

Meeting	POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP
Time/Day/Date	6.30 pm on Wednesday, 12 March 2014
Location	Council Chamber, 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

Item	Pages
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
Under the Code of Conduct members are reminded that in declaring disclosable interests you should make clear the nature of that interest and whether it is pecuniary or non-pecuniary.	
3. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION	
To receive questions from members of the public under rule no.10 of the Council Procedure Rules. The procedure rule provides that members of the public may ask any question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties which affect the District, provided that three clear days' notice in writing has been given to the Head of Legal and Support Services.	
4. MINUTES	
To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 8 January 2014.	3 - 8
5. RETURNING HOUSES TO HOMES UPDATE	
Report of the Head of Community Services	9 - 12



6.	DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS – OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT SCHEME AND THE AWARDS MADE IN 2013/14	
	Report of the Head of Finance	13 - 20
7.	ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT	
	Report of the Head of Community Services	21 - 36
8.	ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME	
	To consider any items to be included in the work programme. The plan of forthcoming decisions of Cabinet is attached for information.	37 - 44

Circulation:

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

MINUTES of a meeting of the POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on WEDNESDAY, 8 JANUARY 2014

Present: Councillor J G Coxon (Chairman)

Councillors N Clarke, J Cotterill, D Everitt, J Geary, V Richichi, A C Saffell, S Sheahan and M Specht

In Attendance: Councillors D De Lacy, R Johnson and T Neilson

Officers: Mr P Coates, Mr D Hughes, Mr J Richardson and Mrs R Wallace

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N Smith.

17. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

18. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

19. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2013.

It was moved by Councillor M Specht, seconded by Councillor J Geary and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2013 be approved and signed as a correct record.

20. CALL-IN OF CABINET DECISION OF 19 NOVEMBER 2013 ENTITLED 'WASTE MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE PROCUREMENT'

The Head of Community Services presented the report to Members.

The Chairman reminded Members that there would be no discussion regarding charging for the collection of green waste as the topic did not form part of the report. He also stated that he would take discussion under each of the call-in grounds in turn for clarity.

Call-in ground one:

Councillor S Sheahan stated that the report was much better than the one considered by Cabinet as it contained more detailed information. He added that he was happy with the proposed savings and that it would pay for itself within three years, he now believed it was efficient.

Councillor J Geary referred to the financial summary within the report, in which it stated that the proposals would improve the customer experience by getting the right information first time. Councillor J Geary asked what that information was. The Waste Services Team Manager explained that currently the customer had more information than the collection crews so resolving the matter sometimes became difficult. He gave an example that if a collection crew was running late on their round then a customer may call in to

report a missed bin when it actually had not yet been collected. When the collection crew finally collected the bin, unless the office had been informed by the customer, it would remain as a missed bin and an extra collection would be arranged even though it was not required. This would improve under the new system.

Councillor J Geary referred to the comment within the report that stated that there would be a reduction of green waste rounds in the winter months; he asked if that meant a reduction in the service. The Head of Community Services explained that as there would not be as much green waste in the winter months the number of collection crews sent out would be less not the number of collections to households.

Councillor N Clarke asked for clarity on how the missed bins would be recorded. The Waste Services Team Manager explained that the crew would input data using a touch screen device within the cab of the vehicles and the data would then be sent immediately to the office for staff to use. Customers would also be able to view on line when collections had been made in their area, which would inform them if their bin had been missed or not yet collected.

In response to a question from Councillor N Clarke, The Waste Services Team Manager explained that although it would add to the driver's workload, the process and service would be improved. He also assured Councillor N Clarke that they would be strict on claims of missed bins and if the system indicated that a bin was not presented, the collection crews would not return for a bin due to a report of it being missed.

In response to further questions from Councillor N Clarke, the Head of Community Services confirmed that the implementation cost did include staff training. Also the system would help identify the areas in which recycling was low; this would assist in targeting those areas to make improvements. The Head of Community Services added that over time the number of missed bins would reduce and then the focus would move to recycling.

Councillor M Specht was happy with the proposal and believed it would improve the service, especially in the cases where customers were reporting missed bins when in fact they had not presented their bins.

In response to a question from Councillor D Everitt, the Waste Services Team Manager explained that the system would be able to identify when recycling boxes had been contaminated with the wrong type of waste; this would help to target those households to prevent it.

Call-in ground two:

Councillor S Sheahan began to comment on the proposed charge for the collection of green waste and the Chairman reminded him that the issue was not for debate and stopped the discussion.

In response to a number of questions from Councillor S Sheahan, the Head of Community Services and the Waste Services Team manager gave the following responses:

- Even though there would be a reduction in the amount of green waste being collected under the proposed scheme, the Council would still receive recycling credit to cover the cost which would be topped up by the proposed household charge.
- Research into other Local Authorities that charge for the collection of green waste indicated that there was no increase in fly tipping as a result of the charge.
- Any cost savings would go directly into the general budget as savings, not towards a particular service.

Councillor S Sheahan stated that he believed that the introduction of the green waste collection charge would be penalising the residents that want to recycle and the reduction in the amount of green waste collected would affect the Council's recycling targets.

In response to a question from Councillor N Clarke, the Head of Community Services confirmed that the proposed new system was self funding and none of the income from the proposed green waste collection charge would be used to help fund it. He also explained that the IT system would contribute to the administration of the collection of green waste, currently the service used a number of different systems and the plan was to bring them all together.

Councillor N Clarke asked when the current GPS system used in the refuse vehicles was installed and how much it had cost. The Waste Services Team Manager stated that it was installed in May 2011 to assist with the route efficiencies and it cost approximately £25,000. He believed it was not a waste of money as the proposed system was not available at that time and the current system was a large part in the optimization of the collection routes.

Councillor J Geary asked if there were any plans to charge for the collection of normal household waste as was indicated within the report. The Head of Community Services said that it was not the case and the report refers to possible charges in the future for trade waste and street cleansing. He agreed that the report was not clear on that point.

Councillor J Geary commented that if the cost of each household collection was £12.50 and the proposed charges were £30 per household, it was obvious that a profit was being made. The Waste Services Team Manager explained that the figure of £12.50 per household was a calculation for every household in the District. As it was predicted that the number of collections would be less, the charge would have to be higher to cover the costs.

For clarity, the Waste Services Team Manager pointed out that within paragraph 3.10 of the report the reference to paragraph 2.24 should have been paragraph 2.25.

In response to a question from Councillor J Geary, the Waste Services Team Manager reported that there would be a contingency plan in place in case of any problems accessing the IT system; a paper based system could be used as other authorities have done.

Call-in ground 3:

There were no comments made.

Councillor M Specht moved that no further action be taken and it was seconded by Councillor J Cotterill.

Councillor S Sheahan commented that he did not agree with the proposed motion as he believed that it needed further political debate and asked Members to consider a possible amendment. He added that it would have been beneficial if the Portfolio Holder or Leader of the Council had been present. Councillor M Specht informed the Members that the Portfolio Holder was recovering at home after a recent stay in hospital but would have attended if it was possible.

