

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK REVIEW</b>
<b>DIRECTORATE:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>CAROLYN WHEATER – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (LEGAL AND CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES)</b>

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To update members on Local Democracy Week and invite comment regarding arrangements for future years.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 Local Democracy Week is a pan-European event intended to promote young people's engagement with democracy. Local Democracy Week 2014 took place from 13-17 October 2014.
- 2.2 Reports have been received on regular basis by the Committee regarding plans for Local Democracy Week 2014. As summarised and agreed within those reports, the Council's activities during Local Democracy Week had been developed with a view to seeking maximum potential participation rather than developing resource-intensive schemes which can reach only a limited number of young people.

## **3. State of the City Debate**

- 3.1 Preparations had been undertaken for a State of the City debate scheduled to have taken place during Local Democracy Week, which would have given the opportunity for interaction with local people and students. In arranging the debate it was noted that a key role would be carried out by the Chief Executive & Town Clerk working alongside the Leader in arranging the debate.
- 3.2 However, following the Chief Executive & Town Clerk's recent illness it was decided that, in view of the pressures already placed on the remaining members of the corporate management team, it would not be appropriate to proceed with the State of the City debate. As such, the debate has been postponed indefinitely.
- 3.3 However, the Leader will be able to call another debate at a time of his own choosing. Plans for a shadow debate involving young people and feeding into the main state of the city debate can also still be revived at a suitable time.

## **4. Democracy Lesson Plans**

- 4.1 Further to previous reports, three lesson plans were also created for distribution to local secondary schools. The plans were based around local government, democracy, and debating skills. In common with the local government lesson plan previously circulated for members' attention, the plans provided background

information, lesson activities and timings.

- 4.2 The lesson plans were circulated to the head teachers of secondary schools in Lincoln with an accompanying letter from the Committee's Chair outlining the Council's aims and intentions. The Council's willingness to receive any negative or positive feedback and to provide any additional assistance required by schools was also stressed. The availability of the lesson plans was also publicised in the local media in order to attempt to generate interest from schools. At the time of writing this report no responses or feedback has been received from any of the schools we approached.
- 4.3 Equally, over the past year repeated attempts have also been made to engage with various secondary schools within Lincoln by telephone, email, and letter. However, to date this has met with limited success. While schools often express an interest in engaging with the Council's attempts to improve democratic engagement it has proven difficult to convert this into real action in the form of opportunities for councillors to interact with students in a school environment.
- 4.4 In view of these difficulties, members may wish to consider whether the Council can adopt any alternative methods for engaging with local schools which are more likely to engender a positive reaction.

## **5. Organisational Impacts**

### **5.1 Finance**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

### **5.2 Legal Implications**

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

## **6. Recommendation**

- 6.1 That the report be noted.
- 6.2 That members offer comments regarding arrangements for the Council's participation in any future Local Democracy Weeks.