



CAI.11 15/16

**Challenge and
Improvement Committee**

1st September 2015

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Subject: Update from the Democracy Working Group

Report by:

Director of Resources

Contact Officer:

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Purpose / Summary:

To provide Members with an update on the work of the Democracy Working Group.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Members consider and note the work to date of the Democracy Working Group and request a further update in six months' time.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: None

Financial : fin ref 53 -16None arising from the report, however costings to inform the work of the group are being submitted to their next meeting on 23rd September

Staffing :None

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights : None

Risk Assessment :None

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :None

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:
None

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

1. Background

- 1.1 To date the Local Democracy Task and Finish Group have met on three occasions with a change of membership following Elections in May.
- 1.2 The first meeting on 26 November 2014, focused on the desired outcomes of the Group followed by a workshop session meeting on 28 January 2015, when the current Council Chamber layout was discussed. Notes of the meetings held on 26 November 2014 and 28 January 2015 are attached at Appendix A and B for information.
- 1.3 Following elections, a new membership was appointed (Cllrs Welburn, McNeill and Patterson) and the notes of their meeting on 28 July are attached as Appendix C.

2. Progress to Date

- 2.1 The actions set out below were agreed at the meeting held on 28 January 2015, followed by discussion at Leaders Panel. The meeting concluded with the following actions:
 - Meeting to be arranged with webcasting providers to discuss a price for moving to live webcasts for Council and Committee meetings.
 - Projection of live webcasts onto screens during meetings to be investigated. To include a range of shots and panic mode to be included.
 - Cllr Patterson and Alan Robinson to attend a Leaders Panel meeting to discuss seating arrangements.
- 2.2 A meeting was therefore held with the webcast provider and a price negotiated to move Council and Planning Committee meetings back to live webcasts.

The necessary works in order to project webcasts onto screens during meetings was also discussed along with annual maintenance and up-grade issues.

A favourable quotation was received from Public-I for the annual maintenance and additional requirements. Following some cabling works to the Council Chamber and software up-grades, webcasts will be projected onto the screens in the Chamber.

- 2.3 Councillor Patterson (Chair of the Democracy Task and Finish Group) and Alan Robinson attended a Leaders Panel meeting to discuss the seating arrangements. Following debate, the decision was to stay with the current seating plan.

- 2.4 The meeting held on 28 July 2015, discussed previous minutes and suggestions in order to re-focus and move forward with chosen priorities, which are listed below:-
- Revisiting options for a reconfiguration of the Council Chamber to support in-meeting communication and debate;
 - Development of a four-year plan for promotion of democracy and youth engagement through the civic office; and
 - Use of communication and social media to publicise and engage with our communities around democracy.
- 2.5 Further, the Working Group welcome the views of all Members on matters relating to democracy and youth engagement and views can be fed in prior to their next meeting on 23rd September.

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Local Democracy Task & Finish Group held in Trent meeting room, Guildhall, on 26 November 2014.

Present: Cllr Paul Howitt-Cowan (PH-C)
Cllr Roger Patterson (RP)
Cllr Geoff Wiseman (GW)

Officers: Alan Robinson (AR)
Anne Rossington (ARo)
Jo Riddell (JR)
Sue Norman

| | | ACTION |
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| 1 | <p>Apologies</p> <p>There were no apologies.</p> | |
| 2 | <p>Purpose of the Meeting – Agree the scope for a number of projects to promote local democracy in West Lindsey</p> <p>The meeting discussed the outcomes the Group were trying to achieve / change.</p> <p>These were put forward as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing confidence in local democracy – getting more people involved and taking responsibility for their community • Increasing the public's awareness of the democratic process • Increasing awareness of the role of Councillors • Helping the public to understand the difference they could make as a Councillor • Increasing the number of people coming through to be Parish / District Councillors • Increase the voting turnout • Involve young people (Youth Councils/schools/etc) in the democratic process <p>RP suggested that a press release, in conjunction with Comms Team and PH-C/RP /GW, could be put out for the purposes of letting people know what WLDC is doing and trying to achieve in the District, with ideas welcomed.</p> <p>The Lincs Echo ran a regular column "First Person" which could be a good vehicle for raising the profile of the role of a District Councillor. Community Grants could be promoted in this way too. Comms Team to be approached to work with the Local Democracy Group on an article.</p> | <p>ARo Comms</p> <p>ARo Comms</p> |

