

**MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**THURSDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 2024**

**ADDITIONAL PAPERS**

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## COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 8 FEBRUARY 2024

### ITEM 6 – GRANT REVIEW

#### ADDITIONAL PAPER

#### Supplementary document on Grants to Citizens Advice and Age UK

##### **Citizen Advice Grant Agreement**

##### Financial contribution to Citizen Advice of 2022-2024

<b>Financial Year</b>	<b>Financial Support</b>	<b>Homelessness Element</b>
2022/23	£62,000	£10,000
2023/24	£62,000	£10,000

##### Aims and Objectives

To provide advice, including financial advice to residents of NWLDC who are experiencing difficulties with a variety of difficulties which include, but are not limited to:

- Debt advice and management – including assisting with applications for
- benefits, charitable funding, debt relief orders, breathing space, etc
- Fuel poverty
- Food poverty
- Relationship breakdown/difficulties – including domestic abuse
- Risk of homelessness
- Landlord and Tenant issues – particular focus on private landlords

##### Specific Performance Indicators

- To assess client need at first contact and provide appropriate support by:
  - Providing information and limited advice at first contact to enable the client to self help going forward where appropriate
  - Referring clients with emergencies through for immediate assistance
  - Arranging an appointment for full advice within a timescale based on the urgency of need
  - Making contact with clients directly referred by NWLDC within 2 working days of receiving the referral
  - Referring clients through to specialist projects as required
- Number of new cases each quarter
- Number of repeat cases each quarter
- Number of community advice sessions each quarter
- Number of referrals made to a food bank
- Amount of ongoing income gains identified, including both those where applications made by citizens advice regarding benefit entitlement
- Amount of one off benefits accessed through applications (e.g. DHP, Household Support Grants)
- Amount of charitable funding accessed through applications (e.g. Big Difference funding, Armed Forces funding)
- Number of cases supported where household was homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Number of households homeless or at risk of homelessness seen within 10 days of referral
- Number of positive outcomes for households at risk of homelessness
- Number of referred clients who:
  - Did not respond to initial phone calls or letters
  - Refused help on contact
  - Failed to attend an appointment

- Case studies detailing how the impact of advice has had a positive impact, for example, improved health and wellbeing outcomes.

#### Homelessness

The following information on homeless households will be provided as part of the monitoring requirements.

Number of clients presenting as homeless and threatened with homelessness. This should be detailed so as to make clear:

- Reason for approach
- Whether referral originated from Council or self-referral
- Whether intervention produced successful outcome (homelessness resolved, prevented or delayed)

Households or individuals who are homeless or threatened with homelessness will be prioritised for advice appointments and are expected to be seen within 10 working days.

<b>Citizen Advice 2022-23</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Number of clients supported	701	740	684	715	<b>2840</b>
Number of issues dealt with	2099	2349	2461	2443	<b>9352</b>
Activities	2282	2347	2196	2070	<b>8895</b>
Cases	708	767	718	759	<b>2952</b>
<b>Outcomes</b>					
Income gains	£226,960	£448,865	£476,527	£364,903	<b>£1,517,255</b>
Re-imburements, services, loans	£1,543	£3,565	£1,066	£1,675	<b>£7,849</b>
Debts written off	£20,747	£29,621	£12,824	£52,869	<b>£116,061</b>
Other	£8,160	£53,732	£16,201	£14,499	<b>£92,592</b>

<b>Citizen Advice 2023-24</b>	<b>Q1</b>	<b>Q2</b>	<b>Q3</b>	<b>Q4</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	
Number of clients supported	616	612	618	No data yet until April 2024	<b>1846</b>	
Number of issues dealt with	2261	1736	1,893		<b>5890</b>	
Activities	1833	1802	2,121		<b>5756</b>	
Cases	705	591	703		<b>1999</b>	
<b>Outcomes</b>						
Income gains	£301,384	£296,577	£260,663		<b>£858,624</b>	
Re-imburements, services, loans	£1,287	£135	£6,436		<b>£7,858</b>	
Debts written off	£66,162	£85,813	£94,593		<b>£246,568</b>	
Other	£45,838	£14,071	£7,702	<b>£67,611</b>		

## Age UK Grant Agreement – Befriending

### Financial contribution to Age UK Befriending of 2022-2024

Financial Year	Financial Support
2022/23	£21,990
2023/24	£21,990

### Aims and Objectives

To provide a befriending service to older residents within the district to reduce social isolation, promote independent living and enable access to services through information and support.

