

SUBJECT: LINCOLN SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY CHARTER

DIRECTORATE: CHIEF EXECUTIVES

REPORT AUTHOR: HEATHER GROVER – PRINCIPAL POLICY OFFICER

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To present Executive with the proposed Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter.
- 1.2 To gain Executive approval for the proposed Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 City of Lincoln Council is looking at a new approach towards recognising and encouraging good employers in the city, through Corporate Social Responsibility.
- 2.2 Following earlier consultation with the Reducing Inequalities Theme Group, the Leader and the Living Wage Forum, it was agreed this new approach should be to develop a social responsibility charter for the city.
- 2.3 The aim of the charter is to encourage organisations in Lincoln to undertake activities which benefit both their employees and also the local community in which they are located.
- 2.4 This report presents the proposed new Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter, examples of socially responsible activities, the signup process and form, what organisations will receive, timescales for implementation, and the setup, launch and ongoing costs for the charter.

3. Background

- 3.1 City of Lincoln Council is looking at a new approach to encouraging and recognising organisations in the city who go above and beyond to support their employees and the local community.
- 3.2 Following consultation with businesses in the city, City of Lincoln Council, with the support of the Lincoln Living Wage Forum, has developed a Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter.
- 3.3 The charter aims to promote Corporate Social Responsibility through recognising those organisations in the city who do more than the statutory minimum to support their employees and the local community.
- 3.4 The Lincoln Living Wage Campaign will continue to be promoted alongside this new charter.

4. Main Body of Report

4.1 Why undertake socially responsible activities?

All organisations, no matter how large or small, or their sector or trade, can undertake some activities which promote them as a good employer. These activities do not need to be costly or time consuming, but together can bring huge benefits to the organisation, the employee and also the local community.

Some of the benefits to an organisation can include:

- Increased staff retention
- Reduced recruitment costs
- More productive workforce
- More attractive to customers
- Increased customer loyalty
- Better brand recognition
- Improved business reputation
- Profits may increase
- Recognition as an ethical employer

Collectively organisations undertaking socially responsible activities can also help to grow the local economy.

4.2 Examples of socially responsible activities

Below lists some examples of socially responsible activities which can benefit employees:

- Living Wage employer (Fair Pay)
- Time off for medical appointments
- Career breaks
- Holiday purchase scheme
- Staff recognition scheme
- Training and development beyond statutory minimum
- Walk/cycle to work incentives
- Stop smoking support

In addition there are a wide number of activities which can be undertaken to benefit the local community. Some of these include:

- Green space sponsorship
- Regular food bank donations
- Apprenticeships
- Training for community groups
- Fundraising
- Use of local services
- Employee volunteering
- Blood & Organ donation
- Dementia friendly accreditation
- Donation of surplus resources
- Support the Lincoln Low Carbon Charter
- Proactive support for community events

It is important to note that the lists above show just a small number of socially responsible activities an organisation can undertake to benefit the employee and the local community. It is likely organisations may already undertake/be planning additional activities in addition to/alongside those listed above.

4.3 The Charter

The charter which organisations will be required to commit to has been provided at Appendix A. This charter will be maintained as a live document and will be updated regularly to reflect new organisations supporting the charter. The charter will be displayed on a new section on the City of Lincoln Council's website. This area of the website will also include a guidance document (Appendix B), which provides more details on the charter, the benefits of signing up, and examples of socially responsible activities which an organisation can undertake to support the employee and the local community, together with an online registration form (Appendix C). It is also proposed to have a copy of the charter in City Hall reception.

Please note, focus to date has been on ensuring the content of the charter is correct. Further work on the branding/design of the charter and supporting documents will be undertaken following the approval process.

4.4 Signing up to the charter

A proposed sign up form has been provided at Appendix C. This draft form has been designed to ensure it collects all the key information required from each organisation. However, further refinement is likely to be required to ensure it is simple and straight forward to complete. This will be undertaken as part of the development of the online version of the form.

Although information on the socially responsible activities each organisation undertakes will not be listed on the website, this information has been requested in the sign up form. This will help the council to develop a central list of socially responsible activities being undertaken in the city, and will provide information which can be used to help both promote the individual organisation and the wider charter. This central list could also be used to develop a wider social responsibility accreditation scheme in the future should this decision be taken.

There will be no costs to an organisation signing up to the charter.

We are proposing small organisations (1-10 employees) should proactively undertake a minimum of three activities (at least one benefitting the employee & one benefitting the local community). Medium sized organisations (11-49) should proactively undertake a minimum of five activities (at least two benefitting the employee & two benefitting the local community). Large organisations (50+ employees) should proactively undertake a minimum of ten activities (at least five benefitting the employee & five benefitting the local community).

Organisations should also demonstrate how they will be developing their social responsibility in the future.

4.5 What will organisations signing up receive?

Organisations signing up to the charter will receive their own personal charter signed by the Mayor of Lincoln. Please see Appendix D for a draft example of the personalised charter. At this stage we are proposing a one year charter, which will be issued for the financial year. Providing a limited timeframe allows us to remove any business from the live website that the Living Wage Forum has deemed as not fulfilling requirements, and whilst they may not take their charter down immediately – it will soon be out of date. Organisations will also receive a logo for use on letterheads, websites and e-mails etc.

