

Meeting	<b>CABINET</b>
Time/Day/Date	5.00 pm on Tuesday, 10 December 2013
Location	Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville
Officer to contact	Democratic Services (01530 454512)

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

### PART A

Item	Pages
<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
<b>2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b>	
<b>3. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION</b>	
<b>4. MINUTES</b>	
Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 19 November 2013.	<b>3 - 8</b>
<b>5. STRATEGIC RAIL FREIGHT INTERCHANGE (SRFI) UPDATE</b>	
Report of the Director of Services Presented by the Regeneration and Planning Portfolio Holder	<b>9 - 12</b>
<b>6. PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2013 - 2018</b>	
Report of the Director of Services Presented by the Housing Portfolio Holder	<b>13 - 36</b>



<b>7.</b>	<b>GENERAL FUND AND SPECIAL EXPENSES REVENUE BUDGETS 2014/15 AND 2015/16</b>	
	Report of the Head of Finance Presented by the Corporate Portfolio Holder	<b>37 - 82</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>DRAFT HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2014/15 AND RENT INCREASE</b>	
	Report of the Head of Finance Presented by the Corporate Portfolio Holder and Housing Portfolio Holder	<b>83 - 96</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION OF MOBILE WORKING WITHIN THE HOUSING SERVICE</b>	
	Report of the Director of Services Presented by the Housing Portfolio Holder	<b>97 - 100</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2014/15</b>	
	Report of the Head of Finance Presented by the Corporate Portfolio Holder	<b>101 - 106</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>LEICESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP REVENUES AND BENEFITS JOINT COMMITTEE - APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS</b>	
	Report of the Head of Finance Presented by the Corporate Portfolio Holder	<b>107 - 108</b>
<b>12.</b>	<b>MINUTES OF THE GRANTS REVIEW WORKING PARTY</b>	
	Report of the Director of Services Presented by the Community Services Portfolio Holder	<b>109 - 114</b>
<b>13.</b>	<b>FORMER TENANT RENT ARREARS, CURRENT TENANT RENT ARREARS, COUNCIL TAX, NON DOMESTIC RATES AND SUNDRY DEBTOR WRITE-OFFS</b>	
	Report of the Head of Finance Presented by the Corporate Portfolio Holder	<b>115 - 120</b>

MINUTES of a meeting of the CABINET held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2013

Present: Councillor R Blunt (Chairman).

Councillors R D Bayliss, T Gillard, T J Pendleton, N J Rushton and A V Smith MBE.

In attendance: Councillors N Clarke, J Geary, J Legrys, S Sheahan and L Spence.

Officers: Mr S Bambrick, Mr R Bowmer, Ms C E Fisher, Mrs M Meredith and Miss E Warhurst.

**53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies received.

**54. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no interests declared.

**55. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

There were no questions received.

**56. MINUTES**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2013.

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**57. CITY DEAL UPDATE**

The Leader presented the report to Members. He stated that the City Deal agreement was a mechanism to access £10,000,000 funding from the Regional Growth Fund and additional funding to develop a business support growth hub. He explained that the focus of the City Deal would be job creation and supporting people into employment.

Councillor A V Smith stated that the scheme was a good piece of work which would bring jobs into the area and provide apprenticeships and training for young people.

Councillor R D Bayliss commended the scheme.

It was moved by Councillor R Blunt, seconded by Councillor A V Smith and

RESOLVED THAT:

a) The submission of the final negotiation document for the City Deal to Central Government be noted and endorsed; and

b) The establishment of the Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Growth Board to facilitate the negotiation of the City Deal be noted.

**Reason for decision:** To note the timescales involved with the City Deal process and the arrangements overseeing this.

**58. SUPPORTING NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE FAMILIES**

The Regeneration and Planning Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members, drawing their attention to Appendix 2, which gave examples of the issues faced by four families and the outcomes which had been achieved. He explained that the team were currently working with 224 individuals and had the second largest caseload in Leicestershire. He reported that 3 members of staff had been trained to deliver parenting classes. He added that there was more work to be done.

Councillor N J Rushton referred to Appendix 1 and the impact of domestic abuse and welcomed the funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner to deal with this issue.

It was moved by Councillor T J Pendleton, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT:

a) The report be noted.

b) Cabinet continue to support the ongoing development of the Supporting Families Programme in North West Leicestershire.

**Reason for decision:** To ensure Cabinet is kept up to date with on-going service developments.

**59. RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT AGREEMENT (2013-15)**

Councillor R D Bayliss presented the report to Members, drawing their attention to the good work of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel as outlined in Appendix 1. A report from the Tenant Scrutiny Panel following their first assignment would be brought to Cabinet in the New Year.

It was moved by Councillor R D Bayliss, seconded by Councillor T Gillard and

RESOLVED THAT:

The adoption of the Resident Involvement Agreement (2013-15) detailed in Appendix A of the report be approved.

**Reason for decision:** The partnership agreement (formerly known as the Tenants Compact) between the Council and its Tenants and Leaseholders which provides the framework for resident involvement in housing services has been reviewed and updated. It now reflects the requirements of the service and its tenants and leaseholders for the short and medium term.

**60. CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT SAFEGUARDING POLICIES UPDATE**

The Regeneration and Planning Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members, explaining the Council's statutory obligations in respect of safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults. He stated that the updated policies would ensure that the Council remained at the forefront of good practice.

It was moved by Councillor T J Pendleton, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The updated 2013 Children and Young People and Adults Safeguarding Policies be approved.
- b) Authority for annual updates be delegated to the Director of Services in consultation with the Regeneration and Planning Portfolio Holder.

**Reason for decision:** To comply with the Council's statutory duty to ensure compliance with safeguarding duties as detailed in the Children Act 2004 and Working Together 2013.

#### 61. **WASTE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE PROCUREMENT**

The Community Services Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members, drawing their attention to the benefits of the software which would save money and build upon the high levels of customer satisfaction.

It was moved by Councillor A V Smith, seconded by Councillor R D Bayliss and

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The procurement process selected for the procurement of waste management software as part of the ICE programme be noted; and
- b) Authority be delegated to the Director of Services in consultation with the Community Services Portfolio Holder to award the waste management software contract, in accordance with evaluation criteria as set out in the framework.

**Reason for decision:** The level of potential expenditure exceeds the authority threshold in the Scheme of Delegation.

#### 62. **2013/14 QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT**

The Leader presented the report to Members, outlining some of the key performance highlights in respect of Council Tax collection rates, Leisure Centre memberships, the General Fund forecast, sickness absence rates, affordable housing delivery and improvements to customer service.

Councillor A V Smith reported that Leisure Centre membership income was £25,000 above target and the summer usage had been exceptional. She commented on the proactive work done by the Environmental Health team due to a large number of changes in ownership of food establishments.

Following a question from Councillor N J Rushton, the Head of Legal and Support Services agreed to provide further information on the additional income in respect of Health and Food Safety.

Councillor T J Pendleton referred to the additional income from Planning and Development Control Fees. He outlined the two areas which were below target, one of which was related to the River Mease issue and the other due to vacancies within the team.

Councillor R D Bayliss reported that the Decent Homes Improvement Programme was behind due to one of the contractors having had staffing problems. He added that they were working on the backlog and he was confident this target would be back on track in the next quarter. He referred to the satisfaction rate in respect of repairs and reiterated that this was an unreliable statistic due to the low return rate of the questionnaire. He added that officers were working on a better means of collecting the data.

Councillor T Gillard stated that he looked forward to the improvements to Coalville Indoor Market commencing soon.

It was moved by Councillor R Blunt, seconded by Councillor T J Pendleton and

RESOLVED THAT:

The Quarter 2 Performance Report (July – September 2013) be received and noted.

**Reason for decision:** The report is provided for Members to effectively monitor the organisation's performance.

### **63. REFUSE WASTE TRANSFER FACILITY (COALVILLE)**

The Community Services Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members, drawing their attention to the benefits of the proposal as outlined at section 2 of the report and the update sheet which had been circulated at the meeting. She stated that the proposals would save a lot of money. She added that the site was located next to Leicestershire County Council's site and was the location where the lorries were already stored.

Councillor R Blunt invited Councillor J Geary to speak.

Councillor J Geary expressed concerns that the proposed site was within 150m of shops, 250m from residential dwellings and 650m from the town centre. He added that in summer, the prevailing winds would direct any smells towards the town centre. He expressed concerns regarding smells, flies and rodents. He stated that people considered the Ashby site to be better as it was in the open countryside, and there was a better highways infrastructure in place. He asked if Leicestershire County Council had given consideration to using the Ashby site, and why the Coalville site was considered more beneficial.

Councillor A V Smith responded that the site at Lount was privately owned, so was not under the control of Leicestershire County Council. She added that the land at Lount was quite undulating and would not be conducive to such a facility. She added that the benefit of using Linden Way was that it was an existing site which was well managed and was the most logical place to install this facility. With regard to flies and smells, she stated that the waste handled would be black bin waste, so if people recycled properly, this would not be an issue. She explained that there were roller doors on the site which would only be open when the waste came in and the waste would not be stored on site for long. She added that rodent control would be a priority. She reminded Members that this was an 'in principle' approval only.

It was moved by Councillor A V Smith, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

RESOLVED THAT:

The development of a refuse waste transfer facility for Coalville be approved in principle at the Linden Way depot.

**Reason for decision:** To ensure efficient use of public sector resources through seeking in principle approvals prior to committing funds to a project.

#### **64. MINUTES OF THE COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES WORKING PARTY**

The Community Services Portfolio Holder presented the report to Members, drawing their attention to the allotments at Greenhill which had now been officially opened and named the Jubilee Allotments, and the green gym which had been very well used.

Councillor R Blunt invited Councillor N Clarke to speak as Chairman of the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party.

Councillor N Clarke drew Members' attention to part 1 of recommendation b. He explained that there had been a long debate with regards to the Remembrance Day service and the Working Party had unanimously agreed that it was not right to demote the responsibility for this to the Coalville Special Expenses area. He added that it was a central event attended by the Chairman, Chief Executive and the MP. He stated that the event should be funded through the General Fund budget, particularly as next year was the 100th anniversary of World War I, and there would be additional attention on the event. He felt that it may give the perception that the Council thought the event was less important if it was funded through the Coalville Special Expenses area. He added that prioritising the event and funding it through the General Fund could have a positive impact. He felt that a contribution from the Coalville Special Expense area could be explored. He urged Members to support the recommendation.

Councillor A V Smith acknowledged the importance of the Remembrance Day Service to every Member. She reminded Members that the event was held across the whole of the District and every Parish funded its own event. She added that dignitaries attended more than one event in the District. She considered that the Working Party would be proud and pleased to take on the responsibility for the event. She stated that a decision on this matter should be deferred to enable further investigation in respect of where savings could be made. She stated that she would then like to meet with a group of Members from the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party to discuss how the event should be funded. She added that she felt it would be unfair to ask people in Appleby and Castle Donington to contribute to the event in Coalville.

Councillor N J Rushton asked what progress had been made on forming a Town Council for Coalville. The Chief Executive advised that an approach would need to be made to the Council to undertake this particular piece of work.

It was moved by Councillor A V Smith, seconded by Councillor R Blunt and

**RESOLVED THAT:**

- a) The minutes of the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party attached at Appendix 1 be approved.
- b) The Events Task and Finish Group consider the 2014/15 events programme and other budget changes in light of the proposed reallocation of funds from the General Fund to the Coalville Special Expenses budget.
- c) The Community Services Portfolio Holder to meet with Members of the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party to discuss further the funding of the Remembrance Day service.

**Reason for decision:** To progress Coalville Special Expenses projects and programmes.

The meeting commenced at 5.00pm and closed at 5.50pm.



## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## CABINET – 10 DECEMBER 2013

	STRATEGIC RAIL FREIGHT INTERCHANGE (SRFI) UPDATE
Key Decision	a) Financial Yes b) Community Yes
Contacts	Councillor Trevor Pendleton 01509 569746 <a href="mailto:trevor.pendleton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">trevor.pendleton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>  Director of Services 01530 454555 <a href="mailto:steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>  Head of Regeneration and Planning 01530 454782 <a href="mailto:david.hughes@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">david.hughes@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>
Purpose of report	To seek Cabinet's 'in principle' support for the East Midlands Gateway development proposal north of East Midlands Airport
Reason for Decision	To provide assurance of the Council's in principle support of the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) proposal
Council Priorities	Business and Jobs
Implications:	This report indicates the potential impacts of a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange proposal within the district
Financial/Staff	The Council will be consulted on an application and there will be a cost in preparing the Council's response
Link to relevant CAT	Business CAT
Risk Management	Risk assessments will be completed as appropriate
Equalities Impact Assessment	None discernible
Human Rights	None discernible
Transformational Government	Any response to the eventual application will be prepared in partnership with Leicestershire County Council who will also be a consultee
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	None.
Background papers	None.
Recommendations	<b>CABINET SUPPORTS 'IN PRINCIPLE' THE EAST MIDLANDS GATEWAY STRATEGIC RAIL FREIGHT INTERCHANGE PROPOSAL.</b>

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 As part of the preparation of the previous Core Strategy document, the Council agreed to support a policy which would facilitate the development of a Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) within the district.
- 1.2 For the past two years, the SRFI proposal for the district has been north of East Midlands Airport, near to Lockington and Hemington and has become known as the East Midlands Gateway or Roxhill proposal.
- 1.3 Up until recently work had been underway by the promoters of the East Midlands Gateway site (Roxhill) to submit a planning application for the scheme to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) for their determination in the summer of 2013. The project is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008, and therefore is required to be the subject of an application for development consent to be submitted to (PINS). The Planning Act 2008 establishes the legal framework for the preparation of, and then the determination of NSIP proposals and applications. A final decision whether to grant development consent will be made by the Secretary of State for Transport.
- 1.4 However during 2013, the Government announced the outline route for the High Speed 2 rail link (HS2). The initial HS2 route cut straight through the Roxhill proposed site. Consequently Roxhill have agreed amendments to the HS2 proposal with Government. These changes would entail extending the tunnel which passes underneath East Midlands Airport to also avoid the Roxhill site and therefore not prejudice the future delivery of that site.
- 1.5 Therefore, the Roxhill proposal is now likely to be subject to public consultation in January 2014 with a likely submission to PINS of March/April 2014.

## **2.0 THE PROPOSAL**

2.1 The site consists of land to the north of East Midlands Airport, east of Castle Donington. It is located south of the villages of Lockington and Hemington, and immediately west of the M1 junction 24. The site as identified for the planned application also consists of the land necessary to accommodate the proposed infrastructure works, including land to the south of Kegworth for a new bypass road. The key benefits of the project that are currently known are to provide:

- a. Up to 6 million sq.ft. of rail connected warehousing floorspace;
- b. Around 7,000 jobs involving a wide range of technical, managerial, administrative and operational posts;
- c. Up to 900 construction jobs;
- d. A new dedicated rail access, from the Nottingham – Birmingham freight only line;
- e. A full inter modal freight facility;
- f. Improved strategic highway arrangements, with a newly configured Junction 24 of the M1, and additional capacity at Junction 24a;
- g. New local access arrangements to Lockington and Hemington, including the closure of the junction of Church Street with the A50 (delivering local road safety benefits);
- h. Provision of additional public transport connectivity to the East Midlands Gateway site, including enabling the extension or enhancement of existing bus services to link communities such as Coalville;
- i. Significant landscaping and earthworks which would result in the buildings being substantially screened from the west (Castle Donington), and north (Lockington-Hemington); and
- j. The provision of a new by-pass to the south of Kegworth

2.2 Clearly however a site of this nature would not be without its impact. The creation of the warehousing floorspace will require very substantial buildings which, whilst they will be substantively screened, they will not be completely obscured. Additionally, such a significant development will inevitably create a significant amount of new traffic movements. There may also be noise impacts resulting from the operations at the site. These are all impacts that will be scrutinised by PINS once an application has been submitted. It is anticipated that any background evidence required to inform the Local Impact Assessment will be undertaken jointly with Leicestershire County Council who will also need, in due course, to inform PINS of their formal view of the application.

## **3.0 THE INFRASTRUCTURE APPLICATION**

3.1 Once a planning application is submitted, the Council, will be invited to prepare a Local Impact Assessment of the proposals and to submit that assessment to PINS for their consideration. This impact assessment will essentially form the Council's detailed and formal view on the application.

3.2 Clearly therefore it would not be possible at this stage, in the absence of such information for the Council to reach a detailed view on the application. However given that the application is imminent and since the revocation of the former Regional Spatial Strategy along with the Council's withdrawal of its emerging Core Strategy, it is considered necessary for Cabinet to offer an 'in principle' view of the development proposals to provide some assurance to both the promoters of the scheme, but also the local communities what the Council's position is likely to be.

3.3 Cabinet should also note that the applicants are seeking to confirm a view on their application from both the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) and

Leicestershire County Council (LCC). Both the LLEP and LCC have previously expressed their general support for the proposals.

#### **4.0 THE NWLDC VIEW**

- 4.1 The Roxhill proposals have previously been considered and supported in principle by the Council as part of the development of the emerging Core Strategy. It is recognised that the proposals are likely to have a significant impact on the local area surrounding Lockington and Hemington and Castle Donington. However that impact needs to be weighed against the benefits of a proposal of this nature, summarised in paragraph 2.1.
- 4.2 Clearly Cabinet will want to reserve its formal position on the Roxhill proposals until all of the details of the scheme are known. However, given the substantial potential for job creation and the likely local, regional and national benefit of such a proposal, it is recommended to Cabinet that 'in principle' support for the Roxhill scheme should be offered at this stage and the applicants encouraged to submit their application to PINS at the earliest opportunity to allow the detailed examination of the scheme to take place.

## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## CABINET – 10 DECEMBER 2013

Title of report	<b>PREVENTION OF HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2013 – 2018</b>
Key Decision	a) Financial No b) Community Yes
Contacts	Councillor Roger Bayliss 01530 411055 <a href="mailto:roger.bayliss@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">roger.bayliss@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>  Director of Services 01530 454555 <a href="mailto:steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>  Head of Housing 01530 454780 <a href="mailto:chris.lambert@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">chris.lambert@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>
Purpose of report	To seek approval of the draft strategy
Reason for Decision	To comply with government legislation
Council Priorities	Homes & Communities
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	The approved budget and staffing structure 2013/14, provides the necessary capacity and resources to implement the proposed strategy and Action Plan.
Link to relevant CAT	Private Sector Housing CAT
Risk Management	Delivery of the Strategy and Action Plan will be monitored through the NWL Homelessness Forum. Any risks will be included in the Corporate Risk Register as and when identified
Equalities Impact Assessment	An equalities impact assessment was undertaken on 10 September 2013 and approved by the Fairer CAT on 23 October 2013. An improvement action plan has been developed to address any potential negative impacts that were identified
Human Rights	None identified
Transformational Government	This strategy has been co-designed with input from service users, internal colleagues and a wide range of external, statutory and voluntary, partner organisations
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	Corporate Leadership Team, Head of Housing, Street Action Team, Housing Management Team, Stronger Safer Team, NWL Homeless Forum, Housing Choices Team, Members, Policy Development Group, service users, general public
Background papers	<a href="#"><u>Making Every Contact Count: A Joint Approach to Preventing Homelessness</u></a> ; s.179 Housing Act 1996, Part 7 (as amended); <a href="#"><u>Housing Strategy 2012-2015</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Laying the Foundations, A Housing Strategy for England (2011)</u></a> ; <i>Leicestershire Together</i> agreed strategic <a href="#"><u>outcomes</u></a> March 2012; <a href="#"><u>Council's Delivery Plan 2013-14</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Call for evidence</u></a> ; <a href="#"><u>Information collected from the workshop</u></a> 23 November 2012 – Draft Preventing Homelessness Strategy, Equality Impact Assessment, <a href="#"><u>High Level Action Plan</u></a>
Recommendations	<p><b>IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT MEMBERS:-</b></p> <p><b>A) APPROVE THE NEW STRATEGY</b></p> <p><b>B) DELEGATE AUTHORITY TO THE DIRECTOR OF SERVICES (IN CONSULTATION WITH THE HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER) TO APPROVE ANY ASSOCIATED ACTION PLANS</b></p>

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires all local authorities to develop and publish a homelessness strategy, every five years. The strategy should be based on a review of the local homelessness situation, to ensure that it addresses the causes of homelessness and introduces and uses initiatives to prevent homelessness wherever possible.
- 1.2 NWLDC published its first Homelessness strategy in 2003 with a review due every five years to reflect the local homelessness situation and changes in Government policies. Our last Homelessness strategy was published in 2008 and covered the period 2008 to 2013 - hence the current need for renewal.
- 1.3 In August 2012 the Government introduced a new National Homelessness Prevention Strategy called *Making Every Contact Count: A joint approach to preventing homelessness*. Within this strategy the Government set 10 challenges for Local Authorities and their partners to deliver on (see paragraph 3 of this report). The strategy focuses on the prevention of homelessness through joined up working between services at every level in areas such as health, justice, benefits and social care. It highlights the need to identify people at risk of homelessness as early as possible and have pathways out of homelessness for those who need help. If everyone at risk of homelessness was to receive help at the earliest possible stage this could prevent them from losing their home. The 10 challenges set for local government will

lead to housing teams delivering a 'Gold Standard' of service. There is also guidance within this new strategy for a review to be carried out annually; enabling local authorities to take into account and respond to prevailing conditions both nationally and locally.

