

EXTRACT FROM THE NOTES OF THE RESOURCES DSP ON 24TH MAY 2005

4. ISSUES FOR SOUTH KESTEVEN DISTRICT COUNCIL ARISING OUT OF A REVIEW OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE REPORT ON LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

The Chief Executive presented report CEX288, which had been referred to the DSP from full Council on 28th April 2005. It set out a number of learning lessons and recommendations arising from the Audit Commission's Corporate Governance Report on Lincolnshire County Council.

- Recommendation 1 – this was 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 – this was agreed as it was considered an important safeguard. It was noted that this Council had established a Standards Committee prior to statutory requirement.
- Recommendation 4 – this was 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 – this was 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 – this was agreed.
- Recommendation 9 – this was agreed, given its relevance to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment and the support the scrutiny system had from other local authorities.
- Recommendation 10 – this was agreed.

Conclusion:

To recommend to Cabinet that,

- (1) All groups make a clear statement of support and commitment to partnership working through the LSP.
- (2) The Chairs and Vice-Chairmanships of DSPs be appointed according to the suitability and merit of members. *[There was a minority view expressed that appointments should be politically balanced with nominations from each group leader accordingly].*
- (3) 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.

- (4) In view of the increasing importance of member training, the Corporate Manager of Human Resources to undertake a review of the resources required to support a more comprehensive member training and development programme at South Kesteven using external expertise where appropriate.
- (5) 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 six months of their appointment.
- (6) In autumn 2005, staff of South Kesteven be asked to complete the survey used by the Audit Commission to inform the Corporate Governance report so that results can be compared.
- (7) The Council reaffirms its commitment to the concept of Local Area Assemblies and pledges to work with local people to make these meetings effective forums for wider community engagement.
- (8) Under the Council's priority for vulnerable people, the Director of Community Services prepares a strategy for Social Inclusion by December 2005.
- (9) 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 setout in the constitution.
- (10) The Corporate Manager of 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.