

ETHICS AND ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Monday, 3 February 2014

6.00 pm

Committee Room 1, City Hall

Membership:	Councillors Geoff Ellis (Chair), David Jackson (Vice-Chair), Chris Burke, Ronald Hills, Ric Metcalfe, Hilton Spratt, Ralph Toofany, Katie Vause and Loraine Woolley
Substitute member(s):	Councillors Brent Charlesworth, David Grattrick, Gary Hewson and Geoff Kirby
Independent Person(s):	Chris Elkington and Roger Vine
Officers attending:	Democratic Services and Carolyn Wheeler

A G E N D A

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1. Confirmation of Minutes - 11 December 2013	3 - 8
2. Declarations of Interest	
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 (<i>in the Chair</i>)
Councillors:	Ronald Hills, Ric Metcalfe, Ralph Toofany and Loraine Woolley
Independent Person(s):	Chris Elkington and Roger Vine
Apologies for Absence:	Councillor Chris Burke, Councillor David Jackson, Councillor Hilton Spratt and Councillor Katie Vause

27. Confirmation of Minutes - 1 October 2013

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2013 be confirmed.

28. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Ronald Hills declared a Personal interest in minute no. 30. He was a member of the Planning Committee and could therefore be affected by the dispensation being considered.

29. Code of Conduct: Cases Review

The Assistant Director of Legal and Corporate Support Services:

- a) presented a report containing information on recent cases relating to other local authorities' codes of conduct.
- b) highlighted that members should identify any issues raised within the report as being relevant for further consideration with regard to their impact upon members.
- c) drew members' attention to the case involving a judicial review which would consider the compatibility of the new standards regime with the European Convention on Human Rights.
- d) invited members' questions and comments.

Members:

- considered the potentially high impact of any successful challenge to the standards regime made under the provisions to protect human rights.
- noted that the Council had previously been successful in avoiding discrimination against members in opposition political groups when considering code of conduct complaints.

The Independent Person summarised his understanding of the case involving human rights based upon recently-undertaken training as part of his role.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

30. Planning Committee Dispensation

The Assistant Director of Legal and Corporate Support Services:

- a) presented a report regarding an application which was likely to be considered by the Planning Committee in the near future.
- b) advised that a number of Planning Committee members were likely to have a personal and pecuniary interest in the applicants owing to their involvement in the civic process.
- c) requested that the Committee determine whether it would be appropriate to grant a dispensation which would allow members of the Planning Committee to take part in consideration of the item if they would otherwise have had an interest which would have precluded them from doing so.
- d) invited members' questions and comments.

The Reserve Independent Person confirmed that the Planning Committee decision would be taken solely by the Planning Committee rather than by Council.

RESOLVED that a dispensation for all members and substitute members of the Planning Committee for a period of one year in relation to planning applications for a tank memorial on Tritton Road be agreed.

31. Lobbying and Corruption in Local Government Reports

The Assistant Director of Legal and Corporate Support Services:

- a) presented a report summarising the contents of two studies recently published by bodies with an interest in the operation of the local government standards regime at a national level.
- b) highlighted the areas of the studies which were specifically relevant to local government and the new standards regime.
- c) noted the particular relevance of the report produced by Transparency International, the conclusions of which were considered to be valid if overly pessimistic.
- d) drew to members' attention the possibility of providing additional guidance to councillors regarding lobbying.
- e) invited members' questions and comments.

Members:

- noted sympathy with the argument that the changes to the standards regime had been a retrograde step, while agreeing that the Transparency International report had possibly overplayed the prevalence of corruption, relying on a few examples in which the perpetrators had been effectively caught and punished.
- stressed that the level of regulation against corruption and lobbying in local government was considerably tighter than within many other organisations, including the Houses of Parliament.
- highlighted the potential relevance of the reports regarding the Western Growth Corridor, discussing the manner in which members of the Planning Committee were particularly targeted for lobbying in relation to decisions scheduled to be taken on applications.

- discussed the potential within the Localism Act 2011 for the receipt of gifts and hospitality to constitute a disclosable pecuniary interest.

The Assistant Director of Legal and Corporate Support Services advised that while the Council's Member Code of Conduct set a minimum value for declarations of gifts and hospitality, there was no such provision within the Localism Act 2011.