Councillor S Sheahan expressed the following concerns with the proposals:

- There was an inconsistency with the charging regime for the collection of green waste which meant that the service was unfair.
- The risk of fly tipping had not been addressed.
- The introduction of the charge penalised people who recycle.

- The people who chose not to pay the green waste collection charge would receive a reduced service with no reduction in their Council Tax.

Councillor M Specht stated that other Councils were introducing green waste collection charges and in these tough financial times it was important that this Council was not left behind.

Councillor A C Saffell commented that the green waste collection charge was a secondary issue to that of the IT system and Members needed to assess whether it would be money well spent. Therefore, he felt that the meeting was not to debate the collection of green waste but the proposal of a £95,000 investment.

At this point the Chairman referred Members to the motion in front of them and moved to the vote.

RESOLVED THAT:

No further action be taken.

21. UPDATE ON INVESTMENT IN COALVILLE INDOOR MARKET

The Head of Regeneration and Planning presented the report to Members.

Councillor N Clarke asked what had happened with the proposals to tender for the improvements required. The Head of Regeneration and Planning responded that there had been no interest from the private sector and therefore other options were being considered as outlined within the report.

Councillor J Geary explained that he had requested this report as he was acquainted with many of the traders and they had concerns. The main concerns were the site of the proposed toilets as they were being moved and the lack of consultation on the proposals. The Head of Regeneration and Planning explained that Members raised concerns regarding the original proposed site of the toilets due to the possibility of anti social behaviour and he believed the new proposal addressed that concern. Regarding the consultation process, the Head of Regeneration and Planning confirmed that he met with traders each week but unfortunately attendance was low. He also confirmed that the traders he did meet with regularly were happy with the proposals. Councillor J Geary commented that he was now confident that consultation was taking place and he would promote the weekly meetings.

The Head of Regeneration and Planning explained that the proposed external works included ceiling repairs, bin storage and other minor works, the main focus was on the access and appearance.

In response to a question from Councillor J Geary, the Head of Regeneration and Planning stated that he did have drawings of the planned new toilets which were still a work in progress and that he was happy to share them with Councillor J Geary but they were not for public viewing at the moment.

In response to a further question from Councillor J Geary, the Head of Community Services confirmed that the posts for staffing the toilets would be reviewed and that was currently underway.

In response to a question from Councillor M Specht, the Head of Regeneration and Planning confirmed that the works on the market were due to commence in February.

Councillor M Specht commented that the toilets were currently run very well and were always very clean, he asked if the new toilets would be maintained to the same standard. The Head of Community Services reported that there would be a mixture of cleaning schedules and there would be more cleaning required on market days.

In response to a question from Councillor D Everitt, the Head of Community Services stated that the charge for the use of the new toilets had not yet been discussed.

In response to a question from Councillor V Richichi, the Head of Community Services reported that the current cost of running the toilets was approximately £50,000 a year.

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The report be noted.
- b) The progress for investments in Coalville Indoor Market be noted.

22. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Community Services circulated a report which was being considered by Cabinet at its next meeting regarding the Armed Forces Community Covenant. He explained that Cabinet would be requesting that the Policy Development Group set up a Task and Finish Group, and the report was to give Members further information when considering nominations.

Councillor S Sheahan asked for a report at the next meeting on the budget proposals which were detailed on Cabinet's plan of forthcoming decisions within the agenda. The Head of Community Services explained that the next scheduled meeting of the Policy Development Group was after the consideration of the budget proposals by Council and therefore would not be possible. Councillor S Sheahan requested an additional meeting be held to look at the budget proposals before consideration at Council. The Chairman agreed to put the request to Officers.

Councillor A C Saffell asked that the Group look into the current Planning process. He explained that many decisions had been made in recent years both good and bad, and he felt that by looking into those decisions, lessons could be learnt. The Head of Regeneration and Planning reported that the Chief Executive was currently reviewing the Planning process and he agreed that the scrutiny of the Group could feed into the review.

Councillor J Geary also requested that the delegations for Planning also be scrutinised as in the last 28 days there had been two examples in which bad decisions had been made. He added that the Director of Services had recommended that this topic be brought to the Group.

RESOLVED THAT:

The following items be included on the work plan for a future meeting:

- a) A report on the review of the Planning process.
- b) A report to consider the current Planning delegations.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.55 pm

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NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP – 12 MARCH 2014

Title of report	RETURNING HOUSES TO HOMES UPDATE
Contacts	<p>Councillor Alison Smith MBE 01530 835668 alison.smith@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Community Services 01530 454832 john.richardson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Street Action Team Manager 01530 454564 clare.proudfoot@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p>
Purpose of report	To update Policy Development Group on the progress of Returning Houses to Homes
Council Priorities	Homes and Communities
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	A cross-service team works to an action plan to deliver the outcomes of the Returning Houses to Homes policy. Financial implications within the policy are those associated with potential future legal action to bring houses back into use.
Link to relevant CAT	Private Sector Housing CAT
Risk Management	Risks have been considered and are covered within the policy.
Equalities Impact Assessment	An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the policy.
Human Rights	N/A
Transformational Government	This relates to the new ways in which council's are being asked to deliver their services.
Comments of Head of Paid Service	The report is satisfactory
Comments of Section 151 Officer	The report is satisfactory
Comments of Deputy Monitoring Officer	The report is satisfactory
Consultees	Corporate Leadership Team Private Sector Housing CAT

Background papers	Returning Houses to Homes Policy
Recommendations	TO NOTE AND COMMENT ON THE REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Making the best use of existing housing is an objective of the Council's 2011 Housing Strategy, contributing particularly to the outcome of "homes for all".
- 1.2 In September 2012 Cabinet adopted a refreshed Empty Homes policy titled Returning Houses to Homes which had been scrutinised by Policy Development Group in July 2012. This policy set out the Council's approach and available powers for tackling empty houses within the District.
- 1.3 The work on empty houses requires a corporate approach from Street Action, Housing Choices, Housing Management and Revenues and Benefits officers who now meet regularly as part of a Corporate Action Team. This team has been meeting for over two years, initially to refresh the Council's Returning Houses to Homes Policy and now delivering against an annual action plan.
- 1.4 The number of Empty Houses in the District can change on a regular basis but Long Term Empty homes are the focus for attention and these are captured annually each October through the Council Tax Base return form. A house has to have been empty for over 6 months to fall into the classification as a long term empty home.
- 1.5 The table below details the North West Leicestershire annual returns since October 2010 on long term empty homes.

	Total	Long term empties	%
Oct 10	40,130	498	1.24
Oct 11	40,332	485	1.20
Oct 12	40,660	378	0.93
Oct 13	41,069	367	0.89

- 1.6 The return in October 2012 showed a significant decrease of 107 long term empty properties which was due to a thorough inspection and reclassification exercise ie removing some properties that were no longer consider suitable for living in and some that had been brought back into use.
- 1.7 The table below details long term empty properties split by tenure.

