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

Time/Date 6.30 pm on TUESDAY, 17 JUNE 2025

Location Forest Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN

Officer to contact Democratic Services (01530 454512)

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "A. ...", located below the contact information.

.....
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. CHAIR'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 13 May 2025	3 - 12
10.	AWAAB'S LAW – OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	
	Report of the Strategic Director of Communities	13 - 16
11.	SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, VIREMENTS AND CAPITAL APPROVALS	
	Report of the Strategic Director of Resources	17 - 28
12.	AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25	
	Report of the Strategic Director of Resources	29 - 46
13.	ANNUAL MEMBER CONDUCT REPORT	
	Report of the Head of Legal and Support Services	47 - 54

MINUTES of a meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Forest Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on TUESDAY, 13 MAY 2025

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 A Barton, Mrs C Hammond, Ms K Hiller, Mr P Stone, Mrs A Thomas and Mrs R Wallace

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillors A Barker, D Everitt, M French, J Geary, R Johnson, J Legrys, N Rushton and A Wilson declared an other interest in item 18, Pension Discretion – Proposed Introduction of a Salary Sacrifice Additional Voluntary Contributions Scheme (AVC), as members of the Leicestershire County Council Pension Scheme.

Councillor S Sheahan declared a registerable interest in item 10, Motions, due to the reference to HS2 and a property owner affected by the proposed route.

Councillors C Sewell and R Sutton declared an interest in item 10, Motions, as members of Kegworth Parish Council.

Councillor P Moulton declared an other interest in item 11, Petitions, as a signatory on the petition submitted.

3. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

Councillor K Horn said a few words regarding his year as Chair of the Council. He thanked all officers and Members for their support, particularly with raising money for his charity. He advised that the total raised was £17,000.

Nominations were sought for the Chair of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

It was moved by Councillor R Blunt that Councillor P Lees be appointed as Chair of the Council for 2025/26. The motion was seconded by Councillor T Gillard.

It was also moved by Councillor A Morley that Councillor T Eynon be appointed as Chair of the Council for 2025/26. It was seconded by Councillor C Sewell.

As two nominations had been received, a vote was taken for each nominee in turn. It was

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor P Lees be appointed Chair of the Council for 2025/26.

Councillor P Lees then took the Chair, received the Chair's chains and signed the Acceptance of Office. He then presented Councillor K Horn with his Past Chair of the Council badge.

4. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY CHAIR

Nominations were sought for the Deputy Chair of the Council for the ensuing year.

It was moved by Councillor R Blunt that Councillor J Simmons be appointed as Deputy Chair of the Council for 2025/26. The motion was seconded by Councillor T Gillard.

It was also moved by Councillor D Bigby that Councillor A Wilson be appointed as Deputy Chair of the Council for 2025/26. The motion was seconded by Councillor J Legrys.

As two nominations had been received, a vote was taken for each nominee in turn, the result of which was tied. Therefore, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Chair of the Council exercised his casting vote. It was

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor J Simmons be appointed as Deputy Chair of the Council for 2025/26.

5. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair of the Council took the opportunity to thank Members for his appointment and announced his intentions for his year in office, particularly to represent the neuro-divergent community as an openly autistic Chair of the Council. Some information was provided in relation to neurodiversity and then it was announced that the Chair of the Council's chosen charity for the year as the National Autistic Society.

6. APPOINTMENT OF LEADER

Nominations were sought for the Leader of the Council for the ensuing year.

It was moved by Councillor T Gillard that Councillor R Blunt be appointed as Leader of the Council for 2025/26. The motion was seconded by Councillor K Horn.

It was also moved by Councillor P Moulton that Councillor J Legrys be appointed as Leader of the Council for 2025/26. The motion was seconded by Councillor G Rogers.

Before a vote was taken, in agreement with the Chair of the Council, Councillor R Sutton addressed the meeting in relation to his priorities for his constituents and the decision on leadership for Members to consider.

As two nominations had been received, a vote was taken for each nominee. It was

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor R Blunt be appointed as the Leader of the Council for 2025/26.

Councillor R Blunt thanked Members for his appointment and said a few words regarding his plans for the forthcoming year.

7. LEADER'S AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council, Councillor R Blunt announced his appointments and delegations of executive functions for the forthcoming year as follows:

Leader – Councillor R Blunt

Deputy Leader and Community and Climate Change Portfolio – Councillor M Wyatt

Infrastructure Portfolio – Councillor N Rushton

Planning Portfolio – Councillor T Saffell
 Finance and Corporate Portfolio – Councillor K Merrie
 Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio – Councillor A Woodman
 Business and Regeneration Portfolio – Councillor T Gillard

As in previous years, the executive responsibilities were to be delegated to the Cabinet to take decisions collectively.

Councillor J Legrys, Leader of the Labour Group, announced the Shadow Portfolio Holders as follows:

Leader, and Planning and Infrastructure Portfolio – Councillor J Legrys
 Housing Portfolio – Councillor A Morley
 Finance and Corporate Portfolio – Councillor S Lambeth
 Freeport Portfolio – Councillor C Sewell
 Community Services Portfolio – Councillor P Moulton
 Environment, Net Zero and Waste Management Portfolio – Councillor D Bigby
 Customer Services Portfolio – Councillor C Beck
 Business and Regeneration Portfolio – Councillor G Rogers
 Policy and Research Lead – Councillor S Sheahan

Councillor J Legrys thanked Councillor S Sheahan for his invaluable work in the previous years as Leader of the Labour Group. He also acknowledged Councillor N Rushton for his many years of hard work in leading Leicestershire County Council.

Councillor R Blunt then provided an update on the latest position with local government reorganisation and devolution. It was announced that during the summer, the Council would be engaging extensively with residents, businesses and stakeholders in preparation for the submission of the full proposals in November.

Councillor A Woodman, as Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio Holder, provided an update on the progress made to date in the Housing Service. He apologised to tenants who were still waiting for service but acknowledged improvements were being made. He thanked all staff involved for the transformation in the last 18 months.

8. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

9. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Four questions were asked which were circulated in the additional papers and are set out below with the responses. Each Member who asked a question was invited by the Chair of the Council to ask one supplementary question which is also set out with the response.

Question from Councillor Legrys

‘Can the Portfolio Holder please update me as Ward Member on proposals to modify/upgrade Stenson Square Coalville please?’

Response from Councillor R Blunt

‘Specialist “Place Making” Consultants have been appointed to undertake the next phase of the Stenson Square project. As part of this commission the consultants will build upon the previous concept proposals to draw up a planning application submission for the area in front of Stenson House. The consultants will shortly be arranging an engagement

meeting with local stakeholders (including councillors) which will offer an opportunity for all those interested in this project to help inform and refine the proposals.'

Supplementary question and response

Councillor J Legrys asked for a timeline for progressing the work. Councillor R Blunt explained that officers were working towards obtaining a certificate of lawful use and then work could begin to demolish the old council offices, therefore, progress was imminent. It was reported that meetings on the matter were being scheduled and Councillor J Legrys would be involved at every stage.

Question from Councillor P Moulton

'I would like to know with regard to timescales when, if at all The Oak public house at Whitwick is to be developed, given that it was purchased in 2021 and the costs of security, clearance and designs are increasing daily?'

Response from Councillor A Woodman

'The site is within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) property portfolio and was purchased some time ago as a prospective development site. The Housing Service's new build capacity has recently been increased through the use of external contractors to start to address outstanding sites. The development opportunities for each site are currently being assessed.

This particular site has an expired outline planning permission for a housing development and requires a detailed application to be developed in line with current social housing standards if it is to be taken forward for development. A feasibility study is currently being commissioned. This means that it is likely to be some months before a revised planning application could come forward. The earliest anticipated date for completion is therefore likely to be some years away.

In the meantime, the site is being managed, along with the other small number of sites the HRA controls, awaiting development. The ongoing regular costs amount to c£1000 per annum, plus ad hoc litter and or vegetation clearance, the cost of which varies by visit. These costs are being met from the HRA and are not funded by the General Fund. This is in addition to the combined purchase and costs for design work and site clearances, fencing etc to date of c£480,000.'

Supplementary question and response

Councillor P Moulton referred to the issues on site including overhanging trees to neighbours, vermin on the site and security required. He asked for an explanation on the impact of the costs on the financial stability and value for money position of the authority. Councillor A Woodman explained the costs if the site was part of the Housing Revenue Account rather than the General Fund and the two should not be conflicted. It was noted that the focus had been on improving the maintenance service, but things were now moving forward. The issues raised were noted and Councillor A Woodman would raise it with officers outside of the meeting.

Question from Councillor C Beck

'What can councils in Leicestershire do, to make sure that the list of independent persons is representative of the population?'

Response from Councillor K Merrie

'There has been a fair and open recruitment process for the Independent Persons in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and HR policies. From this, two new Independent Persons have been chosen due to their impressive applications and successful interviews. We have a pool arrangement with the other Leicestershire Councils. The benefit of this is it provides for a larger number of IPs which can be drawn from and does not limit this to having only one or two in the position. We are hopeful that this approach means the IPs will be better representative of the population, given the pool allows for a wider cross section of people to choose from and no limit on numbers – if someone meets the criteria and performs well in the interview, they can be offered the role.

