may wish to seek the advice of senior colleagues, the relevant senior officer(s), and/or the Monitoring Officer.
- 3.2 Collectively, members are the ultimate policy-makers determining the core values of the Council and approving the authority's policy framework, strategic plans and budget.
- 3.3 Members represent the community, act as community leaders and promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the community often in partnership with other agencies.
- 3.4 Every elected-member represents the interests of, and is an advocate

for, his/her ward and individual constituents. He/she represents the Council in the ward, responds to the concerns of constituents, meets with partner agencies, and often serves on local bodies.

- 3.5 Some members have roles relating to their position as members of the Executive, scrutiny committees or other committees and sub-committees of the Council.
- 3.6 Members of the Executive can have individual delegated powers. They may determine matters within their portfolios but implementation of their decisions is the responsibility of officers.
- 3.7 Members serving on scrutiny committees monitor the effectiveness of the Council's policies and services, develop policy proposals and examine community issues.
- 3.8 Members who serve on other committees and sub-committees collectively have delegated responsibilities, e.g. deciding quasi-judicial matters which by law are excluded from the remit of the Executive.
- 3.9 Some members may be appointed to represent the Council on local, regional or national bodies.
- 3.10 As politicians, members may express the values and aspirations of the party political groups to which they belong, recognising that in their role as members they have a duty always to act in the public interest.
- 3.11 Members are not authorised to instruct officers other than:
 - through the formal decision-making process;
 - to request the provision of consumable resources provided by the Council for members' use;
 - where staff have been specifically allocated to give support to a member or group of members;
 - political assistants.
- 3.12 Members are not authorised to initiate or certify financial transactions, or to enter into a contract on behalf of the Council.
- 3.13 Members must not take action which is unlawful, financially improper or likely to amount to maladministration. Members have an obligation under their code of conduct to have regard, when reaching decisions, to any advice provided by the Monitoring Officer or the designated Finance Officer.
- 3.14 Members must respect the impartiality of officers and do nothing to compromise it, e.g. by insisting that an officer change his/her professional advice.
- 3.15 Members have a duty under their code of conduct:

- to promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and
- to treat others with respect

3.16 Under the code, a member must not when acting as a member or in any other capacity:

- bring the Council or his/her position as a member into disrepute, or
- use his/her position as a member improperly to gain an advantage or disadvantage for his/herself or any other person.

4. The role of officers

- 4.1 Officers are responsible for giving advice to members to enable them to fulfil their roles. In doing so, officers will take into account all available relevant factors.
- 4.2 Under the direction and control of the Council (including, as appropriate, the Executive, committees and sub-committees), officers manage and provide the Council's services within the framework of responsibilities delegated to them. This includes the effective management of employees and operational issues.
- 4.3 Officers have a duty to implement decisions of the Council, the Executive, committees and sub-committees which are lawful, and which have been properly approved in accordance with the requirements of the law and the Council's constitution, and duly minuted.
- 4.4 Officers have a contractual and legal duty to be impartial. They must not allow their professional judgement and advice to be influenced by their own personal views.
- 4.5 Officers must assist and advise all parts of the Council. They must always act to the best of their abilities in the best interests of the authority as expressed in the Council's formal decisions.
- 4.6 Officers must be alert to issues which are, or are likely to be, contentious or politically sensitive, and be aware of the implications for members, the media or other sections of the public.
- 4.7 Officers have the right not to support members in any role other than that of member, and not to engage in actions incompatible with this protocol. In particular, there is a statutory limitation on officers' involvement in political activities.

5. The relationship between members and officers: general

- 5.1 The conduct of members and officers should be such as to instil mutual confidence and trust.
- 5.2 The key elements are a recognition of and a respect for each other's roles and responsibilities. These should be reflected in the behaviour and attitude of each to the other, both publicly and privately.
- 5.3 Informal and collaborative two-way contact between members and officers is encouraged. But personal familiarity can damage the relationship, as might a family or business connection.
- 5.4 Members and officers should inform the Chief Executive of any relationship which might be seen as unduly influencing their work in their respective roles.
- 5.5 It is not enough to avoid actual impropriety. Members and officers should always be open about their relationships to avoid any reason for suspicion and any appearance of improper conduct. Where a personal relationship has been disclosed, those concerned should avoid a situation where conflict could be perceived. Specifically, a member should not sit on a body or participate in any decision which directly affects the officer on a personal basis.
- 5.6 Officers serve the Council as a whole. They have a duty to implement the properly authorised decisions of the Council.
- 5.7 Officers work to the instructions of their senior officers, not individual members. It follows that, whilst such officers will always seek to assist a member, they must not be asked to exceed the bounds of authority they have been given by their managers. Except when the purpose of an enquiry is purely to seek factual information, members should normally direct their requests and concerns to a senior officer, at least in the first instance.
- 5.8 Officers will do their best to give timely responses to members' enquiries. However, officers should not have unreasonable requests placed on them. Their work priorities are set and managed by senior managers. Members should avoid disrupting officers' work by imposing their own priorities.
- 5.9 Members will endeavour to give timely responses to enquiries from officers.
- 5.10 ***An officer shall not discuss with a member any personal matters relating to his/her employment or the employment of a colleague.***

