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SUMMONS TO ATTEND A MEETING OF THE
NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Time/Date 6.30 pm on TUESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2024
Location Forest Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN
Officer to contact Democratic Services (01530 454512)



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Chief Executive

AGENDA

Item		Pages
	PRAYERS	
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2.	DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	
	Under the Code of Conduct members are reminded that in declaring interests you should make clear the nature of that interest and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest, registerable interest or other interest	
3.	CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS	
4.	LEADER'S AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS	
	Members are reminded that under paragraph 11.1 of part 3 of the Constitution, questions can be asked of the Leader and Cabinet Members without notice about any matter contained in any address. Questions shall be limited to five minutes in total for each announcement.	

Item	Pages
5. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION	
To receive questions from members of the public under procedure rule no.10. The procedure rule provides that members of the public may ask members of the Cabinet 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.	
6. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS	
To receive members' questions under procedure rule no.11. The procedure rule provides that any member may ask the Chairman of a board or group 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.	
7. MOTIONS	
To consider any motions on notice under procedure rule no. 12.	
8. PETITIONS	
To receive petitions in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme.	
9. MINUTES	
To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 10 September 2024	5 - 16
10. LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY REVIEW – RESPONSE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND'S DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS	
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Report of the Strategic Director (Resources) Presented by the Corporate Portfolio Holder	87 - 94
12. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STEWARDSHIP REPORT 2023/24	
Report of the Strategic Director (Resources) Presented by the Corporate Portfolio Holder	95 - 112
13. REVIEW OF GAMBLING ACT 2005 STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY	
Report of the Strategic Director (Community) Presented by the Community and Climate Change Portfolio Holder	113 - 144
14. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS ABOUT COUNCILLORS	
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Item	Pages
15. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES	
Report of the Returning Officer Presented by the Infrastructure Portfolio Holder	175 - 182
16. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL	
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17. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION - DEBATE NOT HATE	
Report of the Chief Executive Presented by the Infrastructure Portfolio Holder	213 - 216
18. APPOINTMENT TO THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL	
Report of the Chief Executive Presented by the Infrastructure Portfolio Holder	217 - 220
19. URGENT DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET	
Report of the Chief Executive Presented by the Leader	221 - 222

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MINUTES of a meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Forest Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on TUESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 2024

Present: Councillor K Horn (Chair)

Councillors R L Morris, M Ball, A Barker, C Beck, D Bigby, M Blair-Park, R Blunt, R Boam, M Burke, R Canny, D Cooper, D Everitt, T Eynon, M French, J Geary, T Gillard, R Johnson, S Lambeth, P Lees, J Legrys, K Merrie MBE, A Morley, P Moulton, E Parle, G Rogers, N J Rushton, R Sutton, A C Saffell, C A Sewell, S Sheahan, J G Simmons, N Smith, A Wilson, J Windram, L Windram, A C Woodman and M B Wyatt

Officers: Mr J Arnold, Mrs A Crouch, Mrs C Hammond, Mr M Murphy, Mrs A Thomas, Mrs R Wallace, Miss E Warhurst and Mr P Wheatley

33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

34. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The following Members declared an interest in item 7 – Motions, as they were in receipt of the winter fuel allowance:

Councillors M Ball, A Barker, D Bigby, D Cooper, D Everitt, J Geary, R Johnson, J Legrys, R Morris, E Parle, G Rogers, N Rushton, A Saffell, C Sewell, J Simmons, N Smith, R Sutton and A Wilson.

35. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair announced the recent passing of Ron Adams who was a Labour district councillor for the Greenhill and Broom Leys Wards between 2011 and 2019. The Chair invited Members to join him in a minute silence in his memory.

The celebration events for the 50-year anniversary of North West Leicestershire District Council had now commenced including:

- The Chair thanked the Members that had submitted nominations for the Legacy Award, it was noted that shortlisting would be taking place in the coming months and all nominees would be invited to the thank you event in February.
- Officers have been capturing video footage of people and organisations across the district to talk about their impact over the last 50 years. They would be premiered at the thank you event.
- Officers have been asked to volunteer their own time to raise funds for good causes. The final amount raised will be announced at the thank you event.

Other achievements to celebrate in the 50th year was the completion of Kegworth Market Place and the opening of Marlborough Square, the restoration of the mother and child statue in Belvoir Shopping Centre and a time capsule placed to mark the 125th anniversary of Coalville Park. Still to come was the improvement works to Moira Furnace and Hermitage Recreation Ground, the creation of a new 3G sports provision in Castle Donington and a new volunteer centre within the National Forest. The Council had also awarded over £250,000 of community grants through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and nearly £500,000 of capital grants to rural businesses through the Rural England Prosperity Fund.

36. LEADER'S AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor R Blunt, the Leader of the Council made the following announcements:

Following the General Election, he was looking forward to creating a positive relationship with North West Leicestershire's two Members of Parliament and to work together for the good of the people in the District.

It was announced that the Boundary Commission had revised the proposed new ward boundaries following the work undertaken by officers and Members earlier in the year, it was noted that it was now out for public consultation for a period of 10 weeks. The Leader of the Council explained that the working group would be called to consider the Council's response and Members were also encouraged to submit an individual response should they wish to. A further report would be considered by Council at its next meeting in November.

Further to the Corporate Peer Review conducted earlier in the year, the Leader of the Council thanked officers, Members and partners that took part in intensive interviews as part of the process. It was noted that the final report with recommendations was expected soon, after which plans and actions would be put in place to make improvements. A report would be taken to Scrutiny and Council in the coming months.

Councillor M Wyatt, Community Services and Climate Change Portfolio Holder updated Members following the launch of the Community Lottery. It was noted that it was on target to raise £50,000 this financial year to good local causes.

37. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

38. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

There were 10 questions asked which are set out below together with the responses. Each Member who asked a question was invited by the Chair to ask a supplementary question which is also set out together with the response.

Question from Councillor N Smith

"I am disappointed that the recent decisions made by the Labour Government as stated by Deputy Prime Minister to amend the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) will increase house building figures across NWL.

Our Local Plan review house building figures have gone from a starting point of 357 houses per year to 621 per year as discussed at the last local plan committee. This does not take in to account any extra houses from the Labour Leicester City Council's unmet needs which the Council may need to provide for. We could also potentially see an increase in solar panel farms and wind turbine numbers across NWL and this is not what the residents want.

This change in the NPPF appears to be punishing those Councils who have met their previous Local Plan requirements whilst rewarding those who have failed. Can I ask what actions the portfolio holder and the council intend to take."

Response from Councillor K Merrie

“Members will be aware that the matter raised by Cllr Smith was fully debated at Local Plan Committee on 14th August last month. At the meeting, a number of members expressed concern about the potential increase in the numbers of houses that this Council would have to provide for per year under the government’s new standard method.

At the meeting, the officer report advised to continue to plan for now for 686 dwellings each year, and a minimum of 13,720 dwellings over the plan period of 2020-2040 as set out in the Statement of Common Ground for the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area agreed in June 2022, but that the matter would be kept under review.

However, Members also resolved that North West Leicestershire District Council condemns the government’s decision to increase the allocation of housing and request the Member of Parliament to make urgent representation to the housing minister expressing our grave concerns. As such, a letter on behalf of the committee, has now been sent to the MPs representing North West Leicestershire residents requesting that they make representations to the government expressing their grave concerns about the significant impacts that this level of growth would have on our local communities.

I’m aware that the Chancellor announced that footnotes 57 and 58 to paragraph 163 of the existing NPPF, which placed additional tests on onshore wind schemes, including demonstrating proven community support, would no longer apply to decisions. The government is of the view that in effect, this created a very high bar for consent to be granted and led to very significant under-delivery of onshore wind schemes. This may result in some proposals in NWL which, if acceptable in planning terms, could help with the climate emergency. However, if the Council is faced with a number of new applications for renewable energy proposals, these will be dealt on their planning merits and the Planning Committee would still have the ability to refuse applications where proposals are not considered appropriate, for example where there might be an unacceptable visual impact or where residents amenity might be affected.”

Supplementary question and response

Councillor N Smith asked if the proposed changes to the NPPF were fully costed by the government. Councillor K Merrie confirmed that it was a matter of waiting to see how the new government would move forward on this issue.

Question from Councillor R Morris

“As many local people are, I am disappointed that the Labour Government as announced by the Chancellor has scrapped the ‘Restoring Your Railway Programme’ which has effectively brought to a halt the restoration of the Ivanhoe Line after many years of hard work by all stakeholders.

The reopening of the Ivanhoe line would have provided a valuable commuting route especially given that this Council may have to provide for some of the unmet housing need from the Labour council in Leicester.

Can I please ask what the Portfolio holder is doing to address this situation?”

Response from Councillor K Merrie

“In July, Councillor Richard Blunt said in a press release to the Coalville Times that he was very disappointed to learn of the Chancellor’s decision to cancel the Restoring Your Railway Programme, particularly as North West Leicestershire District Council has been

supportive of the huge amount of work done by partners, including the Campaign to Reopen the Ivanhoe Line (CRIL), Network Rail and other local councils, to reinstate this historically significant branch line.

I fully endorse those comments and as this is a major setback for this long-awaited project, I will be writing to the new MP to ask her to lobby Government to review its position. I will also ask for her support for the reopening of Ivanhoe Line as an individual Restoring Your Railway project when the Transport Secretary undertakes her transport infrastructure review in the autumn to identify any projects where the benefits may justify replacement funding being made available.

As we all know, reopening the Ivanhoe line would be hugely beneficial for local residents, making it easier to travel across the district for work or leisure, and increasing investment from tourism in the area.”

Supplementary question and response

Councillor R Morris asked if the Portfolio Holder was aware if NWLDC Member of Parliament (MP) had had any communication with ministers or stakeholders regarding the Ivanhoe Line. Councillor K Merrie stated that following discussion with the MP, he could confirm that she had discussed the matter with ministers both by letter and in person, and would continue to keep all stakeholders informed moving forward.

Question from Councillor R Johnson

“Could the Portfolio Holder please update Council on what engagement this Council’s representative, Councillor Lee Windram, has had with the volunteers of Coalville Town Football Club since its reforming of the club?”

Response from Councillor K Merie

“The appointment of a Council member to support community bodies is one that is requested by the community body. Following the change of chairmanship at Coalville Town FC, the club requested that the meetings with the member be suspended until the season started. Now the season has started and changes have been embedded within the club, officers will contact them to enquire as to whether they wish to resurrect the member liaison role and meetings”

Supplementary question and response

Councillor R Johnson asked that as the football season had started, when would contact be made and normal service resume. Councillor K Merrie responded that he would provide an update outside of the meeting once it had been discussed with officers.

Question from Councillor J Legrys

“Which community groups are currently hosted at the Moira Replan building and what social return on investment do they bring to the Ashby Woulds area?”

Response from Councillor A Woodman

“17 Ashby Road Moira has been occupied by Moira Replan Charity since 1992 with the Charity being a commercial tenant of the Council. Under the terms of the lease the Charity may use the building for purposes which further the aims and objectives of Moira Replan Charity (as set out in their constitution). Throughout

their occupation the range of uses hosted by Moira Replan Charity at the premises has varied. NWLDC, as landlord, has no information on the social value of these uses.”

Supplementary question and response

Councillor J Legrys shared his concerns for the voluntary groups that used the centre and asked what the Council was doing about finding alternative accommodation for them. Councillor A Woodman acknowledged the importance of the voluntary groups for the community and confirmed that he was in ongoing conversations with Leicestershire County Council and the local Parish Council to create options for them.

Question from Councillor E Parle

“How much did it cost to bring the EPC rating of the Moira Replan building up from a G to an F and which organisations funded these improvements?”

Response from Councillor A Woodman

“The alterations to 17 Ashby Road Moira (Moira Replan building) which we understand have improved the EPC rating from a G to an F were undertaken and paid for by Moira Replan Charity who have not shared the cost and funding information with the Council, as landlord.”

Supplementary question and response

Councillor E Parle asked if the Portfolio Holder was aware of the recent energy efficiency upgrades carried out to the building in 2023 following a grant received and that the tenants were prepared to pay for further work to reach the next energy efficiency band. Councillor A Woodman explained that it was necessary to look forward to the energy efficiency levels required by 2030 and it would be very difficult to achieve the required levels without major financial investment which was not viable.

Question from Councillor T Eynon

“Would the cost of bringing the Moira Replan building up to a lettable standard pass the government’s 7-Year Payback test and, if so, what are the barriers and enabler to funding such improvements?”

Response from Councillor A Woodman

“Energy consumption at the property and the associated cost is determined by the tenant through the way in which they use the building and the energy supply contracts they enter into. Because of this it is not possible for the landlord to determine whether improvements within the building will meet the Government’s 7 year test.

What is clear however is that future changes to the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (to achieve a rating of B by 2030) will prove challenging to achieve at this property. As landlord we have engaged with Moira Replan Charity to begin to explore the short and long term impacts of changing Energy Efficiency legislation.”

Supplementary question and response

Councillor T Eynon asked that due to the uncertainty of the Government’s plans for energy efficiency, plus it could take months to explore options for the tenant, would it be reasonable to not evict the tenant until a later date. Councillor A Woodman confirmed that

unfortunately the Council could not legally lease the building from January 2025 onwards, therefore termination of the lease at that point was necessary.

Question from Councillor D Cooper

“Which Committee made the decision to serve Moira Replan with a Section 25 notice?”

Response from Councillor A Woodman

“Under the Constitution officers have the delegated authority to serve statutory notices. I was briefed about the matter, prior to the notice being served.”

Supplementary question and response

Councillor D Cooper asked that due to the complexity of the issues did the Portfolio Holder think the matter should be considered by a scrutiny committee before the notice was actioned. Councillor A Woodman explained that as it was a landlord/tenant matter, it would be inappropriate to be considered by a scrutiny committee.

Question from Councillor C Beck

“What are the barriers and enablers to Moira Replan taking up a grant to install EV charging in its car park?”

Response from Councillor a Woodman

“The installation of EV charging at 17 Ashby Road Moira would require submission of details of the EV proposal for landlord’s approval which may include:

That the connection of a considerable additional electrical load to the wiring network within the property did not present any risks of overloading.

That the location of EV charging points did not present any additional fire risk to the property.

That the installation of EV chargers did not lead to our insurers declining to cover the building or increasing the premium.”

Supplementary question and response

Councillor C Beck asked if there were any enablers to take up the grant? Councillor A Woodman agreed to consult with officers and provide an answer outside of the meeting.

Question from Councillor A Morley

“Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in the workplace is not a new concept. Indeed, it is now a given that EDI is integral to the ethos of all organisations and authorities, in an aim to ensure that those in control of decision making, are representative of the communities which they serve.

At corporate scrutiny on 29 August 2024, a report was considered which presented an EDI policy review document, the action plan which accompanied this policy evidenced how the policy would be delivered. It was recognised in this document that the current NWLDC workforce is representative of the local district population, and it also recognised the importance of the wider regional profiles being more representative by 2028.

My question relates to why the alliance member leaders of NWLDC seem to be exempt from this goal and expectation. Surely the leaders should have the aspiration to be representative of the local district population as a formal objective.

I must note objectively that all current members of the alliance administration: and specifically, the senior roles of Chair, Deputy Chair, Leader of the Council and six other cabinet members are all white male. I feel that this falls woefully short of being inclusive of the local district population and the communities we collectively serve.

I therefore ask the Portfolio Holder, in light of the current all- white Leadership of the Council, whether it is intended to introduce any new EDI targets to ensure the leadership strives to be more representative of the NWLDC community, and indeed workforce, now or in the future?"

Response from Councillor K Merrie

"I thank Councillor Morley for her question. The Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy is scheduled to go to Cabinet for decision later this month. If agreed the policy will apply to this Council's services and workforce. I cannot speak for all members, but I would hope there would be cross party support for this updated policy and action plan which is absolutely the right way forward.

The arrangements for the selection of councillors are not part of the Council's EDI policy and action plan.

Each political party has its own rules and processes for selecting individuals to run for election on to the Council.

We have also seen choices by community-minded individuals to stand as independent Councillors and this also has an influence on the demographics and make up of this chamber.

There have been efforts across political parties at all levels to make politics more representative of the communities we serve.

There is no doubt that more needs to be done by all to seek to encourage wider participation in our Council chambers across the whole of the local government sector. This is not a unique situation for this Council.

At local level, we have (or the Conservative Group) adopted a collaborative approach in building an alliance with our Liberal Democrat and independent members and this has helped to improve the representation of the different views of our communities. My party will continue to seek to further improve representation through its selection processes in the future wherever possible at a local level.

Other parties may wish to consider their own selection arrangements for candidates.

In terms of the current Cabinet, The Constitution says that The Leader shall appoint a Deputy Leader, who shall be a Cabinet Member and deputise for the Leader and carry out the functions delegated to the Leader in periods of their incapacity or absence and, Cabinet Members to cover one of the specific portfolio responsibilities (other than those reserved to the Leader). The Cabinet comprises the Leader and at least two but no more than nine other Councillors, one of whom must be the Deputy Leader. The Leader considers their executive arrangements each year following their appointment, and these are announced to Council. The current Leader has decided that the Executive responsibilities will be exercised collectively by Cabinet and has chosen his portfolio areas

and Cabinet members from the Alliance based on areas of expertise, interest, and availability for the role.”

Councillor A Morley declined the opportunity to ask a supplementary question.

Question from Councillor R Sutton

“Ahead of budget setting, could the Portfolio Holder please supply figures for the years 2019 to 2024 to illustrate the income dependency of this Council on Business Rates and New Homes Bonus as compared to Council Tax, outlining against each income stream the main risks and opportunities of this dependency for the District budget as a new government approaches the matter of Local Government Funding policy and the 2025-26 Settlement?”

Response from Councillor N Rushton

“The table presented in the additional papers outlines the specifics of the Council's primary funding allocations spanning the financial years 2019/20 through to 2024/25. Additionally, the potential risks linked to these sources of funding are duly noted in the subsequent paragraphs. Changes in the finance settlement often include adjustments to the core spending power of local authorities, which is a measure of the resources available to them for service delivery.

Additionally, the settlement encompasses various grants and revenue streams, such as the New Homes Bonus, which can influence individual funding allocations.”

Supplementary question and response

Councillor R Sutton pointed out that the pooling arrangements were reliant on the rates received, and the figures showed there was a difference between the increase in rates received and the national collection figure. He asked if the Portfolio Holder would be prepared to write to the pooling partners about the matter. Councillor N Rushton confirmed that the Council did not receive all of the rates that were collected and was something that would benefit from a review at a national level.

39. MOTIONS

The Chair referred Members to the motion as detailed within the agenda papers and invited Councillor M Wyatt, who made the submission, to speak.

Councillor M Wyatt spoke to and then formally moved the motion. It was seconded by Councillor A Woodman.

A discussion ensued in which Members spoke both in support and against the motion.

A recorded vote being requested, the voting was as detailed below.

The motion was put to the vote and was CARRIED.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) The Chief Executive be instructed to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the policy on linking winter fuel payments and pension credit receipt to be immediately paused and introduce a new threshold to determine eligibility for winter fuel payments. Further, request the Chief Executive to write to all Members of

Parliament covering North West Leicestershire asking them to give their formal support to halting the changes to the winter fuel payment eligibility.

- 2) A request be made to all group leaders within North West Leicestershire District Council to sign a joint letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the new winter fuel payment policy to be suspended and reviewed.
- 3) The Council urgently commence a significant awareness campaign to encourage the uptake of pension credits.

Motion on Notice - Winter Fuel Payments (Motion)	
Councillor Kenny Horn	For
Councillor Ray Morris	For
Councillor Mike Ball	For
Councillor Anthony Barker	Abstain
Councillor Catherine Beck	Abstain
Councillor Dave Bigby	Abstain
Councillor Murrae Blair-Park	Abstain
Councillor Richard Blunt	For
Councillor Russell Boam	For
Councillor Morgan Burke	For
Councillor Rachel Canny	For
Councillor Doug Cooper	Abstain
Councillor David Everitt	Abstain
Councillor Dr Terri Eynon	Abstain
Councillor Marie French	For
Councillor John Geary	Abstain
Councillor Tony Gillard	For
Councillor Russell Johnson	Abstain
Councillor Simon Lambeth	Abstain
Councillor Paul Lees	For
Councillor John Legrys	Abstain
Councillor Keith Merrie MBE	For
Councillor Alison Morley	Abstain
Councillor Peter Mout	Abstain
Councillor Elizabeth Parle	Abstain
Councillor Guy Rogers	Abstain
Councillor Nicholas Rushton	For
Councillor Ray Sutton	For
Councillor Tony Saffell	For
Councillor Carol Sewell	Abstain
Councillor Sean Sheahan	Abstain
Councillor Jenny Simmons	For
Councillor Nigel Smith	For
Councillor Avril Wilson	Abstain
Councillor Jake Windram	For
Councillor Lee Windram	For
Councillor Andrew Woodman	For
Councillor Michael Wyatt	For
Carried	

40. PETITIONS

No petitions were received.

41. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2024.

It was moved by Councillor K Horn, seconded by Councillor R Morris and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

42. CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE REPORT

Councillor N Rushton, as Corporate Portfolio Holder, presented the report to Members and moved the recommendations. It was seconded by Councillor K Merrie.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) The Supplementary Estimates detailed in paragraph 2.2 of the report which are above £250,000 and are externally funded be approved.
- 2) The new Capital Schemes as set out in paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 of the report be approved.

43. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

Councillor K Merrie, as Infrastructure Portfolio Holder, introduced the report to Members and moved the recommendations. Councillor T Eynon was invited to present the report as Community Scrutiny Committee Chair and then she seconded the recommendations.

During discussion, Members spoke about the improvements made to the scrutiny function and the success it was now having. Members of the committees and the officers who supported them were thanked for the work undertaken in the past 12 months.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Annual Scrutiny Report for 2023/24 be received and noted.

Councillor M French left the meeting at the conclusion of the item.

44. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

Councillor T Gillard, as Group Whip, presented the report to Members and moved the recommendations. It was seconded by Councillor J Legrys.

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor R Johnson be appointed to the vacant seat on the Audit and Governance Committee for the remainder of the 2024/25 civic year.

Councillor M French left the meeting at 7.28pm

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.40 pm

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NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2024



<p>Title of Report</p>	<p>LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND - RESPONSE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND'S DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS</p>	
<p>Presented by</p>	<p>Councillor Keith Merrie Infrastructure Portfolio Holder</p>	
<p>Background Papers</p>	<p>LGBCE technical guidance</p> <p>Council Report – Council Size Submission – 30 January 2024</p> <p>Council Report – Council's submission on the draft warding arrangements – 7 May 2024</p>	<p>Public Report: Yes</p>
<p>Financial Implications</p>	<p>There are no financial implications arising from the contents of this report. However, if the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) recommendations are approved, there will be a need to include an additional sum within Member allowances and other support budgets to reflect the increase in the number of Councillors from 38 to 39. This will be a cost pressure recognised in budget preparations for the financial year 2027/28.</p>	
	<p>Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes</p>	
<p>Legal Implications</p>	<p>The LGBCE has functions under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. It may at any time conduct a review of the area of the Council and recommend whether a change should be made to the electoral arrangements. The Council is required to co-operate with the Commission and must provide any information that it may reasonably require in connection with its functions (Section 56). The Council has provided information to the LGBCE as part of the first two stages of the review process.</p> <p>As part of the review, the Council and others may make submissions proposing electoral arrangements as part of the LGBCE process.</p> <p>Legal advice has been provided by the Legal Services Team throughout the process.</p>	
	<p>Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes</p>	

Staffing and Corporate Implications	There are no implications at this stage.
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes
Purpose of Report	To seek Council's approval to the proposed response to the draft recommendations of the LGBCE for the electoral arrangements for North West Leicestershire.
Recommendations	<p>THAT COUNCIL:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. APPROVES AND AGREES THE SUBMISSION OF THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND FOR NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE", ATTACHED AT APPENDIX B. 2. DELEGATES TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, THE SUBMISSION OF THE "NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND" TO THE LGBCE. 3. NOTES THAT PROPOSALS ON THE DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS MAY ALSO BE PROVIDED TO THE LGBCE BY ANY MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC, EXTERNAL BODY, GROUP OR ORGANISATION WISHING TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE CLOSE OF THE CONSULTATION ON 11 NOVEMBER 2024.

1.0 BACKGROUND

11. In 2022, the LGBCE informed the Chief Executive of the Council of its intention to carry out an Electoral Review of the council. The last electoral review of North West Leicestershire was undertaken in 2013.
- 1.2 The review process began in mid-2023. Any changes that are made regarding council size and ward boundaries will come into effect for the local government elections in May 2027.
- 1.3 In the first phase of the review, the size of the council was considered. On 30 January 2024, the council made a formal submission which supported the size of the council remaining at 38 councillors, with a preference for single-member wards. On 12 March 2024 the LGBCE made a determination that the council should remain at the same size, at 38 Councillors, and noted the preference for single-member wards where possible, taking the statutory criteria into account as set out at 2.1 below.
- 1.4 On 19 March 2024, the public consultation on future warding arrangements commenced. This consultation ran until the 27 May 2024 and following this LGBCE considered all the responses received and visited the district to formulate its draft recommendations. These were published on 3 September 2024 and a public consultation on the recommendations will run until the 11 November 2024. The draft recommendations can be found at appendix A. The council is a consultee in this process.

2.0 DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 In considering the warding pattern for an authority, the LGBCE has regard to the statutory criteria set down in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. These are:
- the need to secure equality of representation (taking future growth into account);
 - the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
 - the need to secure effective and convenient local government.
- 2.2 As the LGBCE developed its draft recommendations for North West Leicestershire, it found that a 39-councillor warding pattern, allocating an extra councillor to Ashby de la Zouch, would allow a recommendation of a uniform pattern of single-councillor wards that would better reflect its statutory criteria than a 38-councillor pattern. Therefore, the draft recommendations are based on a 39-member council. This approach is consistent with the LGBCE's guidance where it explains that it may be necessary to make a small alteration to council size to achieve a better balance of the statutory criteria.
- 2.3 The draft recommendations propose changes to most ward boundaries, with two remaining the same.
- 2.4 The Electoral Review Working Party (ERWRP) met on 13 September 2024 to consider the draft recommendations and consider the approach for all members to input into the response. It was agreed that all members be invited to submit any comments to officers for inclusion and these would be considered by the working party before consideration by Council.
- 2.5 The ERWP met again on 11 October 2024 to consider the draft response, including comments received from a number of Members, to provide any further comments for inclusion in the response and agreed the document for Council's consideration.
- 2.6 The final response, agreed by the ERWP for consideration, is attached at appendix B.

3.0 NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 The LGBCE will consider all the representations and submissions received before the closing date of 11 November 2024 and will formulate its final recommendations on the warding proposals.
- 3.2 The LGBCE will then finalise and publish the new wards in early 2025, with the order then being laid before Parliament in Spring 2025.
- 3.3 New wards are scheduled to come into effect at the 2027 District and Parish elections.

Council Priorities:	A well-run council
Policy Considerations:	The LGBCE is a parliamentary body established by statute to conduct boundary, electoral and structural reviews of local government areas in England.
Safeguarding:	There are none at this stage.
Equalities/Diversity:	There are none at this stage.
Customer Impact:	The Commission will work to achieve electoral equality and will consider representations made to it by other public authorities, community groups, residents associations, electors, political and other stakeholders during later stages. There will be an impact to those communities where wards will need to change so that electoral equality can be achieved.
Economic and Social Impact:	There are none at this stage.
Environment, Climate Change and zero carbon:	There are none at this stage
Consultation/Community Engagement:	The LGBCE is responsible for running any consultations during the review.
Risks:	If the council does not submit proposals on the warding arrangements, the LGBCE will take any other representations into account in formulating the final electoral arrangements.
Officer Contact	Elizabeth Warhurst Head of Legal and Commercial Services elizabeth.warhurst@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

Draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for North West Leicestershire District Council

Electoral review

September 2024

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Tel: 0330 500 1525

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A note on our mapping:

The maps shown in this report are for illustrative purposes only. Whilst best efforts have been made by our staff to ensure that the maps included in this report are representative of the boundaries described by the text, there may be slight variations between these maps and the large PDF map that accompanies this report, or the digital mapping supplied on our consultation portal. This is due to the way in which the final mapped products are produced. The reader should therefore refer to either the large PDF supplied with this report or the digital mapping for the true likeness of the boundaries intended. The boundaries as shown on either the large PDF map or the digital mapping should always appear identical.

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Introduction

Who we are and what we do

1 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament.¹ We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons. Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

2 The members of the Commission are:

- Professor Colin Mellors OBE (Chair)
- Andrew Scallan CBE (Deputy Chair)
- Amanda Nobbs OBE
- Steve Robinson
- Wallace Sampson OBE
- Liz Treacy
- Ailsa Irvine (Chief Executive)

What is an electoral review?

3 An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements decide:

- How many councillors are needed.
- How many wards or electoral divisions there should be, where their boundaries are and what they should be called.
- How many councillors should represent each ward or division.

4 When carrying out an electoral review the Commission has three main considerations:

- Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents.
- Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity.
- Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.

5 Our task is to strike the best balance between these three considerations when making our recommendations.

¹ Under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

6 More details regarding the powers that we have, as well as further guidance and information about electoral reviews and the review process in general, can be found on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Why North West Leicestershire?

7 We are conducting a review of North West Leicestershire District Council ('the Council') as some councillors currently represent many more or fewer electors than others. We describe this as 'electoral inequality'. Our aim is to create 'electoral equality', where the number of electors per councillor is as even as possible, ideally within 10% of being exactly equal.

8 This electoral review is being carried out to ensure that:

- The wards in North West Leicestershire are in the best possible places to help the Council carry out its responsibilities effectively.
- The number of electors represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the district.

Our proposals for North West Leicestershire

9 North West Leicestershire should be represented by 39 councillors, one more than present.

10 North West Leicestershire should have 39 wards, one more than present.

11 The boundaries of most wards should change; two will stay the same.

How will the recommendations affect you?

12 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward and, in some cases, which parish council ward you vote in. Your ward name may also change.

13 Our recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of the district or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. The recommendations will not have an effect on local taxes, house prices or car and house insurance premiums, and we are not able to consider any representations which are based on these issues.

Have your say

14 We will consult on the draft recommendations for 10 weeks, from 3 September 2024 to 11 November 2024. We encourage everyone to use this opportunity to comment on these proposed wards as the more public views we hear, the more informed our decisions will be in making our final recommendations.

15 We ask everyone wishing to contribute ideas for the new wards to first read this report and look at the accompanying map before responding to us.

16 You have until 11 November 2024 to have your say on the draft recommendations. See page 41 for how to send us your response.

Review timetable

17 We wrote to the Council to ask its views on the appropriate number of councillors for North West Leicestershire. We then held a period of consultation with the public on warding patterns for the district. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft recommendations.

18 The review is being conducted as follows:

Stage starts	Description
12 March 2024	Number of councillors decided
19 March 2024	Start of consultation seeking views on new wards
27 May 2024	End of consultation; we began analysing submissions and forming draft recommendations
3 September 2024	Publication of draft recommendations; start of second consultation
11 November 2024	End of consultation; we begin analysing submissions and forming final recommendations
4 February 2025	Publication of final recommendations

Analysis and draft recommendations

19 Legislation² states that our recommendations should not be based only on how many electors³ there are now, but also on how many there are likely to be in the five years after the publication of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for our wards.

20 In reality, we are unlikely to be able to create wards with the same number of electors in each; we have to be flexible. However, we try to keep the number of electors represented by each councillor as close to the average for the council as possible.

21 We work out the average number of electors per councillor for each local authority by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors, as shown in the table below.

	2024	2030
Electorate of North West Leicestershire	82,138	91,063
Number of councillors	39	39
Average number of electors per councillor	2,106	2,335

22 When the number of electors per councillor in a ward is within 10% of the average for the authority, we refer to the ward as having 'electoral equality'. All of our proposed wards for North West Leicestershire are forecast to have electoral equality by 2030.

Submissions received

23 See Appendix C for details of the submissions received. All submissions may be viewed on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk

Electorate figures

24 The Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2030, a period five years from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in 2025. These forecasts were broken down to polling district level and predicted an increase in the electorate of around 11%. This is predominantly due to significant residential development in Ashby de la Zouch and Hugglescote.

² Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

³ Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

25 We considered the information provided by the Council and are satisfied that the projected figures are the best available at present. We have used these figures to produce our draft recommendations.

26 Our mapping tool uses geocoded electoral registers supplied by the Council to locate electors, by associating addresses with specific geographic coordinates. It considers each elector's location to produce precise elector counts for each ward. There can be very slight differences between the electorate figures published on our website at the beginning of the review and the electorate figures published in this report. However, these are very minor and do not impact on our recommendations.

Number of councillors

27 North West Leicestershire District Council currently has 38 councillors. We looked at evidence provided by the Council and the North West Leicestershire District Council Labour Group and concluded that keeping this number the same would ensure the Council could carry out its roles and responsibilities effectively.

28 We therefore invited proposals for new patterns of wards that would be represented by 38 councillors.

29 At a Full Council meeting on 30 January 2024, the Council resolved to request the Commission carry out a review on the basis of recommending a uniform pattern of single-member wards. There is a presumption in legislation⁴ that the Commission should agree to such requests and seek to provide a uniform pattern of single-member wards across the authority. However, in all cases, this consideration will not take precedence over our other statutory criteria, and we will not recommend a uniform pattern of single-member wards if, in our view, or as is shown in evidence provided to us, it is not compatible with our other statutory criteria.

30 As we developed our draft recommendations for North West Leicestershire, we found that a 39-councillor warding pattern, allocating an extra councillor to Ashby de la Zouch, would allow us to recommend a uniform pattern of single-councillor wards that would better reflect our statutory criteria than a 38-councillor pattern. Therefore, our draft recommendations are based on a 39-member council. This approach is consistent with our guidance where we explain that it may be necessary to make a small alteration to council size to achieve a better balance of the statutory criteria.

31 We received one submission about the number of councillors in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. A local resident requested that the number of district councillors be reduced, but did not specify a number. We were not persuaded

⁴ Section 57 of Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

that sufficient evidence has been presented to support a reduction in the number of councillors, so we have based our draft recommendations on a 39-member council.

Ward boundaries consultation

32 We received 26 submissions in response to our consultation on ward boundaries. These included a district-wide scheme from the Council. Submissions from the North West Leicestershire District Council Labour Group, the North West Leicestershire Constituency Labour Party and Councillor Barker (referred to as 'Labour' throughout this report) all supported the scheme in parts, but they provided comments for areas of the district where they disagreed with the Council's scheme. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the district.

33 The Council's district-wide scheme provided for a largely single-councillor warding pattern for North West Leicestershire. We carefully considered this proposal and were of the view that the proposed patterns of wards resulted in good levels of electoral equality in most areas of the authority and generally used identifiable boundaries. Therefore, our draft recommendations are partially based on the Council's proposals.

34 However, the Council proposed a three-councillor ward in the southwest of the district. Labour subdivided this ward into single- and two-councillor wards. Mindful of the requirement to provide a pattern of single-councillor wards across the district, as indicated in paragraph 29, we have increased the number of councillors for the district by one to 39. This has allowed us to recommend a uniform pattern of single-councillor wards that, in our view, effectively balances our statutory criteria and avoids the creation of multi-member wards.

35 Our recommendations also take into account local evidence that we received, which provided further evidence of community links and locally recognised boundaries. In some areas, we considered that the proposals did not provide the best balance between our statutory criteria, so we identified alternative boundaries.

36 We visited the area to look at the various proposals on the ground. This tour of North West Leicestershire helped us to decide between the different boundaries proposed.

Draft recommendations

37 Our draft recommendations are for 39 single-councillor wards. We consider that our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we received such evidence during consultation.

38 The tables and maps on pages 9–33 detail our draft recommendations for each area of North West Leicestershire. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory⁵ criteria of:

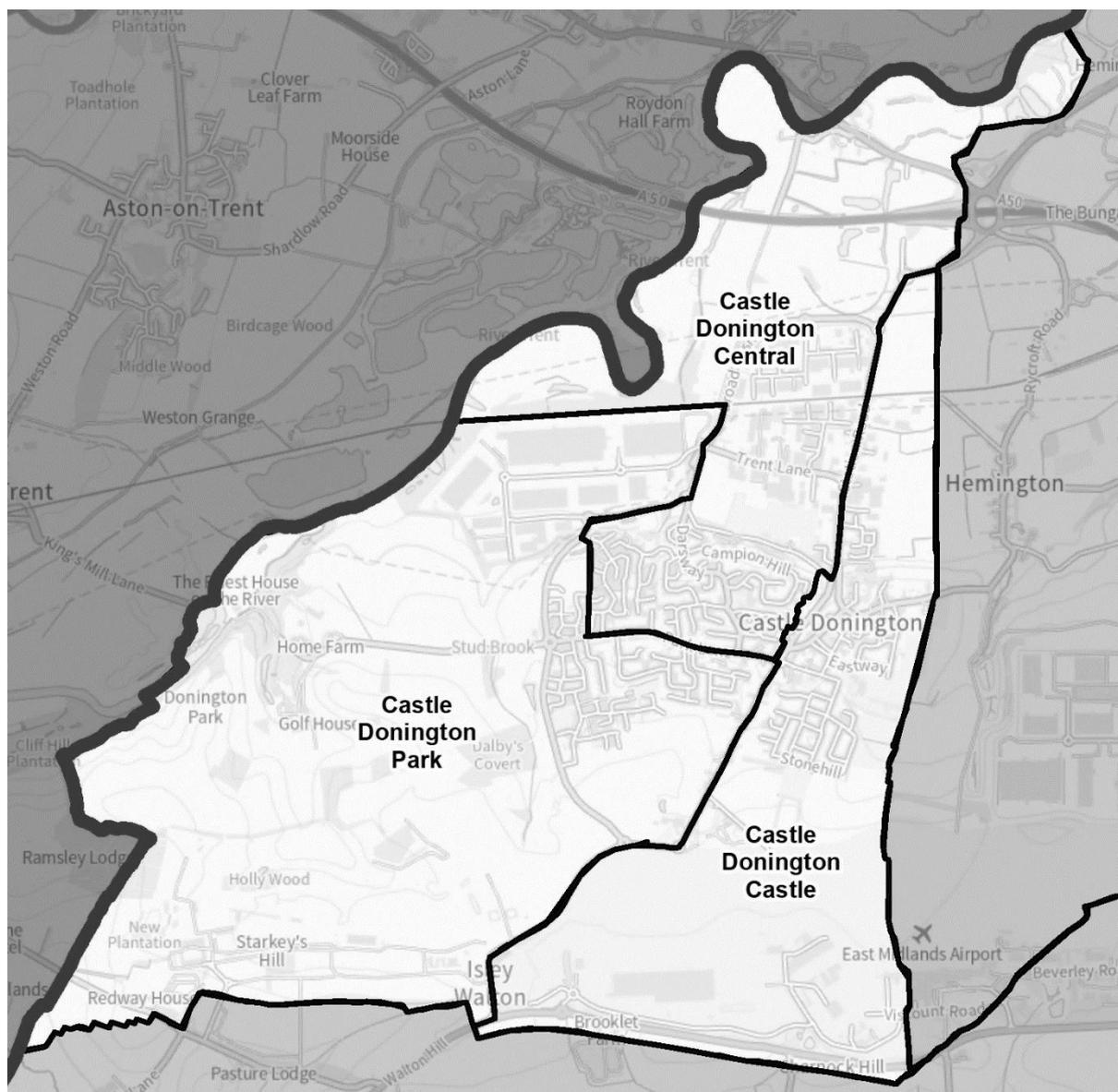
- Equality of representation.
- Reflecting community interests and identities.
- Providing for effective and convenient local government.