To provide and support volunteering opportunities to residents of the district, reducing social isolation, improving employment skills and experience.

### Specific Performance Indicators

- To provide the number volunteers supporting the North West Leicestershire befriending service.
- Number of new cases each quarter
- Number of recurring cases each quarter
- Inform if a client has been referred to any other services each quarter (ie. Citizen Advice, a food bank, First Contact Plus)
- Case studies detailing how the impact of support has had a positive impact, for example, improved health and wellbeing outcomes.

The table below shows the number of clients Age UK befriending service has supported each quarter. It must be noted that “clients being supported” are reoccurring cases, so someone who is being supported in Q1 is likely to be supported in Q2,3 and 4. The fluctuation in clients will be as some clients have sadly passed, gone into long term care, or perhaps moved away from the area but the service has gaining new clients each quarter.

This is the same with volunteers, the same volunteers are potentially helping all year but there is likely to be some who leave and others that join.

Age UK befriending 2022-23	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
Clients being supported	39	35	44	39	44
Changes to clients	11	4	6	4	25
Referrals into other services	5	0	2	3	10
Volunteers	28	29	32	34	34

Age UK befriending 2023-24	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL
Clients being supported	36	36	39	No data yet until April 2024	39
Changes to clients	0	0	5		5
Referrals into other services	12	24	11		47
Volunteers	33	35	35		35

**Both grants are for specific outcomes and not a generic grant for purposes that the charity chooses.**

**The grants are provided on an annual basis with no commitment beyond a consideration of a year at a time.**

Paul Sanders - 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

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## COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 8 FEBRUARY 2024

### ITEM 8 – THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PLANNING ENFORCEMENT - UPDATE

#### ADDITIONAL PAPER

#### EXISTING HARM SCORING AND DRAFT PROPOSED PRIORITISATION METHOD

The main report sets out in paragraph 2.4 that the Planning Enforcement Team Leader is progressing with a new Local Enforcement Plan that is up-to-date and sets out a simpler prioritisation system compared with the existing harm scoring system. This additional paper provides details of the current harm prioritisation system and what is currently being considered as a draft proposed prioritisation method for members information.

#### **Existing (as set out in the current adopted Planning Enforcement Policy)**

The existing method of harm scoring is included in the Council's adopted Planning Enforcement Policy which is extracted below for reference:

#### **The Harm Prioritisation System**

- 6.1 The Harm Prioritisation System allows unauthorised development to be scored according to its 'Harm'. Each case will be scored following a set format in order to provide a consistent result. Scoring is based on a number of criteria including:
- Age of the breach
  - Is the development worsening or stable
  - Are there any safety or statutory nuisance concerns
  - Who is the complainant
  - Is there harm
  - Is there a breach of planning conditions
  - Is the development in a conservation area or affecting the setting of a listed building
  - If the development needs to be controlled by conditions
  - Non-compliance with local planning policy
- 6.2 A total must be reached via the scoring system once it has been established that a breach of planning control has occurred. Only complaints which score 5 or above will be investigated further, those with a lesser score will be informed of the breach and invited to regularise it. This scoring system is based on appropriate Government guidance and gives due consideration to all relevant legislation. In both cases the complainant is notified of our actions and in the case where no investigation is to be made a detailed explanation for the decision will be given.
- 6.3 All retrospective refusals of planning applications, together with complaints regarding criminal works (listed buildings, protected trees and hedgerows, advertisements and non-compliance with legal notices), where no judgement of harm is necessary, will automatically receive a full investigation.
- 6.4 Where there is no breach of planning control the case will be closed automatically and the complainant informed.
- 6.5 The local planning authority believes in firm but fair regulation. Underlying the Harm Prioritisation System are the principles of:
- Expediency
  - Proportionality