This does not prevent an officer raising on a personal basis, and in his/her own time, a matter with his/her ward member.

- 5.11 Members and officers should respect each other's free (i.e. non-Council) time.

6. The Council as employer

- 6.1 Officers are employed by the Council as a whole.
- 6.2 Members' roles are limited to:
- the appointment of specified senior posts,
 - determining human resources policies and conditions of employment,
 - the appointment of political assistants, and
 - hearing and determining appeals.
- 6.3 Members shall not act outside these roles.
- 6.4 If participating in the appointment of officers, members should:
- remember that the sole criterion is merit (other than in the case of political assistants where political consideration may apply),
 - never canvass support for a particular candidate,
 - not take part where one of the candidates is a close friend or relative,
 - not be influenced by personal preferences, and
 - not favour a candidate by giving him/her information not available to the other candidates.
- 6.5 A member should not sit on an appeal hearing if he or she has a declarable personal interest.

7. Mayor and officers

- 7.1 Officers will respect the position of Mayor and provide appropriate support.

8. Executive members and officers

- 8.1 Executive members will take decisions in accordance with the constitution and will not otherwise direct staff. Senior officers will be responsible for instructing staff to implement the Executive's decisions.
- 8.2 Senior officers (including the Monitoring Officer and the designated Finance Officer) have the right to submit papers to the Executive as a whole or to individual Executive members for consideration.
- 8.3 Senior officers and Executive members shall agree mutually convenient methods of regular contact. Before taking any formal decisions, the Executive will seek appropriate professional advice including, without exception, the Monitoring Officer and designated

Finance Officer, and will not direct officers in the framing of recommendations.

- 8.4 Before any formal decisions with a financial implication are taken by the Executive, the Finance Officer and the senior officer(s) for the service(s) concerned must be consulted. This is to ensure that those officers who are budget holders:

- are aware of the proposed decision,
- have the opportunity to offer advice, and
- are subsequently able properly to authorise the financial transactions needed to implement decisions.

- 8.5 Executive members when making decisions (whether collectively or individually) must state the reasons for those decisions. The written record of the decisions must include the reasons. This record of decision must be published on the Council's web site.

- 8.6 Officers taking decisions under their delegated powers must consider the advisability of informing the relevant Executive member(s) of their intentions in advance when the matter to which the decisions relates is likely to be sensitive or contentious, or has wider policy implications. A written record of any delegated executive decision made by officers must be recorded with reasons for making that decision and this must be published on the web site.

9. Scrutiny members and officers

- 9.1 Chairmen and other leading scrutiny members shall maintain regular contact with the officer(s) providing the principal support to the overview and scrutiny function. In consultation with chairmen, it shall be the responsibility of the latter to ensure that those who need to know of matters being considered or for possible future consideration are so informed.

- 9.2 A scrutiny committee or its chairman acting on its behalf may require officers to attend overview and scrutiny meetings. Members should not normally expect junior officers to give evidence. All requests should be made to senior officers in the first instance.

- 9.3 When making requests for officer attendance, scrutiny members shall have regard to the workload of officers.

- 9.4 It is recognised that officers required to appear before a scrutiny committee may often be those who have advised the Executive or another part of the Council on the matter under investigation. In these circumstances, an officer may have a conflict of interest. Both members and officers need to consider the severity of the conflict. If deemed appropriate, research and advice may be sought elsewhere.

- 9.5 Subject to 10.4 above, officers should be prepared to justify advice given to the Council, the Executive, or other committees and sub-committees even when the advice was not accepted.
- 9.6 Officers must also be prepared to justify decisions they have taken under delegated powers.
- 9.7 In giving evidence, officers must not be asked to give political views.
- 9.8 Officers should respect members in the way they respond to members' questions.
- 9.9 Members should not question officers in a way which could be interpreted as harassment. Neither should they ask about matters of a disciplinary nature.
- 9.10 Scrutiny proceedings must not be used to question the capability or competence of officers. Chairmen and members need to make a distinction between reviewing the policies and performance of the Council and its services, and appraising the personal performance of staff. The latter is not a scrutiny function.