39 A summary of our proposed new wards is set out in the table starting on page 47 and the large map accompanying this report.

40 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations, particularly on the location of the ward boundaries and the names of our proposed wards.

⁵ Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Castle Donington



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Castle Donington Castle	1	-9%
Castle Donington Central	1	2%
Castle Donington Park	1	-8%

Castle Donington Castle, Castle Donington Central and Castle Donington Park

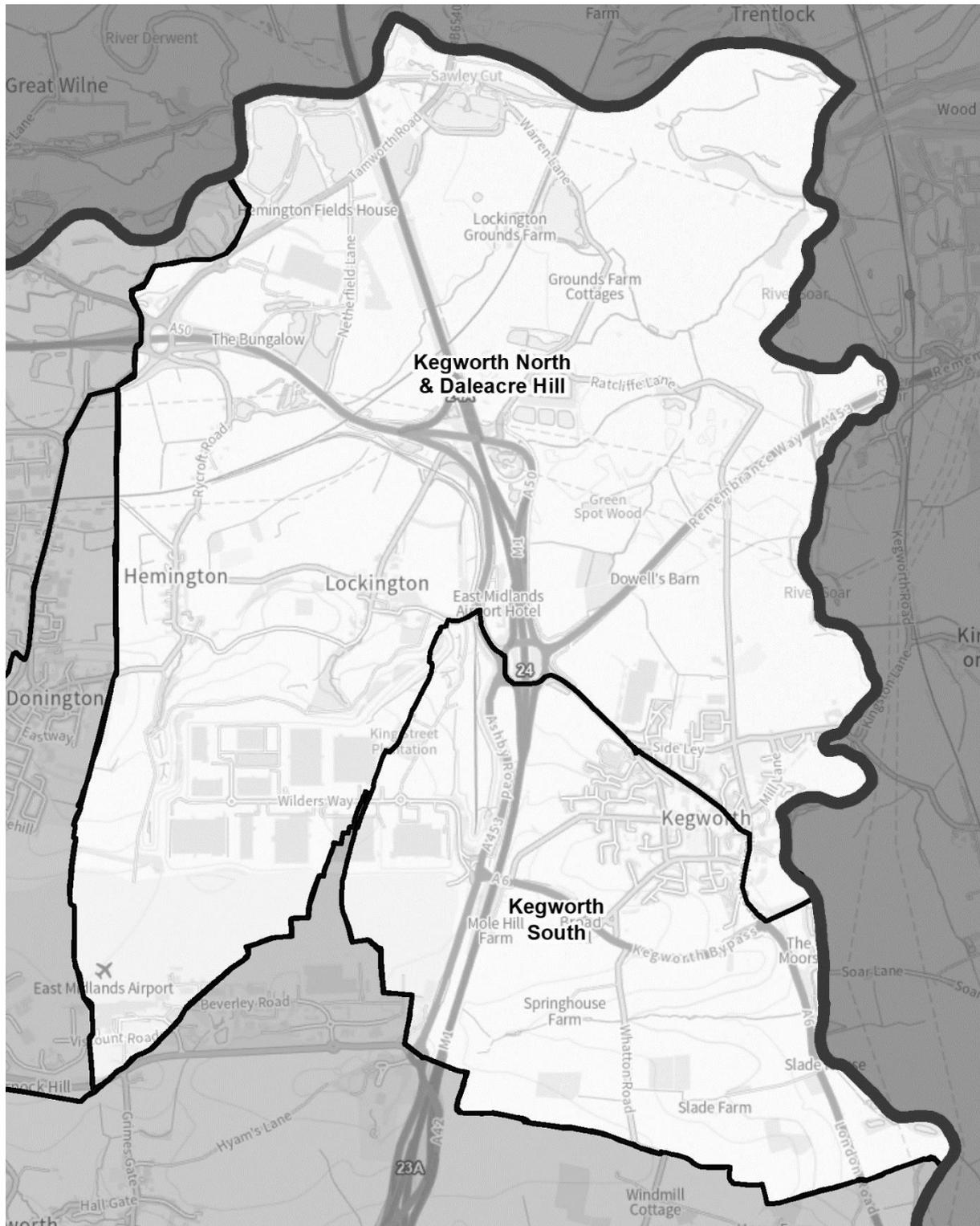
41 The Council proposed adjusting the existing three wards within Castle Donington parish. Its proposed Castle Donington Central ward would incorporate Spitfire Road and its adjacent streets from the current Castle Donington Park ward. The Council argued this change would create a more identifiable boundary than the present one, which bisects Bentley Road. The Council also stated that this modification would unify a distinct community within the same ward. Additionally, the

Council proposed moving electors on the western side of Bondgate, High Street and Hill Top into Castle Donington Castle ward to achieve a better balance of electors across the three wards. Labour supported the three single-member wards for the Castle Donington area but was open to the creation of one single-member ward and one two-member ward if we were minded to move away from a uniform pattern of single-councillor wards for the district.

42 We have decided to broadly adopt the Council's proposals for Castle Donington. We agree that transferring Spitfire Road and its adjacent roads into Castle Donington Central ward will provide for a more identifiable boundary and will avoid the division of a community between wards. The Council's proposals also place new residential development north and south of Park Lane entirely within Castle Donington Park ward, which we anticipate will reflect the community identities and interests of this growing area.

43 However, while we have accepted the Council's proposal to include electors on the western side of Bondgate within Castle Donington Castle ward, we propose retaining the existing boundary between Castle Donington Castle and Castle Donington Park wards. This means keeping the western side of High Street and Hill Top within Castle Donington Park ward. This ensures good electoral equality between our Castle Donington wards under a 39-councillor scheme for the district.

Kegworth



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Kegworth North & Daleacre Hill	1	-10%
Kegworth South	1	-10%

Kegworth North & Daleacre Hill and Kegworth South

44 The Council proposed extending the existing Kegworth South ward to include the village of Long Whatton, suggesting the ward be renamed Kegworth South & Long Whatton. Its proposed Kegworth North & Daleacre Hill ward would largely follow the boundaries of the existing Daleacre Hill ward, but would incorporate residential developments planned to the west of Pritchard Drive. Kegworth Parish Council supported these proposals but suggested the ward name Kegworth North & Daleacre. Labour supported the creation of two single-councillor wards for this area.

45 We carefully examined this proposal on our visit to Kegworth. Upon reflection, we were not persuaded that a ward which linked the southern part of Kegworth with Long Whatton would provide the best reflection of the statutory criteria. We consider that dividing Long Whatton & Diseworth parish between wards would not be conducive to effective and convenient local government, nor represent the community identities and interests of the parish.

46 Under a 39-councillor scheme, the current two single-councillor wards for the Kegworth area can be largely maintained while ensuring good electoral equality. We therefore recommend broadly retaining both in our draft recommendations, subject to a minor modification to the boundary between the two wards. We recommend transferring electors residing near The Otter public house into our proposed Kegworth South ward, as we consider these electors share closer ties with the southern part of Kegworth.

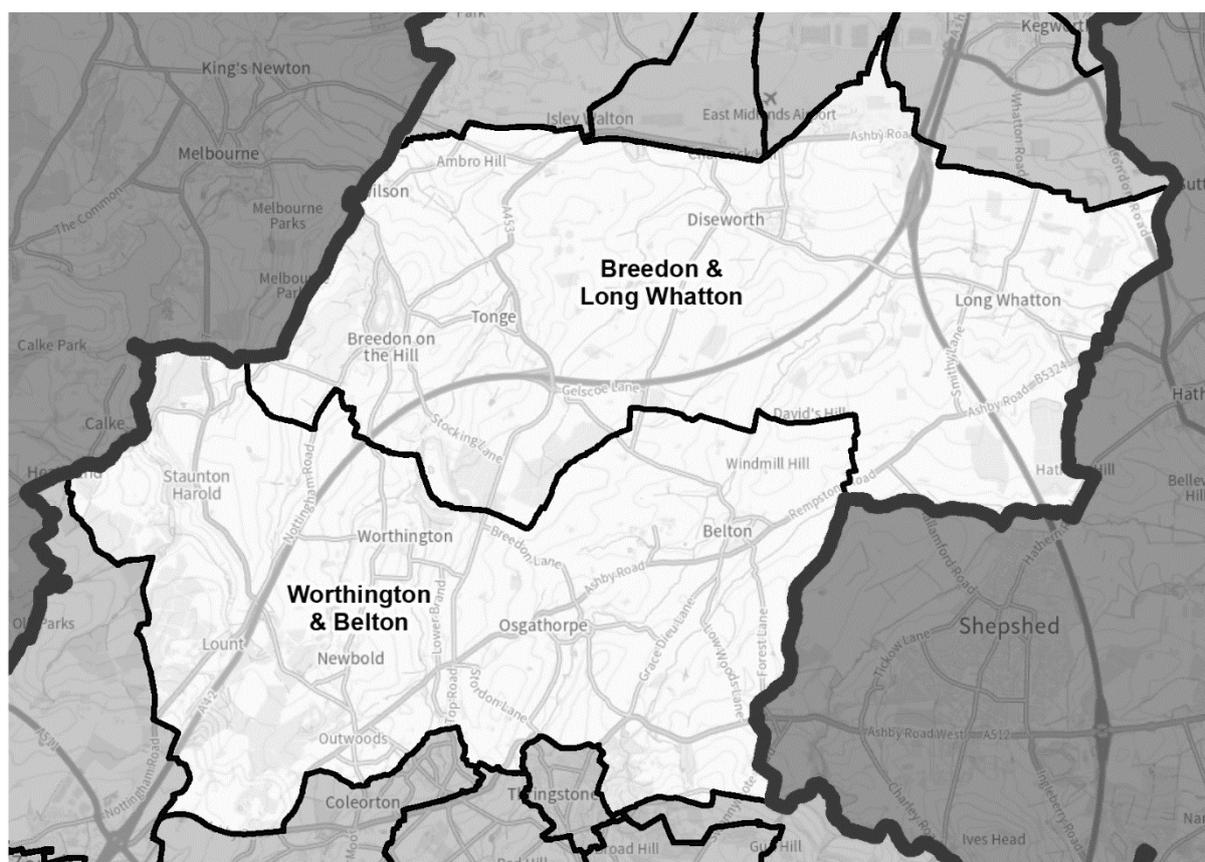
47 A local resident stated that the villages of Lockington and Hemington do not feel connected to the northern part of Kegworth, arguing that the M1 serves as a significant barrier between communities. However, the parish of Lockington-Hemington does not have enough electors to form a single-councillor ward with good electoral equality, thereby necessitating its linkage in a ward with other settlements.

48 The local resident stated that Lockington-Hemington parish shares closer ties with the villages of Ratcliffe on Soar, Long Whatton and Hathern. However, placing the parish in a ward with Ratcliffe on Soar or Hathern is not possible, as both lie outside the North West Leicestershire district boundary. Additionally, we were not convinced by the evidence received that Lockington-Hemington shares particularly close community or geographic ties with Long Whatton. This is because the villages are separated from Long Whatton by the M1, East Midlands Airport and the industrial estate on Wilders Way. Therefore, we consider retaining the existing link between Lockington-Hemington parish and the northern part of Kegworth to offer the best balance of our statutory criteria.

49 The local resident also stated that the current ward name, Daleacre Hill, is misleading. While we acknowledge this concern, we note that the Council and Kegworth Parish Council included 'Daleacre' in their suggested ward names. This

indicated to us that the name may have relevance locally. Consequently, we have named the ward Kegworth North & Daleacre Hill, as suggested by the Council, but welcome comments during the current consultation on whether this ward name is appropriate.

Breedon, Belton, Long Whatton and Worthington



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Breedon & Long Whatton	1	8%
Worthington & Belton	1	7%

Breedon & Long Whatton

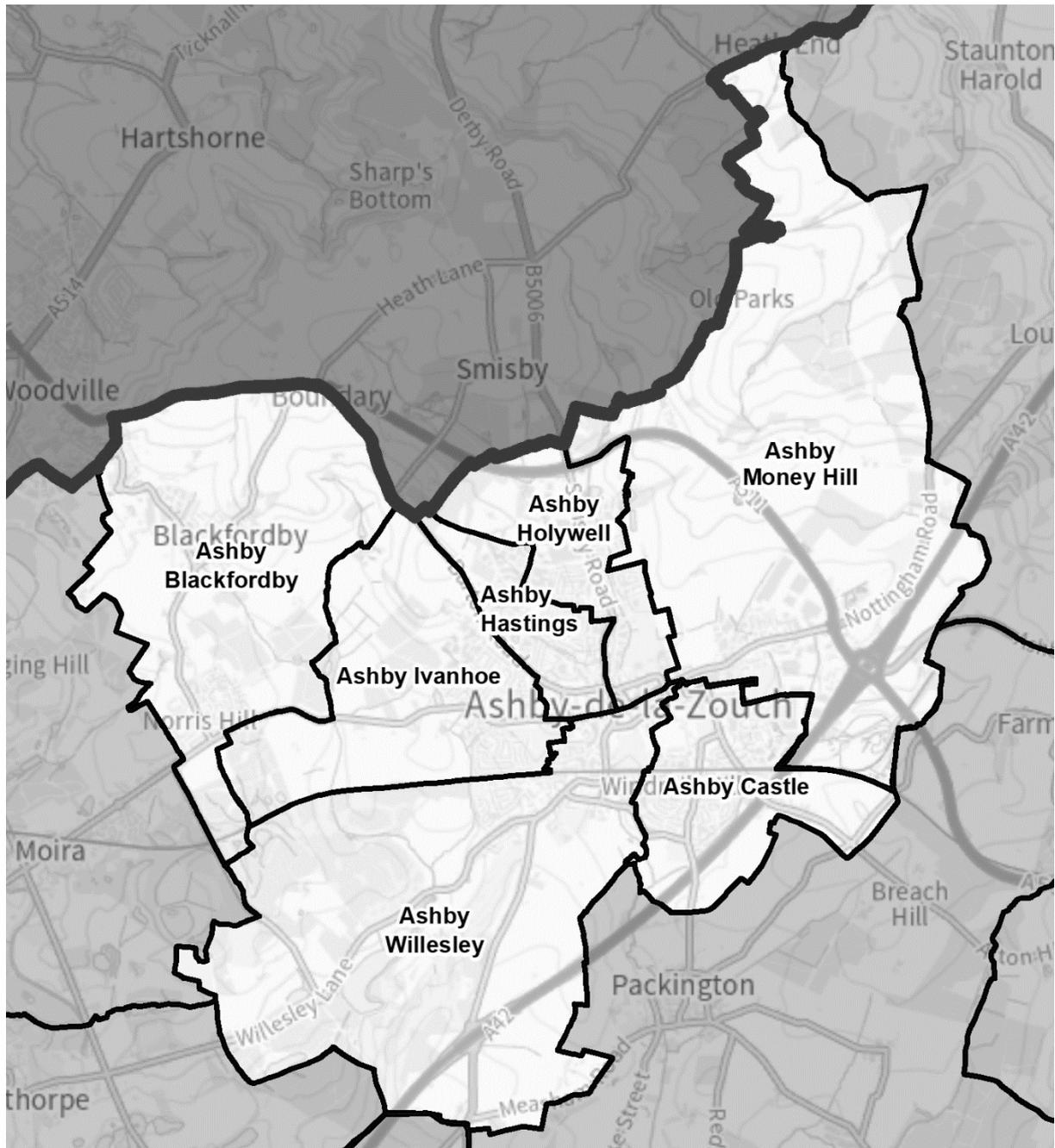
50 The Council proposed a Breedon & Belton ward comprised of Belton, Breedon on the Hill, Isley cum Langley and Osgathorpe parishes, in addition to the village of Diseworth from Long Whatton & Diseworth parish. However, as outlined in the Kegworth section above, we determined that dividing Long Whatton & Diseworth parish between district wards would not reflect our statutory criteria. Therefore, we have not adopted the Council's Breedon & Belton ward as part of our draft recommendations, as it requires the inclusion of Diseworth village to ensure good electoral equality for the ward.

51 Instead, we propose a Breedon & Long Whatton ward that comprises the entirety of Breedon on the Hill, Isley cum Langley and Long Whatton & Diseworth parishes. We found from our visit to the area that, as a predominantly rural ward, it will reflect community identities and interests. We also consider, in this case, that a ward composed of entire parishes will aid effective and convenient local government.

Worthington & Belton

52 The Council proposed a Worthington & Coleorton ward that included the parishes of Coleorton, Worthington and Staunton Harold. However, during the development of our 39-councillor warding pattern for the district, we determined that the best balance of our statutory criteria would be achieved by placing the majority of Coleorton parish in a ward with Heather, Packington and Normanton le Heath parishes. This arrangement allowed us to create a Worthington & Belton ward, which is comprised of Belton, Osgathorpe, Staunton Harold and Worthington parishes, along with a small section of Coleorton parish that includes part of Lount village. We consider that this ward effectively balances our statutory criteria, as it places similar rural communities in a ward, which share good road links via the B5324. It is also forecast to have good electoral equality, with an anticipated variance of 7% by 2030.

Ashby de la Zouch



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Ashby Blackfordby	1	-3%
Ashby Castle	1	2%
Ashby Hastings	1	-10%
Ashby Holywell	1	-10%
Ashby Ivanhoe	1	-7%
Ashby Money Hill	1	3%
Ashby Willesley	1	-4%

Ashby Blackfordby, Ashby Hastings and Ashby Ivanhoe

53 The Council proposed six single-councillor wards for Ashby de la Zouch. Labour supported this, stating that each ward is effectively served by key roads. However, as explained in paragraph 30, we consider it appropriate to allocate an additional councillor to the town.

54 During our visit to the area, we determined that Bishop Hall Road and its adjacent roads would be more appropriately placed in our Ashby Ivanhoe ward, rather than in a ward with Blackfordby village, as suggested by the Council. Although the village is part of the Ashby de la Zouch Town Council area, we determined that it is somewhat distinct from the town itself, being separated by open space. We consider Blackfordby village to have stronger links with Norris Hill and that these areas should remain warded together. This view was shared by Councillor Ball, who stated that ‘absorbing it (Blackfordby village) into the Ashby urban area feels wrong geographically and emotionally’.

55 By incorporating the Bishop Hill Road area into an Ashby Ivanhoe ward, we need to create an additional single-councillor ward for Ashby de la Zouch to achieve electoral equality across wards. We therefore propose an Ashby Hastings ward, which is primarily formed by the area north of Burton Road. This includes electors on Marlborough Way and adjacent roads up to Cheltenham Drive. This ward also unites the entire Spring Avenue and School Lane area, which was previously divided between wards. We propose to name the ward after the Ashby Hastings Primary School which lies within its boundaries. We also note that the Hastings name has historical relevance in the town. We nonetheless welcome alternative ward name proposals during this current consultation.

56 Our overall approach for this area also means that Blackfordby village does not need to be warded with the built-up area of Ashby de la Zouch to achieve good electoral equality. This consequently allows us to create a pattern of wards for the more rural communities to the west of Ashby de la Zouch that better reflects our statutory criteria and avoids the creation of multi-councillor wards, which had been proposed by the Council and Labour. Our proposed Ashby Blackfordby ward is similar to the existing ward, subject to the transfer of a small section of Woodville into our proposed Ashby Woulds ward.

Ashby Castle

57 We recommend retaining the existing Ashby Castle ward, as suggested by the Council. The current ward is projected to achieve good electoral equality by 2030. Furthermore, the proposed ward is fully aligned with the county division boundary between Ashby de la Zouch and Valley divisions, in addition to the Ashby de la Zouch parish boundary, which will aid effective and convenient local government.

Ashby Holywell

58 The Council's proposed modifications to the current Ashby Holywell ward included the addition of the area east of Smisby Road up to, but not including, the Money Hill development site, which currently lies in Ashby Money Hill ward. However, the proposed ward excluded the areas south of Winchester Way and the area around Spring Avenue and School Lane.

59 Our proposed Ashby Holywell ward is broadly based on the Council's proposal but includes some amendments due to our decision to recommend an additional ward for the town. Instead of placing the boundary north of Winchester Way as the Council suggested, we propose moving it to the north of Cheltenham Drive and Downside Drive. Additionally, the Council's proposed boundary with Ashby Willesley ward ran north of North Street and Ivanhoe College, whereas we recommend it follow Market Street. We consider that these boundaries are more identifiable, and they will provide for a ward with electoral equality.

Ashby Money Hill

60 The current Ashby Money Hill ward is projected to have a significant electoral variance by 2030 due to substantial residential development. To address this anticipated under-representation, the Council proposed transferring the area east of Smisby Road, excluding the new development site, into Ashby Holywell ward.

61 We have adopted the Council's proposed boundaries for Ashby Money Hill ward in our draft recommendations. From our visit to the area, we determined that the proposed boundaries are sensible and will create a ward that we anticipate will likely reflect the interests and identities of a community that will grow in the northeastern part of Ashby de la Zouch.

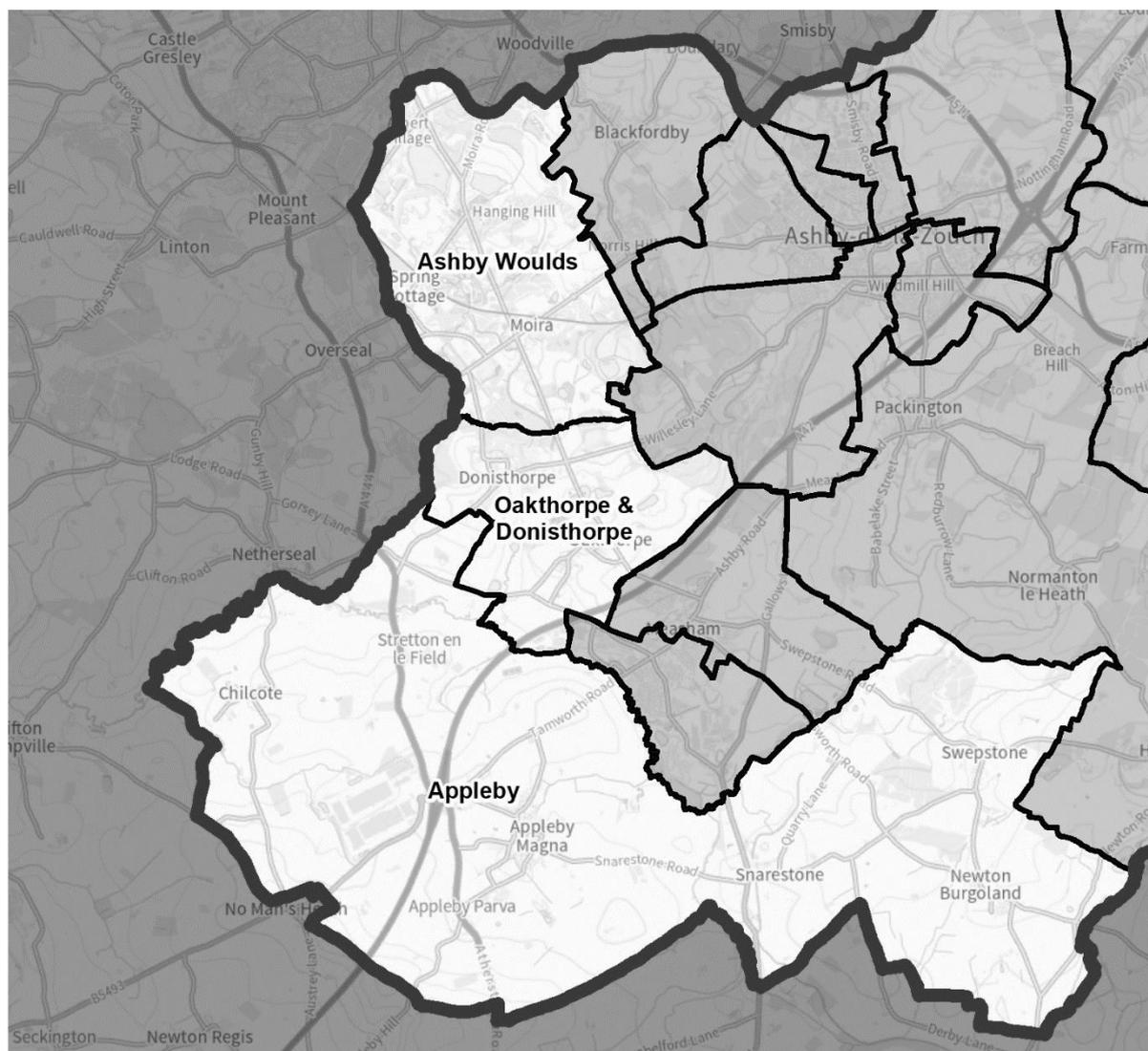
62 The Council proposed naming this ward Ashby Knights Chase. However, it did not provide justification for this name. Therefore, in the absence of supporting evidence, we have decided to retain the existing ward name. We also note that Ashby de la Zouch Town Council and Labour supported the retention of the current ward name.

Ashby Willesley

63 The current Ashby Willesley ward is projected to be over-represented by 2030. Therefore, the Council proposed extending the ward to include North Street, Market Street, South Street and the leisure centre which currently lie in Ashby Money Hill ward.

64 While extending Ashby Willesley ward is necessary to achieve good electoral equality, we propose that the ward extend only as far as Market Street. We consider that this boundary is clearer and more identifiable while still achieving electoral equality for the ward.

Appleby, Ashby Woulds and Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Appleby	1	-10%
Ashby Woulds	1	7%
Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe	1	-6%

Appleby, Ashby Woulds and Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe

65 The Council proposed a three-councillor Appleby & The Forest ward for this area, comprising most of Ashby Woulds parish (excluding Boothorpe) and the parishes of Appleby Magna, Chilcote, Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe & Acresford and Stretton en le Field. The Council argued that a three-councillor ward was necessary due to the size, configuration and geography of the affected parish areas. Labour and Councillor Blunt suggested in their separate submissions that this ward be subdivided into a two-councillor ward and a single-councillor ward.

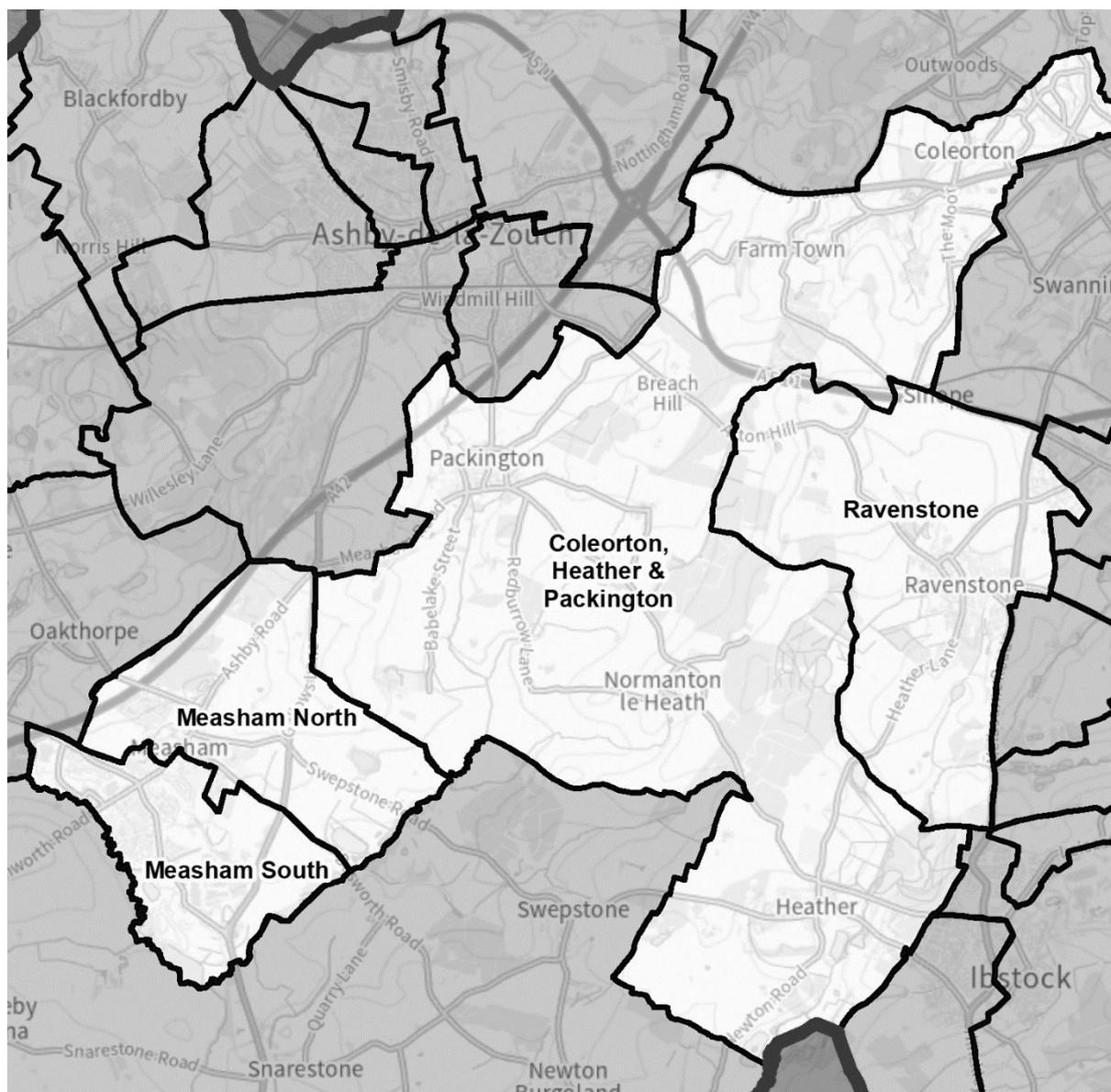
66 As stated in paragraph 29, this review is being conducted on the basis of providing for a uniform pattern of single-councillor wards. This request was formally made to us by the Council and we do not consider that either the Council or Labour have provided sufficient evidence to justify a change in this respect. Therefore, we explored ways to develop a warding pattern for this part of the district that maintained a uniform pattern of single-councillor wards. For the reasons outlined in paragraphs 53–56, we found that, by allocating an additional councillor to Ashby de la Zouch, we were consequently able to create a pattern of single-councillor wards for both the town and this area which effectively meets our statutory criteria.

67 Our draft recommendations for this area closely resemble the existing warding pattern and reflect elements of the proposals put forward to us by Councillor Ball. We propose a single-councillor Ashby Woulds ward that is broadly similar to the existing ward. However, we propose including the small section of Woodville currently in Blackfordby ward. This change means more of Ashby Woulds parish is incorporated into Ashby Woulds ward, which will aid effective and convenient local government. It also ensures good electoral equality between our proposed Ashby Blackfordby and Ashby Woulds wards.

68 We also propose two single-councillor Appleby and Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe wards that closely resemble the existing wards. However, we propose to transfer the village of Acresford from the existing Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe ward into our Appleby ward. While we do note the comments made by Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe & Acresford Parish Council, which requested the parish remain undivided across wards, this change improves the forecast electoral variance of -14% for Appleby ward to -10%. We also noted from our visit to the area that the village has good links with the rest of our Appleby ward via the A444.

69 Chilcote Parish Meeting expressed a preference for remaining in a ward with either Appleby Magna parish or, if not possible, with Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe & Acresford parish. Our proposed Appleby ward includes Chilcote and Appleby Magna parishes. Additionally, a local resident from Snarestone parish requested that the parish stay within Appleby ward, citing the shared rural concerns and issues the parish has with the other constituent parishes. Our proposed Appleby ward does include Snarestone parish and, based on these submissions, we consider our proposed Appleby ward will effectively reflect community identities and interests.

Coleorton, Heather, Measham, Packington and Ravenstone



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Coleorton, Heather & Packington	1	7%
Measham North	1	4%
Measham South	1	-9%
Ravenstone	1	8%

Coleorton, Heather & Packington

70 The Council proposed a Heather & Packington ward, which would include the parishes of Heather, Packington, Normanton le Heath, Snarestone and Swepstone & Newton Burgoland. However, in our draft recommendations, we are recommending a Coleorton, Heather & Packington ward. This ward would exclude the parishes of Snarestone and Swepstone & Newton Burgoland, instead incorporating most of

Coleorton parish with Heather, Packington and Normanton le Heath. This change is necessary because keeping Snarestone and Swepstone & Newton Burgoland parishes in our proposed Appleby ward is fundamental to achieving a single-councillor Appleby ward with good electoral equality in the southwestern corner of the district.

71 However, a ward consisting of only of Heather, Packington and Normanton le Heath parishes would result in a relatively high electoral variance. We therefore examined whether we could retain the link between Ravenstone and Packington parishes and achieve good electoral equality for this ward. However, a ward comprised of the communities of Ravenstone, Packington and Heather would be too large and result in a significantly under-represented single-councillor ward. Therefore, we consider the most appropriate warding arrangement to be the inclusion of the majority of Coleorton parish in a ward with Heather, Packington and Normanton le Heath parishes, achieving an effective balance of our statutory criteria. This ward is forecast to have an electoral variance of 7% by 2030 and will combine similar rural communities together in the same ward.

Measham North and Measham South

72 The current Measham South ward is projected to have an electoral variance of -15% by 2030 and therefore needs to be enlarged to provide improved electoral equality. We have therefore adopted the Council's proposals for Measham town, which adjusts the boundary between the two existing wards by moving it from Navigation Street and Horses Lane to run south of Bosworth Road. This modification expands the current Measham South ward and results in forecast electoral variances of 4% and -9%, respectively, for Measham North and Measham South wards by 2030.

73 Labour requested that we consider a two-councillor ward fully coterminous with the Measham parish boundary. A local resident also expressed confusion as to why Measham is currently divided between two wards, stating that Measham did not seem large enough to justify being divided between wards. However, as stated in paragraph 29, this review aims to establish a uniform pattern of single-councillor wards. We consider that insufficient evidence has been received to justify moving away from this approach in the Measham area.

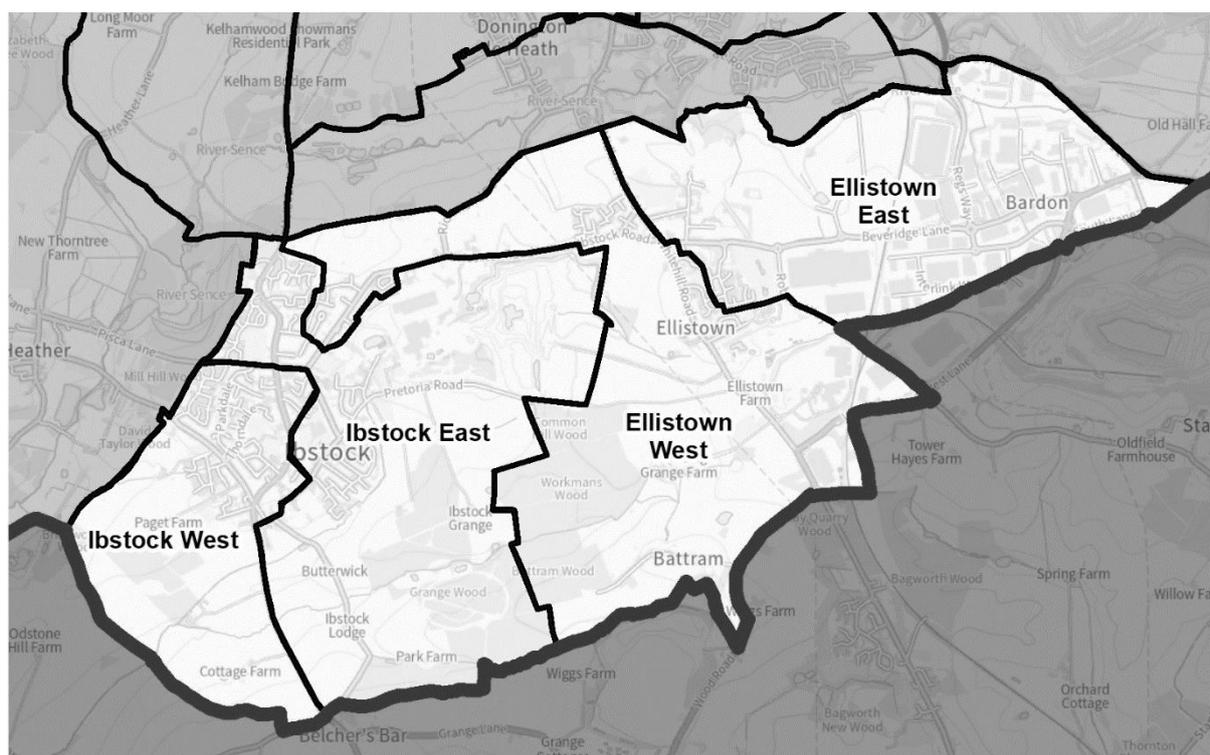
Ravenstone

74 Our proposed Ravenstone ward is based largely on the Council's Ravenstone & Snibston ward, which aligns the ward with the Ravenstone with Snibston parish boundary. Currently, this parish is split between two district wards. We agree with the Council that uniting the parish in a single ward will better reflect community identities and interests and support effective local governance.

75 However, we also propose that the ward include electors in the Buckthorn Road and Hemlock Road area, which is currently bisected by the parish boundary. We consider that the edge of the housing estate will provide for a stronger ward boundary. This change also reduces the forecast electoral variances for the adjacent Snibston North and Snibston South wards. The Council had placed this area in its proposed Snibston North ward, but we consider our proposal better reflects road access routes.

76 The Council proposed naming this ward Ravenstone & Snibston. However, we propose naming this ward Ravenstone instead, to avoid possible confusion with the adjacent Snibston North and Snibston South wards.

Ibstock and Ellistown



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Ellistown East	1	-1%
Ellistown West	1	0%
Ibstock East	1	10%
Ibstock West	1	2%

Ellistown East, Ellistown West, Ibstock East and Ibstock West

77 We have adopted the Council's proposals in the Ellistown & Battleflat and Ibstock areas. The Council suggested adding an extra councillor to this area of the district to accommodate significant residential development expected in Ellistown & Battleflat parish. The Council's proposals placed this development, along with the roads east of Midland Road and south of Beveridge Lane, in an Ellistown East ward. The remainder of Ellistown & Battleflat parish would be combined with the hamlet of Battram (which is currently part of Ibstock East ward but accessible only from Ellistown) and parts of the northern edge of Ibstock parish in a new Ellistown West ward. The current Ibstock East ward would remain unchanged.