The job advert for this recruitment was tailored to the role but in a way that could encourage a range of applicants, and for future recruitment exercises it can be ensured that a similar approach is taken.

The essential criteria were experience of local government or other aspects of public service and of the political process, and that the IPs either live or work in Leicestershire. Other essential criteria related to communication skills, the ability to assimilate information, having an understanding of legal requirements, understanding confidentiality requirements, being assertive, being open minded and using IT. There has to be a balance between ensuring the right people apply for the job, but not setting the requirements too stringently that no one can meet them. It is also important to note that it is an essential requirement that the IP either lives or works in Leicestershire, thus giving them a connection to the area within which they will be carrying out the role.

The role description also specifically requires the IP to be aware of the views of the local community on ethical standards, and to ensure they reflect views when carrying out the role.

The role was advertised by all the Leicestershire Councils, in order to ensure the advert had as wide a reach as possible.'

Supplementary question and response

Councillor C Beck asked how highly qualified and skilled women could be encouraged to take part in the recruitment process. Councillor K Merrie offered to meet with Councillor C Beck to discuss the matter further.

Question from Councillor J Geary

'Once again, our travelling friends paid us a visit a couple of weeks ago, this time setting up home on the London Road Park, so I again ask the question as to what progress is being made in finding the travelling community a suitable site within our district.

I last asked this question at the Council Meeting of the 18 June last. You replied by saying "I can confirm that Officers are currently investigating options for addressing the issue of transit accommodation in respect of both permanent and temporary sites as the Local Plan Review progress. The intention is for Officers to bring forward a report to members of the Local Plan Committee before the end of the year".

You went on to say "I have asked Officers to keep Cllr Geary updated on progress and to make him aware when the issue is to be reported to the Local Plan Committee", to date no such information has been forthcoming.'

Response from Councillor N Rushton

‘Unfortunately, it has not been possible to make the progress we had hoped on this issue due to other important work in respect of the emerging Local Plan, including consulting upon additional housing and employment site allocations and addressing responses to the proposed policies consulted upon last year.

We have recently received some additional funding from the Government to support the preparation of Local Plans and we are looking to bring in some additional capacity to help address the gypsy and traveller’s issue. Officers are aware that this is an important issue to be addressed in the preparation of the Local Plan and they will take a report to Local Plan Committee as soon as they are able.’

Supplementary question and response

Councillor J Geary asked that the matter be sent to a Scrutiny Committee so that it could be fully scrutinized, especially as there had recently been parcels of land removed from the Local Plan proposals which could be used for the much-needed transit sites for gypsy and travellers. Councillor N Rushton acknowledged the importance of the issue and as the new Portfolio Holder, invited Councillor J Geary to discuss the matter with him further outside of the meeting.

10. MOTIONS

The Chair of the Council referred Members to the motion as detailed within the agenda papers and amended in the additional papers, and invited Councillor M Ball, who made the submission, to speak.

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

A discussion ensued in which Members spoke in support of the motion.

The motion was put to the vote and was CARRIED.

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State on behalf of the Council to request an explanation as to why the land in the district safeguarded by HS2 has not yet been released.
- b) The Chief Executive write to the Members of Parliament for North West Leicestershire and Bosworth requesting that they make representations to Government highlighting the blight HS2 continues to cause the district.

11. PETITIONS

The Chair of the Council referred Members to the petition as detailed within the agenda papers and additional papers and invited the Petition Organiser to come forward and speak to the petition.

Councillor T Gillard spoke in support of the petition and moved that the matter be referred to the next convenient meeting of the Local Plan Committee. The motion was seconded by Councillor A Barker.

Councillor N Rushton, the Planning and Infrastructure Portfolio Holder, addressed the meeting and raised the difficulties facing the Local Plan Committee in allocating sites and the Importance of agreeing the Local Plan in accordance with the proposed timeframe.

The motion was put to the vote and was CARRIED.

RESOLVED THAT:

The subject matter of the petition be placed on the next convenient meeting of the Local Plan Committee.

12. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2025.

It was moved by Councillor P Lees, seconded by Councillor J Simmons and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2025 be approved and signed by the Chair of the Council as a correct record.

13. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES AND GROUPS, ELECTION OF CHAIRS AND DEPUTY CHAIRS

Councillor T Gillard, the Business and Regeneration Portfolio Holder, presented the report and directed Members to the nominations as circulated in the additional papers. The recommendations were moved by Councillor T Gillard and seconded by Councillor N Rushton.

As there was more than one nomination for the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, a separate vote on this appointment was required.

The appointment of the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee as circulated in the additional papers was put to the vote.

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor R Sutton be appointed as Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee.

At this point, the Labour Group announced a change to their nominations. It was noted that the nomination for Deputy Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee be changed from Councillor D Everitt to Councillor P Moulton. There was no opposition.

The appointments for the remaining Committees and Groups, including the change as detailed above, was put to the vote.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) The terms of reference of the committees and groups as detailed in appendix A be endorsed.
- 2) The appointments to the committees and groups as circulated in the additional papers be agreed.

- 3) The Chairs and Deputy Chairs for the committees and groups as detailed in the additional papers be agreed subject to the amendment to Deputy Chair of the Audit and governance Committee as detailed above.

14. SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Councillor R Blunt, Leader of the Council, presented the report to Members and moved the recommendations. It was seconded by Councillor K Merrie.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Scheme of Delegation in Part 2, Section G of the Council's Constitution be agreed.

15. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor T Gillard, the Business and Regeneration Portfolio Holder, presented the report and directed Members to the nominations as circulated in the additional papers. The recommendations were moved by Councillor T Gillard and seconded by Councillor N Rushton.

During discussions comments were made regarding the lack of feedback, minutes or written reports from the Members who were appointed to the outside bodies, it was requested that this be done in the future. It was also reported that the MSV Donington Park Consultative Forum did not meet even though appointments were made to it each year. The Chief Executive reiterated advice previously provided relating to outside bodies and that there was no requirement for the Council to provide updates on their behalf. It was agreed for officers to contact the MSV Donington Park Consultative Forum to request that a meeting be convened..

As there was more than one nomination for the Charnwood Forest Geopark Charitable Incorporated Organisation, a separate vote was required.

The appointment of the representative for the Charnwood Forest Geopark Charitable Incorporated Organisation was put to the vote, the result of which was tied. Therefore, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, the Chair of the Council exercised his second and casting vote.

RESOLVED THAT:

Councillor M Wyatt be appointed as the Council's representative on the Charnwood Forest Geopark Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

The appointments for the remaining Outside Bodies as circulated in the additional papers were then put to the vote.

RESOLVED THAT:

The representatives be appointed to serve on the Outside Bodies as circulated in the additional papers.

16. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2025 - 2026

Councillor K Merrie, the Finance and Corporate Portfolio Holder, presented the report to Members and moved the recommendations. It was seconded by Councillor R Blunt.

A request was made for an appropriate notice period for any cancellation of meetings to allow Councillors to better manage their time.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Schedule of Meetings for 2025 - 26 be agreed.

17. CAPITAL UPDATE

Councillor K Merrie, the Finance and Corporate Portfolio Holder, presented the report to Members and moved the recommendations. It was seconded by Councillor M Wyatt.

During discussion the proposals were welcomed. Some concerns were shared in relation to the new vehicles as they were diesel rather than a greener option as originally proposed, officers were asked to put plans in place to consider green options when replacing these vehicles.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) The supplementary estimates detailed in paragraph 2.2 of the report which were above £250,000 and externally funded be approved.
- 2) The revised capital programmes as detailed in appendices A and B be agreed.

18. PENSION DISCRETION - PROPOSED INTRODUCTION OF A SALARY SACRIFICE ADDITIONAL VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS SCHEME (AVC)

Councillor K Merrie, the Finance and Corporate Portfolio Holder, presented the report to Members and moved the recommendations. It was seconded by Councillor A Saffell.

During discussion, a concern was raised regarding the cost of administering the additional voluntary contributions and whether it could be reinvestigated at this stage. It was agreed to provide an answer outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED THAT:

The proposed revisions to the pensions discretions as detailed in appendix 1 of the report be agreed with effect from May 2025.

19. APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS

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

RESOLVED THAT:

The Independent Persons listed in paragraph of 2.2 of the report be appointed for a term of office of four years until Annual Council in May 2029.

20. EVENTS LIST

Councillor M Wyatt, the Community and Climate Change Portfolio Holder, presented the report to Members and moved the recommendations. It was seconded by Councillor R Canny.

During discussion it was acknowledged that historical events were important, but it was also necessary to respect events that were currently happening and therefore should be monitored.

RESOLVED THAT:

The events list as detailed at appendix A of the report be adopted on an ongoing basis.