RESOLVED that:

1. the report be noted.
2. the Assistant Director of Legal and Corporate Support Services be requested to produce and circulate a refresher guidance note to members with regard to the lobbying of councillors.

32. Local Democracy Week Review

The Democratic Services Officer:

- a) presented a report regarding Local Democracy Week.
- b) highlighted the Council's involvement in Local Democracy Week 2013, advising that the focal point for the week had been a live interactive online session between the Leader and young people.
- c) noted the Council's plans for involvement in Local Democracy Week 2014, while also continuing to engage with young people throughout the year.
- d) invited members' questions and comments.

The Chair noted that he and officers were seeking to make contact with local schools to arrange further member-student panels; these were being arranged with a view to staggering a manageable roll-out across the city.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

33. Succession Planning

The Democratic Services Officer:

- a) presented a report which gave details of the Council's succession planning for elected members.
- b) highlighted the overlap between experienced members passing on their knowledge and skills, and the need for the Council to provide development opportunities for less experienced councillors.
- c) drew members' attention to potential programmes for 'buddying' and 'shadowing' with new and less experienced councillors, who could benefit from one-to-one guidance from appropriate persons.
- d) noted the need for any suggestions for development opportunities to take account of the limited financial resources available.
- e) invited members' questions and comments.

Members:

- noted the value of assessing the manner in which new councillors had previously been inducted.
- stressed that succession planning was an important issue for the Council as a whole, and that there was a need for the Council to renew itself through new councillors.
- noted the impact of the change from the previous committee system in undermining members' specialist knowledge of particular areas of Council business.
- supported the introduction of role-shadowing, subject to it being made clear that the role was being provided on a purely educative basis not entailing special responsibilities.
- highlighted the need for training to go beyond the purely reactive and to have a view to long-term development.
- stressed the leading role that councillors ought to play in inducting new councillors.
- highlighted the difficulties with attempting to introduce a formal assistant portfolio holder role within a council comprising relatively few councillors.

RESOLVED that:

1. officers be requested to seek feedback from councillors elected to the council in 2012 regarding feedback on their induction process.
2. the support for the proposals within report, subject to the clear avoidance of any additional special responsibilities for members shadowing senior councillors, be noted.

34. Work Programme Update

The Democratic Services Officer:

- a) presented the current Ethics and Engagement Committee work programme for consideration by members.
- b) highlighted the forthcoming item on the work programme regarding increasing the diversity of electoral candidates and requested members' guidance on the focus for any discussion.
- c) invited members' questions and comments.

Members:

- noted the activities already undertaken by political parties, and highlighted the role the Council could play in encouraging people to stand for election.
- highlighted the need to ensure disabled people felt sufficiently supported to stand for election, while the general need to counter-act an ageing Council membership and reflect Lincoln's population was considered.
- discussed the need to encourage young people to participate in the democratic process by taking meetings to schools and arranging relevant visits.
- noted that the Council had attempted a number of initiatives in the past to seek to improve this situation.

The Reserve Independent Person stressed the role elected members had to play in providing direction to officers in this area and the need for feedback from councillors as to how they would like be involved in any processes.

RESOLVED that the work programme be approved.

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SUBJECT:	CODE OF CONDUCT: CASES REVIEW
REPORT BY:	DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
LEAD OFFICER:	CAROLYN WHEATER – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (LEGAL AND CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide information on recent cases relating to other local authorities' codes of conduct and consider their potential relevance to the Council.

2. National Cases Relating to Councillor Conduct

- 2.1 Since the removal of the Standards for England Board as part of the changes brought through the Localism Act 2011, the Council no longer receives a summary of cases reported from across the country. As a result, the cases chosen for consideration are drawn primarily from local government networks and media reports, and are summarised below.

- 2.2 The reports highlighted are gathered solely from information made available by the relevant local authorities. As cases are often considered to contain exempt information, there are potentially elements of the case which may not be publicly available. As such, members should be aware that the cases below are provided for the purpose of discussion and may not give the full picture in every regard.