78 We recognise that this proposal places a relatively small portion of Ibstock parish into an Ellistown West ward. However, electoral equality in this part of the district cannot be achieved without subdividing Ibstock parish into three separate wards. This is because Ibstock parish is too large to accommodate two councillors and achieve good electoral equality. In contrast, Ellistown & Battleflat parish does

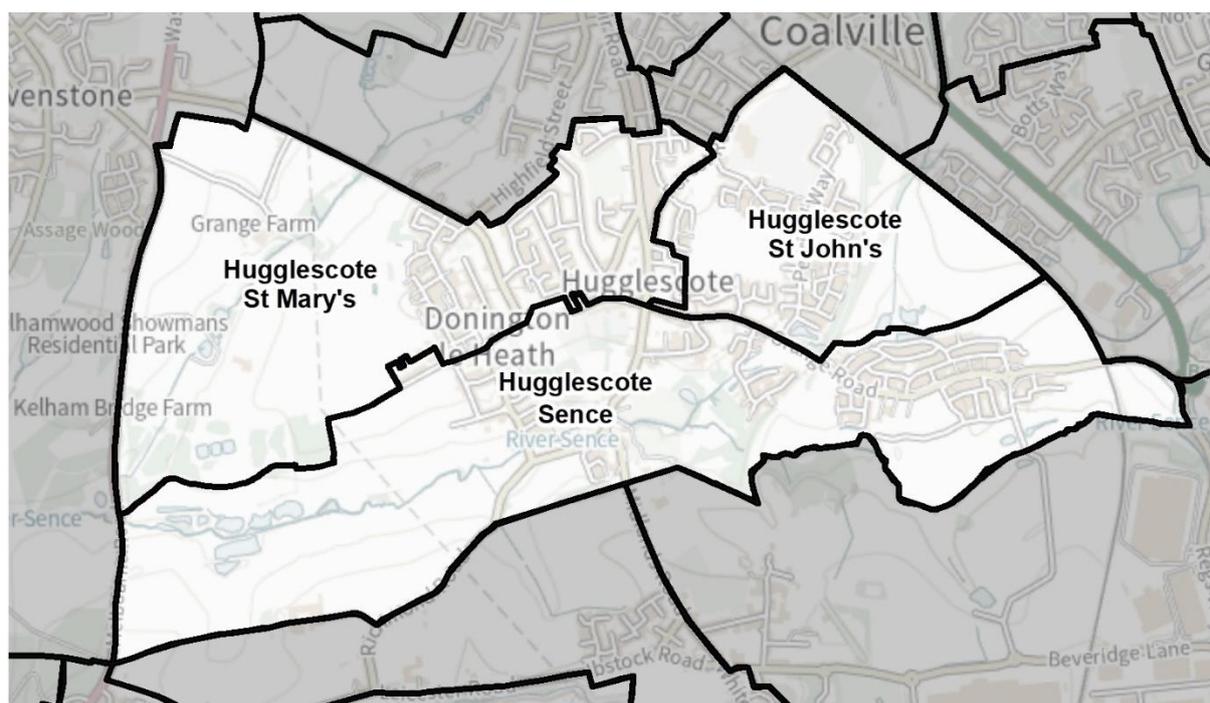
not contain enough electors to form two single-councillor wards. Therefore, we agree that the Council's proposal to incorporate part of Ibstock parish in an Ellistown West ward is the best solution to minimise electoral variances in the Ellistown and Ibstock areas.

79 Labour stated that both Ibstock and Ellistown & Battleflat parishes could form two two-councillor wards, arguing that the Council's proposed wards did not use clear and identifiable boundaries. However, as previously outlined, this review aims to establish a uniform pattern of single-councillor wards. We consider that the evidence supplied by Labour was not sufficiently strong to warrant deviating from this approach in this part of the district.

80 A local resident pointed out that electors on Usbourne Way and its adjacent roads are currently located in Sence Valley ward, along with Heather parish, instead of an Ibstock-centric ward. They questioned this because these roads are within Ibstock parish. It should be noted that our draft recommendations place Usbourne Way and its adjacent roads in Ibstock East ward.

81 The local resident suggested that the electorate forecast should also take account of the proposed development of 450 homes located off Leicester Road. This proposed development is included in the Council's local plan consultation. However, because this development is still subject to public consultation, it was not included in the Council's electoral forecast. This is because it is unlikely to be built within five years of this review's completion and we require a reasonable degree of certainty that any developments included in the forecast be built and occupied within this timeframe.

Hugglescote & Donington le Heath



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Hugglescote Sence	1	9%
Hugglescote St John's	1	3%
Hugglescote St Mary's	1	10%

Hugglescote Sence, Hugglescote St John's and Hugglescote St Mary's

82 The current Hugglescote St John's ward is expected to be significantly under-represented by 2030 due to substantial development in the area. Consequently, the Council has allocated an additional councillor to the Hugglescote & Donington le Heath parish to accommodate the projected increase in electors.

83 The Council's proposed Hugglescote St Mary's ward is largely similar to the existing one but includes Fairfield Road, Central Road, Peggs Grange and Baron Close from the current Hugglescote St John's ward. This change ensures that the entirety of Fairfield Road is within the same ward.

84 The Council's Hugglescote St John's ward is significantly smaller than the current one, with its southern boundary running along Grange Road and north of the newly developed residential area around Usherwood Way. The Council proposed that the remaining part of the current ward form a new Hugglescote Sence ward, naming it after the river to which the southern boundary is partially aligned to. This ward name was supported by Councillor Johnson.

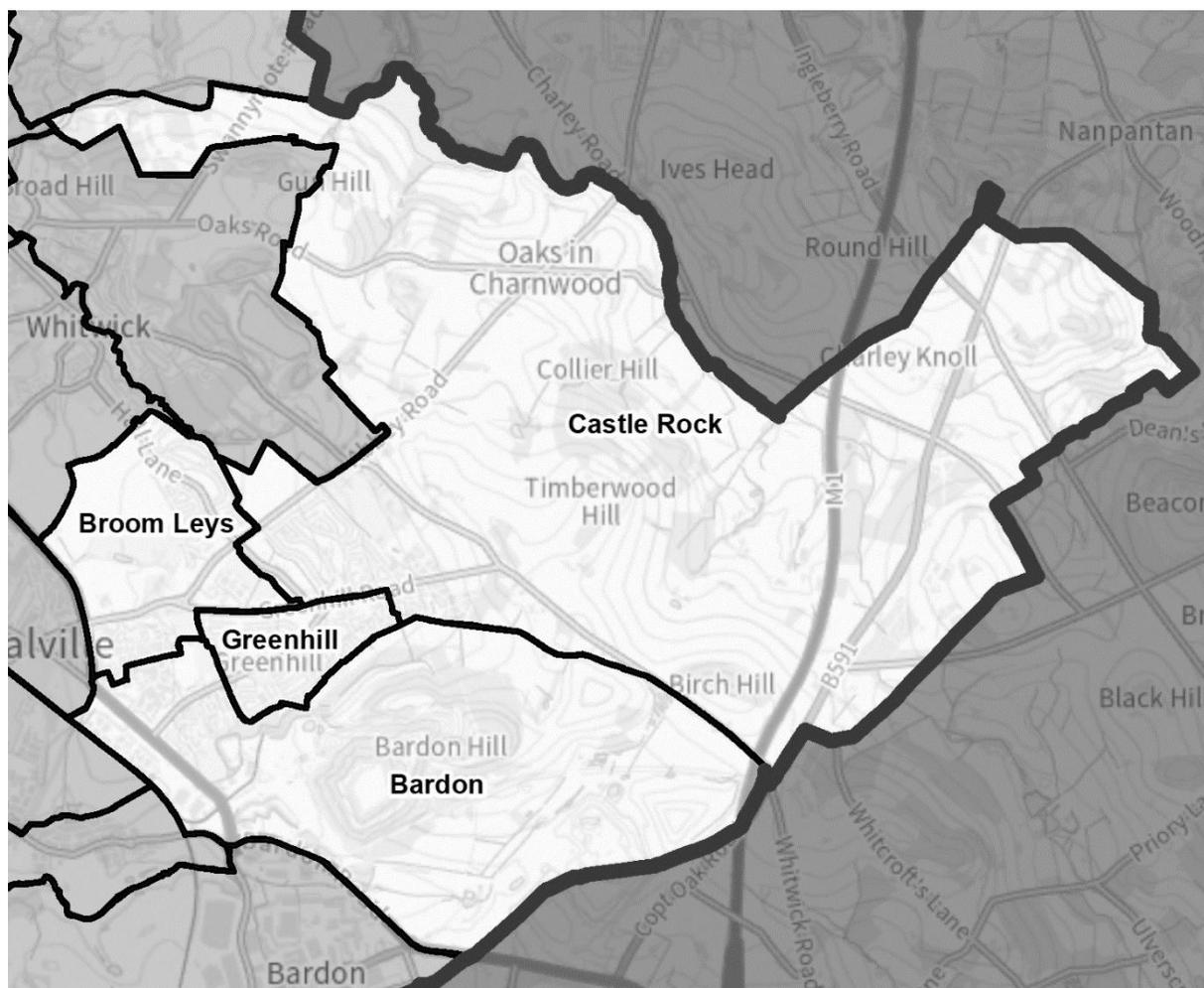
85 We have adopted these proposals in our draft recommendations. They establish three wards with good electoral equality, and which follow clear and identifiable boundaries. We also anticipate that these proposed wards will reflect the identities and interests of the existing and growing communities in the Hugglescote & Donington le Heath area.

86 Labour noted the significant development planned for Hugglescote & Donington le Heath parish. As a result, the party proposed dividing the parish into a two-member ward and a single-member ward, due to uncertainties about development timelines and the absence of a clear natural boundary to use between wards. While we have considered Labour's argument, this review aims to create a uniform pattern of single-member wards across the district. After careful evaluation, we concluded that the evidence provided did not warrant a deviation from this approach.

87 Councillor Johnson expressed a preference for the area around Dennis Street, Old Church Close and St Johns Close to remain in Hugglescote St John's ward, and that certain new developments off Grange Road should be in Hugglescote Sence ward. However, we consider the boundary between the Council's proposed Hugglescote Sence and Hugglescote St John's wards to be clear and identifiable and were not persuaded to adopt the amendment proposed by Councillor Johnson.

88 A local resident requested that Crescent Road remain within a Hugglescote-centric ward. Our draft recommendations provide for a Hugglescote St Mary's ward that will contain Crescent Road. The resident also noted that the existing ward names are appropriate, given the locations of St Mary's Avenue and St Mary's Court within Hugglescote St Mary's ward, and St John's Church and St John's Community Centre as prominent landmarks in Hugglescote St John's ward. Based on this submission, we consider that, by keeping Crescent Road in Hugglescote St Mary's ward and retaining the existing ward names, our draft recommendations will reflect local community identities and interests.

East of Coalville



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Bardon	1	4%
Broom Leys	1	7%
Castle Rock	1	1%
Greenhill	1	-4%

Bardon, Broom Leys, Castle Rock and Greenhill

90 We have based our draft recommendations on the Council's proposed Bardon ward, which will see the existing ward retained, subject to a relatively minor amendment that places the whole of Cropston Drive in Greenhill ward. We agree with the Council that this modification provides for a more logical boundary.

91 The Council proposed to extend the current Broom Leys ward to include a portion of the current Coalville East ward, with the proposed boundary running along the A511.

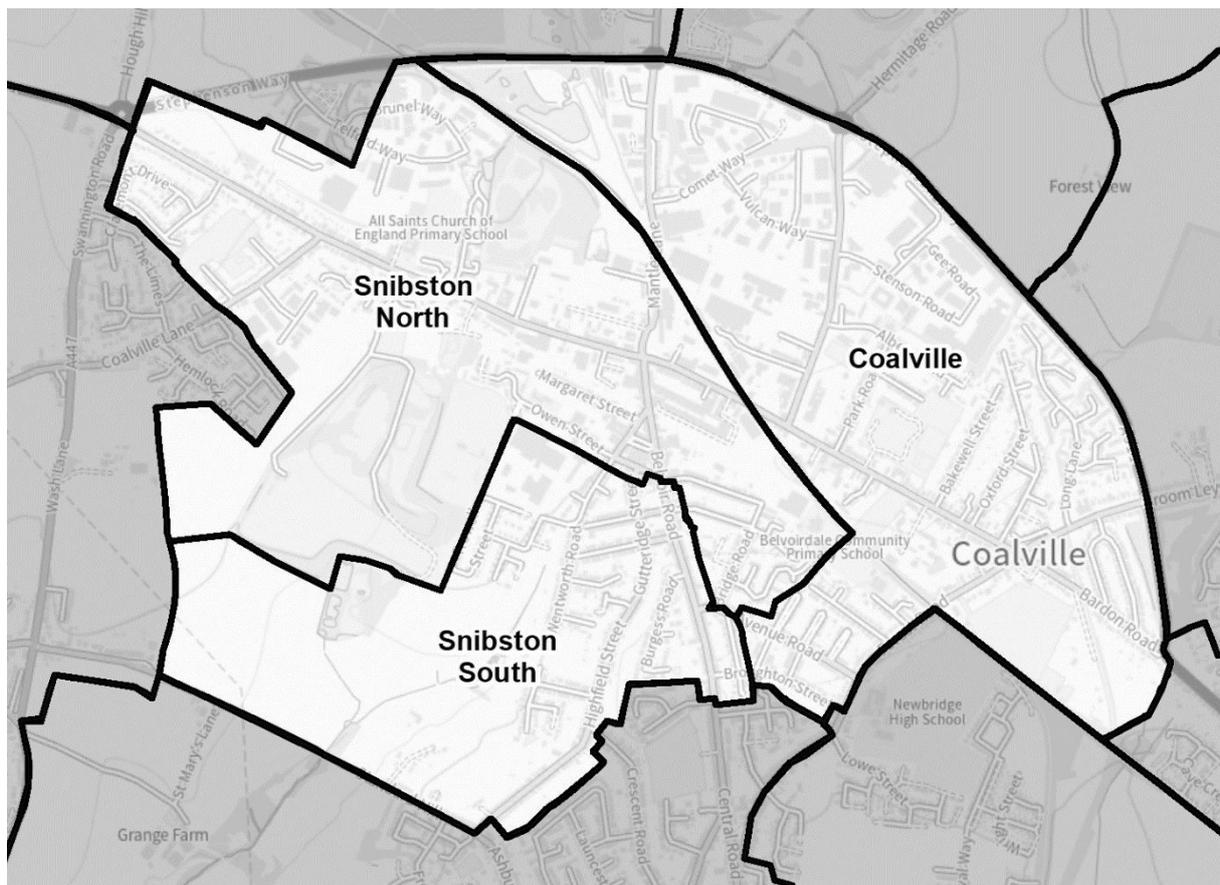
92 These changes mean that the Council's proposed ward is projected to achieve electoral equality and, by aligning it with the A511, will follow a clear and recognisable boundary. Including Broom Leys Primary School and Broom Leys Farm ensures that the ward better reflects local community identities and interests by incorporating more community facilities that share the ward's name. The Council's Broom Leys ward aligns well with our statutory criteria, and we propose to adopt it in our draft recommendations.

93 We have fully adopted the Council's proposed Castle Rock ward in our draft recommendations. This proposal largely retains the existing boundaries, apart from a minor amendment so that both sides of Blackwood are included in the ward. We agree that placing the boundary to the rear of properties on Blackwood and following the perimeter of the cricket ground and cemetery provides for a stronger boundary between the Castle Rock and Broom Leys communities.

94 We have also adopted the Council's proposed Greenhill ward. The Council slightly expanded the existing ward by placing the boundary along the centre of Greenhill Road and including all of Cropston Drive. These changes improve the forecast electoral variance of the current Greenhill ward from -12% to -4%. We also find these proposed boundaries to be more identifiable. Based on this, we consider our proposed Greenhill ward will provide an effective balance of our statutory criteria.

95 Labour suggested that the four wards in this area of the district could be restructured into two two-councillor wards, arguing that the current boundaries did not follow any significant, natural boundaries. However, as previously outlined, this review aims to establish a uniform pattern of single-councillor wards. We consider that the evidence provided by Labour was insufficient to justify moving away from this approach in this part of the district.

West of Coalville



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Coalville	1	7%
Snibston North	1	10%
Snibston South	1	7%

Coalville

96 The Council proposed a new Coalville ward, primarily bounded by the railway line and the A511, but also encompassing the area around Avenue Road and its neighbouring streets. We have decided to fully adopt this ward as part of our draft recommendations, as the railway line and the A511 represent strong boundaries. With an expected electoral variance of 7% by 2030, this ward is forecast to achieve good electoral equality.

97 A local resident noted that the current boundary between Coalville East and Coalville West along London Road was unclear and suggested moving it further east to resolve the electoral inequality forecast for the existing Coalville East ward. We consider that the Council's proposal to use the A511 as a ward boundary aligns with this suggestion and results in a warding pattern that more accurately reflects the Coalville community.

98 Labour proposed that the entirety of Wyggeston Road, Avenue Road and Broughton Street be included in Coalville ward rather than Snibston South ward, which was proposed by the Council. However, incorporating these roads into our proposed Coalville ward would lead to an anticipated electoral variance of 14% by 2030, which would not provide for good electoral equality. Therefore, we have decided not to incorporate this proposal in our draft recommendations.

Snibston North and Snibston South

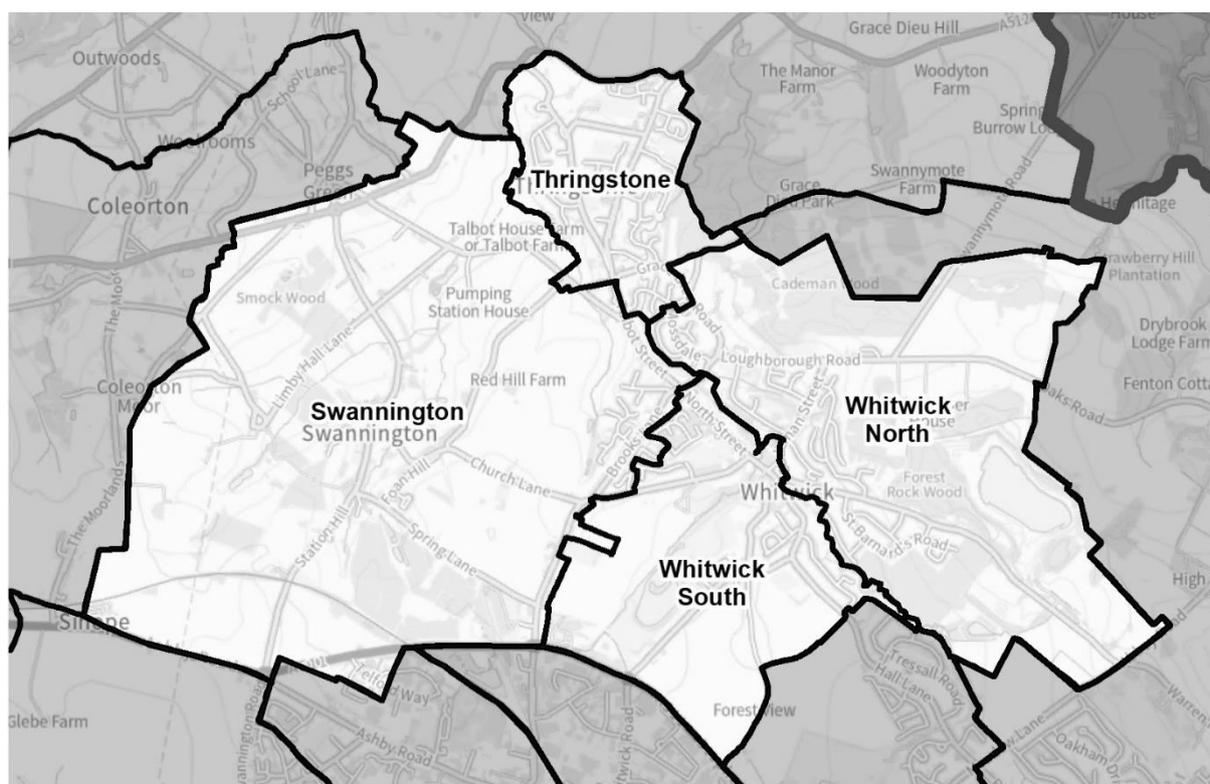
99 Although we have broadly adopted the Council's proposals for Snibston North and Snibston South wards, we propose some modifications to improve electoral equality. This is because the Council's proposed Snibston North ward was forecast to have an electoral variance of 13% by 2030, which we consider is not justified by the evidence received.

100 The Council proposed including the area around Buckthorn Road and Hemlock Road (and their adjacent streets) entirely within a Snibston North ward. However, as discussed in the Ravenstone section, we consider incorporating these electors in Ravenstone ward to provide a better reflection of our statutory criteria.

101 To achieve a better level of electoral equality between the Council's proposed Snibston North and Snibston South wards, we recommend placing Owen Street, Des Starbuck Drive and Kane Close in Snibston North ward. We also propose that both sides of Belvoir Road, from the junction of Owen Street southwards, be placed entirely within Snibston South ward. We consider these modifications will also provide for clearer and more identifiable ward boundaries.

102 Labour proposed merging the Council's proposed Snibston North and Snibston South wards into a larger two-councillor ward, citing the absence of a clear boundary between the two. However, as previously noted, this review aims to establish a consistent pattern of single-councillor wards. We find that the evidence presented by Labour is not sufficiently persuasive to justify moving away from this approach.

Swannington, Thringstone and Whitwick



Ward name	Number of councillors	Variance 2030
Swannington	1	-7%
Thringstone	1	0%
Whitwick North	1	-10%
Whitwick South	1	-1%

Swannington, Thringstone, Whitwick North and Whitwick South

103 We received different proposals for the wards in this part of the district. The Council suggested some relatively minor modifications to the current Hermitage and Holly Hayes wards. However, its proposal for Swannington and Thringstone parishes was more extensive. It involved dividing Thringstone parish between Swannington and Thringstone wards, with the latter ward incorporating a substantial part of the current Thornborough ward.

104 Labour and Whitwick Parish Council opposed these proposals, stating that they divided communities, split parishes across wards and did not follow natural boundaries. They offered an alternative proposal which used the Grace Dieu Brook as a boundary to create Whitwick North and Whitwick South wards, along with Swannington and Thringstone wards.

105 We have decided to adopt the proposal made by Labour and Whitwick Parish Council as part of our draft recommendations. We consider that by following the

Grace Dieu Brook, this proposal uses more locally recognisable boundaries. It also avoids the division of Thringstone parish between wards, which we consider would not reflect community identities or aid effective and convenient local government.

Conclusions

106 The table below provides a summary of the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality in North West Leicestershire, referencing the 2024 and 2030 electorate figures against the proposed number of councillors and wards. A full list of wards, names and their corresponding electoral variances can be found in Appendix A at the back of this report. An outline map of the wards is provided in Appendix B.

Summary of electoral arrangements

	Draft recommendations	
	2024	2030
Number of councillors	39	39
Number of electoral wards	39	39
Average number of electors per councillor	2,106	2,335
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	19	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	7	0

Draft recommendations

North West Leicestershire District Council should be made up of 39 single-councillor wards. The details and names are shown in Appendix A and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Mapping

Sheet 1, Map 1 shows the proposed wards for North West Leicestershire. You can also view our draft recommendations for North West Leicestershire on our interactive maps at www.lgbce.org.uk

Parish electoral arrangements

107 As part of an electoral review, we are required to have regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (the 2009 Act). The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward. We cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an electoral review.

108 Under the 2009 Act we only have the power to make changes to parish electoral arrangements where these are as a direct consequence of our recommendations for principal authority warding arrangements. However, North West Leicestershire District Council has powers under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to conduct community governance reviews to effect changes to parish electoral arrangements.

109 As a result of our proposed ward boundaries and having regard to the statutory criteria set out in Schedule 2 to the 2009 Act, we are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Ashby de la Zouch, Ashby Woulds, Castle Donington, Ellistown & Battleflat, Hugglescote & Donington le Heath, Ibstock, Kegworth, Measham, Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe & Acresford and Whitwick.

110 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Ashby de la Zouch parish.

Draft recommendations

Ashby de la Zouch Town Council should comprise 17 councillors, as at present, representing seven wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Blackfordby	2
Castle	3
Hastings	2
Holywell	2
Ivanhoe	2
Money Hill	3
Willesley	3

111 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Ashby Woulds parish.

Draft recommendations

Ashby Woulds Town Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing three wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Albert Village	2
Moir	4
Norris Hill	3

112 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Castle Donington parish.

Draft recommendations

Castle Donington Parish Council should comprise 14 councillors, as at present, representing three wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Castle	4
Central	5
Park	5

113 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Ellistown & Battleflat parish.

Draft recommendations

Ellistown & Battleflat Parish Council should comprise seven councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
East	4
West	3

114 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Hugglescote & Donington le Heath parish.

Draft recommendations

Hugglescote & Donington le Heath Parish Council should comprise nine councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Central	1
St John's	3
St Mary's	2
Sence	3

115 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Ibstock parish.

Draft recommendations

Ibstock Parish Council should comprise 13 councillors, as at present, representing four wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
East	6
Ellistown & Battram	1
North	1
West	5

116 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Kegworth parish.

Draft recommendations

Kegworth Parish Council should comprise 10 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
North	4
South	6

117 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Measham parish.

Draft recommendations

Measham Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
North	6
South	5

118 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe & Acresford parish.

Draft recommendations

Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe & Acresford Parish Council should comprise eight councillors, as at present, representing two wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Acresford	1
Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe	7

119 We are providing revised parish electoral arrangements for Whitwick parish.

Draft recommendations

Whitwick Parish Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing five wards:

Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Brooks	2
Broom Leys	1
Carter Dale	1
North	3
South	4

Have your say

120 The Commission has an open mind about its draft recommendations. Every representation we receive will be considered, regardless of who it is from or whether it relates to the whole district or just a part of it.

121 If you agree with our recommendations, please let us know. If you don't think our recommendations are right for North West Leicestershire, we want to hear alternative proposals for a different pattern of wards.

122 Our website is the best way to keep up to date with progress on the review and to have your say www.lgbce.org.uk

123 Each review has its own page with details of the timetable for the review, information about its different stages and interactive mapping.

124 Submissions can also be made by emailing reviews@lgbce.org.uk or by writing to:

Review Officer (North West Leicestershire)
LGBCE
7th Floor
3 Bunhill Row
London
EC1Y 8YZ

125 The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for North West Leicestershire which delivers:

- Electoral equality: each local councillor represents a similar number of electors.
- Community identity: reflects the identity and interests of local communities.
- Effective and convenient local government: helping your council discharge its responsibilities effectively.

126 A good pattern of wards should:

- Provide good electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of electors.
- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links.
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries.
- Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government.

127 Electoral equality:

- Does your proposal mean that councillors would represent roughly the same number of electors as elsewhere in North West Leicestershire?

128 Community identity:

- Community groups: is there a parish council, residents' association or other group that represents the area?
- Interests: what issues bind the community together or separate it from other parts of your area?
- Identifiable boundaries: are there natural or constructed features which make strong boundaries for your proposals?

129 Effective local government:

- Are any of the proposed wards too large or small to be represented effectively?
- Are the proposed names of the wards appropriate?
- Are there good links across your proposed wards? Is there any form of public transport?

130 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations will be placed on deposit at our offices and on our website at www.lgbce.org.uk A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

131 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers. This includes your name, postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

132 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

133 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. The draft

Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the all-out elections for North West Leicestershire in 2027.

Equalities

134 The Commission has looked at how it carries out reviews under the guidelines set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. It has made best endeavours to ensure that people with protected characteristics can participate in the review process and is sufficiently satisfied that no adverse equality impacts will arise as a result of the outcome of the review.

Appendices

Appendix A

Draft recommendations for North West Leicestershire District Council

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2024)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2030)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Appleby	1	2,093	2,093	-1%	2,093	2,093	-10%
2	Ashby Blackfordby	1	2,116	2,116	0%	2,260	2,260	-3%
3	Ashby Castle	1	2,391	2,391	13%	2,391	2,391	2%
4	Ashby Hastings	1	2,092	2,092	-1%	2,093	2,093	-10%
5	Ashby Holywell	1	2,071	2,071	-2%	2,103	2,103	-10%
6	Ashby Ivanhoe	1	2,174	2,174	3%	2,174	2,174	-7%
7	Ashby Money Hill	1	916	916	-57%	2,413	2,413	3%
8	Ashby Willesley	1	2,244	2,244	7%	2,248	2,248	-4%
9	Ashby Woulds	1	2,495	2,495	18%	2,495	2,495	7%
10	Bardon	1	2,234	2,234	6%	2,438	2,438	4%
11	Breedon & Long Whatton	1	2,487	2,487	18%	2,522	2,522	8%
12	Broom Leys	1	2,494	2,494	18%	2,494	2,494	7%
13	Castle Donington Castle	1	2,117	2,117	0%	2,118	2,118	-9%

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2024)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2030)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
14	Castle Donington Central	1	2,369	2,369	12%	2,389	2,389	2%
15	Castle Donington Park	1	1,577	1,577	-25%	2,154	2,154	-8%
16	Castle Rock	1	2,313	2,313	10%	2,354	2,354	1%
17	Coalville	1	2,509	2,509	19%	2,509	2,509	7%
18	Coleorton, Heather & Packington	1	2,489	2,489	18%	2,489	2,489	7%
19	Ellistown East	1	562	562	-73%	2,320	2,320	-1%
20	Ellistown West	1	2,281	2,281	8%	2,345	2,345	0%
21	Greenhill	1	2,243	2,243	6%	2,243	2,243	-4%
22	Hugglescote Sence	1	1,597	1,597	-24%	2,548	2,548	9%
23	Hugglescote St John's	1	1,039	1,039	-51%	2,414	2,414	3%
24	Hugglescote St Mary's	1	2,561	2,561	22%	2,570	2,570	10%
25	Ibstock East	1	2,579	2,579	22%	2,579	2,579	10%
26	Ibstock West	1	2,376	2,376	13%	2,376	2,376	2%
27	Kegworth North & Daleacre Hill	1	1,939	1,939	-8%	2,100	2,100	-10%
28	Kegworth South	1	1,755	1,755	-17%	2,097	2,097	-10%

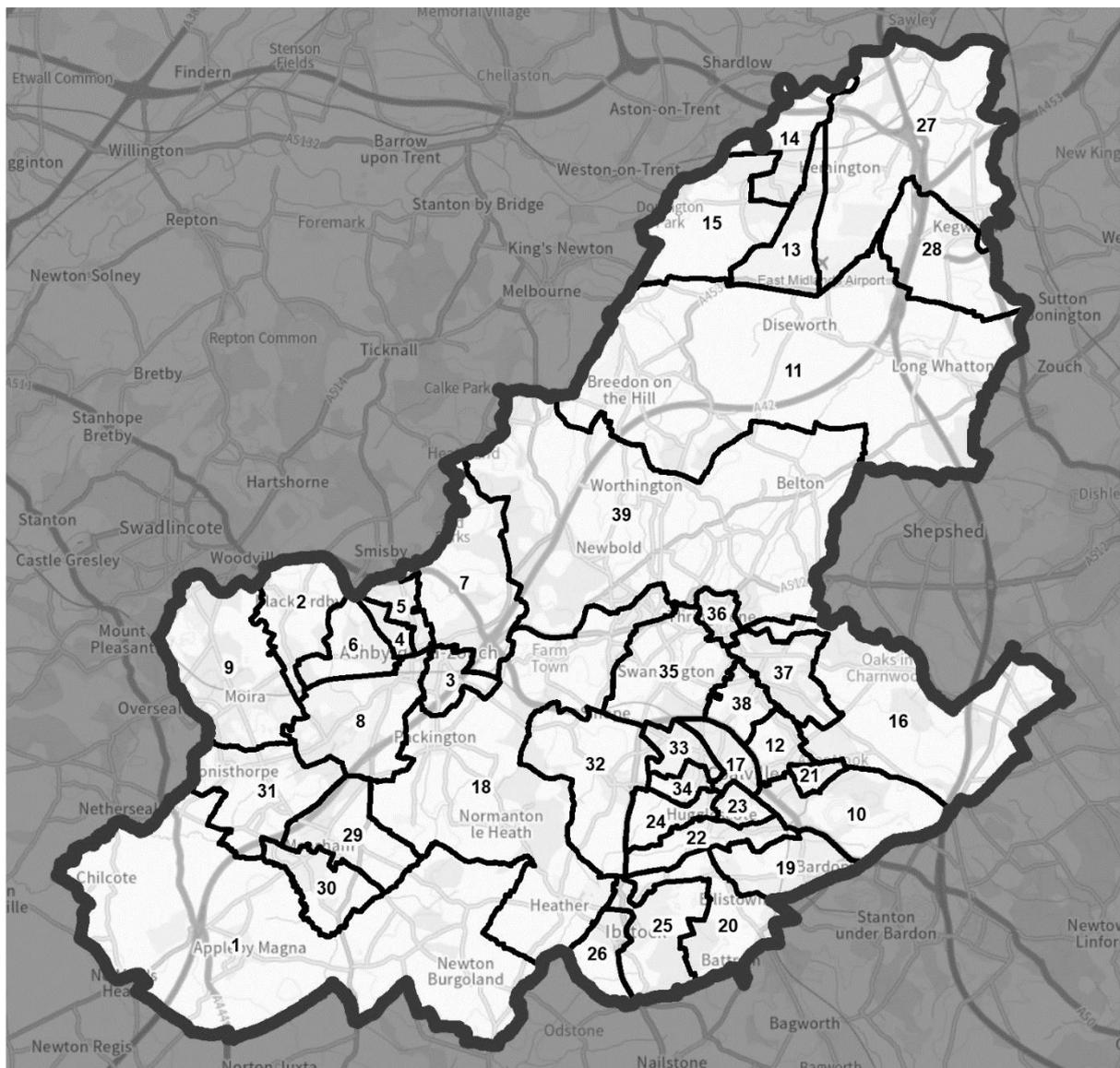
Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2024)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2030)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
29 Measham North	1	1,974	1,974	-6%	2,439	2,439	4%
30 Measham South	1	2,124	2,124	1%	2,125	2,125	-9%
31 Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe	1	2,164	2,164	3%	2,198	2,198	-6%
32 Ravenstone	1	2,477	2,477	18%	2,521	2,521	8%
33 Snibston North	1	2,122	2,122	1%	2,559	2,559	10%
34 Snibston South	1	1,787	1,787	-15%	2,493	2,493	7%
35 Swannington	1	2,147	2,147	2%	2,168	2,168	-7%
36 Thringstone	1	2,327	2,327	10%	2,327	2,327	0%
37 Whitwick North	1	2,091	2,091	-1%	2,091	2,091	-10%
38 Whitwick South	1	2,310	2,310	10%	2,310	2,310	-1%
39 Worthington & Belton	1	2,495	2,495	18%	2,495	2,495	7%
Totals	39	82,138	-	-	91,063	-	-
Averages	-	-	2,106	-	-	2,335	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by North West Leicestershire District Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the district. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Appendix B

Outline map



Number	Ward name
1	Appleby
2	Ashby Blackfordby
3	Ashby Castle
4	Ashby Hastings
5	Ashby Holywell
6	Ashby Ivanhoe
7	Ashby Money Hill
8	Ashby Willesley
9	Ashby Woulds
10	Bardon
11	Breendon & Long Whatton

12	Broom Leys
13	Castle Donington Castle
14	Castle Donington Central
15	Castle Donington Park
16	Castle Rock
17	Coalville
18	Coleorton, Heather & Packington
19	Ellistown East
20	Ellistown West
21	Greenhill
22	Hugglescote Sence
23	Hugglescote St John's
24	Hugglescote St Mary's
25	Ibstock East
26	Ibstock West
27	Kegworth North & Daleacre Hill
28	Kegworth South
29	Measham North
30	Measham South
31	Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe
32	Ravenstone
33	Snibston North
34	Snibston South
35	Swannington
36	Thringstone
37	Whitwick North
38	Whitwick South
39	Worthington & Belton

A more detailed version of this map can be seen on the large map accompanying this report, or on our website: www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/north-west-leicestershire

Appendix C

Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at:
www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/north-west-leicestershire

Local Authority

- North West Leicestershire District Council

Political Groups

- North West Leicestershire Constituency Labour Party
- North West Leicestershire District Council Labour Group

Councillors

- Councillor M. Ball (North West Leicestershire District Council)
- Councillor A. Barker (North West Leicestershire District Council)
- Councillor R. Blunt (North West Leicestershire District Council)
- Councillor R. Johnson (North West Leicestershire District Council)

Parish and Town Councils

- Ashby de la Zouch Town Council
- Chilcote Parish Meeting
- Kegworth Parish Council
- Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe & Acresford Parish Council
- Whitwick Parish Council

Local residents

- 14 local residents

Appendix D

Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral inequality	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. We only take account of electors registered specifically for local elections during our reviews.
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents

Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at www.nalc.gov.uk
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council

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DRAFT - North West Leicestershire District Council's Response to the Draft Recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document is in response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) initial recommendations for the local government boundaries for North West Leicestershire District Council, *New electoral arrangements for North West Leicestershire District Council* published on 3 September 2024.
- 1.2 We thank the LGBCE and the inspectors for the work they have done and in particular, note that they have considered points raised by all parties that responded.
- 1.3 The basis of the proposal is the criteria set out by the LGBCE and:
- I. Where possible has taken into account historic links i.e. areas have previously been in different wards; and
 - II. Where possible parliamentary boundaries have been respected; and
 - III. In drawing boundaries, consideration was given to natural boundaries- major roads, railway lines, industrial estates etc.
- 1.4 It is, therefore, noted that the inspectors have carried out the review in line with the Council's request for single member wards. The proposal to increase the number of councillors by one to 39 councillors to ensure electoral equality across the district is also noted. It is also noted that in the most part the LGBCE has come to similar conclusions to those contained in the Council's initial proposals submitted in May 2024.
- 1.5 All members of the Council have been given the opportunity to feed into the Council's response and comments from individual ward members have been included in the response. The Council's Electoral Review Working Party, established to consider responses to consultations such as this, have also met to consider the Council's response.

2. Castle Donington

- 2.1 The Council notes that inspectors have broadly agreed with our proposals and agree with the LGBCE proposal to retain the existing boundary between Castle Donington Castle and Castle Donington Park as set out at paragraph 43.

3. Kegworth

- 3.1 The Council notes the recommendations for the Kegworth wards and agrees with the proposals set out at paragraph 46.