Year	Council tax base Long Term Empties	Private Housing	Council Housing	Registered Provider owned homes
Oct 2010	498	Unavailable	Unavailable	Unavailable
Oct 2011	485	376	102	7
Oct 2012	378	277	93	8
Oct 2013	367	268	93	6

1.8 The table below is a comparison with other Districts in Leicestershire as at October 2013

	Total	Long term empties	%
Blaby	39,803	284	0.71
Charnwood	70,257	561	0.80
Harborough	36,631	369	1.01
Hinckley	47,224	400	0.85
Melton	22,320	77	0.34
Oadby & Wigston	22,767	156	0.69

2.0 KEY ACTIONS

2.1 In the last 24 months the Corporate Action Team has overseen and/or is working on the following actions:-

2.2 Private Sector Housing

- Signed up to the National Empty Homes Loans Scheme which allows the Council to promote the availability of loans to residents
- Completed survey visits to all long term private empty properties
- Sent questionnaires to owners of private empty properties which were no longer exempt from not paying Council Tax
- Implemented refuse round sheet data sharing to identify properties which become empty or come back into use
- Council Tax Inspectors visited properties where it was uncertain of their occupancy status
- Initiated categorising all long term private empty properties (High, Medium, Low) to risk rate in terms of priority for action
- Secured internal Invest to Save resources to fund a three month post focussed on initiating work on long term empty homes and five priority properties
- Agreed the first tranche of five priority properties requiring a graduated enforcement approach

2.3 Council Housing

- Disposal, on the open market, of Heather House, a former sheltered housing scheme containing 14 flats
- Undertaken a procurement exercise to enable essential high cost works to 29 properties (24% of the empty Council homes)
- Undertaken consultation with neighbouring residents of 'supported' properties and redesignated the properties to general needs for which there is greater demand.

2.4 Registered Provider Housing

- Assisted two Registered Providers to be funded through the Homes & Communities Agency to bring empty properties in the District back into use (Nottingham Community Housing Association, FcH Housing & Care)
- 9 empty privately owned properties brought back into use by Registered Provider's using funding from the HCA since 2012
- Further HCA funding available to bring back a further two properties during 2014-15
- Held Bi monthly meetings with Nottingham Community Housing Association to identify suitable empty properties & to monitor progress

3.0 NEXT STEPS

3.1 In order to continue working to reduce the number of long term empty homes the following actions are planned to be undertaken.

3.2 Private Sector Housing

- To recruit to the three month Empty Homes Officer post in February 2014

- To initiate a graduated enforcement approach on five priority properties (three in Whitwick, two in Measham). The graduated enforcement approach consists of informal steps to work with the owner including letters and visits to encourage bringing the property back into use. Depending on the co-operation of the owner this will determine how quickly the officer moves onto the formal stages of the approach, which can include legal notices, prosecutions and ultimately Compulsory Purchase Orders. These stages and actions are detailed in the Returning Houses to Homes Policy. The graduated enforcement approach can be a very protracted process and is likely to extend well beyond the temporary Empty Homes Officer contract. Therefore officers in the Street Action Team will continue this work subject to capacity.
- To implement a new internal reporting process on long term empty houses
- To programme and initiate contact with all long term empty house owners
- To establish clear systems and procedures for Street Action Team Officers to follow once the short term contract ends

3.3 Council Housing

- At an appropriate time consider the future of two sheltered housing schemes where there are currently 15 empty properties
- Determine the preferred option for two decommissioned sheltered housing schemes (Woulds Court, Moira and Greenacres, Coalville) where there are currently 29 empty properties
- Press campaign to increase demand for sheltered housing accommodation where there are currently 45 empty properties
- Complete high cost improvement works, including Decent Homes works at 29 empty properties

3.4 Registered Provider Housing

- It is still unclear whether there will be an Empty Property element in the new HCA national Affordable Homes Programme 2015-18 funding package. Registered Providers are currently working on their bid submissions which need to be submitted to the HCA by April 2014 to access this funding. Any future activity beyond 2015 will be determined by the outcome of this bid round.

4.0 SUMMARY

- 4.1 The Corporate Action Team continues to meet Bi-monthly to progress the actions identified in 3.0 as part of the annual action plan.

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP – 12 MARCH 2014

Title of report	DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS – OVERVIEW OF THE CURRENT SCHEME AND THE AWARDS MADE IN 2013/14
Contacts	<p>Councillor Roger Bayliss 01530 411055 roger.bayliss@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Finance 01530 454520 ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Partnership Manager 01455 638148 sue.williams-lee@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk</p>
Purpose of report	To outline the Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) Scheme to enable Members to debate the recently aligned and updated DHP policy.
Council Priorities	Homes and Communities Value for Money
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	The DHP scheme is administered by the staff within the Leicestershire Partnership – Revenues and Benefits. The Department for Works and Pensions provides an annual DHP budget to each Local Authority based on their Benefits caseload.
Link to relevant CAT	Welfare Reform CAT
Risk Management	Risks have been considered and are covered within the policy
Equalities Impact Assessment	An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the policy
Human Rights	N/A
Transformational Government	N/A
Comments of Head of Paid Service	The report is satisfactory
Comments of Section 151 Officer	The report is satisfactory

Comments of Deputy Monitoring Officer	The report is satisfactory
Consultees	In drafting the DHP policy the following people/organisations were consulted: The Leicestershire Partnership (North West Leicestershire DC, Harborough DC and Hinckley & Bosworth BC) Housing Departments at each Council. Housing Associations Leicestershire Welfare Practitioners Group. Citizen's Advice Bureau
Background papers	DHP Policy http://www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/executive_decisions_background_papers
Recommendations	THAT MEMBERS NOTE THE REPORT

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) are intended to provide housing benefit claimants with further financial assistance when an authority considers that help with housing costs is required.
- 1.2 DHPs are made at the discretion of the Authority and their purpose is to ensure that those who claim Universal Credit (UC) in future and/or housing benefit (HB) do not suffer high levels of hardship where there is a shortfall between the amount of rent due and the amount of benefit being paid. The amount of rent being paid therefore determines the maximum award of DHP that can be paid in an individual case and housing benefit must be in payment for the period under consideration for the customer to be eligible for a DHP award.
- 1.3 In November 2013, following consultation with key stakeholders, the Joint Committee for the Leicestershire Revenues and Benefits Partnership approved an aligned and updated DHP policy for the partner Authorities. The revised policy was updated to reflect the Welfare Reforms introduced by Central Government in April 2013 and to allow for one efficient, standardised procedure to be followed by the staff administering the DHP scheme for all three Councils.
- 1.4 At the Council meeting held on 29 October 2013, a question was raised by a member of the public regarding the calculation of DHPs under the proposed DHP policy with specific reference to the inclusion of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in the DHP income and expenditure assessment. The specific question raised was:

"It is my understanding that this Council, when calculating qualification for discretionary housing payments uses Disability Living Allowance (DLA) as an income. As far as I am aware DLA is not means tested and is not listed as income on any Government literature. DLA is meant for the specific purpose of helping disabled people live independently and to have the adaptations and treatments they require. This policy disadvantages the disabled when requesting discretionary housing payments, as it is extremely difficult and challenging for many to identify all costs related to their disability when assessments are made. If DLA was not used as income this disadvantage could be removed.