## 2.0 PROCESS

2.1 The process undertaken to complete the review is summarised in the table below;

Date	Summary Detail
Mar – Sep 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Call for evidence from stakeholders including customers; desk top review of evidence and analysis of data; stakeholder forums and staff sessions</li> </ul>
Nov 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workshop event 'Let's Side Step Homelessness' based around the existing work undertaken or planned by the Housing Choices team in connection with the 10 challenges or "Gold Standard" (see paragraph 3). Feedback from workshop discussion groups used to identify gaps in current service and provide focus for future priorities</li> </ul>
Sep 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CLT approved initial draft strategy for wider consultation</li> <li>NWL Homelessness Forum<sup>1</sup> approved the initial draft and high level action plan, nominated Lead Coordinators for each of the 6 strategic priorities and tasked them with developing detailed actions and milestones by December 2013, together with relevant success criteria that could be monitored by the forum on a quarterly basis. The forum also undertook an Equality Impact Assessment of the draft</li> <li>Press release published in local newspaper and formal public consultation launched on the Council's website</li> </ul>
Oct 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fairer Corporate Action Team approved Equality Impact Assessment</li> <li>Draft scrutinised by Policy Development Group</li> </ul>
Nov 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comments received from public consultation (<b>Appendix 1</b>) and scrutiny (<b>Appendix 2</b>) considered and additional information included in the final draft as a result - final attached at <b>Appendix 3</b></li> </ul>

## 3.0 REVIEW FINDINGS

3.1 Analysis of the data and subsequent meetings with partners highlighted that the Housing Choices team provide a wide range of housing options and prevention measures. A lot of work that goes some way to meeting many of the Government's **10 Gold Standard challenges** is already underway including:

	Gold Standard Challenge	How NWLDC is addressing the challenge
1	Adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services	Since 2003, the Council has adopted and published a resourced district-wide homelessness prevention strategy demonstrating it is committed to preventing homelessness across all Council services
2	Actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address	Through the use of First Contact referrals since the beginning of 2013, we have begun to work more

<sup>1</sup> a multi-agency partnership of statutory and non-statutory organisations, all of whom work with vulnerable groups and who are signatories to the strategy

	<b>Gold Standard Challenge</b>	<b>How NWLDC is addressing the challenge</b>
	support, education, employment and training needs	proactively with other partners to address support, education, employment and training needs and are currently assessing their effectiveness
3	Offer a Housing Options prevention service, including written advice, to all clients	A housing options prevention service has been provided since 2004-5. A self-service facility is to be implemented by the end of March 2014 for initial advice that will include optional written advice for all customers
4	Adopt a <i>No Second Night Out</i> model or an effective local alternative	We are working with all Leicestershire districts and the City Council on a <i>No Second Night Out</i> model and have already implemented a Severe Weather Emergency Protocol locally to provide shelter for the street homeless during periods of cold weather
5	Have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partner and client group that includes appropriate accommodation and support	We have an agreed housing pathway protocol in place with Leicestershire Probation service for ex-offenders and have started working with partners to develop housing pathways protocols for other client groups
6	Develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both clients and landlords	In partnership with all Leicestershire districts and the City Council, 'Homefinder' privately rented lettings website has been developed and launched in August 2013 and a suitable private rented sector service for all client groups, including advice and support to landlords and clients is to be developed on the back of this
7	Actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions including through the Mortgage Rescue Scheme	We have a mortgage rescue scheme in place and have already assisted 6 families to remain in their homes.
8	Have a homelessness strategy which sets out a proactive approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually so that it is responsive to emerging needs	This is the Council's third five year strategy that is proactive in preventing homelessness and will be reviewed annually
9	Not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in Bed and Breakfast accommodation	Currently failing on this challenge as we have no bespoke temporary accommodation other than Bed and Breakfast. However, NWLDC will shortly introduce a pilot scheme, using some units of the Council's own stock to provide alternative temporary accommodation with the aim of not having to place any 16-17 year old in Bed and Breakfast accommodation
10	Not place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency and then for no longer than 6 weeks	Through the provision of alternative temporary accommodation (see challenge 9), we aim not to place any families in Bed and Breakfast accommodation unless in an emergency, and then for no more than 6 weeks

3.2 Analysis of our statistics between 2008 and 2012 showed that the number of homelessness declarations made rose dramatically between 2009 and 2011-2012, then decreased again in 2012-13 due to housing advisors adopting a more proactive prevention approach



2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
148	101	128	199	129

3.3 Main recorded reasons for loss of last settled accommodation during 2012/13 were

- |   |  |     |              |
|---|--|-----|--------------|
|   |  |     | (Nationally) |
| ○ | Parents, friends or relatives no longer willing to accommodate | 26% | (31%)        |
| ○ | End of assured shorthold tenancy                               | 20% | (22%)        |
| ○ | Violent relationship breakdown involving partner               | 19% | (12%)        |

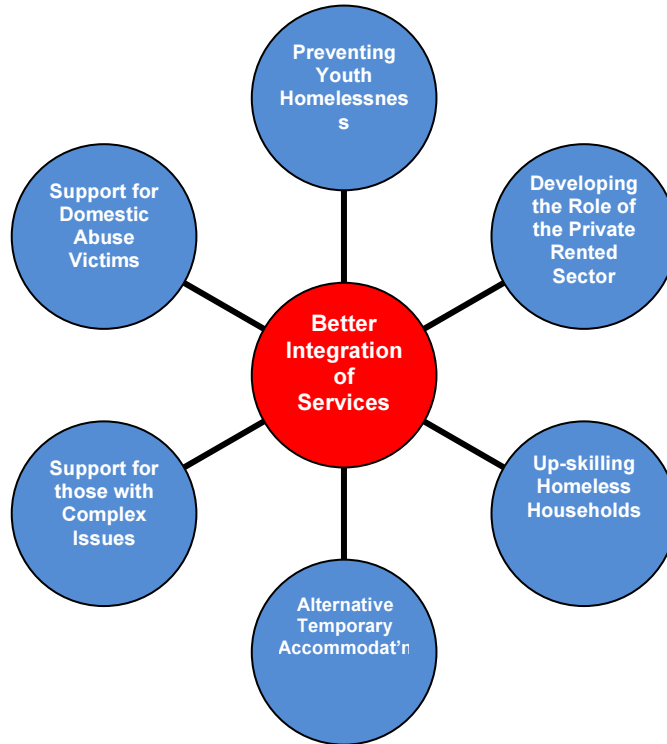
3.4 It was also evidenced that more and more of the clients both NWLDC were dealing with as well as some of our partners, were clients with multiple needs other than just homelessness (mental health, alcohol, drugs). In 2011/12, mental health issues accounted for 13% of all households accepted as homeless and in priority need. In 2009 this was just 2% of the total.

3.5 Youth Homelessness is still a problem with 64% of homeless acceptances in the District from those aged under 35 years of age. This group is specifically affected by the Housing Benefit changes and lack of shared accommodation in the area. Access to early information, advice and guidance is critical if we are to turn the tide on future homelessness presentations for this group.

3.6 Unemployment is also a prevalent factor amongst the homeless. Over the past five years, an average of 76% of all homeless applicants have been either unemployed, or unable to work due to sickness, caring responsibilities or retired etc. If we are to prevent these people from falling back into homelessness, it is important that we try to get as many of these people back into employment, education or training through referrals from our housing options service and through partnership working.

#### 4.0 NEW STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

4.1 The 6 priority areas for improvement that we identified from the Homelessness Review will be underpinned by a central objective - *Better Integration of Services*.



4.2 **Better Integration of services will underpin all priorities** – we will improve the way we communicate and work with partner agencies involved in homelessness prevention, directly or indirectly, by developing shared protocols that support mutual clients. We will develop information sharing pathways and signposting between agencies that is fundamental to all our work.

4.3 The following paragraphs provide a brief summary of the actions needed to deliver on these priorities, together with a note of which of the Government’s ten challenges they support. This demonstrates how we are working in partnership to achieve the Government’s “*Gold Standard*” locally

- **Earlier intervention to prevent youth homelessness** – We need to be more proactive about early intervention and prevention through education to stem the numbers of younger people presenting as homeless and improve the understanding about the respective roles of social care and housing in relation to 16/17 year olds. **(Challenges 2 & 9)**
- **Timely support for domestic abuse victims** – existing support agencies are seeing an increase in the number of families referred to their services due to the current financial climate and fact that more people are aware of their service. At the same time, funding is being cut and waiting lists are growing. We need to work with partners to ensure timely support is available for victims. **(Challenge 5)**
- **Developing the role of the Private Rented Sector** - We need to maximise links with private landlords and provide them with appropriate support and incentives to give them the confidence to provide homes for the full range of vulnerable groups. We also need to consider provision of settling in visits and continued tenancy support for private tenants to prevent repeat homelessness. **(Challenge 6)**

- **Supporting those with complex issues**– more and more clients with complex needs including mental health problems are presenting and it is unclear what information and support is available, especially those with low level problems who don't meet social care thresholds. More time is needed to support the vulnerable with Choice Based Lettings. **(Challenge 5)**
- **Alternative temporary accommodation** – the District needs a wider range of temporary accommodation other than Bed & Breakfast, including emergency accommodation with support. We also need to consider increasing the provision of shared accommodation for young single homeless under 35 years affected by the new benefit rules. **(Challenges 9 & 10)**
- **Up-skilling homeless households** -The fact that 76% of all homeless declarations are received from those who are out of work and mostly on benefits is an area of concern and requires a more proactive and co-ordinated approach to up-skill customers and encourage them to be more independent. **(Challenge 2)**

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no additional financial implications. The approved budget and staffing structure 2013-14, provides the necessary capacity and resources to implement the proposed strategy and emerging Action Plan.

## **6.0 NEXT STEPS**

- 6.1 If Cabinet approve the recommendations in this report, the Housing Choices Team will publish and circulate the approved Prevention of Homelessness Strategy 2013-2018 to all relevant partners and progress the development of the detailed Action Plan so that it can be approved by the Director of Services and Portfolio Holder for Housing and implemented from 1 January 2014.

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## Overview

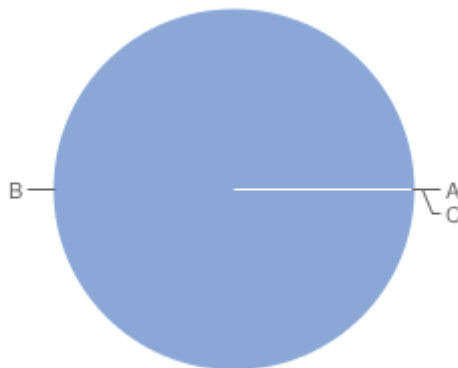
This report was created on Tuesday 15 October 2013 at 09:27.

From **19/09/2013** to **14/10/2013**, North West Leicestershire ran a consultation entitled '*Preventing Homelessness Strategy Consultation*'. This report covers the online element of the consultation process, which was run from <http://consultation.nwleics.gov.uk/housing-customer-services/preventinghomelessness>

### Page 1

**Question 1: Do you have experience of homelessness? This could either be yourself, or a family member or friend.**

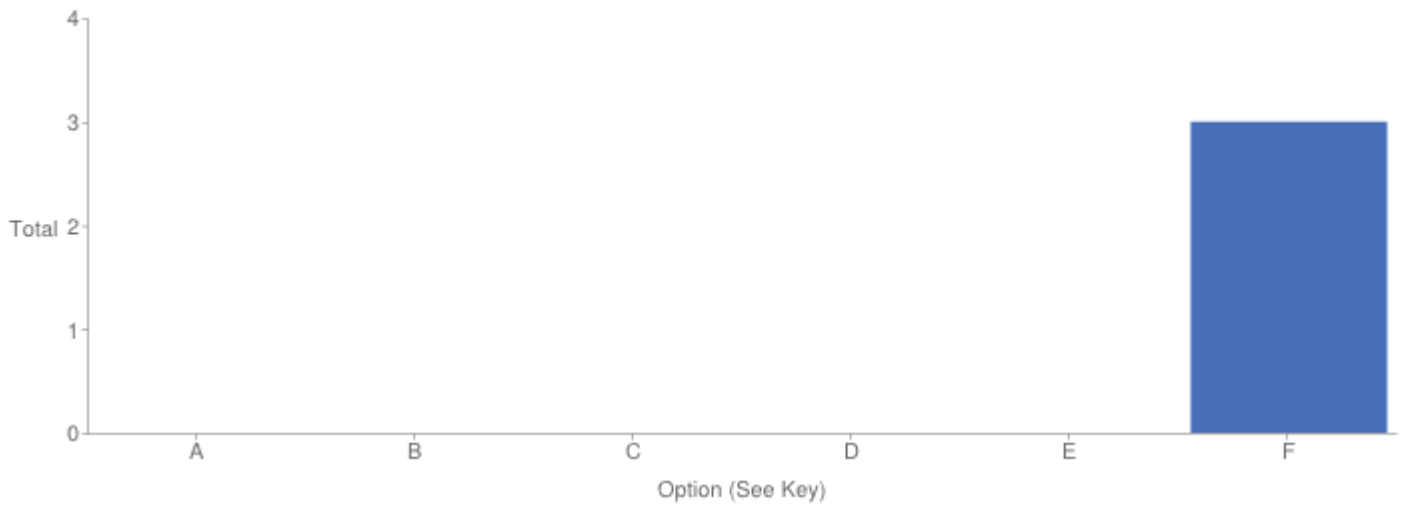
Table of "Experience of Homelessness?"



Key	Option	Total	Percent of All
A	Yes	0	0%
B	No	3	100%
C	Not Answered	0	0%

**Question 2: If Yes, how would you rate the support given by all agencies? This does not just mean the Council, but anyone you might have spoken to from any other forum partners, e.g. Social Care, Job Centre Plus, or any voluntary organisations.**

Table of "How would rate support from all agencies?"



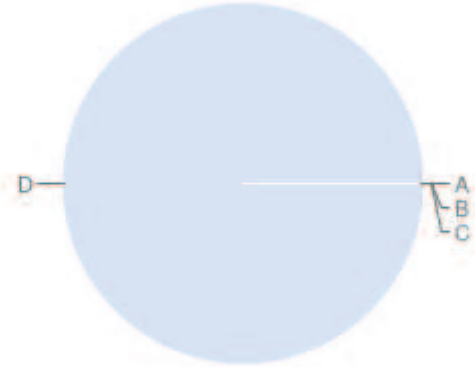
Key	Option	Total	Percent of All
A	Excellent	0	0%
B	Very Good	0	0%
C	Good	0	0%
D	Satisfactory	0	0%
E	Poor	0	0%
F	Not Answered	3	100%

There are no responses to this part of the question.

**Question 3: Do you feel that you were able to explain the circumstances properly to staff?**

**Table of "Able to explain circumstances"**



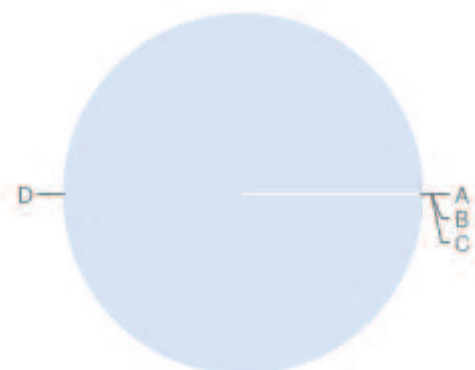


Key	Option	Total	Percent of All
A	Yes	0	0%
B	No	0	0%
C	Not Applicable	0	0%
D	Not Answered	3	100%

There are no responses to this part of the question.

**Question 4: Did you understand the advice you were given?**

Table of "understand advice?"



Key	Option	Total	Percent of All
A	Yes	0	0%

Key	Option	Total	Percent of All
B	No	0	0%
C	Not Applicable	0	0%
D	Not Answered	3	100%

There are no responses to this part of the question.

**Question 5: What would have made your contact with staff from agencies better? (Please select all that apply)**

Table of "What would have made contact better?"

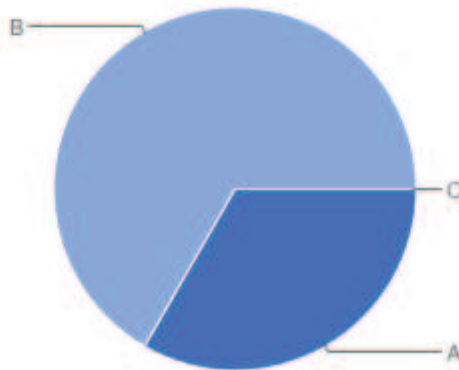


Key	Option	Total	Percent of All
A	The way they spoke to you	0	0%
B	The information you were given	0	0%
C	How easy the information was to understand	0	0%
D	How quickly you were dealt with	0	0%
E	Not Answered	3	100%

There are no responses to this part of the question.

**Question 6: Do you agree with the above priorities?**

Table of "Agree with priorities?"

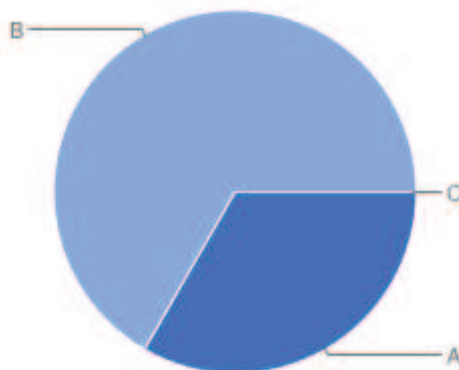


Key	Option	Total	Percent of All
A	Yes	1	33.33%
B	No	2	66.67%
C	Not Answered	0	0%

There are 2 responses to this part of the question.

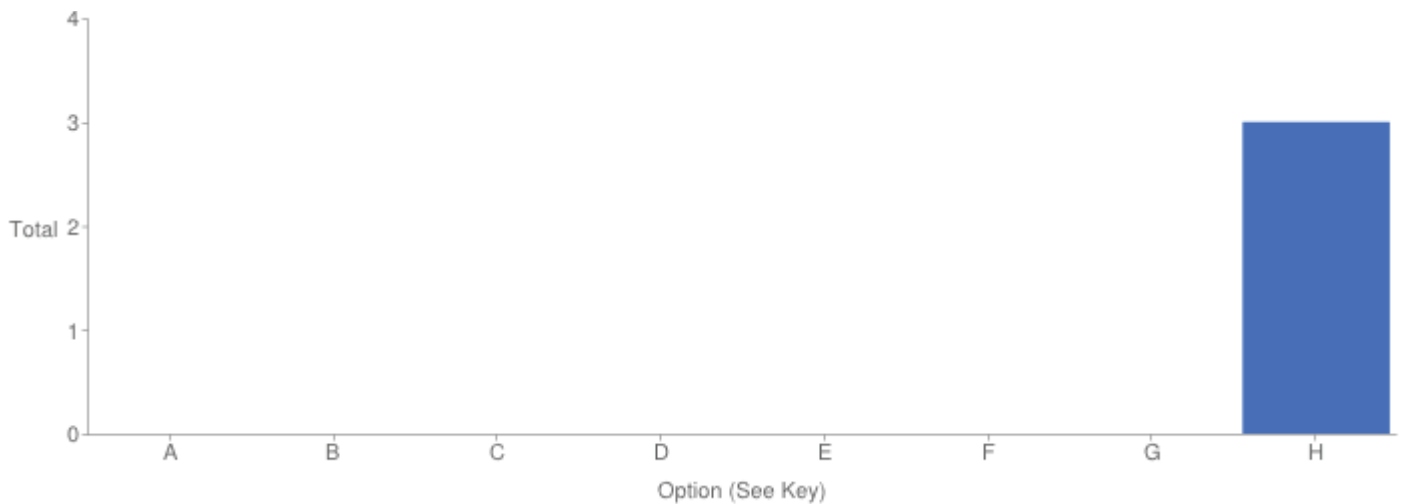
**Question 7: Do you think that these priorities will have a negative impact on any groups of people?**

Table of "priorities have a negative impact?"



Key	Option	Total	Percent of All
A	Yes	1	33.33%
B	No	2	66.67%
C	Not Answered	0	0%

### Table of "Issues"



Key	Option	Total	Percent of All
A	Ethnicity	0	0%
B	Gender	0	0%
C	Relationship Status	0	0%
D	Employment Status	0	0%
E	Age	0	0%
F	Disability	0	0%
G	Criminal Background	0	0%
H	Not Answered	3	100%

There are no responses to this part of the question.

## Page 3

### **Question 8: What is your name?**

There are **3** responses to this part of the question.

### **Question 9: Address? (Including Post Code)**

There are **2** responses to this part of the question.

### **Question 10: What is your telephone number?**

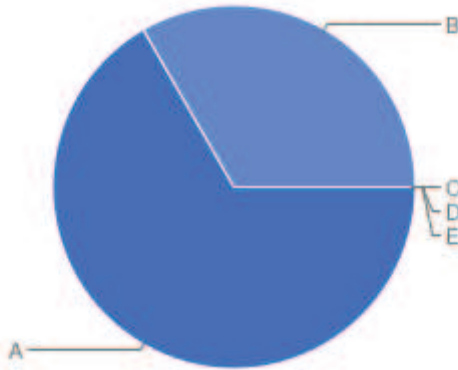
There are **3** responses to this part of the question.

