



Democracy Commission Programme Update

10 October 2019





DC Programme: overall project status (RAG rating)

Governance,
Accountability &
Decision Making

Improving Electoral
Registration

Councillors

Regional Devolution

Active Citizens in civic society



Governance, Accountability & Decision Making

Lead: Penny Bunker

Progress:

Summer 2019 - **pilot masterclasses on what makes a good decision**

- Targeted at senior officers to look at what makes a good decision
- Decision maker and public perspectives
- Feedback - 'Informative' 'thought provoking' 'Useful and practical' and 'really good and relevant'
- Next steps: Development of a pathway offer, starting with baseline working in a political environment training moving through to more indepth look at decision making.

Webcast / video narrative; Work has progressed with video narratives being used to provide information before some meetings.

Refresh of webcast facilities Summer / Autumn 2019

- Higher quality video and audio
- More flexible in producing video clips and narratives to support decision making and engagement activity.
- Councillors, including those leading Scrutiny Panels will be doing introductory videos once the new system is embedded.

Missed Milestones:

Due to resources it has not been possible to progress the on line and off line information. It is anticipated that during November information will be drawn together to move this objective forward.

Milestones in next reporting period: To be determined.

Project outcomes:

A set of on line / off line information to support public access to meetings

A range of new approaches / information have been piloted to open up decision making

Introductory information is available at public meetings

Project objectives:

To develop a set of democratic content standards based on citizens' needs

To prototype online and off-line interpretive information for the public relating to one of our public meetings

To pilot the use of video narratives in advance of a significant issue being discussed and decided, followed by similar narratives once a decision has been taken

To fully explore and implement the full capability of our webcasting technology. This should be on a pilot basis initially

Risks & Issues

There is currently no single place of access on the Council's Website to access on line information about democracy.

Production of a good quality product also requires resources from support services such as comms and graphics to be prioritised. This is an issue to be progressed by officers.

Decisions required: None at this time.



Improving Electoral Registration

Lead: Sharon Salvanos

Progress:

- Continued work with Huddersfield Town Trust Foundation (HTTF), working with socially excluded young people delivering activities around national democracy and registration awareness, to recommence work October 2019;
- NCS planned activities throughout the summer engagement with approx. 800+ young people from North & South Kirklees, workshops, debating sessions – joint working with the Council’s Young people and Engagement Officer – Summer engagement completed;
- Thornhill Academy and Westborough High School delivering activities on national democracy and registration awareness – completed;
- Shelley College – planning activities scheduled to take place in Autumn;
- Parliament Week – October 2019 - initial planning to work with partners on a range of activities;
- National Democracy Week – November 2019 – initial planning to work with partners on a range of activities in support of NDW;
- C&K Careers – Next Step Event – year 11 students voter registration awareness activities;
- Targeted work with residential care homes during the annual canvass timeline (August through to October 2019)
- Huddersfield University - implementation of integrated electoral registration – re-engage to discuss improvements to system and monitor response – awaiting data;
- Flame event – engagement with Young adults with learning difficulties;
- KITS training – engagement session with apprentices;
- Annual canvass activities – July to 1 December;
- Real employment – briefing sessions and resource provision;

Missed Milestones:

- Continuing work with Honley High School delayed due to absence of lead tutor
- Electoral outreach activities were suspended as a result of the following District & Parish Council and European Parliamentary Elections (1 March to 1 June 2019)

Theme outcomes:

Registering to vote should be easy, accessible and convenient, especially for our young citizens

Citizens are able to access accurate, timely, trustworthy and relevant information about elections and candidates standing

Project objectives:

To pilot a local approach to registering young people at the age of 16

To work with the University of Huddersfield and local colleges to integrate electoral registration as part of the existing student registration process.

Key risks/Issues:

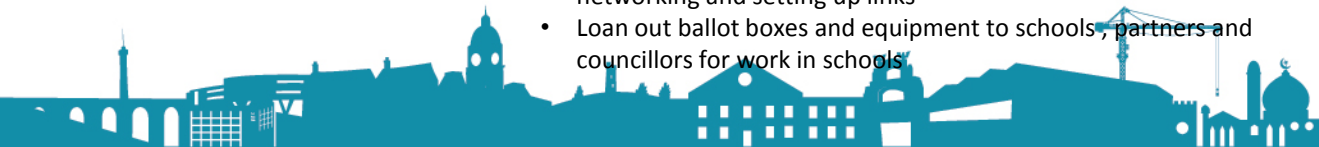
- Activities will be suspended should a national unscheduled election be called in the Autumn/Winter;
- Non-response of some colleges and schools

