

Meeting	<b>POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP</b>
Time/Day/Date	6.30 pm on Wednesday, 1 October 2014
Location	Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville
Officer to contact	Democratic Services (01530 454512)

All persons present are reminded that the meeting may be recorded and by attending this meeting you are giving your consent to being filmed and your image being used. You are kindly requested to make it known to the Chairman if you intend to film or record this meeting.

The Monitoring Officer would like to remind members that when they are considering whether the following items are exempt information under the relevant paragraph under part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 they must have regard to the public interest test. This means that members must consider, for each item, whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption from disclosure outweighs the public interest in making the item available to the public.

## AGENDA

Item	Pages
<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
<b>2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b>	
Under the Code of Conduct members are reminded that in declaring disclosable interests you should make clear the nature of that interest and whether it is pecuniary or non-pecuniary.	
<b>3. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION</b>	
To receive questions from members of the public under rule no.10 of the Council Procedure Rules. The procedure rule provides that members of the public may ask any question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties which affect the District, provided that three clear days' notice in writing has been given to the Head of Legal and Support Services.	
<b>4. MINUTES</b>	
To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2014.	<b>3 - 12</b>



<b>5. UPDATE OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION</b>	
Report of the Head of Legal and Support Services	<b>13 - 28</b>
<b>6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY</b>	
Report of the Head of Community Services	<b>29 - 42</b>
<b>7. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) 2015/16 TO 2018/19</b>	
Report of the Head of Finance	<b>43 - 52</b>
<b>8. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON THE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME</b>	
To consider any items to be included in the work programme. The plan of forthcoming decisions of Cabinet is attached for information.	<b>53 - 60</b>

Circulation:

Councillor N Clarke  
Councillor J Cotterill  
Councillor J G Coxon (Chairman)  
Councillor D Everitt  
Councillor J Geary  
Councillor V Richichi  
Councillor A C Saffell  
Councillor S Sheahan  
Councillor N Smith  
Councillor M Specht (Deputy Chairman)

MINUTES of a meeting of the POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on WEDNESDAY, 16 JULY 2014

Present: Councillor M Specht (in the Chair)

Councillors G A Allman (Substitute for Councillor V Richichi), N Clarke, J Cotterill, J Geary, D Howe (Substitute for Councillor D Everitt), A C Saffell and S Sheahan

In Attendance: Councillors R D Bayliss and T Neilson

Officers: Mr S Bambrick, Mr R Bowmer, Mr D Gill and Mrs M Meredith

## **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J G Coxon, D Everitt, V Richichi and N Smith.

## **2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

No interests were declared.

## **3. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

No questions were received.

## **4. MINUTES**

It was moved by Councillor J Cotterill, seconded by Councillor J Geary and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2014 be approved and signed as a correct record.

## **5. UPDATE OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented the report to Members, drawing their attention to the recommendation to postpone the annual review of the Constitution due to the pending legislation that would have an impact once enacted.

Councillor S Sheahan asked how long this process would take and whether officers had confidence that this could be completed within the next 6 months.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer stated that he had every confidence that it could be completed within this timescale, as the Statutory Instrument had been published, as had a guidance note, and he was confident that a report could be brought to the next meeting.

Councillor S Sheahan asked if there were any additional forthcoming matters that could have an impact upon the Constitution.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer responded that delegated authority had been granted to the Monitoring Officer to make any minor consequential changes to the Constitution. He added that all legislative matters which officers were currently aware of were outlined in the report.

Councillor S Sheahan referred to the proposal in respect of the recording of meetings. He commented that it would embrace the spirit of the legislation if the Council webcast its meeting in the same manner as Leicestershire County Council. He added that this would save people the bother.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that this would be a question of costs and practicality, which would need to be investigated.

Councillor S Sheahan requested a breakdown of the costs to enable this to be considered.

Councillor J Geary commented that he had no problem with the report and asked what impact there would be on staffing levels, and how much staff time this would take to implement.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer advised that he could see no major impact upon staffing levels in respect of making the requisite amendments to the Constitution, however there could be an impact in terms of the management of meetings. He added that this would be unknown until it was clear what was required and this could be reported back to a future meeting.

Councillor A C Saffell commented that he had no problem with the recommendation, however he felt that at 600 pages the Constitution was too long and repeated itself in places. He stated that he did not want to impose any additional burden to implement the required changes, but felt that it ought to be possible to remove parts of the Constitution so that it didn't eventually reach 1,000 pages. He added that in the commercial world you would never see a document anywhere near that long and felt that the shorter it was, the better.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer accepted the comments. He advised that the Constitution was based on the Model Constitution, and was one of the shortest in the county at around 300 pages. He stated that as part of the review he would endeavour to shorten the document, however the Council was bound by legislation insofar as what should be included.

It was moved by Councillor J Geary, seconded by Councillor S Sheahan and

RESOLVED THAT:

On the advice of the Monitoring Officer, the annual review of the Constitution be postponed pending enactment of legislation likely to affect the review.

## **6. ADDITIONAL COSTS OF THE DECENT HOMES PROGRAMME 2014/2015**

The Director of Services introduced the item and sought agreement of the meeting to present the subsequent item, entitled "Updating the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan", concurrently as the two reports were inextricably linked.

The Director of Services presented the reports, drawing Members' attention to the final number of additional non-decent homes identified. He added that in addition to these 305 properties, there were a further 91 properties which, at the time of the original bid, were believed to have qualified for backlog funding. However, as part of the survey work undertaken, it had transpired that these 91 properties had become non-decent after April 2012 and therefore did not qualify. As a result of this, there would be a reduction in the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) grant of £618,895. He added that these properties would still require improvement works as they were non-decent, however there

would be no funding available for these works. Therefore, in addition to the shortfall identified in respect of the 305 properties which were never included in the original programme, the total shortfall was £3,063,165. He advised that the report to Cabinet sought their view and agreement to fund that shortfall to enable all Decent Homes works to be completed by the target date of April 2015. He referred Members to paragraph 5.7 of the first report which set out what was believed to be the most prudent options for funding the shortfall. He pointed out that if Members decided to fund the shortfall, the amount currently identified would be the absolute maximum amount required, as it was likely that some properties had been sold through the right to buy process, and some tenants could refuse improvement works. He advised that if a tenant refused improvement works, they were required to sign a form to evidence the refusal, and the property would then become decent for the purposes of the HCA. He added that works would subsequently be completed when the tenant vacated the property.

The Director of Services referred Members to the financial impact of funding the shortfall as set out in the second report and the potential implications which were indicated. He advised that the principal focus at present was to accrue enough funds by 2021/22 to repay the initial loans against the housing stock. At present, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan indicated a small shortfall of £112,000 due to changes in the housing market. He commented that the housing market was very fluid and there were likely to be further changes that would need to be taken into account. He advised that to date, an increased assumption in respect of properties sold under the right to buy scheme had been built in due to a substantial increase over the last 3 years, which had had an impact upon income. He advised that an increased vacancy rate had also been built in to reflect the current position. He added that the 2013/14 budget setting process had also been reflected in terms of the provisions for bad debt. He advised that the significant emerging issue in respect of rents and the national convergence policy had yet to be considered. He stated that taking into account the shortfall and the additional funding required for the Decent Homes works, the Council would clearly not be in a position to repay the original loans against the housing stock. He added that no decision was being sought at this stage to address the shortfall, as there were other issues which needed to be built into the business plan. He referred Members to the options set out at paragraph 4.2 of the report and suggested that the most prudent and pragmatic way forward was a combination of reducing ongoing expenditure and refinancing the loans rather than repaying them. He advised that both of the reports would be considered by Cabinet on 29 July.

Councillor S Sheahan sought clarification on how much was spent on asbestos removal and stressed the importance of ensuring value for money. He asked if the Council was monitoring relationships between contactors and sub-contractors and whether officers were aware of any disputes or late payment issues. In respect of bad debt provision he asked whether the cause of the increase was due to the bedroom tax or rent levels generally.

The Director of Services agreed to provide a further breakdown of the costs of asbestos removal after the meeting. He advised that regular monitoring meetings took place with contractors and they were contractually required to make us aware of any disputes with sub-contractors. In respect of bad debt, he advised that it was difficult to indicate a specific cause as there were a number of issues which had had an impact. He added that in terms of rent arrears and the ability to pay, the welfare reform could be seen to have had a clear impact. He commented that there was also an increase in empty homes as people were moving into family homes or into shared accommodation.

Councillor S Sheahan commented that it would be helpful to have the extra 0.6% broken down and attributed to various causes to clarify where the problems were arising. He added that his question in respect of disputes with contractors had not been fully

answered and acknowledged that it may not be possible to disclose this in a public meeting.

The Director of Services responded that if there were any disputes, he would be unable to discuss these in a public meeting, however he was not aware of any at present.

Councillor S Sheahan referred to paragraph 3.7 of the HRA Business Plan report and sought clarification on the replacement ratio of affordable housing.

The Director of Services responded that there was no specific ratio for replacement, and the income received from right to buy sales was reinvested in delivering affordable housing once an agreed financial threshold was crossed.

Councillor S Sheahan asked whether the replacement ratio was genuinely one for one.

The Director of Services responded that it was not one for one, and the income available was invested in providing new affordable housing. He advised that the route chosen for the provision of affordable housing would determine the replacement ratio.

Councillor S Sheahan asked if the Director of Services was suggesting that a replacement ratio of one for one was unrealistic.

The Director of Services responded that a ratio of one to one was not required in any case and depending upon the route chosen and the value for money received, the ratio could be more or less than one for one.

Councillor S Sheahan requested an update on the current position regarding the review of sheltered housing schemes and the improvement priorities post 2014/15.

The Director of Services advised that options were currently being considered in respect of the review of sheltered housing schemes, and would be brought forward as part of the budget setting process for 2015/16. He added that he was unable to provide any further detail at this point. In respect of the improvement priorities, he advised that this would include issues such as how Members wished to utilise any headroom in the HRA budget, and clearly the options for dealing with the additional costs would need to be considered. He advised that this would also be part of the budget setting process.

Councillor S Sheahan asked if officers were recommending a particular approach following the completion of the consultation on the sheltered housing schemes.

The Director of Services responded that he was not in a position to share this information as the due processes had not yet been completed. He agreed to write to Councillor S Sheahan separately.