I ask that this Council reviews this policy as a matter of urgency, and considers removing DLA from calculations when assessing people's income".

1.5 The response given at Cabinet by Councillor Bayliss was as follows:

"Discretionary Housing Payments are very different to state benefits or Council Tax Support. They are intended to be paid for a very short period of time to people in desperate and immediate need until they are able to make any changes necessary so that they can live within their means. They are not a replacement or compensation for reductions in welfare benefits. The funds provided by Central Government are limited, £103k in 2013/14, so objective criteria are applied to ensure that the limited resources are made available to the most needy.

The assessment of awards of Discretionary Housing Payments is therefore quite different from that of state benefits. Yes, Disability Allowance Income is taken into account, but so are the costs which this income is intended to cover. These include mobility costs, care costs, special dietary needs and additional fuel costs.

If Disability Living Allowance was to be disregarded as income then the costs associated with the disability would also be excluded from calculations. The current process allows additional costs to be included making it a fairer assessment of need".

1.6 At the Council meeting, Members decided that there should be a further debate on this issue, looking at DHP's in greater depth in order to fully understand the updated policy and its implications for disabled people. This report provides background information to enable Members to debate this issue more fully. The report gives an overview of the process followed when administering and calculating DHPs, it covers the revisions in the DHP Policy, the number of DHP applications received since the Welfare Changes were introduced and provides a breakdown of the reasons for the DHPs awarded between April 2013 and February 2014. The report also outlines the steps taken to promote the DHP scheme to those most in need.

1.7 The policy sets out aligned criteria which each Council adheres to but, as this is a discretionary scheme, each DHP application must be considered on its own merits, on a case by case basis. It is therefore not possible to say, for example, that all those in receipt of Disability Living Allowance will get a DHP award, as this would be considered a blanket policy and would not be permissible under the funding arrangements.

2.0 BREAKDOWN OF THE 2013/14 DHP APPLICATIONS

2.1 Since 1 April 2013 the majority of applications made for DHP have been due to the introduction of the Social Sector 'Under Occupancy' changes which were introduced on 1 April 2013.

2.2 Up to 31 January 2014, the Council awarded DHP to 76 council tenants and 77 private tenants, giving a total of 153 successful applications.

2.3 In the same period the Council refused 96 DHP applications, affecting 79 customers.

2.4 The 2013/14 budget for DHPs for North West Leicestershire DC (NWLDC) is £102,824.00 an increase of approximately £80,000 due to the welfare changes introduced in April 2013.

The Council is permitted to add to this budget by a factor of 2.5; i.e. up to a further £257,060.

- 2.5 The table below shows the amounts that have been spent so far and the amounts that are committed but not yet spent (as at 31 January 2014):

DHP Payments up to 31 January 2014:

Reason for DHP award	Payment made
Other	£115.65
Non-Dependent Deduction	£115.32
Legislation Change	£554.35
Social Size Criteria	£36147.50
Income Tapers	£412.62
Rent Restrictions	£7403.81
Benefit Cap	£2820.11
Combination of Reforms	£266.40
Rent Deposit	£850.00
LHA Reforms	£8593.75
Rent in Advance	£1483.92
Baby Due	£1906.57
Total:	£60,670.00

DHP Future Committed Payments:

Reason for DHP award	Payment made
Combination of Reforms	£77.70
Income Tapers	£388.10
LHA Reforms	£1192.32
Social Size Criteria	£7344.36
Benefit Cap	£411.47
Rent Restrictions	£1948.25
Baby Due	£55.23
Total:	£11,417.43

- 2.6 The Partnership has closely monitored the DHP expenditure throughout the year. At the end of Quarter 1, it was clear, by assessing the number and type of successful applications that by continuing to use the existing financial criteria, there would be a significant underspend by the end of the financial year. This led to the revision of the financial criteria, disregarding child benefit and increasing standard amounts for essential spend on utilities and food. A tolerance was also created, making awards where the difference between income and expenses was below £20 per week.

3.0 DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE CASES

- 3.1 Where the customer or household member is disabled, higher figures are allowed in the DHP calculation for **all expenses** and the DLA is included as income. A major consideration is if they have an adapted property or a terminal illness. DHP is a financially based decision and there have been several cases where the level of income significantly exceeds the expenses. All applications were reviewed when the criteria was changed at the end of Q1.

- 3.2 Of the DHP payments made so far, 28 customers were in receipt of DLA and received £10,928.28 or 18% of the expenditure.
- 3.3 There were 50 unsuccessful cases, where the claimant was in receipt of DLA. This was mainly due to the claimant having more income than expenditure of approximately £47.50 per week on average. The shortfall between rent charged and housing benefit paid in total for these cases is £1,989.51 per week. If the Council awarded DHP for a 26 week period in each of these cases, this would give rise to expenditure of £51,727.26. Therefore the Council would have exceeded the £102k DHP budget by approximately £20,000 as at February 2014.

4.0 CALCULATION OF DHP

- 4.1 DHP is calculated by comparing the income and expenditure of the customer on a financial statement.
- 4.2 Where the figures given are deemed excessive, or indeed, not high enough, then they will be amended to reflect a reasonable amount based on the trigger figures used by Citizen's Advice Bureau debt advisors.
- 4.3 Where outgoings exceed income then a DHP is generally awarded, although it can be awarded when income is higher, if the award would meet the DHP policy, and the claimant's financial statement has been updated to allow for more expenditure for those with disability needs. It is expected that claimants with disabilities will have higher household bills than others, to cater for their specific needs.
- 4.4 As part of the calculation process a £20 threshold is applied i.e. if the excess income is no more than £20, the claimant may still be awarded the DHP, depending on their individual circumstances.
- 4.5 The length of awards has been extended to 26 weeks in most cases, not 13 weeks as stated in the previous policy. This is mainly due to customers not being able to change their situations in such a short period, e.g. find smaller suitable accommodation when there is a national shortage.
- 4.6 As stated in Councillor Bayliss' response to the question raised about including DLA in the income, the DHP calculation also takes into account the specific expenses incurred by the claimant in regard to their disability, from which, there is an expectation that their DLA will pay for these additional expenses. The claimant is specifically asked to provide details of their expenses in relation to their disability such as transport costs, additional fuel costs, hire/purchase/maintenance of mobility equipment etc. Where no detail is included, despite guidance being provided on how to complete the form, and where the Council cannot reasonably infer that such expenses exist, the Council has to assume that there are no such expenses and therefore, a DHP is not applicable due to their excessive level of income.
- 4.7 The Partnership and other Leicestershire Authorities do not generally award DHPs where there is a housing benefit overpayment; instead the team look to reduce the rate of recovery from ongoing benefit. The team will however, give consideration to awarding a DHP, where there may be a possible eviction. As always, each case will be considered on its own merits, as per DWP guidance.
- 4.8 The Benefits Team encourages supported applications from housing officers, social workers, advice agencies etc. as detailed supporting information enables the Council to make a more informed decision on each application.