Decisions required:

- Decisions - none at this time
- Possible communications to attract volunteers for NCS
- Councillor support at some events

Comms/Engagement:

- Use Twitter to promote work and advertise voter registration messages;
- Design and printing of various materials to support activities;
- Sending promotional materials to various partners and groups, networking and setting up links
- Loan out ballot boxes and equipment to schools, partners and councillors for work in schools



Milestones in next reporting period:

- Westborough High School, further engagement;
- Commencement of NCS Autumn programme;
- Continued work with Huddersfield Town Trust Foundation (HTTF) to recommence work October 2019;
- Engagement session with Huddersfield Town Youth team players;
- NDW, activities planned with Kirklees College and New College;
- Organisation of Councillor drop-in session at Kirklees College, representatives from all parties, including independents;
- Initial exploration of targeting Guide, Scouting, Army/Cadet groups to raise awareness of local and national democracy and registration awareness;
- C&K Careers – Next Step Event – year 11 students voter registration awareness activities;
- Partnership with Methodist Mission, working with vulnerable groups including people who are homeless;
- Annual canvass activities – July to 1 December;
- Preparatory work for canvass reform - to be introduced July 2020;
- Employability Kirklees – engagement with Young Adults with Autism;
- Batley 150 event – stall and resources;
- Kirklees college – November working with College student nominees for college council;
- UK Parliament Engagement Officer (Yorkshire & Humberside) – potential work with Colleges

Other activity is also planned but no clear timelines are attached to these yet

N/A

Theme Lead: Sharon Salvanos

Outreach Lead: Sam Atkinson



Councillors (at the heart of what we do)

Lead(s): Deborah Nicholson and Vina Randhawa

Progress:

- Held separate and joint workshop sessions with councillors and officers from across the organisation. Over 100 people were involved.
- Priority actions determined and campaign launched.
- Developed practical opportunities for councillors and officers to work together and develop a shared understanding of their roles. For example:
 - A programme of officer / councillor shadowing.
 - Working in a Political Environment Training, co-delivered with councillors to 578 staff so far
 - Councillor visits to teams and services
 - Video campaign promoting the Councillor role
- Work on the Councillor Account has begun.
- Promotional video filmed of two Councillors visiting Huddersfield Customer Service Centre, intranet news article written “inviting Councillors in” followed up by follow-up e-mail to CMG
- Councillors visited Dewsbury and Huddersfield Customer Service Centres with more visits to take place
- Visit to Huddersfield Waste Recycling Centre filmed

Project outcomes:

Councillors have the confidence, skills, support and capacity to lead the changing relationship between the council and local citizens. They are placed at the heart of the Council

The councillor role is clear, widely communicated and universally understood

Project objectives:

To humanise the councillor role using real life experiences and in particular case study where councillors and officers work effectively in partnership

To develop a wider officer understanding and awareness of what a councillor does using a campaign based approach. This should be on-line and off-line

To develop a range of materials to be shared and used by officers and councillors to facilitate the above

To develop face to face opportunities for officers to meet informally with councillors. Where possible these should be captured and shared

To ensure the overall approach is embedded as part of developing strategic priorities



Councillors (at the heart of what we do)

Lead(s): Deborah Nicholson and Vina Randhawa

Key risks/Issues:

- Lack of response from the organisation to Inviting Councillors In. Only one response received to date.

Missed Milestones:

- None reported.

Milestones in next reporting period:

- Complete interviews with two new Cabinet Members – Cllr Walker and Cllr Pattison
- Preparation for campaign burst #3
- Meetings to be arranged with Councillors elected in May
- Ongoing work relating to the Councillor Account and support for Councillors

Decisions required:

- None required

Engagement/Comms:

- Campaign burst #3 starts in October.

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Councillor (Role and how it is supported)

Lead(s): Deborah Nicholson and Vina Randhawa

Progress:

- Visited other local authorities to research their support arrangements and share good practice.
- Met with rural and urban Councillors in their wards to understand their changing role and support requirements.
- Held workshops with a slice group of officers to determine their understanding of the Councillor role and consider content for a new Councillor Role Profile from an officer perspective. (see: [Live tweets from one of our workshops](#))
- Held workshop sessions with a cross section of Councillors to explore the changing role with a view to designing a new Councillor role Profile.
- Designed and communicated a series of [A Day in the Life of a Councillor videos](#). These have been promoted internally and externally.
- Met with Cllr Scott and Cllr Taylor on 8th July to discuss next steps relating to the Councillor role profile.
- Reported back to Working Group on 7th August and agreed final engagement phase should be completed and collective findings used to develop a Councillor role profile.