Councillor N Clarke asked if bringing 396 homes up to standard by March 2015 was achievable. He sought clarification on what the impact and cost implications would be of delaying works to some properties. He referred to the refusal rates outlined in the first report and asked whether this was genuinely a problem.

The Director of Services responded that if Members decided not to fund the shortfall, the Decent Homes Improvement Programme would not be met by 2015. He advised that the consequences of this were that the Council would not have achieved what it had set out to, and the properties would still require these works which would need to be funded in subsequent years. He added that the cost of any delayed improvement works could not be guaranteed and there was a risk that this may increase. In respect of refusals, he advised that there were a number of different reasons for this, such as the elderly or infirm

not wanting the disruption, or people not wanting works completed at a certain time of year. He explained that refusals from years 1 and 2 of the programme had been treated as deferrals. He added that ultimately the Council could not force the tenant to receive works to the property, with the exception of issues causing a risk to health and safety.

The Head of Finance added that the tenants who had refused works in years 1 and 2 were being revisited and offered partial works to try and ensure that homes were being made as decent as possible and the use of the funding available was maximised.

Councillor N Clarke asked if the work was achievable.

The Director of Services responded that the works could be completed by the target date of March 2015.

Councillor N Clarke referred to the financial implications as outlined in the second report. He asked what the impact of the additional costs would be on the revenue budget, and what the total budget was per year.

The Director of Services responded that the total HRA budget was just over £16,000,000.

The Head of Finance added that Appendix A to the first report set out the HRA budget and pointed out that savings could only be made on a limited number of budget heads as some of the funding was fixed. He added that there would need to be an assessment of where the least impact would be. He stated that the more palatable option would be to simply replace the loans which would have no impact upon the business plan, however there was a risk that the interest rate could be higher than at present.

Councillor D Howe stated that he remembered the last time right to buy agents were employed in this area. He commented that they had been very successful, however no new affordable housing had been provided.

Councillor A C Saffell commented that he was pleased to see value for money was being achieved and the Council was below the median for all costs. He congratulated the work that had been done to achieve this. He stated that he was equally disappointed that 91 homes were missed that now needed to be dealt with. He sought an explanation as to how they had been missed. He also requested an update on the previous report which had been provided regarding staff.

The Director of Services agreed to provide an updated report. He advised that the initial bid made to the HCA was not based on a survey of 100% of the housing stock. He advised that a 70% survey had been undertaken, which was comparatively quite high. He explained that the remaining properties had had an assumed rate of decency, and some of the assumptions made were wrong. He added that the decision had been taken to move to a 100% survey of the housing stock, which had come at a cost. He explained that in year 3, the final update of the survey had been completed, which included not only those properties which were due to be made decent, but also those where assumptions had been made about the levels of decency, and it was due to this process that the additional properties had come to light. He added that when the initial bid had been made, the Council was not in a position to undertake a 100% survey of the housing stock.

Councillor R D Bayliss added that at the time the initial survey was completed, this kind of opportunity had not been anticipated and staff had had to work with the information they had to submit the bid. He commented that under the circumstances, he was surprised that more properties had not been identified.

Councillor J Geary referred to the decision in 2007 to retain a housing stock which was in poor condition and not fit for purpose, which had required spending money. He added that there had been problems from day one as things had been done in a rush. He commented that 7 years later the Council was newly identifying non-decent properties, which indicated that the goalposts were always moving. He expressed concerns that more problems would arise in future and more money would be required to address them despite the assurances to the contrary. He added that he was not satisfied that the properties had been properly surveyed in the first instance. He asked if a contingency plan had been put in place. He also asked how the works were clerked and whether this was done in house. He asked how the Council was ensuring that value for money was being achieved and suggested that the statistics in the matrix could have been manipulated to the Council's advantage. He stated that he was very unhappy and requested a presentation to full Council on both reports going back to day 1 to enable members to chart how the current position had been arrived at as he believed more issues would arise. He expressed alarm regarding the refusal rates and felt that as a landlord, the Council had the right to maintain its properties as it saw fit. He sought clarification that a tenant would have no say if a property needed rewiring or work to the roof.

The Director of Services responded that tenants would have no say on any works required to address health and safety issues, such as rewiring.

Councillor J Geary stated that he would like a presentation at Council so that all Councillors who were interested could see how the current position had been arrived at, and to consider how this could be managed in future.

The Director of Services responded that it was a matter for Members if they wished to make a recommendation to Cabinet. In respect of any further issues arising, he stated that as a 100% condition survey had now been undertaken, this was the first time that officers were certain of the levels of decency. In respect of the quality of the survey, he reminded Members that 30% of the stock had initially not been surveyed at all. In respect of clerking the works, he advised that 3 contract supervisors were employed by the Council and their role was to ensure that works were completed to a satisfactory standard. In respect of the matrix, he advised that the figures were provided by the HCA and showed a comparison of all authorities who were receiving backlog funding.

Councillor J Geary stated that he would like to fully comprehend the bigger picture as he did not understand how this position had been reached. He commented that there was every possibility of a change of leadership next May and added that someone could be inheriting a complex mess.

Councillor S Sheahan seconded the motion for a presentation to Council. He expressed concern that this could happen again. He felt that this would allow a full debate on how this could be managed in future.

Councillor D Howe asked if the 91 houses identified were in one area.

The Director of Services advised that the 91 houses were spread across the district and no particular concentration was discernible in terms of location. He added that he was happy to provide this information if required.

The Chairman referred Members to the recommendations in the report and sought a proposition.

It was moved by Councillor N Clarke, seconded by Councillor J Geary and



RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet be asked to consider the comments from Policy Development Group prior to making decisions relating to the matters covered by this report.

Councillor S Sheahan referred to the request for a presentation at Council which had been moved and seconded.

The Director of Services responded that the intention was to attach the minutes of this meeting to the report to Cabinet, and the request for a presentation would be made clear. He added that this would then be a matter for Cabinet to consider.

Councillor S Sheahan sought clarification on whether it was necessary to refer this point to Cabinet.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer referred Members to section 7(b) of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules which indicated that Policy Development Group may make recommendations to Cabinet.

Councillor A C Saffell stated that he had asked a question a number of years ago as to how a Member could submit an item for a Council agenda. He stated that he was advised that such a request could be submitted to the Proper Officer via Democratic Services and the agreement of the Chairman could then be sought.

Councillor J Geary clarified that he was not particularly interested in having a debate at full Council, but wanted a presentation to enable all Members who were interested to attend to gain a full understanding of the issues.

The Director of Services responded that a request for a Member briefing in advance of Council could be accommodated far more easily. He added that the report received by Members at this meeting would eventually come before full Council and be debated.

Councillor S Sheahan added that as the seconder of the motion he felt the intention was to inform any subsequent debate.

The Chairman then put the motion to the vote and it was

RESOLVED THAT:

A briefing and presentation be arranged prior to full Council for all Members on the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan from its introduction to the present day.

## **7. UPDATING THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN**

It was moved by Councillor S Sheahan, seconded by Councillor A C Saffell and

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet receives the comments of Policy Development Group at its meeting on 29 July.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

The Head of Finance presented the report to Members, highlighting the changes to the strategy. He advised that corporate risks would now be reported to Cabinet each quarter

as part of the performance management framework. He invited comments and suggestions from Members.

Councillor S Sheahan asked whether the quarterly report to Cabinet would also be referred to the Audit and Governance Committee.

The Head of Finance responded that the corporate risk register would be reported to Cabinet and subsequently to the Audit and Governance Committee. He added that this formed part of the Council's internal controls and was a requirement as part of the Annual Governance Statement.

Councillor S Sheahan sought clarification on how it was decided what should be included in the risk register. He asked if contingencies were examined.

The Head of Finance responded that the risk register emanated from the business plans produced by each team. He advised that issues could be escalated either from the team directly or identified by the Corporate Leadership Team as a cross-cutting risk. He added that advice had also been sought from the Council's insurers and a workshop had been undertaken with the Corporate Leadership Team, which had informed the risk register. He explained that the risk register was a dynamic document and was reviewed each quarter.

Councillor S Sheahan asked if the external auditors had the opportunity to comment on the risk register.

The Head of Finance advised that external audit were fully engaged. He added that this formed part of the governance process and was fed into the September meeting.

Councillor N Clarke referred to paragraph 1.1 of the strategy and highlighted the first bullet point in respect of protecting the health, safety and welfare of employees. He commented that this should also include contractors and agency staff. He also asked why employee lost time injury rates had not been included in the report to Cabinet in the last year, and felt this should be included in future.

The Head of Finance responded that he was happy to put forward the suggestion to include contractors and agency staff in the objectives. He stated that he could not provide an answer in respect of the employee lost time injury rates and would explore the reasons why this had not been included.

It was moved by Councillor S Sheahan, seconded by Councillor N Clarke and

RESOLVED THAT:

Cabinet receives the comments of Policy Development Group at its meeting on 29 July.

## **9. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME**

Councillor J Geary referred to the item in respect of the refuse transfer facility. He commented that this was a decision for Leicestershire County Council and asked how the District Council would influence it.

The Director of Services advised that it was a matter for Leicestershire County Council to decide whether to place the facility in Coalville, however it would be located on property owned by the District Council, and as such there would be financial implications.

Councillor S Sheahan requested an item on the Medium Term Financial Strategy. He requested that Policy Development Group have sight of this prior to the report to Cabinet if possible. It was agreed that the possibility of rescheduling the next meeting be investigated to accommodate this.

Councillor S Sheahan referred to the request from Councillor T Neilson in 2012 to set up a sub group to look at the effectiveness of the Community Engagement Strategy.

Councillor T Neilson clarified that at the time of the original request, the strategy had only been recently introduced and it was decided to include this in the work programme for 2014/15.

Councillor A C Saffell referred to his suggestion 2 years ago for Members to ride around the district to see the outcome of previously approved planning applications. He felt that this would assist Members in learning the effect of their decisions. He commented that this had been agreed by the Committee and had appeared in the minutes, however he had heard nothing about the matter since.