2.3 Brighton and Hove City Council

A councillor was found to have breached the member code of conduct following remarks made to a local newspaper that golliwog toys were nostalgic rather than racist and that complaints about them were 'political correctness gone too far'. The councillor was found not to have breached the code with regard to treating others with respect and acting in such a manner as to risk causing the authority to breach any of its equality duties (in particular as set out in the Equality Act 2010), but had breached the code of conduct herself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing her office or authority into disrepute. The councillor was therefore to be requested to attend diversity training. The reasons for the finding were put forward as follows:

1. That her support for and encouragement for the continued sale of golliwogs, instead of fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, had the potential to cause division and offend some sections of the community.
2. The Council has given a commitment to zero tolerance of racist attitudes and behaviours. The councillor's statements to the newspaper were not consistent with these requirements.

2.4 Ealing London Borough Council

An application to bring a judicial review of a code of conduct decision against a councillor on the grounds of the councillor's right to freedom of speech was rejected by a High Court judge. The councillor had made comments about immigration and particular ethnic groups in a website posting. The judge found that:

'The comments about Southall residents were contained in a separate section of the blog from those which raised legitimate topics of political debate. They were not the expression of a political view, but an unjustified personal and generic attack on a section of the public... The subjects of the speech were not politicians but ordinary members of the public and, as such, the comments did not attract the higher level of protection applicable to political expressions and the comments would plainly have undermined confidence in local government, the preservation of which is a recognised aim of the Code.'

Moreover, the mildness of the original sanction requesting an apology from the councillor was also noted to have a bearing on the extent to which the councillor's qualified right to freedom of speech could be infringed.

2.5 Hackney London Borough Council & Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

Members of an opposition group at each of these councils have withdrawn from taking part in the councils' standards committees citing concerns that the new standards regime was politically partial and did not give sufficient emphasis to independent people. Councillors taking part in the move state that they will take no further part in hearings or acknowledge any decisions made.

3. Potential Learning Points

- 3.1 Having regard to these complaints which have been investigated by other local authorities, members should consider whether any appropriate actions can be identified to ensure that the likelihood of any future breaches of the Member Code of Conduct by members representing the City of Lincoln Council is limited.
- 3.2 The Ethics and Engagement Committee may wish to consider the following actions if any learning points are identified:
 - Issuing guidance to members and any other relevant parties on a general topic which presents a cause for concern with a view to potential future breaches of the Member Code of Conduct.
 - Requesting specific training for all members or members whose individual status would be relevant to the particular training.
 - Proposing amendments to the Member Code of Conduct and the procedure for considering complaints, if improvements can be identified.
 - Any other actions falling within the remit of the Committee which might aid the improvement of councillors' conduct.
- 3.3 If members are aware of further cases of broad interest from other local authorities in relation to ethical behaviour by councillors, details can be submitted via Democratic Services or raised at the meeting of the Committee for potential inclusion in a future report.

4. Strategic Priorities

- 4.1 The development of a fit-for-purpose council relies upon the proper conduct of officers and members. By considering the lessons learned from other local authorities the Council is better positioned to take preventative action to resolve any potential issues before they arise.

5. Organisational Impacts

5.1 Finance

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

5.2 Legal Implications

The Ethics and Engagement Committee's role includes the promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct by councillors and co-opted members; this report forms a part of the work of the Committee in proactively addressing any matter that could detract from the reputation and behaviour of the Council or its councillors.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 That the Ethics and Engagement Committee note the contents of the report and recommend any suitable action arising from it.

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SUBJECT: STANDARDS POST-IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

LEAD OFFICER: CAROLYN WHEATER – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (LEGAL AND CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the manner in which the revisions made to the Council's standards regime have changed as a result of the Localism Act 2011 and the effectiveness of the Council's revised arrangements.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Localism Act 2011 made a number of significant changes to the manner in which councillors were to be held to account for their behaviour in office. These changes included:
- The abolition of the national body, Standards for England, and the national member code of conduct.
 - The removal of the capacity for councils to impose material sanctions upon councillors for breaches of a code of conduct, and the introduction of a criminal offence for failing to disclose certain pecuniary interests.
 - The change from independent members to independent persons, with independent persons to be consulted on complaints received regarding potential breaches of the Member Code of Conduct.
 - The power of the Monitoring Officer to consider complaints in the first instance.
 - The introduction of a new category of declarable interests, with disclosable pecuniary interests and councils being allowed to create additional rules surrounding interests defined and agreed at a local level.
 - The introduction of a statutory definition of pre-determination of interests.
- 2.2 The Council reacted to these changes by introducing a member code of conduct based upon the Bevan Brittan template fully incorporating the seven principles of public life (later amended to include the revisions made in the autumn of 2013). The Code of Conduct meeting the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 was agreed in its operational form at the Council meeting of 7 August 2012. The Council has appointed an Independent Person and a Reserve Independent Person, who also attend meetings of the Ethics and Engagement Committee to offer an independent insight to the matters under consideration.
- 2.3 Members may also be interested to note the outcome of a recent national survey examining the impact of the Localism Act's provisions upon English councils, which found that 85% of respondents felt that the available sanctions were too weak, while 2% felt they were too strong; the remainder considered that the level