- Consistency
- Transparency
- Targeting
- Openness
- Helpfulness
- Procedures

### **Officer scoring sheet:**

**Date:**

**Officer:**

**Case Reference:**

#### **North West Leicestershire District Council - HARM Prioritisation Assessment Form**

**To be completed by the officer who has seen the development**

**Note: this form is only to be used when a breach has been identified**

- All retrospective refusals of planning permissions and complaints received regarding illegal works to listed buildings, illegal advertisements, hedge removal and trees covered by a tree preservation order/conservation area will automatically receive a full investigation.
- Each new complaint will be allocated scores as set out to assess its harm. The total will provide its harm score from which its priority will be based.
- Where there is no breach of planning control found, the file will be closed accordingly.



<b>Points allocation</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Is the breach:</b> worsening (1) Stable (0)	
<b>Highway safety issue:</b> Yes (1) No (0)	
<b>Other safety issues:</b> Yes (1) No (0)	
<b>Causing a (potential) statutory nuisance:</b> Yes (1) No (0)	
<b>Complainant:</b> Immediate neighbour/staff (2) Member/Parish Council (2) Other (1)	
<b>Age of breach:</b> Within 3 months of immunity (3) Less than 1 month old (2) More than 1 month old (1)	
<b>Is the harm:</b> Widespread (2) Local (1) None (0)	
<b>Irreversible harm:</b> Yes (1) No (0)	
<b>Breach of planning condition:</b> Yes (1) No (0)	
<b>Conservation area</b> Yes (1) No (0)	
<b>Affecting the setting of a listed building</b> Yes (1) No (0)	
<b>Special exercise (If yes provide more details)</b> Yes (1) No (0)	
<b>Sensitive site (if yes provide more details)</b> Yes (1) No (0)	
<b>Undesirable precedent If yes provide more detail</b> Yes (1) No (0)	
<b>Total Points (HARM score)</b>	

- Only complaints which score 5 or above will be investigated further. Those with a lesser score will be informed of the breach/likely breach and invited to remedy/regularise it. In both cases the complainant will be notified of our actions.

#### **Draft proposed prioritisation method**

Officers are currently progressing a new up to date prioritisation method to be adopted within the new Local Enforcement Plan to include:

- Three priority levels: High, Medium and Low; each with their own target for commencing the investigation or visiting the site (as required). This is considered to be a good indicator that the team is providing an efficient and responsive service, and is considered specific, measurable, achievable and realistic as a target, allowing for consistent reporting.

- Manages available resource and reserves capacity to deal with higher priority matters, as well as progressing historic cases and other projects. For example, an enforcement notice and subsequent appeal on one case can take up the majority of an officer's time.

The table below provides the target response times and example of developments in each category that will be proposed through the draft Local Enforcement Plan:

Priority	Response target	Examples
<b>High</b> (Potential to result in irreparable harm and may also constitute an offence)	1 day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works to listed building</li> <li>• Works to protected trees</li> <li>• Demolition in a Conservation Area</li> <li>• Destruction of important hedgerow</li> <li>• Works relating to hazardous substances</li> </ul>
<b>Medium</b> (Requires fairly prompt response but unlikely to result in irreparable harm in planning terms)	2 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works in a Conservation Area</li> <li>• Harm to setting of listed building</li> <li>• Development contrary to local planning policy</li> <li>• Development contrary to approved plans</li> <li>• Development that significantly impacts on amenity of public safety</li> </ul>
<b>Low</b> (Requires investigation but not urgent)	4 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Domestic development</li> <li>• Small businesses from home</li> <li>• Unauthorised advertisements</li> <li>• Other minor developments</li> </ul>

Members are advised that there is scope to review the table above as officers develop the Local Enforcement Plan.