21. RENAMING OF OAKTHORPE AND DONISTHORPE PARISH COUNCIL

Councillor N Rushton, the Infrastructure Portfolio Holder, presented the report to Members and moved the recommendations. It was seconded by Councillor M Ball.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) The change in name of Oakthorpe and Donisthorpe Parish Council to Oakthorpe, Donisthorpe and Acresford Parish Council be reaffirmed.
- 2) Authority to make any necessary legal orders and notifications to enact the above changes be delegated to the Head of Legal and Support Services.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.16 pm

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 17 JUNE 2025



Title of Report	AWAAB'S LAW – OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	
Presented by	Cllr Andrew Woodman Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio Holder	
Background Papers	None	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	<p>The additional staffing costs are £100k per annum. The costs over five years, totalling £0.5m will be met from the 2024/25 underspend on the Housing Revenue Account.</p> <p>The Council's Constitution states that supplementary estimates exceeding £0.250m require Council approval.</p>	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	<p>The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 introduced Awaab's Law to ensure that there are obligations on social housing landlords to ensure rental properties are free from damp and mould, along with other hazardous conditions. Whilst the regulations to bring these provisions into effect have not yet been laid before Parliament, the Government has made it clear that intends to bring the first phase of obligations into force in October 2025. It will then become a legal obligation to comply with the relevant provisions.</p>	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	These are set out in the body of the report.	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	<p>Council in March set the budget for 2025/6. Since then, the enactment of Awaab's Law has been made and has resulted in a new budget pressure. This report sets out the provisions for this which is over £250,000 and therefore this report seeks Council's decision to create a new reserve as set out in the report.</p>	
Recommendations	<p>THAT COUNCIL APPROVES:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. THE FUNDING OF £0.5M FROM THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) 2024/25 UNDERSPEND AS A SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE TO MEET THE COSTS OVER FIVE YEARS 2. THE CREATION OF AN EARMARKED RESERVE OF £0.5M 	

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Introduction of 'Awaab's Law' (see Section 2.0 below) will affect how the Council carries out its housing functions in future years. As a result, it has been necessary to review the posts within the Housing Service to ensure that the Council is appropriately resourced to address the legislative changes. The changes that are required result in an additional cost to the Council over the medium term.
- 1.2 This report, therefore, seeks approval of a supplementary estimate and the creation of an earmarked reserve to fund the additional staffing resource requirement resulting from the introduction of this new legislation.

2.0 AWAAB'S LAW & SOCIAL HOUSING ACT 2023

- 2.1 Following a number of cases regarding mould and damp in social housing, successive governments have sought to bring about a significantly improved process for addressing such cases. This was enshrined in the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. Earlier this year the secondary legislation to enable the Act came into force. This stipulates that from October 2025, the duties around the investigation of and to address dangerous damp and mould within a set amount of time, as well as repair all emergency hazards within 24 hours. Landlords who fail to comply face legal and financial penalties.
- 2.2 The responsibilities placed on the Council are onerous – the main ones being:
- 14 days to commence an investigation after receiving a report of a hazard.
 - Two days following an inspection to produce a report outlining the investigation, identified hazards, proposed remedial works, and estimated completion times.
 - Seven days to take action to rectify a hazard.
- 24 hours to address emergency hazards that pose an immediate risk to health or safety.
- 2.3 As can be seen from the above, these are significant changes that require additional resources to deliver them. The Council has already started its journey to compliance with the Act including the new Damp Mould and Condensation Policy which was adopted by Cabinet earlier this year.
- 2.4 In summary, the changes proposed to address the requirements of the legislation are the creation of an additional work team of responsive repairs operatives to form a standalone taskforce of ten staff. This will comprise two new posts, and additional administrative/customer contact role and a surveyor. It will also involve the transfer of reporting lines of eight existing skilled trade operative posts all of which are currently vacant. There are no proposed changes to job descriptions, responsibilities with any existing members of staff affected by this, only line management changes. The existing post holders affected are already working in these dedicated work streams. There would be no disturbance to their day-to-day responsibilities or remits and the only changes would be who they report to as their line managers.
- 2.5 Based on the information available of future workload this is considered sufficient to address the likely demands coming forward over the short to medium term. This will continue to be monitored against adherence to the timeframes work needs to comply with as set out in the new legislation and may require change if these are not being met. On the known case load at this time, it is anticipated that this level of resource is sufficient for a steady state, but will be reviewed as part of the normal management and operation of the service going forward.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The current structure of the Housing Repair teams has been reviewed. A combination of reallocating some existing positions and creating several new ones is required. While it is the responsibility of the Head of Paid Service to implement this, to ensure appropriate staffing arrangements are in place to meet the new legislative obligations, the significant cost implications of establishing a new dedicated team to address this work, need to be reported to the Council. Additional funding of £0.5m is required to support the revised structure, therefore, Council is required to approve this supplementary estimate.
- 3.2 The two additional posts outlined in paragraph 2.4 will cost £100k per year over the medium term financial plan period up to 2029/30. In 2024/25, the Housing Revenue Account recorded an underspend of £1.7 million (subject to final confirmation of the outturn). It is proposed that £0.5 million from this underspend be allocated to an earmarked reserve to cover these costs over the next five years. During this period, the Council will review its budget as part of its annual budget-setting process. Where savings within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget can be identified to support the ongoing £100k per year cost from the base budget, this will be agreed at the appropriate time. Any remaining balance in the earmarked reserve at that point may be repurposed.
- 3.3 The above will be subject to consultation with staff and trade unions in line with the Council's normal human resources processes relating to implementing such changes.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communities and housing - A well-run council
Policy Considerations:	Damp Mould and Consultation Policy 2025
Safeguarding:	NA at this level but is addressed through the normal process of work within the department.
Equalities/Diversity:	NA at this level but is addressed through the normal process of work within the Housing Service.
Customer Impact:	Compliance with the Social Housing Act 2023 and the improved Damp and Mould works timelines as set out in the report.
Economic and Social Impact:	NA at this level but is addressed through the normal process of work within the Housing Service.
Environment, Climate Change and zero carbon:	NA at this level but is addressed through the normal process of work within the Housing Service.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Government consultation on the introduction of the legislation. Council consultation as part of developing the Damp, Mould and Consultation Policy which was adopted earlier in 2025.
Risks:	Without this level of resource, it may not be possible for the Council to comply with the statutory requirements as set out in the report.
Officer Contact	Allison Thomas Allison.thomas@nwleicestershire.gov.uk Chief Executive

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NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 17 JUNE 2025



Title of Report	SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, VIREMENTS AND CAPITAL APPROVALS	
Presented by	Cllr Keith Merrie Finance and Corporate Portfolio Holder	
Background Papers	<p>Council: 20 February 2025 2025/26 Budget Setting Reports</p> <p>Cabinet: 25 February 2025 UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025/26 Award</p> <p>Cabinet: 25 March 2025 Acquisitions and Disposals</p> <p>Cabinet: 9 January 2025 2024/25 Quarter 2 General Fund Finance Update</p> <p>Council: 13 May 2025 Capital Update</p> <p>Cabinet: 20 May 2025 Supplementary Estimates, Virements and Capital Approvals</p> <p>Rural England Prosperity Fund 2025-2026 Award</p>	Public Report: Yes, confidential Appendix C
Financial Implications	The report is to ensure the Council is following good financial governance in line with its Financial Procedure Rules and capital governance arrangements. The financial implications are set out in the report.	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	S151 of The Local Government Act (1972) states that every Local Authority shall make arrangements for the proper administration of the financial affairs. The Local Government Act (2000) requires Full Council to approve the Council's budget and NW Leicestershire District Council did so in February 2025. S151 of the Local Government Act (1972) makes clear that the Council is responsible for the overall financial administration of the Council and the S151 Officer is responsible for the administration of those affairs.	

	Councils are required to ensure that there is clear separation between capital and revenue budgets.
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes
Staffing and Corporate Implications	The Council is managing its capital budgets in a co-ordinated and effective way since the Capital Strategy Group was introduced and changes were made to introduce the development pool and programme of active projects.
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes
Purpose of Report	To seek approval for the additions to the Council's General Fund Revenue Budget and Capital Programme in line with the Constitution. The Financial Procedure Rules in the Constitution describes the procedure in respect of supplementary estimates as set out in Financial Regulation A: Financial Management, paragraphs A26 to A28.
Recommendations	<p>THAT COUNCIL APPROVES:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES DETAILED IN PARAGRAPH 2.2 AND APPENDIX C WHICH ARE ABOVE £250K AND ARE EXTERNALLY FUNDED; AND 2. THE REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMMES AS DETAILED IN APPENDICES A AND B.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 On an annual basis the Council approves its Budget and Capital Programmes in February ahead of the subsequent financial year. The Budget is based on the best available intelligence at that point in time.
- 1.2 However, the external environment within which the Council operates is constantly evolving and during the financial year there can be changes in funding, for example the Council being successful in a grant bid for additional funding or by securing extra resources through partnership working.
- 1.3 These changes in funding, and therefore spending, are required to be managed in line with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules which form part of the Constitution. The delegation levels provide clarity regarding the inclusion of additional resources secured during the financial year that were not included when the Council sets its annual Budget in February.
- 1.4 This report provides an update on additional funds secured during the financial year since the previous report to Council on the 13 May 2025 and requests specific approval of new funds secured of £250,000 or more and new schemes for inclusion into the Capital Programme. There are no virements above £250,000 that require Council approval currently. This is in line with the requirements set out in the Financial Procedure Rules.