### **Question 11: Email Address?**

There are **3** responses to this part of the question.

Question 12: Gender

Table of "Gender"

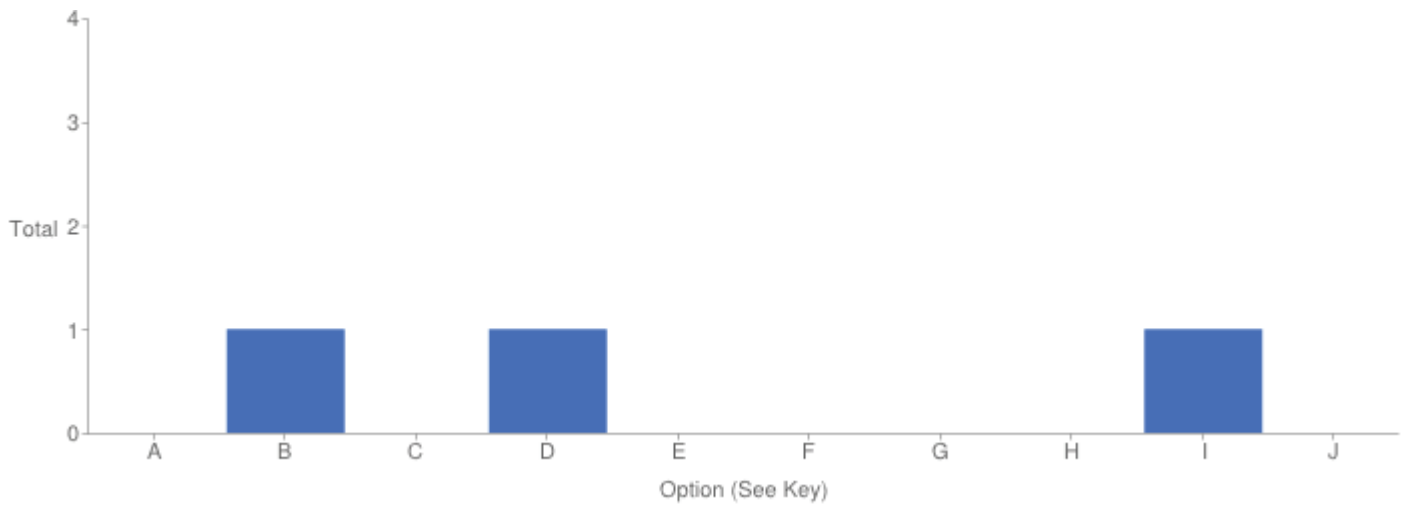


Key	Option	Total	Percent of All
A	Male	2	66.67%
B	Female	1	33.33%
C	Transgender	0	0%
D	Prefer not to say	0	0%
E	Not Answered	0	0%

Question 13: How old are you?

Table of "Age"

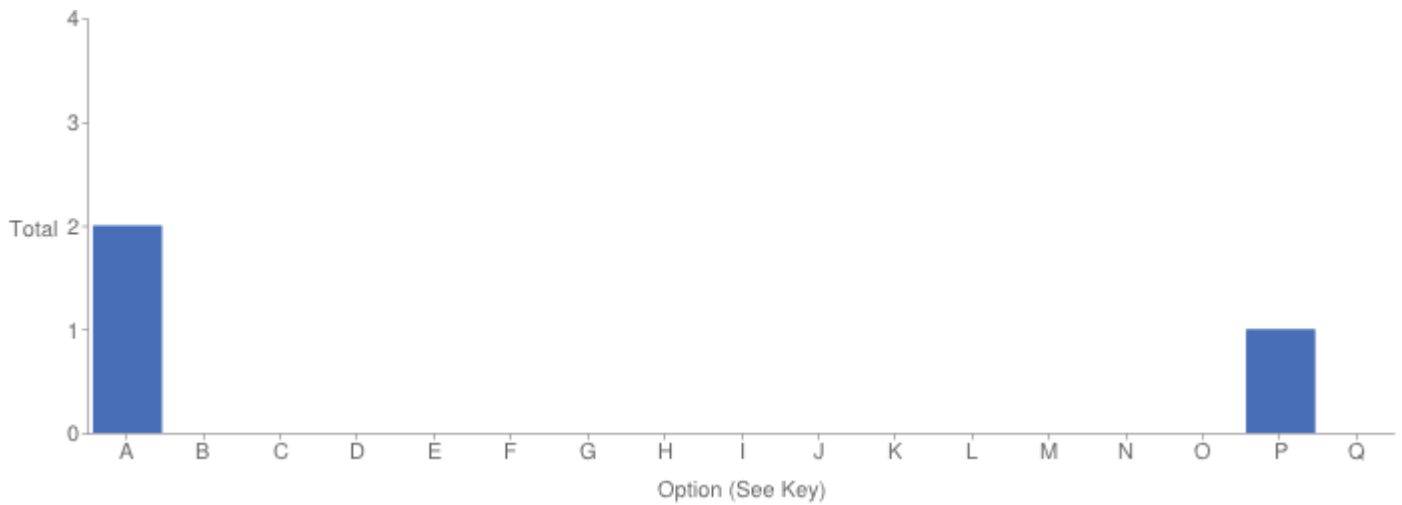




Key	Option	Total	Percent of All
A	16 - 24	0	0%
B	25 - 34	1	33.33%
C	35 - 44	0	0%
D	45 - 54	1	33.33%
E	55 - 64	0	0%
F	65 - 74	0	0%
G	75 - 84	0	0%
H	85+	0	0%
I	Prefer not to say	1	33.33%
J	Not Answered	0	0%

**Question 14: How would you best describe your ethnic origin?**

**Table of "Ethnic Origin"**

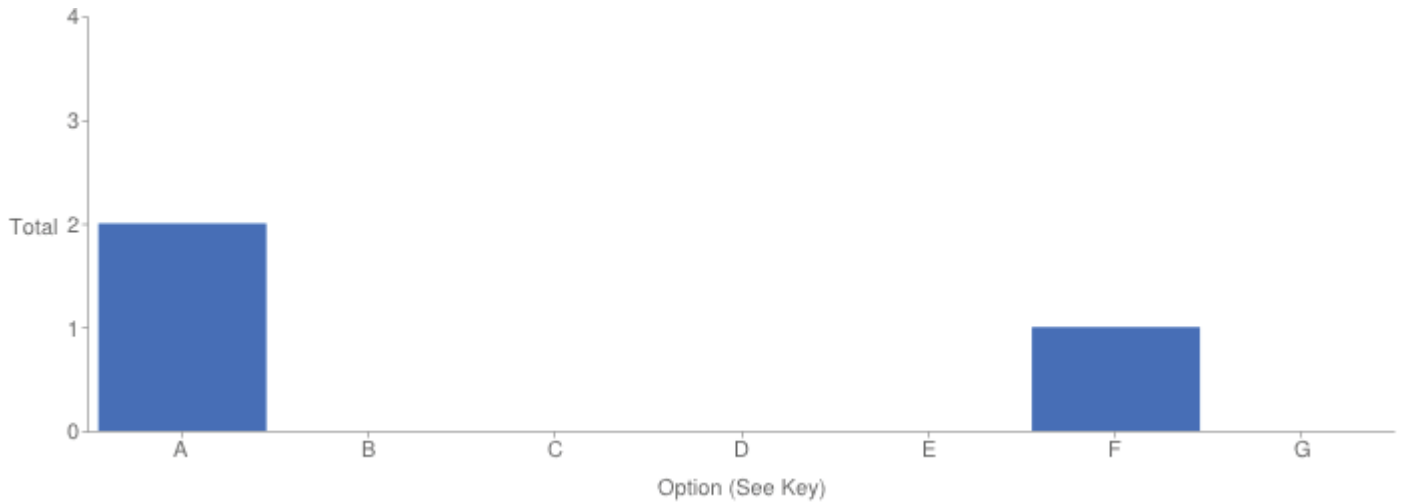


Key	Option	Total	Percent of All
A	White British	2	66.67%
B	White Irish	0	0%
C	Any other White background	0	0%
D	Mixed White and Black Carribean	0	0%
E	Mixed White and Black African	0	0%
F	Mixed White and Asian	0	0%
G	Any other Mixed background	0	0%
H	Asian or Asian British Indian	0	0%
I	Asian, or Asian British Pakistani	0	0%
J	Asian, or Asian British Bangladeshi	0	0%
K	Asian, or Asian British Chinese	0	0%
L	Any other Asian Background	0	0%
M	Black, or Black British Carribean	0	0%
N	Black, or Black British African	0	0%
O	Any other Black Background	0	0%
P	Prefer not to say	1	33.33%

Key	Option	Total	Percent of All
Q	Not Answered	0	0%

**Question 15: What is your sexuality?**

**Table of "Sexuality"**



Key	Option	Total	Percent of All
A	Heterosexual	2	66.67%
B	Gay Man	0	0%
C	Gay Woman	0	0%
D	Bisexual	0	0%
E	Other	0	0%
F	Prefer not to say	1	33.33%
G	Not Answered	0	0%

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## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## CABINET – 10 DECEMBER 2013

Title of report	<b>GENERAL FUND AND SPECIAL EXPENSES REVENUE BUDGETS 2014/15 AND 2015/16</b>
Key Decision	a) Financial Yes b) Community Yes
Contacts	Councillor Nick 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	To update Cabinet on the consultation responses received on its 2014/15 and 2015/16 General Fund and Special Expenses revenue budget proposals and seek agreement on the direction of travel for the proposals. The proposals will receive further consideration at Cabinet on 11 February 2014 and recommendation to Council on 25 February 2014.
Reason for Decision	To enable the Council to set a balanced budget as required by law.
Council Priorities	The budget assists the Council to achieve all its priorities.
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	As contained in the report.
Link to relevant CAT	The budget is relevant to all Corporate Action teams (CATs).
Risk Management	The budget will be monitored throughout the year to ensure savings are achieved and services delivered as planned.
Equalities Impact Assessment	The requirement for equalities impact assessments is being assessed during the consultation process and details will be provided as part of the management responses.
Human Rights	None identified.
Transformational Government	Not applicable

Comments of Head of Paid Service	The report is satisfactory.
Comments of Section 151 Officer	As report author the report is satisfactory.
Comments of Monitoring Officer	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees	Business community, Town and Parish Councils, staff, Trade Unions, General Public through the Council's website, public sector partners, colleges, the National Forest, Federation of Small Businesses, voluntary/community sector.
Background papers	<a href="#">Consultation Responses</a> <a href="#">Cabinet Report 24 September 2013</a> <a href="#">Cabinet Report 11 June 2013 – Medium Term Financial Strategy</a>
Recommendations	<p><b>CABINET IS RECOMMENDED TO :</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. AGREE THE BUDGET PROPOSALS CONTAINED WITHIN APPENDIX 1.</b></li> <li><b>2. AGREE THE BUDGET PROPOSALS AND AMENDED RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED WITHIN APPENDICES 2 TO 2(I).</b></li> <li><b>3. NOTE THE DIRECTION OF TRAVEL AS CONTAINED WITHIN APPENDIX 3.</b></li> <li><b>4. ENDORSE THE PROPOSED PREPARATORY WORK REGARDING THE 2015 - 2016 BUDGET AS OUTLINED IN PARAGRAPH 3.4 OF THE REPORT.</b></li> <li><b>5. RECONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS 1-4 AS PART OF THE FULL BUDGET REPORT ON 11 FEBRUARY 2014.</b></li> </ol>

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Fund and Special Expenses budget proposals for 2014/15 and 2015/16 were considered by Cabinet on 24 September 2013 and approved for consultation with staff, Trade Unions, business community, the general public, public sector partners, colleges, the National Forest, the Federation of Small Businesses, the voluntary/community sector and Parish/Town Councils.

The results of that consultation are detailed within the appendices and can be found in full in the background papers.

1.2 This report summarises progress made since the last Cabinet report was prepared and provides details of the budget consultation responses so that appropriate recommendations can be developed for Council for the Budget and Council Tax for 2014/15 and direction of travel for 2015/16.

- 1.3 The projected budget shortfall of £500,000 for 2014/15 and future year projections previously reported reflect our current understanding. This may change when the Government issues its Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement later this month. Any changes to the projections will be reported to Cabinet on 11 February. For financial planning purposes the Council is still expecting that it will need to save £1.5m by 2015/16 and over £2.8m by 2017/18.
- 1.4 Under the revised Business Rates retention mechanism the level of Government funding is not ultimately confirmed until after the end of the financial year when the actual level of Business Rates are reported. This is a significant change from having grant settlements fixed before the start of the financial year and means that the Council's financial planning is impacted by the volatility of local business rates income. Under the new arrangements district councils are allocated 40% of increases and decreases in Business Rates. There is also a system of levies and safety nets which reduces our share of increases to 20% but at the same time provides a safety net which limits our losses to 7.5% of our funding baseline which for this authority works out at £157k.
- 1.5 The approved budget is rigorously monitored by Cabinet and the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) during the financial year through quarterly performance monitoring so that any potential overspendings can be identified at an early stage and remedial action taken to deal with them. The monitoring also checks that the required savings are being achieved.

## **2.0 GENERAL FUND 2013/14 – PROJECTED OUTTURN**

- 2.1 The second quarter Performance Report which was presented to the Cabinet on 19 November 2013 showed a projected under spend of £537k. The most significant savings are from anticipated reductions in contingency spend (£150k) and one-off Development Control/Planning income (£200k). Significant savings on Employee Costs are also projected. Cabinet will receive a further update, based on Quarter 3, before it recommends the setting of the 2014/15 Revenue Budget in February.
- 2.2 These under spends have been analysed as per previous years to identify which are following a pattern and can be considered as part of the budget proposals (see paragraph 2.3). The others are either unpredictable or completely one-offs.
- 2.3 The Cabinet's budget proposals for 2014/15 incorporate the following:
- Reduction in contingency spend
  - Reductions in employee budgets through the increase in vacancy rates

The additional Planning fee income cannot be relied upon to be built into the base budget.

- 2.4 Ordinarily any in-year under spend would be transferred to the General Fund balance at the year end. The General Fund Balance is at an adequate level and our strategy for utilising any projected savings in 2013/14 will include a number of options. In recent years savings made early have been transferred to the Value for Money Reserve and then allocated to Invest to Save projects.

- 2.5 Given the changing emphasis away from nationally determined income to locally generated income there may be an opportunity to consider the under spend differently. This will be considered by Cabinet in February 2014.

### **3.0 CONSULTATIONS ON REVENUE BUDGET SAVINGS PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 The approval from Cabinet in June 2013 of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the four financial years 2014/15 to 2017/18 showed that there was a funding shortfall in the General Fund of £2.4m by the end of the March 2018. A Government announcement during the summer on the reallocation of New Homes Bonus in 2015/16 necessitated an increase in the target to just over £2.8m. Of this, £1.5m has to be found by April 2015. To meet this shortfall, budget saving proposals for 2014/15 and the direction of travel for 2015/16 were put forward in the General Fund Revenue Budget – Draft Proposals report that was presented to Cabinet on 24 September 2013.
- 3.2 In order to seek opinions on these proposals, a consultation process took place from 25 September 2013 to 8 November 2013 asking for comments to these proposals and alternative suggestions on how this shortfall can be met. Consultation responses were received through a dedicated web form, via email or letter, and directly by Councillors and members of staff. Consultation also took place with Unions, Public Sector Partners, Town and Parish Councils, the business community and voluntary/community sector to seek any expressions of interest in funding or delivering services.
- 3.3 Projected delivery of the agreed proposals will be through the Planning for the Future Programme (PFF). There will be a project management approach taken in planning and delivering the savings once agreed by Council.
- 3.4 The revised Medium Term Financial Strategy projects a budget shortfall of approximately £1m in 2015/16. It is likely that any proposed savings will need a significant lead-in time to implement. It is against this background that the Section 151 Officer considers it would be prudent for officers to commence actively seeking to identify the savings for 2015/16 as early as possible. The usual and required process of Cabinet consideration and consultation will be followed with a view that any proposals will be put in train from July 2014 thereby ensuring that that any savings are able to be realised from April 2015. The results of this process will feed into the usual budget setting process for the financial year 2015/16. Without this timetable there is a risk that there would be insufficient savings in place to balance the 2015/16 budget. The Council will be requested to approve this approach when it agrees the budget in February 2014. The remainder of the budget process is unaffected. Base budgets will be compiled in the usual way and the PFF work will inform the Cabinet and Council's decision to balance the budget.
- 3.5 In light of the consultation responses received the Cabinet is asked to consider five principle areas as follows:

#### **3.5.1 Green Waste:**

78 responses were received to the consultation, including comments from Policy Development Group. As a result of the consultation it is now recommended:

- To introduce a fee of £30 (reduced to £25 if paid by Direct Debit) for the fortnightly collection of 240l garden waste bins



- To introduce a fee of £25 (reduced to £20 if paid by Direct Debit) for residents who currently have or wish to change to the smaller 140l garden waste bin. This would reduce the annual forecast of £150,000 in savings down to £126,000. However, this proposal may increase demand for the service which has not been factored in at this stage.
- To operate the garden waste collection service from the beginning of March until the end of November annually, commencing March 2015. This recommendation is giving residents an extra two collections from the original proposal at no extra cost. This would cost approximately £12,000 but based on historic tonnages of garden waste collected through November it would result in an extra £12,000 worth of income through recycling credits. Therefore, this proposal would be cost neutral.
- To investigate extending the £5 direct debit discount to include all forms of payment made on-line via the Councils web-site.

### 3.5.2 Car Park Charges:

Very few public responses were received to the original budget proposals. However comments were received from the Coalville Town Team. In considering all the consultation responses it is now recommended:

- To implement car park fees and charges from 01/04/14 as follows - 1 hr tariff to 60p, 2 hr tariff to £1.00, 3 hr tariff unchanged, all day tariff to £2.20
- To continue working with the Coalville Town Team and the Belvoir Centre owners on future car parking proposals for Coalville
- To assess the viability of introducing new methods of payment including pay on exit and use of new technology such as number plate recognition and Smartphones for all car parks.

### 3.5.3 Community Partnership Grants

There has been limited comment on the proposal to remove the one-off Community Partnership Grant. Whilst the impact of this reduction in funding is noted, it is also noted that considerable funds have been available from other external sources and many community groups have been successful in securing those funds. Therefore it is now recommended:

- To undertake annual reviews of all Community Partnership Grants to seek efficiencies and/or cash savings.
- To cease the one-off Community Grants fund from 1 April 2014 and disband the Grants Review Working Party.

### 3.5.4 Chairman's function

Responses were received to the consultation, including comments from the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party. As a result of the consultation it is now recommended:

- The Chairman will continue to:
  - (a) Chair the meetings of the Council with the continued support of Democratic Services.

- (b) Attend, on behalf of the Authority, a number of events in Leicestershire at which the cost does not exceed an annual budget of £700.
  - (c) Support Remembrance Day.
  - (d) Attend flag raising events in North West Leicestershire.
  - (e) Attend the Buckingham Palace garden party
  - (f) Receive administrative support and assistance with diary management from Democratic Services.
- The following areas of the chairman's function will no longer be funded:
    - (a) Civic church service
    - (b) Carol service
    - (c) Chauffeur driven car
    - (d) Civic dinner
    - (e) Attendance at events outside Leicestershire
    - (f) Hosting events such as town twinning and charity cheque presentations.
    - (g) Biographical leaflet.

### 3.5.5 Re-allocation of funds from Coalville Special Expenses.

These proposals have been the subject of discussion at the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party and at Cabinet. In light of the comments received it is now recommended:

- That the £25,000 re-allocation from General Fund to Coalville Special Expenses is progressed
- That a further meeting of the Events Task & Finish group be held to finalise the specific reductions proposed for decision at February 2014 Cabinet. That the Portfolio Holder be invited in order to discuss Remembrance Day and all proposals/suggestions received.

### 3.6 The consultation responses and management comments on them are summarised in the appendices as follows:

Appendix 1 – Budget Proposals on which no consultation responses were received

Appendix 2 – Budget Proposals on which consultation responses were received

Appendix 2A – Green Waste

Appendix 2B – Car Park Charges

Appendix 2C – Concessionary fees and Charges

Appendix 2D – Community Partnership Grants

Appendix 2E – Vision Magazine

Appendix 2F – Chairman's function

Appendix 2G – Savings/Staffing proposals

Appendix 2H – HRA Costs

Appendix 2I – Coalville Special Expenses

Appendix 3 – Comments received on the "Direction of Travel" from 2015/16 onwards.

## APPENDIX ONE

These proposals received no responses from the public consultation. It is therefore recommended to Cabinet that the proposals be implemented as previously outlined.

Proposal	£'000 Amount	Portfolio Holder
Reduction in the general fund contingency	150	Cllr Nick Rushton
Staffing vacancy rates	50	Cllr Nick Rushton
Unjustified missed bins	10	Cllr Alison Smith MBE

Cabinet are referred to the Cabinet report of 24 September 2013 which is available as a background paper to this report.

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## APPENDIX TWO

The following areas created the greatest number of responses to the Council's consultation and each will be addressed in appendices 2A through to 2I which highlight the original recommendation, the consultation responses and the resulting proposed recommendation which takes into account those responses. Cabinet are referred to the original report of 24 September 2013 for the detail of the original proposals.

