

REPORT TO COUNCIL

REPORT OF: Chief Executive

REPORT NO. CEX 293

DATE: 23rd June 2005

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| TITLE: | Issues for South Kesteven District Council arising out of a review of the Corporate Governance Report on Lincolnshire County Council. |
| KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL: | N/A |
| COUNCIL AIMS/PORTFOLIO HOLDER NAME AND DESIGNATION: | N/A |
| CORPORATE PRIORITY: | CMAPMG |
| CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS: | N/A |
| FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IMPLICATIONS: | N/A |

Background

1. At its last meeting the Council considered a report concerning implications for South Kesteven DC arising from the corporate governance report on Lincolnshire County Council which included the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1: That all groups make a clear statement of support and commitment to partnership working through the LSP.

Recommendation 2 : That the Chairs and Vice-Chairmanships of DSPs are shared between the major groups in a way that reflects the overall political balance of the Council.

Recommendation 3 : That the Chairman of the Standards Committee be invited to report to the Council on the extent to which he feels that the members of the authority understand and support the role of the

Standards Committee and any proposals he may have for improving the work of the Standards Committee.

Recommendation 4 : That in view of the increasing importance of members training the Corporate Manager of Human Resources undertakes a review of the resources required to support a more comprehensive member training and development programme at South Kesteven using external expertise where appropriate.

Recommendation 5 : That the Constitution and Accounts Committee design an amendment to the Constitution so that with effect from the 1st May 2007, the desirable and essential competencies required of both Cabinet and DSP members are defined with all members being required to attend designated sessions for the essential competencies within twelve months of their appointment.

Recommendation 6: That in the autumn of this year, staff of South Kesteven are asked to complete the survey used by the Audit Commission to inform the Corporate Governance report so that results can be compared.

Recommendation 7: That the Council re-affirms its commitment to the concept of Local Area Assemblies and pledges to work with local people to make these meeting effective forums for wider community engagement.

Recommendation 8: That under our priority for vulnerable people the Director of Community Services prepares a strategy for Social Inclusion by December 2005.

Recommendation 9: That those members who may have concerns about the current system, or indeed a preference for the previous Committee system consider how they will be able to demonstrate to an external assessor that these views have not deterred them from playing a full and active part in the Council's decision making and scrutiny processes as set-out in the constitution.

Recommendation 10 : That the Corporate Manager Human Resources investigates the level of compliance with the Council's policies regarding staff appraisals and the effectiveness of the appraisals that have been undertaken.

2. It was resolved by the Council that the report be considered by the Resources DSP and the Cabinet.

Views of the Resources DSP

3. The Resources DSP held a special meeting on the 24th May and resolved the following:

Recommendation 1 – agreed.

Recommendation 2 – this was considered inappropriate by the majority because it was thought that the best person for the job should be appointed as a Chair or Vice-Chair regardless of political allegiance. It was commented that officers should not be involved in assessing the suitability of members.

Recommendation 3 – agreed.

Recommendation 4 – agreed.

Recommendation 5 – this was agreed in principle but the DSP considered that to undertake training within a shorter period of six months would be more effective. Members considered external and internal training and the consequences of members failing to undertake the “essential” training.

Recommendation 6 – agreed.

Recommendation 7 – although one member expressed concern about one particular Local Area Assembly (LAA), it was considered generally that the LAAs were effective and should continue.

Recommendation 8 – agreed.

Recommendation 9 – agreed.

Recommendation 10 – agreed.

Views of the Cabinet

4. The Cabinet met on the 6th June and considered in detail recommendations 2 and 5 where changes had been proposed by the DSP.
5. On 2 the Cabinet agreed with the principle that appointment to Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen should be made on the basis of suitability and merit rather than political affiliation and considered that the Chief Executive should provide a further report to Cabinet on how such an assessment could be undertaken. On 5 the Cabinet agreed with the original recommendation of the report that in order to accommodate the other commitments of members they should be given twelve rather than six months to attend the designated training courses.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That all groups make a clear statement of support and commitment to partnership working through the LSP.

Recommendation 2 : That the Chairs and Vice-Chairmanships of DSPs are appointed according to the suitability and merit of members and that the Chief Executive reports to a future Constitution and Accounts Committee on a method of determining this.

Recommendation 3 : That the Chairman of the Standards Committee be invited to report to the Council on the extent to which he feels that the members of the

authority understand and support the role of the Standards Committee and any proposals he may have for improving the work of the Standards Committee.

Recommendation 4 : That in view of the increasing importance of members training the Corporate Manager of Human Resources undertakes a review of the resources required to support a more comprehensive member training and development programme at South Kesteven using external expertise where appropriate.

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Duncan Kerr
Chief Executive