3.2 The Council received the following comment from the current Kegworth ward member:

The solution for retaining 'Kegworth South' and 'Kegworth North and Daleacre Hill' more or less unchanged and is in line with my wishes and those of Kegworth Parish Council. The continuity with changes introduced only for the 2015 election will enable residents of the two parishes to feel secure with their District representation and the name changes will bring better identification. The very minor change for the handful of houses near The Otter pub makes sense.

3.3 The Council received a comment from the current ward member for Daleacre Hill who advised that she was supportive of the proposed name for her ward, Kegworth North and Daleacre Hill as were both the two parish Councils that sit within the ward.

4. Breedon, Belton, Long Whatton and Worthington

4.1 The recommendations for the wards are noted and the Council agrees with the proposals set out at paragraphs 50 – 52.

4.2 The Council received the following comment from the current Kegworth ward member:

The new proposal for Breedon and Long Whatton makes sense not only for the named communities and Diseworth, as described by the Commission, but it also helps focus the representation of the proposed Isley Woodhouse development at the heart of this proposed ward.

5. Ashby de la Zouch

5.1 The recommendations for the wards, along with the additional ward for Ashby to be known as Ashby Hastings are noted. The Council agrees with the proposals set out at paragraphs 53 - 64.

5.2 The current ward member for Blackfordby has noted the proposals for the ward and feels that, as noted at paragraph 54, as Blackfordby village is distinct from the town of Ashby de la Zouch, that the name of the ward should remain as Blackfordby to better reflect community identity.

5.3 The Council has received the following comment from four dual hatted District and Parish Members and the current ward member for Ashby Woulds

I am responding on behalf of myself and three current Ashby parish ward members, along with the member representing Ashby Woulds. We all believe that the new ward should retain the name Ashby Blackfordby, as suggested by the Commission, because part of it falls within the Ashby parish and part within Ashby Woulds parish. As such we believe the name should reflect its close ties with the Ashby communities. The Commission rightly points out that the ward forms part of the Ashby cluster of wards and we believe that its name should reflect this.

5.4 As the Council has received differing views on this element, it would ask that the commission considers these along with any other comments received as part of the consultation to make a fair decision.

6. Appleby, Ashby Woulds and Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe

- 6.1 The recommendations for the wards as set out in paragraphs 65-69 are noted.
- 6.2 The current ward member for Oakthorpe and Donisthorpe has submitted the following comments for consideration:

I am broadly supportive of the LGBC recommendations for the simple reason that it seems to concentrate the more significant boundary changes into the areas that have seen the most significant population growth, leaving wards that have had more modest growth relatively unchanged.

In particular, I'm delighted that my village of Donisthorpe would not be cut in half (NWLDC plan A) or absorbed into a 3-member conglomerate with all the attendant potential operational difficulties (NWLDC plan B) . However, I'm unhappy that my current ward stands to lose Acresford, creating an unfortunate misalignment between District and Parish boundaries – but I do understand the need to maintain Appleby at -10% variance or better, so if there's no other way to achieve this then so be it.

*I note that the LGBC recommendations as they stand would leave Ashby Woulds ward at +7% and Donisthorpe & Oakthorpe ward at -6% ; to even these out now , and to reduce the possible need for future boundary changes , I believe a number of properties **physically** part of Donisthorpe village but currently in Moira parish could be transferred by a minor boundary tweak . Namely :*

Donisthorpe Lane
Park Road
Poplar Avenue
Shortheath Road
Measham Road
School Street

7. Coleorton, Heather, Measham, Packington and Ravenstone

- 7.1 The recommendations for the wards are noted and the Council agrees with the proposals set out at paragraphs 70 – 76.

8. Ibstock and Ellistown

- 8.1 The Council notes that inspectors have agreed with the Council's proposals.

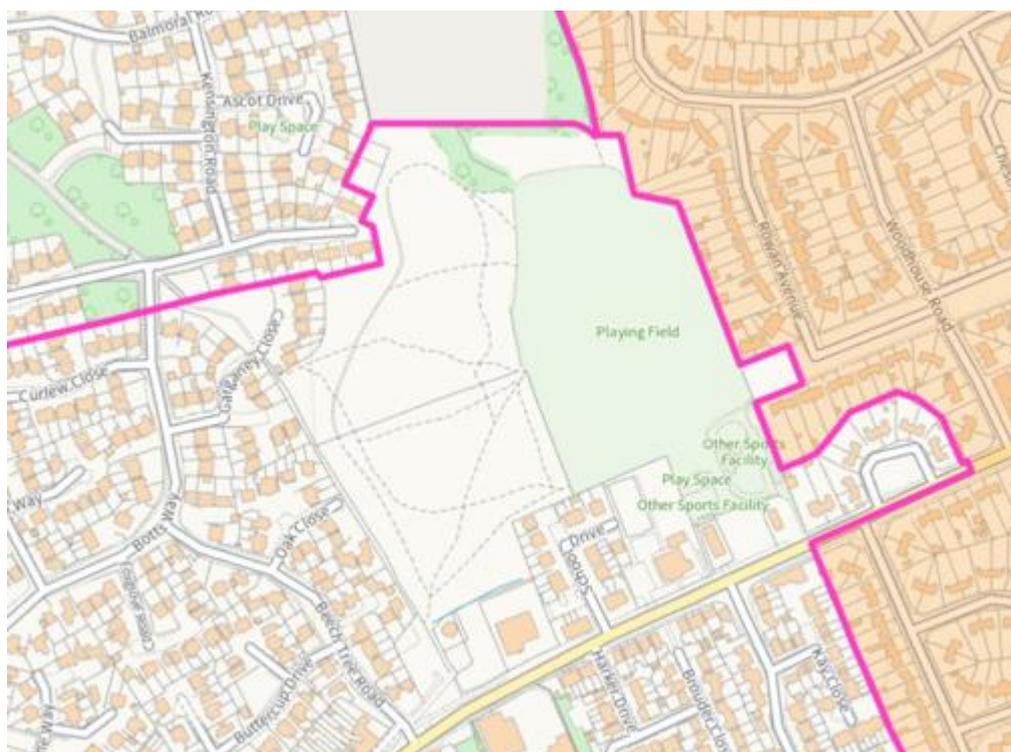
9. Hugglescote & Donington le Heath

- 9.1 The Council notes that inspectors have agreed with the Council's proposals.
- 9.2 The current ward member has requested that Dennis Street, St. John's Close, Old Church Close, Grange Road 2-24, Ashburton Road 1-82, Central Road 2-68 Holly Bank, Peggs Grange is moved back to the St Johns ward. It is felt that by moving St. John's Church and the surrounding roads that are associated with the church out of the St. John's ward, the St. John's ward no longer reflects its community identity.

10. East of Coalville

- 10.1 The Council notes that inspectors have agreed with the Council's proposals.

10.2 Since the submission of the draft warding proposal, the current ward members for the wards East of Coalville have asked if consideration could be given to moving the ward boundary between Greenhill and Bardon. The playing fields that sit within the Bardon Ward (The playing field area that is green in the plan below) have historically been known as Greenhill Playing Fields and always been classed as part of the Greenhill Estate and will reflect local community identities and interests. The plan below shows the exact area to be considered, and it is noted that the movement will not impact on the housing figures.



11. West of Coalville

11.1 The Council notes that inspectors have broadly agreed with the Council's proposals and agrees with the proposals set out at paragraphs 99-102.

12. Swannington, Thringstone and Whitwick

12.1 The Council notes the recommendations for the wards and agrees with the proposals set out at paragraphs 103 - 105.

12.2 Both the Electoral Review Working Party and a ward member for one of the current Whitwick wards have suggested that consideration be given to moving the boundary between Whitwick South and Swannington to proceed up the centre of Thornborough Road, along the small part of Church Lane and then up Brooks Lane to the junction with North Street/Talbot Lane. This would make the main throughfare a more identifiable boundary, particularly along Brooks Lane rather than running the ward boundary through the housing estate. The % variance would not be overly impacted.

13. Conclusion

13.1 In conclusion, the Council thanks the inspectors for the work. The draft recommendations are a sensible and fair solution to the challenge of a growing population in North West Leicestershire. In particular, the warding patterns are the correct ones.

13.2 The further amendments suggested in this report seek to refine points around community identity for the Commission's final proposals.

13.3 In summary, the options for the LGBCE to consider are as follows:

- That further consideration is given to the need to move Acresford from the Oakthorpe and Donisthorpe ward to avoid the misalignment of District and Parish boundaries.
- That consideration is given to the movement of the roads as detailed in the above paragraph 6.2 to even out the variances between Ashby Woulds and Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe.
- That due to the differing views received around the name of Ashby Blackfordby, the commission considers these along with any other comments received as part of the consultation to make a fair decision.
- To reflect better community identity, the boundary between Greenhill and Bardon be moved to include the Greenhill Playfields within the Greenhill ward, noting that the move does not impact any housing numbers.
- That consideration is given to moving the ward boundary between Whitwick South and Swannington to proceed up the centre of Thornborough Road, along the small part of Church Lane and then up Brooks Lane to the junction with North Street/Talbot Lane.

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NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2024



Title of Report	STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS UPDATE	
Presented by	Cllr N Rushton Corporate Portfolio Holder	
Background Papers	NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	There are no staffing and corporate implications arising from this report.	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	To provide Council with an update position regarding the completion and audits of the Council's Statement of Accounts.	
Recommendations	THAT COUNCIL NOTES THE GOVERNMENT'S REVISED TIMETABLES FOR ADDRESSING THE AUDIT BACKLOG IN THE SECTOR.	

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A report was considered by Council on 22 February 2024 which provided details of the Government's proposals for addressing the audit backlog, as well as outlining the Council's position in respect of its Statement of Accounts.
- 1.2 Since that time, the Government has made further announcements regarding the proposals, details of which are set out in Section 2 below.

2.0 GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 2.1 On 30 July 2024, Jim McMahon, Minister for Local Government and English Devolution, announced details of measures to tackle the backlog in local audit, aimed to restore timely and high-quality financial reporting and audit processes for local authorities and other public bodies.
- 2.2 The announcement set out details of how the Government plans to introduce secondary legislation to set a series of backstop dates for clearing the audit backlog. The initial

backstop date is set for 13 December 2024 covering financial years up to and including 2022/23. Subsequent backstop dates are proposed, which are set out below:

- Financial year 2023/24 – 28 February 2025
- Financial year 2024/25 – 27 February 2026
- Financial year 2025/26 – 31 January 2027
- Financial year 2026/27 – 30 November 2027
- Financial year 2027/28 – 30 November 2028

- 2.3 The National Audit Office and Financial Reporting Council will issue guidance to support local bodies and auditors in meeting these deadlines. The Government will also conduct question and answer webinars to ensure all stakeholders understand the new requirements and can implement them effectively.
- 2.4 Due to the tight timelines, many audits may initially receive ‘disclaimed’ opinions, indicating no assurance. This measure is intended to expedite the clearing of the backlog while maintaining focus on quality. Auditors will be required to clearly explain the reasons for any modified opinions to mitigate potential concerns. A modified audit opinion can arise where there is an error, a disagreement over a particular matter or a lack of sufficient audit evidence in a particular area of the financial statements, including disclosures.
- 2.5 On 20 September 2024, Catherine Frances, the Director General for Local Government and Public Services, addressed a letter to Chief Executives, Chief Financial Officers, Local Authority Leaders, and Local Audit Firm Partners. The letter provides an update on the Government’s actions to address the significant backlog in local audits in England, a copy of which is shown at Appendix One.
- 2.6 It confirmed that the first backstop date is set for 13 December 2024, by which time all unaudited accounts up to and including the financial year 2022/23 must be cleared. This measure aims to refocus the audit system on more recent accounts, where assurance is most valuable.
- 2.7 To implement the proposals, the Government has laid two pieces of legislation in Parliament: the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2024 and a draft Code of Audit Practice 2024, on behalf of the Comptroller & Auditor General of the National Audit Office (NAO). The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2024 came into force on 30 September 2024. These regulations remove the current requirement to publish audited accounts for the financial year 2023/24 by that date. Instead, the deadline for the publication of audited accounts for FY 2023/24 will be extended to 28 February 2025, coinciding with the second backstop date. Furthermore, the regulations amend the date by which bodies must publish draft (unaudited) accounts to 30 June for the financial years 2024/25 to 2027/28.
- 2.8 The Government is aware that local bodies should not be unfairly judged based on disclaimed or modified opinions caused by the introduction of backstop dates. Auditors are expected to provide clear reasons for issuing such opinions to mitigate potential reputational risks for local bodies.
- 2.9 The Government is committed to a proportionate approach to rebuilding assurance once the backlog is cleared. All system partners, including the Financial Reporting Council (FRC), NAO, and auditors, are aware of this objective. Work is ongoing to further understand the financial impact of these measures and to take appropriate action.

3.0 The Council's Accounts Position

- 3.1 The Council published its draft unaudited Statement of Accounts 2021/22 on 26 June 2024 which were subsequently approved by Audit and Governance Committee on 25 September 2024 (minute ref.83) At the time of writing, the publication of the draft unaudited Statement of Accounts 2022/23 is imminent.
- 3.2 At its meeting on 9 December 2024, the Audit and Governance Committee will be asked to sign-off the unaudited Statement of Accounts 2022/23. The Council's external auditors will provide an opinion on the accounts, as well as a value for money opinion.
- 3.3 The Council is working closely with its new auditors Azets, to determine timescales for the completion of the Statement of Accounts 2023/24.

4.0 Recognition of Potential Criticism

- 4.1 The Government understands that the introduction of statutory backstop dates, which may result in the issuance of modified or disclaimed audit opinions, could lead to reputational risks for local authorities. These opinions might be necessary when audits cannot be completed by the set deadlines. The Government has emphasised that local bodies should not be unfairly judged based on these opinions, as the delays are beyond their control. Auditors are expected to provide clear reasons for issuing such opinions to mitigate potential reputational damage.

5.0 Importance of Rebuilding Assurance

- 5.1 It is crucial to understand that the local government sector is now entering a period of rebuilding assurance. The backlog in local audits has created a significant challenge, and the Government's measures aim to reset and recover the local audit system. This period of rebuilding involves several key steps:
1. **Phased Approach:** The introduction of multiple backstop dates up to the financial year 2027/28 allows for a gradual rebuilding of assurance over several audit cycles. This phased approach helps manage the workload and ensures that the system can progressively return to timely audits.
 2. **Guidance and Support:** The NAO and the FRC have issued specific guidance to support auditors in meeting their responsibilities. This guidance emphasises the need for a proportionate approach to rebuilding assurance, ensuring that audits are completed in a timely manner while maintaining professional standards.
 3. **Collaboration and Communication:** Effective collaboration among local bodies, auditors, and key stakeholders is essential. The Government has planned a series of communication and engagement events, including webinars, to facilitate ongoing dialogue and support throughout this period.
 4. **Legislative Changes:** The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2024 and the draft Code of Audit Practice 2024 provide the legislative framework needed to implement these changes. These regulations and codes are designed to help local bodies comply with new deadlines and requirements, ensuring a smoother transition during this rebuilding phase.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	A well-run council
Policy Considerations:	None.
Safeguarding:	None.
Equalities/Diversity:	None.
Customer Impact:	None.
Economic and Social Impact:	None.
Environment, Climate Change and zero carbon:	None.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	The Council has responded to Government consultations in respect of backstop dates.
Risks:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of public trust and confidence in the Council's financial management and governance. - Reduced transparency and accountability to the Council's stakeholders, including taxpayers, service users, creditors, grant providers and regulators. - Increased scrutiny and intervention from external bodies, such as the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Local Government, the National Audit Office, the Local Government Association and the Public Sector Audit Appointments. - Potential legal challenges or claims from aggrieved parties who may rely on the accuracy and timeliness of the financial information in the Statement of Accounts. - Additional costs and resources required to resolve the audit issues and complete the audit process.
Officer Contact	Paul Stone Director of Resources paul.stone@nwleicestershire.gov.uk



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Catherine Frances
Director General for Local
Government and Public Services
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

To All Chief Executives, Chief
Financial Officers, Local Authority
Leaders and Local Audit Firm Partners

20 September 2024

Dear Colleagues,

UPDATE ON ACTION TO TACKLE THE LOCAL AUDIT BACKLOG IN ENGLAND

Local authorities and other local bodies provide vital public services to local communities. Effective local audit, in turn, helps ensure transparency and accountability for public money spent on these services and builds public confidence.

Following the Minister of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government's letter of 30 July 2024, I am writing today to provide a further update on the action the Government is taking to tackle the significant local audit backlog in England.

On 30 July, Minister McMahon issued a [written ministerial statement](#) (WMS) in Parliament setting out proposals to tackle the local audit backlog. As that statement set out, the proposals included setting a statutory backstop date of 13 December 2024 to clear the backlog of unaudited accounts up to and including Financial Year 2022/23. This will enable the system to refocus on recent accounts where assurance is most valuable. There will also be five further backstop dates up to and including financial year 2027/28 to allow assurance to be rebuilt over several audit cycles.

The Government has now laid in Parliament two pieces of legislation which would give effect to these proposals: [the Accounts and Audit \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#) and, on behalf of the Comptroller & Auditor General of the National Audit Office (NAO), [a draft Code of Audit Practice 2024](#). In parallel, we published a response to feedback on the [audit backlog consultation](#) held earlier this year.

The Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2024 are due to come into force on 30 September 2024. This will remove the current requirement to publish audited accounts for financial year (FY) 2023/24 on that date. The deadline for the publication of audited accounts for FY 2023/24 will, instead, be 28 February 2025 to coincide with the second backstop. The Regulations also amend the date by which bodies should publish draft (unaudited) accounts to 30 June for financial years 2024/25 – 2027/28.

The draft Code must be laid in Parliament for a period of 40 calendar days (excluding periods during which both Houses of Parliament are adjourned for more than 4 days). Once both the Code and Regulations are in force, auditors will be required to produce timely audit opinions

(which may result in the issue of a disclaimed or modified opinion), which will in turn mean that local bodies can prepare accountability statements by statutory backstop dates.

As the WMS highlighted, aspects of these proposals are uncomfortable, particularly around issuing modified or disclaimed audit opinions where audits cannot be completed by a backstop date. Given the scale of the backlog, however, and the absence of viable alternatives, the difficult decision was taken to proceed. Without these measures, audits would continue to be delayed, and the system will move even further away from timely assurance. All key local audit organisations support these bold measures, while recognising their exceptional nature. As Minister McMahon set out in his WMS, the Government is clear that local bodies should not be unfairly judged based on disclaimed or modified opinions, caused by the introduction of backstop dates that are largely beyond their control. Auditors are expected to provide clear reasons for the issuing of such opinions to mitigate the potential reputational risk that local bodies may face.

To support auditors in meeting their responsibilities under the Code of Audit Practice, the NAO has issued specific [guidance](#), endorsed by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC) on implementing the reset and recovery of local audit in England. This guidance sets out the public interest considerations that require auditors to act in ways that enable a return to the completion of audits on a timely manner whilst complying with professional standards. As set out in Minister McMahon's WMS, the Government is clear that a proportionate approach to the rebuilding of assurance, once the backlog is cleared, is required by auditors - and all system partners including the FRC, NAO and auditors, are aware that this is the Government's objective. Work is ongoing to further understand the financial impact of these measures and consequent action.

In order to comply with the regulations, and to help auditors deliver opinions, any local body that has not yet done so should publish their unaudited accounts (including financial statements, the annual governance statement and narrative statement) and hold the 30-day public inspection period for all years up to and including FY 2023/24 as soon as possible. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) will soon publish information to help preparers understand the impact of the backstop dates and how they should approach any unpublished accounts, alongside guidance for audit committees via its Better Governance Forum.

It should not be necessary for the audit of the previous year's accounts to be completed for Section 151 Officers to comply with their responsibilities to certify that the unaudited accounts show a true and fair view, as local bodies should have sufficient internal controls and processes for the Section 151 Officer to obtain this assurance. It is a legislative requirement for bodies to publish unaudited accounts. If bodies feel they are in a position where they will not be able to do this ahead of the backstop, following engagement with their auditor, they should contact the Department or their relevant sponsor department at the earliest opportunity.

As you may be aware, MHCLG will hold a webinar for senior officials on 24 September between 1045 – 1115, with support from key local audit organisations, to discuss ongoing work to address the local audit backlog. This is the first in a series of cross system communication and engagement events which will take place between now and the first backstop date of 13 December. The webinar can be joined via this [link](#), I would strongly encourage you to attend if possible.

Finally, I would like to share my appreciation for all of the hard work that finance teams, key audit partners and others have already delivered in support of these measures. Continued and effective collaboration is vital to ensure the best possible outcomes for the local audit system. As Minister McMahon set out in his WMS, the Government is committed to significant reform to overhaul the local audit system and will continue to review the evidence, including considering

the recommendations of external reviews to date, and update further in the Autumn on longer-term plans.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Frances', with a small dot at the end.

Catherine Frances

Director General for Local Government and Public Services

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NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2024



Title of Report	TREASURY MANAGEMENT STEWARDSHIP REPORT 2023/24	
Presented by	Councillor Nick Rushton Corporate Portfolio Holder	
Background Papers	<p>Prudential Indicators and Treasury Strategies 2023-24 – Council 23 February 2023</p> <p>Treasury Management Half-Yearly Report 2023/24 – Council 30 January 2024</p> <p>Treasury Management Activity Report 2023/24 – Quarter 3 – Audit and Governance Committee 24 April 2024</p> <p>Treasury Management Stewardship report 2023/24 – Audit and Governance Committee 22 August 2024</p> <p>Treasury Management Stewardship report 2023/24 – Cabinet 24 September 2024</p>	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications as a direct result from this report.	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	The Council is required to report Treasury Management activity to Full Council.	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	There are no staffing or corporate implications as a direct result from this report.	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	To inform Full Council of the Council's Treasury Management Activity undertaken during the 2023/24 financial year.	

Recommendations	THAT COUNCIL: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ENDORSES THE COUNCIL’S APPROACH TO TREASURY MANAGEMENT IN 2023/24. 2. REQUESTS A FUTURE REPORT COVERING ACTIVITIES IN 2024/25.
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1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Treasury Management activity is underpinned by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy’s Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the CIPFA Code), which requires local authorities to produce Prudential Indicators and a Treasury Management Strategy Statement annually on the likely financing and investment activity. The work is a key part of demonstrating that the Council is well run. The Prudential Indicators and Treasury Strategies for 2023/24 were approved by Council on 23 February 2023.
- 1.2 As a minimum, the CIPFA Code requires that the Council reports on the performance of the Treasury Management function at least twice yearly (mid-year and at year end). The year-end report and the fourth to be presented in relation to 2023/24 is attached at Appendix A. Quarterly reports were presented to Audit and Governance Committee and a half-yearly report was presented to Council in January 2024.
- 1.3 The Treasury Management Stewardship Report 2023/24 (Appendix) A is designed to inform Members of the Council’s treasury activity for 2023/24. The report was presented to the Audit and Governance Committee in August 2024 and Cabinet in September 2024.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 In compliance with the requirements of the CIPFA Code of practice, Appendix A provides Council with a summary report of the Treasury Management activity for the period April 2023 to March 2024. A prudent approach has been taken in relation to investment activity with priority being given to security and liquidity over yield.
- 2.2 For the reporting period, there have been no breaches of Treasury Management Strategy Statement that need bringing to the attention of Council.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	A Well-Run Council
Policy Considerations:	Treasury Management Strategy Statement
Safeguarding:	Not applicable
Equalities/Diversity:	Not applicable
Customer Impact:	Not applicable
Economic and Social Impact:	Not applicable
Environment, Climate Change and zero carbon:	Not applicable
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Audit and Governance Committee 22 August 2024
Risks:	Borrowing and investment both carry an element of risk. This risk is mitigated through the adoption of the Treasury and Investment Strategies, compliance with the CIPFA code of Treasury Management and the retention of Treasury Management advisors (Arlingclose) to proffer expert advice.
Officer Contact	Anna Crouch Head of Finance anna.crouch@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

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DRAFT TREASURY MANAGEMENT STEWARDSHIP REPORT 2023/24

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Council has adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Council to approve treasury management semi-annual and annual reports.
- 1.2. The Council's treasury management strategy for 2023/24 was approved at a meeting on 23 February 2023. The Council has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk remains central to the Council's treasury management strategy.
- 1.3. The Prudential Code includes a requirement for local authorities to provide a Capital Strategy, a summary document approved by full Council covering capital expenditure and financing, treasury management and non-treasury investments. The Council's Capital Strategy, complying with CIPFA's requirement, was approved by full Council on 23 February 2023.

2. External Context (provided by Arlingclose Ltd)

- 2.1. **Economic background:** UK inflation continued to decline from the 8.7% rate seen at the start of 2023/24. By the last quarter of the financial year headline consumer price inflation (CPI) had fallen to 3.4% in February but was still above the Bank of England's 2% target at the end of the period. The core measure of CPI, i.e. excluding food and energy, also slowed in February to 4.5% from 5.1% in January, a rate that had stubbornly persisted for three consecutive months.
- 2.2. The UK economy entered a technical recession in the second half of 2023, as growth rates of -0.1% and -0.3% respectively were recorded for Q3 and Q4. Over the 2023 calendar year GDP growth only expanded by 0.1% compared to 2022. Of the recent monthly data, the Office for National Statistics reported a rebound in activity with economy expanding 0.2% in January 2024. While the economy may somewhat recover in Q1 2024, the data suggests that prior increases in interest rates and higher price levels are depressing growth, which will continue to bear down on inflation throughout 2024.
- 2.3. Labour market data provided a mixed message for policymakers. Employment and vacancies declined, and unemployment rose to 4.3% (3mth/year) in July 2023. The same month saw the highest annual growth rate of 8.5% for total pay (i.e. including bonuses) and 7.8% for regular pay growth (i.e. excluding bonuses). Thereafter, unemployment began to decline, falling to 3.9% (3mth/year) in January and pay growth also edged lower to 5.6% for total pay and 6.1% for regular pay, but remained above the Bank of England's forecast.

- 2.4. Having begun the financial year at 4.25%, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) increased Bank Rate to 5.25% in August 2023 with a three-way split in the Committee's voting as the UK economy appeared resilient in the face of the dual headwinds of higher inflation and interest rates. Bank Rate was maintained at 5.25% through to March 2024. The vote at the March meeting was eight to one in favour of maintaining rates at this level, with the single dissenter preferring to cut rates immediately by 0.25%. Although financial markets shifted their interest rate expectations downwards with expectations of a cut in June, the MPC's focus remained on assessing how long interest rates would need to be restrictive in order to control inflation over the medium term.
- 2.5. In the Bank's quarterly Monetary Policy Report (MPR) released in August 2023, the near-term projection for services price inflation was revised upwards, goods price inflation widespread across products, indicating stronger domestic inflationary pressure with second-round effects in domestic prices and wages likely taking longer to unwind than they did to emerge. In the February 2024, MPR the Bank's expectations for the UK economy were positive for the first half of 2024, with a recovery from the mild recession in calendar H2 2023 being gradual. Headline CPI was forecast to dip below the 2% target quicker than previously thought due to declining energy prices, these effects would hold inflation slightly above target for much of the forecast horizon.
- 2.6. Following this MPC meeting, Arlingclose, the Council's treasury adviser, maintained its central view that 5.25% remains the peak in Bank Rate and that interest rates will most likely start to be cut later in H2 2024. The risks in the short-term are deemed to be to the downside as a rate cut may come sooner than expected, but then more broadly balanced over the medium term.
- 2.7. The US Federal Reserve also pushed up rates over the period, reaching a peak range of between 5.25-5.50% in August 2023, where it has stayed since. US policymakers have maintained the relatively dovish stance from the December FOMC meeting and at the meeting in March, economic projections pointed to interest rates being cut by a total of 0.75% in 2024.
- 2.8. Following a similarly sharp upward trajectory, the European Central Bank hiked rates to historically high levels over the period, pushing its main refinancing rate to 4.5% in September 2023, where it has remained. Economic growth in the region remains weak, with a potential recession on the cards, but inflation remains sticky and above the ECB's target, putting pressure on policymakers on how to balance these factors.
- 2.9. Financial markets: Sentiment in financial markets remained uncertain and bond yields continued to be volatile over the year. During the first half of the year, yields rose as interest rates continued to be pushed up in response to rising inflation. From October 2023 they started declining again before falling sharply in December 2023 as falling inflation and dovish central bank attitudes caused financial markets to expect cuts in interest rates in 2024. When it emerged in January 2024 that inflation was stickier than expected and the BoE and the Federal Reserve were data dependent and not inclined to cut rates soon, yields rose once again, ending the period some 50+ bps higher than when it started.

- 2.10. Over the financial year, the 10-year UK benchmark gilt yield rose from 3.44% to peak at 4.75% in August, before then dropping to 3.44% in late December 2023 and rising again to 3.92% (28 March 2024). The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 4.96% over the period to 31 March.
- 2.11. Credit review: In response to an improving outlook for credit markets, in January 2024 Arlingclose moved away from its previous temporary stance of a 35-day maximum duration and increased its advised recommended maximum unsecured duration limit on all banks on its counterparty list to 100 days.
- 2.12. Earlier in the period, S&P revised the UK sovereign outlook to stable and upgraded Barclays Bank to A+. Moody's also revised the UK outlook to stable, Handelsbanken's outlook to negative, downgraded five local authorities, and affirmed HSBC's outlook at stable while upgrading its Baseline Credit Assessment. Fitch revised UOB's and BMO's outlooks to stable.
- 2.13. In the final quarter of the financial year, Fitch revised the outlook on the UK sovereign rating to stable from negative based on their assessment that the risks to the UK's public finances had decreased since its previous review in October 2022, the time of the mini- budget.
- 2.14. Moody's, meanwhile, upgraded the long-term ratings of German lenders Helaba, Bayern LB and LBBW on better solvency and capital positions, despite challenges from a slowing German economy and exposure to the commercial real estate sector. Moody's also upgraded or placed on review for an upgrade, Australian banks including ANZ, CBA NAB and Westpac on the back of the introduction of a new bank resolution regime.
- 2.15. Credit default swap prices began the financial year at elevated levels following the fallout from Silicon Valley Bank and collapse/takeover of other lenders. From then the general trend was one of falling prices and UK lenders' CDS ended the period at similar levels to those seen in early 2023. Earlier in the year some Canadian lenders saw their CDS prices rise due to concerns over a slowing domestic economy and housing market, while some German lenders were impacted by similar economic concerns and exposure to commercial real estate towards the end of the period, with LBBW remaining the most elevated.
- 2.16. Heightened market volatility is expected to remain a feature, at least in the near term and, credit default swap levels will be monitored for signs of ongoing credit stress. As ever, the institutions and durations on the Council's counterparty list recommended by Arlingclose remain under constant review.

3. Local Context

- 3.1. On 31 March 2024, the Council had net borrowing of £26.3m arising from its revenue and capital income and expenditure. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. These factors are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary

	31.3.23 Provisional £'m	31.3.24 Provisional £'m
General Fund CFR	43.9	45.5
HRA CFR	53.0	50.5
Total CFR	96.9	96.0
External borrowing	62.6	56.3
Internal borrowing	34.3	39.7
Total Borrowing	96.9	96.0

- 3.2. The Council pursued its strategy of keeping borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing, to reduce risk and keep interest costs low.
- 3.3. The treasury management position as of 31 March 2024 and the change during the year is shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Treasury Management Summary

	31.3.23 Balance £m	Movement £m	31.3.24 Balance £m	31.3.24 Rate %
Long-term borrowing	59.8	-3.5	56.3	3.66%
Short-term borrowing	2.7	-2.7	0.0	2.30%
Total borrowing	62.6	-6.2	56.3	3.58%
Long-term investments	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00%
Short-term investments	39.0	-24.0	15.0	5.67%
Cash and cash equivalents	4.1	10.9	15.0	5.62%
Total investments	43.1	-13.1	30.0	5.65%
Net borrowing	19.5	6.9	26.3	

- 3.4. As shown above external borrowing decreased by £6.2m after repayment of a £3.5m Lender Option Borrower Option (LOBO) loan held with Commerzbank, a PWLB Maturity Loan of £1.5m and two PWLB annuity loan repayments totalling £1.2m.
- 3.5. Investment balances overall reduced by £13.1m from 31 March 2023 due to capital programme delivery, use of reserves and repayment of debt.
- 3.6. The Council was able to more accurately predict its cashflows allowing more funds to be invested for longer while maintaining cash flow confidence. This resulted in a change in investment portfolio structure which became more balanced between short term investments and cash and cash equivalents as shown in Table 2.

4. Borrowing Update

- 4.1. CIPFA's 2021 Prudential Code is clear that local authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return and that it is not prudent for local authorities to make any investment or spending decision that will increase the capital financing requirement, and so

may lead to new borrowing, unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the Council. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield unless these loans are for refinancing purposes.

- 4.2. The Council currently holds £13.8m in commercial property investments that were purchased prior to the change in the CIPFA Prudential Code. However, these investments are primarily held for local regeneration and support and not financial return and as such will not fall directly into the above category.

5. Borrowing Strategy and Activity

- 5.1. As outlined in the treasury strategy, the Council's chief objective when borrowing has been to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing lower interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Council's long-term plans change being a secondary objective. The Council's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio.
- 5.2. Interest rates have seen substantial rises over the last two years, although these rises have now begun to plateau. Gilt yields fell in late 2023, reaching April 2023 lows in December 2023 before rebounding to an extent in the first three months of 2024. Gilt yields have remained volatile, seeing upward pressure from perceived sticker inflation at times and downward pressure from falling inflation and a struggling economy at other times.
- 5.3. On 31 December, the Public Work Loans Board (PWLB) certainty rates for maturity loans were 4.74% for 10-year loans, 5.18% for 20-year loans and 5.01% for 50-year loans. Their equivalents on 31 March 2023 were 4.33%, 4.70% and 4.41% respectively.
- 5.4. The cost of short-term borrowing from other local authorities has generally risen with Base Rate over the year. Interest rates peaked at around 7% towards the later part of March 2024 as many authorities required cash at the same time. These rates are expected to fall back to more normal market levels in April 2024.
- 5.5. A new PWLB Housing Revenue Account (HRA) rate which is 0.4% below the certainty rate was made available from 15 June 2023. This rate will now be available to June 2025. The discounted rate is to support local authorities borrowing for the HRA and for refinancing existing HRA loans.
- 5.6. This new reduced HRA borrowing rate may create opportunity for savings for the Council. The Council will evaluate the potential benefits of restructuring its borrowing with the lower HRA rate.

- 5.7. On 31 March 2024, the Council held £56.3m of loans, a decrease of £6.2m to 31 March 2023, as part of its strategy for funding previous and current year's capital programmes. Outstanding loans on 31 March 2024 are summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Borrowing Position

	31.3.23 Balance £'m	Net Movement £'m	31.3.24 Balance £'m	31.3.24 Weighted Average Rate %	31.3.24 Weighted Average Maturity (years)
Public Works Loan Board	55.1	-2.7	52.4	3.41%	14.4
Banks (LOBO)	3.5	-3.5	0.0	0.00%	0.0
Banks (fixed-term)	3.9	0.0	3.9	4.74%	2.1
Local authorities (long-term)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00%	0.0
Local authorities (short-term)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.00%	0.0
Total borrowing	62.6	-6.2	56.3	3.57%	16.5

- 5.8. The Council's chief objective when borrowing has been to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which funds are required, with flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Council's long-term plans change being a secondary objective.
- 5.9. In keeping with these objectives, no new borrowing was undertaken, while £6.2m of existing loans were allowed to mature without replacement. This strategy enabled the Council to reduce net borrowing costs (despite foregone investment income) and reduce overall treasury risk.
- 5.10. There remains an argument for diversifying funding sources, particularly if rates can be achieved on alternatives which are below gilt yields + 0.80%. The Council will evaluate and pursue these lower cost solutions and opportunities with its advisor Arlingclose.
- 5.11. LOBO loans: On 1 April 2023 the Council held £3.5m of LOBO (Lender's Option Borrower's Option) loans where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate at set dates, following which the Council has the option to either accept the new rate and terms or to repay the loan at no additional cost.
- 5.12. As market interest rates rose, there was increased probability of call options on the LOBOs being exercised by lenders. £3.5m of LOBO loans had annual/semi-annual call option dates during the year to 31 March 2024, lenders exercised options on the following of the Council's loans:-

	Amount £'m	Rate %	Final Maturity	New rate proposed %	5. Action taken by Council
Commerzbank	3.5	4.80	08/02/2055	5.80	Repaid at no cost from cash resources
Total	3.5	4.80	08/02/2024	5.80	

5.18. In February 2024, Commerzbank exercised its option to increase the interest rate from 4.80% to 5.80%. Following a review of our investment balances, the rates offered on other borrowing facilities and with the recommendation of the Council's Treasury Management advisers, the increased rate was declined and the Council repaid the loan in full at no penalty. The Council no longer has any LOBO loans on its books. This removes some of the interest rate risk on the borrowing portfolio.

6. Treasury Investment Activity

6.1. The CIPFA Treasury Management Code now defines treasury management investments as those investments which arise from the Council's cash flows or treasury risk management activity that ultimately represents balances that need to be invested until the cash is required for use in the course of business.