- Green waste Appendix 2A
- Car Park Charges Appendix 2B
- Concessionary Fees and Charges Appendix 2C
- Community Partnership grants Appendix 2D
- Vision magazine Appendix 2E
- Chairman's Function Appendix 2F
- Efficiency Savings/Staffing Appendix 2G
- HRA Costs Appendix 2H
- Coalville Special Expenses Appendix 2I

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GREEN WASTE COLLECTION

PORTFOLIO HOLDER CLLR ALISON SMITH MBE

**Previous recommendation to Cabinet**

*Introducing charging for fortnightly Green Waste collection with effect from the 2015 season (March – October 2015)*

**Consultation responses from Members of the Public – 78 Responses received**

- 16% (17) suggested that recycling will reduce
- 30% (31) stated that fly tipping will increase
- 50% (52) stated that they will return their waste bins, put their garden waste in their black bins, burn or compost their green waste to avoid the charge.
- Residents have suggested that we should be encouraging recycling and that such a proposal will have the opposite effect.
- Money must be being made from all this re cycling. There should be a reduction not increase.
- How will you collect the green bins if I do not pay the charge?
- People are already paying for this service through their council tax and the Bin Tax needs revisiting with ALL local councillors involved in the decision and not just Cabinet. A tax for being 'green' is just wrong. Do not introduce this charge. Charging people to recycle green waste is CLEARLY a step back. I urge you to reconsider this decision.
- A more sophisticated pricing strategy could deliver greater acceptance and adoption of new charges.

**Consultation responses from Working Groups, Unions etc**

- The success or failure of changes in Waste Services remains to be seen. Presumably they have been tried successfully at other Councils.

**Consultation responses from the Executive Consultation Meeting**

- Mike Brown (UNISON Regional Representative) went on to explain that he felt the Green Waste scheme would fail as nobody would sign up in year two.

**Consultation responses from the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party**

- None on this issue

**Consultation responses from the Policy Development Group**

- Councillor A C Saffell raised concerns regarding charging for the collection of green waste, he felt that it would encourage people to stop using the service and therefore stop recycling. He questioned whether the Authority could make money and continue to maintain recycling rates. The Head of Community Services reported that Melton Borough Council had been consulted as they had introduced a charge and they still had a 40 percent take up rate. He explained he was aware that some green waste would be placed in the general waste but

the Authority would encourage home composting and disposal at the Recycling and Household Waste sites.

- For clarification, the Head of Community Services explained the proposed charges for the collection of green waste. Councillor D Howe suggested a charge of £20 per year as that was the fee Charnwood Borough Council was charging.
- Councillor J Geary stated that it was 'a sorry state of affairs we are in' and made the following comments:
  - 1) The Leader of the Council made a statement in Vision Magazine making it clear there would not be cuts to services as a result of freezing the Council Tax rate. Councillor J Geary felt that it was sad that the first cut proposed was to discontinue producing Vision Magazine, he believed this decision would 'come back to haunt' the Leader of the Council.
  - 2) Residents were not happy about being charged for the collection of green waste but he believed it was sensible to pay as it was cheaper than disposing it at the Recycling and Household Waste Sites. He stated he would be encouraging people to burn their green waste as he would be doing himself.
- Councillor J Geary asked what the cost would be to collect the unwanted bins. The Head of Community Services explained that plans were currently being worked on as the bins would be collected in stages to make it as cost efficient as possible.
- Councillor J Geary asked if there was currently any income for the recycling of green waste and also why was the implementation of the charge not being introduced until 2015. The Waste Services Team Manager explained that the Authority received recycling credit income for green waste collection but did not receive any sales income. He reported that the timeframe for introducing the charge was necessary to provide sufficient time to install waste management software into the waste collection vehicles and to prepare for the administration of the charge, for example setting up direct debits. The timeframe was a sensible one.
- Councillor S Sheahan strongly objected to the introduction of charges for the collection of green waste and believed it was a poor policy on the grounds of the time consuming and costly set up, the additional work involved in processing invoices and direct debits, and it encouraged people to not recycle. He believed this policy would result in many complaints.
- Councillor D Everitt concurred with Councillor S Sheahan and he felt that all of the work carried out with recycling rates would be undone with the introduction of the charges for the collection of green waste. He added it was a shame to destroy a wonderful service.
- Councillor J Geary questioned the high cost of the refuse vehicle software and whether it had been planned for in the budget proposals. The Head of Community Services explained that there was money available in reserves which had been ring fenced for the investment.

### **Officer Comments**

Further to the responses received through the consultation, Officers make the following comments

- For residents who do not wish to take up this service we will be promoting home composting and the use of the local household waste refuse sites.
- The Green Waste charge will be an "Opt in" process. The experience reported from other authorities who have implemented this charge is that there is no discernible increase in fly tipping and we sincerely hope that will be the case in North West Leicestershire.
- The Council does make money from selling its recycling material, however, that money is already within the Council's finances and any reduction to that will only increase the savings targets required. With regards to returning bins, if the proposal is approved by Cabinet, we will provide a service for collection of unwanted bins, however, the details have not yet been finalised.



- All consultees are thanked for their comments and suggestions.
- In response to a question from Councillor M Specht, the Head of Community Services confirmed that the payment for the collection of green waste would not be included as part of the Council Tax payment.

### **Recommendations**

In considering all the consultation responses the following recommendations are now proposed to Cabinet:

1 – To introduce a fee of £30 (reduced to £25 if paid by Direct Debit) for the fortnightly collection of 240l garden waste bins

2 – To introduce a fee of £25 (reduced to £20 if paid by Direct Debit) for residents who currently have or wish to change to the smaller 140l garden waste bin .

This would reduce the annual forecast of £150,000 in savings down to £126,000. However, this proposal may increase demand for the service which has not been factored in at this stage.

3 – To operate the garden waste collection service from the beginning of March until the end of November annually, commencing March 2015.

This recommendation is giving residents an extra two collections from the original proposal at no extra cost. This would cost approximately £12,000 but based on historic tonnages of garden waste collected through November it would result in an extra £12,000 worth of income through recycling credits. Therefore, this proposal would be cost neutral.

4 – To investigate extending the £5 direct debit discount to include all forms of payment made on-line via the Councils web-site.

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## CAR PARK CHARGES

PORTFOLIO HOLDER CLLR ALISON SMITH MBE

**Previous recommendation to Cabinet**

*Car Park charges have remained unchanged since 2007. It is proposed to increase tariffs for 1hour/2hours and All Day parking. The 3 hour tariff will remain unchanged.*

**Consultation responses from Members of the Public**

- Need to increase usage/investment needs within Coalville TC before looking to raise car park charges. Raising car parking charges will just drive more people away from the town. Increasing car parking charges will destroy the town. Any increase in parking fees will only cause people to go elsewhere such as Ashby, Leicester or Loughborough or cause more people to park on residential streets causing misery for local residents. Rather than raising parking something major needs to be done about Coalville itself.
- Ref car park charges, worst decision ever taken by NWLDC to introduce them.
- Remove the free parking spaces and charge 50p per hour for all parking.
- We do not agree that the benchmarking information indicates that NWL charges compare favourably locally. Are aware that neighbouring South Derbyshire makes no charges for parking and that this is a bone of contention for local traders, who believe they are losing footfall because of this. Furthermore, the comparison table is clear that other Leicestershire Districts differentiate their charges by length of stay or location, indicating that they have a strategy to encourage parking uptake by purpose.
- Car park charges proposal lacks an economic impact assessment. For instance, there is no reference to the availability of or charges for public transport, which is critical to a rural economy like NWL. However, in the context of high levels of personal insolvency and disadvantage in the District, together with the paucity of Equality Impact Assessment, it is apparent that the sustainability of these proposals is questionable.
- With regards to any changes which are made to the car parking. Further consultations are required in accordance with the lease obligations of the car park adjoining Coalville Shopping centre
- Find it hard to understand how the Council clearly aspire to be 'supporting businesses to set up and grow within the town centre', yet they then plan on increasing car parking charges when we all clearly know that parking charges are damaging the high street.

### **Consultation responses from Working Groups, Unions etc**

- None on this issue

### **Consultation responses from the Executive Consultation Meeting**

- Mike Brown (UNISON Regional Representative) stated that he supported the proposed increases to car parking charges.

### **Consultation responses from the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party**

- None on this issue

### **Consultation responses from the Policy Development Group**

- In response to a comment regarding the correct legislation for setting car parking charges for maintaining car parks and not for Council income, the Head of Finance confirmed that there was legislation for accounting in relation to car park charges but in this case the levels were relatively low and he was confident that the Council was operating its car parks within the law.

### **Consultation responses from Coalville Town Team (CTT)**

Whilst we understand, and sympathise with the Councils' current budget situation, the CTT find it hard to understand how the Council clearly aspire to be 'supporting businesses to set up and grow within the town centre', yet they then plan on increasing car parking charges when we all clearly know that parking charges are damaging the high street. You only have to look at current Government proposals and the Grimsey Review to see this is a widely accepted principle.

We welcome the news of investment on the town market but points 1.2 & 1.4 (your own minutes from the Cabinet on September 24th) clearly contradict each other about how current trading conditions are in the town. We believe this confusion and stagnation of trade may well be the reason for no private investment, as they see no potential investment return. The proposed blanket increases in car parking charges can only be a retrograde step to your hard work and investment.

As you know the CTT is currently working with the NWLDC on a more sustainable strategy in terms of car parking arrangements that will be beneficial to council, trader and most importantly the shoppers of the town.

CTT recognise that the advent of car parking charges have been detrimental to the footfall within the town centre since 2007, and we know of large high street retailers that will not invest in our town with our current car parking charging structure. After a recent meeting between ourselves and the Belvoir Centre, they also support our thinking.

Our proposals answer these retailers concerns but fully respect the councils need for income. We look forward to the opportunity to work alongside the NWLDC as we have the same aspirations to see business growth, investment and job creation.

## **Officer Comments**

- The Council is pro-actively working with local businesses through the Coalville Town Team to encourage use of the town. The Council's Head of Regeneration and Planning is also actively seeking development and the Council is working to improve Coalville. Charges have not risen since 2007.
- Thanked for their comments and increases to car park charges is one of a number of proposals to meet the budget shortfall. Comments noted and will form part of the consultation report to Cabinet.

## **Recommendations**

In considering all the consultation responses the following recommendation are now proposed to Cabinet:

1. To implement car park fees and charges from 01/04/14 as follows - 1 hr tariff from 50p to 60p, 2 hr tariff from 80p to £1.00, 3 hr tariff unchanged, all day tariff from £2.00 to £2.20
2. To continue working with the Coalville Town Team and the Belvoir Centre owners on future car parking proposals for Coalville
3. To assess the viability of introducing new methods of payment including pay on exit and use of new technology such as number plate recognition and smartphones for all car parks.

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CONCESSIONARY FEES AND CHARGES

PORTFOLIO HOLDER CLLR ALISON SMITH MBE

**Previous recommendation to Cabinet**

*Change the level of discount applied to certain concession with effect from April 2014: Bulky Waste Removal; Casual Swimming and some aspects of Pest Control*

**Consultation responses from Members of the Public**

- Comment that more rats are now around since the council started charging for visit by Environmental Health and will end up with mounds of open compost....ideal places for rats to hide
- Put out leisure centres to trust/private company.
- Reduce opening hours at the recycling centres by one hour per day for much larger savings.
- Since the majority of proposals affect recipients of a range of benefits, many of whom may have protected characteristics, it is imperative that the Council first satisfies its equality duty as no evidence of an Equality Impact Assessment has been included.

**Consultation responses from Working Groups, Unions etc**

- These same vulnerable people are to be targeted by changing the level of discount in concessionary fees and charges relating to bulky waste removal, casual swimming and pest control. This may lead to more fly tipping and unsightly waste piling up in some front gardens, all of which affects the surrounding community. Affordable pest control is important to prevent disease spread by vermin.

**Consultation responses from the Executive Consultation Meeting**

- None on this issue

**Consultation responses from the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party**

- None on this issue

**Consultation responses from the Policy Development Group**

- None on this issue

### **Officer Comments**

- There is no evidence to suggest that population of rats in N W Leicestershire growing and calls to the Council to report a rat sighting and the number of treatments carried out have fallen in recent years. There is also no evidence to suggest having a compost heap leads to more rats.
- Keeping these in-house is in line with our strategy of maintaining valued services whilst driving efficiencies. These services will be subject to efficiency reviews and other options will always be considered if it can be demonstrated that Council Tax payers would benefit from alternate service delivery models.

### **Recommendation**

In considering all the consultation responses the following recommendation are now proposed to Cabinet

To introduce the proposed changes to the level of concessions for the following services from 01/04/14

- Bulky waste collections from 100% to 50%
- Non-public health related pest control services (wasps, fleas, bedbugs) from 100% to 50%
- Leisure Link category 1 casual swimming from 100% to 50% (Year 1) and from 50% to 25% (Year 2)



## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

PORTFOLIO HOLDER CLLR ALISON SMITH MBE

**Previous recommendation to Cabinet**

*To undertake annual reviews of Community Partnership Grants and To cease one-off Community Grants from 1/04/2014.*

**Consultation responses from Members of the Public**

- Please think carefully about removing community grants and community leisure schemes as they would be a great loss to many small groups. Would be sorry to see the Coalville 2013 type event in Coalville park go as it is a vital part of annual fundraising, and gives an increased profile locally which would otherwise be lost and receive a lot of help and support from the TIC in Ashby. Relies on 'one-off grant' as recently applied for a local elderly Community group to help them keep going since the social services stopped their funding. The present annual financial support that NWLDC gives to Ashby Museum, is fundamental to our economic well-being with nearly 70 local volunteers, none of whom costs anything and provide excellent value for our annual Grant. One off grants to voluntary and community organisations to make an important difference to local organisations and are one of the most cost effective ways of delivering services. If anything these grants should be increased, grants given assist the Council in carrying out its agreed functions and priorities and that evidence to be produced to show that the money is being spent in an effective way both in terms of cost and achievement of purpose. From the Budget Efficiency Savings proposals it would therefore seem that all communities, besides those in Coalville, Bardon, Snibston, Thringstone and Greenhill will experience a contraction in grant funding opportunities. Remarkably, there is not even a mention of an Equality Impact Assessment to evidence this as impartial.

**Consultation responses from Working Groups, Unions etc**

- None on this issue

**Consultation responses from the Executive Consultation Meeting**

- None on this issue

**Consultation responses from the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party**

- Councillor M B Wyatt suggested that the grants that were currently offered by the Working Party should be forsaken in favour of the larger events that were held.
- Councillor L Spence disagreed with this viewpoint, stating that the Coalville Specials grant fund should be maintained given the likelihood of the Grants Review Working Party being imminently disbanded.

**Consultation responses from the Policy Development Group**

- None on this issue

### **Officer Comments**

- We do understand that Community Grants will be a loss to community groups that have benefitted in the past and we will continue to support all community groups through advice, guidance and signposting to other grant funds.
- We do expect the annual Coalville summer Community Event (Coalville TWENTY14) to continue, albeit on a potentially reduced budget, as it is funded by the Coalville Specials Expense Area.

### **Recommendation**

In considering all the consultation responses the following recommendations are now proposed to Cabinet

- 1) To undertake annual reviews of all Community Partnership Grants to seek efficiencies and/or cash savings
- 2) To cease the one-off Community Grants fund from 1/04/2014 and disband the Grants Review Working party

### **Previous recommendation to Cabinet**

*Move to maximising communication through existing and more cost effective channels*

### **Consultation responses from Members of the Public**

- Cease vision as there are already community magazines.
- Do not want glossy magazines that no one reads and need to maximise communication through more cost effective channels

### **Consultation responses from Working Groups, Unions etc**

- As far as ceasing to print Vision Magazine goes, Councillors will be aware of the digital backwater that North West Leicestershire is. Many elderly residents depend on printed magazines to find out what is going on and Vision has been a valuable source of information for vulnerable people e.g. publicising changes to Housing Benefits and Council Tax, housing issues for those in privately rented accommodation or homeowners and publicising events. It is valued by a section of the community not served by modern media. No doubt this will be picked up by the EIA.

### **Consultation responses from the Executive Consultation Meeting**

- None on this issue

### **Consultation responses from the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party**

- None on this issue

### **Consultation responses from the Policy Development Group**

- None on this issue

### **Officer Comments**

- The suggestion of using community magazines to promote Council information is really welcome and we will take this idea forward.
- Advised that we are proposing to stop publishing the Vision magazine

### **Recommendation**

The recommendation remains to cease Vision magazine. The Council will move to maximising communication through existing and more cost effective channels and in early 2014 we will develop a new communications strategy. This will set out how we will use all channels available to us to reach the widest possible audience.

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**Previous recommendation to Cabinet**

*The cost and delivery of this function to be reviewed*

**Consultation responses from Members of the Public**

- Would like a stop on spending on civic events with the Chairman just chairing meetings.

**Consultation responses from Working Groups, Unions etc**

- I am attaching [copied below] the comments of one individual UNISON member concerning the review of the Chairman's functions at the end of this response, I hope that Councillors take the opportunity to read it as it contains many practical and alternative ideas. This, along with the proposal to cease Vision Magazine affects staff in the Council offices.

**Response from an individual member of UNISON**

There is a proposal to cut some of the Civic Functions.

1. The chairman as the First Citizen of the District should be recognised in this role. He/she can be the face of the Council as they are a-political. They can help to make inroads with businesses, the community and the public.
2. By cutting some of the Civic Functions you will lose some of the above.
3. Keep the Civic Service as this is a good networking opportunity between other Civic Heads, the Community and the profile of this type of event can be raised via the website and other media opportunities. However, there can be a reduction in the budget, by not offering those attending a proper afternoon tea, instead keep it minimal, and it could be tea/coffee and homemade cakes. This would possibly reduce the budget by half, therefore offering a 50% saving
4. The Civic Carol Service only has a tiny budget, but a saving of £250 (full budget amount) could be achieved by not holding one. Instead to raise the profile of the Council, the Chairman could actually be invited to a Carol Service within the District, as many parishes hold their own anyway. This would therefore mean a 100% saving, including some officer time.
5. Remembrance Service – This is a vital event to remain within the Civic Budget as there is no British Legion in Coalville. Also please note that 2014 is the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Great War, and the pride and community working that goes with this event must not be lost. I have some ideas to make this something special, and am already receiving calls to ask that

planning for this event is started earlier than it would for normal remembrance services. As I do not know what is happening with this, I am unable to respond at the moment.

If it cannot remain within the Civic area, and sits within Specials Budget, then the full amount needs to be transferred over. There cannot be a reduction in budget as year on year the costs increase. For 2013 we have fewer Police assisting with the event, and keeping the public safe is paramount. Our internal team who do the traffic management do a fantastic job, and I am sure people are not aware of what goes on behind the scenes.

However, after the 2014 event, there could be possibly a small saving made, by working in partnership with Christ Church and invited guests go back there for tea/coffee and biscuits. This would save on overtime for the facilities officer, and may be saving on the officers time for serving teas/and coffees. This would need to be discussed in more detail with all parties to see if it is feasible.

6. Civic Dinner and Awards evening 2015 onwards. Two suggestions
  - a) The civic dinner – goes back to being a civic dinner only and is self financing
  - b) The Awards evening could be combined to one awards evening, instead of at present where we have officers on higher salaries than the Events officers organising their own ‘afternoon thank you teas, respect awards, and may be other events within the council, and could incorporate the ‘internal awards’. All of these small events take time and effort to organise. If sponsorship is sought then it could be one joint awards/thank you evening instead. Everyone likes to feel valued. Those officers currently working these other events could then be focused at a more strategic level within their role/s.
  - c) Therefore a saving of approx. £1000 would be achieved if sponsorship can be maintained, and the Civic Dinner is self financing.

These are small savings in the grand scheme of things.

#### 7. Other Points

I think a consultation should be carried out with other Civic Officers to see what they are considering. If it is a similar situation, then may be one county-wide Civic Service could take place alternating the venue each year, and each authority could invite say 20 guests each. Each authority then only has to find the money every 7 years. This would be a countywide saving.

Also, the above could be achieved with the Carol Service, again giving county wide savings.

### **Consultation responses from the Executive Consultation Meeting**

- Anne Nielson (UNISON Representative) gave the example of the suggested saving proposed in the Chairman’s Function stating that it amounted to cutting someone’s job

### **Consultation responses from the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party**

- Councillor M B Wyatt stated that he strongly disagreed with the proposal to charge the Coalville Special Expense Budget for the Remembrance Day Service given that it acted as a focal point for commemorations in the entire District. He stated that this was highlighted by the fact that the Chief Executive and Chairman of the District attended the Coalville event.
- The Head of Community Services stated that the Coalville Special Expense Budget should fund the event as other parishes within the District host their own events which they fund themselves.
- Councillor L Spence stated that he agreed with the position taken by Councillor M B Wyatt and that he disagreed with the proposal in the strongest possible terms. He noted that he appreciated that some burden would have to transfer to the Coalville Special Expense Budget given the current economic climate. However, he said that he was astonished that it was being proposed to transfer the funding of the Remembrance Day Service for the same reasoning given by Councillor M B Wyatt.
- Councillor R Johnson stated that he thought the proposal was disgraceful and agreed that the cost of running the event should be taken from the General Fund.
- Councillor J Geary stated that he was bitterly disappointed with the proposal. He noted that other parishes within the District held their own events, but stated that parishes were able to raise Council Tax precepts to help fund such events whereas the Coalville Special Expense area had to liaise with Cabinet in order to do so. He stated that he felt the maximum increase in Council Tax should be requested.
- Councillor J Legrys suggested that the increase should be kept at 1.5% if the £3,500 cost of holding the Remembrance Day Service was returned to the General Fund.
- Councillor M B Wyatt stated that the large events that were currently held were important to the community and suggested that these should be maintained, at the expense of the smaller events.
- Councillor J Legrys proposed that the St George's Day Flags should be scrapped in forthcoming years, along with the annual Food and Drink Festival which he described as unnecessary. However, he noted that the Coalville by the Sea event had been well attended and appeared to be popular with the public and, as such, should be maintained.
- Councillor L Spence countered that the St George's Day Flags, much like the maintaining of the flowerbeds, made the town seem pleasant and welcoming to the public and should therefore be maintained. He instead suggested that the budget for each event should be capped.
- Councillor N Clarke suggested that, as a minimum, the Christmas and Picnic in the Park events should be maintained.