2.0 SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

- 2.1 A Supplementary Estimate is an addition to the Council's approved budget. In line with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, a supplementary estimate over £250,000 or more requires Council approval to include it in its Budget.
- 2.2 The following Supplementary Estimates of £250,000 or more have been received and requires Council approval to include in the Council's budget:

Supplementary Estimates	Fund	£	Funded By
UKSPF 2025/26 Programme	Revenue	644,140	UKSPF Grant Funding Allocation
Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund	Capital	2,560,000	Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund 2

There is an additional supplementary estimate for approval in Appendix C (confidential).

3.0 CAPITAL

- 3.1 The Council agreed its Capital Programme as part of the annual Budget in February 2025. The budget report set out capital project governance by managing schemes through their project life cycle. In line with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, which forms part of the Constitution, any new schemes entering the Capital Programme requires Council approval.

New Schemes – General Fund

- 3.2 **Rural England Prosperity Funding**
On 4 March 2025, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) announced a further year of Rural England Prosperity Funding (REPR) with up to £33 million of funding available to eligible local authorities who successfully delivered their 2023 to 2025 award.
- 3.3 On 27 March 2025, DEFRA confirmed that the Council would receive an additional £140,699 to continue the delivery of the REPF programme into the financial year 2025/26
- 3.4 At its meeting on the 20 May 2025 Cabinet agreed to accept £140,699 grant from the Rural England Prosperity Fund and recommended to Council that the £140,699 is added to the Capital Programme for 2025/26.
- 3.5 **Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund**
On the 9 January 2025, it was reported to Cabinet that the Council has been successful in its bid for the Round 2 of the Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund (LNMF). The funding will assist in progressing stalled housing delivery in affected catchments. The Council has been awarded all of the capital funding bid of £2.56m and revenue funding of £120k and the funding was received in February 2025.
- 3.6 A portfolio of programme of works for mitigation measures formed the basis of the Council's bid to the LNMF, which were mostly nature-based solutions, as well as retrofitting water efficient facilities to Council-owned properties across the three council areas (NWLDC, Lichfield District Council and South Derbyshire District Council) within the River Mease Special Area of Conservation (SAC) catchment.

- 3.7 The mitigation measures will be fully funded by the LNMF. The costs of each mitigation measure will not be confirmed until after the procurement process is completed for each stage of the delivery of each measure.

Movements from Development Pool to Active Programme

- 3.8 As part of the approval of the Capital Strategy 2025-26 on the 20 February 2025, Council delegated authority to move a capital scheme from the development pool to the active programme as long as the scheme is within the approved budget. Under these powers, Cabinet has approved the following movements:

Fund	Project	Amount	Cabinet Meeting Date
GF	Car Park Resurfacing	164,000	20 May 2025
HRA	New Supply	220,000	25 March 2025
HRA	New Supply	155,000	20 May 2025

- 3.9 The General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programmes have been updated to reflect the new schemes and movements between schemes as detailed above and are detailed in Appendices A and B for approval.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Planning and regeneration - Communities and housing - Clean, green and Zero Carbon - A well-run council
Policy Considerations:	<p>The Council's Financial Procedure Rules, sections A24 – A28, set out the details of the virement and supplementary estimates, as shown in Appendix 1 of this report.</p> <p>The delivery of the North West Leicestershire Rural Business Grant programme contributes towards the delivery of NWL Districtwide Regeneration Framework</p>
Safeguarding:	If a vulnerable person contacts the Council then support will be provided to them to make an application, where possible, or refer them to other support services if required.
Equalities/Diversity:	The grant programmes are open to all eligible businesses across North West Leicestershire. All businesses will be offered support to apply for the funding.
Customer Impact:	The REFR programme supports local communities and businesses by retaining local jobs, increasing employment opportunities and retaining local shops and facilities.

Economic and Social Impact:	<p>£140,699 of capital contributions from the Rural England Prosperity Fund to deliver the North West Leicestershire Rural Business Grants Programme. No further funding is being sought. Resource to deliver the scheme will be met through existing staff capacity within the Economic Regeneration service.</p> <p>£2,560,000 of capital contribution from the Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund to deliver a portfolio of programme of works for mitigation measures across the SAC.</p>
Environment, Climate Change and zero carbon:	<p>The Rural England Prosperity Fund grants are intended to fund investment projects that can demonstrate business growth, tourism and visitor economy development, contribute towards net zero or rural diversification. Businesses are encouraged to utilise the funds to invest in a number of different areas of their business including investing in energy efficiency or achieving zero carbon.</p> <p>The Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund will deliver a portfolio of programme of works for mitigation measures across the SAC.</p>
Consultation/Community Engagement:	The design of the grant scheme has taken representations from the National Farmers' Union, the National Forest Company and the Leicestershire Rural Partnership.
Risks:	<p>Non-compliance with any grant conditions. A full assessment is in place as part of the grant process.</p> <p>A requirement of the Rural England Prosperity Fund is that all funding must be spent before 31 March 2026. To ensure that all funding is claimed, and projects are delivered on schedule, Officers proposed to close the scheme to new applications at the end of October 2025 to allow sufficient time for all funded projects to be completed and the money paid well ahead of the 31 March 2026 deadline.</p>
Officer Contact	<p>Anna Crouch Head of Finance anna.crouch@nwleicesershire.gov.uk</p>

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Project Name	2025/26 Approved Budget	2026/27 Indicative Budget	2027/28 Indicative Budget	2028/29 Indicative Budget	2029/30 Indicative Budget	Total	Funding					
							Grant	Capital Receipt	Revenue	Business Rates Reserve	EMR	Total
ACTIVE PROGRAMME												
Coalville Regeneration Projects												
Marlborough Square Improvements	61,039					61,039				61,039		61,039
Marlborough Centre Purchase and Renovation	500,000	2,400,000	52,923			2,952,923				2,952,923		2,952,923
Capitalisation of Salaries	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	2,500,000				2,500,000		2,500,000
Total Coalville Regeneration Projects	1,061,039	2,900,000	552,923	500,000	500,000	5,513,962	-	-	-	5,513,962	-	5,513,962
Zero Carbon												
Solar EV Hub Moneyhill	250,000					250,000	250,000					250,000
Total Zero Carbon	250,000	-	-	-	-	250,000	250,000	-	-	-	-	250,000
Vehicles, Plant and Equipment												
Food Waste Collections	1,154,138					1,154,138	1,062,066			92,072		1,154,138
Refuse Bins and Recycling Containers	1,674,000					1,674,000				1,674,000		1,674,000
Fleet Replacement Programme	4,708,000					4,708,000				4,708,000		4,708,000
Total Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	7,536,138	-	-	-	-	7,536,138	1,062,066	-	-	6,474,072	-	7,536,138
New Construction or Renovation												
The Courtyard Roof Repair	200,000					200,000				200,000		200,000
Car Park Resurfacing	164,000					164,000				164,000		164,000
Total New Construction or Renovation	364,000	-	-	-	-	364,000	-	-	-	364,000	-	364,000
TOTAL ACTIVE PROGRAMME	9,211,177	2,900,000	552,923	500,000	500,000	13,664,100	1,312,066	-	-	12,352,034	-	13,664,100
DEVELOPMENT POOL												
Coalville Regeneration Projects												
Coalville Regeneration Framework	1,500,000					1,500,000				1,500,000		1,500,000
Demolition of Council Offices	120,000					120,000				120,000		120,000
Total Coalville Regeneration Projects	1,620,000	-	-	-	-	1,620,000	-	-	-	1,620,000	-	1,620,000
UK Shared Prosperity Investment Plan Programme (UKSPF)												
UK Shared Prosperity Investment Plan Programme	145,859					145,859	145,859					145,859
Total Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	145,859	-	-	-	-	145,859	145,859	-	-	-	-	145,859
Zero Carbon												
Electrical Vehicle (EV) Charging Infrastructure Strategy	40,000					40,000				40,000		40,000
Solar Panels - Ashby Leisure Centres	195,000					195,000				195,000		195,000
Solar EV Hub Moneyhill						-				-		-