The Director of Services responded that he would look into this further.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.05 pm

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**NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL****POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP - 1 OCTOBER 2014**

Title of report	<b>UPDATE OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION</b>
Contacts	<p>Councillor Nick Rushton 01530 412059 <a href="mailto:nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Chief Executive 01530 454500 <a href="mailto:christine.fisher@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">christine.fisher@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Head of Legal and Support Services 01530 454762 <a href="mailto:elizabeth.warhurst@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">elizabeth.warhurst@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a></p>
Purpose of report	To seek Scrutiny's comments on and recommendation to Council on proposed amendments arising from the Annual Review of the Constitution.
Reason for Decision	To comply with the Constitutional update procedure agreed by Council.
Council Priorities	Value for Money
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	None.
Link to relevant CAT	None.
Risk Management	A clear and up to date Constitution will minimise the risk of the Authority failing to comply with statutory requirements and assist in delivering its priorities and objectives.
Equalities Impact Assessment	Not applicable.
Human Rights	Not applicable.
Transformational Government	Clear and robust governance arrangements and procedures assist with the effective and efficient delivery of services and proper decision making.
Comments of Head of Paid Service	The report is satisfactory

Comments of Section 151 Officer	The report is satisfactory
Comments of Monitoring Officer	The report is satisfactory
Consultees	Statutory Officers. Head of Legal and Support Services.
Background papers	Report to Policy Development Group 16 July 2014. Local Government Act 1972.
Recommendations	<p><b>THAT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP:</b></p> <p><b>1. NOTES THE REPORT AND COMMENTS ON THE SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION</b></p> <p><b>AND</b></p> <p><b>2. MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL FOR ADOPTION.</b></p>

## **1. BACKGROUND**

1.1 Full Council regularly considers items relating to updates to the Constitution. The updates are generally required due to legislative and organisational changes or to clarify and improve processes within the Authority to reflect best practice. Members may recall that, in response to comments and suggestions made by members at Council, it was agreed that:

- (i) the Constitution underwent one main annual review - around the time of Annual Council;
- (ii) any remaining changes or matters arising after this date would be dealt with by way of one midyear review;
- (iii) further reviews or changes would only be suggested outside this process if legislation or national guidance required it;
- (iv) there was some “scrutiny” of the main annual review report whilst in draft and prior to its publication;
- (v) there would be informal consultation / engagement with members on the midyear and other reviews.

## **2. ROLE OF SCRUTINY**

2.1 Where amendments are identified and proposed, Policy Development Group is asked to consider and comment on the suggested amendments before the amendments are considered by Council.

### **3. PROCESS OF REVIEW**

- 3.1 As indicated at 1.1 above, updates are generally required due to legislative and organisational changes or to clarify and improve processes within the Authority to reflect best practice.
- 3.2 Each year a survey of officers is undertaken and they are invited to submit proposed amendments for consideration by the Monitoring Officer which arise from legislative changes, organisational changes or for reasons of business efficiency.
- 3.3 In parallel with this process the Legal Services team review any proposed legislation which is likely to require amendments to the Constitution.

### **4. REPORT OF THE INITIAL OUTCOME OF THE 2014 REVIEW**

- 4.1 Members will recall that the Head of Legal and Support Services presented a report to Policy Development Group on 16 July 2014 recommending that the annual review of the Constitution was postponed for the reasons set out at paragraphs 4.2 to 4.7 in the report. A copy of the report is a background paper.
- 4.2 The Head of Legal and Support Services is now able to report that the anticipated legislation referred to in her report of 16 July (The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014) (the Regulations) was enacted with immediate effect on 6 August 2014. The most immediate impact of those Regulations was that all meetings of the Council may now be recorded.

### **5. RECORDING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS - AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

- 5.1 Currently the Constitution is silent on the recording of meetings and as a result of the legislative changes it is felt appropriate to amend the Council Procedure Rules. In addition, the non-statutory guidance issued with the Regulations advises that it would be appropriate for councils to adopt a protocol on recording meetings in order that elected members, members of the public and the press are aware of the parameters within which recording will be permitted.
- 5.2 As the Regulations became effective immediately, officers have put in place interim arrangements to ensure that the Council complied with its duties but consider that it is appropriate that members comment on and approve the draft protocol that is currently being applied.
- 5.3 It is proposed that Standing Order 9 of the Council Procedure Rules (Smoking at Meetings) is deleted as this is no longer necessary as a result of legislative changes (Regulations made under the Health Act 2006) and replaced with a new Standing Order 9 (Recording of Meetings). Examples of the track-changed amendments are contained at Appendix 1.
- 5.4 In addition, a copy of the draft protocol to allow persons to film, photograph or make sound recordings, etc of proceedings at Council meetings is attached at Appendix 2 for comment and recommendation to Council. Also included are drafts of the resultant changes to the agenda front sheet, etc which members are asked to note.

## **6. DECISION RECORDS**

6.1 The Regulations published on 6 August 2014 also introduced new requirements in respect of the publication of decision records where officers make decisions under delegated powers from Council whereas currently decision records are only required where officers exercise delegated powers from Cabinet.

6.2 The requirements are that a decision record is now required:

where an officer makes a delegated decision following a delegation from Council, a committee, sub-committee or a joint committee in the following circumstances:

- (a) under a specific delegation;
- (b) under a general authorisation to officers to take such decisions and the effect of the decision is to:
  - (i) grant a permission or licence;
  - (ii) affects the right of an individual;
  - (iii) award a contract or incur expenditure which in either case materially affects the council's financial position.

A large number of these decisions are already published e.g. planning permissions; licensing decisions etc and officers are currently looking at how the publication of such decisions can be improved.

6.3 The Council's Rules of Procedures at Part 4 Section 4.4 Paragraph 8 of the Constitution have been amended to reflect this change. A track change amendment is attached at Appendix 2.

## **7. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION - ANNUAL REVIEW 2014**

7.1 There are a small number of requests to amend the Constitution to reflect organisational changes following departmental restructures, the correction of grammatical errors, changes in legislation and for the purposes of clarity which the Head of Legal and Support Services has delegated authority to deal with. In addition, the Head of Legal and Support Services wishes to bring the following matters to the attention of members.

## **8. MEMBERS INTERESTS**

8.1 The Head of Legal and Support Services considers that it would be useful for members if the Constitution was more specific in relation to members' interests under the Code of Conduct and, in particular, what constitutes a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and a Disclosable Non-Pecuniary Interest.

8.2 Members will recall that at the time that the current Code of Conduct was adopted in June 2012 (resulting from the changes brought about by the enactment of the Localism Act 2011), the Code required members to declare an interest of a type prescribed in Regulations made by the Secretary of State. To date the Secretary of State has prescribed Disclosable Pecuniary Interests by way of The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012/1464. Although no regulations have been made relating to Disclosable Non Pecuniary Interests, members will also



recall that the Cross Party Working Group which was established to consider the Code before its adoption made recommendations relating to such interests which were subsequently adopted by Council and are included on the current Members' Register of Interests form.

- 8.3 In the interests of clarity the Head of Legal and Support Services is of the opinion that the Code should contain specific details of both pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests and track changed amendments to the Code are attached at Appendix 3.

## **9. APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE**

- 9.1 The current delegations to the Appointments Committee are attached at Appendix 4.
- 9.2 As a result of several management restructures that have occurred over the years, which have resulted in a "flatter" management structure, there is more direct reporting by Team Managers to Statutory and Non-Statutory Chief Officers. A consequence of this is that in order to comply with the Constitution all Team Managers reporting to a Statutory or Non- Statutory Chief Officers are required to appear before an Appointments Committee.
- 9.3 Following informal discussions with the Group Leaders some members have expressed the view that it is unnecessary to convene the Appointments Committee for some Team Managers' posts and not others merely because the post reports directly to a Statutory or Non Statutory Chief Officer.
- 9.4 Therefore a number of recommendations are proposed to both streamline the Appointments process (and ensure that the Appointments Committee is only convened in respect of senior positions) and make the administration of the Committee more effective and efficient. Those recommendations include the election of a Chairman for the municipal year, the appointment of substitutes and specifying which appointments will require an Appointments Committee and/or the approval of members.

### **9.5 Appointment of a Chairman**

It is recommended that in line with other committees and sub-committees of the Council (other than Licensing Sub-committees) a Chairman and Deputy Chairman are appointed at the start of the year at Annual Council to Chair the Committee for the subsequent municipal year.

- 9.6 Council will be asked to appoint a Chairman and Deputy Chairman for the remainder of this municipal year at its meeting on 16 November 2014.
- 9.7 It has also been suggested that if appointed the Chairman's right to a second or casting vote should be restricted. However, the right to such a vote is governed by Section 4(3) of the Local Government Act 1972 which cannot be dis-applied.

### **9.8 Substitutes**

- 9.9 In line with other committees, members have the ability to appoint substitutes to the Appointments Committee in line with the Council's approved "Members' Substitute Scheme". Given the role of the Appointments Committee in appointing to senior positions within the Council, it is recommended that substitute members are drawn from Cabinet and members of the Shadow Portfolio Holders Group.

## **10. Amendment to the functions of the Appointments Committee**

- 10.1 As set out at 9.2 above, the Appointments Committee is currently involved in the appointment of all Team Managers who, because they report directly to a Statutory or Non-Statutory Chief Officer, are considered to be deputy chief officers. (A full definition of Statutory and Non-Statutory Chief Officers can be found at Pages 190-193 of the Constitution.)
- 10.2 Having taken on board the views of members that this approach is not always necessary or appropriate, it is recommended that the scope of such involvement is amended so as to ensure that, whilst the requirements of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and associated Regulations relating to the involvement of members in staffing matters is complied with, the Appointments Committee is only required to sit where necessary.
- 10.3 It is therefore recommended that the Appointments Committee will be involved in staff appointments on the following basis:
1. Head of Paid Service - by the Appointments Committee and approval of full Council.
  2. Directors - by the Appointments Committee and approval of Executive members.
  3. Heads of Service - including the Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer by the Appointments Committee and approval of Executive members.
- 10.4 The Head of Paid Service will be responsible for the appointment of all other members of staff in accordance with the requirements of the legislation identified at 10.2 above
- 10.5 Consequential amendments to the Officer Employment Procedure Rules are required and are shown at Appendix 5.
- 10.6 **Appointments to Shared Services / Joint Working Arrangements**
- 10.7 Members will be aware that the Council participates in a number of formal shared service arrangements, the largest being the Leicestershire Revenues and Benefits Partnership which operates under a specific contractual agreement between the participating authorities, all of which have differing constitutional requirements in relation to the appointment of staff.
- 10.8 In addition, there are a number of examples where the Council has undertaken strategic working on an ad-hoc basis which has also identified differing constitutional requirements. As such strategic working is likely to continue in the future, in the interests of consistency, effectiveness and efficiency in recruitment to such posts, it is recommended that appointments to a shared services / joint working arrangements should take place outside of the above Appointments Committee arrangements.

## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

board, group committee, or panel at which the appointment of staff is being considered or a meeting of a quasi judicial nature.

- 4.3 Rule 10 – questions by the public shall apply to the Policy Development Group.

### 5. NOTICE OF AND SUMMONS TO MEETINGS

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- 5.1 The Chief Executive or other authorised officer will give notice to the public of the time and place of any meeting in accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rules. At least 5 clear days before a meeting, the Chief Executive or other authorised officer will send a summons signed by him or her by post to every member of the Council or leave it at their usual place of residence. The summons will give the date, time and place of each meeting and specify the business to be transacted, and will be accompanied by such reports as are available. Clear days excludes the day of the meeting, the day on which the meeting is called, weekends and bank holidays.

### 6. CHAIRMAN OF MEETING

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- 6.1 The person presiding at a meeting of the Council may exercise any power or duty of the Chairman. Where these rules apply to meetings of boards or committees, references to the Chairman also include the Chairmen of boards or committees.

### 7. QUORUM

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- 7.1 Subject to any specific statutory requirement, the quorum of a meeting will be one quarter of the whole number of members or three voting members, whichever is the greater. If a quorum is not reached 15 minutes after the time appointed for the start of the meeting, the meeting will stand adjourned. During any meeting if the Chairman counts the number of members present and declares there is not a quorum present, then the meeting will adjourn immediately. Remaining business will be considered at a time and date fixed by the Chairman. If he/she does not fix a date, the remaining business will be considered at the next ordinary meeting.

### 8. DURATION OF MEETING

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- 8.1 All meetings of the Council will end after it has sat for three hours, except that an extension may be agreed by resolution to extend the meeting for no more than half an hour.

### 9. ~~SMOKING AT MEETINGS~~ RECORDING MEETINGS

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- 9.1 ~~Smoking will not be permitted at any meeting of the Council.~~

Members of the public and press may film, photograph or make sound recordings etc of proceedings at council meetings in accordance with the

[Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 and the Council's adopted recording protocol.](#)

## 10. QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

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**10.1 General.** Members of the public may ask questions of members of the Cabinet at ordinary meetings of the Council.

**10.2 Order of Questions.** Where provision is made for questions by the public at a Council meeting, a maximum of thirty minutes will be allowed for the questions and answers. Questions will be asked in the order of which notice of them was received, except that the Chairman may group together similar questions. The Chairman will decide the time allocated to each question.

**10.3 Notice of Questions.** A question may only be asked if notice has been given by delivering it in writing or by electronic mail to the Head of Legal and Support Services no later than midday three clear days before the day of the meeting. Each question must give the name and address of the questioner and must name the member of the Cabinet to whom it is to be put.

**10.4 Number of Questions.** At any one meeting no person may submit more than one question and no more than one question may be asked on behalf of any one organisation.

**10.5 Scope of Questions.** The Head of Legal and Support Services may reject a question if it:

is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the district;

is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;

is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months;

requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information;

relates to a planning application.

If a question is rejected the person who submitted it will be notified in writing before the meeting and given the reasons for the rejection.

**10.6 Record of Questions.** The Head of Legal and Support Services will enter each question in a book open to public inspection and will immediately send a copy of the question to the Cabinet member to whom it is to be put. Rejected questions will include reasons for rejection. Copies of all questions will be

## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

### 7. Accountability

- 7.1 You are accountable to the public for your decisions and you must co-operate fully with whatever scrutiny is appropriate to your office.

### PART 2 - INTERESTS

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### 8. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

- 8.1 Subject to Paragraph 11 (sensitive interests), you must within 28 days of

- (a) this code being adopted or
- (b) your election or appointment (where that is later)

Notify the Monitoring Officer of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests where such interest is

- (i) yours,
- (ii) your spouse's or civil partner's,
- (iii) somebody with whom you are living as husband and wife or civil partners
- (iv) that of your family,
- (v) close associate.

and you are aware that that person has the interest

- 8.2 Subject to Paragraph 11, you must within 28 days of becoming aware of any new Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or any change to any such interest, notify the Monitoring Officer in writing of that new interest or change pursuant to Paragraph 8.1.

- 8.3 You have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest if it is of a description specified in [the Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012/1464 as specified below:](#)~~made by the Secretary of State.~~

- (i) [Any employment, office, trade, profession or carried on for profit or gain;](#)
- (ii) [Sponsorship – Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit \(other than from the relevant authority\) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by a member in carrying out their duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of the member \(this includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations \(Consolidation\) Act 1992\)](#)
- (iii) [Any contract which is made between the relevant person \(or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest\) and the relevant authority:-](#)



9.1 Subject to Paragraph 11 (sensitive interests), you must within 28 days of

- (a) this code being adopted or
- (b) your election or appointment (where that is later)

notify the Monitoring Officer of any Disclosable Non-Pecuniary Interests.

9.2 ~~You have a Disclosable Non-Pecuniary Interests~~ are defined as (but not limited to) the following under this Code: if it is of a description specified in Regulations made by the Secretary of State.

(i) Any gift or hospitality you have received with an estimated value of £25.00 or more which must also be registered in the Gifts and Hospitality Register

(ii) Sensitive Information under Paragraph 11 of the Code of Conduct

(iii) Any body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by the Council

(iv) Any body:-

(a) Exercising functions of a public nature;

(b) Directed to charitable purposes; or

(c) One of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union), of which you are a member or in the position of general management

9.3 Where you have a Disclosable Non-Pecuniary Interest you may remain in the meeting, speak and vote on the matter unless to do would compromise your impartiality obligations or any other obligations set out in this Code.

## 10. Dispensations

10.1 Dispensations may be granted by the Monitoring Officer for one meeting only on request in writing from you.

10.2 Requests for Dispensations must be made in writing detailing what the interest is, why it is required and for what meeting.

10.3 Requests must be made 5 days prior to the meeting at which the Dispensation is required.

## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

- 6.1.1 A copy of the agenda including the item (or a copy of the item) is open to inspection by a member of the public for at least five clear days before the meeting or, where the meeting is convened at shorter notice, from the time the meeting is convened, or
- 6.1.2 By reason of special urgency, which shall be specified in the minutes, the Chairman of the meeting is of the opinion that the item should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency.
- 6.2 “Five clear days” excludes the day of the meeting, the day on which the meeting is called, weekends and bank holidays.
- 6.3 “Special urgency” justifying an item being considered as a matter of urgency will relate to both why the decision could not be made by calling a meeting allowing the proper time for inspection as well as why the item of report could not have been available for inspection for five clear days before the meeting.
- 6.4 Where the item of business relates to an executive decision Rules 14-17 will apply.

### 7. SUPPLY OF COPIES

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- 7.1 The Council will in the first instance direct an interested person to the Council’s website and offices where such information is available, but where copies are required the Council will supply copies of:
- 7.1.1 any agenda and reports which are open to public inspection;
- 7.1.2 any further statements or particulars necessary to indicate the nature of the items in the agenda; and
- 7.1.3 any other documents not exempt or excluded in connection with an item to any person on payment of a charge for postage and any other costs.

### 8. ACCESS TO MINUTES, ETC AFTER THE MEETING

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- 8.1 The Council will make available at its offices and on its website copies of the following for six years immediately after a meeting of a decision making body at which a decision is made:
- 8.1.1 Records of all decisions taken by:
- [a\) -Cabinet-; and](#)
- [b\) Where an officer makes a delegated decision following a delegation from Council, a committee, sub-committee or a joint committee in the following circumstances:](#)



- i) Under a specific authorisation; or
- ii) Under a general authorisation to officers to take such decisions and, the effect of the decision is to:-
  - a) Grant a permission or licence
  - b) Affect the rights of the individual; or
  - c) Award a contract or incur expenditure which, in either case materially affects the the Council's financial position

8.1.2 Any report considered by the decision maker in making the decision excluding any part which discloses exempt or confidential information.

## 9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

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### 9.1 List of Background Papers

- 9.1.1 The Proper Officer will set out in every report a list of those documents (background papers) relating to the subject matter of the report which in his/her opinion:
- disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based; and
  - which have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report;
  - but does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential information (as defined in Rule 11).

### 9.2 Public Inspection of Background Papers

- 9.2.1 Where a report is made available to the public a list of the background papers connected to the report will also be available together with at least one copy of each of those papers. The documents will also be available on the Council's website.

## 10. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC'S RIGHTS

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- 10.1 A written summary of the public's rights to attend meetings and to inspect and copy documents must be kept at and available to the public at the Council Offices, Coalville.

## 11. EXCLUSION OF ACCESS BY THE PUBLIC TO MEETINGS

**North West Leicestershire District Council - Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014**

**Protocol to allow persons to film, photograph or make sound recordings, etc, of proceedings at council meetings.**

North West Leicestershire District Council is committed to being open and transparent in the way it conducts its business. The press and public are therefore welcome to film, photograph or record decision making at any meeting which is open to the public. This includes meetings of full council, cabinet and meetings of committees and sub-committees.

This should be done in such a way as not to disrupt the conduct of the meeting or stop other members of the public from being able to see, hear or film the proceedings.

We ask therefore, that anyone wishing to photograph, film or record proceedings abides by the following:

**Audio and visual recording - your obligations**

Where possible, please inform democratic services if you intend to film or record a public meeting so that necessary arrangements can be made.

Any photography or audio/visual recording must take place from a fixed position in the meeting room approved by the chair so as to minimise disruption to the proceedings.

No oral commentary is permitted.

The use of flash photography or additional lighting will only be permitted for a limited period during the meeting at a point in the proceedings agreed in advance with the chair.

If the chair feels that any photography, audio or visual recording is disrupting the meeting in any way or any pre-meeting agreement has been breached then the operator of the equipment will be required to stop.

