



## **Democracy Commission Programme Update**

### **1. Context**

The Cross Party Working Group agreed a number of priority recommendations as the key areas of focus for the first phases of its work. As a result number of projects have been commissioned by the Working Group intended to begin to progress those recommendations.

Now that those projects have begun to progress it is timely to take an overview of the programme of work as a whole. This is the first report of this kind to be considered by the Working Group and therefore views and comments as to the format and approach to reporting would be welcomed.

### **2. Programme Overview**

The period for which this programme update is applicable is up to September 2019. The Programme Manager has identified that the overall status for the programme is “on track” although there has been slippage in a number of areas, the details of which are set out in the attached slides. The main area of concern relates to the progress made in terms of the projects under the Governance, Accountability and Decision Making theme.

In terms of some areas of progress/success to highlight:

#### Active Citizens in Civic Society:

- The council’s approach to citizen engagement has progressed significantly. Citizen engagement principles are becoming embedded and our approach to place based engagement using the Place Standard continues to grow. Place Standard engagement has been delivered in 8 neighbourhoods covering 5 wards to date engaging approximately 1750 citizens. Further engagement planned in 19 neighbourhoods covering 11 wards. Over 200 people have received training in delivering Place Standard conversations. This includes staff from 26 service areas, 12 councillors, 6 voluntary organisations and 39 residents;
- Specific highlights from our civic pathways work include the delivery of NCS planned activities throughout the summer engagement with approx. 800+ young people from North & South Kirklees and work with Huddersfield Town

Trust Foundation, working with socially excluded young people delivering activities around national democracy and registration awareness. We have engaged with over 1,500 young people and stakeholders to better understand how we can support our young citizens.

#### Improving Electoral Registration:

- The piloting and delivery of a wide range of voter awareness and electoral registration initiatives involving a wide range of stakeholders e.g. Huddersfield University, NCS, local school and colleges, Huddersfield Town, Calderdale and Kirklees Carers etc.

#### Councillors:

- Engagement with councillors and staff has taken place as part of co-producing the next iteration of the councillor role profile;
- The Networked Councillor survey has been completed (see elsewhere on the agenda)
- Work on the Councillor Account has begun, working closely with a cross section of councillors to inform its development. This has also been informed by the engagement that took place with all councillors as part of putting councillors at the heart of the organisation;
- Progress has been made in delivering the “Putting Councillors at the Heart” project (see elsewhere on the agenda. Many commissioned activities have been delivered and so far two campaign bursts have been completed. The next is planned for Local Democracy Week.

#### Regional Devolution:

- 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.

### **3. Recommendation**

The Working Group is asked to:

- Broadly consider and comment on the programme reporting arrangements in order to ensure that future reports fully meet the needs of the Working Group;
- Comment on specific part of the programme in terms of effectiveness, issues and risks as set out in detail in the attached slides.

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