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Meeting	<b>CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
Time/Day/Date	6.30 pm on Thursday, 5 December 2024
Location	Forest Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN
Officer to contact	Democratic Services (01530 454512)

### AGENDA

Item		Pages
<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	
<b>2.</b>	<b>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</b>	
	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.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION</b>	
	To receive questions from members of the public under rule no.10 of the Council Procedure Rules. The procedure rule provides that members of the public may ask any question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties which affect the District, provided that three clear days' notice in writing has been given to the Head of Legal and Support Services.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>MINUTES</b>	
	To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 29 August 2024	<b>3 - 6</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN - PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 2 2024/25 COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</b>	
	The report of the Head of Human Resources and Organization Development	<b>7 - 12</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>LGA PEER REVIEW</b>	
	The report of the Chief Executive	<b>13 - 50</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>CONSULTATION ON ENABLING REMOTE ATTENDANCE AND PROXY VOTING AT LOCAL AUTHORITY MEETINGS</b>	
	The report of the Interim Monitoring Officer	<b>51 - 62</b>

**8. COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS AND EXEMPTIONS/BUSINESS RATES RELIEF**

The report of the Strategic Director of Resources

**63 - 92**

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

To consider any items to be included in the work programme. A draft plan of forthcoming Cabinet decisions and the current Corporate Scrutiny work programme are attached for information.

**93 - 122**

Circulation:

- Councillor S Lambeth (Chair)
- Councillor M Ball (Deputy Chair)
- Councillor C Beck
- Councillor M Blair-Park
- Councillor M Burke
- Councillor K Horn
- Councillor A Morley
- Councillor R L Morris
- Councillor S Sheahan
- Councillor J Windram

MINUTES of a meeting of the CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the Abbey Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on THURSDAY, 29 AUGUST 2024

Present: Councillor S Lambeth (Chair)

Councillors M Ball, C Beck, M Burke, K Horn, A Morley, R L Morris, S Sheahan, J Windram and J Legrys (Substitute for Councillor M Blair-Park)

In Attendance: Councillors C A Sewell, L Windram, R Johnson and P Moul

Portfolio Holders: Councillors K Merrie MBE

Officers: Mr A Barton, Miss E Warhurst, Mr T Devonshire, Mr P Stone, Mr C Elston, Ms J Marshall and Mr M Murphy

#### **11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor M Blair-Park and K Horn.

#### **12. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no interests declared.

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

There were no questions received.

#### **14. MINUTES**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2024.

It was moved by Councillor M Burke, seconded by Councillor A Morley, and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2024 be approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

#### **15. ZERO CARBON UPDATE**

The Climate Change Programme Manager presented the report.

A discussion was had about calculations and targets, how focus areas were separated into scope 1, scope 2 and scope 3, and why scope 1 and 2 issues were being targeted when scope 3 issues were responsible for a large majority of emissions. The Chair was concerned that data suggested progress to Zero Carbon was slow and wanted to see more clearly articulated timelines and an action plan.

The Climate Change Programme Manager advised that scope 1 and 2 reflected things within the Council's operational control. Scope 3, things which the Council could facilitate, largely consisted of housing stock and thus emissions generated by tenants were not entirely in the control of the Council. She would provide further information about the data and the timeline to Zero Carbon in the Members briefing in the autumn.

The Strategic Director of Communities added that the current priority for the housing stock was to bring all properties up to at least an EPC C rating, and the strategies to achieve

this, such as asset management plans and stock condition surveys, would be communicated to Members in upcoming workshops.

A discussion was had about the Council's vehicle fleet and the fleet replacement programme. Officers set out how this was separated into different service areas and advised on the prospects of emissions reduction in each and the viability, costs and benefits of transitioning to electric vehicles, which would not be immediately prudent in some parts of the fleet.

A discussion was had about the bio-diversity net gain planning principle and its ability to influence the path to Zero Carbon. The Head of Planning and Infrastructure advised that it would be factored into the drafting process for the new Local Plan and would be discussed at upcoming meetings of that committee.

A discussion was had about the provision of electric vehicle charging sites on Council car parks across the district. The Chair expressed concern that the facilities seemed overpriced and had to slow a charging speed. The Climate Change Programme Manager advised that the charge points were 7kw, the speed limited by electric connection costs, are owned by the Council and had been supported with grant funding. Charges are priced to cover costs, and the intention was to provide overnight charging facilities to people who did not have private access to them. Nevertheless, she took on board the Chair's concern and she would feedback to the Car Park Team and confirm the decision process for EV charging costs.

The Chair said that future reports should assess progress against the 2030 plan or future plans, the performances of projects funded with the climate change reserve fund should be assessed, and a permanent staff position should be made for the Climate Change Programme Manager.

The Chair thanked Members for their comments.

## **16. PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT**

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development presented the report.

In response to a Member, the Strategic Director of Resources reiterated that the 2021/22 accounts had been published in June 2024, that a value for money opinion would be issued for 2022/23 by the end of September, and that a meeting with Mazars and the Audit and Governance Committee had been scheduled for September 2024 too. The Council's financial reserves were healthy and its governance structure robust. He also advised Members as to how the auditors would assess value for money, by examining the Council's financial performance as a totality.