6.2. The Council holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. During the year, the Council's investment balances ranged between £43.3m and £68.2m due to timing differences between income and expenditure. The investment position is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Treasury Investment Position

	31.3.23 Balance £m	Net Movement £m	31.3.24 Balance £m	31.3.24 Income Return %	31.3.24 Weighted Average Maturity Days
Banks & building societies (unsecured)	2.0	-2.0	0.0	0.00%	0
Government (incl. local authorities)	32.0	-2.0	30.0	5.65%	118
Money Market Funds	4.1	-4.1	0.0	0.00%	0
Total investments	38.1	-8.1	30.0	5.65%	118

- 6.3. Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Council to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.
- 6.4. Bank Rate increased by 1% over the period, from 4.25% at the beginning of April 2023 to 5.25% by the end March 2024. Short term rates peaked at 5.7% for 3-month rates and 6.7% for 12-month rates during the period, although these rates subsequently began to decline towards the end of the period. Money Market Rates also rose and were between 4.8% and 5.1% by the end of March 2024.
- 6.5. Investment objectives were achieved by increasing exposure to short dated, low risk deposits with Government and decreasing exposure to both banks and Money Market Funds. This encouraged longer dated deposits with higher returns alongside increased security of funds.
- 6.6. The progression of risk and return metrics are shown in the extracts from Arlingclose's quarterly investment benchmarking in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Investment Benchmarking – Treasury investments managed in-house

	Credit Score	Credit Rating	Bail-in Exposure	Weighted Average Maturity (days)	Rate of Return %
31.12.2023	5.42	A+	0%	118	5.65%
Similar LA's	4.9	A+	61%	50	5.20%
All LA's	4.82	A+	61%	9	5.03%

- 6.7. The Council had budgeted £792,015 in interest income from investments after deductions in 2023/24. Actual income received in 2023/24 was £2.55m. This represents an average return on balances through the year of 4.79%.
- 6.8. Of the £2.55m received an estimated £371k will be deducted to S106 balances and other minor deductions. The remaining £2.18m will be apportioned between the General Fund (GF) and Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- 6.9. The allocations to the GF and HRA will be worked out based on the notional investment balances of both funds throughout the year. The percentage of which will be applied to the overall interest received after deductions. This approach leads to the balances being split £1.02m to the GF and £1.17m to the HRA. Please note these figures are subject to finalisation and may change.
- 6.10. The forecast interest received for 2023/24 in comparison to actuals is significantly different. This is largely due to the dramatic increase in interest rates by central government in response to the exceptional economic scenario detailed in section 2. These increased interest rates have boosted the interest return from 3.50% on 31 March 2023 to 5.65% on

31 March 2024 resulting in the overall increased investment return.

7. Non-Treasury Investments

- 7.1. The definition of investments in the Treasury Management Code now covers all the financial assets of the Council as well as other non-financial assets which the Council holds primarily for financial return. Investments that do not meet the definition of treasury management investments (i.e. management of surplus cash) are categorised as either for service purposes (made explicitly to further service objectives) or for commercial purposes (made primarily for financial return).
- 7.2. Investment Guidance issued by the then Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and Welsh Government also broadens the definition of investments to include all such assets held partially or wholly for financial return.
- 7.3. On 31 March 2024, the Council held £13.8m of directly owned property investments which although are primarily held for local regeneration and development do also provide financial return as a secondary function.
- 7.4. A full list of the Council's non-treasury investments is available in the Council's investment strategy found [here](#).
- 7.5. These investments are budgeted to generate £195,889 of investment income for the Council after taking account of direct costs, representing a rate of return of 3.91%.

8. Treasury Performance

- 8.1. The Council measures the financial performance of its treasury management activities both in terms of its impact on the revenue budget and its relationship to benchmark interest rates.
- 8.2. Since the beginning of the reporting period the Council has paid £2.2m in interest. The overall interest rate for the financial year 2023/24 is 3.57%. For comparison purposes current 1 year borrowing through the PWLB upon writing this report is 5.7%.
- 8.3. No new borrowing was undertaken in the 2023/24 financial year in line with expectations.
- 8.4. The Council's interest return percentage on 31 March 2024 was 5.65%. In comparison with other local authorities this was significantly better than the 5.03% average. A further comparison is the Daily Sterling Overnight Index Average (SONIA) which on 31 March 2024 was 5.20%.

9. Compliance

- 9.1. The Council's S151 Officer reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the year complied fully with the CIPFA Code of Practice and the Council's approved Treasury Management Strategy
- 9.2. Compliance with specific investment limits is demonstrated in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Investment Limits

	2023/24 Maximum	31.3.24 Actual	2023/24 Limit	Complied? Yes
The UK Government	18.3	0.0	Unlimited	YES
Local authorities and other government entities	30.0	30.0	60.0	YES
Secured investments	0.0	0.0	60.0	YES
Banks (unsecured)	4.1	1.1	60.0	YES
Building societies (unsecured)	0.0	0.0	5.0	YES
Registered providers (unsecured)	0.0	0.0	12.5	YES
Money market funds	22.0	0.0	60.0	YES
Strategic pooled funds	0.0	0.0	25.0	YES
Real estate investment trusts	0.0	0.0	12.5	YES
Other investments	0.0	0.0	2.5	YES
Totals	74.4	31.1		

- 9.3. Compliance with the authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt is demonstrated in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Debt Limits

	2023/24 Maximum	31.3.24 Actual	2023/24 Operational Boundary	2022/23 Authorised Limit	Complied?
Borrowing	62.6	56.3	101.8	111.8	YES

- 9.4. Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring it is not significant if the operational boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this is not counted as a compliance failure.

10. **Treasury Management Indicators**

- 10.1 As required by the 2021 CIPFA Treasury Management Code, the Council monitors and measures the following treasury management prudential indicators.

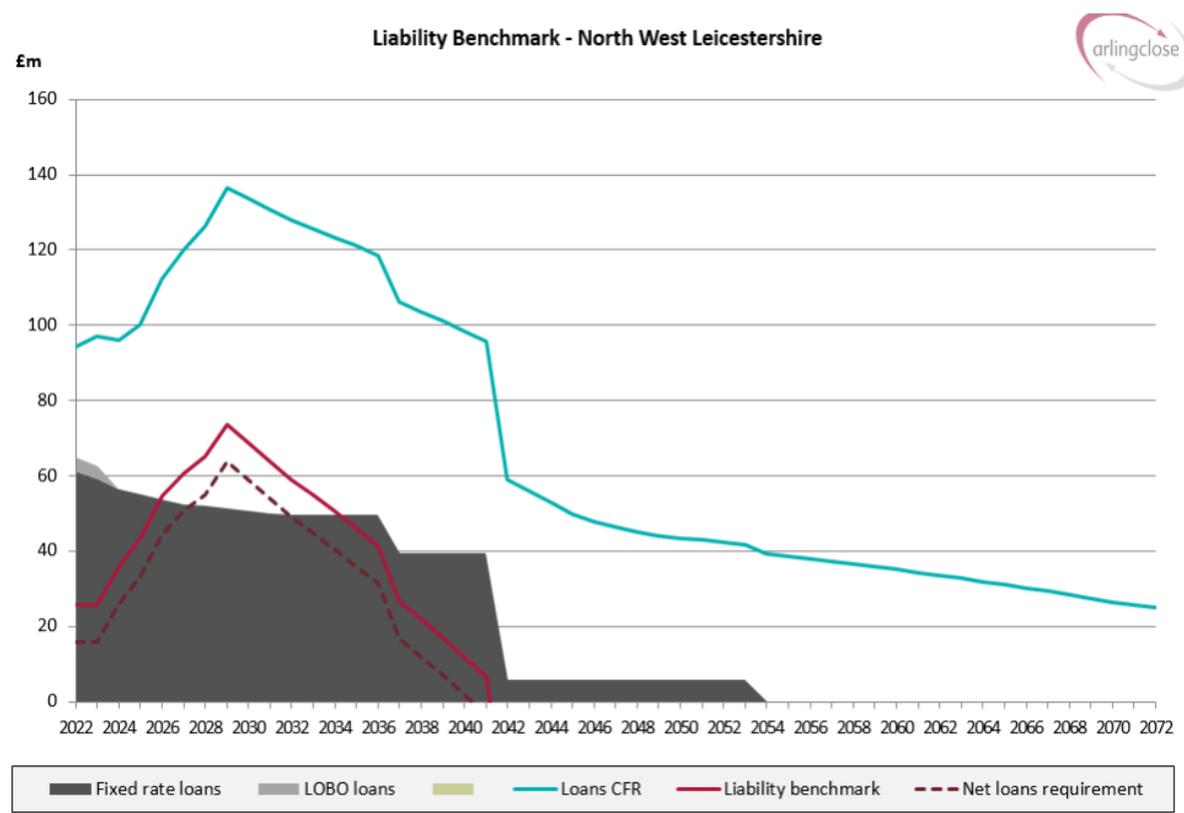
- 10.2 **Liability Benchmark:** This new indicator compares the Council's actual existing borrowing against a liability benchmark that has been calculated to show the lowest risk level of borrowing. The liability benchmark is an important tool to help establish whether the Council is likely to be a long-term borrower or long-term investor in the future, and so shape its strategic focus and decision making. It represents an estimate of the cumulative amount of external borrowing the Council must hold to fund its current capital and revenue plans while

keeping treasury investments at the minimum level of £10m required to manage day-to-day cash flow.

Table 8: Liability Benchmark

	31.3.23 Estimate	31.3.24 Forecast	31.3.25 Forecast	31.3.26 Forecast
Loans CFR	96.9	96	100.2	112.4
Less: Balance sheet resources	-81.2	-70	-67	-68
Net loans requirement	15.7	26	33.2	44.4
Plus: Liquidity allowance	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Liability benchmark	25.7	36	43.2	54.4
Existing external borrowing	62.6	56.3	55.1	53.8

10.3 Following on from the medium-term forecast above, the long-term liability benchmark assumes capital expenditure funded by borrowing of £3.8m a year, minimum revenue provision on new capital expenditure based on a 25-year asset life and income, expenditure and reserves all increasing by inflation of 2.5% p.a. This is shown in the chart below together with the maturity profile of the Council's existing borrowing.



10.4 Whilst borrowing may be above the liability benchmark, strategies involving borrowing which is significantly above the liability benchmark carry higher risk.

- 10.5 **Security:** The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

Table 9: Security

	31.12.24 Actual	2023/24 Target	Complied?
Portfolio average credit score	A+	A-	Yes

- 10.6. **Liquidity:** The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three-month period.

Table 10: Liquidity

	31.3.24 Actual	2023/24 Target	Complied?
Total cash available within 3 months	£15,000,000	£2,500,000	Yes

- 10.7. **Interest Rate Exposures:** This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on the one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise or fall in interests was:

Table 11: Interest Rate Exposures

Interest rate risk indicator	31.3.24 Actual	2023/24 Limit	Complied?
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise in interest rates	190,677	600,000	YES
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% fall in interest rates	-190,677	-600,000	YES

- 10.8 The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investment will be replaced at current rates. Longer investments would reduce the interest rate risk but would expose the Council to higher liquidity risk.
- 10.9 **Maturity Structure of Borrowing:** This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of all borrowing were:

Table 12: Maturity Structure of Debt

	31.03.24 Actual £m	31.03.24 Actual %	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Complied?
Under 12 months	1.3	2%	0%	70%	YES
12 months and within 24 months	1.3	2%	0%	30%	YES
24 months and within 5 years	2.5	4%	0%	30%	YES
5 years and within 10 years	1.9	3%	0%	30%	YES
10 years and within 20 years	43.8	78%	0%	90%	YES
20 years and above	5.7	10%	0%	30%	YES
TOTALS	56.4	100%			

10.10 Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

10.11 **Principal Sums Invested for Periods Longer than a year:** The purpose of this indicator is to control the Council's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The limits on the long-term principal sum invested to final maturities beyond the period end were:

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	No Fixed Date
Actual principal invested beyond year end - £'m	£0	£0	£0	£0
Limit on principal invested beyond year end - £'m	£60	£10	£10	£10
Complied?	YES	YES	YES	YES

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NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
COUNCIL – TUESDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2024



Title of Report	REVIW OF GAMBLING ACT 2005 STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY	
Presented by	Councillor Michael Wyatt Portfolio Holder for Community Services	
Background Papers	<p>Gambling Commission – Guidance to Licensing Authorities 5th Edition. https://www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-to-licensing-authorities</p> <p>North West Leicestershire District Council Gambling Statement of Licensing Policy 2022-2025</p> <p>Licensing Committee meeting agenda and minutes 18 September 2024</p>	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	A Gambling Act Statement of Licensing Policy can be subject to legal challenge. Legal advice has been secured in its preparation to mitigate the risk of any legal challenge occurring.	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	The workload associated with the review of the policy shall be undertaken within existing resources.	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	For members to consider the draft Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Policy 2025 – 2028 following the consultation period.	
Recommendations	<p>THAT COUNCIL</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CONSIDERS AND APPROVES THE PROPOSED GAMBLING ACT 2005 STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY ATTACHED AT APPENDIX 1. 2. APPROVES THE CONTINUATION OF THE DELEGATION TO THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY SERVICES IN CONSULTATION WITH PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR THE UPDATING OF THE LOCAL AREA PROFILE. 	

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Under section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005 (the 'Act'), licensing authorities are required to prepare and publish a statement of principles which they intend to apply when exercising their functions under the Act. This statement of principles is referred to as the Statement of Licensing Policy (the 'Policy').
- 1.2 Following consultation with a wide range of bodies and agencies, the last review of this Council's Policy was approved by Full Council on 16 November 2021 and came into effect on 31 January 2022.
- 1.3 The Council's Policy guides decision making with regards to all applications received under the Act.
- 1.4 Section 349 also requires licensing authorities to review their Policy every three years. The revised Policy must be in place on or before 31 January 2025.

2.0 REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

- 2.1 The current Policy has been reviewed in accordance with the Gambling Act 2005 (Licensing Authority Policy Statement) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006 and national statutory guidance issued to licensing authorities by the Gambling Commission. The draft statement of licensing policy is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.2 The revised Policy remains broadly unchanged from the previously adopted Policy. The main areas of change within the draft Policy relate to the updating of the local area profiles and updating of information showing the prevalence of problem gambling severity and reported demand for treatment and support for gambling harms. The local area profiles have been moved out of the main body of the policy into Appendix C.

3.0 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The Gambling Act 2005 requires that all local authorities must widely consult when reviewing their Policy.
- 3.2 The consultation, which commenced on 29 May 2024, was a targeted consultation with relevant businesses, agencies, organisations, authorities and councillors, seeking comments on the whole draft Policy. The consultation closed on 11 August 2024.
- 3.3 A consultee response was received from GambleAware. GambleAware work in partnership with the Gambling Commission and the Responsible Gambling Strategy Board. Their response is as follows:

"GambleAware recently published [interactive maps](#), which have been designed for use by local authorities. The maps show the prevalence of problem gambling severity in each local authority and ward area as well as usage of, and reported demand for, treatment and support for gambling harms.

GambleAware also strongly commends two publications by the Local Government Association which set out the range of options available to local authorities to deal with gambling-related harms using existing powers:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/tackling-gambling-related-harm-whole-council-approach>

<https://www.local.gov.uk/gambling-regulation-councillor-handbook-england-and-wales>

GambleAware is also fully supportive of local authorities which conduct an analysis to identify areas with increased levels of risk for any reason. In particular, we support those who also include additional licence requirements to mitigate the increased level of risk. Areas where there are higher than average resident or visiting populations from groups, we know to be vulnerable to gambling harms include children, the unemployed, the homeless, certain ethnic-minorities, lower socio-economic groups, those attending mental health (including gambling disorders) or substance addiction treatment services.”

- 3.4 A consultation response has been received from Leicestershire County Council Public Health. The consultation response details the harms associated with gambling and its impact across Leicestershire. The detailed response has been incorporated within the local area profile at Appendix 1 of the draft Policy.

4.0 DELEGATION

- 4.1 The profile of North West Leicestershire will continue to change throughout the life of this Policy. To ensure that any such changes are reflected within the Policy without unnecessary reference to Licensing Committee or Council, it is recommended that any such changes be delegated to the Head of Service in consultation with the Portfolio Holder. A delegation was put in place in 2018, and a continuation was also approved in 2021. A continuation of this delegation is sought.

5.0 APPROVAL PROCESS

- 5.1 Once the reviewed Policy has been approved by Council, it must be published 4 weeks prior to it coming in effect on 31 January 2025.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	Communities and housing – looking after our tenants and keeping our communities safe
Policy Considerations:	North West Leicestershire District Council Gambling Statement of Licensing Policy 2022-2025
Safeguarding:	Licensed premises are required to risk assess gambling activity associated with their premises
Equalities/Diversity:	Equality Impact Assessment already undertaken, issues identified actioned
Customer Impact:	Businesses may be impacted by any decision made
Economic and Social Impact:	The Policy may reduce the risk of harm from gambling activity by influencing the content of the risk assessments carried out by licensed premises
Environment and Climate Change:	Not applicable
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Consultation with Leicestershire Police, Gambling Commission, Association of British Bookmakers, British Amusement Catering Trade Association, British Casino Association, Bingo Association, British Horse Racing Board, Working Men's Club and Institute Union, British Beer and Pub Association, Gamcare, Salvation Army, Leicestershire Partnership Trust CAMHS, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Board, Leicestershire County Council Public Health, Vital Health Group, Betfred, Gala Leisure, Flutter Leisure Ltd, Ladbrokes, Moto Donington, Quicksilver, GambleAware, Leicestershire Fire Service, 2 Fat Ladies Leisure Limited, Members, Responsible Authorities, Town and Parish Councils, South Derbyshire District Council, Charnwood Borough Council, local secondary schools / colleges, licensing agents / solicitors.
Risks:	A Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Policy can be subject to challenge. Legal advice has been sought in its preparation to mitigate the risk of any challenge.
Officer Contact	Paul Sanders Head of Community Services paul.sanders@nwleicestershire.gov.uk



GAMBLING ACT 2005 STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY 2025 - 2028

Item	Details
Reference:	Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Policy 2025 - 2028
Status:	Draft
Originator:	Environmental Health
Owner:	Environmental Health
Version No:	7
Date:	5 November 2024

Key policy details

Approvals

Item	Date of Approval	Version No.
Consulted with - See appendix B of policy		7
Reviewed by Licensing Committee	18 September 2024	7
Approved by Council	5 November 2024	7

Policy Location

This policy can be found at NWLDC website www.nwleics.gov.uk

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

Completed by	Completion date
Environmental Health & Community Safety Team Manager	October 2021

Revision history

Version Control	Revision Date	Summary of Changes
6	16 November 2021	Statutory Review – amended statutory guidance
5	13 November 2018	Statutory Review – amended statutory guidance
4	17 November 2015	Statutory Review – amended statutory guidance

Policy Review Plans

This policy is subject to a scheduled review once every three years or earlier if there is a change in legislation or local policy that requires it.

Distribution

Title	Date of Issue	Version No.
Published on NWLDC website	[TBC]	7

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the Gambling Act 2005 (the “Act”), a Licensing Authority is required to prepare and publish a Statement of Licensing Policy. This document is the seventh Statement of Licensing Policy issued by North West Leicestershire District Council. Since the introduction of the Act, the Statement of Licensing Policy has assisted in promoting the three licensing objectives detailed under the Act:

- Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime,
- Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way, and
- Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.

North West Leicestershire District Council declares that it has had regard to the licensing objectives of the Act, the guidance issued by the Gambling Commission, and any responses from those consulted on the Statement of Licensing Policy.

The Statement of Licensing Policy forms the mandate for managing gambling provision within North West Leicestershire and sets out how North West Leicestershire District Council views the local risk environment and therefore its expectations in relation to operators with premises within the district.

A map of the geographical area of North West Leicestershire is at Appendix A of this policy. The local area profile is detailed within Appendix C and contains a link to interactive maps showing the prevalence of problem gambling severity in each local authority area and ward area, as well as usage of, and reported demand for, treatment and support for gambling harms. Operators must have regard to the content of the local area profile when producing their risk assessments.

The number of licensed premises has largely remained stable over the last 15 years however there has been a small reduction in the number of licensed premises since 2019.

A list of the persons North West Leicestershire District Council consulted in preparing this Statement of Licensing Policy is at Appendix B.

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INTRODUCTION

Policy Development

Licensing Authorities are required by the Act to publish a statement of the principles which they propose to apply when exercising their functions. This policy must be published at least every three years. The statement must also be reviewed from “time to time” and any amended parts re-consulted upon. The statement must then be republished.

It should be noted that this policy statement will not override the right of any person to make an application, make representations about an application, or apply for a review of a licence, as each will be considered on its own merits and according to the statutory requirements of the Act.

The policy was adopted by full Council following consultation with key stakeholders. The policy commenced on **INSERT DATE** and unless reviewed in the intervening period, the Statement of Licensing Policy will remain in force until **INSERT DATE**

Declaration

In producing the final statement, this Licensing Authority declares that it has had regard to the licensing objectives of the Act, the guidance issued by the Gambling Commission, and any responses from those consulted on the statement.

District of North West Leicestershire

North West Leicestershire District Council is the Licensing Authority under the Gambling Act 2005 (the Act). North West Leicestershire is a mixed urban and rural district covering approximately 279 square kilometres. The main towns are Coalville, a former mining town and Ashby de la Zouch, a traditional market town. Other settlements include Castle Donington, Ibstock, Kegworth and Measham. The area also encompasses East Midlands Airport and the site of Donington Park a motor circuit and site for music festivals. These areas are shown in the map below at Appendix A.

The population is 104,700 (source ONS 2021). The proportion of young people (0-15 years) is 17.7% per cent and is close to regional and national averages. The District has 20.1% of the population aged over 65, slightly over the regional and national averages (ONS 2021). The minority ethnic population is 4.1%; this compares with 14.3% for East Midlands and 19% for England (source 2021 Census).

Consultation

This Licensing Authority consulted widely upon this statement before finalising and publishing it. The Act requires that the following parties are consulted by Licensing Authorities:

- The Chief Officer of Police;
- One or more persons who appear to the Licensing Authority to represent the interests of persons carrying on gambling businesses in the Licensing Authority’s area;
- One or more persons who appear to the Licensing Authority to represent the interests of persons who are likely to be affected by the exercise of the Licensing Authority’s functions under the Act.

A full list of those persons consulted is provided below at Appendix B.

PART A

1. The Licensing Objectives

In exercising most of its functions under the Act, Licensing Authorities must have regard to the licensing objectives as set out in the Act. The licensing objectives are:

- Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime;
- Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way;
- Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.

2. Responsible Authorities

The Licensing Authority is required to state the principles it will apply in exercising its powers to designate a body which is competent to advise the Licensing Authority about the protection of children from harm. The principles are:

- The need for the body to be responsible for an area covering the whole of the Licensing Authority's area; and
- The need for the body to be answerable to democratically elected persons, rather than any particular vested interest group.

This Licensing Authority designates the Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Board for this purpose.

3. Interested Parties

Interested parties can make representations about licence applications, or apply for a review of an existing licence. These parties are defined in section 158 of the Act as follows:

“For the purposes of this Part a person is an interested party in relation to an application for or in respect of a premises licence if, in the opinion of the Licensing Authority which issues the licence or to which the application is made, the person

- a) lives sufficiently close to the premises to be likely to be affected by the authorised activities,
- b) has business interests that might be affected by the authorised activities, or
- c) represents persons who satisfy paragraph (a) or (b)”

The Licensing Authority is required to state the principles it will apply in exercising its powers under the Act to determine whether a person is an interested party. The overriding principle is that each case will be decided upon its merits. The factors that this Licensing Authority may take into account when determining what ‘sufficiently close to the premises’ means (in each case) might include:

- The size of the premises;
- The nature of the premises;
- The distance of the premises from the location of the person making the representation;
- The potential impact of the premises; and
- The circumstances of the complainant.

In determining whether a person with business interests might be affected by the premises, the factors likely to be relevant include:

- The size of the premises;
- The catchment area of the premises; and
- Whether the person making the representation has business interests in that catchment area that might be affected.

This Licensing Authority views trade associations, trade unions, residents' and tenants' associations as interested parties.

Interested parties can be persons who are democratically elected such as Councillors and Members of Parliament. No specific evidence of being asked to represent an interested person will be required as long as the Councillor or Members of Parliament represents the ward likely to be affected. Other than these however, this Licensing Authority will generally require written evidence that a person or body 'represents' someone who either lives sufficiently close to the premises to be likely to be affected by the authorised activities and/or has business interests that might be affected by the authorised activities. A letter from one of these persons requesting the representation is sufficient.

4. Exchange of Information

This Licensing Authority adopts the principle of better regulation and will conduct itself in accordance with the provisions of the Act in its exchange of information which includes the provision that the Data Protection Act 2018 and other relevant legislation will not be contravened. The Licensing Authority will also have regard to the Guidance issued by the Gambling Commission to Local Authorities on this matter, as well as any relevant regulations issued by the Secretary of State under the powers provided in the Act.

Should any protocols be established pursuant to section 350 of the Act concerning information exchange with other bodies as listed in schedule 6(1) of the Act then these will be made available.

5. Inspection and Enforcement

The main enforcement and compliance role for this Licensing Authority in terms of the Act will be to ensure compliance with licences and permits issued by this Licensing Authority and any conditions attached to them, including compliance with relevant codes of practice, dealing with temporary permissions and registration of small lotteries.

This Licensing Authority will act in accordance with the following principles for regulators:

- **Proportionate:** regulators should only intervene when necessary: remedies should be appropriate to the risk posed, and costs identified and minimised;
- **Accountable:** regulators must be able to justify decisions, and be subject to public scrutiny;
- **Consistent:** rules and standards must be joined up and implemented fairly;
- **Transparent:** regulators should be open, and keep regulations simple and user friendly; and
- **Targeted:** regulation should be focused on the problem, and minimise side effects.

This Licensing Authority will endeavour to avoid duplication with other statutory or regulatory regimes so far as possible.

This Licensing Authority will have regard to the [Regulators' Code](#) and will adopt a risk-based, proportionate and targeted approach to regulatory inspection and enforcement. This will include targeting high-risk premises which require greater attention, whilst operating a lighter touch in respect of low-risk premises, so that resources are more effectively concentrated on problem premises. The local area profile will inform the approach to identifying high risk premises.

This Licensing Authority shall comply with the codes of practices developed by the Crown Prosecution Service in the management of criminal cases.

This Licensing Authority will also have regard to the North West Leicestershire District Council General Enforcement Policy.

6. Licensing Authority Functions

This Licensing Authority will:

- Be responsible for the licensing of premises where gambling activities are to take place by issuing Premises Licences;
- Issue Provisional Statements;
- Regulate members' clubs and miners' welfare institutes who wish to undertake certain gaming activities by means of issuing Club Gaming Permits and/or Club Machine Permits;
- Issue Club Machine Permits to Commercial Clubs;
- Grant permits for the use of certain lower stake gaming machines at unlicensed Family Entertainment Centres;
- Receive notifications from alcohol licensed premises (under the Licensing Act 2003) for the use of two or fewer gaming machines;
- Issue Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permits for premises licensed to sell/supply alcohol for consumption on the licensed premises, under the Licensing Act 2003, where there are more than two machines;
- Register small society lotteries below prescribed thresholds;
- Issue Prize Gaming Permits;
- Receive and endorse Temporary Use Notices;
- Receive Occasional Use Notices;
- Provide information to the Gambling Commission;
- Maintain registers of licences and permits that are issued and small society lottery registrations.

It should be noted that this Licensing Authority will not be involved in licensing remote gambling. This is the responsibility of the Gambling Commission by means of operating licences.

7. Local Risk Assessments

The Gambling Commission's Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice (LCCP) (issued in February 2015) requires operators to consider local risks in their applications.

As part of the application process, licensees are required to submit a local risk assessment when applying for a new premises licence. An updated risk assessment must also be submitted:

- when applying for a variation of a premises licence;

- to take account of significant changes in local circumstances, including those identified in a licensing authority's policy statement; and
- when there are significant changes at a licensee's premises that may affect their mitigation of local risks.

A local risk assessment should (a) assess specific risks to the licensing objectives in the local area, and (b) assess whether control measures going beyond standard control measures are needed.

This Licensing Authority may require a licensee to share their risk assessment with the authority. The risk assessment will set out the measures the licensee has in place to address specific issues where concerns exist over new or existing risks. By adopting this proactive approach Licensing Authorities and licensees should be able to reduce the occasions on which a premises review is required.

8. Local Area Profile – North West Leicestershire

Licensees should share their risk assessment with licensing authorities when applying for a premises licence or applying for a variation to existing licensed premises, or otherwise on request. Such risk assessments can make reference to the council's area profile which may be compiled with respect to reported gambling-related problems in an area.

The detailed local area Profile can be found at Appendix C.

9. Registers

The Licensing Authority keeps registers of the premises licences it has issued. They can be viewed online on the Council's web site at

https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/pages/view_comment_on_licensing_applications or at the Council's offices during normal office hours. Copies of the register can be requested but a charge will be made.

10. Fees

The Council shall aim to ensure that the income it receives in fees matches the costs of providing the service to which the fees relate. The Council sets its own fees within a framework set by central government.

PART B

Premises Licences

1. General Principles

Premises licences will be subject to the requirements set out in the Act and regulations, as well as specific mandatory and default conditions detailed in regulations issued by the Secretary of State. This Licensing Authority may exclude default conditions and also attach others, where it is believed to be appropriate.

This Licensing Authority is aware that in making decisions about premises licences it should aim to permit the use of premises for gambling in so far as it thinks it is:

- In accordance with any relevant code of practice issued by the Gambling Commission;
- In accordance with any relevant guidance issued by the Gambling Commission;
- Reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives; and
- In accordance with this Licensing Authority's Statement of Licensing Policy.

In determining applications, this Licensing Authority will only take into consideration all relevant matters and not take into consideration any irrelevant matters. Planning permission, building control approval and public nuisance are not considered to be relevant. Each application or review will be decided on its merits and will depend to a large extent on the type of gambling that is proposed for the premises.

This Licensing Authority accepts the principle that moral objections to gambling are not a valid reason to reject applications for premises licences and also that unmet demand is not a criterion for a Licensing Authority.

This Licensing Authority will give particular consideration to applications:

- for multiple licences for a building and those relating to a discrete part of a building used for other (non-gambling) purposes; and
- applications where access to the licensed premises is through other premises (which themselves may be licensed or unlicensed).

In respect of premises which still have to be constructed or altered, an operator can apply for a premises licence rather than a provisional statement. In these circumstances, this Licensing Authority will first decide whether, as a matter of substance after applying the principles in section 153 of the Act, the premises ought to be permitted to be used for gambling and secondly, in deciding whether or not to grant the application, this Licensing Authority will need to consider if appropriate conditions can be put in place to cater for the situation that the premises are not yet in the state in which they ought to be before gambling takes place.

Any conditions attached to licences will be proportionate and will be:

- relevant to the need to make the proposed building suitable as a gambling facility;
- directly related to the premises and the type of licence applied for;
- fairly and reasonably related to the scale and type of premises; and
- reasonable in all other respects.

Decisions upon individual conditions will be made on a case by case basis.

Gaming machines are defined in the Act which essentially covers all machines on which people can gamble. Section 172 of the Act prescribes the number and category of gaming machines that are permitted in each type of gambling premises licensed by the Licensing Authority. Regulations define 4 categories of gaming machines: categories A, B, C and D with category B divided into further sub-categories. The categories and subcategories have been defined according to the maximum amount that can be paid for playing the machines and the maximum prize it can deliver. A breakdown of gaming machine categories and entitlements is available on the Gambling Commission website www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk

2. Licensing Objectives

Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime

Where an area has known high levels of organised crime, this Licensing Authority will consider carefully whether gambling premises are suitable to be located there and whether conditions may be appropriate such as the provision of door supervisors.

Appropriate matters for consideration may include:

- disorder;
- the sale and distribution of controlled drugs;
- the laundering of the proceeds of drugs to support gambling.

Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way

This Licensing Authority does not expect to be concerned with ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way as this will be addressed via operating and personal licences which will be dealt with by the Gambling Commission.

Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling

This Licensing Authority will consider whether specific measures are required at particular premises, with regard to this licensing objective. Appropriate measures may include:

- supervision of entrances / machines;
- location of machines including cash terminals;
- segregation of areas;
- signage / leaflets.

As regards the term “vulnerable persons” it is noted that the Gambling Commission is not seeking to offer a definition but states that “it will for regulatory purposes assume that this group includes people who gamble more than they want to; people who gamble beyond their means; and people who may not be able to make informed or balanced decisions about gambling due to a mental impairment, alcohol or drugs.” This Licensing Authority will consider this licensing objective on a case by case basis.

3. Adult Gaming Centres

This Licensing Authority will specifically have regard to the need to protect children and vulnerable persons from harm or being exploited by gambling and will expect the applicant

to satisfy the Licensing Authority that there will be sufficient measures to, for example, ensure that under 18 year olds do not have access to the premises.

Factors which this Licensing Authority may consider include:

- Proof of age schemes
- CCTV
- Supervision of entrances / machine areas
- Physical separation of areas
- Location of entrance
- Notices / signage
- Specific opening hours
- Self-barring schemes
- Provision of information leaflets / helpline numbers for organisations such as GamCare.

This list is not mandatory, nor exhaustive, and is merely indicative of factors that may be taken into consideration.

4. (Licensed) Family Entertainment Centres

This Licensing Authority will specifically have regard to the need to protect children and vulnerable persons from harm or being exploited by gambling and will expect the applicant to satisfy the Licensing Authority, for example, that there will be sufficient measures to ensure that under 18 year olds do not have access to the adult only gaming machine areas.

Factors which this Licensing Authority may consider include:

- CCTV
- Supervision of entrances / machine areas
- Physical separation of areas
- Location of entrance
- Notices / signage
- Specific opening hours
- Self-barring schemes
- Provision of information leaflets / helpline numbers for organisations such as GamCare.
- Measures / training for staff on how to deal with suspected truant school children on the premises

This list is not mandatory, nor exhaustive, and is merely indicative of factors that may be taken into consideration.

5. Casinos

This Licensing Authority has not passed a 'no casino' resolution under the Act, but is aware that it has the power to do so. Should this Licensing Authority decide in the future to pass such a resolution, it will update this policy statement with details of that resolution. Any such decision will be made by the Full Council.

6. Bingo Premises

Gaming machines may be made available for use in licensed bingo premises only on those days when sufficient facilities for playing bingo are also available for use.

Where category C or above machines are available in premises to which children are admitted this Licensing Authority will wish to ensure that:

- all such machines are located in an area of the premises separate from the remainder of the premises by a physical barrier which is effective to prevent access other than through a designated entrance;
- only adults are admitted to the area where the machines are located;
- access to the area where the machines are located is supervised;
- the area where the machines are located is arranged so that it can be observed by staff of the operator or the licence holder; and
- at the entrance to, and inside any such area there are prominently displayed notices indicating that access to the area is prohibited to persons under 18.

7. Betting Premises

It is not permissible to offer gaming machines on a premises which is licensed for betting but not to offer sufficient facilities for betting.

In deciding whether to restrict the number of betting machines, this Licensing Authority will take into account the size of the premises, the number of counter positions available for person-to-person transactions, and the ability of staff to monitor the use of betting machines by children and young persons (it is an offence for those under 18 to bet) or by vulnerable people.

8. Tracks

Tracks are defined in the Act as ‘a horse racecourse, greyhound track or other premises on any part of which a race or other sporting event takes place or is intended to take place.’ Examples of a track are football, cricket and rugby grounds, a motor racing event and venues hosting darts, bowls, or snooker tournaments. This list is by no means exhaustive as betting could take place at any venue where a sporting or competitive event is occurring.

This Licensing Authority will expect the premises licence applicant to demonstrate suitable measures to ensure that children do not have access to adult only gaming facilities. It is noted that children and young persons are allowed to attend premises such as greyhound tracks or racecourses on event days, and children are permitted into areas where betting facilities are provided, such as the betting ring, where betting takes place. However, they are still prevented from entering areas where gaming machines (other than category D machines) are provided.

Factors which this Licensing Authority may consider include:

- Proof of age schemes
- CCTV
- Supervision of entrances / machine areas
- Physical separation of areas
- Location of entrance
- Notices / signage
- Specific opening hours
- Self-baring schemes
- Provision of information leaflets / helpline numbers for organisations such as GamCare

This list is not mandatory, nor exhaustive, and is merely indicative of factors that may be taken into consideration.

Applications for track premises licences will need to demonstrate that, where the applicant holds a pool betting operating licence and is going to use his entitlement to four gaming machines, unless they are Category D machines, these machines are located in areas from which children are excluded.

This Licensing Authority will require detailed plans of the racetrack itself and the area that will be used for temporary “on-course” betting facilities (often known as the “betting ring”). In the case of dog tracks and horse racecourses fixed and mobile pool betting facilities operated by the Tote or track operator, as well as any other proposed gambling facilities must be clearly indicated on the plans. The plans should also make clear what is being sought for authorisation under the track betting premises licence and what, if any, other areas are to be subject to a separate application for a different type of premises licence.

9. Travelling Fairs

Where category D machines and / or equal chance prize gaming without a permit is to be made available for use at travelling fairs, the statutory requirement that the facilities for gambling amount to no more than an ancillary amusement at the fair must be met.

This Licensing Authority will consider whether the applicant falls within the statutory definition of a travelling fair.

A site may not be used for fairs on more than 27 days per calendar year. The 27-day maximum applies to the piece of land on which the fairs are held, regardless of whether it is the same or different travelling fairs occupying the land. This Licensing Authority will monitor the use of land and maintain a record of the dates on which land is used.

10. Provisional Statements

Applicants for premises licences must fulfil certain criteria. They must hold or have applied for an operating licence from the Gambling Commission (except in the case of a track), and they must have a right to occupy the premises in respect of which their premises licence application is made. These restrictions do not apply in relation to an application for a provisional statement.

The application for a provisional statement must be accompanied by plans and the fee. Responsible authorities and interested parties may make representations.

Once the premises are constructed, altered, or acquired the holder of a provisional statement can return to this Licensing Authority and submit an application for the necessary premises licence.

11. Reviews

Requests for a review of a premises licence can be made by interested parties or responsible authorities however, it is for this Licensing Authority to decide whether the review is to be allowed. An application for review may be rejected if the grounds of the review:

- are not relevant to the principles that must be applied by this Licensing Authority in accordance with the Act;
- are frivolous;

- are vexatious;
- 'will certainly not' cause this Licensing Authority to revoke or suspend a licence or to remove, amend or attach conditions to the premises licence;
- are substantially the same as grounds stated in a previous application relating to the same premises; or
- are substantially the same as representations made at the time the application for a premises licence was considered.

The Act provides that Licensing Authorities may initiate a review in relation to a particular class of premises licence or in relation to particular premises.

In relation to a class of premises, this Licensing Authority may review the use made of premises and, in particular, the arrangements that premises licence holders have made to comply with licence conditions.

In relation to particular premises, this Licensing Authority may review any matter connected with the use made of the premises if it has reason to suspect that premises licence conditions are not being observed, or for any other reason (such as a complaint from a third party) which gives it cause to believe that a review may be appropriate. A formal review will normally be at the end of a process ensuring compliance by the operator. If the operator does not meet requirements then after a formal review, this Licensing Authority may impose additional conditions or revoke the premises licence.

PART C

Permits, Temporary Use Notice & Occasional Use Notice

1. Unlicensed Family Entertainment Centre Gaming Machine Permits

The application will be in the form and manner specified by this Licensing Authority. The application form must be accompanied by a plan of the premises indicating the location of the gaming machines and the fee.

This Licensing Authority considers that the applicant should have policies and procedures in place to protect children from harm. Harm in this context is not limited to harm from gambling but includes wider child protection considerations. The policies and procedures may include:

- appropriate measures / training for staff as regards suspected truant school children on the premises;
- a proof of age policy;
- measures / training covering how staff would deal with unsupervised very young children being on the premises; or
- children causing perceived problems on / around the premises.

2. (Alcohol) Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permits

The application will be in the form and manner specified by this Licensing Authority. Applications will be required to state the premises to which it relates and the number and category of gaming machines sought. The application form must be accompanied by a plan of the premises and the fee.