10. Members of other committees or sub-committees and officers

- 10.1 The appropriate senior officers will offer to arrange regular informal meetings with chairs and vice-chairs of committees and sub-committees.
- 10.2 Senior officers (including the Monitoring Officer and the designated Finance Officer) have the right to present reports and give advice to committees and sub-committees.
- 10.3 Members of a committee or sub-committee shall take decisions within the remit of that committee or sub-committee, and will not otherwise instruct officers to act.
- 10.4 At some committee or sub-committee meetings, a resolution may be passed which authorises a named officer to take action between meetings in consultation with the chairman. In these circumstances it is the officer, not the chairman, who takes the action and is responsible for it. A chairman has no legal power to take decisions on behalf of a committee or sub-committee, neither should he/she apply inappropriate pressure on the officer.

11. Party groups and officers

- 11.1 Senior officers may properly be asked to contribute to deliberations of matters concerning Council business by party groups, officers have the right to reasonably refuse such requests. The relevant Director should be informed where the request is made of an Assistant

Director or other members of staff.

- 11.2 Officers will normally not attend a meeting of a party group where the information to be provided to members is exempt or confidential and some of those attending are not members of the Council.
- 11.3 Officer support will not extend beyond providing factual information or professional advice in relation to matters of Council business. Officers must not be involved in advising on matters of party business, and therefore should not be expected to be present at meetings or parts of meetings when such matters are to be discussed.
- 11.4 Party group meetings are not empowered to make decisions on behalf of the Council, and conclusions reached at such meetings do not rank as formal decisions. The presence of an officer confers no formal status on such meetings in terms of Council business and must not be interpreted as doing so.
- 11.5 Where officers provide factual information and advice to a party group in relation to a matter of Council business, this is not a substitute for providing all the necessary information and advice when the matter in question is formally considered by the relevant part of the Council.
- 11.6 It must not be assumed that an officer is supportive of a particular policy or view considered at a party group meeting simply because he/she has attended or provided information to the meeting.
- 11.7 Officers will respect the confidentiality of any party group discussions at which they are present and, unless requested to do so by that party group, will not relay the content of such discussions to another party group or to any other members. This shall not prevent an officer providing feedback to other senior officers on a need-to-know basis.
- 11.8 In their dealings with party groups, officers must treat each group in a fair and even-handed manner.
- 11.9 Members must not do anything which compromises or is likely to compromise officers' impartiality.
- 11.10 The duration of an officer's attendance at a party group meeting will be at the discretion of the group, but an officer may leave at any time if he/she feels it is no longer appropriate to be there.
- 11.11 An officer accepting an invitation to the meeting of one party group shall not decline an invitation to advise another group about the same matter. He/she must give substantially the same advice to each.
- 11.12 An officer who is not a senior officer shall not be invited to attend a party group meeting, but a senior officer may nominate another officer to attend on his/her behalf.

- 11.13 An officer should be given the opportunity of verifying comments and advice attributed to him/her in any written record of a party group meeting.
- 11.14 No member will refer in public or at meetings of the Council to advice or information given by officers to a party group meeting.
- 11.15 At party group meetings where some of those present are not members of the Council, care must be taken not to divulge confidential information relating to Council business. Persons who are not members are not bound by the members' code of conduct. They do not have the same rights to Council information as members.
- 11.16 Any particular cases of difficulty or uncertainty in relation to this part of the protocol should be raised with the Chief Executive and the relevant party group leader.

12. Local members and officers

- 12.1 To enable them to carry out their ward role effectively, members need to be fully informed about matters affecting their ward. Senior officers must ensure that all relevant staff are aware of the requirement to keep local members informed, thus allowing members to contribute to the decision-making process and develop their representative role.
- 12.2 This requirement is particularly important:
- during the formative stages of policy development, where practicable,
 - in relation to significant or sensitive operational matters,
 - whenever any form of public consultation exercise is undertaken, and
 - during a scrutiny investigation.
- 12.3 Issues may affect a single ward. Where they have a wider impact, a number of local members will need to be kept informed.
- 12.4 Whenever a public meeting is organised by the Council to consider a local issue, all the members representing the wards affected should be invited to attend the meeting as a matter of course.
- 12.5 If a local member intends to arrange a public meeting on a matter concerning some aspect of the Council's work, he/she should inform the relevant officer. Provided the meeting has not been arranged on a party political basis:
- an officer may attend but is not obliged to do so, and
 - the meeting may be held in Council-owned premises.