If, during the course of a meeting, a motion is passed to exclude the press and public because confidential or exempt information is likely to be disclosed, then all rights to record the meeting are removed and the operator of the equipment will be required to stop recording and/or photographing and remove all equipment from the room for the duration of the private session.

If a meeting for which agreement has been given to record or photograph is adjourned by the chair, then the operator of the equipment should stop any recording or photography at the point at which the meeting is adjourned.

Anyone filming a meeting must only focus on those actively participating, and not on people seated in the public gallery/seating area, particularly children or those persons who have expressed an objection to being filmed.

Photographs, audio, and visual recordings should not be edited in a way that could lead to misinterpretation of the proceedings. This includes refraining from editing the views being recorded in a way that may ridicule or show lack of respect.

## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

Council. The content of this paragraph will be included in any recruitment information.

2.2.2 No councillor will seek support for any person for any appointment with the Council.

2.2.3 No councillor shall give a reference (oral or written) for a candidate for employment by the Council.

### 3. RECRUITMENT OF HEAD OF PAID SERVICE AND CHIEF OFFICERS

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3.1 Where the Council proposes to appoint a chief officer (including the Head of Paid Service) and it is not proposed that the appointment be made exclusively from among their existing officers or by way of interim appointment, the Council will:

3.1.1 draw up a statement specifying:

- (a) the duties of the officer concerned; and
- (b) any qualifications or qualities to be sought in the person to be appointed.

3.1.2 make arrangements for the post to be advertised in such a way as is likely to bring it to the attention of persons who are qualified to apply for it; and

3.1.3 make arrangements for a copy of the statement mentioned in sub paragraph 3.1.1 to be sent to any person on request.

### 4. APPOINTMENT OF HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

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4.1 The full Council will approve the appointment of the Head of Paid Service following the recommendation of such an appointment by an Appointments Committee established in accordance with Rule 5.1 below. That Committee must include at least one member of the Cabinet.

4.2 The full Council may only make or approve the appointment of the Head of Paid Service where no well-founded objection has been made by any member of the Cabinet.

### 5. APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF OFFICERS ~~AND DEPUTY CHIEF OFFICERS~~

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5.1 All permanent (as opposed to interim) appointments to chief officer ~~and deputy chief officer~~ posts shall be made on a resolution of the Appointments Committee, which shall be established by the Council. The Appointments Committee must include at least one member of the Cabinet.

5.2 An offer of permanent or interim employment as a chief officer ~~or deputy chief officer~~ shall only be made where no well-founded objection from any member of the Cabinet has been received.

5.3 Subject to paragraph 5.5 below, in these Rules, chief officers are defined as:

5.3.1 the Chief Executive (as Head of Paid Service)

5.3.2 the statutory chief officers (Chief Finance Officer and the Monitoring Officer)

5.3.3 the non-statutory chief officers which are:

(a) officers for which the Chief Executive is responsible

(b) officers in the Chief Executive's Department who report to or who are directly accountable to the Chief Executive by virtue of the nature of their duties; and

(c) officers who report to or who are directly accountable to the Council itself or any committee of the Council by virtue of the nature of their duties.

## **5.4 APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHIEF OFFICERS**

5.4 Subject to paragraph 5.5 below, in these Rules, deputy chief officers are defined as officers in departments who, by virtue of the nature of their duties, either report to or are directly accountable to the statutory or non-statutory chief officer responsible for that department.

**5.5 All permanent (as opposed to interim) appointments to deputy chief officer shall be made by the Head of Paid Service provided that no well-founded objection from any member of the Cabinet has been received.**

5.5 Rules 5.3 and 5.4 do not apply to officers whose duties are solely secretarial and clerical or are in the nature of support services or to officers below Head of Service level.

## **6. PROCEDURE FOR THE PERMANENT APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF OFFICERS ~~AND DEPUTY CHIEF OFFICERS~~**

6.1 **Appointment Process.** The following process will apply after an Appointments Committee has interviewed all shortlisted candidates:

6.1.1 If the Committee agrees on a candidate suitable for the post, it will indicate its 'provisional intention to make an offer' to the Chief Executive.

**NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP – 1 OCTOBER 2014**

Title of report	<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY</b>
Contacts	<p>Councillor Alison Smith MBE 01530 835668 <a href="mailto:alison.smith@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">alison.smith@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Chief Executive 01530 454500 <a href="mailto:christine.fisher@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">christine.fisher@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Head of Community Services 01530 454832 <a href="mailto:john.richardson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">john.richardson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a></p>
Purpose of report	To establish a task and finish group to review the Community Engagement Strategy 2012/15
Council Priorities	<p>Value for Money Business and Jobs Homes and Communities Green Footprints Challenge</p>
Implications:	n/a
Financial/Staff	To be delivered through existing budgets and staff
Link to relevant CAT	n/a
Risk Management	n/a
Equalities Impact Screening	n/a
Human Rights	n/a
Transformational Government	n/a
Comments of Head of Paid Service	Report is satisfactory
Comments of Section 151 Officer	Report is satisfactory

Comments of Monitoring Officer	Report is satisfactory
Consultees	n/a
Background papers	n/a
Recommendations	<b>THAT POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP NOMINATES UP TO FIVE MEMBERS OF THE GROUP FOR A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY TASK AND FINISH GROUP</b>

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 In May 2012 Cabinet approved the Council’s Community Engagement Strategy 2012-15 (attached as Appendix One) to define how the Council will work together to inform, consult and involve local people in decision making and improving public services.

1.2 At its meeting of 16 July 2014 Policy Development Group requested the following item be placed on the forward work plan for the group,

*“to create a working party to investigate the effectiveness of current methods of consultation measured against the aims of the Community Engagement Strategy and to suggest any improvements as required and to highlight areas where consultation works well”*

1.3 The proposed item could be a small or potentially large piece of work. In order to focus the work of the group it is proposed to consider the effectiveness of consultation methods against the aims of the Community Engagement Strategy by;

- Considering examples where consultation has worked well
- Considering examples where consultation has not been used as effectively as it could have
- Considering ways to improve consultation
- Recommend any improvements to existing practice
- Update and refresh the Community Engagement Strategy with any proposed changes for the period 2015-2018

1.4 It should be noted that some proposed changes or improvements may need testing for effectiveness prior to being included in the refreshed 2015-2018 Community Engagement Strategy. This will need to be a consideration of the task and finish group as part of any final recommendations.

## 2.0 NEXT STEPS

- 2.1 It is proposed to establish a task and finish group comprising of up to five members of the Policy Development Group and the following officers;

Karen Talbot – Stronger and Safer Communities Team Manager  
Wendy May - Community Focus Team Leader  
(meeting to be administered by Democratic Services)

- 2.2 The date of the first meeting of the task and finish group will now be discussed.

- 2.3 The proposed format would be as follows;

Meeting One	Elect a Member as Chair of the group Receive an officer report of where consultation has worked well and where it has not been used as effectively as it could have been Group discussion Agree areas to consider at the next meeting
Meeting Two	Receive a further officer report Consider any changes to be made to the Community Engagement Strategy for 2015-2018 and/or any appropriate actions to be undertaken
Meeting Three	Finalise any changes to the Community Engagement Strategy 2015-2018 and make recommendations to Policy Development Group highlighting any potential financial or operational resource implications

- 2.4 The task and finish group will report back to Policy Development Group who will then make recommendations for Cabinet to consider at the next available Cabinet meeting.

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# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2012-15



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Community engagement is vital to making sure that North West Leicestershire is the best it can be. To get involved in making the District a better place we need local people to let us know what they think. To do this we need to provide consistent good quality and co-ordinated engagement by the Councillors and officers of the Council who influence and provide services.
- 1.2 This strategy outlines how we will work together to inform, consult and involve local people in decision making and improving public services in North West Leicestershire. It is for everybody who has a role to play or who wants to get involved in influencing the District's future and enhancing the quality of life for people across North West Leicestershire.
- 1.3 The strategy is supported by a Community Engagement Toolkit which has been developed to help Council members and officers plan and conduct consultation and engagement events. The Toolkit also outlines the process by which this activity will be co-ordinated and the information used to improve services.

## 2. WHAT IS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

- 2.1 Community engagement is not an 'add-on' service and it is not the responsibility of a single team or department. It is a commitment to involving communities across North West Leicestershire in what we do. 'Communities' is a term that does not always best reflect the complexity of how our local communities are made up. For example there are communities based around where people live, where they work, where they socialise and also communities who share similar interests, circumstances or backgrounds. We want to be in a position where everyone who chooses to can clearly see the ways in which they can engage with the Council.
- 2.2 Essentially, community engagement is about making sure that people can get involved and take part in a range of ways in the planning, development and delivery of services. It goes further than informing and consulting local people by seeking to enable communities to take an active part in influencing decision-making and service delivery. The main levels of community engagement are:

Levels	In other words...	What it means
<b>Empowering</b>	We help people to take responsibility for doing or running something themselves...	A group or community has achieved autonomous, independent or arms-length control over planning, commissioning, management, delivery and evaluation of projects and services; public service providers may have a monitoring or advisory role

<b>Participating</b>	We mobilise the community to help us decide what to do...	People are supported and enabled to represent their community, evaluate services, highlight specific issues and develop solutions in partnership with decision-makers
<b>Involving</b>	We bring people together to talk about issues and ideas...	Members of the community come together to share experiences and work collectively to identify potential solutions. Decisions on what actions to take are influenced but remain the responsibility of decision-makers
<b>Consulting</b>	We ask people what they think...	Measuring public opinion on an issue or proposal
<b>Informing</b>	We tell people something...	Information is made available to the whole community or part of it, in an accessible way

2.3 Every type of involvement is important in the community engagement process and different methods will be used depending on the activity and circumstances. Sometimes it may be appropriate to inform or consult on some activities, while at other times we will seek to involve communities and individuals in much greater depth. Our aim is to work towards devolving decision-making and supporting independent community initiatives wherever possible and to demonstrate where this type of community engagement activity can make genuine improvements to services.

### 3. WHY HAVE A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY?

#### 3.1 National Legislation

In April 2009, a new legal ‘**duty to involve**’ came into force for local authorities and health. This duty:

- Requires local authorities to “*embed a culture of engagement and empowerment. This means that authorities consider, as a matter of course, the possibilities for provision of information to, consultation with involvement of representative local persons across all authority functions*”
- Highlights the need to demonstrate how stakeholders and service users are consulted, informed and involved.