This Licensing Authority will consider each application on a case by case basis but generally there will be regard to the need to protect children and vulnerable persons from harm or being exploited by gambling and will expect the applicant to satisfy the Licensing Authority that there will be sufficient measures to ensure that under 18 year olds do not have access to the adult only gaming machines. The permit holder must be capable of demonstrating compliance with the conditions detailed in the Code of Practice issued by the Gambling Commission and this Licensing Authority would expect the permit holder to implement the best practice set out in the Code of Practice.

3. Prize Gaming Permits

The application will be in the form and manner specified by this Licensing Authority. The application form must specify the premises and be accompanied by a plan of the premises and the fee.

This Licensing Authority will require the applicant to set out the types of gaming that he/she is intending to offer and the applicant should be able to demonstrate:

- that they understand the limits on stakes and prizes that are set out in regulations; and
- that the gaming offered is within the law.

In making its decision on an application for this permit the Licensing Authority does not need to have regard to the licensing objectives but must have regard to any Gambling Commission guidance.

4. Club Gaming and Club Machines Permits

Members Clubs and Miners' welfare institutes (but not Commercial Clubs) may apply for a Club Gaming Permit. The Club Gaming Permit will enable the premises to provide gaming machines (3 machines of categories B3A (no more than one), B4, C or D), equal chance gaming and games of chance.

Members Clubs, Miners' welfare institutes and Commercial Clubs may apply for a Club Machine Permit. A Club Machine permit will only enable the premises to provide gaming machines (3 machines of categories B3A (no more than one), B4, C or D). Commercial clubs are not allowed to provide category B3A gaming machines.

This Licensing Authority may only refuse an application for either type of permit if:

- (a) the applicant does not fulfil the requirements for a members' or commercial club or miners' welfare institute and therefore is not entitled to receive the type of permit for which it has applied;
- (b) the applicant's premises are used wholly or mainly by children and/or young person's;
- (c) an offence under the Act or a breach of a permit has been committed by the applicant while providing gaming facilities;
- (d) a permit held by the applicant has been cancelled in the previous ten years; or
- (e) an objection has been lodged by the Commission or the police.

There is also a 'fast-track' procedure available under the Act for premises which hold a Club Premises Certificate under the Licensing Act 2003. Under the fast-track procedure there is no opportunity for objections to be made by the Commission or the police and the grounds on which an application may be refused are:

- (a) that the club is established primarily for gaming, other than gaming prescribed under schedule 12;
- (b) that in addition to the prescribed gaming, the applicant provides facilities for other gaming; or
- (c) that a club gaming permit or club machine permit issued to the applicant in the last ten years has been cancelled.

The permit holder must demonstrate compliance with the conditions detailed in the Code of Practice issued by the Gambling Commission and this Licensing Authority would expect the permit holder to implement the best practice set out in the Code of Practice.

5. Temporary Use Notices

Temporary Use Notices (TUN) can only be used to permit the provision of facilities for equal chance gaming where the gaming is intended to produce a single overall winner.

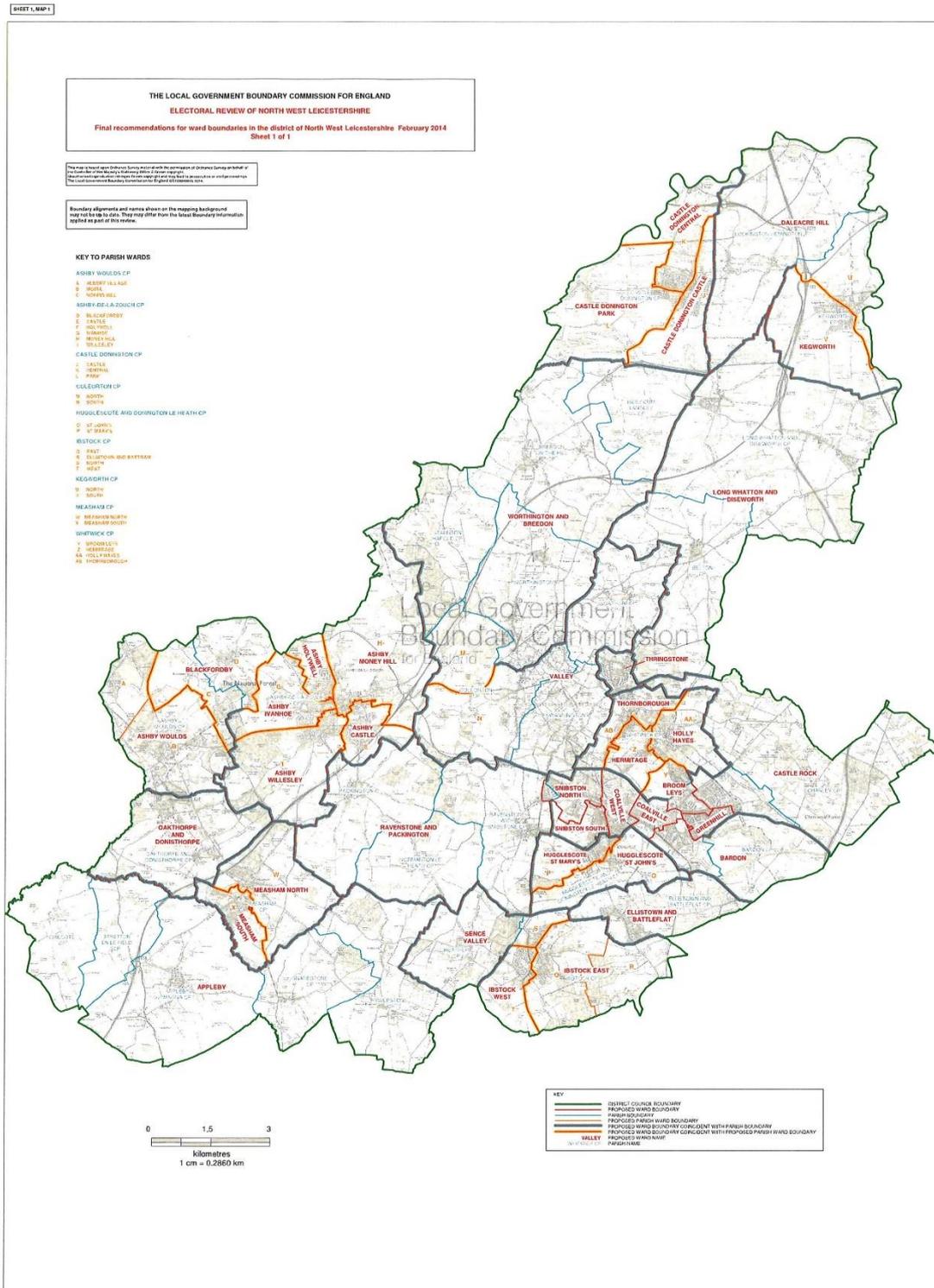
The holder of a relevant operating licence must give notice to this Licensing Authority on the prescribed form with the relevant fee.

This Licensing Authority will have regard to the licensing objectives when considering whether to object to any notice received.

6. Occasional Use Notices

A notice must be served by a person who is responsible for the administration of events on the track or by an occupier of the track. The notice must be served on this Licensing Authority and copied to the Chief Officer of Police for the area in which the track is located. The notice must specify the day on which it has effect. Notices may be given in relation to consecutive days, so long as the overall limit of eight days is not exceeded in the calendar year.

Appendix A - Area Map



Appendix B – List of Consultees

Leicestershire Police
Leicestershire Fire Service
Gambling Commission
Association of British Bookmakers
British Amusement Catering Trades Association
British Casino Association
Bingo Association
British Horse Racing Board
Working Men's Club and Institute Union
British Beer & Pub Association
Gamcare
Salvation Army
Leicestershire Partnership Trust CAMHS
Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Board
Leicestershire County Council Public Health
Betfred
Gala Leisure
Ladbrokes
Moto Donington
Quicksilver
GambleAware
2 Fat Ladies Leisure Limited
Betbre, Ashby De La Zouch
Town and Parish Councils
South Derbyshire District Council
Charnwood Borough Council
Local secondary schools / colleges
Other teams within North West Leicestershire District Council (Community Safety, Community Focus, Strategic Housing)
Vital Health Group
Licensing agents and solicitors

Appendix C – Local Area Profile

The link below takes you to interactive maps showing the prevalence of problem gambling severity in each local authority and ward area as well as usage of, and reported demand for, treatment and support for gambling harms.

Interactive Maps

The published data and maps relate to the findings of the Annual GB Treatments and Support Survey 2022 which can be found at the following link: [Annual GB Treatment and Support Survey 2022](#)

The Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) measures levels of gambling behaviour which may cause harm to an individual from low-risk gambling (score 1-2), to moderate risk gambling (3-7), and problem gambling (8+). A summary understanding of gambling harms in North West Leicestershire details the following:

- It is estimated one in eight people in North West Leicestershire have a PGSI score of one or more (12.6%), this compares to 13.4% across Great Britain.
- One in 20 people (4.9%) in North West Leicestershire have a PGSI score of 3 or more, compared to 5.9% across Great Britain.
- One in 47 people (2.1%) in North West Leicestershire have a PGSI score of 8 or more, compared to 2.9% across Great Britain.
- £1.6 million is the estimated fiscal cost of 'problem gambling' in North West Leicestershire.
- 11.4% of those who have a score of PGSI 1+ would like treatment, support or advice to deal with their gambling. This rises to 62.1% among PGSI 8+ in North West Leicestershire.
- 11.7% of those in North West Leicestershire who have a score of PGSI 1+ have accessed treatment, support or advice, compared to 14.8% across Great Britain.
- 28.2% of those in North West Leicestershire who have a score of PGSI 3+ have accessed treatment, support or advice, compared to 32.1% across Great Britain.
- 62.6% of those with in North West Leicestershire who have a score of PGSI 8+ have accessed treatment, support or advice, compared to 65.5% across Great Britain.

(Source GambleAware Annual GB Treatment and Support Survey 2022).

The following area profile has been included to facilitate operators being able to better understand the environment within North West Leicestershire and therefore proactively mitigate risks to the licensing objectives. The information detailed below was correct at the time of publishing. Applicants are advised to contact the licensing team to seek the current local area profile.

Population

North West Leicestershire has a population of 104,700 (source: [North West Leicestershire Census 2021](#)), 12.0% higher than 10 years previously. The population growth was higher than the East Midlands region (7.7%) and England (6.6%). The proportion of young people (0-15 years) in North West Leicestershire is 17.1% and is slightly below the regional and national averages. The District has 20.1% of the population above pension age, slightly higher than for the East Midlands or England. The percentage of people from minority ethnic groups within the population of North West Leicestershire is 4.1%(source: 2021 Census); this compares with 14.3% for the East Midlands and 19.0% for England respectively.

Economy and skills

Between January and December 2023, 81.0% of North West Leicestershire's 16-64 year olds were economically active, compared to 78.8% in Great Britain as a whole (source: ONS Annual Population Survey). The District's economy is dynamic, with a higher job density average than the East Midlands or Great Britain of 1.17, and many people commute into the District to work for North west Leicestershire businesses.

The proportion of residents aged 16-64 years claiming financial support in North West Leicestershire was 3.8% in April 2024. The highest claimant rate in North West Leicestershire was Greenhill (Coalville) with a rate of 6.1%. (Source: Nomis June 2021).

0.4% of the resident population aged 16-64 in North West Leicestershire claim Jobseekers' Allowance (source Nomis: April 2024).

Educational attainment

In 2021/22, the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ GCSEs in English and Maths was 50.8% in Leicestershire compared to an England average of 50% (source: Department for Education).

In 2023, the percentage of residents aged over 16 with at least NVQ Level 1 or equivalent qualifications in North West Leicestershire was 96.6%, above the Great Britain average of 89.0% (source: ONS Annual Population Survey Jan – Dec 2023). 46.7% of the District's population had an NVQ4 or above – higher than the East Midland's 40.2% but slightly below Great Britain's 47.3%.

Housing

The average household size in North West Leicestershire is 2.3 people, the England average is 2.4 people (source: Census, 2021).

Between 2011 and 2021, the number of households in North West Leicestershire increased by 12%, compared to an England and Wales average of 6.6% (source: Census 2021).

Between October and December 2023, the rate of homelessness in North West Leicestershire was 0.78 per 1,000, compared to an England average of 1.87 per 1,000 (source: Department for Levelling up Housing and Communities April 2024).

Schools – for academic years 2023/2024

Ashby School, Nottingham Road, Ashby de la Zouch LE65 1DT – Age range 11-19 – 1,623 pupils

Ivanhoe, North Street, Ashby De La Zouch, LE65 1HX - Age range 11-16 - 899 pupils

Castle Rock School (inc King Edward VII), Meadow Lane, Coalville, LE67 4BR – Age range 11-18 - 1221 pupils

Stephenson Studio School, Thornborough Road Coalville, LE67 3TN – Age range 14-19 – 79 pupils

Ibstock Community College, Central Avenue, Ibstock, LE67 6NE - Age range 11-16 - 709 Pupils

Newbridge School, Forest Road, Coalville, LE67 3SJ - Age range 11-16 – 798 pupils

Forest Way School, Warren Hills Road Coalville LE67 4UU – Age range 3-19 - 271 pupils

Castle Donington College, Mount Pleasant, Castle Donington DE74 2LN – Age range 11-16 – 639 pupils

Breakdown of gambling premises by type and location is given below

Premises Type	
Betting	6
Adult Gaming Centres (AGCs)	5
Bingo	1
Location	
Coalville town centre	4 (2 betting, 1 bingo and 1 AGC)
Coalville suburbs (Greenhill)	1 betting
Ashby de la Zouch	2 betting
East Midlands Airport	2 AGCs
Motorway service	2 AGCs
Measham	1 betting

In addition to the two main town centres, betting premises can also be found in some of the smaller communities of Greenhill and Measham.

The two Adult Gaming Centres at East Midlands Airport are both situated airside (beyond passport control). Due to the complexities of gaining access to this restricted area of the airport their customer base is taken from transient travellers leaving the country on holiday

or business. These premises are considered to be low-risk and consequently receive light touch intervention from the licensing authority.

The motorway service area at Donington Park generally serves individuals using the M1 and A42 routes. The premises are situated away from the motorway and can be accessed by anyone using the nearby minor roads. The service area is open 24 hours. Underage gambling is low-risk as there are no housing estates within walking distance. Underage persons would more than likely be under the supervision of a parent or guardian whilst visiting the motorway service area.

The only bingo premises in the district is situated in Coalville, housed in a 1930's design building previously used as a cinema .

North West Leicestershire is earmarked for a large house building programme over the next 15 years. However there is no intelligence to suggest that the extra population will alter the demographic of those people that live and spend time in the district.

Enquiries with local betting premises in relation to use of B2 or fixed odds betting terminals (FOBT) indicates that there is no excessive use of the machines and that proper control and monitoring of these machines by the licence holders is in place. Inspections by licensing enforcement officers have highlighted a high level of compliance by the industry and this is backed up by the historically low number of complaints received about individual premises. This Authority will continue to monitor to ensure high compliance levels are maintained.

Leicestershire County Council Public Health Team July 2024

Gambling Harms

Gambling and the harms associated with it are increasingly considered a public health issue¹, not least due to the negative impact harmful gambling products can have on the individual's health, relationships, and their financial and social circumstances². Gambling at a harmful level is defined by the adverse consequences on the individual, families and communities³ and is considered a comorbidity with substance dependencies, such as alcohol and drug misuse⁴. The [National Suicide Prevention Strategy](#) acknowledges harmful gambling as a risk factor for suicide, and includes an ambition to improve data and evidence on people experiencing harmful gambling⁵.

Impact across Leicestershire

Anyone exposed to gambling products is at risk of experiencing harms⁶, however data suggests that there are some communities which are more vulnerable than others, and the harm is not distributed equally. There is a strong correlation to communities already experiencing health inequalities, including deprivation and poor mental health⁷, and across Leicestershire the most gambling premises are in the most deprived areas.

Nationally, evidence suggests that males, 16-24 year olds, individuals from ethnic minority groups, those unemployed and those with poor mental health are more likely to experience gambling harms. Research has found that veterans are 10 times more likely to experience harms from gambling than non-veterans⁸, and the homeless population are identified as a vulnerable group who are also at risk of co-morbid health issues such as mental health and substance addictions^{9,10}.

[2023 Gambling Commission survey data](#) suggests nationally that 0.3% of adults experience harmful gambling. When applied to the Census 2021 population estimates, this equates to 1,762

people in Leicestershire. For every individual experiencing harms, six to ten other people are impacted, which amounts to between 10,572 to 17,620 Leicestershire residents being affected by someone else's gambling. The [Office for Health Improvement and Disparities \(2023\)](#) also estimate that over 9,500 children live in the same household as an adult who might benefit from gambling treatment and support.

Children are also considered vulnerable due to their age. The [Gambling Commission's children survey \(2023\)](#) highlights nationally, 0.7% of children are 'problem gamblers', equating to 395 children in Leicestershire. Gambling harms have a broad impact on families when considering housing, finances, family breakdowns and the impact of suicide, with further local research required into the links with gaming/gambling and young people.

There is a national issue with local data for a number of reasons including lack of services available to record, and the secretive nature and stigma attached to the behaviour preventing access to services. As a result, often national data is aligned with our census populations and is considered an underestimate.

Public Health

Although not a responsible authority, Leicestershire Public Health is a consultee, to assist the District Council in addressing gambling related harms across North West Leicestershire. The Local Government Association and Public Health England in 2018 produced [Tackling gambling related harm: A whole council approach](#), recommending that Public Health contribute to licensing statements of policy along with a wider approach to understanding the scale of harmful gambling locally. Accessing data at District level is a challenge, recognised in the Draft Leicestershire Gambling Related Harms Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, with the intention to increase screening and data collection and build our understanding of local prevalence.

Public health also works closely with District Licensing teams regarding other licensed establishments, local plan and planning colleagues, to promote variety in the high street offer and consider the impact of a concentration of licensed premises. This is particularly relevant with vulnerable populations or in areas of high levels of deprivation. The Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) recommend promoting a variety in the High Street offer, to create vibrant, diverse and sustainable town centres through encouraging a diverse mix of uses.

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NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2024



Title of Report	REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS ABOUT COUNCILLORS	
Presented by	Councillor Keith Merrie MBE Infrastructure Portfolio Holder	
Background Papers	Agenda and Minutes of Audit and Governance Committee – 25 September 2024 Current Arrangements for Dealing with Councillor Complaints Current Flowchart of Complaint Procedure	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	There are no direct financial implications arising.	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	The Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to adopt Arrangements for dealing with complaints about Members' conduct. The Council already has Arrangements in place which were drafted based on LGA Guidance, however it is prudent to keep these Arrangements under review to ensure they still reflect best practice since their adoption in 2022.	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	There are no direct staffing or corporate implications arising.	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	To ask Council to consider the work of the Governance Working Group on the review of the Arrangements for Dealing with Councillor Complaints and accompanying Flowchart, and adopt the amended Arrangements and Flowchart. To ask Council to authorise the Monitoring Officer to update the Constitution to reflect the amendments to the Arrangements and Flowchart.	
Recommendations	THAT COUNCIL: 1. NOTES THE WORK OF THE CROSS-PARTY WORKING GROUP IN CONDUCTING THE REVIEW OF THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS ABOUT COUNCILLORS;	

	<p>2. ADOPTS THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ARRANGEMENTS, SUMMARISED IN THE REPORT AND AT APPENDIX A AND ILLUSTRATED AT APPENDIX B, AND THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE FLOWCHART AT APPENDIX C, FOR ADOPTION WITH EFFECT FROM 6 NOVEMBER 2024;</p> <p>3. AUTHORISES THE MONITORING OFFICER TO UPDATE THE CONSTITUTION TO GIVE EFFECT TO THE AMENDMENTS REQUIRED AS A CONSEQUENCE OF REVIEWING THE ARRANGEMENTS, AS SET OUT AT APPENDIX D, WITH EFFECT FROM 6 NOVEMBER 2024.</p>
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1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Section 27(2) of the Localism Act 2011 requires each local authority to adopt a Councillors' code of conduct, and s28(6) also requires there to be arrangements under which allegations against members can be investigated, and decisions can be made. The Council adopted its Code of Conduct and Arrangements on 24 February 2022.
- 1.2 It is considered good practice to review the procedures from time to time, especially as there has been a recent increase in the number of complaints being referred to the Monitoring Officer, and sub-committees being convened to consider complaints.
- 1.3 The Audit and Governance Committee has considered the proposed amendments prior to these being brought before Full Council. The Committee supported the recommendation that Council be asked to adopt the amended Arrangements and Flowchart. The minutes of that meeting are included as background papers to this report.

2.0 METHOD OF REVIEW

- 2.1 A cross-party member working group was established to work on the review of the Arrangements. The Governance Working Group comprised of Councillors Everitt, Rogers, Simmons (Chair), Smith and Sutton, and met on the following dates:
- 10 July 2024
 - 31 July 2024
- 2.2 The Working Group had agreed its terms of reference at the meeting of the Group held on 10 July 2024. At that meeting, the Group also agreed the timetable for the review of the Arrangements and the way that it wished to see information presented to it. The appendices to this report reflect the approach agreed by the working group. Appendix A shows the proposed changes summarised in a schedule of changes. Appendix B contains a copy of the Arrangements with the revisions having been made, and shows the proposed changes as tracked changes. This enables Members to see the proposed changes in one place and in the context of the Arrangements as a whole. Appendix C shows the updated version of the flowchart which accompanies the Arrangements. Appendix D sets out the necessary amendments to the Council's Constitution, resulting from the review of the Arrangements (discussed further below).
- 2.3 Members have provided invaluable insight and constructive challenge to the review process and are thanked for their time and work on this project.

3.0 SUMMARY OF MAIN CHANGES PROPOSED

- 3.1 The schedule of changes to the Arrangements is provided at Appendix A. A copy of the updated Arrangements (with tracked changes) is provided at Appendix B, with the updated Flowchart at Appendix C. The proposed changes cover the following:
1. Updating the name of the Arrangements and the Flowchart.
 2. Removing the provisions relating to appeals, including removing the Review Committee stages of the current procedure. If adopted, this will also require a change to the Constitution, to remove the references to 'Review Sub-Committee' where it occurs in Part 2 Section D7, as well as in the definitions section of the Constitution. An extract from the Constitution showing the proposed amendments in tracked changes is provided at Appendix D to this report.
 3. Amending the provisions to allow the investigator to set their own investigation plan, rather than prescribing what they should include in this if the complaint progresses to requiring the involvement of an external investigator.
 4. Removing the chairperson's ability to use their discretion as to whether the complainant or subject member can observe a meeting held in closed session.
 5. Tidying up the provisions regarding confidential complaints and adding wording to ensure a decision to keep the identity of a complainant confidential is kept under review.
 6. Adding a provision to acknowledge that an appropriate summary of the outcome would still need to be published for meetings dealing with exempt or confidential information.
 7. Adding a provision to acknowledge that Sub-Committees may co-opt a parish member for decisions concerning a parish matter, to reflect the provision for this in the Constitution.
 8. Generally tidying up numbering and typing errors, updating the Council's address, adding defined terms and capitalisation.
- 3.2 It is proposed that the changes are adopted from 6 November 2024. The new Arrangements will then apply to any complaints arising from that date. Any complaints which are already in progress will continue to be dealt with under the current Arrangements until completed.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	A well-run council which is trusted by customers to provide its services.
Policy Considerations:	It is a legal requirement to have a Members' Code of Conduct and Arrangements for dealing with complaints.
Safeguarding:	N/A
Equalities/Diversity:	N/A
Customer Impact:	A clear yet comprehensive set of Arrangements will enable customers to understand the process if they wish to complain about the conduct of a Councillor, to provide assurance that all legitimate complaints will be investigated thoroughly and fairly. The revised Arrangements and Flowchart will be available for members of the public to access online, or at the Council offices as per the address within the Arrangements.
Economic and Social Impact:	N/A
Environment, Climate Change and zero carbon:	N/A
Consultation/Community Engagement:	N/A
Risks:	The Arrangements are a legal requirement. Having compliant Arrangements which set out the process for dealing with complaints may reduce the risk of any challenge to NWL processes.
Officer Contact	Elizabeth Warhurst Head of Legal and Commercial Services elizabeth.warhurst@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

Appendix A

Review of Arrangements For Dealing with Complaints About Councillors - Schedule of Changes

Amendments to Current Arrangements

Current Arrangements Reference	Amended/Moved/Removed	Reason
Title of the Arrangements	Amended to: Arrangements For Dealing With Complaints About Councillors	The link to view the Arrangements on NWL's website already uses the proposed name, then when the document opens up it has the current name at the top. The proposed name is more clear as to what the document contains and its purpose, and streamlines the name across all places. With the current name, it may cause confusion as to what the document relates to, especially as it does not match the name on the website link.
Title of the Flowchart	Amended to: Flowchart re: Arrangements For Dealing With Complaints About Councillors	As above, this streamlines the naming of the document and makes it more clear that the flowchart is connected to the Arrangements.
Clause 1, Paragraph 1 – Members' Code of Conduct	Amended to: Councillors' Code of Conduct	This brings the reference to the Code into line with the name change which had previously been agreed.

Clause 2 – available on request from the Civic Offices	Amended to: Council Offices at Whitwick Business Centre, Whitwick Business Park, Stenson Road, Coalville, LE67 4JP	Updating the location of where the code of conduct can be requested.
Clause 3 – address for complaints	Amended to: North West Leicestershire District Council, PO Box 11051, Coalville, Leicestershire, LE67 0FW	Updating the address for complaints to be sent to, as this previously had the old address.
Anonymous and Confidential Complaints (page 2) – ‘Where the complainant wishes to remain anonymous...’	Amended to: ‘Where the complainant wishes for their identity to remain confidential...’	Anonymous/confidential had been used interchangeably, but relate to separate points. Anonymous complaints are where the Council does not know who made the complaint. This line in the paragraph should refer to a confidential complaint, as the Monitoring Officer will know the complainant’s identity but the issue is whether the Subject Member should be told.
Clause 4, paragraph 6 – ‘dealing with a matter by alternative resolution’.	Amended to: ‘dealing with a matter by informal resolution’.	The wording throughout the Arrangements refers to informal resolution, the change keeps it consistent.
Clause 5, paragraph 4 and Clause 6, paragraph 2	Removal of: ‘it will be at the Chair’s discretion as to whether the complainant and/or Subject Member may be able to observe the meeting if it is being held in closed session’.	The references in the Arrangements to the Chair’s discretion as to whether the complainant and/or Subject Member can observe if a meeting has been deemed to be a closed session has been removed, as it is felt this would go against the

		confidentiality provisions of the LGA 1972.
<p>Clause 5, paragraph 5</p> <p>and</p> <p>Clause 13</p> <p>(Provisions relating to Appeals)</p>	<p>Clause 5 - Removal of 'who may be given leave by the Committee to appeal the decision. Such appeal will only be granted where there is new evidence in relation to the complaint.'</p> <p>Clause 13 - Removal of the appeals wording, the paragraph will simply read: 'There is no right of appeal for the complainant or for the Subject Member. If you feel that the authority has failed to deal with your complaint properly, you may make a complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. Details can be found here https://www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint/fact-sheets/other-topics/complaints-about-standards-and-member-conduct'</p> <p><i>See also Appendix D for the consequential amendments to the Constitution which will be required if these amendments are approved.</i></p>	<p>There is not a requirement for this stage of the procedure to be present in the Arrangements. The LGA Guidance provides: "There should be no right of appeal against a decision not to take any further action if the system is to be efficient and proportionate" and goes on to state, "There should be no appeal allowed either for the subject member or the complainant. Where a breach has been found and the matter is going to a hearing the parties will have their chance to have their say on the investigation at that stage. Where no breach has been found, no action taken or the matter otherwise resolved, that will be the end of the matter."</p> <p>The point above has already dealt with why the appeal stage is being removed. At the point where a review would take place, the complaint would have already gone through a number of stages, as shown on the flowchart, and would have been considered fully and fairly.</p>

		<p>This step is therefore somewhat superfluous, as on each occasion where the 'Review Committee' stage occurs, there has already been a fact-finding exercise, report to the assessment sub-committee, and public interest consideration. At the 'breach of the code' stage, the complaint would have additionally been through formal investigation via and external party, and the determination sub-committee.</p> <p>The LGA Guidance states, "Given that the framework and sanctions are meant to be light-touch and proportionate, there should be no right of appeal against a decision on a Code of Conduct complaint."</p>
Clause 5, paragraph 7	<p>Amended to: 'Should the Committee determine that the matter warrants a detailed investigation, the Monitoring Officer will appoint an Investigating Officer who may be an officer of another authority (e.g. a Monitoring Officer from another council) or an external investigator. The Investigating Officer will draft an initial plan for the investigation, and will have overall responsibility for the conduct and outcome of the investigation. The investigation will be carried out in accordance with the Investigations Guidance document, a</p>	<p>The amendment reflects the fact that each Investigating Officer may have their own method of carrying out the investigation, so allows them the flexibility of drafting their own investigation plan, rather than having to follow what is prescribed in the Arrangements.</p> <p>There is also reference to the Investigations Guidance document, to acknowledge the</p>

	copy of which the parties will be provided with at the time.'	existence of this and the fact it will be provided when needed.
Clause 5, paragraph 8	Paragraph amended as follows: 'In exceptional circumstances where it is appropriate to keep identities confidential, or disclosure of details of the complaint to the Subject Member might prejudice the investigation, the authority will need to decide whether or not to give the Subject Member a copy of the full complaint and whether the complainant should remain confidential. In such circumstances, the Monitoring Officer can delete names and addresses from the papers given to the Subject Member, or delay notifying the Subject Member until the investigation has progressed sufficiently. Any decision to withhold information should be kept under review as circumstances change. See further above re: Anonymous and Confidential Complaints.'	The paragraph which discusses keeping identities confidential has been amended slightly to bring it more into line with the LGA Guidance – normally the complainant's identity would be disclosed to the Subject Member, but it is acknowledged there are exceptional circumstances where it should remain confidential. The amended paragraphs acknowledges that this will be in exceptional circumstances, and that any decision to keep someone's identity confidential should be kept under review.
Throughout document	Capitalisation of Arrangements Correction of typos Updating numbering Capitalisation for defined terms.	Correcting numbering/typing errors, capitalisation and updates where required, to ensure an accurate and coherent document.
Flowchart	Removal of Review Committee stages	Reflects the point previously discussed, that there is not to be an appeals process.

Additions to Updated Arrangements

Paragraph Reference	Addition	Reason
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Clause 1, Paragraph 2 [and thereafter throughout the document]	Addition of defined term 'Subject Member'	Allows for consistency throughout the document by introducing a defined term which is capitalised throughout.
Clause 5, paragraph 3	'... as set out in the Constitution and as per Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972...'	This addition simply sets out the legal provision and the fact this is also a constitutional requirement.
Clause 9	Addition of new paragraph, 'For any meeting dealing with exempt or confidential information, a summary of the outcome would need to be published setting out the main points considered, i.e. conclusions on the complaint and reasons for the conclusion.'	This reiterates the procedure, to acknowledge that even if a meeting deals with exempt or confidential information, there is certain information that still needs to be published.
Clause 10	Addition of new paragraph, 'As provided for in the Council's Constitution, the Sub Committees may co-opt at least one parish councillor when decisions are taken concerning a parish matter.'	The Working Group considered whether they wished to retain the ability to co-opt parish representatives for parish matters, which is currently set out in the Constitution but not provided for in the Arrangements. The Working Group were presented with evidence of how other Local Authorities operate, with the conclusion being there was no clear-cut method, and the Local Authorities looked at all deal with this slightly differently. Members expressed their support for the additional perspective which the Parish Representatives could offer but agreed if the data suggested that Members frequently opted to

		co-opt the arrangements could then be reassessed. It was also suggested that a briefing would be offered to the Parish representatives and the annual member conduct report could be sent to them each year.
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ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH ~~STANDARDS ALLEGATIONS UNDER THE LOCALISM ACT 2011~~ COMPLAINTS ABOUT COUNCILLORS

1. Context

These “Arrangements” set out how a person may make a complaint that an elected or co-opted member of this authority or of a Town or Parish Council has failed to comply with the ~~Members’ Code of Conduct,~~Councillors’ Code of Conduct, and sets out how the authority will deal with allegations of a failure to comply with that Code.

Under Section 28(6) and (7) of the Localism Act 2011, the Council must have in place “Arrangements” under which allegations that a member or co-opted member of the authority or Town or Parish Council, or of a Committee or Sub-Committee of the authority, (hereafter to be known as the “Subject Member”) has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct can be investigated and decisions made on such allegations.

These ~~arrangements~~Arrangements also provide for the authority to appoint at least one Independent Person, whose views must be sought before a decision on an allegation is made and which it has decided shall be investigated, and whose views can be sought by the authority at any other stage, or by a member against whom an allegation has been made.

2. The Code of Conduct

The Council has adopted a ~~Code of Conduct~~Code of Conduct for members, which is available for inspection on the authority’s website and on request from Reception at the ~~Civic Offices~~Council Offices at Whitwick Business Centre, Whitwick Business Park, Stenson Road, Coalville, LE67 4JP.

3. Making a complaint

If you wish to make a complaint, please write or email to:

“The Monitoring Officer
North West Leicestershire District Council
PO Box 11051
Coalville
Leicestershire
LE67 0FW”

~~North West Leicestershire District Council~~

~~Council Offices~~

~~Coalville~~

~~Leicestershire~~

LE67 3FJ”

Or:

elizabeth.warhurst@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

If you have a disability that prevents you from submitting a complaint in writing, you can call the Customer Services team on 01530 454545 and arrangements will be made to transcribe your complaint for you.

The Monitoring Officer is a senior officer of the authority who has statutory responsibility for maintaining the register of members’ interests and who is ~~155~~

responsible for administering the system in respect of complaints of member misconduct.

In order to ensure that all the information required is available with the complaint, the complainant will be asked to provide their name and a contact address or email address together with any relevant documents in support of their complaint. Supporting information may include:

- Dates and times of alleged misconduct;
- Details of any witnesses to the alleged misconduct;
- Any other authorities that the ~~member~~Subject Member belongs to.

The Monitoring Officer will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 5 working days of receiving it.

Anonymous and Confidential Complaints

An anonymous complaint is one where the complainant is not known. The Council will not normally allow anonymous complaints as that would be against the principles of transparency and fairness and make matters much more difficult to investigate. However, there may be exceptional compelling reasons why an anonymous complaint could be accepted without detriment to the process and where the allegation can be evidenced without reference to the complainant. Where an anonymous complaint is received, the Monitoring Officer will make a decision on whether to proceed with the complaints process, depending on the nature of the alleged misconduct and the public interest.

A confidential complaint is one where the complainant makes themselves known but does not wish for their identity to be revealed during the complaints process. Where the complainant wishes for their identity to remain ~~anonymous~~confidential it will be at the Monitoring Officer’s discretion as to whether the complaint proceeds. Consideration will be given to the public interest and whether the complaint can be justified or determined without the complainant’s participation.

4. What happens to my complaint?

When a complaint is received, it will be acknowledged and the complainant may be asked for further information in order for the Monitoring Officer to carry out an initial assessment of the complaint.

The Monitoring Officer will review each complaint and will determine whether the initial tests have been met:

1. Does the complaint relate to a ~~member~~Subject Member within the NWLDC area, in office at the time of the conduct complained of?
2. Was the ~~member~~Subject Member acting in their capacity as a councillor at the time of the conduct complained of?
3. The complaint, if proven, would be a breach of the Code under which the ~~member~~Subject Member operates?

When considering the initial tests, the Monitoring Officer may need to inform the Subject Member of the complaint and seek further information from them. The Monitoring Officer may also consult with and seek advice from the Independent Person during this time.

If the initial tests are not met, then the complaint cannot progress and the complainant will be informed.

If the initial tests are met then the Monitoring Officer will decide if the complaint is suitable for informal resolution, having regard to the jurisdictional test. The Monitoring Officer will not make a determination about whether the Code of Conduct has been breached but will work with both parties to see whether the issue is one which can be resolved informally to the satisfaction of the complainant and the ~~subject member~~Subject Member.

Informal resolution can be a proportionate way of dealing with relatively minor allegations, one-off incidents or underlying disagreements between individuals. For the avoidance of doubt, dealing with a matter by ~~alternative~~informal resolution at the initial assessment stage is making no finding of fact as there has been no formal investigation and therefore the Monitoring Officer will balance the interest in resolving a matter quickly and satisfactorily against the interest in the complainant having their complaint upheld or the ~~member's~~Subject Member's desire to clear their name.

In the event that the Monitoring Officer considers informal resolution appropriate, it may, for example involve the ~~member~~Subject Member accepting that his/her conduct was unacceptable and offer an apology, or other remedial action / steps which are acceptable to both parties such as the ~~member~~Subject Member undertaking training. The Monitoring Officer may consult with or seek advice from the Independent Person when considering informal resolution.

5. What if Informal Resolution is not appropriate/successful?

In cases where Informal Resolution is not appropriate or successful the Monitoring Officer will prepare a report to the Assessment Sub-Committee.

The Assessment Sub-Committee ~~who~~ will determine the further steps to be taken in relation to the complaint or whether no further action is to be taken based on a consideration of the public interest test. The Assessment Sub-Committee will consist of members from the Council's Audit and Governance Committee (a politically proportionate committee). The report will detail all steps taken by the Monitoring Officer and the Independent Person prior to the Sub Committee. The Independent Person will be invited to attend the meeting of the Assessment Sub-committee and can offer guidance to members in reaching their decision on whether to take any further action on the complaint or not.

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The Assessment Sub-Committee is subject to the normal Access to Information Procedures and Committee rules in relation to public meetings as set out in the Constitution and as per Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and it will take a decision at the start of the meeting to determine whether it is appropriate to hold the meeting in closed session. There will be a presumption that the committee is in closed session unless the committee determines that there is good reason for it to be made public.

The complainant and the Subject Member will not participate in the meeting but their views will have been sought prior to the meeting to enable their opinions to be presented. ~~It will be at the Chair's discretion as to whether the complainant and/or Subject Member may be able to observe the meeting if it is being held in closed session.~~

If, on assessment of the facts, the Sub-Committee determines that no further action is required or there is no case to answer, this will be reported back to the complainant and the ~~subject member who may be given leave by the Committee to appeal the decision. Such appeal will only be granted where there is new evidence in relation to the complaint~~Subject Member.

There may be instances where the Sub-Committee consider the action of the ~~subject member~~Subject Member should be referred to the police (e.g. failure to disclose a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest). In such circumstances, the Sub-Committee will instruct the Monitoring Officer to refer the matter to the appropriate body for investigation.