Key risks/Issues:

- None reported.

Missed Milestones:

- None

Milestones in next reporting period:

- Democracy Seekers session taking place on 2nd October to incorporate Councillor Role Profile workshop.

Decisions required: None at this time..

Project outcomes:

Councillors have the confidence, skills, support and capacity to lead the changing relationship between the council and local citizens. They are placed at the heart of the Council

The councillor role is clear, widely communicated and universally understood

Councillors are accessible and confident in their role in a digitally networked society

Project objectives:

Supporting Councillors in their Wards: To set out strategic and operational proposals for a redefined approach to supporting councillors in their Wards

To produce a revised role profile for a Kirklees

To develop and communicate performance information that demonstrates to citizens the impact a councillor is having



Councillor (Networked Councillors)

Lead: Diane Sims

Progress:

Finding out what councillors think

- 29 councillors (42%) took part in our survey
- Report of full results and key findings produced

Finding out what citizens think

- Democracy Seekers discussion workshop session: "What do councillors do?" is booked for 2nd October. We're asking citizens:
What do you want and expect from your councillor?
How do you find out what your councillors do?
How can digital tools help councillors and citizens to connect?
- Digital version of the task available in October for remote participation

Democratic content

- Audit of digital democratic content (channels and content) in progress

Missed Milestones:

- None

Milestones in next reporting period:

- First Democracy Seekers task complete and shared with Working Group
- Recommendations for activities planned in response to what we've learned from citizens & councillors, to be shared with Working Group

Key risks/Issues:

We need to make sure that we enable different people to take part (not just those who will participate in an event). We have a diverse group signed up, but these may not be the same people who participate in the first session.

Decisions required: None.

Comms/Engagement: Democracy Seekers promoted as part of our Local Democracy Week 2019 programme (including web, social media & email)

Project outcomes:

Councillors have the confidence, skills, support and capacity to lead the changing relationship between the council and local citizens. They are placed at the heart of the Council

Councillors are accessible and confident in their role in a digitally networked society

Democratic content is accessible, digestible and delivered in a way that considers the needs of the citizen and councillors alike

Project objectives:

To develop an ongoing approach to developing and embedding the digital literacy skills of all councillors in the context of their changing role

To develop an innovative approach to creating and sharing democratic content

To develop a clear set of democratic content standards, based on citizens' needs

To develop and deliver a live social media audit for all councillors to facilitate awareness and confidence in developing civic networks in their wards



Regional Devolution

Lead(s): Nick Howe

Progress:

Good progress continues to be made across most of the initially identified activities and milestones with a number being completed. However as previously stated, the majority of the work is ongoing which will be reviewed on annually (end of the municipal year)

In terms of specific progress against actions and milestones;

- Kirklees now has representation on all key West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) committees and panels with both Cllrs McBride and Mather securing more prominent roles
- The briefing expectations from Cllrs and senior officers continue to be met and are roundly welcomed ensuring Kirklees is able to input and influence key agendas.
- The internal officer regional working group is established for the coming year and continues to work well providing much-needed insight for the various panels and committees.
- Scrutiny has replaced the void left by the Cross-Party Working Group and had its first regional focused session on the 22nd July. The next session is scheduled for December and will include senior staff from WYCA. The aim is for 4/5 sessions each year.
- As previously mentioned significant resources are now in place under the Economy & Skills directorate. Angela Blake has taken a clear lead on regional issues include attending the Scrutiny sessions.

Project outcomes:

Our approach to local devolution is from the ground up, based on local identity and the specific priorities of our towns, villages and communities

Citizens and councillors understand the opportunities and implications of regional devolution

Project objectives:

To develop an approach that supports all of our senior politicians who have a specific role in the wider region to be proactive and effective

To put in place means by which all councillors receive regular, timely and relevant information about the wider devolution agenda and in particular the ways in which this has implications for the Wards they represent

To establish timely and effective information flows between the council and the region

To consider the above in the context of information for Kirklees citizens



Regional Devolution

Lead(s): Nick Howe

Progress: (cont);

- The chair of Scrutiny has also asked for a specific briefing session on progress with regional devolution 29th Oct. Following this session a paper will be shared with all cllrs.
- Project Pipeline – this projects continues to support and work with the new Head of Major to establish a concise project pipeline which can be shared more widely with the all cllrs.
- The Leader, Deputy and Chief Exec now meet 4 weekly to specifically discuss regional issues and ensure we are working as effectively as possible. A key part of the first meeting in September was to discuss our priorities and where our focus should be at the WY and regional level. Once agreed, this will be shared more widely and provide a sharper focus for this project.