- 12.6 No such meetings should be arranged or held in the immediate run-up to Council elections.
- 12.7 Whilst support for members' ward work is legitimate, care should be taken if staff are asked to accompany members to ward surgeries. In such circumstances:
- the surgeries must be open to the general public, and
 - officers should not be requested to accompany members to surgeries held in the offices or premises of political parties.
- 12.8 Officers must never be asked to attend ward or constituency political party meetings.
- 12.9 It is acknowledged that some Council staff (e.g. those providing dedicated support to Executive members) may receive and handle messages for members on topics unrelated to the Council. Whilst these will often concern diary management, care should be taken to avoid Council resources being used for private or party political purposes.
- 12.10 In seeking to deal with constituents' queries or concerns, members should not seek to jump the queue but should respect the Council's procedures. Officers have many pressures on their time. They may not be able to carry out the work required by members in the requested timescale, and may need to seek instructions from their managers.

13. Members' access to documents and information

- 13.1 This part of the protocol should be read in conjunction with the Access to Information Rules in the Council's constitution and the data protection guidance given to members and officers.
- 13.2 Members may request senior officers to provide them with such information, explanation and advice as they may reasonably need to assist them to discharge their roles as members. This may range from general information about some aspect of the Council's services to specific information on behalf of a constituent. Where information is requested on behalf of a third party, it will only be provided if:
- it is in the public domain, and
 - it is not barred by the Data Protection Act from being given.
- 13.3 Every member of the Executive, a scrutiny committee, and/or any other committee or sub-committee has a right to inspect documents about the business of that scrutiny committee, other committee or sub-committee or the Executive.

- 13.4 A member who is not a member of a specific scrutiny committee, other committee or sub-committee, or the Executive may have access to any document of that specific part of the Council provided:
- he/she can demonstrate a reasonable need to see the documents in order to carry out his/her roles as a member (the “need to know” principle), and
 - the documents do not contain “confidential” or “exempt” information as defined by the law.
- 13.5 Disputes as to the validity of a member’s request to see a document on a need to know basis will be determined by the Monitoring Officer. Officers should seek his/her advice if in any doubt about the reasonableness of a member’s request.
- 13.6 A member should obtain advice from the Monitoring Officer in circumstances where he/she wishes to have access to documents or information:
- where to do so is likely to be in breach of the Data Protection Act, or
 - where the subject matter is one in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest or personal or pecuniary interest as defined in the members’ code of conduct.
- 13.7 Information given to a member must only be used for the purpose for which it was requested.
- 13.8 It is an accepted convention that a member of one party group will not have a need to know and therefore a right to inspect a document which forms part of the internal workings of another party group.
- 13.9 Members and officers must not disclose information given to them in confidence without the consent of a person authorised to give it, or unless required by law to do so or failure to disclose the information would prejudice the Council.
- 13.10 When requested to do so, officers will keep confidential from other members advice requested by a member except where to do so would prejudice the Council.
- 13.11 Members and officers must not prevent another person from gaining access to information to which that person is entitled by law.

14. Correspondence

- 14.1 Correspondence between an individual member and an officer may be copied to another member unless the member specifically requests that it remain confidential (correspondence may be copied to another member despite a request that it remain confidential

where legislation requires it or if failure to disclose it would prejudice the Council). Where correspondence is copied, this should always be made explicit, i.e. there should be no “blind” copies.

- 14.2 Official letters written on behalf of the Council should normally be in the name of the relevant officer. It may be appropriate in some circumstances (e.g. representations to a Government Minister) for letters to appear in the name of an Executive member or the chairman of a scrutiny committee.
- 14.3 The Mayor may initiate correspondence in his/her own name.
- 14.4 Letters which create legally enforceable obligations or which give instructions on behalf of the Council should never be sent in the name of a member.
- 14.5 When writing in an individual capacity as a ward member, a member must make clear that fact.

15. Access to premises

- 15.1 Officers have the right to enter Council land and premises to carry out their work. Some officers have the legal power to enter property in the ownership of others.
- 15.2 Members have a right of access to Council land and premises to fulfil their duties.
- 15.3 When making visits as individual members, members should:
 - whenever practicable, notify and make advance arrangements with the appropriate manager or officer in charge;
 - comply with health and safety, security and other workplace rules;
 - not interfere with the services or activities being provided at the time of the visit; and
 - take special care at schools and establishments serving vulnerable sections of society to avoid giving any impression of improper or inappropriate behaviour.