of the sanctions was appropriate. The majority of respondents to the same survey found that the changes to bias and predetermination had made no impact upon councillors' understanding of these matters.

3. Operation

- 3.1 Since implementing the new standards arrangements, one complaint has been received in relation to councillors at the City of Lincoln Council breaching the Member Code of Conduct. This complaint was considered by the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Independent Person; the matter was then referred for the consideration of a hearings panel. In this instance, the hearings panel determined that there had been a breach of the Member Code of Conduct and censured the councillor for the breach. These findings were also reported for the consideration of Council.
- 3.2 As members will note, having only received one complaint during the time since the implementation of the new standards regime gives a relatively limited frame of reference for a post-implementation review. It is equally difficult to draw significant conclusions from the time immediately preceding the change of the Member Code of Conduct as only one complaint was resolved in the year preceding the introduction of the new code.
- 3.3 Instead, the committee may wish to reflect on its own role in monitoring standards of behaviour both within and outside the Council and whether the Council is, as such, doing all it can to pre-empt or mitigate any breaches of the Member Code of Conduct.
- 3.4 In this regard, the Committee would appear to have taken a more proactive role than was previously the case in its previous form as the Standards Committee. Setting aside the Ethics & Engagement Committee's role in improving democratic engagement, the principal actions relating to the new standards regime have included:
- Setting in place a Social Media Protocol offering guidance to members on the use of online social media.
 - Recommending to Council a change to the Constitution in order to relax the limitations upon the recording or broadcast of public meetings.
 - Circulating guidance regarding members' potential liability for defamation and the role of qualified privilege.
 - Regularly considering code of conduct cases from elsewhere within the country and the readiness of the Council to address similar situations should they arise.
 - Putting in place a protocol establishing the relationship between the Council and Lincolnshire Police in the event of a potentially criminal offence being carried out with regard to the non-declaration of an interest.
 - Carrying out a broad overview of the systems in place to ensure appropriate behaviour of the Civic Party, following members' concerns about a code of conduct complaint which had been upheld regarding another council's mayor.
 - Considering the appropriateness of the Member-Officer Protocol, culminating in a simplified version of the protocol which was circulated to members and officers in order for each to better understand their respective

responsibilities.

- Granting dispensations as appropriate within the Committee's terms of reference and having regard to the Localism Act 2011.
- Establishing a protocol relating to the role of the Independent Person.
- Having regard to national reports produced regarding the operation of the new standards regime.

4. Organisational Impacts

4.1 Finance

There are no financial implications to this report.

4.2 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications to this report.

5. Recommendation

5.1 That members note the content of the report.

5.2 That members consider whether the standards arrangement in place are meeting their purpose to the extent allowed under the law, and whether any improvements could be made.

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SUBJECT: INCREASING THE DIVERSITY OF ELECTORAL CANDIDATES

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

LEAD OFFICER: CAROLYN WHEATER – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (LEGAL AND CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide members with options with regard to the Council taking a more proactive role in encouraging people from a diverse range of backgrounds to consider standing for election as councillors.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Ethics and Engagement Committee has responsibility, as part of its work programme and terms of reference, for developing innovative and effective proposals to improve democratic engagement. Part of this democratic engagement includes ensuring that Lincoln's voters are empowered to take a full part in the democratic process, covering both voting in and standing for election.
- 2.2 One measure of success for the Council's effectiveness in increasing democratic engagement is to examine whether the Council's composite members and the candidates from whom they are chosen represent as wide a range of Lincoln's population as possible, without particular groups being excluded from taking part through a lack of knowledge or opportunity. While stressing the ultimate power of the voter to decide upon the most suitable of the available candidates it is important that all those who might stand are given sufficient support from the Council to make the process of standing for election and becoming a councillor as clear and unintimidating as possible.
- 2.3 While the Council has always and will continue to perform its electoral functions to the full extent of the law, the mere provision of free and fair elections is only one part of a broader democratic picture. This report presents some key factual information surrounding the makeup of Lincoln's population, topics for discussion, and possible policy options for the Committee's consideration.