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Regional Devolution

Lead(s): Nick Howe

Key risks/Issues:

- Still unable to get a clear picture from WYCA on the officer structures (this has been taken on by senior officers)
- Initial attempts to create a series of specific topic briefs failed but the Regional Officer Group is now focusing on a set of half a dozen key topics.

Milestones in next reporting period:

Several activities and milestones are ongoing such as meeting briefings and these will continue. Below are the milestones which require more focus;

- Continue to work with Angela Blake to check the activities are right and identify resources in her world to help deliver relevant milestones. Also support the Leader on identifying the regional priorities and areas of focus.
- Complete the first series of topic briefings and share more widely.
- Secure WYCA attendance at the next Scrutiny regional session in December.
- Continue to work with the new HoS for Major Projects to refine the existing project pipeline and how the governance of this will work

Decisions required:

None

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Active Citizens in Civic Society

Lead(s): Vina Randhawa

Progress:

- Citizen engagement reference group meets monthly to consider and co-ordinate planned engagement activity to agreed standards and principles and membership continues to grow.
- Regular conversations with Ward Councillors, 3rd sector orgs and services to determine priority Place Standard activity.
- Place Standard engagements delivered in 8 neighbourhood covering 5 wards, engaging approximately 1750 citizens.
- Engagement planned in 19 neighbourhoods covering 11 wards (all involving councillors) – a mix of councillor led (incl a Town Council), community led or service led where there is an opportunity to influence investment (e.g. KNH)
- Engagement phase complete as part of Huddersfield Town Centre Masterplan / Blueprint, report to draft in October.
- Over 200 people have received training in delivering Place Standard conversations by July. This includes staff from 26 service areas, 12 councillors, 6 voluntary organisations and 39 residents.
- Place based working update report to cross party working group on 19th August, which included citizen engagement.
- Engaged with over 1,500 young people and stakeholders to better understand how we can support our young citizens.
- Held a workshop with young citizens, Cllrs and the Mayor to find out how they currently engage with young citizens and their experiences..
- Started to work with partners to map our current approaches and to recognise the valuable work that's already happening to support our young citizens.

Project outcomes:

Active Citizenship is a shared strategic priority and used as a basis for developing a new democratic relationship between Kirklees citizens and the state.

Schools should play a central role as local democratic hubs as part of the delivery of an Active Citizens Strategy.

Project objectives:

Develop and adopt citizen engagement principles to guide and inform the council's approach to place based engagement

Develop an environment and culture that nurtures citizens , and in particular young citizen's, interest in local democracy

To develop a continued focus to encourage as many Kirklees residents as possible to become interested, engaged and involved in local democracy, have a real stake and make a real difference in their communities and neighbourhoods

Promote the role of councillor to help Kirklees citizens understand the role and to encourage citizens to come forward and stand as councillors.



Active Citizens in Civic Society

Lead(s): Vina Randhawa

Progress (cont)

- Started to engage with Kirklees schools and school hubs to promote what we are doing and the crucial role they play to support and develop young citizens.
- Liaised with UK Parliament, other local authorities and British Youth Council to research approaches and share good practice.
- Approx 650 young people participated in NCS this summer. Local Democracy workshops planned as part of NCS, format was adapted to accommodate changes to the programme.
- Councillors, Officers and Partners took part in NCS Dragons Den to bring a fresh perspective to supporting young citizens to develop a range of social action and fundraising activities given their local knowledge and resources they can tap into.
- NCS update report presented to ET in August – support will sit with democracy service and delivery budget agreed to support work going forward.
- Memorandum of understanding drafted to ensure the partnership arrangement with NCS Trust and Kirklees Council will continue i.e. pre-programme promotion and participation, social action, programme content, comms and marketing support.

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Active Citizens in Civic Society

Lead(s): Vina Randhawa

Key risks/Issues:

- Given the level of demand for place standard citizen engagement, capacity to deliver.
- Commitment from Council Services and partners to support place standard citizen engagement and action planning/priority setting.
- Citizen engagement activity could be suspended should a national election be called in Autumn/Winter.

Missed Milestones:

- No missed milestones as such, however really need to make further progress with civic pathways for young citizens work.

Milestones in next reporting period:

- Civic Pathways progress report to cross party working group on 16th December.
- Growing a Stronger Youth Council report and recommendations to go to cross party working group – date tbc
- Meeting with NCS programme leads in September to plan next steps for Autumn 2019 and summer 2020 programme.

Decisions required:

- None required.

Engagement/Comms:

- Team uses the shared calendars to highlight comms support needed which is discussed at comms and content meeting

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