Project Name	2025/26 Approved Budget	2026/27 Indicative Budget	2027/28 Indicative Budget	2028/29 Indicative Budget	2029/30 Indicative Budget	Total	Funding					
							Grant	Capital Receipt	Revenue	Business Rates Reserve	EMR	Total
Total Zero Carbon	235,000	-	-	-	-	235,000	-	-	-	235,000	-	235,000
Systems/ICT Systems												
Laptop Replacement	92,000	49,000	49,000	60,000	92,000	342,000				342,000		342,000
Replacement Windows Server	50,000				50,000	100,000				100,000		100,000
Wide Area Network (WAN)	50,000				50,000	100,000				100,000		100,000
Total Systems/ICT Systems	192,000	49,000	49,000	60,000	192,000	542,000	-	-	-	542,000	-	542,000
Vehicle, Plant and Equipment												
Refuse Bins and Recycling Containers	200,000	200,000	202,000			602,000				602,000		602,000
Fleet Replacement Programme	591,000	99,000	637,000			1,327,000		20,760		1,306,240		1,327,000
Total Vehicle, Plant and Equipment	791,000	299,000	839,000	-	-	1,929,000	-	20,760	-	1,908,240	-	1,929,000
New Construction or Renovation												
Hermitage Leisure Centre Demolition	146,068					146,068				146,068		146,068
Hermitage Recreational ground 3G Pitch		150,000				150,000				150,000		150,000
Stenson Square Public Realm	1,000,000	1,000,000				2,000,000				2,000,000		2,000,000
Enterprise Park	1,850,000	1,850,000				3,700,000				3,700,000		3,700,000
Moirs Furnace	266,741					266,741				266,741		266,741
Service Road Resurfacing	500,000					500,000				500,000		500,000
Total New Construction or Renovation	3,762,809	3,000,000	-	-	-	6,762,809	-	-	-	6,762,809	-	6,762,809
TOTAL DEVELOPMENT POOL	6,746,668	3,348,000	888,000	60,000	192,000	11,234,668	145,859	20,760	-	11,068,049	-	11,234,668
REFCUS												
Disabled Facilities Grants	670,310	670,310	670,310	670,310	670,310	3,351,550	3,351,550					3,351,550
Castle Donington 3G Pitch Development	250,000					250,000				250,000		250,000
Rural England Prosperity Fund	140,699					140,699	140,699					140,699
Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund	250,000	770,000	770,000	770,000		2,560,000	2,560,000					2,560,000
Total REFUS	1,311,009	1,440,310	1,440,310	1,440,310	670,310	6,302,249	6,052,249	-	-	250,000	-	6,302,249
SPECIAL EXPENSES												
Coaville Cemetery - Meadow Lane (Broomley's)	22,000					22,000			22,000			22,000
TOTAL SPECIAL EXPENSES	22,000	-	-	-	-	22,000	-	-	22,000	-	-	22,000
TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME	17,290,854	7,688,310	2,881,233	2,000,310	1,362,310	31,223,017	7,510,174	20,760	22,000	23,670,083	-	31,223,017

Project Name	2025/26 Approved Budget	2026/27 Indicative Budget	2027/28 Indicative Budget	2028/29 Indicative Budget	2029/30 Indicative Budget	Total	Funding						
							Major Repairs Reserve	Capital Receipt	RTB Receipts	RCCO	Grant	Prudential Borrowing	Total
ACTIVE PROGRAMME													
Stock Investment													
Home Improvement Programme	4,500,000	4,500,000	4,500,000	4,500,000	4,500,000	22,500,000	18,236,421			3,808,595		454,984	22,500,000
Asbestos	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	2,000,000		400,000				1,600,000	2,000,000
Roofs	500,000	500,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	1,750,000		500,000				1,250,000	1,750,000
Commercial Boilers	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	1,000,000		250,000				750,000	1,000,000
Stock Condition Surveys	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	325,000		65,000				260,000	325,000
Zero Carbon	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	20,000,000		6,000,000		683,425	8,069,584	5,246,991	20,000,000
Total Stock Investment	9,715,000	9,715,000	9,465,000	9,465,000	9,215,000	47,575,000	18,236,421	7,215,000	-	4,492,020	8,069,584	9,561,975	47,575,000
New Supply													
New Supply	375,000					375,000			375,000				375,000
Total New Supply	375,000	-	-	-	-	375,000	-	-	375,000	-	-	-	375,000
Estate Improvements													
Off-Street Parking	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	1,500,000		300,000				1,200,000	1,500,000
Estate Projects	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	500,000		100,000				400,000	500,000
Garage Demolition	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	250,000		50,000				200,000	250,000
Footpaths and Unadopted Roads	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	250,000		50,000				200,000	250,000
Total Estate Improvements	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	2,500,000	-	500,000	-	-	-	2,000,000	2,500,000
Fleet Replacement													
Vehicles	100,000	300,000				400,000						400,000	400,000
Total Fleet Replacement	100,000	300,000	-	-	-	400,000	-	-	-	-	-	400,000	400,000
Other Capital Schemes													
Sheltered Scheme Improvements	700,000	700,000	700,000	100,000	100,000	2,300,000		700,000				1,600,000	2,300,000
Passive Fire Safety	800,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	1,200,000		800,000				400,000	1,200,000
Scheme Lighting	350,000	350,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	1,300,000		350,000				950,000	1,300,000
Major Aids and Adaptations	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	2,000,000		400,000				1,600,000	2,000,000
Total Other Capital Schemes	2,250,000	1,550,000	1,400,000	800,000	800,000	6,800,000	-	2,250,000	-	-	-	4,550,000	6,800,000
TOTAL ACTIVE PROGRAMME	12,565,000	12,065,000	11,365,000	10,765,000	10,515,000	57,275,000	18,236,421	9,965,000	-	4,492,020	8,069,584	16,511,975	57,275,000
DEVELOPMENT POOL													
New Supply													
New Supply	2,637,605	3,065,507	4,433,413	1,396,361	4,189,083	15,721,969			4,448,310			11,273,659	15,721,969
Total New Supply	2,637,605	3,065,507	4,433,413	1,396,361	4,189,083	15,721,969	-	-	4,448,310	-	-	11,273,659	15,721,969
TOTAL DEVELOPMENT POOL	2,637,605	3,065,507	4,433,413	1,396,361	4,189,083	15,721,969	-	-	4,448,310	-	-	11,273,659	15,721,969

TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME	15,202,605	15,130,507	15,798,413	12,161,361	14,704,083	72,996,969	18,236,421	9,965,000	4,448,310	4,492,020	8,069,584	27,785,634	72,996,969

Likely to contain exempt information under paragraph(s) 3 of
Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 17 JUNE 2025



Title of Report	AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25	
Presented by	Cllr K Merrie MBE Finance and Corporate Portfolio	
Background Papers	Audit and Governance Committee Minutes 23 April 2025	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications arising from this report.	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	There are no legal implications arising from this report.	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	There are no staffing or corporate implications arising from this report.	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	To provide a summary of the work undertaken by the Audit and Governance Committee during the 2024/25 financial year. The Committee's Terms of Reference states that a report to full Council is required on the Committee's performance and effectiveness.	
Recommendations	THAT COUNCIL NOTES THE DETAILS OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25.	

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Annual Report of the Audit and Governance Committee 2024/25 is designed to inform the full Council of the Committee's activities during the financial year, and how it has discharged its responsibilities.
- 1.2 The Audit and Governance Committee considered and approved the Annual Report at its meeting on 23 April 2025.

2.0 ANNUAL REPORT 2024/25

- 2.1 The production of an annual report by the Audit and Governance Committee is considered to be good practice by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). CIPFA's Position Statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police 2022, states that: To discharge its responsibilities effectively, the Committee should:

report annually on how the Committee has complied with the position statement, discharged its responsibilities, and include an assessment of its performance. The report should be available to the public.

- 2.2 It is important that the wider membership of the Council is kept informed of the work to ensure sound control and governance. The report to Council is an essential part of this process.
- 2.3 The Annual Report of the Audit and Governance Committee 2024/25 is shown in Appendix 1. It summarises the activities of the Committee and demonstrates how it has discharged its duties. It highlights the achievements of the Committee and is a useful reminder to the organisation of the role of the Committee in providing assurance about its governance, risk management and financial controls.
- 2.4 The collaboration between the Director of Resources, Head of Internal Audit, and the Audit and Governance Committee's chair along with other Committee members, is a critical process in the drafting of the Annual Report. This cooperative effort ensures that the report is comprehensive, reflecting the organisation's financial health and adherence to regulatory requirements.

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:	Members of the Audit Committee have been widely consulted on the draft report.
Risks:	The Audit and Governance Committee has a leading role to play in ensuring that the Council's governance arrangements are effective and contribute to the mitigation of risks.
Officer Contact	Paul Stone Director of Resources paul.stone@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

2024/25



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FOREWORD

As Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, I am pleased to present this Annual Report which sets out the role of the Audit Committee and summarises the work and achievements we have undertaken as a Committee during the financial year 2024/25.

As we embark on the next phase for the Committee, we recognise that we are in a continuous learning and development period. The training received in January 2025 was a helpful refresher of our roles for all our members. We are committed to learning and exploring the intricacies of financial reporting, internal controls, risk management, and external audit functions together as a committee.

It is my pleasure to commend the 2024/25 Audit Committee Annual Report.

Thank you to all the officers involved in its production, and in particular Kerry Beavis, Audit Manager, Kate Hiller, Head of Legal and Support Services, Elizabeth Warhurst, former Head of Legal and Support Services, Paul Stone, Director of Resources and Anna Crouch, Head of Finance. I would also like to thank Members and officers who have supported the work of this Committee by presenting, discussing, challenging and debating solutions to the ongoing risk, control and governance environment of the Council. All Members of the Committee bring a balanced, independent and objective approach to business of the Committee and I thank them for the contributions they have made.

As a Committee, our focus over the past year has been on the Council's progress regarding the sign-off of the statement of accounts.

We have received assurances on the security of the Council's network and receipt of the Public Sector Network Certification.

The work of the Internal Audit function continues to provide regular assurance in respect of the Council's governance and internal control arrangements. We have oversight of the internal controls, and therefore, we have held officers to account when there are concerns about internal audit recommendations not being completed in a timely manner. The Committee is concerned about the last two annual audit opinions, which were issued with limited assurance. Consequently, the Committee is seeking to address these issues and monitor the situation to ensure that the Council meets its priorities of being well-run.