### **Consultation responses from the Policy Development Group**

- None on this issue

## Officer Comments

- In respect of civic events and budgets, there is a proposal to reduce these costs by £15,000, including a reduction in events, transport and activities.
- It is intended to maintain the profile and prominence of the Chairman's role whilst accepting that there is some scope to reduce the costs associated with hosting events.
- The suggestions have been noted but the proposal is to cease the hosting of events and this event is one such event.
- The Civic Carol Service is also highlighted as an event which will cease. The Chairman will be supported in attending local Community events and as such if invited may choose to attend other Carol Services.
- The Remembrance Day event will be hosted in 2014 and it is recognised that 2014 will be a very special year. However, all costs will be considered in detail through the event planning process and your suggestions are most helpful.
- The Civic Dinner is also highlighted as an event to be ceased from 14/15 onwards. The Green Footprints CAT are considering how to recognise the important work of the Green Footprints Challenge through a different format and this will be considered in due course and sponsorship will be considered for any costs related to a new format.
- Other civic officers across the County have been consulted with and ideas shared. However, each authority will make its own decisions of what is right for its locality within the resources it has available.

## Officer Comments

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 On considering the draft proposals for the general fund revenue budget at the meeting of Cabinet held on 24 September 2013, a decision was made that a review should be undertaken of the full range of duties carried out by the Chairman in order to establish a more cost effective service delivery and an achievable saving of £11,000. It was suggested that consideration should be given to reducing the role to

- (a) chairing the meetings of the Council
- (b) attending a reduced number of events in Leicestershire on behalf of the Council
- (c) supporting the Remembrance Day service.

### **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1 At present the total cost of delivering the Chairman's function is approximately £38,000 per annum including support costs.
- 2.2 There is a separate allowance set out in Scheme of Allowances for the Chairman and his/her Deputy. These currently stand at £3662.04 and £457.75 respectively. Whether these be retained or amended will be a matter for the Independent Remuneration Panel. Therefore for the purpose of this report it has been assumed that these will be retained and have not been included in the costs.



### **3. Consultation**

- 3.1 Following the meeting of Cabinet, consultation was carried out with all staff and those views have been considered.
- 3.2 Consultation has also been carried out with the other local Authorities in the County to see if there are any proposals which would merit a joint approach. This demonstrated that other authorities are making similar efforts to our own to keep down the cost of the civic function.

### **Recommendation**

In considering all the consultation responses the following recommendation are now proposed to Cabinet which recognise the importance of the Chairman's role as an ambassador for the district and his valued support at local community engagements.

1. It is intended to maintain the profile and prominence of the Chairman's role locally whilst accepting that there is some scope to reduce the costs associated with hosting events. The support afforded to the Chairman will in this reshaped role be retained whilst minimising the budget by approximately 28%.
2. Acknowledging the views expressed by Cabinet at the meeting on 24 September it is proposed that the Chairman will
  - (a) Chair the meetings of the Council with the continued support of Democratic Services.
  - (b) Attend, on behalf of the Authority, a number of events in Leicestershire at which the cost does not exceed an annual budget of £700 which will cover all associated costs (transport, tickets etc). A work plan will be drawn up by staff within Democratic Services at the beginning of each civic year and agreed with the Chairman.
  - (c) Support Remembrance Day. The costs will be reviewed by the portfolio holder in consultation with the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party to see whether a contribution can be agreed towards the total cost.
  - (d) Attend flag raising events in North West Leicestershire.
  - (e) Attend the Buckingham Palace garden party
  - (f) Continue to receive administrative support and assistance with diary management from Democratic Services .
3. In order to meet the objectives of ensuring a more cost effective service delivery it is proposed that the following areas of the chairman's function will no longer be funded:
  - (a) Civic church service
  - (b) Carol service
  - (c) Chauffeur driven car
  - (d) Civic dinner
  - (e) Attendance at events outside Leicestershire

- (f) Hosting events such as town twinning and charity cheque presentations.
- (g) Biographical leaflet.

These proposals would offer a saving of approximately £10,800 excluding support costs, the savings being made from the hire of transport, hospitality, civic events and general civic budgets.

**Previous recommendation to Cabinet**

*Maximise efficiencies through in-year staffing and operational changes as they occur.*

**Consultation responses from Members of the Public**

- None on this issue

**Consultation responses from Working Groups, Unions etc**

- The report which went to Cabinet on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2013 and the Road Shows that Christine conducted, also in September, has made sure that the highest number of staff possible are aware of the dire situation we find ourselves in. We have shared the staff suggestions with Unison members and, naturally, after 4 years of a pay freeze and a derisory 1% pay rise this year, not many, if any, are keen to see their pay and working conditions affected still further. We do recognise the financial situation that we are in but doubt if any manageable pay cuts will cover the shortfall in funding.
- The proposals for savings this year seem risk free, however, Councillors must be aware that “different ways of working” = cuts, less officers available to help residents and the ones that remain feeling overworked and undervalued. Morale has never been lower.
- Of course, some of the increases in charges are controversial with the public, indeed the majority of Unison members employed here are also residents and voters. Given the cuts in Central Government funding to Local Government and increases in inflation it is about time that the Council Tax was increased and this is something that the Unions have consistently advised for the past 4 years.
- The prospect of much larger savings required in 2015/16 is more challenging and we would hope that management will consult with us and discuss ways to minimise the pain for employees of the Council. Many times we have suggested that voluntary redundancies are sought in the first instance. If more cuts are on the way after 2015/16 then we realise that the Council will be reduced to providing only statutory services. We should be preparing for this and ensuring that the staff who want and need to stay in employment here are assisted to do so and those who would prefer to leave, can. It is the fairest option. A few years ago we suggested a programme of job shadowing and training for all staff to a good standard in Microsoft programmes so that they could move relatively easily from one department to another. The Unions are able to provide some of that training to their members which would reduce the costs to the Council. We understand that experienced staff are valuable and expensive to let go, but they will leave eventually and younger less experienced staff will have to take their place. It is surely better for this process to start now while we are in a better position. We also understand that some roles are highly technical and these officers

could not be replaced so easily. Many other councils have taken this approach with success and have managed to reduce the wage bill.

- Savings can also be made (although small) from contractual perks for senior managers. Lease cars larger than a Ford Fiesta should be paid for by individuals. Unison also would like to see Councillors refusing to claim any expenses over and above their allowances. Claiming for Broadband sets a poor example to everyone else.
- We all hope that no more expensive mistakes are made and that the use of external consultants and agency staff is kept to an absolute minimum. We have faith that our senior managers are capable and adequately remunerated to deal with the challenges ahead.
- Additional response from Mike Nelson, UCATT Midlands Regional Organiser
- For the attention of Christine Fisher – Chief Executive

Dear Christine,

I understand the Authority is currently examining possible ways to make savings in response to further funding cuts. I have also been informed you have not ruled out the possibility of redundancies.

I am sure you will appreciate how difficult it is for trade unions to offer any opinion which could impact on potential job losses. It is equally difficult to form a measured response to a proposal, expressed in such general terms, without a clear understanding of what it is that the authority actually intends to do. Whilst UCATT's specific interest is of course, Property Services and what your intentions are, it would be helpful if we could have sight also of the detail for the eight other area listed in Cabinet papers, September 24<sup>th</sup> 2014.

I would hope all of this will be fully discussed with the trade unions at our Executive Meeting on October 4<sup>th</sup> 2013 when we can together agree an appropriate time – scale for consultation on these proposals, particularly as we note the timetable included at 6:1 in the papers which has not yet been agreed by all parties.

We also note your proposal 3 at appendix 1A and await a detailed explanation about this. You should be aware UCATT would be concerned about any proposal which could take monies away from the HRA to support other areas.

At an appropriate time, and should it prove to be necessary, UCATT has a number of proposals to bring forward. However, these would not include any lessening in numbers of the craft-worker team which we believe to be already at minimum levels required.

UCATT continues to be concerned about the ability of the authority to maintain quality services following on from previous cuts. Any further discrimination in staffing levels, wherever these might take place can only achieve the dysfunction operation we have consistently pointed to.

I look forward to meeting with you at the Executive where we can further these discussions.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Nelson

UCATT Midlands Regional Organiser

### **Consultation responses from the Executive Consultation Meeting**

- **Salary Sacrifice:** reported that the uptake of the Computer and Smart TV scheme had been low and that a re-launch is planned in October.
- Issue raised regarding the introduction of Mobile Working Project stating that the £70,000 expenditure was unjustifiable in the current climate.
- The Efficiency Reviews were worrying as it could be detrimental to workers health. His members are already working many unpaid hours due to cuts and live in fear of losing their jobs.
- Members are horrified at the prospect of any reduction in take home pay. Issues such as car lease payments to staff and Councillor allowances should be looked at before staff are asked to make other sacrifices. For instance those with car leases could receive a basic payment and then top it up if they chose.
- Members would broadly be in agreement with a Christmas closure. Members would not want to see a reduction in sick pay or make a contribution to their uniform.
- Did not agree with any of the suggestions made as pay for his members is already too low to start making further cuts. He added that these suggestions must have come from those on higher salaries.
- That times have changed and therefore the lease car scheme needed to be looked at.
- Members would not accept any cuts to terms and conditions.
- Enforcing a closure over Christmas and asking staff to use their holidays is unfair, particularly to those with children and childcare to think of. Suggested that the Council could meet staff half way by contributing to their holiday. Overall would support the closure, but would need more detail before could agree to this.
- Agree with flexible working in principle as it is voluntary. Also highlighted the point that flexible retirement might realistically only be open to those aged 60 and over due to the potential capital costs involved, and would ask that this be made clear to employees when promoting this pensions discretion.

### **Consultation responses from the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party**

- None on this issue

## Consultation responses from the Policy Development Group

- None on this issue

### Officer Comments

- Staff were asked at the Chief executive's roadshows to put forward ideas for potential savings / efficiencies. A number of these ideas included possible reductions in the terms and conditions of service for Council employees. UNISON are clearly not supportive of such proposals.
- All car allowances and Lease cars were recently reviewed (in 2012) and considered in detail after consultation with the recognised Trade Unions. Lease cars or Essential user allowances are only paid to employees who meet the agreed, specified criteria. The Lease car contributions made by the Council are already restricted to "benchmark" vehicles and the contribution is also linked to the CO2 efficiency of the car chosen.
- Members are entitled to claim expenses for the provision of telephone and broadband facilities under the current Members' Allowance Scheme on production of receipts. The Members' Allowance Scheme is agreed and reviewed by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP). When these items were last reviewed in September 2011, the IRP recommended a reduction in the level of payment which was implemented in April 2012. All allowances are kept under continual review by the IRP.
- Corporate Leadership Team is monitoring expenditure on both external consultants and Agency staff to ensure this is managed appropriately.
- These indeed are difficult times and as you know I have always been committed to working with the Trades Unions whilst recognising your primary role for your Members. Clearly we would welcome any alternative or additional suggestions on how to meet the financial reductions we are facing
- Car Policy: stated that officers had met to discuss this matter further, but had not yet had the opportunity to meet with the Trade Union. A report will be produced to CLT around how to manage car allowances moving forward, and this will then be forwarded to the Trade Unions for consideration.
- The Mobile Working is being funded by the HRA Budget. The budget proposals relate to the General Fund.
- Capital investment needed to be made to improve and grow services and officers are happy to correspond regarding facts and figures.
- There are tough decisions to be faced. There is not enough money to keep all services running as they are at the moment. Every effort will be made to find partnering opportunities, but if the funding isn't there, there will have to be closures.
- The Council are currently in talks with Ashby Town Council with regard to running the toilets there, and there may be other opportunities for partnership working.
- The proposed Christmas closure would not be voluntary and it would require employees to save holiday or build flexi time to cover those days
- Promoting the flexible working arrangements currently on offer to staff would not achieve significant savings, but might be able to help a minority of staff to create a better work life balance while contributing to salary savings (where the business case in individual circumstances could be justified)
- The financial implications of early retirement are complex and that he is currently gathering data around pensions so that more accurate information can be provided about the potential capital costs that might be applicable
- Where access to flexible working is requested, careful consideration should be given to business needs before the request is granted.

## **Recommendations**

1. The proposals in the original Cabinet report of 24 September related to the deletion of vacant posts. It is recommended that this saving be accepted.
2. Further opportunities for rationalising and refocussing services will be considered by officers as part of the Planning for the Future Programme.
3. Comments/proposals made during the consultation will be considered by officers as the Planning for the Future Programme progresses. Those which are viable will be progressed.
4. All staff suggestions have been collated responded to and presented back to staff through internal communications.

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**Previous recommendation to Cabinet**

*Re-assessment of the charges made to the HRA for General Fund Services*

**Consultation responses from Members of the Public**

- None on this issue

**Consultation responses from Working Groups, Unions etc**

- None on this issue

**Consultation responses from the Executive Consultation Meeting**

- MN expressed concern at the increased allocation of finds from the HRA budget to the General Fund.
- RB explained that this was to reflect the growth in activity in this area and the consequent increase in workload for support services. It was good accounting practice to review the charging arrangements to reflect changing circumstances.
- MN raised the issue of the introduction of Mobile Working Project stating that the £70,000 expenditure was unjustifiable in the current climate. MN explained that the department is currently working at 95% of KPI's and that this new system would not improve performance. He stated that his members wanted the project to be stopped.
- SB stated the Mobile Working is being funded by the HRA Budget. The budget proposals relate to the General Fund.
- SB also explained that there needs to be a reassessment of cross charging between the HRA and General Fund is needed. Housing has increased its resource requiring a higher level of support from support functions such as HR and Finance.
- MN stated that he accepted the need for this adjustment, but again asked how the spending on the Mobile Working could be justified when there are no demonstrable benefits to introducing it.

**Consultation responses from the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party**

- None on this issue

**Consultation responses from the Policy Development Group**

- None on this issue

**Officer Comments**

This adjustment has been included in the Housing Revenue Account business plan 30 year projections.

**Recommendation**

In considering all the consultation responses there is no change to the recommendation.

COALVILLE SPECIAL EXPENSES

PORTFOLIO HOLDER CLLR ALISON SMITH MBE

**Previous recommendation to Cabinet**

*Re-assessment of General Fund expenditure spent on Coalville Special Expense area activity*

**Consultation responses from Members of the Public**

- None on this issue

**Consultation responses from Working Groups, Unions etc**

- None on this issue

**Consultation responses from the Executive Consultation Meeting**

- None on this issue

**Consultation responses from the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party**

- Councillor M B Wyatt stated that he strongly disagreed with the proposal to charge the Coalville Special Expense Budget for the Remembrance Day Service given that it acted as a focal point for commemorations in the entire District. He stated that this was highlighted by the fact that the Chief Executive and Chairman of the District attended the Coalville event.
- The Head of Community Services stated that the Coalville Special Expense Budget could fund the event as other parishes within the District host their own events which they fund themselves.
- Councillor L Spence stated that he agreed with the position taken by Councillor M B Wyatt and that he disagreed with the proposal in the strongest possible terms. He noted that he appreciated that some burden would have to transfer to the Coalville Special Expense Budget given the current economic climate. However, he said that he was astonished that it was being proposed to transfer the funding of the Remembrance Day Service for the same reasoning given by Councillor M B Wyatt.
- Councillor R Johnson stated that he thought the proposal was disgraceful and agreed that the cost of running the event should be taken from the General Fund.
- Councillor J Geary stated that he was bitterly disappointed with the proposal. He noted that other parishes within the District held their own events, but stated that parishes were able to raise Council Tax precepts to help fund such events whereas the Coalville Special Expense area had to liaise with Cabinet in order to do so. He stated that he felt the maximum increase in Council Tax should be requested.
- Councillor M B Wyatt countered that in his opinion Council Tax should not be raised.

- Councillor L Spence also stated that, in his opinion, an increase in the precept for the Coalville Special Expense area should not be requested.
- Members sought clarification as to how much the Council could increase Council Tax. The Senior Accountant confirmed that any raise is capped at 2% and that the District intended to implement a 1.5% raise in any case.
- Councillor J Legrys suggested that the increase should be kept at 1.5% if the £3,500 cost of holding the Remembrance Day Service was returned to the General Fund.
- Councillor L Spence stated that, in his view, it was important to maintain open spaces, such as flowerbeds, as it provided both residents and visitors with a positive impression of the town. He stated that he believed this was more important than one-off events and that the Working Party should concentrate on making Coalville a place where people want to live all year round.
- Councillor J Legrys concurred with the views put forward by Councillor L Spence. He stated that it was essential that the town was maintained all year round and that events such as Coalville Twenty14 could instead be run by volunteers.
- The consensus of Members was to convene a meeting of the Events Task & Finish Group during the consultation period to consider the 2014/15 Events Programme and other budget changes in light of the proposed reallocation of funds from the General Fund to the Coalville Special Expense Budget. See notes from meeting below.

## **COALVILLE SPECIALS EXPENSES EVENTS TASK & FINISH GROUP**

### **(14/15 BUDGET MEETING)**

In attendance:

Cllr Spence, Cultural Services Team Manager, Democratic Services Support Officer

An Events Task & Finish Group meeting was held on 30 October 2013 to discuss how to address the budget proposals outlined in the Councils September Cabinet report. The report highlighted that £25,000 of General Fund expenditure would be re-allocated to the Coalville Specials Expenses in 14/15 (based on the activities/functions/services being directly attributable to Coalville).

The following proposals were discussed in order to achieve the savings target required.

#### **Coalville Events**

Reduce the events budget from £31,500 to £18,500 **Saving £13,000**

The events programme for 14/15 would therefore be as follows

- Coalville Twenty 14 (budget being reduced from £15,000 to £10,000)
- Christmas in Coalville (budget reduced from £10,000 to £5,000)
- Remembrance Day Service (budget £3,500)

(It should be noted that St Georges Day Flags would no longer be put up, and the Food and Drink promotion and Coalville by the Sea events would not be held, however, these could be discussed with the Town Team to see if they wished to fund and take on the management of these events/activities)

### **Coalville Christmas Decorations**

Reduce the budget from £18,500 to £12,500 **Saving £6,000**

The budget would fund the annual contract and maintenance of £12,500

(No new lighting would be added in 14/15 unless members consider use of reserves as per 12/13 budget)

### **Asset Protection**

Merge together and reduce Asset Protection budgets for Coalville Park, Recreation Grounds, Open Spaces and Coalville Cemetery, reducing budgets from £17,000 to £9,000 **Saving £8,000**

### **Total proposed savings for 2014/15 £27,000**

(Extra savings contributing to the recharge of officer time for event management)

The following suggestions were received from Cllr Wyatt who was unable to attend the Events Task & Finish group meeting

- To re-look at the Asset Protection Funds with a view to identifying if further reductions can be made.
- To retain the Coalville by the Sea event as an important local event during the School Holidays particularly for families that do not have a summer holiday
- To investigate the feasibility of transferring assets such as Nature Alive and Urban Forest to agencies such as the Woodland Trust or National Forest
- To retain the Remembrance Day Events as General Fund expenditure, with at best a part contribution from the Coalville Specials to the event
- To incentivise local businesses to contribute financially to events in Coalville, through earmarking a figure from reserves ie £5,000 and for every pound contributed by local businesses the Specials budget would match from this reserves allocation with any income being ring fenced for the Community Events such as Coalville Twenty 14 and Christmas Switch On Event, in return the businesses would receive recognition through various means such as event posters, event brochure adverts, website adverts etc
- To consider branding the above initiative as 'Love Coalville' – Supporting Local Business
- To engage a company or individual on a commission only basis to seek advertising and sponsorship for town centre hanging baskets, flower beds, park flower beds, events and any other identified opportunity. Any income generated would be ring fenced for community events to increase footfall into the town centre.

### **Consultation responses from the Policy Development Group**

- None on this issue

### **Officer Comments**

- None on this issue

### **Recommendation**

In considering all the consultation responses the following recommendation are now proposed to Cabinet

- That the £25,000 re-allocation from General Fund to Coalville Special Expenses is progressed
- That a further meeting of the Events Task & Finish group be held to finalise the specific reductions proposed for decision at February 2014 Cabinet. That the Portfolio Holder be invited in order to discuss Remembrance Day and all proposals/suggestions received.

The following areas are still under consideration and provide an update to Members for progress so far. Cabinet are recommended to note the progress to date with a full recommendation being submitted in February.