3. Reflecting Communities

- 3.1 The Council does not maintain a record of councillors' personal details for the purposes of equal opportunities monitoring. However, the Council's membership is sufficiently compact to allow members to gauge adequately the respective gender, age, and ethnic backgrounds of current councillors based on their own knowledge. Having considered this, members may wish to consider the extent to which councillors are an accurate reflection of the communities they represent by reviewing the statistics provided below for Lincoln's population as a whole.

3.2 Age

Age	Number	Proportion of all 18+ residents
18-29	23,369	30.9%
30s	11,887	15.7%
40s	12,016	15.9%
50s	10,161	13.4%
60s	8,665	11.4%
70s	5,471	7.2%
80s+	4,127	5.5%

3.3 Gender

Gender	Number	Proportion of all 18+ residents by gender
Male	36,652	48.4%
Female	39,044	51.6%

3.4 Ethnicity (including under-18s)

Ethnicity	Number	Proportion of <i>all</i> residents
White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	83,653	89.4%
White: Irish	719	0.8%
White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller	80	0.1%
White: Other White	4,927	5.3%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Black Caribbean	367	0.4%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Black African	189	0.2%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: White and Asian	372	0.4%
Mixed/multiple ethnic group: Other Mixed	302	0.3%
Asian/Asian British: Indian	522	0.6%
Asian/Asian British: Pakistani	139	0.1%
Asian/Asian British: Bangladeshi	139	0.1%
Asian/Asian British: Chinese	452	0.5%
Asian/Asian British: Other Asian	542	0.6%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: African	504	0.5%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Caribbean	165	0.2%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British: Other Black	109	0.1%
Other ethnic group: Arab	175	0.2%
Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group	185	0.2%

3.5 Disabilities

Type	Number	Proportion of all residents
People who have their day to day activities limited a lot	8,012	8.6%
People who have their day to day activities limited a little	9,254	9.9%
Total	17,266	18.5%

4. Options to Improve Accessibility

- 4.1 It would appear from the information provided above that the Council's current membership is weighted towards being disproportionately older and more male than the city's population as a whole. This is, of course, ultimately a matter for voters to determine and it should be clear that the Council has no role to play either in influencing the outcome of elections or in the candidate selections of political parties. It should also be recognised that within a sample size of 33 members it is inevitable that there will be variance from the population as a whole and that this variance is likely to be exacerbated by the first-past-the-post voting system. In addition, there is perhaps an institutional bias in terms of age towards retired persons who may have more time than those in younger age groups to dedicate towards both becoming and being a councillor.
- 4.2 However, as discussed above, there is a clear role for the Council to play in ensuring that as a wide a proportion of the city's residents and workers are aware of their rights to stand for election and the role of councillors. Equally, the Council should do all it can to identify and mitigate potential barriers in these areas. With a view to achieving these goals the following options are put forward for members' consideration.
- 4.3 Improving Awareness
The majority of candidates for election within Lincoln in recent years have represented national political parties. Through these parties candidates can benefit from a party's electoral experience, support, and guidance. Political parties also have their own methods for attracting and selecting new candidates for election. There is potential, however, for the Council to supplement these processes by ensuring that as many people as possible are aware of how and why they should stand to become councillors, including those who would prefer to stand as independent candidates or to establish their own local groups.
- 4.4 Currently the Council uses both its website and the *Your Lincoln* publication to promote the role of the councillor. This includes guides to the role of the councillor, the process of becoming a councillor, and a regular spotlight magazine article on an individual councillor. The *Lincolnshire Echo* also previously ran a regular series of columns by local councillors although this appears to have been discontinued. While there is perhaps scope for increased prominence within both *Your Lincoln* and the Council's website, members may also wish to consider whether there is value in other forms of publicity, such as poster campaigns and the general promotion of councillors' roles via other local media.