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| | <p>Encouraging young people to take part in local democracy was discussed – with perhaps the Chairman or Vice Chairman going out to schools and academies in the District, or Members visiting schools in their Wards. It was suggested that Youth Councils could be invited to use our Chamber for their meeting. JR to draw up a list of Youth Councils currently active in the District initially.</p> | JR |
| 3 | <p>Re-configuration of the Council Chamber</p> <p>A discussion took place on the layout of the Chamber and the possibility of changing this to a semi-circle amphi-theatre style, whilst not losing flexibility of use for other meetings that take place. New microphones were necessary and these could be positioned/sited to enable better quality audio webcast recording. Benefits could be clear communication, accountability and transparency.</p> <p>AR suggested that Richard Quirk, who currently sat on the Remuneration Panel, had worked in Parliament on the logistics of making sure that the rooms were equipped for the right meetings etc. might be of value to invite to join this Group. It was agreed that he be invited.</p> <p>Officers to obtain costs for: Changing the Chamber layout New microphone system/updating the technology Live broadcasting of webcasts</p> | AR ARo |
| 4 | <p>Taking the Planning Committee out into the District</p> <p>The meeting discussed the logistics of taking the Committee out into the District and agreed that, with the equipment that was necessary plus webcast recording, it was best to have the meetings take place in the Chamber – as this would render meetings accessible to all. Technology was becoming more slick (webinar / virtual meetings). However, Officers would look into the costs of live webcasting.</p> <p>JR would look into best practice around the county as to what other authorities were doing.</p> | ARo JR |
| 5 | <p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>Date in late January, to be confirmed</p> <p>The meeting closed at 6.45pm</p> | |

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Local Democracy Task & Finish Group held in Trent meeting room, Guildhall, on 28 January 2015.

Present: Cllr Paul Howitt-Cowan (PH-C)
Cllr Roger Patterson (RP)
Mr Richard Quirk

Officers: Alan Robinson (AR)
Anne Rossington (ARo)
Julie Heath (JH)

| | | ACTION |
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| 1 | <p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies received from Cllr Geoff Wiseman and Ruth Farningham.</p> | |
| 2 | <p>Minutes of Previous Meeting 26 November 2014</p> <p>Communications: Suggestions from JH to promote the work of the group.</p> <p>Purdah was from 10 March to 7 May, prior to this comments from politically balanced representatives regarding the aims and objectives of the group.</p> <p>Following the elections, the Comms Team would compile a programme of actions from the following suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A feature in the County News covering an area of the district and the role of the District Councillors for that particular area. Videos and website can also be used. • Visits to schools by local Ward Councillor. • Invite UK Youth Parliament representative to WLDC to speak to Democracy Task and Finish Group. • Youth parliament – question time with Councillors • Nominate a Democracy Champion following elections <p>Councillor Patterson commented on unsuccessful enquiries regarding funding for prizes for Road Safety for Schools. RQ suggested approaching the AA or RAC for sponsorship.</p> <p>The suggestion that Planning meetings be taken out into the district was not pursued as it was considered to be too expensive in terms of officer time and effort. Live webcasts would reach a</p> | |

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| | wider audience. A quote of £750 for 40 hours of live webcast of Planning Committee had been received. | |
| 3 | <p>Workshop Regarding Council Chamber Layout</p> <p>AR presented a list of constraints, requirements and possible costs to be taken into consideration when developing a new layout for the Council Chamber, listed below:</p> <p>Council Chamber Layout – Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Flexibility of rooms must be retained Total Room Bookings during year (excluding full Council and Committee Meetings) 331 Requests for different furniture layouts 113 ○ Furniture – must be easy to move and store – each unit approx. £400 each ○ Floor boxes required for each desk position – boxes cost approx. £200 each to move ○ Camera positions – cost of moving unknown at present ○ Microphones – to be replaced – monies in budget ○ Screens for presentations <p>Desks and Seating Chairman, Chief Executive, Vice Chairman 36 Members 6 Officers Lectern Computer and AV equipment Seating of Members of the Public Public signing in point</p> <p>Members were presented with plans and invited to create a preferred layout. RQ discussed layouts of various Council Chambers and Parliament and the restrictions of the flexible room situation at West Lindsey District Council.</p> <p>A suggestion which would address some of the dislikes of the current Council Chamber set up, would be to re-instate live webcasts and display on screens in the Chamber for the duration of the meeting. All would then be able to see Members when they were speaking. A variety of camera shots could be introduced and a “panic shot” set up to ensure that any inappropriate behaviour, protests etc would not receive any air time.</p> <p>Current seating arrangements were discussed and it was agreed that Cllr Patterson and Alan Robinson would attend a Leaders’ Panel meeting to make suggestions for alternative seating positions to be implemented following elections.</p> | |