5.0 PROMOTION OF THE DHP SCHEME

5.1 Various activities have been undertaken by the Partnership to encourage the take-up of DHPs. These activities are summarised below.

- DHP awareness sessions have been delivered to key stakeholders and third sector partners.
- Customer Services were briefed on the DHP scheme in order to promote this to customers face to face and on the telephone.
- The website details and promotes the scheme.
- The Partnership's Welfare Officers have targeted customers for Council Tax Discretionary Discounts and for those in receipt of Housing Benefit; these applications have also been assessed for DHP purposes.
- The Recovery Team have also issued Discretionary Discount forms, which again are also assessed for DHPs, where appropriate to do so.
- The Partnership has worked closely with the Welfare Reform Officer in Hinckley & Bosworth's Housing Team who supports applications with a detailed letter and further evidence, this has worked extremely well. The Partnership has provided a list of potential cases to NWL Housing colleagues for them to target tenants in arrears and provide support to complete DHP applications.
- The NWL Housing Team has liaised with the Partnership on specific cases with rent arrears.
- The DWP provided marketing material which all Councils could utilise to promote their financial assistance schemes.
- A DHP leaflet has been produced, which gives claimants details of how to access the scheme.

6.0 THE NEW DHP POLICY

6.1 When aligning the policy for the Partnership, officers considered the most recent set of Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) guidance, which came out in April 2013. The new guidelines were introduced to reflect the Welfare Reform changes introduced in 2013. The previous DHP policy was mainly concerned with assisting those who had a shortfall in their rent, where they could show that their outgoings were in excess of the income but it did not cover anything about the specific groups affected by the welfare reforms.

6.2 The policy was amended to reflect the abolition of Council Tax Benefit. DHP's are no longer paid towards a Council Tax liability. There is a new discretionary fund which is used to support those with shortfalls in their Council Tax where they are in receipt of Council Tax Support.

6.3 The new policy goes into more depth about the circumstances that we will consider an award for DHP for, as the DHP scheme now incorporates welfare reforms.

6.4 In addition to a 'shortfall in the rent', DHP awards can also be considered in the following circumstances:

- Rent in Advance
- Deposits
- Lump sum costs such as removal costs

6.5 The Leicestershire Partnership policy states which new groups of people it will consider awarding a DHP to. These include:

- Those affected by the Local Housing Allowance changes
 - Those affected by the benefit cap
 - Those affected by the size criteria in the social rented sector
- 6.6 Under the above headings, the new policy states which groups are likely to need help from the DHP fund.
- 6.7 Objectives that must be considered when deciding a DHP award have been clearly stated in the new policy to ensure that the policy meets each Local Authority's corporate aims.
- 6.8 The DHP funding will not cover every person affected by welfare reform changes but to ensure that the most vulnerable groups of people are considered for help, the Partnership has identified prioritised groups that could be offered DHP to enable them to stay in their home:
- families with children at a critical point in their education;
 - young people leaving local authority care;
 - foster carers, including those between placements;
 - People going through the approval process to become foster carers who may need to show that they have a spare room to be approved;
 - families with kinship care arrangements;
 - families with a child temporarily in care but who is expected to return home;
 - families with a social services intervention, for example highly dependent adults, children at risk or involvement in a family intervention project;
 - people who have had to flee domestic violence or have moved because of the threat of violence in another area;
 - where someone in the household is expecting a baby (including those currently in shared accommodation or subject to an under-occupation reduction);
 - ex-homeless people being supported to settle in the community;
 - people with health or medical problems who need access to local medical services or support that might not be available elsewhere;
 - people with disabilities who need, or have had, significant adaptations made to their property, or where they are living in a property particularly suited to their needs.
 - where the claimant or someone in their household has a disability which requires them to have a larger property than would usually be the case for the size of their household;
 - people with disabilities who receive informal care and support in their current neighbourhood from family and friends which would not be available in a new area;
 - households with disabled children who require an overnight carer;
 - the elderly frail who have lived in the area for a long time and would find it difficult to establish support networks in a new area;
 - people who need to live near their jobs because they work unsocial hours or split shifts; or where moving home may mean living in an area where public transport would be inadequate to enable them to sustain their current job.
 - Single under 35's, with priority being given to the following households:
 - where the claimant is in receipt of any element of DLA
 - any history of rehabilitation from drug or alcohol related dependency
 - cases placed through the Homeless Teams
 - those who have exhausted their options through the Homeless Prevention Fund
 - those within 6 months of their 35th birthday.
- 6.9 The new policy also goes into more detail as to the criteria to be applied in deciding a DHP award:

- financial circumstances,
- prevention of homelessness,
- sustaining tenancies,
- the household's medical circumstances and
- other general circumstances

6.10 There is more detail in the new policy on how to obtain a review of a DHP decision and the recovery of a DHP, if it has been paid when the circumstances no longer warrant it.

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP – 12 MARCH 2014

Title of report	ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT
Contacts	<p>Councillor Alison Smith MBE 01530 835668 alison.smith@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Community Services 01530 454832 john.richardson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Cultural Services Team Manager 01530 454601 goff.lewis@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p>
Purpose of report	To present Policy Development Group with a Draft Community Covenant as discussed and agreed by the Task and Finish group
Council Priorities	Homes and Communities
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	Officer time to support the Armed Forces Champion and measures contained within the covenant. Grant funding is available through the Community Covenant Grant Fund.
Link to relevant CAT	None
Risk Management	N/A
Equalities Impact Assessment	N/A
Human Rights	None Discernible
Transformational Government	N/A
Comments of Head of Paid Service	The report is satisfactory
Comments of Section 151 Officer	The report is satisfactory
Comments of Deputy Monitoring Officer	The report is satisfactory
Consultees	Royal British Legion North West Leicestershire Branches Armed Forces Community Engagement officer

Background papers	Cabinet Report – Armed Forces Community Covenant 14 January 2014 https://www.gov.uk/armed-forces-community-covenant
Recommendations	POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP CONSIDERS THE DRAFT COMMUNITY COVENANT AND MAKES RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 What is the Armed Forces Community Covenant?

Local authorities and the armed forces community are encouraged to work together to establish a community covenant in their area in order to:

- encourage local communities to support the armed forces community in their area
- to raise public understanding and awareness of the issues affecting the armed forces community
- recognise and remember the sacrifices faced by the armed forces community
- encourage activities which help to integrate the armed forces community into local life
- to encourage the armed forces community to help and support the wider community, whether through participation in events and projects, or other forms of engagement

1.2 Community covenants can look different in different areas. This is a scheme where one size does not fit all, and the details within a scheme will be determined by the local need and local capacity.