4.5 Information Provided to Prospective Candidates

Candidates for election currently receive information packs which focus primarily upon meeting the statutory obligations for candidates and their agents. Members will have experience of these packs from their time as candidates and so may have feedback which can be offered with regard to providing the most helpful and relevant introduction possible to the role of the councillor. This could include, for example, more information on the structure of the Council, the role of the councillor, and what is likely to be expected of candidates should they be successful in an election.

4.6 Outreach to Key Groups

The Council may also be able to take advantage of existing community and interest groups to spread knowledge and awareness of how to stand for election. While councillors already take a prominent role in the operation of a considerable number of local organisations, these tend often to be related to the provision of particular services in which the Council has a direct stake. By way of example of a wider interest group, there is the possibility of councillors delivering presentations on their role to the regular meetings held for voluntary sector organisations, which would provide a potentially valuable source of people who are already motivated to serve in their community and will often be drawn from groups which may be under-represented within the typical range of candidates.

4.7 Working with Employers

The median wage for a full-time worker in Lincoln is approximately 5 times higher than the basic allowance payable to councillors, which means that a significant number of people would require additional income streams to carry out the duties of a councillor while maintaining a basic standard of living. An inevitable outcome of this is that elected members are often reliant on the support of an existing employer in order to stand for election. This is a particular factor where employers are or would be unwilling to allow their employees time off or flexible working arrangements to fit around their Council duties. While noting the potential difficulty for an employee in confronting an unwilling employer, the Council should ensure it supports the rights of councillors to take reasonable lengths of time off work to carry out their duties as a councillor, as established in section 50 of the Employment Rights Act 1996.

4.8 While the Council does not have powers to compel the co-operation of business with employees who wish to become councillors and recognises the pressures that may be placed upon small business in particular, there is certainly scope for the Council to work with local employers to understand their concerns and to emphasise the part roles councillors play in their communities.

4.9 The Committee may be therefore be minded to request representations from local employers or to proactively provide information to Lincoln's key employers regarding this. Any attempt to create a dialogue in this regard is likely to be positive provided that the Council is able and willing to engage constructively with any points raised.

4.10 Support for Parents and Carers

The Council has provisions in place for a Childcare and Dependent Carer's Allowance, which allows for payments of up to £5 per hour upon provision of a

received receipt for care undertaken while a member carries out their duties as a councillor. Take-up for this allowance is low, with the majority of members having never claimed. The reason for this may be low awareness, a lack of willingness to submit claims, or that the allowance rate is set too low. With regard to awareness, future guidance to prospective candidates could highlight the possibility of claiming an allowance if required to allow members to carry out his or her Council duties.

- 4.11 There is also the possibility that members could recommend that Council change the rate of the allowance to match either the minimum or living wage in order to increase the possibility that members will be able to meet in the full any costs incurred while carrying out their duties. The budgetary impact of this is likely to be minimal in view of the low level of claims, while other options, such as providing in-house care, would be disproportionately expensive.
- 4.12 As is the case for those in employment, it is likely that the current timing of Council meetings is a benefit to some and a disadvantage to others. The majority of public meetings are held in the early evening between Monday and Thursday; members in receipt of a special responsibility allowance are also likely to have a greater number of meetings during the day with officers and external organisations. These timings are likely to benefit most those councillors who work during normal business hours, but will present particular challenges to those who work irregular hours or have caring duties for children or others. While these arrangements for meeting times are longstanding and may be regarded as appropriate in a compact urban area unaffected by long journey times to meetings, member may wish to consider whether the current arrangements are the most effective possible for the broadest possible benefit to officers, members, and the public.

5. Organisational Impacts

5.1 Finance

There are no direct financial implications to this report.

5.2 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications to this report.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 That members note the contents of the report.
- 6.2 That members highlight which, if any, of the options put forward within the report should be adopted or investigated further, in addition to any other developments which members feel would be advantageous.

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

1. Purpose of Report

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

2. Work Programme Summary

2.1 The work programme is attached as **Appendix A**, and was agreed at the meeting of 11 December 2013.

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. Changes Made to the Work Programme

3.1 At the meeting of 29 May 2013, the work programme for 2013/14 was agreed. Work on the three primary strands of the Committee's work has been staggered throughout the year. There is flexibility within the work programme to react to changing priorities as necessary.

4. 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.