The Committee established a working group of members that reviewed both the Council's Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints and the Constitution. I am particularly grateful to those Members of the working group who assisted in those reviews.

Committee members have been involved in the successful recruitment of two independent persons providing the Committee with an extended knowledge base and assists with complying with the good practices detailed within the CIPFA Position Statement on Audit Committees.

Effective audit committees build strong relationships, so we intend to collaborate with management, external auditors, and other stakeholders. We have new auditors, Azets, for the audit of our accounts from 2023/24 onwards. It is important that we develop a good working relationship with them to ensure the backlog of accounts is completed in a timely manner. We look forward to receiving regular updates from Azets. In addition to our financial oversight, we have also focused on governance arrangements and have received numerous reports to ensure that our oversight responsibilities are met effectively. This focus on governance has

significantly impacted our decision-making, enabling us to make more informed and transparent decisions.

As we move forward, we remain dedicated to our role in providing rigorous oversight and ensuring the highest standards of accountability and transparency. We look forward to continuing our work in collaboration with all stakeholders to achieve our shared goals.

The times in which NWLDC operates remain challenging. However, the professionalism and dedication of Officers, Audit Committee members, and our external auditors, Azets, have enabled the highest standards of governance to continue to be achieved.



Cllr Peter Moulton,

Chair, Audit and Governance Committee

April 2025

INTRODUCTION

While there is no statutory obligation to have such an arrangement, Audit Committees are widely recognised as a core component of effective governance and therefore reflect good practice. The CIPFA Position Statement also states that “*Audit Committees are a key component of an authority’s governance framework. Their function is to provide an independent and high-level resource to support good governance strong public financial management.*”

The Audit and Governance Committee is properly constituted and as such is given sufficient authority and resources by the Council. In effect, the Committee has the right to obtain all the information it considers necessary and to consult directly with senior managers. In line with best practice the Audit and Governance Committee can report its observations and concerns directly to the Council.

A local authority has a duty to ensure that it is fulfilling its responsibilities for adequate and effective internal control, risk management and governance, as well as the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of its activities. The Audit Committee has a key role in overseeing and assessing the internal control, risk management and corporate governance arrangements and advising the Council on the adequacy and effectiveness of those arrangements.

This role is reflected in the Committee’s Terms of Reference which are shown in Appendix One as set out in the Council’s Constitution. During October 2022 CIPFA (the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) published ‘Audit Committees – Practical guidance for Local Authorities and Police’, an update of previous guidance from 2018. The guidance includes suggested Terms of reference for audit committees. These were used as the basis for proposed new Terms of Reference for the Audit and Governance Committee, which were agreed at the Full Council meeting on 23 February 2023, with membership of the Committee agreed at the Full Council meeting on 7 May 2024.

The current Audit and Governance Committee had the following attendance during 2024/25.

Member	24 Apr 2024	7 Aug 2024	22 Aug 2024	25 Sep 2024	20 Nov 2024	9 Dec 2024	5 Feb 2024
Cllr Moulton (Chair)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr Everitt (Deputy Chair)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr Barker	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr Boam	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
Cllr Cooper	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr Johnson*	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr Rogers	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr Simmons	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cllr Smith	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
Cllr Sutton	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓

*Cllr Johnson was appointed to the Committee in 2024.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

There have been many benefits from the work of the Committee. The main outcomes and improvements include:

- Received and approved the Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25
- Focused on the CIPFA Position Statement to enhance the work of the Committee.
- Audit Committee working party with a focus on reviewing the Council's Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints and the Constitution
- Received risk register updates at each of its meetings.
- Focus on Internal Audit Recommendations
- Training received for Audit Committee Members
- Signing off the Statements of Accounts 2021/22 and 2022/23 in accordance with the Government's backstop date

SUMMARY OF WORK UNDERTAKEN IN 2024/25

The Audit and Governance Committee completed the following during 2024/25:

External Audit

- Received audit updates from the Council's external auditors, Mazars
- Received and considered a report in respect of the audit delay backlog
- Received and considered the detailed results of the external auditor's work in relation to the audit of the 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial statements of the Council. The Committee noted the disclaimed opinion, in accordance with the Government's proposal to meet the backstop date for these specific financial years.

Internal Audit

- Continued to oversee the internal audit arrangements for the Council. This included approving the review of the Internal Audit Charter which outlines the terms of reference of the Council and is aligned to the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards.
- Received and approved the Internal Audit Annual Report for 2023/24. This included the Annual Audit Opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the framework of control, risk management and governance within the Council. As the opinion was one of limited assurance, the Director of Resources also provided a management action plan in response to the audit opinion.
- Received and approved the Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25. The plan ensures that internal audit resources are prioritised towards those systems and areas which are considered to be of high risk, or which contribute most to the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives. It is designed to enable the Internal Audit Manager to give her opinion at the end of the year but is flexible to ensure it remains relevant throughout the year.
- Monitored the delivery of the Internal Audit Plan for 2024/25 through regular update reports presented by the Audit Manager.

- Received and considered the results of internal audit work performed in respect of each Directorate.
- Monitored the progress made by management during the period to address identified control weaknesses (recommendations).
- Monitored the performance of the Internal Audit team through the regular update reports.

Anti-fraud and Corruption

- Received and approved updates to the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy, and the Anti-Money Laundering Policy.

Risk Management

- Continued to oversee the Council's risk management arrangements and Risk Management Policy, including updates to the strategy and Policy, as well as a revised format of the risk register.
- Reviewed the progress made by the Council to identify and address corporate risks. This included consideration of the Strategic Risk Register three times during the year, in April November and August 2024.

Corporate Governance

- Received and considered the Senior Information Risk Officer Annual Report
- Received and considered the Annual Governance Statements 2021/22 and 2022/23
- Considered the draft Member Conduct Annual Report recognising it acts as a helpful tool in communicating the work undertaken by the Audit and Governance Committee to the public and to Members.
- Received and considered quarterly Standards and Ethics reports detailing both the figures for the Ethical Indicators and the figures for the Local Determination of Complaints process.
- Received and considered at each meeting its own work plan for the year ahead, ensuring that all relevant areas are covered during the year.
- Considered the management response to the Annual Internal Audit Opinion 2023/24 and received regular updates on progress against the action plan at each of its meetings.
- Received and considered a report in respect of a review of the Council's Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints about Councillors and recommended changes to Council on 5 November 2024
- Considered a report in respect of the Council's review of its Constitution and recommended changes to Council on 22 February 2024
- Reviewed Corporate Governance Policies including:

- Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy
 - Anti Money Laundering Policy
 - Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy
 - Risk Management Policy
 - RIPA and Policy
 - Local Code of Corporate Governance
 - Data Protection Policy
 - Information Governance Framework
 - Information Security Policy
 - Information Rights Policy
 - Records Management Policy
- Appointed two Independent Members of the Audit Committee,

Finance

- Considered reports in respect of the Statement of Accounts update
- Considered the draft Accounting Policies 2023/24
- Received and considered reports on Treasury Management Stewardship
- Continued to review the Council's Treasury Management arrangements. This included reviewing the Treasury Management Activity Report 2023/24 – Quarter 1 and Quarter 3 and Mid-year which included the actual and proposed treasury management activity.

Other

- Received details of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman's review letter for 2023/24 in accordance with its guidance on Effective Handling of Complaints.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- Members have completed a self-assessment against CIPFA Guidance for Local Authority Audit Committees. This will be used to inform an ongoing training programme for Members.
- Members have received training in respect of Internal Audit, Risk, Standards and Ethics, Statement of Accounts
- Members received training in respect of the role of Audit Committee members
- A programme of training for Committee members has been produced and will be mandatory for all Audit and Governance Committee Members.
- A Training manual will be developed for Audit and Governance Committee Members.

LOOKING FORWARD

The Committee has approved the work programme for the 2025/26 financial year setting out the receipt of regular update reports and annual assurance reports.

The Committee will continue to closely monitor the delays to publishing the Council's Statement of Accounts and the Government's proposals for addressing the backlogs across the sector, with a focus on monitoring the Council's progress towards meeting the backstop dates.

Continued training and development of Members in line with the CIPFA Position Statement.

Close monitoring of the Council's Corporate Risk Register and scrutiny of key areas of concern such as, but not limited to, safeguarding, housing and value for money.

A continued focus on the monitoring of internal audit recommendations.

SECTION D7 - AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

1 COMMITTEE FORM AND STRUCTURE

Committee scope

- 1.1 The **Audit and Governance Committee** has specific responsibility for governance issues, including audit functions.
- 1.2 The Committee's scope is to:
 - 1.2.1 provide independent assurance to those charged with governance of the adequacy of the risk management framework and the internal control environment.
 - 1.2.2 provide independent review of the **Council's** governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversee the financial reporting and annual governance process.
 - 1.2.3 oversee internal audit and external audit arrangements, helping to ensure efficient and effective assurance mechanisms are in place.
- 1.3 The success of the **Audit and Governance Committee** in exercising its audit functions depends upon its ability to remain apolitical. It must adopt a nonpolitical approach to its meetings and discussions at all times. Remaining apolitical also places a duty on **Councillors** not to make inappropriate use of information provided to the Committee for other purposes.