Should the Committee determine that the matter warrants a detailed investigation, the Monitoring Officer will appoint an Investigating Officer who may be an officer of another authority (e.g. a ~~an~~ Monitoring Officer from another council) or an external investigator. The Investigating Officer will ~~decide whether he/she needs to meet or speak to the complainant to understand the nature of the complaint and will provide~~draft an opportunity initial plan for the complainant

~~to explain their understanding of events investigation, and will have overall responsibility for the conduct and suggest what documents outcome of the investigation. The investigation will be carried out in accordance with the Investigations Guidance document, a copy of which the Investigating Officer needs to see, and who parties will be provided with at the Investigating Officer needs to interview time.~~

In exceptional ~~cases, circumstances~~ where it is appropriate to keep identities confidential, or disclosure of details of the complaint to the ~~member~~ Subject Member might prejudice the investigation, the ~~authority will need to decide whether or not to give the Subject Member a copy of the full complaint and whether the complainant should remain confidential. In such circumstances, the~~ Monitoring Officer can delete names and addresses from the papers given to the ~~member~~ Subject Member, or delay notifying the ~~member~~ Subject Member until the investigation has progressed sufficiently. ~~Any decision to withhold information should be kept under review as circumstances change. See further above re: Anonymous and Confidential Complaints.~~

At the end of his/her investigation, the Investigating Officer will produce a draft report and will send copies of that draft report, in confidence, to the complainant and to the ~~member~~ Subject Member concerned, to give them both an opportunity to identify any matter in that draft report with which they disagree or consider requires more consideration.

Having received and taken account of any comments, the Investigating Officer will send his/her final report to the Monitoring Officer.

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Complaints in relation to ~~members~~ Subject Members that sit on multiple authorities

There may be times when the same complaint is made against a member of more than one authority. For example, an allegation may allege that a councillor has failed to register an interest at both district and county level.

In such a case the Council will agree with the other authority who would carry out the initial assessment (if necessary, under an agreed delegation) and any subsequent action. This avoids the risk of two different actions or conclusions being reached.

For the avoidance of doubt, this would not arise where the councillor is on a town or parish council and as well as this Council because this Council is responsible for handling both complaints. It could however arise if the parish or town councillor were also on the county council in a two-tier area.

- 6. What happens if the Investigating Officer concludes that there is no evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct?**

On completing their investigation the Investigating Officer will present their report to the Determination Sub-Committee who will take into account the facts and evidence produced.

The ~~Determinations~~Determination Sub-Committee is subject to the normal Access to Information and Committee rules in relation to public meetings and it will take a decision at the start of the meeting to determine whether it is appropriate to hold the meeting in closed session. There will be a presumption that the committee is open to the public unless there is good reason for it to be dealt with confidentially. ~~It will be at the Chair's discretion as to whether the complainant and/or Subject Member may be able to observe the meeting if it is being held in closed session.~~

If satisfied that the Investigating Officer's report is sufficient, the ~~Determinations~~Determination Sub Committee will accept the findings of the report and request the Monitoring Officer to write to the complainant and to the ~~member~~Subject Member concerned notifying them that they are satisfied that no further action is required, and provide a copy of the Investigating Officer's final report. If the Monitoring Officer is not satisfied that the investigation has been conducted properly, they may ask the Investigating Officer to reconsider his/her report.

There may be instances where the ~~Determinations~~Determination Sub Committee wishes to ask questions of the complainant and the Subject Member in order to fully understand the circumstances of the complaint. Where this is requested by the Sub Committee, the meeting will be adjourned to enable the attendance of all parties. In such a situation, the Sub Committee will be conducted in a manner similar to other regulatory committees where each party may present their arguments.

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At the end of the Committee the Chair will ask the ~~subject member~~Subject Member whether they are happy for the outcome of the matter to be published through public notice/press statement. It will be at the discretion of the ~~subject member~~Subject Member whether such action is taken.

7. What happens if the Investigating Officer concludes that there is evidence of a failure to comply with the Code of Conduct?

Where the ~~investigating officer~~Investigating Officer has determined that there is a breach of the ~~code~~Code of ~~conduct~~Conduct they will present their report to the ~~Determinations~~Determination Sub Committee in accordance with the relevant timescales in section 14 below.

The Monitoring Officer may conduct a "pre-hearing process", requiring the ~~member~~Subject Member to give his/her response to the Investigating Officer's

report, in order to identify what is likely to be agreed and what is likely to be in contention at the hearing. The Chair of the Hearings Panel may issue directions as to the manner in which the hearing will be conducted.

At the Sub Committee, the Investigating Officer will present his/her report, call such witnesses as he/she considers necessary and make representations to substantiate his/her conclusion that the ~~member~~Subject Member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct. For this purpose, the Investigating Officer may ask the complainant to attend and give evidence to the Sub Committee. The ~~member~~Subject Member will then have an opportunity to give his/her evidence, to call witnesses and to make representations to the Sub Committee as to why he/she considers that he/she did not fail to comply with the Code of Conduct.

The Sub Committee, with the benefit of any advice from the Monitoring Officer and an Independent Person, may conclude, in disagreement with the ~~investigation officer~~Investigating Officer that the ~~member~~Subject Member did not fail to comply with the Code of Conduct, and so dismiss the complaint. If the Sub Committee concludes that the ~~member~~Subject Member did fail to comply with the Code of Conduct, the Chair will inform the meeting of this finding and the Sub Committee will then consider what action, if any, should be taken as a result of the ~~member's~~Subject Member's failure to comply with the Code of Conduct. In doing this, the Sub Committee will give the ~~member~~Subject Member an opportunity to make representations to the Panel and will consult the Independent Person (and if appropriate the Parish Council), but will then decide what action, if any, to take in respect of the matter.

8. What action can the Determination Sub-Committee take where a ~~member~~Subject Member has failed to comply with the Code of Conduct?

The Council has delegated to the Audit and Governance Committee and its sub-committees such of its powers to take action in respect of individual members as may be necessary to promote and maintain high standards of conduct. Both the Assessment Sub-Committee and Determination Sub-Committee will each have their own procedures and the procedures for the Determination Sub-Committee will set out the factors that will be taken into account when determining a sanction. In such circumstances, the Committee may:~~160~~

- ~~☐~~ Issue a formal letter to the ~~member~~Subject Member found to have breached the Code.
- ~~☐~~ Impose Formal censure.
- ~~☐~~ Make recommendations to Full Council to remove the ~~member~~Subject Member from committee(s) and other appointments subject to political balance requirements (where there are political groups, the decision could only be to recommend them to change their nominated appointees).

- ☐ A press release and other appropriate publicity.
- ☐ Recommend Training.
- ☐ Recommendation to Group Leader to remove the memberSubject Member from committee(s) and other appointments.

The Committee has no power to suspend or disqualify the memberSubject Member or to withdraw members' or special responsibility allowances.

[In relation to Parish Members, the Monitoring Officer can only make recommendations for sanctions against those Members. The responsibility for enforcing those sanctions will fall to the Parish Council as a whole with the assistance and guidance from the Monitoring Officer.]

9. What happens at the end of the hearing?

At the end of the hearing, the Chair will state the decision of the Committee as to whether the memberSubject Member failed to comply with the Code of Conduct and as to any actions which the Committee resolves to take.

As soon as reasonably practicable thereafter, the Monitoring Officer shall prepare a formal decision notice in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, and send a copy to the complainant, to the memberSubject Member *[and to the Parish Council]*. The Council will publish the minuteminutes of the Determination Sub-Committee on its website.

10. For any meeting dealing with exempt or confidential information, an appropriate summary of the outcome would need to be published setting out the main points considered, i.e. conclusions on the complaint and reasons for the conclusion.

10. Who are the Committees?

The Assessment and DeterminationsDetermination Sub Committees are Sub-CommitteeCommittees of the Council's Audit and Governance Committee.

As provided for in the Council's Constitution, the Sub Committees may co-opt at least one parish councillor when decisions are taken concerning a parish matter.

The Independent Person is invited to attend all meetings of the sub-committees and their views are sought and taken into consideration before any decision is taken on whether the member'sSubject Member's conduct constitutes a failure to comply with the Code of conductConduct and as to any action to be taken following a finding of failure to comply with the Code of Conduct. There may be more than one Independent Person involved throughout the complaint depending on whether they have been conflicted out of sitting on the Committee/Sub Committee due to being 164approached by the complainant or Subject Member for assistance throughout the process.

11. Who is the Independent Person?

The Independent Person is a person who has applied for the post following advertisement of a vacancy for the post, and is appointed by a positive vote from a majority of all the members of Council.

A person cannot be “independent” if he/she:

- 11.1 ~~is~~ is, or has been within the past 5 years, a member, co-opted member or officer of the authority;
- 11.2 ~~is or has been within the past 5 years, a member, co-opted member or officer of a parish council within the authority's area~~; or
- 11.3 ~~is~~ is a relative, or close friend, of a person within paragraph 11.1 or 11.2 above. For this purpose, “relative” means:
 - 11.3.1 ~~is~~ spouse or civil partner;
 - 11.3.2 ~~is~~ living with the other person as husband and wife or as if they were civil partners;
 - 11.3.3 ~~is~~ grandparent of the other person;
 - 11.3.4 ~~is~~ a lineal descendent of a grandparent of the other person;
 - 11.3.5 ~~is~~ a parent, sibling or child of a person within paragraphs 11.3.1 or 11.3.2;
 - 11.3.6 ~~is~~ a spouse or civil partner of a person within paragraphs 11.3.3, 11.3.4 or 11.3.5; or
 - 11.3.7 ~~is~~ living with a person within paragraphs 11.3.3, 11.3.4 or 11.3.5 as husband and wife or as if they were civil partners.

The Council is part of the pool arrangements which have been established with the other Leicestershire District and Borough Councils. This arrangement provides for a pool of 5 IPs which can be called upon by any Council.

Views may be sought from the Independent Person at the initial tests stage and in which case those views will not be made public. The Independent Person may also provide views at the Assessment Sub-Committee and/or the Determinations Determination Sub-Committee.

In addition to the above, it is open to the complainant and/or the Subject Member to speak with the Independent Person also. If you wish to do this, you should arrange this through the Monitoring Officer. ~~162~~

12. Revision of these ~~arrangements~~ Arrangements

The Council may by resolution agree to amend these ~~arrangements~~ Arrangements, and has delegated to the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Independent Person the right to depart from these ~~arrangements~~ Arrangements where he/she considers that it is expedient to do so in order to secure the effective and fair consideration of any matter.

13. Appeals

~~The Sub Committees have authority to allow, or not, a right of review following the Assessment Sub Committee's determination of the complaint, and following the determination of the complaint by the Determination Sub Committee. The process follows one similar to the court process, where Members be given leave to appeal a decision taken on their matter. That in order to avoid frivolous appeals, a stance of "unless new evidence is submitted/provided there will be no review".~~

~~Such request for a review to be received within 28 days of the decision by the relevant Sub Committee.~~

There is no right of appeal for the complainant or for the ~~subject member:~~Subject Member.

~~□ against a decision of the Monitoring Officer made under this process;~~

~~□ a decision by the Assessment Sub-Committee or Determination Committee not to grant leave to appeal; or~~

~~□ a decision made on review~~

If you feel that the authority has failed to deal with your complaint properly, you may make a complaint to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. Details can be found here ~~<https://www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint/fact-sheets/other-topics/complaints-about-standards-and-member-conduct>;~~
<https://www.lgo.org.uk/make-a-complaint/fact-sheets/other-topics/complaints-about-standards-and-member-conduct>

14. Timescales

The complaints process will proceed in line with the following timescales (unless otherwise agreed with the relevant parties):

Subject Member to make comments on complaint – 10 working days from being notified

Initial assessment outcome – 15 working days from date complaint received

Investigations – completed within 6 months (where possible)

Notice of ~~Determinations~~Determination Sub-Committee hearing – at least 2 weeks prior to hearing

~~Determinations~~Determination Sub-Committee hearing – within 3 months of report (but not within first 14 days)

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Panel's written decision – within one week of the ~~Determinations~~Determination Sub-Committee hearing

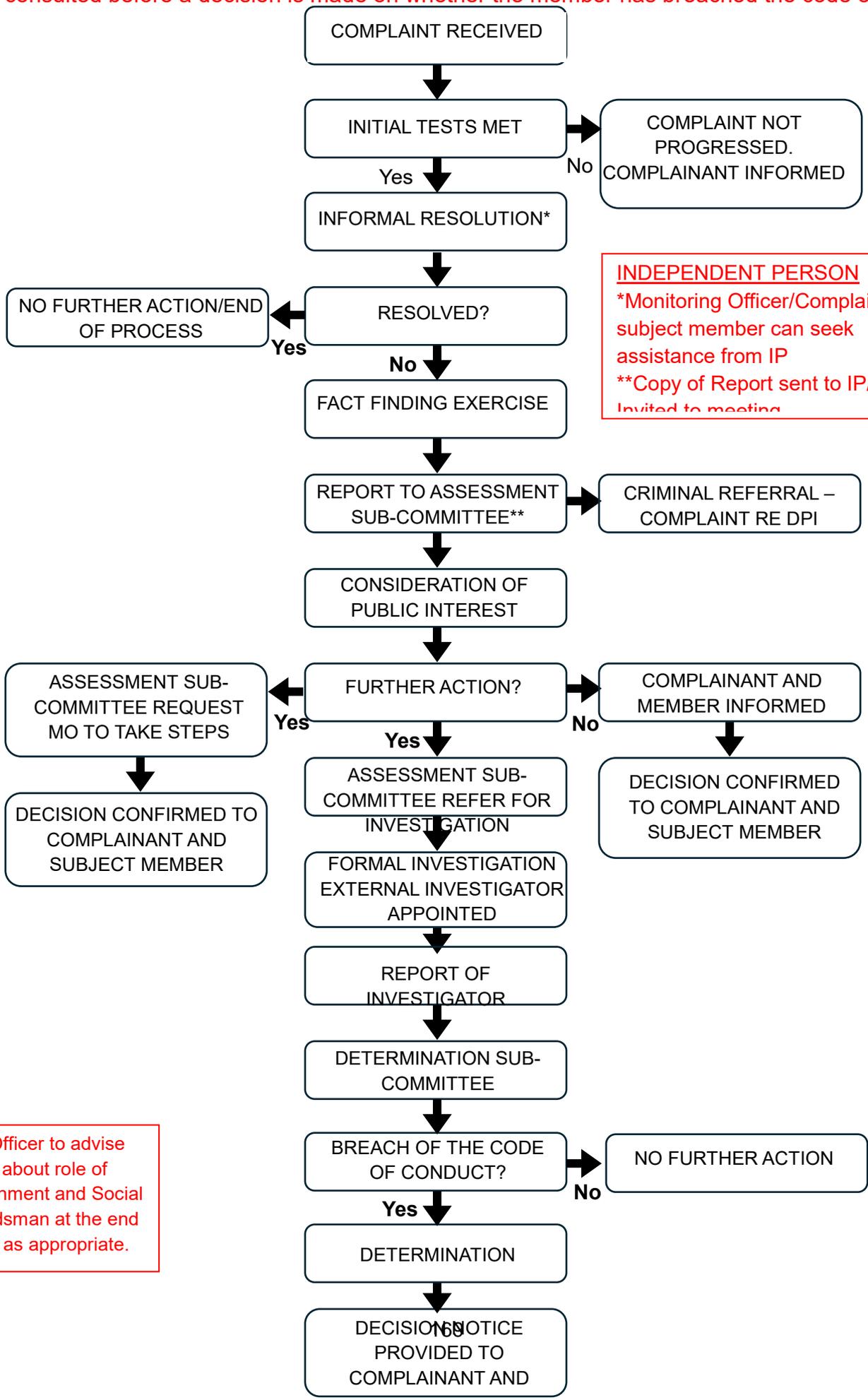
Appendix _____ Flowchart of procedure

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FLOWCHART RE: ARRANGEMENTS FOR DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS ABOUT COUNCILLORS

IP will be consulted before a decision is made on whether the member has breached the code of conduct



INDEPENDENT PERSON
 *Monitoring Officer/Complainant or subject member can seek assistance from IP
 **Copy of Report sent to IP/IP invited to meeting

Monitoring Officer to advise complainant about role of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman at the end of each step as appropriate.

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**Appendix D – Consequential Amendments to the Constitution following
Review of the Arrangements for Dealing with Councillor Complaints**

Part 2

SECTION D7 - AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

8 STANDARDS FUNCTIONS

8.1 To assist the Council in fulfilling its duty under the Localism Act 2011 to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by **Councillors** and **co-opted Councillors** of **District** and parish councils.

8.2 To advise the Council on the adoption or revision of its **Councillors' Code of Conduct** in **Part 4**.

8.3 To monitor and advise the Council about the operation of its **Councillors' Code of Conduct** in **Part 4** in light of best practice and any changes in the law.

8.4 Advising, training or arranging to train councillors and co-opted members on matters relating to the **Councillors' Code of Conduct** in **Part 4**.

8.5 Dealing with any report from the **Monitoring Officer** on any matter concerning governance.

8.6 To establish **Sub-Committees** for the assessment or determination of matters concerning allegations in relation to Councillor conduct.

8.7 To grant **Dispensations** to **Councillors** who require such Dispensations for more than one meeting or on more than one occasion from requirements relating to interests set out in the **Councillors' Code of Conduct** in **Part 4** as appropriate.

8.8 To advise the Council on, and review as necessary, the arrangements for dealing with complaints or any local **Protocols** regulating the conduct of **Councillors** and to deal with allegations of breach of any such protocol.

8.9 To consider and make recommendations to **Full Council** on any other matter that may be referred to the **Audit and Governance Committee** relating to the conduct and training of Councillors.

8.10 To consider amendments to the **Constitution** and recommend proposals to **Full Council** for approval, except where specifically delegated to the **Monitoring Officer**.

8.11 To undertake an annual review of the **Corporate Governance Policies** and make recommendations to **Cabinet**.

Local Assessment of Complaints About Councillor Conduct

8.12 **Sub-Committees** of the **Audit and Governance Committee** are formed on an ad hoc basis to deal with local assessment of **Councillor** conduct complaints.

8.13 All **Audit and Governance Committee** members will form a pool from which members will be drawn based on their availability and the requirements of the particular **Sub-Committee** as and when required.

8.14 The **Sub-Committee** may co-opt at least one parish councillor when decisions are taken concerning a parish matter.

8.15 The **Sub-Committee** may co-opt at least one **Independent Person** as appropriate.

~~8.16 No member who considered a complaint at the initial **Assessment/ Determination Sub-Committee** may consider the same complaint at the **Review Sub-Committee**.~~

~~8.17-16~~ The **Quorum** of the **Sub-Committees** is three **Councillors**.

~~8.18-17~~ The **Chair** of each **Sub-Committee** will be a **Councillor**.

~~8.19-18~~ The **Sub-Committees** and their functions are set out below:

Assessment Sub-Committee

Assessment of complaints in accordance with the **Council's Arrangements for Dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints** and to either:

- Decide that there is not enough information to make a decision;
- Decide that no action should be taken in respect of the complaint;
- Refer the matter for full investigation; or
- Refer the matter for other action.

~~Review Sub-Committee~~

~~Consideration of requests for a review in accordance with the **Council's Arrangements for Dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints**.~~

Determinations Sub-Committee

To receive reports from the **Monitoring Officer** or his/her appointed investigating officer and to decide either:

- to determine finding of no failure to comply with the **Councillors' Code of Conduct** in **Part 4**;
- to determine finding of failure to comply with the **Councillors' Code of Conduct** in **Part 4** and impose relevant sanctions; or
- Refer the matter for other action;

in accordance with the **Council's Arrangements for Dealing with Code of Conduct Complaints**.

Definitions – page 355

~~Review Sub-Committee~~

~~A **Sub-Committee** of the **Audit and Governance Committee** that hears requests for reviews of decisions of the **Assessment Sub-Committee**~~

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Title of Report	REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES	
Presented by	Councillor Keith Merrie Infrastructure Portfolio Holder	
Background Papers	The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	The average cost for hiring a building for use as a polling station is currently £295.80. The cost of providing a mobile polling station is significantly higher at approximately £3,000. The proposals do not include the use of any mobile polling stations, thus if approved, there are no financial implications.	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	Failure to undertake a compulsory review will see the Council failing in its duties under the Representation of the People Act 1983, as amended by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing & Corporate Implications	None were identified.	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	To approve the final proposals for the review of polling districts and polling places.	
Recommendations	THAT COUNCIL: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. APPROVES THE FINAL PROPOSALS IN RESPECT OF THE REVIEW, AS SET OUT IN APPENDIX A TO THE REPORT; 2. DELEGATES AUTHORITY TO THE RETURNING OFFICER TO MAKE, WHERE NECESSARY, ALTERATIONS TO THE DESIGNATION OF ANY POLLING PLACE PRIOR TO THE NEXT FULL REVIEW IN CONSULTATION WITH WARD MEMBERS AND GROUP LEADERS. 	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In accordance with the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, every council in England and Wales must undertake and complete a review of all of the polling districts and polling places in its area every five years and the next review must be completed by January 2025.

- 1.2 As the District is currently undergoing a review of its Electoral warding arrangements by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE), which will result in some changes to the Polling Districts and the UK Parliamentary General Election (UKPGE) now having been held, the Returning Officer is carrying out a light touch review. A further review will be carried out once the final recommendations have been received from the LGBCE in Spring 2025. The further review will be based on the new District wards and intended to come into effect from May 2027.
- 1.3. Following the Police and Crime Commissioner elections held on 2 May 2024 and the UKPGE held on 6 July 2024, any comments made by the electorate, the staff, candidates and agents were captured and the current arrangements, as agreed in 2019 were subject to a consultation exercise between 2 September to 27 September 2024. Notices about the consultation were placed in the local papers and on the council's website inviting members of the public to submit comments. All town and parish council's were also written to seeking comments.
- 1.4 The Electoral Review Working Group met on 13 September 2024 to comment on the current arrangements and it met again on 11 October 2024 to consider the consultation response, the actions taken and the consequential recommendations.
- 1.5 The outcome of the consultation and the views of the Electoral Review Working Party have been used to inform the final recommendations attached at appendix A. It is recommended that five polling stations will change due to either the previous building no longer being available or more suitable buildings being found and all others will remain the same.

2. TERMINOLOGY

- 2.1 **Polling district:** the area created by the division of a constituency, ward or European Parliamentary electoral region into smaller parts, within which a polling place can be determined, which is convenient to electors. In North West Leicestershire, each ward is divided into a number of polling districts which each have a two or three letter code e.g. AC, ABA based on the ward in which they are located.
- 2.2 **Polling place:** the location (normally the building) in which polling stations will be sited by the Returning Officer.
- 2.3 **Polling station:** the room where the poll takes place (e.g. community room), which must be located within the polling place. The polling station is chosen by the Returning Officer. It is publicised in the Notice of Situation of Polling Stations and communicated to electors via their poll cards and is also published on the Council's website.
- 2.4 Where possible, every polling district should have its own dedicated polling place and all electors in that polling district are assigned to vote at the polling station located in that place.
- 2.5 It should be noted that the terms 'polling place' and 'polling station' are often used interchangeably and most people consider the polling place (such as a community centre) to be the polling station. However, it is possible to have more than one polling station per polling place (e.g. two sets of staff, two ballot boxes, two electoral registers); and these double stations are often provided in polling districts with a large number of electors or where there is a high turnout or a large number of people voting at certain times of the day.

3. THE DESIGNATION OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS

- 3.1 The designation of the district's polling districts and places is the responsibility of the Council.
- 3.2 The allocation of polling stations within polling places is not a Council function and is the responsibility of the Returning Officer for the election concerned. However, in practice, the location of likely polling stations is a key consideration when identifying polling places and the boundaries of polling districts, particularly in those areas of the district where there are no suitable premises.
- 3.3 Polling districts for local government elections are not automatically part of the statutory review. However, the Electoral Commission advises that the polling districts for UK parliamentary and local government elections should always be the same, and it therefore follows that any review of parliamentary polling arrangements should be conducted simultaneously with one of local government arrangements. Consequently, polling districts and polling places adopted by the Council for parliamentary elections will also be effective for local government elections.

4. AIMS OF THE REVIEW

- 4.1 In conducting a review, guidance from the Electoral Commission states that the Council must:
- (a) seek to ensure that all the electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances;
 - (b) seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places it is responsible for are accessible to all electors;
 - (c) have regard to the accessibility of disabled persons to potential polling stations in the polling place;
 - (d) other than in special circumstances, locate the polling place in the polling district it serves; and
 - (e) ensure the polling place is small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the polling district how they will be able to reach the polling station.
- 4.2 The focus of the review was to identify wherever possible polling places/polling stations which met set criteria, relating to:
- Location
 - Facilities
 - Accessibility
 - Health and Safety

5. FUTURE REVIEWS

- 5.1 The next statutory review needs to be undertaken before January 2030. However, as detailed in paragraph 1.2, the Returning Officer will be required to complete a further review following the outcome of the LGBCE review.

- 5.2 However, on occasion, it may be necessary to change the designation of a polling place outside of the statutory review process. This can arise as a result of premises being closed, or where better facilities are identified.
- 5.3 The Council is, therefore, requested to authorise the Returning Officer, in consultation with group leaders and ward members to make changes to the designation of polling places which occur outside of the formal review process.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	A well-run council Communities and housing
Policy Considerations:	None
Safeguarding:	Attempts are made to avoid the use of schools. Where unavoidable, close liaison with the schools ensures a clear separation between the children and the polling station.
Equalities/Diversity:	In determining where polling places should be located, the Council must seek to ensure that all electors have reasonable facilities for voting and that as far as is reasonable and practical, polling places are accessible to all electors. These issues were considered when making the recommendations.
Customer Impact:	The key aims of the recommendations are to meet the needs of our customers as identified through the consultation process.
Environment, Climate Change and Zero Carbon	No issues identified.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Consultations were carried out with all elected members of the Council, parish councils and the electorate of North West Leicestershire.
Risks:	No risks identified.
Officer Contact	Allison Thomas Returning Officer allison.thomas@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

Polling Places Schedule 2025-2030

Ward No.	Ward	Polling District	Polling Place/Station
1	Appleby	ABA	Sports Pavilion, Bowleys Lane, Appleby Magna
		ABB	Old Schoolroom, Church Lane, Chilcote
		ABC	Sports Pavilion, Bowleys Lane, Appleby Magna
		ABD	St Bartholomew Church, Measham Road, Snarestone
		ABE	Church Hall, Newton Road, Swebstone
		ABF	The Belper Arms, Main Street, Newton Burgoland
2	Ashby Castle	AC	Legion House, South Street, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
3	Ashby Holywell	AHA	Springfields EMH – Care & Support, School Lane, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
		AHB	Springfields EMH – Care & Support, School Lane, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
4	Ashby Ivanhoe	AIA	Ashby Hill Top Primary School, Beaumont Avenue, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
		AIB	Community Room, Browns Court, Atkinson Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
5	Ashby Money Hill	AM	Ashby Museum, North Street, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
6	Ashby Willesley	ASA	Recreation Ground Cabin, Ridgway Road, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
		ASB	Ashby Hastings Scout HQ, Wilfred Place, Ashby-de-la-Zouch
7	Ashby Woulds	AWA	Moira Replan, Ashby Road, Moira
		AWB	The Mushroom Hall, Main Street, Albert Village
8	Bardon	BAA	Bardon Sports Club, Bardon Close, Coalville
		BAB	
9	Blackfordby	BLA	Blackfordby Village Hall, Sandtop Lane, Blackfordby
		BLB	Moira Children & Wellbeing Centre, Moira Primary School, Blackfordby Lane, Moira
		BLC	Blackfordby Village Hall, Sandtop Lane, Blackfordby
10	Broom leys	BRA	Hall Lane Methodist Church, Hall Lane, Whitwick
		BRB	Greenacres Community Centre, Linford Crescent, Coalville
		BRC	
11	Castle Donington Castle	CA	Castle Donington Children & Wellbeing Centre, Community College, Mount Pleasant
12	Castle Donington Central	CE	Community Hub, 101 Bondgate, Castle Donington
13	Castle Donington Park	CP	Community Hub, 101 Bondgate, Castle Donington
14	Castle Rock	CRA	Oak Storer Hall, Oaks Road, Oaks in Charnwood
		CRB	Agar Nook Community Centre, Belgrave Close, Coalville

15	Coalville East	CTA	St Davids Church, Meadow Lane, Coalville
		CTB	
16	Coalville West	CWA	Community Room, Central Court, Coalville
		CWB	Christ Church Hall, London Road, Coalville
17	Daleacre Hill	DHA	Village Hall, Nottingham Road, Kegworth
		DHB	Lockington Village Hall, Hemington Lane, Lockington
		DHC	Function Room, The Jolly Sailor PH, 21 Main Street, Hemington
18	Ellistown & Battleflat	EB	Community Centre, Whitehill Road, Ellistown
19	Greenhill	GR	Greenhill Community Church, Charnborough Road, Coalville
20	Hermitage	HE	Whitwick Park Hall, North Street, Whitwick
21	Holly Hayes	HH	Whitwick Methodist Church, Market Place, Whitwick
22	Hugglescote St. John's	HJ	Hugglescote Community Centre, Grange Road, Hugglescote
23	Hugglescote St. Mary's	HMA	Hugglescote Community Centre, Grange Road, Hugglescote
		HMB	Community Room, Central Court, Avenue Road, Coalville
24	Ibstock East	IEA	Meeting Room, Baptist Church, Chapel Street, Ibstock
		IEB	Community Centre, Whitehill Road, Ellistown
25	Ibstock West	IW	Schoolroom, Wesleyan Reform Church, Melbourne Road, Ibstock
26	Kegworth	KE	Kegworth Community Library, High Street, Kegworth
27	Long Whatton & Diseworth	LDA	Guide Friendship Centre, Main Street, Long Whatton
		LDB	Village Hall, Hall Gate, Diseworth
		LDC	Belton Village Hall, School Lane, Belton
28	Measham North	MN	St Laurence Church Hall, High Street, Measham
29	Measham South	MS	Measham Leisure Centre, High Street, Measham
30	Oakthorpe & Donisthorpe	ODA	Donisthorpe Woodlands Centre, Church Street, Donisthorpe
		ODB	Donisthorpe Woodlands Centre, Church Street, Donisthorpe
		ODC	Leisure Centre, Measham Road, Oakthorpe
31	Ravenstone & Packington	RPA	Pavilion, Ravenslea, Ravenstone
		RRB	Memorial Hall, Packington
		RPC	
32	Sence Valley	SEA	Heather Village Hall, Swebstone Road, Heather
		SEB	Schoolroom, Wesleyan Reform Church, Melbourne Road, Ibstock
33	Snibston North	SNA	Century Theatre, Off Ashby Road, Coalville
		SNB	Century Theatre, Off Ashby Road, Coalville

34	Snibston South	SS	Full Gospel Mission Pentecostal Church, James Street, Coalville
35	Thornborough	TBA	Community Room, Howe Court, Whitwick
		TBB	Holy Cross Parish Rooms, Parsonwood Hill, Whitwick
36	Thringstone	TS	Thringstone Miners Social Centre, Homestead Road, Thringstone
37	Valley	VAA	Swannington Institute, Main Street, Swannington
		VAB	Beaumont Centre, Nottingham Road, Peggs Green, Coleorton
		VAC	Harley Hall, Osgathorpe Village Hall, Church Lane, Osgathorpe
38	Worthington & Breedon	WBA	St Matthews Church, Church Street, Worthington
		WBB	C of E Primary School, School Lane, Newbold Coleorton
		WBC	
		WBD	
		WBE	Breedon Parish Hall, Priory Close, Breedon on the Hill
		WBF	Beaumont Centre, Nottingham Road, Peggs Green, Coleorton
		WBG	

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NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2024



Title of Report	RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL	
Presented by	Councillor Keith Merrie Infrastructure Portfolio Holder	
Background Papers	The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 The Code of Conduct Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	<p>The additional costs for the carers' allowance will be met from within existing budgets.</p> <p>The cost for the Co-Opted Independent Members of the Audit and Governance Committee will be subject to a cost pressure bid as part of the General Fund Budget 2025/26 to be agreed by Council in February 2025. Should the appointments be made prior to the end of the current financial year, the costs will be met from within existing budgets as the sums will be nominal.</p>	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	<p>The Council is required by The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel to advise on the level of remuneration to members for fulfilling their role.</p>	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	There are none.	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	To receive recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel on the Members' Scheme of Allowances.	
Recommendations	<p>THAT COUNCIL ADOPTS THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL AS FOLLOWS:</p> <p>1) WITH EFFECT FROM 6 NOVEMBER 2024, AN ANNUAL ALLOWANCE OF £800.00 TO BE PAID TO EACH OF THE TWO POSITIONS OF CO-OPTED INDEPENDENT MEMBER OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE;</p>	

	<p>2) THE CHANGES LISTED IN BOLD AT PARAGRAPH 4 OF THE REPORT TO TAKE EFFECT FROM 1 APRIL 2025; AND</p> <p>3) THAT COUNCIL DELEGATES AUTHORITY TO THE MONITORING OFFICER TO AMEND THE MEMBERS' SCHEME OF ALLOWANCES IN THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CHANGES SHOWN AT APPENDIX A.</p>
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1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The Council is required by The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel to advise on the level of remuneration to members for fulfilling their role as Members.

1.2 The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) was convened to carry out a full review of the Scheme of Allowances for Members, as one had not been completed for a number of years, and to consider a request from the Strategic Director of Resources to introduce an annual allowance for the two positions of co-opted independent members of the Audit and Governance Committee.

1.3 The Panel has agreed that, moving forward, a full review of the Members' Allowance Scheme will be carried out annually, with any changes taking effect from the start of the next financial year.

2.0 THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

2.1 The Panel's membership is as follows:-

- Stephen Barkby
- Margaret Dadley
- Elaine Oldham
- Trevor Moore

2.2 The Panel's terms of reference are to make recommendations to the authority:

- as to the amount of basic allowance that should be payable to its elected Members;
- about the responsibilities or duties which should lead to the payment of a special responsibility allowance and as to the amount of such an allowance;
- about the duties for which a travelling and subsistence allowance can be paid and as to the amount of this allowance;
- on whether any allowance should be backdated to the beginning of a financial year in the event of the scheme being amended;
- as to whether annual adjustments of allowance levels may be made by reference to an index, and, if so, for how long such a measure should run.

2.3 Since its establishment, the Panel's approach has been that recommendations should be formulated appropriate to the circumstances of the Council. The following underlying principles form the fundamental basis of the Panel's review process:

- Allowances should take account, as far as possible, of the amount of time taken by members to fulfil their roles.

- The scheme should enable, as far as practical, that as wide a range of people as possible should be able to stand for election.
- Allowances are not a salary but a level of 'compensation';
- Any increases to the scheme which might be recommended should be balanced against the interests of the council tax payers in the district.
- Special Responsibility Allowance payments should be banded to reflect both the time commitment and workload of the identified special responsibilities;
- The assumption is made that all members will participate as fully as possible in council business and play an active role in their wards and the importance of these mutually inclusive roles is reflected in the level of the basic allowance.

2.4 The Panel met on 5 September 2024 and 3 October 2024 to consider the report from the Strategic Director of Resources and review the scheme.

3.0 ANNUAL ALLOWANCE FOR CO-OPTED INDEPENDENT MEMBERS OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

3.1 The Panel was asked to consider whether remuneration should be offered given the need for specialised experience in audit and finance, otherwise the position will continue to be advertised as a voluntary position. Officers consider that the particular level of specialist knowledge and the limited pool of possible appointees supports the need for a small allowance in order to attract suitably qualified and experienced applicants and to recognise the time commitment and resources required. It was noted that the roles had been advertised four times without remuneration and on each occasion no applications had been received.

3.2 The Panel was provided with information relating to the role of the committee and the independent member, along with benchmarking data from other Councils that co-opted to a similar role.

3.3 After considering the information provided, the Panel felt that due to the technical knowledge required for the role and the lack of interest in the recent recruitment process, an annual allowance should be paid. In relation to the amount for the annual allowance, the Panel discussed the benchmarking information provided and felt that £800 was appropriate for the role. They were confident that this would attract the right candidate required and would be a good starting point. The Panel was advised that they could look at the amount again should the recruitment process not be successful.

3.4 It was recommended that the Council introduces an annual allowance of £800 to each of the two positions of Co-opted Independent Member of the Audit and Governance Committee.

4.0 ANNUAL REVIEW OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME

Recommendations from the meeting on 5 September 2024

4.1 At the first meeting, the Panel reviewed the Scheme of Allowance and considered benchmarking data that had been provided by officers. Paragraphs 4.2 to 4.5 detail the recommendations agreed by the Panel and the requests for further information to be brought back to the second meeting.

4.2 Basic Allowance – Annual Review of the Level

The Panel discussed the benchmarking information provided and the way in which NWLDC currently increases it annually by the same percentage as the National Joint Council staff pay award.

It was agreed to continue with the current method of annual increase and as the current amount already reflected this, no changes be made to the current basic allowance figure of £5,715.33.

4.3 Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA)

The Panel discussed the benchmarking information and decided that since it hadn't been reviewed in a while, it was time to look at the SRAs again. They also discussed the Scrutiny Chair's SRA and considered that further information was required now that the changes to the scrutiny function had been in operation for over a year. The Panel requested that all Committee Chairs be invited to submit a statement about their roles to the Democratic Services Team Manager, to circulate to the Panel ahead of the second meeting. On reviewing any information provided, any member of the Panel, would then ask officers to invite Committee Chairs to the second meeting should it be required.

It was agreed for the Panel to undertake a review of the SRAs. Further discussions were held in respect of SRAs at the meeting on 3 October 2024 and these are set out in paragraph 4.7 below.

4.4 Travel and Subsistence Allowances

The Panel discussed the benchmarking information provided and discussed the alternative methods that could be used for claiming the allowance including receipt reimbursement. It was agreed that the current method with limits was the most appropriate as there should be a restriction on what could be claimed for. It was the consensus that this allowance was a gesture to help with costs rather than intended to cover the whole cost but it was acknowledged that the current amounts were on the lower side, therefore a small increase was recommended. The Panel also felt that there was no longer a need for a separate tea allowance, therefore this should be deleted and the amount included in the evening meal allowance. It was noted that the travel allowance would include electric vehicles as it did for staff.

It was recommended that:

- **the travel and subsistence allowance be increased to the following:**
 - **Breakfast – from £4.92 to £6.50**
 - **Lunch – from £6.77 to £8.00**
 - **Evening meal - £8.38 to £11.00**
 - **Overnight accommodation - £79.83 to £90.00**
 - **Overnight accommodation (London or LGA Conference) – from £91.04 to £100.00**
- **Remove the tea subsistence allowance.**
- **Make no changes to the current travel allowances.**

4.5 Other Areas for Review

The Panel discussed the allowance scheme as a whole and asked that more information and benchmarking be made available on the following as part of the ongoing review:

- Telephone and internet allowance: it was queried whether this was still required, particularly the landline allowance.
- Carers allowance: consideration of the government allowance available, as well as consideration of the wording for school age children and childcare for two-year-old children.

