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| SUBJECT: | CIVIC PARTY GUIDANCE |
| REPORT BY: | DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES |
| LEAD OFFICER: | CAROLYN WHEATER – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (LEGAL AND CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES) |

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform members of the safeguards and processes in place to ensure a high standard of behaviour by the Civic Party in dealing with the public and representing the Council.

2. Background

- 2.1 Members regularly receive updates regarding code of conduct cases which have emerged in other English local authorities. At its meeting on 29 May 2013, members considered a case relating to inappropriate behaviour by a ceremonial Mayor in another authority.
- 2.2 In response to this case, members considered the manner in which any similar case would either be averted or dealt with by the City of Lincoln Council. This report is intended to summarise the current processes for members' information and consideration.

3. Guidance Summary

- 3.1 Members will recall that their interest in this area was prompted by inappropriate remarks made by a Mayor to a schoolchild in his formal role at an official event. The Mayor subsequently voluntarily resigned his position.
- 3.2 With specific regard to the manner in which the Council ensures the behaviour of its Civic Party, the primary formal means is the Member Code of Conduct. The Code already applies to councillors taking a civic post, and is also signed by the Sheriff as part of the Declaration on Acceptance of Office. Among other things, the Code makes clear the responsibility of signatories to behave in a respectful and appropriate manner to the public. There is also a formal role description in place to offer guidance on the positions within the Civic Party.
- 3.3 In addition to this formal provision, the principal means by which the behaviour of the Civic Party is monitored and guided remains the continual training and feedback provided by the Civic Manager and other officers within the Civic Team. In advance of undertaking any role, detailed guidance is provided to all members of the Civic Party on the nature of their position and the importance of appropriate behaviour. Indeed, members are reminded that they should seek to attain the highest possible level of behaviour in their duties, to an even greater extent than in the role of a councillor. To this end, each member of the Civic Party is issued with

a copy of the Civic Handbook, which encompasses a large number of protocol guidance notes, in addition to reminders regarding equal opportunities and the officer code of practice.

- 3.4 Members will note that, given the inevitable annual turnover of individuals within the Civic Party, there is a constant need for training and refreshers to be provided. Equally, it is not possible to guarantee the behaviour of any individual at all times given the large number of engagements and the regularly changing postholders. As such, given the highly public and sensitive nature of the role, the Council retains measures by which any behaviour which threatens to tarnish the reputation of Lincoln, the Council, or the Civic Party can be actively managed.
- 3.5 In particular, the Civic Manager and the Chief Executive and Town Clerk remain in close contact with members of the Civic Party and would proactively engage with any members whose behaviour is alleged to have fallen below or is likely to fall below the high standards expected of Lincoln's civic ambassadors. If it proved necessary, members of the Civic Party who were unable to ensure suitably high standards of behaviour would be reminded of their duties by the Chief Executive and Town Clerk. In the event that this proved ineffective, there would be engagement with the Leader and a relevant political group leader. Ultimate sanctions range from non inclusion in events to removal from office. Proactive diary management would ensure that any further opportunities for inappropriate behaviour were expressly limited.
- 3.6 In addition to the guidance and other measures provided through officers of the Council, members will also be aware of other mechanisms by which appropriate behaviour can be ensured. In particular, the role of political leaders within the Council may be relevant to members of the Civic Party who are also members of the appropriate political parties, while the Monitoring Officer and the Ethics and Engagement Committee continue to hold their formal role in monitoring and sanctioning members' behaviour as required.

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 contents of the report and put forward any relevant comments for consideration in developing guidance to the Civic Party.