Composition

- 1.4 The **Audit and Governance Committee** will comprise 10 Councillors in **Political Balance**.
- 1.5 Members of the **Committee** should not be members of **Cabinet** or **Scrutiny**.
- 1.6 The Chair will be appointed by **Full Council** annually.
- 1.7 Two **Independent Persons** may be co-opted as required to the Audit and Governance Committee to advise on finance matters or to a **Sub-Committee** of the Audit and Governance Committee in relation to standards matters but will not be entitled to vote at meetings.
- 1.8 At least one parish councillor may be present when matters relating to parish councils, or their Councillors are being considered. Parish councillors are co-opted to the Audit and Governance Committee as required and will not be entitled to vote at meetings.

Quorum

The **Audit and Governance Committee Quorum** will be three **Councillors**.

2 MATTERS RESERVED FOR THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Governance, Risk and Controls

- 2.1 The Committee has the right to access all the information it considers necessary to undertake the work of the Committee and may receive reports and refer matters to internal and external auditors.
- 2.2 To review the Council's corporate governance arrangements against the good governance framework, including the ethical framework and consider the local code of governance.
- 2.3 To review and approve the **Annual Governance Statement** and consider whether it properly reflects the risk environment and supporting assurances, taking into account internal audit's opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the **Council's** framework of governance, risk management and control.
- 2.4 To consider the **Council's** arrangements to secure value for money and to review and scrutinise assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.
- 2.5 To consider the **Council's** framework of assurance and ensure that it adequately addresses the risks and priorities of the Council.
- 2.6 To monitor the effective development and operation of risk management in the **Council**.
- 2.7 To monitor progress in addressing risk related issues reported to the **Committee** such as the [Corporate Risk Register](#).
- 2.8 To consider reports on the effectiveness of internal controls and monitor the implementation of agreed actions.
- 2.9 To review the assessment of fraud risks and potential harm to the **Council** from fraud and corruption.

- 2.10 To monitor the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy, actions and resources.
- 2.11 To review the governance and assurance arrangements for significant partnerships or collaborations.
- 2.12 To review and monitor the Council's compliance with public sector financial and audit standards and guidance, in accordance with the CIPFA Codes and Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.13 To review and monitor the Council's Treasury Management arrangements in accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice.

3 INTERNAL AUDIT

- 3.1 To approve the internal audit charter.
- 3.2 To approve (but not direct) the risk-based internal audit plan, including internal audit's resource requirements, the approach to using other sources of assurance and any work required to place reliance upon those other sources.
- 3.3 To approve significant interim changes to the risk-based internal audit plan and resource requirements.
- 3.4 To make appropriate enquiries of both management and the Head of Internal Audit (currently the Audit Manager) to determine if there are any inappropriate scope or resource limitations.
- 3.5 To consider any impairments to independence or objectivity arising from additional roles or responsibilities outside of internal auditing of the Head of Internal Audit. To approve and periodically review safeguards to limit such impairments.
- 3.6 To consider reports from the Head of Internal Audit on internal audit's performance during the year.
- 3.7 To consider internal audit's annual report:

3.7.1 The statement of the level of conformance with the **Public Sector Internal Audit Standards** and the results of the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme that supports the statement – these will indicate the reliability of the conclusions of internal audit;

3.7.2 The opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the **Council's** framework of governance, risk management and control together with the summary of the work supporting the opinion – these will assist the Committee in reviewing the **Annual Governance Statement**.

- 3.8 To consider summaries of specific internal audit reports in accordance with agreed protocols.
- 3.9 To receive reports outlining the action taken where the Head of Internal Audit has concluded that management has accepted a level of risk that may be unacceptable to the Council or there are concerns about progress with the implementation of agreed actions.
- 3.10 To contribute to the Quality Assurance and Improvement Programme and in particular, to the external quality assessment of internal audit that takes place at least once every five years.
- 3.11 To provide free and unfettered access to the **Audit and Governance Committee** Chair for internal audit, including the opportunity for a private meeting with the Committee.

4 EXTERNAL AUDIT

- 4.1 To support the independence of external audit through consideration of the external auditor's annual assessment of its independence and review of any issues raised.
- 4.2 To consider the external auditor's annual audit letter, relevant reports and the report to those charged with governance.
- 4.3 To consider specific reports as agreed with the external auditor.
- 4.4 To comment on the scope and depth of external audit work and to ensure it gives value for money.
- 4.5 To advise and recommend on the effectiveness of relationships between external and internal audit and other inspection agencies or relevant bodies.

5 FINANCIAL REPORTING

- 5.1 To review and approve the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the financial statements or from the audit that need to be brought to the attention of the **Full Council**.
- 5.2 To consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the audit of the accounts.
- 5.3 To seek assurances that the **Council** has complied with the **Treasury Management** Strategy and Practices by demonstrating effective control of the associated risks and pursuing optimum performance consistent with those risks.

6 ACCOUNTABILITY ARRANGEMENTS

- 6.1 To report to those charged with governance on the Committee's findings, conclusions and recommendations concerning the adequacy and effectiveness of their governance, risk management and internal control frameworks, financial reporting arrangements and internal and external audit functions.
- 6.2 To report to **Full Council**, as required, on the Committee's performance in relation to the terms of reference and the effectiveness of the Committee in meeting its purpose.
- 6.3 To publish an annual report on the work of the Committee.

7 RELATED FUNCTIONS

- 7.1 Subject to the requirements set out below, to consider all findings of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, including reports resulting in a finding of maladministration against the **Council**, and to make recommendations as to actions that may be necessary in connection with the Ombudsman's findings.

There are statutory obligations which will, in some circumstances, require reports to be taken to **Cabinet** or **Full Council**.

The Ombudsman operates protocols in relation to the timing of the publication of findings. The Council would have to give consideration to those protocols when determining how to manage the **Audit and Governance Committee's Agenda**.

- 7.2 To review any issue referred to it by the **Chief Executive, S151 Officer, Monitoring Officer** or any **Council** body.

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 The **Quorum** of the **Sub-Committees** is 3 **Councillors**.
- 8.18 The **Chair** of each **Sub-Committee** will be a **Councillor**.
- 8.19 The **Sub-Committees** and their functions are set out below:

Assessment Sub-Committee

Assessment of complaints in accordance with the **Council's Councillors' Code of Conduct** in **Part 4** and to either:

- Accept the **Monitoring Officer's** recommendation of no failure to comply with the **Councillor's Code of Conduct**; • 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 Councillors' Code of Conduct** in **Part 4**.

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 Councillors' Code of Conduct** in **Part 4**.

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 17 JUNE 2025



Title of Report	ANNUAL MEMBER CONDUCT REPORT	
Presented by	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Infrastructure Portfolio Holder	
Background Papers	<u>Agenda and Minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee 23 April 2025</u>	Public Report: Yes
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications to be considered.	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	There are no direct legal implications arising from the report.	
	Signed off by the Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	None arising from this report.	
	Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes	
Purpose of Report	To provide a summary of the work undertaken by the Audit and Governance Committee during the year 2024/25 in relation to member conduct standards work. The Committee's Terms of Reference states that a report to full Council is required on the Committee's performance and effectiveness.	
Recommendations	THAT COUNCIL NOTES THE DETAILS OF THE ANNUAL MEMBER CONDUCT REPORT 2024/2025.	

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 It is important that the work of the Audit and Governance Committee should be visible to the Council and wider public. The Annual Member Conduct Report acts as a helpful tool in communicating the work undertaken by the Audit and Governance Committee in relation to member conduct. The Annual Member Conduct Report is attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The Annual Member Conduct Report covering the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 was considered and approved by the Audit and Governance Committee at its meeting on 23 April 2025. A link to the minutes of the Audit and Governance Committee is in the background papers section to this report.
- 1.3 Council is being asked to note the details of the report for 2024/25.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	A well-run council
Policy Considerations:	The Code of Conduct and the Constitution
Safeguarding:	N/A
Equalities/Diversity:	Detailed in the Draft Annual Member Conduct Report attached as an appendix.
Customer Impact:	None arising directly from the report. Details regarding the process for making a complaint about a councillor are on the Council's website.
Economic and Social Impact:	N/A
Environment, Climate Change and zero carbon:	N/A
Consultation/Community Engagement:	N/A
Risks:	By reporting on complaints made under the Member Code of Conduct to the Monitoring Officer and ensuring the Code of Conduct is kept under review by the Audit and Governance Committee, and endorsed by Full Council, the Council can ensure that Members are aware of their obligations under the Code and mitigate risks associated with misconduct and non - compliance.
Officer Contact	Kate Hiller Head of Legal and Support Services kate.hiller@nwleicestershire.gov.uk



MEMBER CONDUCT ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

This is the Member Conduct Annual Report of North West Leicestershire District Council's Audit and Governance Committee and covers the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.

In addition to the responsibilities detailed in the Terms of Reference below, the Audit and Governance Committee promotes high standards of conduct by District Council Members and Members of Town/Parish Councils in North West Leicestershire. The Audit and Governance Committee complies with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011, applicable regulations and the guidance provided under that legislation, together with the Council's adopted Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints about Councillors.