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| | <p>The meeting concluded with the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meeting to be arranged with webcasting providers to discuss a price for moving to live webcasts for Council and Committee meetings. ▪ Projection of live webcasts onto screens during meetings to be investigated. To include a range of shots and panic mode to be included. ▪ Cllr Patterson and Alan Robinson to attend a Leaders Panel meeting to discuss seating arrangements. ▪ Cllr Patterson to approach the AA / RAC for sponsorship. | <p>ARo</p> <p>ARo</p> <p>RP / AR</p> <p>RP</p> |
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WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Democracy Working Group held on Tuesday 28th July 2015 at 4pm in Fossey Meeting Room

Present: Cllr Giles McNeill
Cllr Roger Patterson
Cllr Anne Welburn
Anne Rossington (Member and Support Services Team Manager)
Nicola Calver (Governance and Civic Officer)

Apologies: Alan Robinson (SL for Democratic and Business Support)

| | | ACTION |
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| 1. | <p>Notes of Previous Meetings and Review of Last Year</p> <p>Anne Rossington presented the Minutes from meetings of the previous civic year's Democracy Task and Finish Group for discussion. The original remit was reaffirmed as noted in the minutes of 26th November.</p> <p>An exercise had been undertaken to look at layouts for the Council Chamber and a change in configuration had not been found, however screens had been acquired for use during meetings. Members felt that a key factor to a change would be for a layout where they could look at each other to assist in debating. Indeed, the administration wished to add debate items to Council agendas going forward. A further attempt at a reconfiguration was requested, although Members would be mindful of the room limitations. Costs would be provided with each layout. A further issue was raised on this matter to address Member discussions with the public during meetings. Microphones were being considered currently and Members wish for electronic voting and publishing results of votes on the website for transparency.</p> | <p>NC NC NC</p> |
| 2. | <p>Youth Engagement and Promotion of Democracy Through the Civic Function</p> <p>Nicola Calver presented Paper C which set out a collated set of ideas for use of the Civic office in spearheading the promotion of democracy and youth engagement.</p> <p>Mini-Chairman / Cadet – It was suggested that appointment to this position could be linked to Community Awards. They would select a charity along with the Chairman for civic support throughout the year. Further a youth Chairman could head up a youth Council made up of secondary school children from across the district. They would pick their own topics to debate</p> | |

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| | <p>(suggested the takeover day), and meet twice a year. Transport and set up costs would need to be considered. Chairman should attend to liaise back to Council. A Chairman for the day scheme was not considered necessary.</p> <p>Youth Councils – Members wished to write to all primary schools about hosting youth councils in our chamber.</p> <p>Scouts / Guides – Members wished to write also to these groups and offer ceremonies and use of our civic involvement.</p> <p>Crown Celebrations – Rather than a competition for 9th September, a card designing competition should take place for the Queen’s 90th Birthday.</p> <p>Involvement in organising events – It was suggested that students working on Duke of Edinburgh Awards may wish to assist at Civic Events.</p> <p>School Visits – Members felt that a consistent approach in attending the schools within the district was a good idea.</p> <p>It was agreed that a four year plan for the delivery of this project would be pulled together in advance of the next meeting.</p> | NC |
| 3. | <p>Future Discussion Items and Issues</p> <p>As part of the conservative manifesto suggestions were made about provision of flags and flagpoles to schools, and budget of £1000 was requested. Whilst this could not be found within the civic budget, investigation would be made in to funding and sponsorship. It was agreed to discuss at the following meeting.</p> <p>Julie Heath attended the meeting to discuss how communications can be a great tool this the promotion of democracy and suggestions were made as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Features in the County News • Cover of visits in to schools • Attendance of Youth Parliament to the Working Group • Question-time with the Youth Council • Schools Instagram / communicating with younger people • Road Safety and behaviours on buses. • Councillor’s support to comms. | NC |
| 4. | <p>Date and Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>23rd September 2015 at 4pm. Members of Council would be notified to be able to feed in to Democracy Working Group colleagues.</p> | |

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| 5. | Any Other Business None discussed. | |
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Meeting closed at 17.22pm