1.3 It is meant to be a pledge that sets out what a community covenant seeks to achieve in a particular area and, where possible, will be signed by representatives from all parts of the community. In most cases the lead signatories will be a senior representative from the local authority and one from the services who will sign on behalf of the armed forces community, whether that is the local military unit or those representing veterans' or families groups.

1.4 A Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. It is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces.

1.5 Many people nationally have become involved in supporting the Services community, through Service charities or more recently by participating in Armed Forces Day showing their support through fundraising, military celebrations, open days and family fun days. The Community Covenant scheme aims to build upon this support.

2.0 NWLDC SUPPORT FOR THE ARMED FORCES

2.1 North West Leicestershire is proud of its longstanding links with the serving and ex-serving members of HM Armed Forces and the Council is already fully supportive of the aims of the Armed Forces Community Covenant. At present the following annual activities are supported by the Council;

- The national initiative to fly a flag for Armed Forces Day
- The Remembrance Sunday service at Memorial Square in Coalville
- The two minute silence on Armistice Day at Memorial Square in Coalville

2.2 The Council recognises that in signing the Armed Forces Community Covenant it will allow existing relationships with the Armed Forces to be developed further particularly with the forthcoming significant national events.

- 2014 being the 100 years anniversary of the commencement of World War 1
- 2014 -18 seeing various significant World War 1 events celebrated
- 2015 being the celebration of 70 years since the end of World War 2

3.0 NEXT STEPS - NWLDC AND KEY PARTNERS

3.1 Cabinet agreed at its meeting on 14 January 2014 to ask Policy Development Group to establish a Task and Finish Group to develop and further the relationships with the Armed Forces Community.

3.2 It was proposed that the mission statement of the Group be

‘To identify key measures that deliver the principles set out in the Armed Forces Community Covenant and report back recommendations to Policy and Development Group and Cabinet at the earliest opportunity’

3.3 It was proposed that the Task and Finish group includes members, officers and representatives of the Armed Forces Community.

3.4 The Task and Finish group met on the 18 February 2014 (see Appendix 1 for minutes).

3.5 The summary recommendations from the meeting were as follows;

- That the Portfolio Holder for Community Services be nominated as the on-going Armed Forces Champion
- That the Draft Community Covenant as presented and debated at the meeting be recommended to Policy Development Group (12 March 2014) and Cabinet (24 June 2014) for adoption (see Appendix 2 for Draft Community Covenant)
- That the Cultural Services Team Manager as support officer begin working on the relevant measures

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MINUTES of a meeting of the ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT TASK AND FINISH GROUP held in the Room 140, Council Offices, Coalville on TUESDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2014

Present: Councillors J Cotterill, V Richichi, N Smith and M Specht

In Attendance: Councillor A V Smith MBE

Officers: Mrs C Hammond, Mr G Lewis and Mr J Richardson

Interested Parties: Lt. Col. R Pope (Ministry of Defence), Mr J Bailey, Mr A Moore, Mr J Rowlinson, Mr B Smith and Mr D Starbuck (Royal British Legion)

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor N Smith take the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

The Chairman then went round the room introducing all attendees.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor T Saffell.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests received.

4. TO IDENTIFY KEY MEASURES THAT DELIVER THE PRINCIPLES SET OUT IN THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT AND REPORT BACK RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP AND CABINET AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY

Members considered the Armed Forces Community Covenant that had been circulated at the start of the meeting.

The Head of Community Services thanked everyone for attending and provided Members with the background as to why the Task and Finish Group had been established.

Lt. Col. Pope provided Members with a brief overview of his role in supporting all the authorities in Leicestershire to sign covenants. He informed Members that the covenant was a formalisation of what many local authorities already did, but advised Members that during the first year, following the signing, the Council may find ways of improving the support that they offer to the Armed Forces Community within the district.

Following questions from Councillor N Smith, Lt. Col. Pope advised Members that not all of the local authorities within the County had signed their covenants, but he was working with those Councils towards them signing. He outlined to Members the support that every Armed Forces service personnel was entitled to, however it was difficult to encourage personnel to take this help.

Mr A Moore took the opportunity to provide Members with an overview of the work carried out by the Poppy Support Services.

Councillor M Specht stated that he spent time volunteering with a local group carrying out various projects and felt it would be beneficial to encourage ex service personnel to come along and take part.

Lt. Col. Pope advised Members that community group events like this would be ideal to advertise on the Armed Forces webpage and that funding would be available to support groups like this.

The Head of Community Services informed the Members that the Council would need to appoint an Armed Forces Champion and it was recommended that the Community Services Portfolio Holder be nominated.

Lt. Col. Pope took the opportunity to outline to role of the Armed Forces Champion to Members, advising them that it was not just evolving the covenant once it had been signed, but being the face of the covenant and getting out to meet the Armed Forces Community.

Members supported the role of an Armed Forces Champion and recommended that the Community Services Portfolio Holder be nominated.

Councillor A V Smith left the meeting at 5.58pm.

Councillor V Richichi stated that he was unsure as to how the Council would be able to assist members of the Armed Forces Community when they are able to receive assistance and support from both the Ministry of Defence and the Royal British Legion. Lt. Col. Pope responded by informing Members that, as the elected representatives for the district, Councillors were in a better position to assist with Local Authority issues than the Royal British Legion.

Members and representatives then discussed the grants scheme that was available and what sort of projects would meet the criteria. Members were advised that up to £250,000 could be applied for. This could be for a new War Memorial for a village, however it would be the responsibility of the Local Authority, either District or Parish/Town for the upkeep of this. The Head of Community Services informed Members that the Council would support any local groups in applying for funding.

RECOMMENDED THAT:

The Policy Development Group has due regard to the following recommendations made by the Task and Finish Group when making its representation to Cabinet.

1. That the Portfolio Holder for Community Services be nominated as the on-going Armed Forces Champion.
2. That the Draft Community Covenant as presented and debated at the meeting be recommended to Policy Development Group (12 March 2014) and Cabinet (24 June 2014) for adoption.
3. That the Cultural Services Team Manager, as support officer, begin working on the relevant measures.

5. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

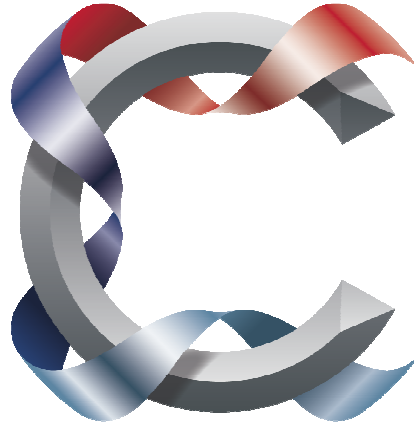
RESOLVED THAT:

The Task and Finish Group would convene again to review the covenant after the first year. Date and Time to be agreed at a later date.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 6.17 pm

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Community Covenant

AN ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

BETWEEN

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
REPRESENTATIVES OF THE CHARITABLE AND VOLUNTARY SECTORS,
THE CIVILIAN COMMUNITY OF LEICESTERSHIRE

AND

THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY IN LEICESTERSHIRE

**We, the undersigned, agree to work and act together to
honour the Armed Forces Community Covenant**



Signatories

Councillor Richard Blunt
Leader
North West Leicestershire District Council

Christine Fisher
Chief Executive
North West Leicestershire District Council

Andrew Bridgen
Member of Parliament
North West Leicestershire

Lt. Col. Richard Pope
Ministry of Defence
Armed Forces Community Engagement Officer - Leicestershire

David Atterbury
County Chairman of Leicestershire & Rutland
Royal British Legion

Date: 2014

PARTICIPANTS

This Armed Forces Community Covenant is made between:

The serving, reservists and veterans of the Armed Forces and their families working and residing in North West Leicestershire and North West Leicestershire District Council.

PRINCIPLES OF THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

The Armed Forces Community Covenant is a voluntary statement of mutual support between a civilian community and its local Armed Forces Community. It is intended to complement the Armed Forces Covenant, which outlines the moral obligation between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces, at the local level.

The purpose of this Community Covenant is to encourage support for the Armed Forces Community working and residing in North West Leicestershire and to recognise and remember the sacrifices made by members of this Armed Forces Community, particularly those who have given the most. This includes in-Service, Reservists and ex-Service personnel their families and widow(er)s in North West Leicestershire.

For North West Leicestershire District Council and partner organisations, the Community Covenant presents an opportunity to bring their knowledge, experience and expertise to bear on the provision of help and advice to members of the Armed Forces Community. It also presents an opportunity to build upon existing good work in District Council services such as Supporting our Families and our Community Focus work.

For the Armed Forces community, the Community Covenant encourages the integration of Service life into civilian life and encourages members of the Armed Forces community to help their local community.

This covenant builds on the strong connections already demonstrated between North West Leicestershire District Council and the Armed Forces community through ongoing initiatives such as the development of the Coalville Clock Tower War Memorial and Remembrance Day services. The North West Leicestershire Community Covenant will also seek to complement and support the Leicestershire County Council Community Covenant.

OBJECTIVES AND GENERAL INTENTIONS

The Armed Forces Community Covenant complements the principles of the Armed Forces Covenant which defines the enduring, general principles that should govern the relationship between the Nation, the Government and the Armed Forces community.

It aims to encourage all parties within a community to offer support to the local Armed Forces community and make it easier for Service personnel, families and veterans to access the help and support available from the Ministry of Defence, from statutory providers and from the Charitable and Voluntary Sector. These organisations already work together in partnership at local level.

The scheme is intended to be a two-way arrangement and the Armed Forces community are encouraged to do as much as they can to support their community and promote activity which integrates the Service community into civilian life.

THE COMMITMENT OF NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Armed Forces Champion

The District Council will nominate an Armed Forces Champion, ensuring that military involvement is embedded at the highest levels within the Council. It is intended that this will be the relevant serving Portfolio Holder. The Armed Forces Champion or nominated representative will attend events in support of the local armed forces and the Royal British Legion, and will play an active role at receptions to mark special occasions.

Armed Forces Support Officer

The District Council will nominate an Armed Forces Support Officer who will support the Armed Forces Champion and lead on Armed Forces Community Covenant related matters.

Website

The Council will maintain an area on its website for the Armed Forces Community including the Community Covenant and a direct email link to the Armed Forces Champion.

Fly a Flag for Armed Forces Day

The Council will support the national initiative to fly a flag for Armed Forces Day, with the Chairman hosting a short flag raising ceremony at the Council Offices in Coalville with other civic dignitaries and members of the Armed Forces and the Royal British Legion. The raising and flying of the Armed Forces Day flag provides a high profile opportunity to raise awareness of the role our Armed Forces and their families continue to play.

Remembrance Day

The District Council will support arrangements for the marking of Remembrance Sunday in Coalville at Memorial Square which involves the Chairman alongside other civic dignitaries leading a public act of remembrance and hosting a parade through the Town. The Chairman may also attend other remembrance services around the District during the day.

Armistice Day

The District Council recognises the importance of Armistice Day. A two minute silence is commemorated at the Council Offices. This event provides the opportunity for members of the public, Councillors and staff to observe the armistice in silence and reflect on previous wars and the sacrifices made by members of the armed forces.

Housing Support

The Council has included special qualifying provisions in recognition of recent government guidance in its revised Housing Allocations Policy to ensure that members of the armed forces are not disadvantaged by the requirement to have a local connection to qualify for inclusion on our Housing Register and therefore access to social housing.

These provisions recognise the special position of members of the Armed Forces (and their families) whose employment requires them to be mobile and who are likely therefore to be particularly disadvantaged by local connection requirements; as well as those injured reservists who may need to move to another local authority district to access treatment, care or support.

Access to Council Leisure Services

The Council will support service families and personnel to access and engage with North West Leicestershire's leisure services and facilities. Serving Armed Forces personnel and veterans are entitled to a 25% Membership discount in the Districts Leisure Centres.

Health Services Information and Support

Upon notification of injured military personnel recovering/resettling in North West Leicestershire the District Council will ensure carers and individuals in need receive up-to-date information of services available. This will include provision of information which can assist those veterans suffering from mental ill-health issues.

War Memorials

The Council will continue to recognise the importance and contribution of local war memorials through the Armed Forces Support Officer coordinating, promoting and responding to matters. This Officer will liaise with and be supported by the War Memorials Trust.

Armed Forces Community of NWL

The Council will collate and maintain information to best understand the Armed Forces community in North West Leicestershire.

Community Covenant Grant Fund Support

The Council through the Armed Forces Champion and Support Officer will promote, signpost to and support applications to the Community Covenant Grant Fund.

Signposting to relevant agencies

The Council will liaise with and signpost to all relevant Armed Forces support agencies including the Royal British Legion and liaise with local representatives.

Review of the Community Covenant

The Council will hold an annual meeting with the Armed Forces representatives to review the Community Covenant and progress on measures.