**The Big Society** is about real community empowerment. It means that local people have the freedom and power to help themselves and their communities. To enable this to happen, Central and Local Government, including North West Leicestershire District Council need to transfer more responsibility and control to local communities, neighbourhoods and individuals. The Council also needs to be more transparent. If local people are to play a bigger role in society, they need the necessary information to hold an organisation to account and to take action themselves.

**The Localism Bill** received Royal Assent on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2011. Through the Localism Act, the Government is committed to the decentralisation of power and devolving power from government directly to individuals and local Communities. This is about putting people back in control of decision making and handing power directly to people encouraging them to take greater responsibility for their area.

**The Equality Act 2010** requires local authorities such as North West Leicestershire to be transparent in their engagement processes and be able to demonstrate this through publishing information about the engagement it has undertaken.

**The requirement for Social Landlords** to consult their tenants as defined by legislation and the Tenant Services Authority.

### 3.2 **Local Ambition**

The Council wants to deliver better services which strengthen the confidence and abilities of our communities not only to influence, but also take greater control of the services we provide. We need a better knowledge of the obstacles that can affect the relationship between the Council and residents so that we can take appropriate measures to ensure no individual or community feels excluded.

We want to encourage all members of the community to take an active role in improving their own lives and those of their families, neighbours and friends. It is the role and responsibility of the Council to help and support those communities who are willing to take up the challenge of working with the Council on planning, developing and delivering a better future.

### 3.3 This Strategy seeks to:

- Improve service delivery and outcomes for local people
- Ensure people can be engaged about things that matter to them
- Reduce inefficiency and duplication in engagement by the Council
- Increase the satisfaction levels of local people
- Strengthen the links between communities and the Council
- Enable local people to influence service improvements

The Community Engagement Strategy will be refreshed every three years.

## 4. WHERE ARE WE NOW?

4.1 The Council already has lots of experience of local community engagement. Some examples are mentioned below:

**Community Focus** – the establishment of 3 locality based teams to:

- Provide a framework for agencies to work together to put plans in place so that local people can shape local services and their communities, and vice versa
- Ensure the district council has a greater understanding of its communities
- Ensure the district council can map out existing levels of community activity and draw up community profiles
- Ensure the Council and all of its services are responsible for delivering and creating the 'Improving Local Services' agenda and co-production of services

**Community Forums** – are held quarterly across the District and play a role in ensuring that the services provided in the area match the needs of local people.

**Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** - highlights the Council's guiding principals to encourage people to become involved in the planning process.

**Housing Communications Strategy 2010-15** - ensures that a coordinated and strategic approach is given to all communications and consultations activity with tenants.

**Council's Constitution** – describes Citizens' Rights in relation to information and participation. It also outlines how the Council will respond to petitions.

**Tenant Compact** - encourages and supports all tenants to become more involved with the services the Council provides for them. The service seeks to find the best forms of participation for particular service issues using a variety of methods and techniques.

**Vision** – the Council's magazine which is distributed to all households.

**Youth Focus** – a group of young people who work on a project focused basis by setting up self-led task and finish groups.

**Better Business for All** - is made up of representatives from local businesses within the District. Forum members are able to improve and develop services that directly impact local businesses.

However the Council recognises that it's approach to community engagement could be better co-ordinated. This would reduce consultation fatigue, improve outcomes for local people and also provide better value for money.

## 5. WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

5.1 The Council's vision for the future is that:

*"North West Leicestershire will be a place where people and businesses feel they belong and are proud to call home".*

5.2 We aim to be responsive to the needs of the community and to involve them in decision-making and shaping services. To achieve this information, consultation and involvement must be provided on the right issues targeted at the right people at the right time in an accessible way. The Council is committed to involve and empower the District's residents and communities.

5.3 This Strategy seeks to establish a more robust approach to community engagement. The following standards will be adopted to ensure that co-ordinated methods of community engagement are adhered to:

### **STANDARDS**

#### **a. Clarity of Purpose**

Before beginning any engagement activity, we will be clear about why it is happening, what the relevance is to the people we are involving, what we want to achieve, which engagement activity we will use, what the community can and cannot influence, and how we will use the information gathered through the engagement activity.

#### **b. Evidence Base**

We will use all available research, knowledge and community intelligence including qualitative information to help us plan engagement activities. We will not carry out engagement activities if the information we need is already available. However, we recognise that sometimes the process of involving people is an end in itself to ensure that everyone is committed to the outcomes.

#### **c. Timing**

We will allow sufficient time to design and carry out engagement activities that are inclusive and encourage participation from all affected communities. We will also allow sufficient time to ensure that the results of engagement activities can shape our policies, plans and services to meet the needs of our communities.

#### **d. Quality**

We will work to ensure that officers responsible for engagement have the skills and capacity to achieve high quality engagement. We will ensure that they are aware of the barriers there can be to engagement and how they can be overcome. Equally, we will work to ensure that communities have the opportunity to develop their skills and capacity to engage if they wish.

#### **e. Partnership**

We will identify the appropriate partners, with particular recognition of the knowledge and expertise of the voluntary and community sector, and carry out

engagement activities in partnership where appropriate. This will allow us to appropriately target engagement activities and to avoid duplication of effort (this will help us to avoid 'consultation fatigue' in our communities).

**f. Communication**

We will always be open, honest, and accountable when sharing information and responding to contributions from all participants. We will also communicate between partners to create joined-up engagement activities and avoid duplication of effort. We will ensure there are clear referral routes for issues which arise during engagement activities.

**g. Inclusion**

We will support a variety of engagement activities to reflect the diversity of our communities and will be responsive to the ways that the community wants to engage with us. We will carry out equality impact assessments and endeavour to involve people in a way which meets their needs rather than ours, ensuring that there are accessible ways for them to initiate engagement. We will recognise the complexity of engaging with seldom heard groups and vulnerable groups, and people who face additional barriers to engagement, such as accessibility and transport issues.

**h. Feedback**

We will provide feedback to the community about the engagement activities we carry out and will explain how the community's input contributed to the decision-making process. We will explain how and when we will provide feedback to the community at the same time as we carry out the community engagement exercise. We will also make the feedback as widely available as possible.

**i. Monitoring & Review**

We will monitor and review the engagement activities we carry out to ensure that all sections of the community have the opportunity to engage should they choose to, particularly those whose voices are often not heard, and change our practices accordingly. We will evaluate effectiveness and share learning.

**j. Resources**

We will plan engagement activity and underpinning community development activity carefully in the light of what those activities seek to achieve and in the context of available resources and will communicate any constraints clearly.

**KEY AIMS**

5.4 Our key aims are set out below:

**AIM 1: To strengthen, develop and sustain opportunities for all local people to influence what happens in their communities**

5.5 We will help and support local people, using the lessons learned from our engagement experiences so far, ensuring we continue to involve people in decision

making. Local people will then have the confidence and ability to influence what happens in their communities, whether those communities are based on geography or special interest.

- 5.6 We will also provide opportunities for communities to shape and influence the development and delivery of quality services and policies that reflect local needs and priorities.
- 5.7 We will ensure that community engagement activities provide opportunities for participation for all sections of the community, particularly people and groups that are often missed out of community engagement activities.

**AIM 2: To listen, be responsive & feedback to the community**

- 5.8 The Council values informed and constructive challenge and views on proposals relating to service delivery. We recognise the importance of feedback to the community in response to all forms of communication including consultation surveys and requests for information. We will ensure feedback to participants about the outcomes of consultation and community engagement.

**AIM 3: To improve the community engagement knowledge and skills of our officers and Members**

- 5.9 The Council recognises that community engagement is the responsibility of both officers and Councillors. It will ensure that the necessary tools and training are available to help plan and deliver appropriate engagement that is effective, efficient and informed.

**AIM 4: To support the management of collected data and results**

- 5.10 The Council recognises that data needs to be collected in an ethical and consistent way. It will develop improved data sets, by population and area, and compare differences in responses that could lead to a better understanding of equality and locality issues.
- 5.11 This aim will be supported through the introduction of on-line consultation software. This will enable a more co-ordinated consultation process with better use made of the gathered information.



## 6. HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE OUR AIMS?

- 6.1 It is not intended to develop a separate action plan to deliver this Community Engagement Strategy. The Council's aims and objectives will be delivered through the Council's Delivery Plan, Service & Team Plans and Single Partnership Equality and Diversity Scheme action plan. This will avoid duplication and also help to ensure that the engagement of local residents, businesses, partner organisations and visitors is mainstreamed into the day-to-day work of the Council's services.

## 7. MEASURING SUCCESS

- 7.1 The success of our Community Engagement Strategy can be measured through customer satisfaction levels. Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things was measured by the Best Value User Satisfaction Survey then every two years through the Place Survey. The 2008 Place Survey results provided a national baseline showing the Council's current performance in relation to community engagement. The Council also carried out a 'tracker' Place Survey during 2010.
- 7.2 With the cancellation of the Place Survey we are not required to report against the National Indicators previously measured by the Survey. However, we will be undertaking an **Annual Residents Survey**, as we still need to report against these measures for our key documents such as the Council Delivery Plan.

	2008	2010	2011	Difference
NI 1: the % of people who believe that people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area.	74.9%	77.3%	TBC	TBC
NI 2: % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood.	59.9%	61.3%	TBC	TBC
NI 3: Civic participation in a local area.	10.5%	9.9%	TBC	TBC
NI 4: % of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality.	24.8%	28.1%	TBC	TBC

Figures above to be inputted post special CLT on 24<sup>th</sup> April

- 7.3 The **Housing Tenants Survey** known as STATUS was abolished as a mandatory measure of customer satisfaction regarding housing for local authorities in 2010 although certain elements of it have remained as a requirement for housing associations. However a replacement lighter touch survey has been developed by

Housemark, the industry standard benchmarking organisation. This is the Housing related STAR survey which will also be carried out bi-annually.