Recommendations from meeting on 3 October 2024

4.6 At its next meeting, the Panel considered the additional information and benchmarking that had been requested. The Panel also had regard to a written statement that had been received from the Scrutiny Committee Chairs, setting out to the Panel the responsibilities and aims of their roles, and how they achieved those aims. It was noted by the Panel that many of responsibilities and aims were also applied to the Audit and Governance Chair. Paragraphs 4.7 to 4.10 detail the recommendations agreed by the Panel.

4.7 Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA)

The Panel discussed the information provided on the different roles of the Committee Chairs. In relation to the Scrutiny Chairs, the Panel felt that the workload and demands on the roles were equivalent to other chairs roles. It was acknowledged that some Members put more into the role, which was good to see, however, the special responsibility allowances needed to be tailored towards the role not the person in the role.

The Panel considered the benchmarking information provided and felt that NWLDC's current rates were appropriate. They felt that no changes were required at this time.

It was recommended that the Council make no change to the current levels of Special Responsibility Allowances.

4.8 Carers' Allowance

Following discussion at the previous meeting, the panel were content with the proposed removal of the requirement within the scheme in respect of children of compulsory school age. The Panel considered the benchmarking information provided, and it was acknowledged that although the allowance was rarely used, it was important that it be retained. During discussion on the current claim rate, it was noted that there was a Member substitute scheme in place which could be used if Members were unable to attend a committee. The Panel felt that the maximum rate for claims be increased to £10 per hour and that the wording be changed from 'maximum hourly rate...' to 'does not exceed...'

It was recommended that

1. The following requirement be removed from the scheme:

That no payments be made in respect of the care of children of compulsory school age during school hours.

2. That the hourly rate for the claiming carer allowance be increased from £8.34 per hour to £10 per hour.

3. The wording in the scheme relating to the hourly rate for provision of care be amended as follows:

‘Payments are made on the basis of reimbursement of actual expenditure incurred to a maximum of an hourly rate of £8.34 per hour providing it does not exceed £10 per hour for each hour of absence from home and is subject to the production of satisfactory receipts by the member.’

4.9 Broadband and telephone allowances

The Panel considered the benchmarking information provided. There was some discussion on whether the allowance was now obsolete, particularly the broadband allowance as most households had an internet provider as standard. It was felt that the allowance should remain as it is currently but this would be something to consider in more detail in the 2025 annual allowance review.

It was recommended that the Council makes no change to the current broadband and telephone allowances.

4.10 Changes of allowances to come into effect

It was recommended that Council approves the changes to the Scheme of Allowances put forward by the panel at its meeting on 5 September 2024 and 3 October 2024 to come into effect from the 2025/26 financial year, with the exception of the Independent Audit and Governance Committee Members, which it was recommended to come into effect immediately due to the requirement for the recruitment process.

5.0 MEMBERS INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

5.1 This section of the report considers the issue of members interests.

Councillors Code of Conduct

5.2 The Council adopted the Councillors Code of Conduct in February 2022. The Code requires Members to notify the Monitoring Officer of any disclosable pecuniary interests and register them in the Register of Interests. Furthermore, members must not take part in any decision in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI). The categories of DPI are set out in Regulations. The Councillors Code of Conduct and Regulations can be accessed via the links in the background papers to this report.

5.3 One of the categories of DPI is “any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain”. There is legal uncertainty about whether the receipt of an allowance paid by the Council to its members could amount to a DPI when considering council business. It is understood that some councils have sought a view from differing Kings Counsel and the advice has been split. In the circumstances, some councils have advised their members to err on the side of caution to, as failure to declare a DPI could amount to a criminal offence under the Code.

- 5.4 Even if it were to be found that the allowance did not amount to a DPI, it is likely that it would amount to a non-registerable interest under the Code. A non-registerable interest is one which “directly relates to” or “affects a financial interest of yourself or a friend relative or close associate”. It is likely that the consideration of the Members Allowance Scheme would “directly relate” to members’ financial interests. Members would be advised to declare that interest, not take part in the debate and not vote. The difference between a DPI and a non-registerable interest is that the latter would risk a complaint and potential breach of the Councillors Code, rather than a criminal sanction.

Dispensations

- 5.5 Section 31 (4) of the Localism Act 2011 states that a member may not take part in the discussion, participate or vote on a matter in which they have a DPI.
- 5.6 Section 33 of the Localism Act states that a council may, following the written request of members to the proper officer, grant a dispensation from the requirements of Section 34 of the Act. A dispensation is, in effect, an exemption from the rules in Section 34 (4). A council may only grant a dispensation if, having had regard to all the relevant circumstances, the authority:
- a) considers that without the dispensation the number of persons prohibited by section 31(4) from participating in any particular business would be so great a proportion of the body transacting the business as to impede the transaction of the business,
 - (b) considers that without the dispensation the representation of different political groups on the body transacting any particular business would be so upset as to alter the likely outcome of any vote relating to the business,
 - (c) considers that granting the dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the authority's area,
 - (d) if it is an authority to which Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000 applies and is operating executive arrangements, considers that without the dispensation each member of the authority's executive would be prohibited by section 31(4) from participating in any particular business to be transacted by the authority's executive, or
 - (e) considers that it is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.
- 5.7 The Council is required to have a members’ allowance scheme in place. Approval of the scheme is a matter for Full Council. All members are entitled to receive allowances under the Members Allowance Scheme, whether that be the basic allowance only or an additional Special Responsibility Allowance. The scheme also covers allowances for co-opted members, such as the Independent Person on Audit and Governance Committee and subsistence allowances. If all members were to declare an interest and not take part in the discussion and vote, it would impede the transaction of the business (section 34(4)a) above) and mean that the Council could not agree a scheme as required. It is considered that it is in the interests of the residents of North West Leicestershire that the Full Council can fulfil the requirement to agree a members allowance scheme.
- 5.8 Under the Council’s Constitution (Section G3 – Delegations to the Head of Paid Service and Statutory Officers), the Monitoring Officer has been given the authority to grant dispensations to Councillors who require them for one meeting or on one occasion. The grant of such a dispensation will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

5.9 For the reasons above and to ensure that the Council can transact the business of this report, the Monitoring Officer has granted a dispensation from the requirements of Code relating to interests to all councillors of the Council. This means that Members may take part in the debate and vote.

6.0 NEXT STEPS

6.1 Should Council agree to the changes to the scheme, the Democratic Services Team Manager will ensure that, in line with The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, all requirements are met in relation to the publicity requirements in advertising the changes to the scheme.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	A well-run council
Policy Considerations:	The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012
Safeguarding:	No issues identified
Equalities/Diversity:	No issues identified
Customer Impact:	No issues identified
Economic and Social Impact:	No issues identified
Environment, Climate Change and zero carbon:	No issues identified
Consultation/Community Engagement:	None.
Risks:	There is a reputational risk to the Council when increasing allowances to Councillors.
Officer Contact	Elizabeth Warhurst Head of Legal and Support Services elizabeth.warhurst@nwleicestershire.gov.uk



MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

GUIDANCE FOR MEMBERS

Revised November 2024

INDEX

- Section 1 - NWLDC Member's Allowance Scheme
- Section 2 - NWLDC Carer's Allowance Scheme
- Section 3 - Guidance for Members on the Allowance Scheme
- Section 4 - Examples of forms

SECTION 1 - NWLDC Members' Allowance Scheme

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

The North West Leicestershire District Council, in exercise of the powers conferred by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 hereby makes the following scheme:

1. Citation

This scheme may be cited as the North West Leicestershire District Council Members' Allowances Scheme.

2. Interpretation

In this scheme

"Councillor" means a member of the North West Leicestershire District Council who is a councillor.

"Year" means the 12 months ending with 31 March.

3. Basic allowance

Subject to paragraphs 6 and 7, for each year a basic allowance (2023/24 £5,715.33) shall be paid to each councillor.

4. Special responsibility allowances

- (i) For each year a special responsibility allowance shall be paid to those councillors who hold the special responsibilities in relation to the authority that are specified in Schedule 1 to this scheme.
- (ii) Subject to paragraphs 6 and 7, the amount of each such allowance shall be the amount specified against that special responsibility in that schedule.

5. Renunciation

A councillor may by notice in writing given to the Head of Legal & Support Services, elect to forego any part of his/her entitlement to an allowance under this scheme.

6. Part-year entitlements

- (i) The provisions of this paragraph shall have effect to regulate the entitlements of a councillor to basic and special responsibility allowances where, in the course of a year, this scheme is amended or that councillor becomes, or ceases to be, a councillor, or accepts or relinquishes a special responsibility in respect of which a special responsibility allowance is payable.

- (ii) If an amendment to this scheme changes the amount to which a councillor is entitled by way of a basic allowance or a special responsibility allowance, then in relation to each of the periods:
 - (a) Beginning with the year and ending with the day before that on which the first amendment in that year takes effect, or
 - (b) Beginning with the day on which an amendment takes effect and ending with the day before that on which the next amendment takes effect, or (if none) with the year,

the entitlement to such an allowance shall be to the payment of such part of the amount of the allowance under this scheme as it has effect during the relevant period as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of the days in the period bears to the number of days in the year.

- (iii) Where the term of office of a councillor begins or ends otherwise than at the beginning or end of a year, the entitlement of that councillor to a basic allowance shall be to the payment to such part of the basic allowance as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days during which his/her term of office subsists bears to the number of days in that year.
- (iv) Where this scheme is amended as mentioned in sub paragraph (ii), and the term of office of a councillor does not subsist throughout the period mentioned in sub paragraph (ii)(a), the entitlement of any such councillor to a basic allowance referable to each such period (ascertained in accordance with that sub paragraph) as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days during which his/her term of office as a councillor subsists bears to the number of days in that period.
- (v) Where a councillor has during part of, but not throughout, a year such special responsibilities as entitle him/her to a special responsibility allowance, that councillor's entitlement shall be to payment of such part of that allowance as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days during which he/she has such special responsibilities bears to the number of days in that year.
- (vi) Where this scheme is amended as mentioned in sub paragraph (ii), and a councillor has during part, but does not have throughout the whole, of any period mentioned in sub paragraph (ii)(a) of that paragraph any such special responsibilities as entitle him/her to a special responsibility allowance, that councillor's entitlement shall be to payment of such part of the allowance referable to each such period (ascertained in accordance with that sub paragraph) as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days in that period during which he/she has such special responsibilities bears to the number of days in that period.

7. Withdrawing of allowances

Where a member is suspended or partially suspended from his or her responsibilities in accordance with Part 3 of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations made thereunder, the part of the basic, special responsibility or co-optees allowance payable to him or her in respect of responsibilities or duties which he/she is suspended or partially suspended may be withheld by the Council.

8. Co-optees Allowance

An annual allowance of £800 per annum is available to those independent persons co-opted to the Audit and Governance committee and an annual co-optees allowance of £200 per annum is available to those individuals serving as members of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

9. Payments shall be made

- (i) In respect of basic allowances and special responsibility allowance, subject to sub paragraph (ii), in instalments of one twelfth of the amount specified in this scheme on the 25th day of each month.
- (ii) Where a payment of one twelfth of the amount specified in this scheme in respect of a basic allowance or a special responsibility allowance would result in the councillor receiving more than the amount to which, by virtue of paragraph 7, he or she is entitled, the payment shall be restricted to such amount as will ensure that no more is paid than the amount to which he or she is entitled.

10. Annual Review of the Level of Allowances

All allowances will be increased annually on 1 April by the same percentage as the National Joint Council staff pay award (scp 28).

SCHEDULE 1 - SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES

The following are specified as the special responsibilities in respect of which special responsibility allowances are payable, and the amounts of those allowances:

	Multiple	Amount payable 2022/23(£)
Chair of the Council	1	5,715.33
Deputy Chair of the Council	1/8 (12.5%)	714.41
Leader of the Council	4	22,861.31
Deputy Leader of the Council	2.5	14,288.32
Portfolio Holder	1.5	8,572.99
Opposition Leader (*)	1	5,715.33
Chair (Scrutiny Committee) x2	0.5	2,857.66
Chair (Local Plan Committee)	0.5	2,857.66
Chair (Planning Committee)	1.5	8,572.99
Chair (Licensing)	0.5	2,857.66
Chair (Audit and Governance Committee)	0.5	2,857.66

*An opposition group must consist of at least 5 members to qualify for the Special Responsibility Allowance.

Normally only one special responsibility allowance will be paid per councillor, being the highest of the allowances available to him/her. However, where the Council requires a member to undertake additional duties that attract a Special Responsibility Allowance the member will receive 100% of the higher allowance and 50% of the other allowance.

SCHEDULE 2 - APPROVED DUTIES

The following are specified as approved duties for the payment of travelling and subsistence allowances.

- (a) Any meeting (not being a meeting of a board, group, sub group or working party of this Council or a planning site visit) the holding of which is authorised by the Council or any of its boards, provided that it is a meeting to which members of at least two political groups on the Council have been invited.
- (b) A meeting of any other body to which the Council makes appointments or nominations, or of any group or sub group of such a body.
- (c) A meeting of any association of authorities of which the Council is a member.
- (d) Carrying out by a member of the Council any duty in connection with the discharge of any function of the authority conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises.
- (e) As an appointed representative of the Council at any visit to obtain any advice or information as a consequence of a report to, or decision of, any council, board, group, sub group, working party, etc.
- (f) Attendance at training courses funded by the District Council.

[Note: The bodies covered by paragraph (b) are those listed as "Outside Bodies" in the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Council each year, together with any meetings of outside bodies specified by the Council or a board from time to time. Any other meetings authorised by the Council involving members of more than one political party automatically become "Approved duties" under (a)].

SECTION 2 - NWLDC Carers' Allowance Scheme

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL CARERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME

CHILDCARE

The scheme to provide for the reimbursement of expenditure incurred by members in providing childcare arrangements to facilitate their attendance at approved duties of the Council in accordance with the following requirements:-

- That payment is made to someone other than a close relation.
- That payments for the care of under 8s are restricted to payments to registered childminders and other statutory approved childcare providers.
- That payments be restricted to the care of children up to their 14th birthday who normally reside with the member.

CARE OF DEPENDANTS

The reimbursement of expenditure on professional care for an elderly, sick or disabled dependent relative normally residing with the member and requiring constant care subject to payments being restricted to agencies or persons qualified to provide the care other than close relations.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

The following conditions will apply to both types of allowance:

- Payments are made on the basis of reimbursement of actual expenditure incurred providing it does not exceed £10 per hour for each hour of absence from home and are subject to the production of satisfactory receipts by the member. This hourly rate will be increased annually on 1 April by the same percentage as the National Joint Council staff pay award (scp28).
- That members self-certify claims confirming that they have incurred expenditure in accordance with the scheme.
- That qualifying meetings be restricted to those regarded as approved duties in the Council's scheme.

SECTION 3 - Guidance for members on the allowances scheme

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES – FROM 1 APRIL 2024

Members' allowances are paid through the monthly payroll on the 25th day of each month (unless this falls at the weekend when payment will be made on the Friday before) by credit transfer to personal accounts in a bank or building society. A computer pay slip is provided containing details of all payments and deductions. Payments are subject to PAYE and National Insurance deductions (where applicable).

1. BASIC ALLOWANCE

This allowance is £5,715.33 per councillor per year. Payment is made automatically and, therefore, no claim is required.

This allowance is intended to recognise the time devoted by councillors to their work, including such inevitable calls on their time as meetings with constituents etc and also to cover incidental costs for which other provision is not made. The basic allowance also covers attendance at the following meetings:

Council, board meetings, groups, sub groups, strategy groups, steering groups, working parties, panels, review boards, outside bodies, etc and site visits.

2. SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCE

The special responsibility allowances are paid to the following:

Chair of the Council	£5,715.33 per annum
Deputy Chair of the Council	£714.41 per annum
Leader of the Council	£22,861.31 per annum
Deputy Leader of the Council	£14,288.32 per annum
Cabinet Member/Portfolio Holder	£8,572.99 per annum
Opposition Leader	£5,715.33 per annum
Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee	£2,857.66 per annum
Chair of the Community Scrutiny Committee	£2,857.66 per annum
Chair of the Local Plan Committee	£2,857.66 per annum
Chair of Planning Committee	£8,572.99 per annum
Chair of Licensing Committee	£2,857.66 per annum
Chair of Audit and Governance Committee	£2,857.66 per annum

Normally only one special responsibility allowance will be paid per councillor, being the highest of the allowances available to him/her. However, where the Council requires a member to undertake additional duties that attract a Special Responsibility Allowance the member will receive 100% of the higher allowance and 50% of the other allowance.

3. RENUNCIATION

Any member not wishing to claim the basic allowance or special responsibility allowance **MUST NOTIFY THE HEAD OF LEGAL & SUPPORT SERVICES IN WRITING.**

4. TRAVELLING ALLOWANCES

Mileage rates are determined and set annually by the National Employers' Organisation for Local Government Services.

(a) Public transport

The rate for travel by public transport is limited to the amount of the ordinary fare or any available cheap fare.

(b) Motor cycles

The rates for travel by a member's own solo motor cycle are as follows:

- (i) Not exceeding 150 cc 9.2p per mile
- (ii) Exceeding 150 cc but not exceeding 500 cc 13.4p per mile
- (iii) Over 500 cc 18p per mile

(c) Motor vehicles

The rate for travel by a member's own private motor vehicle, or one belonging to a member of his/her family or otherwise provided for his/her use, other than a solo motor cycle shall not exceed:

For the use of a motor vehicle of cylinder capacity:

- (i) Not exceeding 999 cc 46.9p per mile
- (ii) Exceeding 999 cc but not exceeding 1199 cc 52.2p per mile

The cylinder capacity is that entered in the vehicle registration book or document by the Secretary of State under the Vehicles (Excise) Act 1971.

These rates may be increased in respect of the carriage of each passenger, not exceeding 4, to whom a travelling allowance would otherwise be payable under any enactment by not more than 3.0p per mile for the first passenger and 2.0p per mile for the second and subsequent passengers.

The following is also specified as an approved duty for the purposes of payment of travelling expenses and subsistence allowances:

As an appointed representative of the Council at any visit to obtain any advice or information as a consequence of a report to, or decision of, any council, board, sub group or working party etc.

(d) Taxis

The rate of travel by taxi-cab or cab shall not exceed:

- (i) in cases of urgency or where no public transport is reasonably available, as determined on an individual Councillor's needs basis, the amount of the actual fare and any reasonable gratuity paid;
- (ii) in any other case, the amount of the fare for travel by appropriate public transport.

(e) Rail

Unless a member is travelling with an officer, request forms for rail tickets should be completed and at least 5 working days' notice given in order for arrangements to be made for the tickets to be obtained from the travel agents. Completed forms should be forwarded to the Democratic Services Officer.

(f) Air

The rate for travel by air shall not exceed the rate applicable to travel by appropriate alternative means of transport together with an allowance equivalent to the amount of any saving in attendance allowance and subsistence allowance consequent on travel by air.

Provided that where the body resolves, either generally or specifically, that the saving in time is so substantial as to justify payment of the fare for travel by air, there may be paid an amount not exceeding:

- (i) The ordinary fare of any available cheap fare for travel by regular air service, or
- (ii) Where no such service is available or in case of urgency, the fare actually paid by the member.

The Council has resolved that in all cases where, in the opinion of the Head of Finance, the above criteria have been met, the appropriate air travel costs be paid.

(g) Tolls, ferries, parking fees

The actual amount of any expenditure incurred on tolls, ferries or parking fees may also be claimed.

Travelling expenses are limited to the actual journey from home or one's regular place of work which are necessarily incurred for the purpose of enabling you to perform an approved duty as a member of the Council.

(h) Tax implications on travelling expenses

Members who use their own car in the performance of their duties are paid a mileage allowance to cover the costs incurred, based on an amount per mile for the mileage

covered on Council business. An element of these payments may be taxable where the amount paid per mile exceeds the Inland Revenue permitted allowance. If any tax liability arises this is likely to be very minimal. (Further information can be obtained from the Senior Collections Officer on 01530 454820).

Travel between home and the Council Offices (or any other place) on Council business is not taxable provided that such payment does no more than reimburse the cost of such travel.

Taxi, rail or air fares, tolls, ferries and parking expenses **are taxable** unless accompanied by a receipt or invoice. **Members are requested to provide the appropriate receipts in order to reduce the possibility of any tax liability.**

IT IS NECESSARY TO SUBMIT CLAIM FORMS FOR TRAVELLING EXPENSES IN RESPECT OF ALL APPROVED MEETINGS ATTENDED (INCLUDING THOSE COVERED BY THE BASIC ALLOWANCE).

6. MEMBERS - "IN ATTENDANCE" AT MEETINGS

A Councillor who is "in attendance" at a meeting, i.e., is not a member of the board, group or sub group, etc is not eligible to claim travelling expenses.

Counsel's opinion was sought by the Association of District Councils, (now the Local Government Association) when the members' allowances system was first introduced in 1974, regarding members who attended meetings but who were not members of a particular committee.

Counsel's opinion was that:

"A Councillor attending the committee meeting of which he/she is not a member is not attending as a member of the committee and his/her attendance is not an approved duty within Section 177(2)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

The attendance of a non-member of a committee would not, in his opinion, be within Section 177(2)(b) unless he were there at the committee meeting by special invitation to assist the committee. The mere attendance and chance assistance of the committee would not be enough to enable the attendance to be an approved duty."

7. SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES

The amount of subsistence payable is on a meals basis, with clarification of eligibility based on the time of day the meal is taken and time away from home.

(a) Absence from the usual place of residence:

- (i) Breakfast allowance (more than 4 hours away from normal place of residence before 11.00am) £6.50
- (ii) Lunch allowance (more than 4 hours away from normal place of residence including the lunchtime period between 12 noon and 2.00pm) £8.00

- (iv) Evening meal allowance (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence ending after 7.00pm) £11.00

Points to remember:

You must have more than 4 hours before 11.00am to claim the breakfast allowance.

You must have 4 hours which include 12.00 noon to 2.00pm to claim the lunch allowance.

You must have 4 hours which include 3.00pm to 6.00pm to claim the tea allowance.

You must have 4 hours ending after 7.00pm to claim the dinner allowance.

i.e., if you finish your duty, including travel home, at 1.50pm, you cannot claim the lunch allowance even if you started at 8.00am.

Examples:

Day & times	Amounts to be claimed	Total
Monday 06.45 - 13.00	Breakfast allowance <u>£6.50</u>	£6.50
Tuesday 06.50 - 17.00	Breakfast allowance £6.50 Lunch allowance <u>£8.00</u>	£14.50
Wednesday 10.30 - 18.15	Lunch allowance £8.00	£8.00
Thursday 06.00 - 21.00	Breakfast allowance £6.50 Lunch allowance £8.00 Dinner allowance £11.00	£25.50

- (b) **Overnight subsistence from the usual place of residence..... £90.00**

For such an absence overnight in London, or for the purposes of attendance at an annual conference (including or not including an annual meeting) of the Local Government Association - £100.00.

(For the purposes of this paragraph, London means the City of London and the London boroughs of Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Hammersmith and Fulham, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea, Lambeth, Lewisham, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Wandsworth and Westminster.) When members are required to spend a night away from home or work place on Council business the normal rate for subsistence will not be taxable provided the expenses claimed are accompanied by a receipt or invoice.

(c) Meals provided free of charge

The rates specified in paragraphs (a) and (b) above shall be reduced by an appropriate amount in respect of any meal provided free of charge by an authority or body in respect of the meal or the period to which the allowance relates.

(d) Meals on trains

Where main meals are taken on trains during a period for which there is an entitlement for a day subsistence allowance, the reasonable cost of the meals (including VAT) may be reimbursed in full, within the limits specified below. In such circumstances, reimbursement for the reasonable cost of a meal would replace the entitlement to the day subsistence allowance for the appropriate meal period.

The limitations on reimbursement are:

- (i) for breakfast, an absence of more than 4 hours before 11.00am;
- (ii) for lunch, an absence of more than 4 hours including the period between 12noon and 2.00pm;
- (iii) for dinner, an absence of more than 4 hours ending after 7.00pm.

(e) Taxation of subsistence allowances

Subsistence allowances paid in respect of expenses incurred as a consequence of travel on Council business away from the Council Offices, will not be taxable provided they merely reimburse costs incurred by the member and claims for payment are accompanied by the relevant receipts. **If receipts are not submitted, income tax will have to be deducted from the expenses claimed.** Members are, therefore, requested to provide receipts to reduce the possibility of any tax liability.

Allowances claimed for meals taken at the Council Offices, e.g. where a member comes to the Offices for a briefing meeting, at say, 4.00pm and stays at the offices for an evening meeting that ends at 9.00pm, **expenses claimed are subject to tax.**

8. SCHOOL GOVERNORS

The District Council is not able to pay attendance allowances, travelling expenses or subsistence allowances to members serving as school governors when attending meetings of school governing bodies, as education is not a function of this authority.

9. TELEPHONE RENTALS

The Council has agreed to pay £75 per annum towards the home telephone rental (e.g. rental of line and equipment) of any member **except where the number is ex-directory.** Before payment can be made, you will need to supply an original invoice from your provider, to evidence that a telephone line is in use. Please send this to Democratic Services.

10. BROADBAND CONNECTION

The Council has agreed to pay £75 per annum towards the rental of a home broadband connection. Payment is made automatically, thus no claim is required. However, before payment can be made you will need to supply an original invoice from your provider, to evidence that a broadband connection is in use. Please send this to Democratic Services.

11. NATIONAL INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS

The Social Security Act 1973 provides that both the member and the authority will become liable for Class 1 national insurance contributions in respect of allowances provided the amounts involved reach the lower earnings limit in any earnings period.

Members who are retired for National Insurance purposes (state pension age) will not be liable to pay any contribution, and the DWP will, on application, issue a certificate of earner's non-liability. A person who has more than one job must obtain a separate certificate for each employer since each office or employment is considered separately for contribution purposes. **It is emphasised**, that unless such a certificate is obtained, should any liability for contributions arise, deductions will be made from the allowance at the full rate applicable, since any employer may be held liable for any deficiency in contributions. Contact your local tax office for further information.

12. ANNUAL PUBLICATION OF AMOUNTS OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES PAID

The District Council is required by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (Amendment) Regulations, 2003, "to make arrangements for the publication within the Authority's area, of the total sum paid by it in that (financial) year under the Members' Allowances Scheme, to each member in respect of the following, namely Basic, Special Responsibility and Attendance Allowances".

This requirement is made by publishing a list, of the total sums paid to each member in the previous financial year, in the press around May/June each year.

13. CLAIMING PROCEDURE

To claim payment of any of the allowances you must use the standard claim form. Blank copies of the form can be obtained from Democratic Services and it is essential that these be completed **fully**.

Here are a few tips about completing the claim form:

- Make sure your writing is clear – if you have any doubts use block capitals!
- Try to avoid using abbreviations for meetings; complete the title of the meeting in full.
- Show the time and place of departure and return, and location of meetings.
- Obtain receipts (when applicable) and attach these to your claim forms.
- Submit claims on a monthly basis **by the 6th of the month**. This will ensure payment by the 25th day of the month.

MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO SUBMIT CLAIM FORMS REGULARLY EACH MONTH

If you have any further questions or concerns about completing the claim forms, or members' allowances in general, please contact Democratic Services.

SECTION 4 - Examples of forms

- 1. Attendance, travel and subsistence**
- 2. Carers' allowance**
- 3. Rail ticket requests**
- 4. Vehicle information**

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

REQUEST FOR RAIL TICKETS

FROM: COUNCILLOR

Date of Meeting	Times of Trains (If known)	Destination	Title and Times of Meeting
Date ticket required by _____			

(It would be appreciated if 5 working days' notice could be given in order for arrangements to be made for the tickets to be obtained from the Travel Agents)

Signed Date

When completed, please return the form to the Democratic Services Officer

WOULD MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE:

IN ACCORDANCE WITH INLAND REVENUE TAX REGULATIONS, RECEIPTS ARE REQUIRED WHEN CLAIMING TRAVELLING EXPENSES, AND MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO RETURN THE RAIL TICKET WITH THEIR EXPENSES FORMS TO DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

If for any reason you are unable to attend the meeting, or the meeting is cancelled, would you please return the ticket, as soon as possible, in order for a refund to be obtained.

For Office Use Only	
Cost of Ticket £ p	Date Purchased/ Code

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

**TRAVELLING EXPENSES
INFORMATION REQUIRED IN CONNECTION WITH MEMBERS' VEHICLES**

COUNCILLOR

ADDRESS

.....

Make of Vehicle	
Model of Vehicle	
Cylinder Capacity (Exact c.c. as quoted on the log book)	
Registration Number	

I confirm that the above is a true record.

Signed Date

PLEASE RETURN THE FORM TO DEMOCRATIC
SERVICES

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NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2024



Title of Report	LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION - DEBATE NOT HATE CAMPAIGN	
Presented by	Councillor Keith Merrie Infrastructure Portfolio Holder	
Background Papers	None	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	No financial implications are known at this time. Any implications will be identified as the working party draft their action plan. An annual budget is set aside for member development that would cover costs of any training that may be identified during the work. Officers will liaise with Finance as the work progresses should any additional costs be identified.	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	There are no direct legal implications from the report	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	There are no implications	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	To seek Council's agreement to establishing and appointing a working party to engage in completing the assessments and drafting an action plan in response to the Local Government Association (LGA) toolkit.	
Recommendations	<p>THAT</p> <p>1. COUNCIL CONSIDERS IF IT WISHES TO CARRY OUT A PIECE OF WORK ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION'S DEBATE NOT HATE TOOLKIT</p> <p>AND</p> <p>2. SUBJECT TO RECOMMENDATION ONE, A CROSS PARTY WORKING GROUP BE ESTABLISHED TO CARRY OUT THE WORK.</p>	

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The LGA commissioned consultants to work with councils and relevant partners, in order to consider how to deal with the growing issue of abuse and intimidation and its negative impact on councillors and local democracy. The project culminated in the publication of the

LGA's findings in July 2023, titled [Debate Not Hate: Ending abuse in Public Life for councillors](#). The document suggested how councils can better support councillors to prevent and handle abuse and intimidation. It set out the main challenges faced by councillors, and proposed principles to assist councils in dealing with these challenges, including a zero-tolerance approach to abuse and a clearly defined process for raising concerns. The document also sets out 'top tips', and good practice case studies, which illustrate how councils can support their members.

- 1.2 Following on from this and, after further work, in May this year, the LGA published their [Ending abuse in public life council self assessment toolkit](#).
- 1.3 Councillors at authorities across the country are faced with different issues and the support that those councils put in place will be personalised to meet these issues.
- 1.4 The toolkit has been designed to aid councils in supporting councillors in their role and supporting them to be safe, whilst mitigating the impact and risks of abuse and intimidation that they may encounter. It is suggested in the toolkit, that a starting point will be for Councils to consider and complete the self-assessment to establish the current issues which are being experienced by their councillors, what is currently being done to support councillors, and how improvements can be made. The toolkit is structured around the principles detailed in the July 2023 publication discussed above and advises how councils can implement these principles.

2.0 PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Council is being asked to consider if it wishes to carry out some work around the Debate not Hate toolkit, and if so, establish a cross-party working group to carry out the work.
- 2.2 Should Council be minded to establish the working group, officers will seek nominations with a view to holding the first meeting by the end of November 2024. The Terms of Reference will be agreed at this first meeting. It is proposed that the working party is made up of three Alliance members, two Labour members and one Independent member.
- 2.3 It is envisaged that, should a working group be created, the members of the group will wish to complete the self-assessment, understand more about any issues affecting NWLDC members and complete the assessments at its first meeting and, with the support of officers draft an action plan to address any issues that the working party identifies.
- 2.4 Depending on the content, it is proposed to bring the action plan, when drafted, back to Council for consideration and support in its implementation.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	A well-run council
Policy Considerations:	None at this time
Safeguarding:	None at this time
Equalities/Diversity:	None at this time
Customer Impact:	None at this time
Economic and Social Impact:	None at this time
Environment, Climate Change and zero carbon:	None at this time
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Leaders of Political Groups
Risks:	None arising from this report. Will be considered as part of a future report to Council
Officer Contact	Elizabeth Warhurst Head of Legal and Support Services elizabeth.warhurst@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

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NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2024



Title of Report	APPOINTMENT TO THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL (IRP)	
Presented by	Councillor Keith Merrie Infrastructure Portfolio Holder	
Background Papers	Part 4 of the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 – Independent Remuneration Panels	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	Under the council's Members Allowance Scheme, co-opted Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel receive reasonable expenses incurred in attending meetings and in addition a small remuneration of £200.00 per annum. These costs are met from within existing budgets.	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	Regulation 20 of the Local Government (Members Allowances) Regulations 2003 (the Regulations) require the Council to appoint an Independent Remuneration Panel to consider the matter of members allowances.	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	There are no direct staffing or corporate implications arising.	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	To endorse the appointment of the Independent Remuneration Panel.	
Recommendations	<p>THAT COUNCIL:</p> <p>1) MAKES THE APPOINTMENTS TO THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL AS DETAILED IN PARAGRAPH 2.4 OF THE REPORT;</p> <p>AND</p> <p>2) ASKS THE CHAIR OF THE COUNCIL TO WRITE TO THE TWO MEMBERS OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL WHO ARE STANDING DOWN AT THE END OF THE TERM, TO THANK THEM FOR THEIR SERVICE ON THE PANEL</p>	

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 It is a legislative requirement for all councils to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel to make recommendations to the Council on the Members' Allowance Scheme and the nature and level of allowances to be paid to its elected members. The work of the panel includes receiving reports from Officers, considering statutory guidance, considering representations from councillors as appropriate and using comparative evidence to formulate recommendations on appropriate levels of allowances for consideration by the Council.
- 1.2 The Council cannot amend or update its Members' Allowance Scheme without first considering a report from the Independent Remuneration Panel, however, it does not have to accept the recommendations put forward.
- 1.3 In order to maintain the independence of the Independent Remuneration Panel, in line with the Member Protocol agreed by Council in 2015, and as set out in the council's Constitution, members should not be:
- a person who has within the period of five years before receiving the date of appointment been a councillor or officer of the council; and
 - a person who is a relative or close friend of a councillor or officer of the council.
 - a person who does not either live or work in the District.
- 1.4. The Council's Panel comprises four members. In November 2020, the Council agreed to extend the term of office of the current panel to 11 November 2024. The current membership of the Panel is:

Mrs M Dadley
Mrs E Oldham
Mr S Barkby
Mr T Moore

2.0 RECRUITMENT PROCESS

- 2.1 The Regulations do not stipulate how the IRP members should be appointed but provide that the panel shall consist of at least three members, none of whom are also a member of an authority in respect of which it makes recommendations or is a member of a committee or sub-committee of such an authority, or is disqualified from being or becoming a member of an authority.:
- 2.2 In August/September 2024, the four vacancies were advertised in the Coalville and Ashby Times and publicised on the council's website. The current panel members were also given the opportunity to reapply for the roles.
- 2.3 Two of the current members have taken the decision that the time is right to step away from the panel and not re-apply for the roles on the panel. Mrs Elaine Oldham and Mrs Margaret Dadley have both served on the panel for 19 years and eight years respectively. It is proposed that a thank you letter for the work that they have done on the panel is sent to them by the Chair of the Council.

2.4 A robust application and selection process was conducted by the Chief Executive and Democratic Services Team Manager. Due to unforeseen circumstances, one of the roles had not been filled in time for ratification by Council and officers have ensured that a process is in place for a report to be brought back to Council in February 2025 to ratify the final member of the panel.

2.5 The following persons are proposed for membership of the IRP for the term of office 18 November 2024 to 17 November 2028.

- Mr T Moore
- Mr S Barkby
- Mrs S Barnett

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	A well-run council
Policy Considerations:	Constitution
Safeguarding:	N/A
Equalities/Diversity:	The application process was open to anyone who met the essential criteria set out in para 1.3
Customer Impact:	NA
Economic and Social Impact:	N/A
Environment, Climate Change and zero carbon:	N/A
Consultation/Community Engagement:	N/A
Risks:	An up to date Constitution is a legal requirement
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NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2024



Title of Report	URGENT DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET	
Presented by	Councillor Richard Blunt Leader of the Council	
Background Papers	Council's Constitution Confidential Award of Contract Report to Cabinet – 24 September 2024	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	Financial implications were taken into account by Cabinet in reaching its decision for the report detailed in paragraph 2.3. Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	Legal implications were taken into account by the Cabinet in reaching the decisions. Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	There are no staffing and corporate implications Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	In accordance with the Council's Constitution, to formally report that Cabinet has taken decisions, which are considered to be urgent and, if delayed, would be likely to cause serious prejudice to the Council's interests.	
Recommendations	THAT COUNCIL NOTES THE REPORT.	

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 As set out in Rule 15 (call-in urgency) of Part 3, Section D of the Council's Constitution, the call-in procedure may be suspended where a decision being taken by the Cabinet is urgent. A decision is considered urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests.
- 1.2 In all circumstances, the Chairman of the Council must agree that the decision is reasonable and must agree to the decision being treated as a matter of urgency.
- 1.3 Decisions taken as a matter of urgency must be recorded in the minutes and be reported to the next available meeting of the Council, together with the reasons for urgency.
- 1.4 Decisions that required the waiver of call-in are detailed at section 2 of the report.

2.0 WAIVER OF CALL-IN DECISIONS MADE BY CABINET

- 2.1 One executive decision was taken by Cabinet, where the Chairman of the Council agreed that any delay caused by call-in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests.
- 2.2 A summary of the decision made is detailed below:
- 2.3 Cabinet – Tuesday, 24 September 2024 – Award of Contracts

The approval of the Chairman of the Council was given to the exemption of the Council's Scrutiny Procedure rules in relation to the call-in of the decision on the item, since any call-in would prejudice the ability of the Council to award the contract for the provision of insurance by the 1 October 2024. If the contract for insurance was not awarded prior to the 1 October 2024, it would have created significant future financial obligations, and the Council may also be in breach of conditions in other contracts should adequate insurance cover not be in place.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	Planning and regeneration Clean, green and Zero Carbon Communities and housing A well-run council
Policy Considerations:	As detailed on each report that was considered by Cabinet.
Safeguarding:	As detailed on each report that was considered by Cabinet.
Equalities/Diversity:	As detailed on each report that was considered by Cabinet.
Customer Impact:	As detailed on each report that was considered by Cabinet.
Economic and Social Impact:	As detailed on each report that was considered by Cabinet.
Environment, Climate Change and Zero Carbon:	As detailed on each report that was considered by Cabinet.
Consultation/Community/Tenant Engagement:	Chair of the Council
Risks:	To comply with Special Urgency Rule 15, Section C of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution, the decisions made by Cabinet are to be reported to Council and Rule 15 (call-in urgency), Section D of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution that suspensions of Call-In in relation to urgent decisions made by Cabinet are to be reported to Council.
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