16. Use of Council resources

- 16.1 The Council provides all members with services such as typing, printing and photocopying, and goods such as stationery and computer equipment, to assist them in discharging their roles as members of the Council. These goods and services are paid for from the public purse. They should not be used for private purposes or in connection with party political or campaigning activities.

16.2 Members should ensure they understand and comply with the Council's own rules about the use of such resources, particularly:

- where facilities are provided in members' homes at the Council's expense;
- in relation to any locally-agreed arrangements e.g. payment for private photocopying; and
- regarding ICT security.

16.3 Members should not put pressure on staff to provide resources or support which officers are not permitted to give. Examples are:

- business which is solely to do with a political party;
- work in connection with a ward or constituency party political meeting;
- electioneering;
- work associated with an event attended by a member in a capacity other than as a member of the Council;
- private personal correspondence;
- work in connection with another body or organisation where a member's involvement is other than as a member of the Council; and
- support to a member in his/her capacity as a councillor of another local authority.

17. Interpretation, complaints and allegations of breaches

17.1 This part of the protocol should be read in conjunction with any "whistle-blowing" policy the Council may have.

17.2 Members or officers with questions about the implementation or interpretation of any part of this protocol should seek the guidance of the Monitoring Officer.

17.3 A member who is unhappy about the actions taken by, or conduct of, an officer should:

- avoid personal attacks on, or abuse of, the officer at all times,
- ensure that any criticism is well founded and constructive,
- never make a criticism in public, and
- take up the concern with the officer privately in an appropriate manner taking into account the status and position of both the member and officer.

17.4 If direct discussion with the officer is inappropriate (e.g. because of the seriousness of the concern) or fails to resolve the matter, the member should raise the issue with the officer's manager or the relevant senior officer.

17.5 The purpose of this protocol is to give advice and guidance. Whilst a

breach of this protocol alone will not give rise to disciplinary action a serious breach of this protocol by an officer may constitute a breach of discipline and lead to an investigation under the Council's disciplinary procedure.

- 17.6 An officer who believes a member may have acted other than in accordance with this protocol should raise his/her concern with the Monitoring Officer. He/she will consider how the complaint or allegation should be dealt with. At a minor level, this may be no more than informally referring the matter to the leader of the relevant party group. More serious complaints may involve alleged breaches of the members' code of conduct, and may be referred to the Ethics and Engagement Committee.

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SUBJECT:	WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE
DIRECTORATE:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE & TOWN CLERK
LEAD OFFICER:	CAROLYN WHEATER – CITY SOLICITOR

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 last meeting of the Committee.
- 2.2 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. Organisational Impacts

- 4.1 Finance
There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
- 4.2 Legal Implications
Any additions to the work programme should be made in accordance with the scope of the Committee as established within its terms of reference.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 That the Committee consider the work programme and propose any suitable changes if necessary.

Lead Officer:

Graham Watts, Principal Democratic Officer
Telephone (01522) 873439

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Ethics and Engagement Committee Work Programme 2017/18

15 January 2018

Topic	Matter for Consideration	Outcome
Member Development Update	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide an update on member development activity.
A review of the consultation strategy and how the Council engages with the public	The Committee has a broader remit to improve the level of public engagement with the Council. This wider engagement will be examined in a broad manner within the report in order to allow members to highlight any areas which might benefit from particular attention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To determine whether any aspect of the Council's current engagement with the public should be considered in any further detail.
Guidance on casework for Councillors	Guidance has been issued by the Local Government Association for Councillors with regard to dealing with casework.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consider the guidance document issued by the Local Government Association.
Provision of mobile devices to members	The mobile devices currently used by some members will soon be in need of replacement due to their operating systems no longer being supported.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consider the replacement options available
Timescale associated with producing and publishing draft minutes	A comment was made by a member that Executive draft minutes had been published earlier than usual. It was agreed that this issue should be considered by the Ethics and Engagement Committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consider the timescale associated with the production and publication of draft minutes
Work Programme Update	The Committee's work programme is agreed on an ongoing basis in consultation with the Chair and the Committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To agree the work programme. To consider the arrangements for the next meeting.

5 March 2018

Topic	Matter for Consideration	Outcome
Code of Conduct: Cases Review	To examine national developments of relevance to the Members' Code of Conduct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To note the issues raised and consider a suitable response if required.
Member Development Update	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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To consider the current provision of member development and offer guidance on its future operation.
Member Induction Programme	A member induction programme will be developed for any newly elected members following the City Council elections in May 2016.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To consider the proposed content of the member induction programme
Work Programme 2016/17	The Committee's work programme is agreed on an ongoing basis in consultation with the Chair and the Committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To agree the work programme. ▪ To consider the arrangements for the next meeting.