- 7.4 A **Waste Survey** will also be completed every year. The questionnaire will cover service specific issues including general awareness of waste issues, perception of current waste management services, and attitudes to waste reduction, recycling and other waste management technologies
- 7.5 A **Listening Week** will be held annually to obtain the views of leisure centre users and non-users. Local people will be encouraged to have their say about the activities on offer and will also be able to comment on the quality of the facilities and standards of service provided.
- 7.6 In addition to these formal surveys we will be looking to proactively find opportunities to ask customers throughout the year how satisfied they are with the service they receive and how we can improve.
- 7.7 The Performance and Projects Team will work closely with the Community Focus Team to co-ordinate customer survey information and build a repository of information that can be shared across the council avoiding duplication and maximising effectiveness. In addition we will ensure that learning and improvements that are implemented as result of the feedback that we receive is publicised to customers.

**NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP – 1 OCTOBER 2014**

Title of report	<b>MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) 2015/16 – 2018/19</b>
Contacts	<p>Councillor Nick Rushton 01530 412059 <a href="mailto:nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Chief Executive 01530 454500 <a href="mailto:christine.fisher@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">christine.fisher@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Head of Finance 01530 454520 <a href="mailto:ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a></p>
Purpose of report	To receive the Committee's comments on the Cabinet's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 – 2018/19.
Council Priorities	Value for Money
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	Financial issues are contained within the attached Cabinet report.
Link to relevant CAT	All affected.
Risk Management	If the overall level of savings is not achieved within the four year timescale the Council's ability to deliver its priorities could be put at risk. The Council must provide a balanced budget by law.
Equalities Impact Assessment	No requirement identified.
Human Rights	None identified.
Transformational Government	None identified.
Comments of Head of Paid Service	Report is satisfactory
Comments of Section 151 Officer	As report author the report is satisfactory.
Comments of	Report is satisfactory

Monitoring Officer	
Consultees	As detailed in the attached Cabinet report.
Background papers	Report to Cabinet 23 September 2014 (attached).
Recommendations	<b>THAT THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP PROVIDES ANY COMMENTS IT MAY HAVE ON THE COUNCIL'S MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2015/16 – 2018/19.</b>

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Cabinet is being asked to approve the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 – 2018/19 at its meeting on 23 September 2014. The Policy Development Group requested at its last meeting that the MTFS be included on its work programme as soon as possible.
- 1.2 The report to Cabinet is attached at Appendix 1. Whilst the Cabinet is being asked to approve the MTFS at its meeting on 23 September, this Committee can comment and these comments can be considered by the Cabinet in formulating its budget proposals which it will approve for consultation on 18 November 2014.
- 1.3 The budget consultation will be held from 1 December 2014 to 16 January 2015 and the Policy Development Group will be asked for its comments at its meeting on 7 January 2015.

## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## CABINET – 23 SEPTEMBER 2014

Title of report	<b>MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) 2015/16 TO 2018/19</b>
Key Decision	a) Financial Yes b) Community Yes
Contacts	Councillor Nicholas Rushton 01530 412059 <a href="mailto:nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>  Chief Executive 01530 454500 <a href="mailto:christine.fisher@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">christine.fisher@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>  Head of Finance 01530 454520 <a href="mailto:ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>
Purpose of report	The purpose of the report is to establish the financial strategy for the Authority for the next four years and to set out a high level timeline for the production of the 2015/16 General Fund Revenue Budget.
Reason for Decision	Requirement of the budget setting process.
Council Priorities	Value for Money
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	Financial issues are contained within the report.
Link to relevant CAT	Impacts over all Corporate Action Teams (CATS)
Risk Management	Preparation of a Medium Term Financial Strategy reduces the risk of adverse impact on the provision of services in a climate of reducing resources.
Equalities Impact Assessment	No impact at this stage.
Human Rights	No impact at this stage.
Transformational Government	The strategy outlined responds to the requirement to deliver a more efficient authority within reducing and changing resource levels.

Comments of Head of Paid Service	Report is satisfactory
Comments of Section 151 Officer	As report author the report is satisfactory
Comments of Monitoring Officer	Report is satisfactory
Consultees	Corporate Leadership Team
Background papers	None
Recommendations	<b>THAT CABINET APPROVES THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AS OUTLINED IN THIS REPORT AND NOTES THE OUTLINE TIMETABLE FOR THE 2015/16 BUDGET PROCESS.</b>

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This review has been undertaken to update the MTFFS and to highlight the financial issues facing the Council. Since the current MTFFS was approved in June 2013 the Council has approved a balanced budget for 2014/15 and responded to the Government's reforms of local government funding including the Local Retention of Business Rates and the Localisation of Council Tax Support. The MTFFS below has also been updated to reflect revised interest rates and inflation forecasts as well as estimated changes to government grants.
- 1.2 The review covers the General Fund only but reflects recharges to/from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The latter was subject to a separate business plan case approved in January 2012 reflecting the debt settlement due to the government in 2012 and the other major changes in the operation of the HRA effective from 1 April 2012. The HRA Business Plan is currently being updated and will be presented to members for approval later this year. The revised Plan will take account of the increased number of council homes being made decent and the increased costs of completing the Decent Homes Investment Programme by March 2015.
- 1.3 Potential capital expenditure over the next four years will be covered by separate reports to Cabinet running in line with the Revenue Budget process for 2015/16. However, this MTFFS assumes that there will no net material revenue impacts from that expenditure.

## 2. REVISED MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

- 2.1 The MTFFS set out in Appendix 1 illustrates the financial and operational challenges facing the Council over the next four years. It is the Council's aim to approve balanced budgets and bridge the funding gap by the end of March 2019. Proposals will be put forward at future Cabinet meetings setting out how this will be achieved.

2.2 As can be seen from Appendix A by 2018/19 there is an estimated ongoing budget shortfall of £1.4m per year. This can clearly change as there are many elements of the budget which are fluid e.g. National and local policy changes and more reliance on local income (business rates, service income and fees and charges).

2.3 The 2015/16 – 2018/19 financial plans indicate that ongoing savings will be needed profiled as follows:

2015/16	£365k
2016/17	£343k
2017/18	£366k
2018/19	£351k

As part of continuing sound financial management over the last few years, the savings target will be met through a variety of strategies including additional income generation, continuing efficiencies and better use of our asset portfolio.

2.4 The budget shortfalls currently projected will be manageable and is a reflection of the Council's forward thinking in making year on year efficiencies without impacting on front line service delivery. The projected shortfalls could change significantly even in the short term particularly if there are changes to Central Government funding. The projections also do not take into account the impact of budgetary decisions which other partner organisations might take beyond 2015/16.

2.5 In preparing the MTFS the risk of losing income from the County Council currently paid as credits for recycled materials has been identified. The County is proposing to cease paying credits on Green Waste and not pay the annual increase for inflation from 2015/16 on all recycled materials. The Council received £269k from the County Council in Green Waste recycling credits for 2013/14 and next year's inflation uplift is worth a further £11k. As part of its 2014/15 budget proposals the County Council also provided some indication of other budget reductions from 2015/16 which could impact on the District Council. Whilst these pressures have not been built into our budget projections it is recommended that £300k is set aside as a contingency for this from 2015/16. The total income received from the County Council in recycling credits is around £536k a year and the remaining income could be withdrawn in future years. This has not at this stage been factored into the MTFS.

## 2.6 MTFS Assumptions

2.6.1 The main assumptions used in the MTFS are set out in Table 1.

Table 1

<b>Summary of Assumptions</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>
Council Tax - % increase	0%	0%	0%	0%
Inflation Rate Applied to Salaries - % increase	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%
Revenue Support Grant (Reduction)	Provisional	-10%	-10%	-10%
Inflation Rate Applied to Non-Pay items	1.50%	1.50%	1.50%	1.50%
Interest Rates - average for NWL - internal and external investments	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%	0.50%
Increase in the Council's Pension contributions	1.00%	1.00%	1.00%	0.00%

## 2.7 Government Grants

- 2.7.1 Central Government has provided provisional grant information for 2015/16 but projecting levels of funding beyond next year is complicated by the General Election in May 2015. The assumptions made in this report are already subject to annual review and we would respond to any unforeseen changes which are announced. The initial assumption in this report is that from 2016/17 onwards Revenue Support Grant will reduce by 10% each year.
- 2.7.2 Income from business rates is also effectively Central Government funding with the potential to retain a proportion of any increases from growth in the tax base. Under new arrangements which started in 2013/14 the District shares gains and/or losses at a rate of 40%. There is however a 50% levy on any net increase so at best only 20% of additional rates would be retained by the District. As the Council is no longer participating in county-wide pooling arrangements the 50% levy would go to Central Government rather than the countywide Pool. The Council will however have the security of the national safety net arrangements rather than the risk of depending on resources in a local pool to pay any safety net payments required. The MTFs currently assumes no losses or gains on business rates. The Council's aim will be to increase its business rates base and increase the amount of business rates retained locally to assist in bridging the projected budget shortfalls. Unfortunately whilst the business rates base can increase it can also reduce because of a variety of reasons including reductions following appeals, statutory relief payments and provisions for future losses.
- 2.7.3 Our New Homes Bonus (NHB) projections assume increases of £0.5m in 2015/16 when it will reach £1.9m and £0.2m in 2016/17 taking it to £2.1m. From 2017/18 the NHB which was paid from the first year of the scheme will drop out and we are likely to see a levelling off in this income under the current rules and assuming similar levels of housing growth. However more general reductions are always possible and beyond 2016/17 the considerable financial pressures of the scheme are quite likely to force the Government to review the mechanism. Each new home brings the District approximately £1000 in New Homes Bonus representing 80% of a national average Band D Council Tax Charge. The County Council benefits from 20%.
- 2.7.4 The MTFs assumes that the New Homes Bonus (NHB) is retained for general use. Alternative uses would include specific capital or revenue items but each pound used for those purposes would increase the General Fund Budget shortfall by a similar amount.



## 2.8 Council Tax

2.8.1 Council Tax freezes each year have been assumed in the financial plans. Growth in the Council Tax base of 1% has been assumed although in reality this is subject to considerable variation each year depending how many new properties have been listed for Council Tax in the previous year.

## 2.9 Revenue Reserves

2.9.1 The 2013/14 Provisional Outturn Report approved by Cabinet on 29 July 2014 set out how the underspending from arising from additional income and further efficiencies would be utilised. This left a balance of around £1.1m before any potential surpluses in 2014/15. This is in line with maintaining a minimum balance of £1m which the Council's Section 151 Officer and the Council's external auditors are satisfied with.

2.9.2 As part of the same report the Cabinet approved further allocations from the Value For Money Reserve. It is projected that around £750k will remain unallocated and available in this reserve for other projects.