In February 2022, Council adopted a new version of its Code of Conduct for Councillors, which was based on the Local Government Association Model Code of Conduct, and followed collaboration with other Leicestershire District and Borough Councils and Leicestershire County Council.

2. Audit and Governance Committee Terms of Reference

Membership: Ten District Councillors

Quorum: Three District Councillors

The Terms of Reference of the Audit and Governance Committee are set out in Section D7 of Part 2 of the Constitution and can be found via this link:

[The Councils Constitution](#)

The Audit and Governance Committee has responsibility for governance issues, including audit functions. Its scope is to provide independent assurance to those charged with governance on matters such as risk management, the internal control environment, financial reporting, internal and external audit and standards matters. It also oversees the work on reviewing the Council's Constitution, corporate governance policies, Councillors Code of Conduct and Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints about Councillors and receives the annual letter from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. Sub-Committees of the Audit and Governance Committee are formed as required to deal with matters relating to complaints about Councillors.

3. Composition

District Councillors

The following Councillors were appointed to the Committee in May 2024:

Chairman: Councillor P Moul

Deputy Chairman: Councillor D Everitt

Councillor A Barker

Councillor R Boam

Councillor D Cooper

Councillor Johnson

Councillor G Rodgers

Councillor J G Simmons

Councillor N Smith

Councillor R Sutton

Parish Representatives

The following parish councillors were appointed as Parish Representatives for the remainder of the Administration in June 2024:

Councillor M McIntyre – Lockington and Hemington Parish Council

Part of the role of the Audit and Governance Committee is to hold Sub-committees to investigate complaints against Councillors (District and Parish). 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. This will be as and when required. The Parish representatives will not be required to attend the main meetings of the Audit and Governance Committee. The Sub-committees have not been required to co-opt a Parish Councillor in the last year.

Independent Persons

The legislation requires the Council to appoint at least one Independent Person (IP) who potentially advises all those involved in a Standards complaint, including the Monitoring Officer, and who must be consulted prior to the determination of a complaint.

Through an open advertising process conducted with partner authorities the Council appointed the following pool of independent persons from whom one can be drawn as and when required:

Michael Pearson
Mark Shaw
Gordon Grimes
Richard Gough
Michael Gibson
Laurence Faulkner

The IPs were appointed by Full Council on the 25 May 2021 until Full Council meeting on 13 May 2025.

The Council is currently working with other districts on the recruitment of the new pool of Independent Persons for 2025-29. The recruitment is being led by Oadby and Wigston Borough Council. The report to recruit the new pool will be taken to Full Council on 13 May 2025.

The main officer support for the Committee is provided by the Monitoring Officer, the Governance Legal Team Leader and the Democratic Support Officer. Professional advice is provided to the Committee by the S151 Officer and Internal Audit Manager and other officers, as required.

4. Meetings and Work Programme

The Audit and Governance Committee meets in accordance with the programme set by Full Council. The Chair of the Committee, in their discretion, may convene an additional meeting not in the programme. Sub committees still meet on an ad hoc basis in order to consider and determine allegations of Member conduct. The Committee has its main work planned in advance through a Work Programme which enables it to be more proactive, strategic and focused in its approach to key issues. The work of the sub committees is not programmed as the meetings are called as and when needed.

5. Reporting Arrangements

The Audit and Governance Committee receives quarterly Standards and Ethics Reports which provide information in two categories: Local Determination of Complaints and Ethical Indicators.

The report enables the Audit and Governance Committee to keep track of how many complaints are received by the Monitoring Officer each quarter and how these are dealt with. Where the Councillor Code of Conduct has been breached, this will also be recorded to enable the Committee to determine whether there needs to be further targeted training.

The report also allows the Committee to have oversight on the quarterly data for Ethical Indicators. This includes reporting on instances of concern raised regarding Modern Slavery, reporting of

whistleblowing incidents, whether the Council has used its Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) powers, and several other indicators.

6. Procedures and Workloads

(a) **Dispensations**

During 2024/25, there was one dispensation granted to all Members at full Council on 5 November 2024. This was in relation to the Members' Allowance Scheme. As all members are entitled to receive allowances under the Members Allowance Scheme, 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) of the Localism Act 2011) and mean that the Council could not agree a scheme as required. A dispensation was, therefore, granted to all Members as it was considered in the interests of North West Leicestershire to agree a Members Allowance Scheme.

(b) **Complaints made to the Monitoring Officer under the Code of Conduct during 2024/25**

The Monitoring Officer deals with complaints in line with the Council's Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints about Councillors. The Arrangements can be found on the Council's website via the following link:

[Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints about Councillors 2024-25](#)

The Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints about Councillors were reviewed in 2024/25 and were adopted by Council on 5 November 2024.

The first stage of dealing with a complaint is a consideration of the initial tests. The Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints about Councillors provide that if the initial tests are not met, the complaint will not proceed.

If the complaint does proceed, the next step is informal resolution. This is where the Monitoring Officer works with the complainant and the subject member to see whether the complaint is one that can be resolved informally to the satisfaction of both parties. No finding is made in relation to the Code and parties can decide whether they wish to take part in this step.

If the complaint is not resolved informally, for whatever reason, the Monitoring Officer refers the complaint to the Assessment Sub-Committee. The Assessment Sub-Committee makes a decision about whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972. The Sub-Committee makes this decision having regard to the advice from the Monitoring Officer and an assessment of the public interest. Under the Council's Arrangements for Dealing with Complaints about Councillors. There is a presumption that the meeting will be held in private. This is in line with the Local Government Association Guidance on Member Code of Conduct Complaints Handling (2021).

On consideration of a complaint, the Assessment Sub-Committee has the following decisions available to it:

- Refer the complaint to the Monitoring Officer to take other action – this is fact specific to the matter being considered.
- Request further information from the parties.
- Refer the complaint to the Monitoring Officer for investigation.
- No action to be taken in respect of the complaint.

The table below summarises the complaints which have been received during 2024/25. This information is reported on quarterly basis to the Audit and Governance Committee.

<u>Qtr</u>	<u>Complaint from</u>	<u>About district/parish councillor</u>	<u>Regarding</u>	<u>Status</u>
Q1 24/25	Member of the public	District Councillor	Accusation of trespassing and fly-tipping	Initial tests not met
	Member of the public	Parish Councillor	Concerns around planning application and predetermination	Initial tests not met
Q2 24/25	Member of the public	Parish Councillor	Failing to follow procedures re calling an extraordinary meeting	Went to Assessment Sub-committee – no further action
Q3 24/25	District Councillor	District Councillor	Concerns raised regarding conduct at a Council meeting	Initial tests not met
	District Councillor	District Councillor	Concerns raised regarding conduct at a Council meeting	Went to Assessment Sub-committee – referred to the MO to take other action
	District Councillor	District Councillor	Concerns raised regarding conduct at a Council meeting	Resolved informally
	District Councillor	District Councillor	Concerns raised regarding conduct at a Council meeting	Went to Assessment Sub-committee – referred to the MO to take other action
	District Councillor	District Councillor	Concerns raised regarding conduct at a Council meeting	Resolved informally
Q4 24/25	District Councillor	District Councillor	Concerns raised regarding conduct at a Planning Committee meeting	Ongoing – referred to Assessment Sub-committee
	District Councillor	District Councillor	Concerns raised regarding conduct at a Planning Committee meeting	Initial tests not met
	District Councillor	District Councillor	Concerns raised regarding conduct at a Planning Committee meeting	Initial tests not met
	District Councillor	District Councillor	Concerns raised regarding conduct at a Planning Committee meeting	Initial tests not met
	Member of the public	District Councillor	Refusal to meet to discuss ASB issues	Ongoing – referred to the Assessment Sub-committee
	Member of the public	District Councillor	Concerns around connection to a planning application	Ongoing
	District	District	Misleading the public	Initial tests not met
	Member of the public	Parish / Town	Continuing to act as a Cllr following resignation	Initial tests not met

	Member of the public	Parish / Town	Allowing a Cllr to act following a resignation	Initial tests not met
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(c) Complaints referred to the Standards Assessment Sub Committee

From the complaints in the above table, five were referred to the Sub-Committee.

(d) Members' Register of Interests

The Democratic Services Officers send regular reminders to members to ensure that the Register of Members' Interests is up to date and provide advice and assistance to Parish Councils on the completion of the Registers.

(e) Advice and Training

The Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer continue to provide both parish and district members with advice, both proactively and on request, on member's interests and governance.

7. Policies & Procedures

The Audit and Governance Committee oversees the ethical framework of the Council including oversight of:

- Anti Fraud and Corruption Policy
- Anti Money Laundering Policy
- Confidential Reporting (Whistle Blowing Policy)
- Risk Management Policy
- RIPA Policy
- Local Code of Corporate Governance
- Data Protection Policy
- Information Governance Framework
- Information Security Policy
- Information Rights Policy
- Records Management Policy

These corporate governance policies are reviewed annually by the Audit and Governance Committee before consideration and adopted by Cabinet. The Committee considered the policies at its meeting on 7 August 2024 and Cabinet adopted the policies at its meeting on 24 September 2024.

Councillor P Moul
Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee

Councillor D Everitt
Deputy Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee

Kate Hiller
Head of Legal and Support Services and Monitoring Officer