CONTACT PERSONNEL AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS

MOD DCDS (Personnel & Training) Covenant Team

Contact Name: Lisa Harper
Title: DCDS (Pers) Sec Covenant 1
Telephone: 020 7218 9110
Address: DCDS (Pers) Covenant Team
Zone D, 6th Floor
Ministry of Defence
Main Building, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2HB

In-Service representative(s)

Contact Name: Lieutenant Colonel Richard Pope
Title: Armed Forces Community Engagement Officer - Leicestershire
Telephone: 01664 418621
Address: Animal Defence Centre, Melton Mowbray, LE13 0HX

North West Leicestershire District Council – Armed Forces Champion

Contact Name: Cllr Alison Smith MBE
Title: Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Community Services
Telephone: 07970707152
Email: alison.smith@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

North West Leicestershire District Council – Officer Contact

Contact Name: John Richardson
Title: Head of Community Services
Telephone: 01530 454832
Email: john.richardson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

The Royal British Legion, Leicestershire & Rutland

Contact Name: David Atterbury
Title: County Chairman
Email: david.atterbury@aol.com

The Royal British Legion, North West Leicestershire

Contact Name: Jim Rawlinson
Title: North West Leicester Royal British Legion Group Chairman.
and Vice President of Leicestershire & Rutland County Royal British
Legion
Email: james.rowlinson@ntlworld.com

THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

An enduring Covenant between

the people of the United Kingdom

Her Majesty's Government

– and –

all those who serve or have served in the
Armed Forces of the Crown

and their Families

The first duty of Government is the defence of the realm. Our Armed Forces fulfil that responsibility on behalf of the Government, sacrificing some civilian freedoms, facing danger and, sometimes, suffering serious injury or death as a result of their duty. Families also play a vital role in supporting the operational effectiveness of our Armed Forces. In return, the whole nation has a moral obligation to the members of the Naval Service, the Army and the Royal Air Force, together with their families. They deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment.

Those who serve in the Armed Forces, whether Regular or Reserve, those who have served in the past, and their families, should face no disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public and commercial services. Special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given most such as the injured and the bereaved.

This obligation involves the whole of society: it includes voluntary and charitable bodies, private organisations, and the actions of individuals in supporting the Armed Forces. Recognising those who have performed military duty unites the country and demonstrates the value of their contribution. This has no greater expression than in upholding this Covenant.

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Draft Notice of Executive Key Decisions – as at 20 February 2014

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

The date of publication of this notice is **23 May 2014**. The Deadline for making any representations as to why items marked as private should be considered in public by **Cabinet on 24 June 2014 is 5pm Friday, 13 June 2014**.

Key Decisions

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

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

The Council's Executive

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

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

Confidential Items and Private Meetings of the Executive

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

Access to Agenda and Related Documents

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

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

Executive Decisions

Decision	Decision maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private (and reason – where private)	Date of decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the decision maker
Refuse Transfer Facility (Coalville)	Cabinet	Key Decision	Public	24 June 2014	<p>Councillor Alison Smith MBE 01530 564645 alison.smith@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Director of Services 01530 454555 steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Community Services 01530 454832 john.richardson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p>	Report
Air Quality Action Plan	Cabinet	Key Decision	Public	24 June 2014	<p>Councillor Alison Smith MBE 01530 835668 alison.smith@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Director of Services 01530 454555 steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Community Services 01530 454832 john.richardson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p>	Air Quality Action Plan Framework
Minutes of the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party	Cabinet	Non Key Decision	Public	24 June 2014	<p>Councillor Alison Smith MBE 01530 835668 alison.smith@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Director of Services 01530 454555 steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Community Services 01530 454832 john.richardson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p>	Report & Minutes

Decision	Decision maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private (and reason – where private)	Date of decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the decision maker
Q4 Cabinet Performance Report	Cabinet	Key Decision	Public	24 June 2014	Councillor Richard Blunt 01530 454510 richard.blunt@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Chief Executive 01530 454500 christine.fisher@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Head of Legal and Support Services 01530 454762 elizabeth.warhurst@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report
Environmental Health Food Safety Service Delivery Plan 2014/15	Cabinet	Key Decision	Public	24 June 2014	Councillor Alison Smith MBE 01530 835668 alison.smith@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Chief Executive 01530 454500 christine.fisher@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Head of Legal and Support Services 01530 454762 elizabeth.warhurst@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report and Service Delivery Plan
Risk Management Strategy	Cabinet	Key Decision	Public	24 June 2014	Councillor Nick Rushton 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Chief Executive 01530 454500 christine.fisher@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Head of Finance 01530 454520 ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report

Decision	Decision maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private (and reason – where private)	Date of decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the decision maker
Armed Forces Community Covenant	Cabinet	Key Decision	Public	24 June 2014	Councillor Alison Smith MBE 01530 835668 alison.smith@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Director of Services 01530 454555 steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Head of Community Services 01530 454832 john.richardson@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report & Draft Covenant
Tenant Scrutiny Panel Update and Revised Terms of Reference	Cabinet	Key Decision	Public	24 June 2014	Councillor Roger Bayliss 01530 411055 roger.bayliss@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Director of Services 01530 454555 steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Head of Housing 01530 454780 chris.lambert@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report
Dealing with Additional Non Decent Homes	Cabinet	Key Decision	Public	24 June 2014	Councillor Roger Bayliss 01530 411055 roger.bayliss@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Director of Services 01530 454555 steve.bambrick@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Head of Housing 01530 454780 chris.lambert@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report

Decision	Decision maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private (and reason – where private)	Date of decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the decision maker
Former Tenant Rent Arrears, Sundry Debtors, Council Tax and Non Domestic Rate Write Offs Over £10,000	Cabinet	Key Decision	Public	24 June 2014	Councillor Nick Rushton 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Chief Executive 01530 454500 christine.fisher@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Head of Finance 01530 454520 ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report
Asset Management Strategy and Corporate Capital Strategy	Cabinet	Key Decision	Public	29 July 2014	Councillor Nick Rushton 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Chief Executive 01530 454500 christine.fisher@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Head of Finance 01530 454520 ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report
Provisional Financial Outturn 2013/14	Cabinet	Key Decision	Public	29 July 2014	Councillor Nick Rushton 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Chief Executive 01530 454500 christine.fisher@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Head of Finance 01530 454520 ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report

Decision	Decision maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private (and reason – where private)	Date of decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the decision maker
Treasury Management Stewardship Report	Cabinet	Key Decision	Public	29 July 2014	Councillor Nick Rushton 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Chief Executive 01530 454500 christine.fisher@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Head of Finance 01530 454520 ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report
Former Tenant Rent Arrears, Sundry Debtors, Council Tax and Non Domestic Rate Write Offs Over £10,000	Cabinet	Key Decision	Public	23 September 2014	Councillor Nick Rushton 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Chief Executive 01530 454500 christine.fisher@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Head of Finance 01530 454520 ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report
Former Tenant Rent Arrears, Sundry Debtors, Council Tax and Non Domestic Rate Write Offs Over £10,000	Cabinet	Key Decision	Public	9 December 2014	Councillor Nick Rushton 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Chief Executive 01530 454500 christine.fisher@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Head of Finance 01530 454520 ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report

Decision	Decision maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private (and reason – where private)	Date of decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the decision maker
Former Tenant Rent Arrears, Sundry Debtors, Council Tax and Non Domestic Rate Write Offs Over £10,000	Cabinet	Key Decision	Public	3 March 2015	Councillor Nick Rushton 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Chief Executive 01530 454500 christine.fisher@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Head of Finance 01530 454520 ray.bowmer@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Report

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