

## Ethics & Engagement Committee Scoping

This document is an initial set of broad aims and means for working on the three main strands of the Committee's current work. It will be subject to ongoing revision in reaction to the direction of the Committee.

### **Increasing democratic engagement with young people**

#### Aims

- To determine the extent to which young people are disengaged from local and national democracy relative to other age groups, and the reasons for this.
- As a complement to the two other main strands (as outlined below), to establish whether the Council is able to take any cost-effective and resource-efficient action to:
  - Increase young people's knowledge of local democracy and their willingness both to register for and vote in elections.
  - Promote the roles and responsibilities of the councillor to young people with a particular view to encouraging young people to consider standing for election in future years.

#### Method

- Establishing relative turnout figures and candidates by age group.
- Trialling of regular councillor-student discussion panels in local secondary schools.
- Considering the quality of information provided to young people studying at university either in Lincoln or elsewhere, regarding registering to vote and the means by which this is provided.
- Developing an effective programme for participation in the international Local Democracy Week.

### **Encouraging electoral engagement**

#### Aims

- To assess turnout rates as a whole and for individual groups to establish any relevant disparities between them.
- To understand the reasons behind local people choosing not to register to vote.
- To understand the reasons behind local people choosing not to cast their votes.
- To examine whether the Council can seek to undertake any cost-effective and resource-efficient actions to improve electoral turnout.
- To consider the potential impact of individual registration and any possible mitigation to drops in electoral registration rates.

#### Method

- Undertaking a comparison of electoral turnout in selected districts to establish whether other European Union voters are more or less likely to take part in local elections than British citizens.

- Seeking input from psephologists on broader national trends in voting patterns.
- Early forecasting of the effect of individual registration and a broad examination of the associated principles and practices.
- Carrying out an examination of best practice elsewhere and opportunities for joint working with other local authorities.
- Tackling electoral registration among homeless people.
- Examining the potential use of neighbourhood managers in improving electoral engagement.
- Bidding for new funding from the Cabinet Office for targeted canvassing and increasing electoral registration among key groups.

## **Increasing the diversity of electoral candidates**

### Aims

- To establish the demographic differences between the typical councillor and the typical citizen of Lincoln, and the possible impacts of any differences.
- To understand the challenges faced by individual groups in standing for election and consider possible mitigating actions.
- To promote the roles and responsibilities of the councillor to people who may be interested in standing but have not done so in the past.
- To examine the process of becoming a councillor and to assess whether any non-legislative barriers are dissuading possible candidates.

### Method

- Assessing the extent to which the Council caters for different groups of people becoming councillors, through, for example, the provision of childcare or respite care.
- Seeking statements from representative employers as to the support they offer to councillors and possible candidates.
- Considering the options for publicising material relating to becoming a councillor.
- Carrying out an examination of best practice elsewhere and opportunities for joint working with other local authorities.
- Identifying community forums which could be targeted as a potential pool for future candidates who might not otherwise have considered standing for election.
- Assessing whether the current form of councillor allowances is fit-for-purpose in affording elected representatives with adequate recompense for the considerable time, expenses, and sacrifices of becoming a councillor.
- Using national and local statistics to compare a range of data relating to councillors, candidates, and citizens, including their age, gender, and ethnicity.