## 2.10 Future Risks

The MTFS has been compiled with less than a year before the next General Election. Whilst it is generally accepted that future governments will need to continue to reduce public expenditure and Local Government funding will continue to fall, it is unclear what the impact on individual authorities will be. The current emphasis on New Homes Bonus and Business Rate Retention provides opportunities for district councils such as ours to increase revenue whilst Revenue Support Grant is reduced. There is the risk that a future government could change this emphasis and that this Council could be disadvantaged by revised resource allocation policies. Savings projections beyond 2015/16 can only be tentative at this time and we need to be prepared for more challenging savings targets in response to higher than assumed reductions in grant.

## 3. **OUTLINE BUDGET TIMETABLE 2015/16**

3.1 The table below sets out the outline budget timetable for 2015/16:

<b>Action</b>	<b>Dates</b>
MTFS agreed by Cabinet	23 September 2014
Cabinet's draft budget proposals agreed	18 November 2014
Consultation undertaken	1 December 2014 to 16 January 2015
Policy Development Group consideration	7 January 2015
Cabinet makes final budget recommendations to Council	10 February 2015
Council agrees 2015/16 Budget	24 February 2015

3.2 The report to Cabinet in November will set out the draft budget proposals for closing the projected budget shortfall in 2015/16.

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	2014-15		2015-16			2016-17			2017-18			2018-19		
	Budget	Growth	Savings	Budget	Growth	Savings	Budget	Growth	Savings	Budget	Growth	Savings	Budget	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Base Budget	10143			10546			10480			10543			10482	
Pay Inflation	0	105		105	105		105	110		110	110		110	
Increased Pension Costs	0	120		120	120		120	0		0	0		0	
Contingency for Partners' Proposals	0	300		300	0		0							
Non-Pay Inflation	0	177		177	180		180	195		195	195		195	
Transfer to Reserves	403		-403	-403			0			0			0	
Savings needed	0		-365	-365		-343	-343		-366	-366		-351	-351	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10546</b>	<b>702</b>	<b>-768</b>	<b>10480</b>	<b>405</b>	<b>-343</b>	<b>10543</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>-366</b>	<b>10482</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>-351</b>	<b>10436</b>	
<b>Funding</b>														
Revenue Support Grant	1774			1680			1512			1361			1225	
Business Rates	1902			2035			2076			2117			2160	
LCTS Grant	661			0			0			0			0	
New Homes Bonus	1395			1900			2100			2100			2100	
Council Tax Freeze Grant	56			57			0			0			0	
Council Tax	4611			4758			4806			4854			4902	
Council Tax Surplus	147			50			50			50			50	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10546</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10480</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10543</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10482</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10436</b>	

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# DRAFT Notice of Executive Key Decisions

The attached notice lists the matters which are likely to be the subject of a key decision by the Council's executive and executive decision making bodies. This notice is produced in accordance with the Constitution adopted by North West Leicestershire District Council and will be published a minimum of 28 days before the date on which a key decision is to be made on behalf of the Council.


The date of publication of this notice is Friday, 19 September 2014. The Deadline for making any representations as to why items marked as private should be considered in public by **Cabinet on 21 October 2014 is 5pm Friday, 10 October 2014.**

## Key Decisions

A key decision means a decision taken by the Cabinet, a committee of the Cabinet, an area or joint committee or an individual in connection with the discharge of a function which is the responsibility of the executive and which is likely:

- (a) to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the Council;
- (c) for the purposes of (a) and (b) above £100,000 shall be regarded as significant in terms of expenditure or savings, and any issue which, in the opinion of the Leader is likely to have an impact on people, shall be regarded as significant in terms of impact on communities.

## The Council's Executive

 The Council's executive committee is the Cabinet. The Cabinet comprises:

Councillor R Blunt	-	Leader	Councillor T J Pendleton	-	Regeneration and Planning
Councillor A V Smith MBE	-	Deputy Leader and Community Services	Councillor N J Rushton	-	Corporate
Councillor T Gillard	-	Business	Councillor R D Bayliss	-	Housing

## Confidential Items and Private Meetings of the Executive

Whilst the majority of the Cabinet's business at the meetings listed in this notice will be open to the public and media organisations to attend, there will inevitably be some business to be considered that contains, for example, confidential, commercially sensitive or personal information. This is a formal notice under the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 that part of the Cabinet meetings listed in this Forward Plan may be held in private because the agenda and reports for the meeting contain exempt information under Part 1 Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. Those Items where it is considered that they should be considered in private are identified on the Notice.

## Access to Agenda and Related Documents

Documents relating to the matters listed in this notice are available at least 5 clear working days prior to the date of decision as indicated below. Other documents relevant to the matters listed in this notice may be submitted to the decision maker.

If you wish to request or submit a document, or make representation in relation to any issue contained within this notice, please contact Democratic and Support Services on telephone number 01530 454512 or by emailing [memberservices@nwleicestershire.gov.uk](mailto:memberservices@nwleicestershire.gov.uk)

## Executive Decisions

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker
Redevelopment of the Pick and Shovel Public House - Coalville Strategic Site	Cabinet	Key	Public	21 October 2014	Councillor Roger Bayliss Tel: 01530 411055 roger.bayliss@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Housing Tel: 01530 454780 chris.lambert@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report
Memorandum of Understanding relating to Objectively Assessed Need for Housing	Cabinet	Key	Public	21 October 2014	Councillor Trevor Pendleton Tel: 01509 569746 trevor.pendleton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Director of Services Tel: 01530 454555 steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report Memo randum of Understanding
Review of Housing Policies	Cabinet	Key	Part Private Some background papers contain exempt information	21 October 2014	Councillor Roger Bayliss Tel: 01530 411055 roger.bayliss@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Housing Tel: 01530 454780 chris.lambert@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report
Developing the 2015/ 16 HRA Budget and HRA Capital Programme	Cabinet	Key	Public	21 October 2014	Councillor Roger Bayliss Tel: 01530 411055 roger.bayliss@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Housing Tel: 01530 454780 chris.lambert@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker
Superfast Broadband	Cabinet	Key	Part Private Some background papers contain exempt information	21 October 2014	Councillor Tony Gillard Tel: 01530 452930 tony.gillard@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Legal and Support Services Tel: 01530 454762 elizabeth.warhurst@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report
Small Grants Scheme	Cabinet	Key	Public	21 October 2014	Councillor Alison Smith MBE Tel: 01530 835668 alison.smith@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Community Services Tel: 01530 454832 john.richardson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report
Refuse and Recycling Policy	Cabinet	Key	Public	21 October 2014	Councillor Alison Smith MBE Tel: 01530 835668 alison.smith@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Community Services Tel: 01530 454832 john.richardson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report and Refuse & Recycling Policy
Exemption to The Council's Contract Procedure Rules - Web Hosted Choice Base Lettings System	Cabinet	Non-Key	Private Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	21 October 2014	Councillor Roger Bayliss Tel: 01530 411055 roger.bayliss@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Housing Tel: 01530 454780 chris.lambert@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker
Asset Management Strategy and Corporate Capital Strategy	Cabinet	Key	Public	18 November 2014	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454520 ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report
Local Plan Update	Cabinet	Key	Public	18 November 2014	Councillor Trevor Pendleton Tel: 01509 569746 trevor.pendleton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Director of Services Tel: 01530 454555 steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report
General Fund Revenue Budget Proposals 2015/16	Cabinet	Key	Public	18 November 2014	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454520 ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Cabinet Report
HRA Budget Proposals for 2015/16	Cabinet	Key	Public	18 November 2014	Councillor Roger Bayliss Tel: 01530 411055 roger.bayliss@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Housing Tel: 01530 454780 chris.lambert@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report



Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker
Q2 Performance Report	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	18 November 2014	Councillor Richard Blunt Tel: 01530 454510 richard.blunt@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Legal and Support Services Tel: 01530 454762 elizabeth.warhurst@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Quarter 2 Performance Report
Minutes of the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party - 14 October 2014	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	18 November 2014	Councillor Alison Smith MBE Tel: 01530 835668 alison.smith@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Community Services Tel: 01530 454832 john.richardson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report & Minutes of Meeting
Draft General Fund Capital Programme 2015/16 - 2018/19	Cabinet	Key	Public	9 December 2014	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454520 ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report
Former Tenant Rent Arrears, Current Tenant Rent Arrears, Council Tax, Non Domestic Rates and Sundry Debtor Write Offs	Cabinet	Key	Part Private Some background papers contain exempt information	9 December 2014	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454520 ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker
Local Plan Update	Cabinet	Key	Public	9 December 2014	Councillor Trevor Pendleton Tel: 01509 569746 trevor.pendleton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Director of Services Tel: 01530 454555 steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report
Council Tax Base 2015/16	Cabinet	Key	Public	13 January 2015	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454520 ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report
Minutes of the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party - 16 December 2014	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	10 February 2015	Councillor Alison Smith MBE Tel: 01530 835668 alison.smith@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Community Services Tel: 01530 454832 john.richardson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report and Minutes of Meeting
General Fund Budget 2015/16	Cabinet	Key	Public	10 February 2015	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454520 ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker
Capital Programmes 2015/16 - 2018/9	Cabinet	Key	Public	10 February 2015	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454520 ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report
Treasury Management Policy and Strategy Statements	Cabinet	Key	Public	10 February 2015	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454520 ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report
Former Tenant Rent Arrears, Current Tenant Rent Arrears, Council Tax, Non Domestic Rates and Sundry Debtor Write Offs	Cabinet	Key	Part Private Some background papers contain exempt information	3 March 2015	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454520 ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report
Q3 Performance Report	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	3 March 2015	Councillor Richard Blunt Tel: 01530 454510 richard.blunt@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Legal and Support Services Tel: 01530 454762 elizabeth.warhurst@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Quarter 3 Performance Report

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker
Minutes of the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party - 21 April 2015	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	16 June 2015	Head of Community Services Tel: 01530 454832 john.richardson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report and Minutes of Meeting
Q4 Performance Report	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	16 June 2015	Head of Legal and Support Services Tel: 01530 454762 elizabeth.warhurst@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Quarter 4 Performance Report
Treasury Management Stewardship Report 2014/15	Cabinet	Key	Public	16 June 2015	Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454520 ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report