<b>1. Tourist Information Centre</b>	
<b>Comments</b>	<b>Management Comments</b>
Think that the Tourist Information Centre is excellent and would be a major loss	We agree and we do not want to cease any services that we currently provide but we do not have the resources to continue funding all that we do. We are keen to explore every option in advance which is why we have put out a list of services we are looking for either partners or external funding to support before we consider the issue of cessation of service.
Requests have been received from the National Forest Company and Leicestershire Promotions to discuss this proposal further	Officers will be arranging to meet these valued partners for discussions regarding this proposal in order to feedback comments to Cabinet early in 2014.

<b>2. Community Events</b>	
<b>Comments</b>	<b>Management Comments</b>
Although Leisure Services do an excellent job but I think in the current climate community events should not be run by the Council e.g. Picnic in the Park	We agree and we do not want to cease any services that we currently provide but we do not have the resources to continue funding all that we do. We are keen to explore every option in advance which is why we have put out a list of services we are looking for either partners or external funding to support before we consider the issue of cessation of service.

### 3 Community leisure schemes (Ibstock & Castle Donington)

Comments	Management Comments
<p>Comments received from Ibstock Community College expressing deep concerns at the possibility that North West Leicestershire District Council may withdraw funding from the Ibstock community leisure scheme. Are urging the District Council to consider very carefully the wide range of negative consequences that any significant reduction of support for the Ibstock leisure scheme would cause. Are also particularly concerned at the potential impact on the vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our community, including the elderly, those with mental health issues, and the physically handicapped. Ibstock Community College have proposed a way forward which is as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Although it will be very difficult to achieve, we are prepared to make efficiency savings of £3,000 per annum in our running of the Leisure Complex with effect from April 2014; this will therefore lead to an equivalent reduction in our need for a direct subsidy from the District Council.</li> <li>2. To reduce your management costs, we are willing to manage the District Council community Leisure Manager and Senior Community Leisure Manager on your behalf for no charge; we shall do this fully in accordance with your procedures and policies, and will be accountable to the District Council for this in the same way that your officers are currently.</li> <li>3. I would be very happy to serve on a group such as a District Council working party to help address the budget issues by identifying potential reductions in costs and increases in income across North West Leicestershire.</li> <li>4. We would be very happy to meet at any stage with you and/or any NWLDC councillors or officers to discuss how we can move forward together.</li> </ol>	<p>We thank Ibstock Community College for their helpful response as we fully appreciate the scale of reduction will have an impact on the service provided , we assure the college that this is not something that we wish to be proposing but the scale of financial challenge is such that difficult decisions and choices are having to be made. In direct response to the proposals we accept the £3,000 reduction in NWLDC contribution for 14/15 and we would also like to accept the offer of the principal's contribution to a working party to look at how we can achieve the District Councils stated future position for this service area. We note your willingness to accept line management responsibility for the two posts but this will not help achieve or contribute to our cost savings at this point and would in fact reduce any potential flexibility with these posts in the future but thank you for the offer. We will arrange a meeting in due course.</p>



#### 4 CCTV

Comments	Management Comments
<p>Concerned that the CCTV service will be cut or axed completely. Has been an integral part in policing of the local area and has helped detect shoplifters, robberies, serious assaults, public order, theft from motor vehicles, drink drivers, and road traffic accidents, have also assisted in locating high risk missing persons. If the CCTV is cut, there will be an increase in crime in both Ashby and Coalville, and a reduction in detections.</p> <p>With regards to the changes to the CCTV further consultations are required as there are obligations within the lease of the control room for CCTV surveillance to be undertaken.</p> <p>Some CCTV is necessary, but perhaps it has been overdone and some money could be saved in this area.</p>	Awaiting comments from David Hughes

#### 5 Ashby Toilets

Comments	Management Comments
<p>I think most of the proposals are reasonable except that I should very much not want to see public toilet provision removed in Ashby (and if Ashby, why not Coalville) - I am sure I am not alone in finding myself in urgent need of a WC from time to time. Could alternative provision be made e.g. through willing shops.</p>	<p>We are in discussions with Ashby Town Council regarding the future provision of toilets in Ashby and also looking at what other provision exists, all options will be considered before any decisions are made and your comments regarding Coalville have been noted</p>

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## CABINET

10 DECEMBER 2013

### ITEM 7 - GENERAL FUND AND SPECIAL EXPENSES REVENUE BUDGETS 2014/15 AND 2015/16

#### UPDATE TO APPENDIX 3

Following the production of the agenda, an additional response to the consultation has been received from Castle Donington Community College as below.

<b>3 Community leisure schemes (Ibstock &amp; Castle Donington)</b>	
<b>Comments</b>	<b>Management Comments</b>
<p>Castle Donington College have thanked the Council for notification of the budget proposals for 2014-18 but have advised that they are unable to reduce their costs for 14/15 onwards based on the current usage of their premises.</p> <p>They point out that through negotiation, the services and hours open for recreational activities for the community have reduced to the bare minimum over the last few years and feel that any further reduction would lead to a real detrimental effect on the community, income to NWLDC and staff who work during those hours.</p> <p>They point out that if the Council wishes to change its provision of recreational facilities at the college very careful negotiating will be required by all parties concerned ie the Parish Council, residents and the college to name but a few.</p> <p>The college would appreciate being advised of any changes as a matter of urgency as the fixed term staff contracts are due for renewal on 1 April 2014.</p>	<p>We thank the College for their response and do recognise the work that has been undertaken in previous years to maintain the cost of the service within available resources.</p> <p>We note the Colleges views that this matter will need wider discussion and we would be happy to initiate a meeting of relevant parties to discuss further.</p> <p>We also note the timescales in relation to staff contracts and would suggest that the District Council convene a meeting of all relevant parties early in 2014.</p>

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## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## CABINET – 10 DECEMBER 2013

Title of report	<b>DRAFT HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2014/15 AND RENT INCREASE</b>
Key Decision	a) Financial Yes b) Community Yes
Contacts	<p>Councillor Nick Rushton 01530 412059 <a href="mailto:nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Councillor Roger Bayliss 01530 411055 <a href="mailto:roger.bayliss@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">roger.bayliss@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>Director of Services 01530 454555 <a href="mailto:steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">steve.bambrick@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 seek approval of the draft 2014/15 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Rent & Service Charge increases for consultation.
Reason for Decision	To enable the Council to set a balanced Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2014/15.
Council Priorities	The HRA budget assists the Value for money priority.
Implications: Financial/Staff	As included in report.
Link to relevant CAT	Delivering a HRA Budget for 2014/15 will allow the Council to achieve the objectives for the service as set out in the Housing Business Plan.
Risk Management	The Council sets an HRA budget, which is regularly monitored throughout the year to ensure services are delivered within budget.
Equalities Impact Assessment	No impact identified.

Human Rights	None identified.
Transformational Government	Not applicable
Comments of Head of Paid Service	The report is satisfactory.
Comments of Section 151 Officer	As report author the report is satisfactory
Comments of Monitoring Officer	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees	Corporate Leadership Team (CLT). Tenants Performance and Finance Working Group. Tenants and Leaseholders Consultation Forum.
Background papers	None
Recommendations	<p><b>1. THAT CABINET NOTES THE ASSURANCE STATEMENT BY THE S151 OFFICER</b></p> <p><b>2. THAT CABINET APPROVES THE DRAFT HRA BUDGET AS DETAILED IN THIS REPORT AND ASSOCIATED APPENDICES FOR CONSULTATION</b></p>

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The draft Housing Revenue Account budget for 2014/15 is set out at Appendix A. The revised budget for the current year, together with the original 2013/14 budget are also attached for information.
- 1.2 This report seeks Cabinet approval to consult on the draft HRA budget, with the outcome of this consultation exercise being fed back into the subsequent report to Cabinet, for Cabinet to make recommendations on the final budget to Council.

## 2.0 REVISED BUDGET 2013/14

- 2.1 The overall forecast for the current year shows a decrease in the forecast surplus from £1.473m to £1.274m. This is largely as a result of a reduction in expected rental income of £238k due to an increased level of empty properties and an increased number of property sales through the 'Right to Buy.'
- 2.2 There is a small decrease in Supervision and Management expenses (£25k) and a reduction in other income of £17k.
- 2.3 As a result of this and other smaller differences, the balance on the Housing Revenue Account at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 is estimated to be £5.034m. This balance significantly exceeds our agreed minimum balance of £1m but this has been developed to provide a loan repayment reserve provision against the future repayment of debts taken out on a maturity repayment basis, within the HRA Business Plan.

### **3.0 2014/15 BUDGET OVERVIEW**

- 3.1 The budget is based on prices at November 2013 plus known increases, for example contractual obligations.
- 3.2 Repairs and maintenance of dwellings (Appendix 'A' – line 1) in 2014/15 is anticipated to total £4.931m.
- 3.3 Supervision and Management Expenditure (Appendix 'A' – line 4) in 2014/15 is expected to be £2.322m (1 % lower than the original 2013/14 budget). This is largely caused by the net effect of the service investments and budget reductions detailed in Appendices 'B' and 'C.'
- 3.4 Garage rent levels (Appendix 'A' – line 15) are proposed to rise by 3.2 % which is in line with the Retail Prices Index (RPI) as at September 2013.
- 3.5 Appleby Magna Caravan Site is a General Fund asset but managed within Housing. Ground rents for the site are proposed to be increased by 3.2% on the anniversary of each individual rent agreement in 2014/15.
- 3.6 It is proposed that Lifeline Charges (included in Appendix A – line – 13) are increased by 3.2% from 1 July 2014.
- 3.7 The budget investment and budget reductions proposals included in the 2014/15 budget are shown at Appendices B and C.

### **4.0 2014/15 BUDGET – RENTS (APPENDIX 'A' – LINE 13)**

- 4.1 Existing Government policy, introduced nationally for local authorities in April 2002 is to establish the local authority average guideline rent increase by applying RPI inflation at the previous September plus 0.5%, and a convergence factor of up to £2 per week to reflect the number of years to rental convergence with the housing association sector.
- 4.2 The Government has proposed that from 2015/16 this will be replaced by a formula of CPI + 1% for the next 10 years. Historically CPI has been lower than RPI, so the expected impact of this policy would be to reduce annual rent increases. For September 2013 CPI was 0.5% below RPI, so the new formula would have produced an identical increase (for the inflation related element) for 2014/15 had it been in place now.
- 4.3 The Government is proposing to cease the rent restructuring policy in 2015/16. Through this process all properties are moving towards their "target rent" in steps of up to £2pw per year. Currently only approximately 30% of our tenants are paying the target rent for their home, principally because we were historically a lower rent level Council. This means the steps required to get to target rents are larger and the impact of the £2pw increase "cap" has restricted many properties progress to their target. Because of their lower rent starting point, many of our homes are not forecast to reach their target rent until after 2016/17. Our business plan forecasts assume that all properties will reach their target rents. If rent restructuring ceases in 2015/16 a significant proportion of our properties will not have reached their target rent. This will reduce the income projected from future rent increases, and mean that we will have different rent levels for similar properties throughout the housing stock.
- 4.4 September 2013 RPI inflation was 3.2%. This has been used as the basis to calculate the rent increase for 2014/15 in line with the Government's Rent Convergence Policy.

- 4.5 Members may recall that the original average rent for 2013/14 approved at Council on 26th February 2013 was £74.25. As part of the 2008/2009 budget setting process and following tenant consultation, Members agreed that upon re-let, if the tenant was new to the service, the rent charged would be the target rent. Such re-lets since the approval of the 2013/14 rent now mean that the average rent has increased by 20 pence to £74.45
- 4.6 In accordance with Government's Rent Convergence Policy therefore it is proposed to increase the average weekly rents by £4.30 per week (5.78%) from £74.45 to £78.75. For those properties already at the target rent the increases are 3.7%.
- 4.7 A table showing a sample of rents across property types and areas is attached at Appendix "D" for Member's information. This excludes any service charge.

## **5.0 SERVICE CHARGES**

- 5.1 About one third of the Council's properties have a service charge of one type or another, covering a range of items such as communal heating, communal lighting and the maintenance of communal areas. The estimated income from these charges is shown at line 14 of Appendix "A".
- 5.2 For 2014/15 average weekly service charges are proposed to be increased by 2 pence (1.02%) from £1.43 to £1.45. This gives a combined average rent/service charge increase of £4.32 per week (5.69%), from £75.88 to £80.20.

## **6.0 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BALANCE**

- 6.1 The budget for 2014/15 produces an operating surplus of £1.808m for the year which will increase the estimated balance on the Housing Revenue Account at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 to £6.841m.
- 6.2 Significant surpluses on the HRA are required in 2013/14 and 2014/15 and beyond so as to be able to meet the loan repayment commitments in the HRA Business Plan.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION PROCESS**

- 7.1 The contents and appendices of this report will be used to consult with Council tenants on the proposals for the 2014/15 Housing Revenue Account budget.
- 7.2 This will include consulting with tenant members of the Performance and Finance Working Group (the Council's Resident Involvement technical finance working group) and the Tenants and Leaseholders Consultation Forum (the Council's Resident Involvement decision making body) to review and comment on the proposals.
- 7.3 In addition, the contents and appendices of this report will be published on the Council's Housing internet page.
- 7.4 A copy of the consultation timetable can be found in Appendix E.

## **8.0 ROBUSTNESS OF ESTIMATES AND ADEQUACY OF RESERVES**

- 8.1 The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council's Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) to comment on the robustness of the estimates and also on the adequacy



of the proposed reserves. Members must have regard to these comments when making a decision on the budget proposals for the forthcoming year.

- 8.2 Taking into account identified risks, the Section 151 Officer considers that the estimates which form the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2014/15 are robust and prudent and the proposals are deliverable.
- 8.3 The Section 151 Officer also considers that the overall level of Housing Revenue Account reserves is adequate.

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## HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT SUMMARY

LINE NO.	DETAIL	2013/2014		2014/2015
		Budget £	Forecast (p6) £	Estimate £
	<b>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT</b>			
1.	TOTAL REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE	4,849,230	4,851,110	4,931,190
	<b>SUPERVISION &amp; MANAGEMENT</b>			
2.	General	2,114,740	2,134,160	2,300,860
3.	Special / Supporting People	229,830	185,380	21,380
4.		2,344,570	2,319,540	2,322,240
5.	PROVISION -DOUBTFUL DEBTS	96,760	96,760	170,790
6.	CAPITAL FINANCING:-			
7.	Depreciation - MRA & other	4,008,170	4,008,170	4,008,170
8.	Debt Management Expenses	1,380	1,380	1,380
9.		4,009,550	4,009,550	4,009,550
10.	HOUSING SUBSIDY PAYMENT TO NATIONAL POOL	0	0	0
11.	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	11,300,110	11,276,960	11,433,770
12.	RENT INCOME			
13.	Dwellings	16,051,250	15,813,450	16,741,400
14.	Service Charges	316,550	303,940	304,550
15.	Garages & Sites	89,020	84,140	80,920
16.	Other	26,100	26,100	26,100
17.		16,482,920	16,227,630	17,152,970
18.	TOTAL INCOME	16,482,920	16,227,630	17,152,970
19.	NET COST OF SERVICES	-5,182,810	-4,950,670	-5,719,200
20.	CAPITAL FINANCING - HISTORICAL DEBT	175,000	175,000	175,000
21.	CAPITAL FINANCING - SELF FINANCING DEBT	3,257,170	3,257,170	3,257,170
22.	INVESTMENT INCOME	-25,200	-25,200	-25,200
23.	PREMATURE LOAN REDEMPTION PREMIUMS	19,270	19,270	14,470
24.		3,426,240	3,426,240	3,421,440
25.	NET OPERATING EXPENDITURE	-1,756,570	-1,524,430	-2,297,760
26.	REVENUE CONTRIBUTION TO CAPITAL	250,000	250,000	490,000
27.	CONTINGENCY	33,000	0	0
28.		283,000	250,000	490,000
29.	NET (SURPLUS) / DEFICIT	-1,473,570	-1,274,430	-1,807,760
	<b><u>HRA BALANCES</u></b>			
30.	Balance Brought Forward	-3,759,156	-3,759,156	-5,033,586
31.	(Surplus)/Deficit for Year	-1,473,570	-1,274,430	-1,807,760
32.	Balance as at year end	-5,232,726	-5,033,586	-6,841,346

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## HRA Budget Investments 2014/15

Ref	dept	Investments	£'s		Cost code	RAG
BI1	HM	HRA Hardship Fund	10,500	Option to have additional DHP type provision for Council tenants only	New required	a
BI2	HM	Increase in Bad Debt Provision	74,030	Increase to reflect increase in arrears due to welfare reform	5290-5990	g
BI3	HM	Under Occupation Incentive	10,000	Option to help tenants move if affected by under occupation charge	5030 0849	a
BI6	HM	Housing Tenancy Support	40,000	Option to introduce a support service for single and childless couples	1206 1116	a
BI7	R & I	SoR (Schedule of rates) Void Costs - Increase in Number of Voids	109,000	Additional budget to reflect increase in number of void properties	5005 0200 - 5005 1293	g
BI8	R & I	SoR (Schedule of Rates) Increase - Contract Inflationary Increase	52,000	Inflation increase in repairs contract prices	5103 1281 - 5103 1294	g
BI12	HRA BS	Supporting people		Option to make up shortfall in income following retendering (removed)	5090-2009	r
BI13	HRA BS	HRA Salary cost of living rise	74,470	1% assumed as per GF	Salary	g
BI14	HRA BS	RCCO - Revenue Contribution to Capital outlay	240,000	Estimated RCCO - to be confirmed	5295 1402	g
BI16	HRA BS	Electricity costs - Increase in Utility Costs	13,300		5030-0302	g
BI17	HRA BS	Green & Decent advisor costs	13,400	Costs for Energy Saving Trust in monitoring and evaluating pilot	5025 0800	g
BI18	HRA BS	Garage & Garage Site Reduction in Income Due to Voids and Review of Sites	8,100	Fewer garages let, and projected reduction due to redevelopment	5290 2181	g
BI19	HRA BS	Energy Strategy Officer	31,000	Option to fund post that would lead on our approach	1203 1116	a
BI20	HRA BS	Resident Involvement Restructure provision	27,000	Increase in capacity to reflect recent restructure (Team Leader post)	1203 1116	g
BI21	HRA BS	ICT Project Officer fixed term extension	9,000	To allow proper conclusion to mobile working project	1203 1116	g
BI22	HRA BS	Mobile working licence costs	9,000	Additional license costs over an above existing budget	1203 0854	g
BI23	HRA BS	Service Charges - Increased Provision in Relation to Additional Void Properties	12,000		5290-2200	g
BI24	HRA BS	Increase in Corporate recharges	50,000	As seen in draft GF budget for 2014/15		g
BI25	HRA BS	Gas costs - Increase in Utility Costs	16,810		5030	g
BI4 BI5 BI9 BI10 BI11 BI15		De Minimus items (under £5k)	14,060	Inflation Increase in Gas Servicing Contract (£2,250), Increase in properties for gas servicing due to conversion from solid fuel ( £ 3,740), Inflation increase in Cleaning contract ( £ 1,570), Inflation increase in Grounds Maintenance contract ( £ 1,150), Assistive telecare equipment & phone bills costs ( £ 2.350), Open Housing Improvement Group ICT systems enhancements ( £ 3,000)	Various	g
			<b>813,670</b>			

## HRA Budget Reductions 2014/15

Ref	dept	Savings	£'s	Comments	Cost code	RAG
BR2	R & I	Reduction of overtime paid for boiler stoking	10,000	Solid fuel boilers no longer in use	5103	g
BR3	R & I	Reduction in tipping charges	6,000	Increased budget last year, has not been used in full	5103 0818	g
BR5	R & I	Mobile working	77,100	Reduction in repairs budget due to mobile working efficiencies	5103 1281-5103 1294	g
BR7	HRA BS	Assistive Telecare Maintenance Contract	7,500	Reduction in charges from new contractor	5050 0875	g
BR8	HRA BS	Caravan site pitch fees		Increase at Appleby Magna - removed from HRA as General Fund		g
BR9	HRA BS	Dwelling rents	690,150	Annual rent increase at 5.81% average	5290 2180	g
BR11	HRA BS	End of pension added years provision	18,000	Budget provision that is not required	1203 0060	g
BR13	HRA BS	Consultation budget	8,000	Budget provision no longer required	1203 0815	g
BR14	HRA BS	Tenants Contents Insurance	unknown	Will not be notified of increase by insurer till Jan 14.	1203	-
BR17	HRA BS	Supporting People Retender - Removal of Subsidy	171,000	3/4 year impact of tenure neutral contract for support	5050	a
BR18	R & I	Defective Double Glazing	50,000	Removal of one-off growth from 2013/14	5032 0170	g
BR19	R & I	Minor adaptations budget	10,000	Surplus budget capacity - not required.	5010 0167	g
BR20	HM	Council Tax	41,700	Reduction in budget to reflect actual 2013/14 spend	5030	g
BR21	HRA BS	Capitalised Salaries Income	38,000	Charging Planned Investment team salary costs to capital	1207	g
BR1 BR4 BR6 BR10 BR12 BR15 BR16 BR22		De Minimus items (under £5k)	25,480	Reduction in In House Repairs Team vehicle fuel costs (£4,000), Reduced number of properties for solid fuel servicing due to conversion to gas ( £ 2,180), Annual increase in Lifeline charges ( £ 4,000), Reduced Refuse Collection costs due to closed schemes ( £ 1,400), Reduced uniforms budget for Customer Services staff ( £ 4,700), Income received from sale of recycling materials ( £ 2,000), Increased Central Heating Charges ( £2,400), Reduced Premium on historical premature loan redemptions ( £ 4,800)	Various	g
			<b>1,152,930</b>			

