

<b>Present:</b>	Councillor Adrianna McNulty ( <i>in the Chair</i> )
<b>Councillors:</b>	Geoff Ellis, Gary Hewson, Laura McWilliams, Christopher Reid, Naomi Twedde and Loraine Woolley
<b>Independent Person(s):</b>	Chris Elkington
<b>Apologies for Absence:</b>	Councillor Ric Metcalfe, Councillor Edmund Strengiel, Councillor Gill Clayton-Hewson and Councillor Hilton Spratt

**22. Confirmation of Minutes - 5 March 2018**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2018 be confirmed.

**23. Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

**24. Polling Station Review Timetable (Verbal Report)**

The Democratic Team Leader and Elections Manager:

- (a) Provided a verbal update on a review of polling districts and polling stations due to commence shortly, which was a statutory review that had to take place every five years.
- (b) Reported that he would be undertaking a preliminary review of all polling stations currently used by way of a site visit to assess a range of things such as accessibility, the size of the room or hall and health and safety.
- (c) Reported that his initial findings would be reported to the elections project team, chaired by the Chief Executive, prior to launching a public consultation for a period of one month.
- (d) Reported that it was proposed for the public consultation to take place after the new electoral register was published on 1 December 2018 and that a final report would be submitted to a meeting of Full Council in February 2019 in order that any changes to polling districts or polling stations could be implemented in time for the local elections in 2019.
- (e) Invited members' questions and comments.

Discussion ensued on the number of people included on the electoral register, compared to the previous year. It was noted that until the canvass had been completed later this year and publication of the revised register on 1 December 2018 it would not be possible to confirm an accurate electorate for the City of Lincoln. The Democratic Team Leader and Elections Manager highlighted the number of occasions throughout the year where direct contact was made with households in the city regarding their electoral registration and the significant local and national publicity that took place throughout the year to encourage people to register.

The public consultation element of the review meant that anyone could submit comments regarding the proposals for polling districts and polling stations. It was therefore agreed that any member wishing to contribute to the review should submit a response as part of the consultation process, with a report ultimately being submitted to Full Council for consideration and approval.

The update was noted.

## **25. Code of Conduct: Cases Review**

The Democratic Team Leader and Elections Manager:

- (a) Presented a report which provided information on recent cases relating to other local authorities' Codes of Conduct.
- (b) Highlighted three particular cases from other local authorities where Councillors were considered to have breached the Code of Conduct.
- (c) Invited members' questions and comments.

Two of the examples provided in the report related to social media, highlighting the importance of members understanding their responsibilities in relation to the Code of Conduct when using social media and, in particular, understanding the difference between acting in their role as an elected member and acting as an individual.

The report was noted.

## **26. Social Media Guidance and Policy**

The Legal and Democratic Services Manager:

- (a) Presented a report which provided members with an opportunity to consider the Council's current social media guidance and the introduction of a Social Media Policy.
- (b) Highlighted that social media had developed into a crucial method of communication and was used frequently by elected members in undertaking their role and engaging with residents.
- (c) Reported that the Council had issued social media guidance which provided advice to members on the use of social media in their role as councillors. A copy of the document was appended to the report.
- (d) Invited members' questions and comments.

Members agreed that social media was becoming much more frequently used as a way of engaging with residents and a fit for purpose policy to support its proper use would assist members in order that expected standards were clearly set out. In addition, a policy or guidance document for officers would be equally as important in order that they understood the standards expected of them.

Discussion ensued on use of social media and how the Code of Conduct would apply, with some members claiming that this was a grey area. A recent member development training session had included advice on this issue and it was noted that the Code of Conduct would only apply to an elected member in their use of social

media if they were acting in their capacity as a councillor or their comments or views were perceived as representing those of the authority. The Code of Conduct would not apply, for example, to any comments posted on a private social media account which included no reference to that person being an elected member no matter how contentious, derogatory or offensive they were.

Members discussed management of the Council's social media accounts, with comments made that it was not always clear that responses or actions had occurred in response to posts. It was agreed that this would be reported to the Council's communications team.

RESOLVED that:

- (1) The report be noted.
- (2) The Ethics and Engagement Committee recommends the introduction of a social media policy for elected members and that the policy and guidance document be circulated to all members.
- (3) The Ethics and Engagement Committee recommends the introduction of social media guidance for officers.

## **27. Member Succession and Proposed Training**

The Legal and Democratic Services Manager:

- (a) Presented a report which provided the committee with an opportunity to consider member succession planning, as well as the proposed training programme.
- (b) Highlighted that the Ethics and Engagement Committee debated possibilities for reviewing the training programme in December 2013 where budding, long term training planning and personal development plans were suggested as improvements. In practice, personal development plans for members did not work successfully but aspects of buddying and long-term training had been embedded.
- (c) Reported that, alongside buddying and the general member training programme, it was envisaged that there should be a programme of training with different levels as follows:
  - level one – a training programme for new members including an induction and generic training programmed through the year from in-house provisions and training for specific committees as required;
  - level two – training for Chairs, Vice-Chairs and those members on an intermediary level;
  - level three – training focused upon ensuring that the Executive was able to fulfil its role sufficiently and effectively in order that Executive members could make informed decisions. This would also focus on member succession and provide training and mentoring for any members from level two who were aspiring to become level three members.

- (d) Highlighted that consideration should be given to members reporting back from any training events that they attended in order to share their learning.
- (e) Invited members' questions and comments.

Those newly elected members at the 2018 elections who had undergone the induction programme this year would have welcomed more information on the role of specific committees at an earlier opportunity, such as in a welcome pack on the night of the count. They also welcomed the format of the induction programme consisting of an intensive two day programme rather than a prolonged induction programme over a lengthier period of time.

Discussion ensued on shadowing within political groups which was identified as a good method of succession planning from a political perspective.

Members liked the idea of tiered training alongside mandatory training sessions which they felt showed progression.

It was agreed that the report should be shared with all members of the Council.