In addition, organisations will be promoted via a range of marketing routes – Your Lincoln, online register, press releases, radio interviews, social media, links from other websites and via an interactive map. Consultation has shown that this is of more value to businesses than promotional materials such as free pens etc. Organisations signing up to the charter will also receive invitations to City of Lincoln Council led consultations and Mayoral charity events, again requested through our consultation with businesses.

4.6 Timescales

Below outlines the key timescales for the approval and launch of the charter.

Action	Completion date
Continue to promote the Living Wage	Ongoing throughout 2018
Consult with Lincoln Living Wage Forum on the draft charter	13 th November 2017 to 30 th November 2017
Present draft charter to Brayford Business Forum (other forum meetings were arranged but were subsequently cancelled by the organisers)	14 th November 2017
Consult with a selection of Lincoln businesses	1 st December to 15 th December 2017
Present charter to Reducing Inequality Theme Group	10 th January 2018
Present charter to Policy Scrutiny Committee	16 th January 2018
Gain approval from Corporate Leadership Team	17 th January 2018
Seek approval of charter from Executive	26 th February 2018
Present final charter to Service Managers Forum	22 nd February 2018
Present final charter to Lincoln Living Wage Forum	28 th February 2018
Charter soft launch (Lincoln Growth Conference)	March 2018
Develop branding/design for the charter and supporting documents	March/April 2018
Charter formal launch	May 2018

4.7 Costs

The table below shows the estimated costs to setup/launch the charter, together with the estimated ongoing costs. The charter is expected to be funded from the Corporate Policy Unit's existing social policy budget.

Activity	Cost (Max)
Stationary (S)	£50
Branding/Design (S)	£500
Printing of information posters/flyers (L)	£150
Promotional video production	£1000
Promotion - Roller Banners, Social media (L)	£300
Stationery (O)	£50 per year
Promotion – Social media (O)	£200 per year
Printing of information posters/flyers (O)	£200 per year

Setup - S

Launch – L

Ongoing - O

4.8 City of Lincoln Council and the charter

Following development of the guidance, City of Lincoln Council has undertaken a self-assessment in order to test the process and identify what socially responsible activities it undertakes. City of Lincoln Council has identified there are 24 socially responsible activities it undertakes, of which 14 support the employee and a further 10 support the local community. It should be noted those activities which benefit the community are additional to those which we do as part of the day to day work of the council.

4.9 Review of the charter

In order to ensure ongoing success we will carefully monitor the level and types of organisations signing up to the charter. It is then proposed to review the charter and supporting criteria after the first year of operation.

5. Strategic Priorities

- 5.1 The Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter aims to encourage local organisations to undertake activities which benefit their employees and the local community. In return this will help the organisation to gain recognition as a good employer in the city. This charter feeds directly into helping to support the strategic priority, 'Let's reduce inequality', due to the charter encouraging local organisations to provide better working conditions for residents and provide support within the local community. It also supports other strategic priorities – 'Let's drive economic growth', 'Let's enhance our remarkable place' and to a lesser extent 'Let's deliver quality housing'.

6. Organisational Impacts

- 6.1 Finance – The setup, launch and ongoing costs for the charter are expected to be minimal. These costs have been outlined in section 4.7 above. It is proposed these costs will be covered by the existing Corporate Policy Unit's social policy budget.

- 6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules – There are no legal implications arising in this report.
- 6.3 Land, property and accommodation – N/A
- 6.4 Human Resources – The implementation of a Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter will require support from the Human Resources team to assist in identifying the socially responsible activities the City of Lincoln Council undertakes to support employees and the local community. This support will help to ensure the council is the first Lincoln organisation to formally sign the charter.
- 6.5 Equality, Diversity & Human Rights – The Equality Impact Assessment for this project has been provided at Appendix E.

7. Risk Implications

- 7.1 (i) Options Explored – An alternative to the approach above is for City of Lincoln Council to develop a full social responsibility accreditation scheme, which accredits local organisations based on the number and mix of socially responsible activities the organisation undertakes to benefit the employee and the local community. However, this approach would require a significant amount of resource to setup the scheme and to support this going forward. The costs associated with this approach would also be significantly greater than the charter approach outlined above.
- 7.2 (ii) Key risks associated with the preferred approach

There is a risk that it could prove difficult to get local organisations to sign up to the charter. This would result in the need to undertake additional promotion to help encourage buy in. Some additional costs associated with additional promotion have been factored into the cost table in section 4.7. However, there is a significant number of activities an organisation may already be undertaking or could undertake, which will hopefully encourage sign up. This will help to reduce this risk, especially if organisations can also clearly see signing up to the charter will help to promote their organisation.

The reputational risk to the council should take up be very low is negligible. Should sign up be significantly higher than anticipated there is unlikely to be any significant additional workload.

8. Recommendation

- 8.1 Executive considers and approves the proposed Lincoln Social Responsibility Charter.

Is this a key decision?

No

Do the exempt information categories apply?

No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?

No

How many appendices does the report contain?

Six

List of Background Papers:

None

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