<b>Net Budget saving/(investment)</b>	<b>339,260</b>
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**Examples of Proposed Rent Charges 2014/2015 (excluding service charges)**

ASSET LOCATION	BEDSIT						ONE BEDROOM						TWO BEDROOM						THREE BEDROOM						FOUR / FIVE BEDROOM					
	Existing Rent (2013/14)			New Rent (2014/15)			Existing Rent (2013/14)			New Rent (2014/15)			Existing Rent (2013/14)			New Rent (2014/15)			Existing Rent (2013/14)			New Rent (2014/15)			Existing Rent (2013/14)			New Rent (2014/15)		
	Lowest	Average	Highest	Lowest	Average	Highest	Lowest	Average	Highest	Lowest	Average	Highest	Lowest	Average	Highest	Lowest	Average	Highest	Lowest	Average	Highest	Lowest	Average	Highest	Lowest	Average	Highest	Lowest	Average	Highest
Albert Village, Coalville, Ellistown, Hugglescote, Overseal, Worthington.	37.26	45.54	52.35	40.64	48.42	54.28	43.28	56.89	67.78	46.88	60.23	70.85	52.78	71.54	79.32	56.73	75.61	82.25	73.17	81.61	88.11	77.88	86.34	91.37	82.97	87.50	95.19	88.04	92.45	98.71
Castle Donington	41.43	47.44	53.45	44.96	50.20	55.43	46.05	57.50	67.82	49.75	61.39	72.33	65.55	75.93	82.65	69.98	80.24	85.71	60.66	83.66	91.44	64.90	88.50	94.82	84.80	88.34	92.33	89.94	93.61	97.75
Ibstock, Moira, Ravenstone, Thringstone, Whitwick.	46.09	49.77	53.45	49.80	52.62	55.43	33.99	57.94	70.55	37.25	61.41	73.16	41.98	70.49	83.78	45.53	74.55	86.88	68.90	82.37	92.53	73.45	87.12	95.95	85.95	88.15	96.30	91.13	93.27	99.87
Ashby, Blackfordby, Coleorton, Diseworth, Donisthorpe, Kegworth, Long Whatton, Measham, Newbold Coleorton, Oakthorpe, Packington	34.62	50.59	59.02	37.90	53.52	61.20	41.70	59.93	70.55	45.24	63.56	73.16	54.77	71.22	82.11	58.80	75.34	85.15	70.56	82.40	96.42	75.17	87.07	99.99	78.23	86.83	102.35	83.12	91.89	106.14
Appleby Magna, Belton, Breedon, Chilcote, Heather, Hemington, Lockington, Newton Burgoland, Normanton Le Heath, Osgathorpe, Snarestone, Swannington, Sweptstone, Tonge.	53.54	55.68	56.24	57.52	58.25	58.32	56.00	63.76	70.55	60.07	67.69	73.16	62.83	73.36	84.88	67.15	77.37	88.03	81.25	85.69	93.64	86.26	90.59	97.10	90.26	90.26	90.26	95.60	95.60	95.60

SUMMARY	£		£	%
Average Rent	78.75	Average Increase	4.30	5.78
Lowest Rent	37.25	Lowest Increase	1.88	3.69
Highest Rent	106.14	Highest Increase	5.43	9.59

Figures based upon stock levels as at 11th November 2013: 4310 properties

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2014/15 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget timetable			
Details	Group	Dates	Notes
Approves 2013/14 Budget proposals for consultation	Cabinet	10 December 2013	
End of call in period	End of Cabinet Call in Period	30 December 2013	
Review of proposed 2014/15 HRA Budget	Performance & Finance Working Group	09 January 2013	
Publication 2014/15 HRA Budget on the Council's Housing webpage	All Council tenants	6 January - 17 January 2014	
Review of proposed 2014/15 HRA Budget	Tenants & Leaseholders Consultation Forum	27 January 2014	Note that comments will be recieved after Statutory Officer deadline but before print deadline of 11 Feb Cabinet report
Recommends 2014/15 HRA Budget	Cabinet	11 February 2014	
Recommends 2014/15 HRA Budget	Council	25 February 2014	

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## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## CABINET – 10 DECEMBER 2013

Title of report	<b>INTRODUCTION OF MOBILE WORKING WITHIN THE HOUSING SERVICE</b>
Key Decision	a) Financial Yes b) Community Yes
Contacts	Councillor Roger Bayliss 01530 411055 <a href="mailto:roger.bayliss@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">roger.bayliss@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>  Director of Services 01530 454555 <a href="mailto:steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>  Head of Housing 01530 454780 <a href="mailto:chris.lambert@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">chris.lambert@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>
Purpose of report	To ask Cabinet to waive Contract Procedure Rule 5 and delegate authority for the award of contract to the Director of Services.
Reason for Decision	To ensure the Mobile Working Programme is delivered in an effective and efficient manner.
Council Priorities	Value for Money Homes and Communities Green Footprints Challenge
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	Financial implications can be met within existing budgets. There is no impact on staffing
Link to relevant CAT	Improving Customer Experience
Risk Management	The report addresses the proper procurement of a contract to provide a scheduling system for the Repairs Management Team. Without such a system the Council's spend on third party repairs contracts will continue to grow and the reduction in repairs costs as a result of the Decent Homes Investment Program will not be fully realised.
Equalities Impact Assessment	Not applicable
Human Rights	No human rights implications are apparent.

Transformational Government	This relates to the new ways in which councils are being asked to deliver their services. The approach to tendering for this service represents procurement best practice and will deliver optimum value for money.
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	Procurement Team, Legal Services, Housing Team
Background papers	None.
Recommendations	<p><b>THAT CABINET:</b></p> <p><b>(1) WAIVES CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULE 5 FOR THE PURPOSES OF THIS PROCUREMENT; AND</b></p> <p><b>(2) DELEGATES THE AWARD OF THE CONTRACT FOR MOBILE WORKING TO THE DIRECTOR OF SERVICES IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER</b></p>

## 1.0 BACKGROUND.

- 1.1 Optimised or dynamic scheduling is being increasingly utilised by local authorities and housing associations operating in-house repairs teams. Currently we use paper job tickets which are collected and returned on a weekly basis severely restricting our ability to deliver an efficient service for our customers.
- 1.2 Designed to deliver efficiencies within the scheduling of appointments, it also reduces non productive time by minimising the time and cost repairs officers spend travelling between appointments as well as simplifying the ordering of parts.
- 1.3 In turn this delivers a much improved service to customers as well as vastly improved management information.
- 1.4 The resulting efficiency savings will reduce the additional costs incurred using Lakers who are a third party external repairs contractor used by the Council as additional resource to help deliver the right service to our customers as well as specialised jobs such as asbestos removal and drainage works.
- 1.5 Although Housing will initially benefit from mobile working it is expected that this will expedite mobile working technology within other functions and services offered by the Council and in support of ICE (Improving Customer Experience) work stream.

## **2.0 PROCUREMENT APPROACH**

- 2.1 At the beginning of 2013 a Prior Information Notice was placed in the Official Journal of the European Union, following which the Council received 15 expressions of interest. Based on Council requirements and needs, of these 15, two contractors were identified as being able to provide an appropriate solution. Capita, who operate our Housing Management System OPENHousing, working in partnership with Totalmobile Xmbrace DRS and Oneserve Ltd.
- 2.2 In consultation with members of the Council's Legal, Procurement as well as Repairs, Housing and Investment Teams it has been concluded that the most effective course of action to ensure that we get the best solution to fit the Housing Team's requirements is to utilise the Government Procurement Service (GPS) 'Spot Buy Service'. This will provide a 'professionally managed procurement service' to identify suppliers on an open market basis.
- 2.3 By utilising this service it will ensure that the procurement process is as efficient as possible, will ensure suppliers have an equal opportunity to tender and will release time of Council Officers to focus on other priorities.

## **3.0 VALUE FOR MONEY ASSESSMENT**

- 3.1 The pre market engagement provided some indicative costs. The competitive process undertaken by the tender process should ensure our requirements are met and we obtain best price.
- 3.2 Demonstrations by two initially shortlisted suppliers have been delivered to the project team officers from Repairs, HRA Business Support and Customer Services. This has enabled the project team to establish the best solution for the Council and facilitated the development of the specification for the GPS Spot Buy Service.

## **4.0 RESOURCE COMMITMENTS**

- 4.1 It is estimated that the set-up costs including annual licence fees over four years will be in the region of £165,000. Accordingly a full tender should be carried out under the Council's Contract Procedure Rule 5.16.
- 4.2 Given the limited response to the Prior Information Notice from suppliers offering a suitable product and in order that the procurement of this contract can be delivered as soon as possible, Cabinet are asked to waive Contract Procedure Rule 5.
- 4.3 The use of the GPS Spot Buy Service ensures that an established and professional procurement route is adopted to select the best price and quality achievable within budget for the Council, which will include all suppliers on the open market.
- 4.4 Procurement and delivery will be managed and supported by the HRA Business Support Team.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Indicative prices from the two suppliers above indicate that set-up costs might exceed £100,000 in addition there will also be annual licence costs.
- 5.2 Sufficient funding is available in the 2013/14 Revenue Earmarked Reserves and 2013/14 HRA Capital Programme.

5.3 For using the Spot Buy Service there will be a charge equal to 1% of the value of the contract put in place, which will be in the region of £1,650, subject to the final prices submitted.

5.4 The savings from introducing mobile working would come by way of increasing the number of jobs completed by our in-house repairs team therefore reducing the number of repairs appointments we allocate to and pay Lakers for. Based on each of the Council's repairs operatives completing one additional job per week, the saving with Lakers will be at least £298,000 during the life of the contract (4 years).

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

6.1 In order for the budgeted savings from implementing mobile working to be delivered during 2014/15 it is important that the contract is awarded and implementation commences as soon as possible. In order to facilitate this Cabinet are requested to waive the relevant provisions of the Contract Procedure rules and delegate authority for award of the contract to the Director of Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## CABINET – 10 DECEMBER 2013

Title of report	<b>LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2014/15</b>
Key Decision	a) Financial Yes b) Community Yes
Contacts	Councillor Nick 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	To provide Cabinet with a summary of the responses to the public consultation of the 2014/15 Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS) and to make a recommendation to Council resulting from that consultation.
Reason for Decision	To comply with legislative requirements and approve details for calculating the Council Tax Base for 2014/15.
Council Priorities	Business and Jobs Value for Money
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	Financial implications are contained within the report.
Link to relevant CAT	Welfare Reform CAT
Risk Management	Detailed in Section 3.
Equalities Impact Assessment	Completed and available below: <a href="https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/lcts_eia/LCTS%20EIA%20NWL%20V5.pdf">https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/lcts_eia/LCTS%20EIA%20NWL%20V5.pdf</a>
Human Rights	None identified.
Transformational Government	None identified
Comments of Head of Paid Service	The report is satisfactory.
Comments of Section 151 Officer	As the report author the report is satisfactory

Comments of Monitoring Officer	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees	Existing Council Tax Support claimants, members of the public, Leicestershire County Council, Leicestershire Police Authority, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Authority.
Background papers	<p>Reports to Cabinet: <a href="#">17 July 2012</a>, <a href="#">21 August 2012</a> and <a href="#">21 November 2012</a></p> <p>Report to Council: <a href="#">22 January 2013</a></p> <p>Analysis of Consultation Responses:  <a href="https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/nwl_council_tax_support_consultation_responses_analysed_2/NWL%20Council%20Tax%20Support%20Consultation%20Responses%20-%20Analysed%20%282%29.xlsx">https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/nwl_council_tax_support_consultation_responses_analysed_2/NWL%20Council%20Tax%20Support%20Consultation%20Responses%20-%20Analysed%20%282%29.xlsx</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/council_tax_support_consultation/Council%20Tax%20Support%20Consultation.xlsx">https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/council_tax_support_consultation/Council%20Tax%20Support%20Consultation.xlsx</a></p> <p>Local Government Finance Act 2012:  <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/17/enacted">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/17/enacted</a></p>
Recommendations	<p><b>THAT IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:</b></p> <p><b>THAT THE MAXIMUM LEVEL OF COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT AVAILABLE SHOULD BE REDUCED FROM 91.5% TO 85%.</b></p>

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Local Government Finance Act contains provisions for the localisation of council tax support in England by imposing a duty on billing authorities to approve a localised council tax reduction scheme by 31 January each year and to consult with major precepting authorities and such other persons as it considers likely to have an interest in the scheme.
- 1.2 In line with legislative requirements a period of public consultation on the 2014/15 Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS) commenced on 28 August 2013 and ended on 11 October 2013. Consultation was also conducted with the County Council, Police and Fire services as precepting authorities with their comments having been considered.
- 1.3 In year one of the LCTSS (2013/14), the Government provided a one-off Transitional Grant to assist Councils which implemented schemes limiting contributions to Council Tax liabilities to 8.5%. This announcement influenced Cabinet's decision to recommend to Council a Local Council Tax Support Scheme which took advantage of this payment, as recommending a higher contribution would have meant that the Council would not have received this grant. The transitional grant for the area of North West Leicestershire was £140,182 (£20,428 paid to NWLDC).
- 1.4 In 2014/15 this additional payment is no longer available, which has a bearing on the overall cost of the Scheme and therefore influences the maximum level of support that can be afforded by the Council and the precepting authorities.



## 2. PROPOSED SCHEME

- 2.1 As part of the Government's Welfare Reform programme, from April 2013 Council Tax Benefit, the previous means of helping people on low incomes meet their Council Tax obligations, was replaced by a new localised support scheme defined by each Council. At the same time the Government reduced the funding for Council Tax Support by around 10%. This aimed to save £470m nationally and the North West Leicestershire share of this was £586,000. This Council was required to save £84,000 with the remainder to be saved by the County Council, Police and Fire and Rescue Service.
- 2.2 This year the Government has maintained its position that pensioners will be protected from the effects of the local schemes by a national framework of rules and eligibility. The level of funding was reduced nationally by an average of 10% from this April and taking into account the protection for pensioners, the reduction in support for working age claimants in North West Leicestershire was estimated to be nearer 21%.

### Summary of Consultations

- 2.3 In order to assist the decision making with regard to the 2014/15 LCTSS, the Council consulted on a capped eligibility scheme of 80%, 85% and 90%. The consultation was promoted by customer services staff, on the Council's website, through social media, leaflets distributed within district and county facilities and through local stakeholder forums. The Council also wrote out to all existing working age Council Tax Support claimants and to the major preceptors – County Council, Police and Fire & Rescue as well and consulted with Town and Parish Councils through the regular liaison meeting.
- 2.4 A relatively small number of responses (56) were received to the public consultation. Responses were similarly low last year and caution needs to be exercised as the respondees may not represent a statistically representative sample of the population. 29 of these were from people currently in receipt of CTS, which represents 0.44% of the number of Council Tax Support claimants (6,489). Questions were asked to assist the Council in determining its local scheme. The responses can be summarised as follows:
- 61% (34) agreed that everyone, apart from pensioners, should pay something towards their Council Tax. As opposed to 34% (19) who disagreed. 5% (3) didn't know.
  - When asked how much people should pay, only 34 people answered the question. Of these, 36% (20) of people said they thought everyone should pay 10%. 4% (2) said everyone should pay 15% and 21% (12) thought everyone should pay 20%.
  - 84% (47) of people said that they thought the Council should protect the vulnerable from paying more. 14% (8) disagreed with this and 2% (1) didn't know.
  - When given a list of vulnerable groups to choose from, 'people who are in receipt of higher or middle rate Disability Allowance' were perceived to be the most vulnerable group (48%), followed by 'Carers' (43%) and those being re-housed due to being made homeless (e.g. hostel or care leavers, those fleeing domestic violence or forced marriages) (43%)
  - In addition to the public responses the following key comments from major preceptors (County Council, Police Authority and Fire and Rescue Authority) were also received:
  - The principle of partnership working adopted by Leicestershire Districts is strongly supported

- The development of new local Council Tax Support Schemes that are designed to be financially sustainable is strongly supported
- A 'hardship fund', to mitigate the impact of the new local schemes on council tax benefit recipients should be continued in 2014/15

2.5 Based on the consultation responses and the need for the scheme to be affordable to the District and the major preceptors, it is proposed that the maximum level of Council Tax Support be reduced from 91.5% to 85% of the total Council Tax Liability. This means that people will now be responsible for 15% of their Council Tax liability as opposed to the 8.5% of last year. NWLDC will save approximately £28,200 through this change.

2.6 Council Tax Support is in addition to other Council Tax Discounts which may already have been granted. The proposed commitment to continue with the hardship fund will assist in meeting the needs of the vulnerable people highlighted by the consultation responses.

2.7 The table below shows the cost to this authority should the cap be retained at last year's rate of 91.5% compared to the financial position if the Council were to reduce the level of support to 85% for this year.

	<b>Current Scheme Maximum Council tax Support 91.5% £</b>	<b>Proposed Scheme Maximum Council tax Support 85% £</b>
Loss of support for Discretionary Discount Funding (see paragraph 2.9).	50,354	0
Loss of support for admin funding (see paragraph 2.10).	28,704	
Loss of Transitional Grant (see paragraphs 1.3 and 1.4).	20,428	20,428
<b>Loss to recover</b>	<b>99,486</b>	<b>20,428</b>
Savings on new scheme (see paragraph 2.5).	0	28,200
<b>Deficit/(Surplus)</b>	<b>99,486</b>	<b>(7,772)</b>

2.8 The proposed scheme would result in a minimum Council Tax Bill (District and all preceptors) of around £231 per annum based on the current Band D which takes into account the proposed increase in Council Tax for 2014/15. As the 85% LCTS award is applied after all other discounts have been applied, in practice many people's bills would be significantly lower than this. This compares with £128 estimated for the 2013/14 year where people were receiving up to 91.5% discount.

#### 2.9 Hardship Fund and Administrative Costs

Subject to the council reducing its cap from 91.5% to 85%, the Discretionary Council Tax Hardship Fund administered by district council can be continued. The costs will be shared by the district council (£8,589) and the major preceptors (£50,354) pro-rata to the share of the Council Tax bill. This is already part of the agreed scheme.

2.10 In addition, the preceptors will continue to contribute towards the additional administrative costs, at an amount of £28,703, on the basis that the LCTS cap is reduced to 85%. As in 2013/14, the design of the 2014/15 scheme continues to make savings to cover these costs as well as the reduction in Government funding

### **3.0 RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

#### **3.1 Technical**

IT systems were successfully modified 2013/14 to allow for changes to be made to LCTS schemes.

#### **3.2 Future Government Funding**

The transitional grant, by definition, will not be available in 2014/15 unless there is a further Government announcement. The main LCTSS funding will be fixed but demand is not. Changing demographics or unexpected consequences of the scheme design could mean Council Tax Support awarded is more than anticipated and hence Council Tax collected and distributed will not equate to that budgeted for. This expenditure is monitored throughout the year by the District and information shared with the precepting authorities. The funding does increase to reflect future Council Tax increases and the 2014/15 budget will make provision for any additional cost

### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 These are set out in paragraph 2.7 above. The 2014/15 Council Tax Base will be calculated based on the revised scheme and will be approved by Cabinet on 14 January 2014 and confirmed when Council approves the new LCTS scheme on 21 January 2014.

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## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## CABINET – 10 DECEMBER 2013

Title of report	<b>LEICESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP REVENUES AND BENEFITS JOINT COMMITTEE - APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS</b>
Key Decision:	a) Financial No b) Community Yes
Contact	Councillor Nick Rushton 01530 412059 <a href="mailto:nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>  Head of Legal and Support Services 01530 454762 <a href="mailto:elizabeth.warhurst@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">elizabeth.warhurst@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	To appoint an additional member to the Leicestershire Partnership Revenues and Benefits Committee, specifically to increase the Membership of the Joint Committee.
Reason for decision	To comply with the Constitution of the Leicestershire Partnership Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee
Council Priorities	Value for Money
Implications:	
Financial/staff	None.
Link to relevant Corporate Action Team	None.
Risk management	None.
Equalities Impact Assessment	Not applicable.
Human rights	None.
Transformational Government	None.
Comments of the Head of Paid Service	The report is satisfactory.
Comments of the Section 151 Officer	The report is satisfactory.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees	Partnership Chief Executives, Legal Services, S151 Officers, Finance and Partnership managers.
Background papers	The Constitution of the Joint Committee Report to Cabinet 5 February 2011  <a href="https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/05_revs_and_bens/05.%20Revs%20and%20Bens.pdf">https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/05_revs_and_bens/05.%20Revs%20and%20Bens.pdf</a>
Recommendations	<b>TO NOMINATE AND APPOINT AN ADDITIONAL CABINET MEMBER TO SERVE ON THE JOINT COMMITTEE AND NOMINATE AND APPOINT AN ADDITIONAL SUBSTITUTE.</b>

## 1.0 BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 A joint Revenues and Benefits Governance Arrangements report developed in partnership with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and Harborough District Council was produced in 2011. It was agreed that the same report should be sent to all three Councils within a similar timeframe. The joint report was considered by Cabinet on 15 February 2011, where it was agreed that three Executive/Cabinet members be appointed to serve on the Joint Committee, one from each Authority. Councillor R D Bayliss was nominated and appointed and is the current Joint Committee Chairman. Councillor T J Pendleton is the current substitute.
- 1.2 At the meeting of the Joint Committee on 17 October 2013 amendments were made to the Constitution to increase the membership of the Committee from one Member from each Authority to two Members from each Authority. In addition the number of Substitutes that each Executive/Cabinet can nominate to attend if the Members are unable to attend has been increased to two from each Authority.