5.2 That the Committee consider items scheduled for the next meeting and any necessary arrangements relating to them.

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Ethics and Engagement Committee Work Programme 2013/14**29 May 2013**

Topic	Matter for Consideration	Outcome
Revised Terms of Reference	To highlight the terms of reference agreed by Council on 16 April 2013.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To note the changes to the operation of the Committee.
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.
Paperless Meetings Trial	To approve details of the trial already agreed in principle at the previous meeting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consider and endorse an approach for the trial of paperless working with elected committee members.
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.

30 July 2013

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 suitable a suitable response if required.
Increasing Democratic Engagement with Young People	Following discussions with pupils and teachers from a local school at a recent meeting, plans for member panels interacting with students are being developed for members' consideration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consider the format for any future member panels taking place in local schools.
Webcasting Cost-Benefit Analysis	Following discussion at a previous meeting, to consider the findings of research into the operation of webcasting at neighbouring councils, and the relative costs and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To judge the relative costs and benefits of webcasting public committee meetings.

	benefits of adopting a similar system.	
Local Democracy Week	Local Democracy Week is a pan-European event intended to promote people's engagement with democracy. Following consideration at the previous meetings, members requested further details regarding possible involvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To investigate the costs and benefits of increasing the Council's engagement with Local Democracy Week
European Citizens' Electoral Turnouts	As part of a broader investigation into turnout rates in local elections, members requested details regarding the relative proportion of European Union citizens taking part in elections set against the rates for British citizens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To consider whether a disparity in voter turnout exists and any appropriate action which may be taken.
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.

1 October 2013

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 suitable a suitable response if required.
Civic Party Guidance	Following consideration of a relevant code of conduct breach in another local authority, members requested details of the current guidance in place for the Council's civic party.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To consider the fitness of guidance offered to members of the Council's civic party.
Encouraging Electoral Engagement	Turnout in Lincoln's local government elections, in common with many other areas of the country, is often below 30%, meaning that the majority of electors are choosing not to exercise their right to vote, while others entitled to vote may not even be registering to do so.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To examine voter registration and electoral turnout, and to discuss the manner in which this can be improved.
Local Democracy Week	To update members on the plans for Local Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To consider the arrangements made

Update	Week 2013.	and recommend any suitable changes
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.
Paperless Meetings Trial	Following the planned establishment of a paperless meetings trial as considered on 29 May 2013, members will be invited to feedback and discuss their experiences of paperless working.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To consider the outcome of the planned trial of paperless meetings.
The Promotion of Citizenship within Schools	Further to the Increasing Democratic Engagement with Young People item scheduled earlier in 2013/14, it will be necessary to monitor progress and outcomes from the project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To consider the outcomes of any progress made in trialling member panels with local schools.
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.

11 December 2013

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 suitable a suitable response if required.
Local Democracy Week Review	To update members on the events held during Local Democracy Week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To consider any positive and negative outcomes from Local Democracy Week with a view to future arrangements.
Succession Planning	Councillors have differing levels of responsibilities, with portfolio holders and committee chairs taking particular additional responsibilities. These posts often benefit from holders having particular skills and knowledge, and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To consider whether and how succession planning for key councillor posts should be pursued.

	there may be a benefit to developing other members to be able assume similar responsibilities if required.	
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.

3 February 2014

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 suitable a suitable response if required.
Standards Post-Implementation Review	The Localism Act 2011 provided for a considerable revision of arrangements for member standards, including changes to members' declarations of interests and the Members' Code of Conduct.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To consider the impact of changes to the standards regime introduced through the Localism Act 2011.
Increasing the Diversity of Electoral Candidates	Across the United Kingdom, elected members in local government are often disproportionately drawn from certain sections of the population, with significant disparities existing in areas such as race, gender, and age.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To determine whether any barriers to a broader range of electoral candidates exist that the Council could reasonably address, noting that the Council has no role in influencing the selection process of political parties.
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.

17 March 2014

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 suitable a suitable response if required.

Promoting Constructive Debate Within Meetings	The manner in which debate is conducted at meetings has a significant bearing on the quality of outcomes and the working relationships between members and officers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To review the Council's standing orders and to consider the manner in which a high standard of debate can be secured.
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.
Dual Membership of Local Authorities	Within Lincolnshire, councillors can be elected to represent both a lower and an upper-tier council, which potentially raised conflicts of interests in considering certain items.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To consider the suggested guidance and recommend its circulation to councillors.
Work Programme 2014/15	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 consider the work programme for the next municipal year.

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