## 2. NOMINATIONS:

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to nominate and appoint an additional Member to serve on the Joint Committee and an additional substitute.

## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## CABINET – 10 DECEMBER 2013

Title of report	<b>MINUTES OF THE GRANTS REVIEW WORKING PARTY</b>
Key Decision	a) Financial No b) Community No
Contacts	Councillor Alison Smith MBE 01530 835668 <a href="mailto:alison.smith@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">alison.smith@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>  Director of Services 01530 454555 <a href="mailto:steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>  Head of Community Services 01530 454832 <a href="mailto:john.richardson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">john.richardson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>
Purpose of report	To consider the recommendations made by the Grants Review Working Party.
Reason for Decision	To enable community and voluntary organisations in the District to receive financial assistance for projects that meet the Council's priorities.
Council Priorities	Homes and Communities
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	As set out within the budget.
Link to relevant CAT	Stronger CAT
Risk Management	N/A
Equalities Impact Assessment	Equalities Impact Assessment undertaken in 2008/09
Human Rights	None.
Transformational Government	None.
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	Members of the Grants Review Working Party
Background papers	Agenda and associated documents of the meeting held on 28 October 2013: <a href="https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/grwp/281013%20Agenda%20print%20pack.pdf">https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/grwp/281013%20Agenda%20print%20pack.pdf</a>
Recommendations	<b>TO APPROVE THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE GRANTS REVIEW WORKING PARTY AS DETAILED WITHIN THE MINUTES ATTACHED AT APPENDIX 1.</b>

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Grants Review Working Party meets each quarter to consider small grant applications and other items as detailed within the terms of reference in paragraph 2. As the group reports directly to Cabinet, all recommendations made will be sent to the first available Cabinet meeting after the group have met for final approval.

## 2.0 GRANTS REVIEW WORKING PARTY – TERMS OF REFERENCE

2.1 To make recommendations to Cabinet in respect of the following:-

- The undertaking of an annual programme of partnership grant reviews to ensure value for money and delivery against the Service Level Agreement;
- The allocation of partnership grants during the budget cycle;
- The assessment of small grant applications on a quarterly basis and determination of awards;
- The review and establishment of the criteria for the small grants programme;
- The continuing monitoring of grants upon completion of the review to ensure compliance.



MINUTES of a meeting of the GRANTS REVIEW WORKING PARTY held in the Board Room, Council Offices, Coalville on MONDAY, 28 OCTOBER 2013

Present: Councillor D J Stevenson (Chairman)

Councillors J Cotterill, J Legrys and J Ruff.

Officers: Mr G Lewis, Mrs J Summerton and Mrs R Wallace.

**14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Clayfield and N Smith.

**15. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Councillor J Legrys declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in the grant application made by Heritage FM/Carillon Radio under item 5 – One Off Grant Applications 2013/14 due to his involvement with the Hermitage FM.

**16. MINUTES**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting on 22 July 2013.

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2013 were approved and signed as a true record.

**17. ONE OFF GRANT APPLICATIONS 2013/14 – DEADLINE 30 SEPTEMBER 2013**

The one off grant applications were considered.

Ashby de la Zouch Museum – For the conservation of the 16th Earl of Huntingdon's Coronation Robes to ensure an important artefact from the Premier Family of Ashby (since 1461) has been saved and will be able to put on display for the benefit of local visitors.

Sum requested: £450

Sum recommended:£450

RECOMMENDED THAT:

The nominated officer's recommendation be approved

Rushcliffe Care Parkmanor Care Home – To design and build a Sensory Garden for residents at Parkmanor Care Home, Albert Road, Coalville. This project will make a big difference to the residents and visitors to the home.

Councillor J Legrys asked why the application was made as it met none of the required criteria. The Grants and Community Development Officer explained that the company were not fully aware of the grant application process and that after the meeting she would signpost them elsewhere.

Sum requested: £450

Sum recommended: £0 due to the home being a large private organisation

RECOMMENDED THAT:

The nominated officer's recommendation be approved.

Friends of Holly Hayes Wood –Towards the purchase of a chainsaw and safety equipment for an apprentice who has recently got his licence, having previously completed the NEETs course.

Sum requested: £450

Sum recommended:£450

RECOMMENDED THAT:

The nominated officer's recommendation be approved

Castle Donington Friday Group for the Blind, Visually Impaired and Disabled – To provide a Christmas meal and small table gift for members of the Friday Group, who are a social gathering of 25 elderly residents who meet each Friday afternoon. Additional funds will be raised by a raffle to ensure bus fare is covered.

Sum requested: £450

Sum recommended:£450

RECOMMENDED THAT:

The nominated officer's recommendation be approved

Ashby de la Zouch Arts Festival – A contribution towards artist/performer fees to provide free children's activities and workshops, and marketing.

Sum requested: £450

Sum recommended:£450

RECOMMENDED THAT:

The nominated officer's recommendation be approved

Swannington Heritage Trust – To enable the purchase of a wheeled trimmer mower to help maintain the 12 acres of heritage sites cared for by the trust

Sum requested: £225

Sum recommended:£225

RECOMMENDED THAT:

The nominated officer's recommendation be approved.

Moira Furnace Museum Trust – To undertake an options appraisal to investigate the feasibility of creating a dedicated visitor/education centre for Moira Furnace Museum and Country Park. The project will help to make a decision about how best to expand its work in the future and would enable more groups to visit the site and carry out research and education.

Sum requested: £225

Sum recommended:£225

RECOMMENDED THAT:

The nominated officer's recommendation be approved

Chorus Theatre – To be used to support the running of a new Young People's Drama Project based in Coalville and will provide a creative activity for young people to do during the evening. Costs include props/costume hire, travel and professional fees. In response to a question from Councillor J Legrys, the Cultural Services Team Manager explained that the group did not have a permanent base and performed throughout the District.

Sum requested: £450

Sum recommended:£450

RECOMMENDED THAT:

The nominated officer's recommendation be approved

East Midlands Housing Durban House - Will provide transport and entry to Go Ape for 8 residents of Durban House who will be empowered by participating in these activities to promote self esteem, confidence and team building and life skills. This activity is very challenging, will improve healthy lifestyles, build relationships and make a difference to their self confidence.

Some concerns were raised regarding the high expense of the event for just one day. After some discussion the Members asked that the Officers suggest to the applicant that they consider using a more local event such as Conkers or Snibston Discovery Park which run team building days to possibly reduce the cost. However, Members were aware that the facilities at Go Ape were excellent and there was nothing of a similar calibre in the immediate area.

Sum requested: £440

Sum recommended: £440

RECOMMENDED THAT:

The application be deferred for further discussions with the applicant.

Desford Colliery Band - Towards the hire of Hermitage Leisure Centre for the Christmas Concert on 15 December 2013 and towards the cost of a professional conductor.

Sum requested: £450

Sum recommended: £450

RECOMMENDED THAT:

The nominated officer's recommendation be approved

Outlook – Towards the hire of a minibus for 300 miles as and when required for shopping trips, days out, transport residents to the group in the harsh weather. Outlook is a community group for people over the age of 60 and currently has 22 members.

In response to a question from Councillor J Legrys, the Grant and Community Development Officer reported that the group were based in Ibstock.

Sum requested: £450

Sum recommended: £450

RECOMMENDED THAT:

The nominated officer's recommendation be approved

Due to declaring a pecuniary interest, Councillor J Legrys left the meeting during the consideration of the following application and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

Hermitage FM/Carillon Radio - Towards equipping out the new Community Coffee Lounge with new wall monitors and amplifier which will display live news and pictures of events that are happening within North West Leicestershire.

Sum requested: £450

Sum recommended: £450

RECOMMENDED THAT:

The nominated officer's recommendation be approved.

**18. OTHER EXTERNAL FUNDING COMING INTO NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE (JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2013 – QUARTER 2)**

Consideration was given to the report of the Grants and Community Development Officer.

It was noted that the total amount of external funding received into each forum area was as follows:

Ashby area - £30,250

Coalville area – £444,771

Valley area – £27,295

Total funding received for quarter 2 - £502,316

Councillor J Legrys commented that he welcomed the external funding but wished that there was a mechanism to find out all funding that had been received into the District as it would be interesting.

RESOLVED THAT:

The report be received and approved.

The meeting started at 6.30pm and closed at 6.45pm.

## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## CABINET – 10 DECEMBER 2013

Title of report	<b>FORMER TENANT RENT ARREARS, CURRENT TENANT RENT ARREARS, COUNCIL TAX, NON DOMESTIC RATES AND SUNDRY DEBTOR WRITE-OFFS</b>
Key Decision	a) Financial No b) Community No
Contacts	Councillor Nick 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	To agree write-offs over £10,000 and receive details of debts written off under delegated powers.
Reason for Decision	To comply with proper accounting practices.
Council Priorities	Value for Money
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	There is no additional financial effect as all the debts are met from the Authority's bad debt provision.
Link to relevant CAT	None
Risk Management	Regular reviews of debts for write off moderates the risk that External Audit will "qualify" the Council's accounts on the basis they do not reflect the true level of recoverable income. It is also part of an effective arrears management strategy.
Equalities Impact Assessment	Not applicable.
Human Rights	None discernable.
Transformational Government	Not applicable.
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	None.
Background papers	All papers used in compiling the report contain exempt information under paragraph 3 of Part 1 to Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972
Recommendations	<b>THAT CABINET APPROVES THE WRITE OFFS OVER £10,000 DETAILED IN THIS REPORT. THAT CABINET NOTES THE AMOUNTS WRITTEN OFF UNDER DELEGATED POWERS.</b>

## 1.0 DOUBTFUL DEBT PROVISIONS

1.1 Provision is made in the accounts as follows:

	<b>As at 1 April 2013</b>	<b>Write offs to date (Under delegated powers)</b>	<b>Amounts written off over £10,000 approved by Members</b>	<b>Balance Available</b>
Council Tax	£1,270,609	£79,579.32	0.00	£1,191,029.68
Non Domestic Rates	£481,459	£64,630.52	£110,418.44	£306,410.04
Housing Rents	£320,618	£52,113.95	0.00	£268,504.05
Sundry Debtors	£934,140	£15,494.95	£10,071.39	£908,573.66

## 2.0 FORMER TENANT RENT ARREARS

2.1 There are currently no Former Tenant Rent Arrears over £10,000 for which we seek approval.

2.2 The amounts written off under delegated powers, in accordance with the thresholds outlined in the write off policy are as follows: nine cases under £1,000 which amount to £998.87. Of these, three are uneconomical to pursue (£168.82), six are where the tenant is deceased and there is no estate (£830.05). There were six cases which qualified for a bereavement allowance following the death of the tenant (£1,310.94). There were 11 cases over £1000.00 which amount to £21,312.07. Of these nine are uneconomical to pursue legal action (£17,492.64) and two are over six years old and are not legally enforceable (£3819.43).

## 3.0 CURRENT TENANT RENT ARREARS

3.1 There are no current rent arrears which have been written off.

## 4.0 COUNCIL TAX

4.1 There are currently no Council Tax debts over £10,000 for which we seek approval for write off.

4.2 The amounts written off under delegated powers, in accordance with the thresholds outlined in the write off policy, are as follows: seven cases under £100 which amount to £382.51. Of these, three have absconded (£210.21), three are deceased (£107.75), one is uneconomical to collect (£64.55). There are 34 cases between £100 and £1,000, which amount to £12,564.11. Of these, 27 have absconded (£10,468.25), and six have been made bankrupt (£1,445.12), one is deceased (£650.74). There are 10 cases between £1,000 and £10,000 which amount to £20,906.65. Of these, three have absconded (£7,304.38), three are deceased (4,359.66) three have been made bankrupt (£7,958.75), one is out of the area for the purposes of enforcing payment of the debt (£1,283.86).

4.3 The full list of reasons for writing off debt includes:

- Bankruptcy or a Debt Relief Order is in place
- Deceased – No assets in the estate.
- Debtor Absconded / No Trace
- Company in liquidation/dissolved or ceased trading with no assets
- Severe Hardship and/or Serious health Issues
- Statute barred i.e. we cannot legally pursue the debt as there has been six years since the debt fell due and no action has been taken to collect the debt.
- Uneconomical to collect i.e. it is not financially viable to take further action for e.g. due to the low level of the debt, they have gone abroad etc.

4.4 Writing off debts is only considered where all appropriate recovery and enforcement measures have been taken, or, where the council are legally prohibited from pursuing the debt.

4.5 Each year the council produces a recovery timetable which details the dates on which the statutory Reminders, Final Notices and Summonses are to be despatched. The letters issued are designed to maximise collection by prompting tax payers to pay their missed instalments in a timely manner, thereby avoiding further enforcement action taking place. A leaflet is included with the reminders to explain what happens next should payment not be made.

4.6 For all outstanding debt, the council takes the recovery action outlined in the bullet points below:

- If payment is not received by the instalment due date shown on the bill, a reminder notice is issued.
- If payment is received within seven days the tax payer may continue with their original instalment plan. If they default again within the year, then one further reminder notice is issued. If they do not pay, the following steps are taken.
- If payment is not received by the date on the reminder notice, a court Summons is issued. The Summons advises them of the date and time that the Council will attend a Magistrates Court hearing to apply for the award of a Liability Order against them.
- Once a Liability Order is obtained, the Council has a number of enforcement options open to them in order to secure payment of the debt.

4.7 Liability Order Action

Once a Liability Order has been obtained each debt is looked at and a decision is made as to the most appropriate course of action to take from the list of available

options below. It is only after all of these have been considered and/or pursued that the debt is put forward for write off.

1. Apply to the debtor's employer for an Attachment of Earnings.
2. Apply to the DWP for a deduction from the debtor's benefits
3. Instruct an external enforcement company (bailiffs) to collect the debt on the council's behalf.
4. If the bailiff company are unsuccessful, the Council could commence committal proceedings against the debtor.
5. If the debtor owns their own home a Charging Order could be placed on the property.
6. If the debt is over £750, bankruptcy proceedings could be commenced against the debtor.

When considering the final three options on the above list, the Council must always be mindful of the individual circumstances of the debtor and the financial impact on the Council of pursuing each option. Additional costs will be incurred when utilising any of these options.

## **5.0 NON DOMESTIC RATES (NNDR)**

- 5.1 There are currently no Non Domestic Rate debts over £10,000 for which we seek approval for write off.
- 5.2 The amounts written off under delegated powers in accordance with the policy thresholds are as follows: one case under £100 which is insolvent (£34.67). There are four cases between £1,000 and £10,000 which amount to £17,685.80, all of which are insolvent.
- 5.3 As with the recovery of Council Tax, for Business Rates, writing off debt is only ever considered as a last resort. Often companies, sole traders or partnerships become insolvent and the Council is prohibited from taking any further action as all of their outstanding debts are included within the Administration, Liquidation or personal bankruptcy.
- 5.4 The Council follows the same recovery process for Business Rates as for Council Tax. However, once the Council has obtained a Liability Order there are only a limited number of enforcement actions that can legally be pursued. In most cases, where a payment arrangement or contact cannot be made, the Council refers the case to external bailiffs. If they are unsuccessful, the Council then has three further options to consider before putting the debt for write off. These options are:
  - Committal (For sole traders and partnerships only)
  - Security for Unpaid Rate (this is the equivalent of a Charging Order on a property but this can only be done with the ratepayers agreement)
  - Insolvency Proceedings

## **6.0 SUNDRY DEBTORS**

- 6.1 There are currently no Sundry Debtor cases over £10,000 for which we seek approval for write off.
- 6.2 The amounts written off under delegated powers in accordance with the thresholds outlined in the write off policy are as follows: There are 13 cases under £100 which amount to £433.84. Of these, four are deceased with no assets (£254.63), five are



uneconomical to collect (£2.50), four where there is insufficient recovery data (£176.81). There are 11 cases that are between £100 and £1000 amounting to £5,041.97. Of these, one is deceased (£187.86), one is insolvent (£283.75), nine have insufficient recovery data to pursue the debt (£4,570.36). There are three cases between £1,000 and £10,000 which amount to £5,595.66, of these, one is insolvent (£1,332.43) and two have insufficient recovery data to pursue the debt (£4,263.23).

6.3 For all outstanding Benefit Overpayment debt, the Council takes the recovery action outlined in the bullet points below:

- An invoice is issued giving 14 days to make payment, or to contact the council.
- If payment is not received a first Reminder is issued, followed by a second reminder two to three weeks later.
- If payment is not received a 'CIS' (DWP database) check is carried out to assess if an attachment of benefit is appropriate. If benefit cannot be attached the account is sent to an external bailiffs collection team with no cost to the Council. However, they have no powers to enforce the debt at this stage only to collect it.
- If the cases are returned, each case is checked and a decision is made as to whether it is appropriate to start legal proceedings in the County Court.
- If judgement is obtained in the County Court, the following enforcement options are available to consider:-
  1. Attachments of Earnings (deduction of customer's wages, at source by employer)
  2. Warrants of Execution (the use of County Court Bailiff, or High Court Sheriff)
  3. Third Party Debt Orders (Utilises the customer's bank account to extract payment)
  4. Charging Order (the debt is secured on the customer's house)
  5. Insolvency (petition for bankruptcy)

## 7.0 BENCHMARKING

7.1 At the end of 2012/13 we undertook a benchmarking exercise with other Leicestershire Authorities, Rutland and North Warwickshire B.C. We compared the 2012/13 Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates 'in year' collection rate and the outstanding level of arrears. This analysis is shown below in table 3.

**Table 3 (\* see note below)**

### 2012/13 Outturn - Benchmarking Analysis for Leicestershire, Rutland and North Warwickshire BC.

Council	CTax Collection 2012/13	CTax Arrears 2012/13 only	CTax Arrears pre 2012/13	NNDR Collection 2012/13	NNDR Arrears 2012/13 only	NNDR Arrears pre 2012/13
North West Leicestershire DC	97.76%	£1,088,000	£1,250,000	99.20%	£744,000	£280,000
Hinckley & Bosworth BC	98.16%	£931,000	£710,000	97.74%	£603,000	£90,000
Harborough DC	98.53%	£834,000	£1,250,000	98.35%	£395,000	£160,000
Melton BC	97.96%	£560,282	£1,363,395	98.01%	£241,805	£277,129
Oadby & Wigston BC	98.80%	£308,261	£415,104	98.20%	£282,313	£354,873
Blaby DC	97.05%	N/K	N/K	96.78%	N/K	N/K
Charnwood BC	97.92%	N/K	£3,986,846	98.76%	N/K	£777,850
Leicester CC	95.97%	£3,794,000	£5,898,000	97.43%	£2,314,000	£2,447,000
Rutland CC	98.96%	£252,911.01	£271,061	98.74%	£119,148	£17,927
North Warwickshire BC	98.16%	£571,532	£505,658	98.85%	£279,717	£291,305

**\*Please note:** When comparing the data in table 3 or table 4, account must be taken of the significant variance in the levels of staffing resource at each Local Authority, the number of dwellings, the number of rating assessments, the demographics of each area and the level of affluence/deprivation which all contribute towards the performance figures.

7.2 The Partnership has obtained 2012/13 outturn benchmarking information from three other Shared Service Partnerships for comparison purposes. See table 4 below. The Partnership is also currently liaising with councils within the same 'Audit Family Group', i.e. Local Authorities that are similar to North West Leicestershire in terms of population, demographics, deprivation etc. Subject to their response, we hope to be able to include this benchmarking information in a future report.

**Table 4 (\* see note above)**

**2012/13 Outturn - Benchmarking Analysis (Shared Service Partnerships).**

<b>Partnerships</b>	<b>Individual Councils with the Partnerships</b>	<b>CTax Collection 2012/13</b>	<b>NNDR Collection 2012/13</b>
The Leicestershire Partnership	North West Leicestershire DC	97.76%	99.20%
The Leicestershire Partnership	Hinckley & Bosworth BC	98.16%	97.74%
The Leicestershire Partnership	Harborough DC	98.53%	98.35%
Preston & Lancaster Revs and Bens Shared Service	Preston	97.20%	96.00%
Preston & Lancaster Revs and Bens Shared Service	Lancaster	97.10%	97.90%
Stour Valley Partnership	North Dorset	99.71%	97.61%
Stour Valley Partnership	East Dorset	98.98%	97.61%
Stour Valley Partnership	Christchurch	98.47%	97.18%
East Kent Services Partnership	Canterbury City Council	98.87%	99.30%
East Kent Services Partnership	Dover District Council	98.04%	95.80%
East Kent Services Partnership	Thanet District Council	96.28%	98.00%

7.3 On 26 June 2013 the Government published the national outturn for Council Tax and NNDR collection rates for all Billing Authorities. The information can be accessed by using the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government/series/council-tax-statistics>