A discussion was had about the definition of 'a well-run Council'. Officers advised that the definition of 'a well-run council' synthesised the work of Oflog and the LGA. The Chair requested further information to clarify specifically how accepted good practice in the local government sector had been incorporated into the Council Delivery Plan which was adopted by full Council for a 4 year term last year.

A Member proposed the following definition and requested that it be placed in the minutes: 'A well run Council co-ordinates its actions around an overarching vision, underpinned by a thorough and ongoing appraisal of stakeholder needs and aspirations, and provides sound leadership on the local economy, environment and community by championing democracy, value for money, fairness and meaningful opportunity.'

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development stressed that below the Council Delivery Plan sat a range of service level plans and these were reviewed annually.

The Chair thanked Members for their comments which would be presented to Cabinet on 22 October 2024.

## **17. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development presented the report.

A discussion was had about disability policy. Members wondered whether the proportion of employees with disabilities was monitored, whether the disability characteristic could be expanded to include 'neuro-divergency', whether a policy of 'job carving' was implemented, and whether the LGA work on disability had been incorporated into the plan.

In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Legal and Support Services explained that it was the Leader of the Council who appointed to the Cabinet from the administration, based on skills, expertise and interest in the particular portfolio areas.

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development set out for Members the policy of reasonable adjustments, said that he would discuss the concept of 'job carving' with the Member, and advised that the Council did monitor data on disabled employees and compared it to the 2021 census, which he would share with the Member. The Council also calculated and published the gender pay gap, and from next year would be voluntarily calculating the ethnic pay gap too if the plan was agreed.

A discussion was had about engagement. Members wished to see greater Member input, and increased attempts to engage marginalised communities within the district in decision making. The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development acknowledged that greater engagement with certain sections of the community within the district was a key aim of the plan.

Members discussed the process of drafting the plan, which some Members felt should be central to the Council's ethic. Some concern was expressed that it seemed vague, lacking in performance monitoring indicators and targets, and that some of the latest trends in EDI policy such as a focus on equity had not been incorporated. It was also unclear when the last such plan had been formulated.

In response, the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said that he could provide monitoring reports to future meetings of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, that the last plan had been published in 2019 and thus impacted by Covid, and that this proposed plan had been influenced by statutory frameworks and current good practice guidance from the LGA and similar bodies.

The Chair noted recent plans set out by the new Government and hoped the Council would be tracking changes in this sphere dynamically, and the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development concurred.

A discussion was had about unconscious bias training, which the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development said had a good rate of enrolment amongst staff. A Member suggested that it should be mandatory for all staff and elected Members.

The Chair thanked Members for their comments.

**18. CORPORATE CHARGING POLICY**

The Strategic Director of Resources presented the report.

In response to a Member, the Strategic Director of Resources advised that the consequences of approving the policy would be that Cabinet, rather than full Council, would be able to amend charges in the future.

The Chair thanked Members for their comments, which would be presented to the Cabinet on 24 September 2024.

**19. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to any items of the work programme.

Members requested another report on the work plan covering employee resourcing. Officers advised that there was a workforce strategy plan to be presented to Cabinet later this year and then the Corporate Scrutiny Committee; this would incorporate concerns Members had previously expressed.

Members asked about the Transformation Update report and the Strategic Director of Resources advised that updates would be incorporated into quarterly performance monitoring and financial performance monitoring reports moving forwards, and these would include detailed, benchmarked targets.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.14 pm

## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – THURSDAY, 5  
DECEMBER 2024

<b>Title of Report</b>	<b>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN – PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER 2 2024/25</b>	
<b>Presented by</b>	Mike Murphy Head of Human Resources and Organisation Development	
<b>Background Papers</b>	<a href="#">Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday, 22nd October, 2024, 5.00 pm - North West Leicestershire District Council</a>	<b>Public Report:</b> Yes
<b>Financial Implications</b>	There are no financial implications arising from this report.	
	<b>Signed off by the Section 151 Officer:</b> Yes	
<b>Legal Implications</b>	There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.	
	<b>Signed off by the Monitoring Officer:</b> Yes	
<b>Staffing and Corporate Implications</b>	The Council Delivery Plan (CDP) sets out the priorities for the Council for a five-year period so has significant corporate and staffing implications.	
	<b>Signed off by the Head of Paid Service:</b> Yes	
<b>Reason Agenda item submitted to Scrutiny Committee.</b>	To report the performance of the Council during the second quarter of 2024/25 against the objectives and key performance indicators as detailed in the Council Delivery Plan as agreed by full Council on 14 November 2023. To request that Scrutiny Committee reviews the comments of Cabinet on the performance report and provides feedback on its response for consideration by Cabinet.	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>THAT CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. NOTES THE CONSIDERATION OF THE PERFORMANCE REPORT BY CABINET AT THEIR MEETING ON 22 OCTOBER 2024.</b></li> <li><b>2. PROVIDES COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK ON CABINET’S RESPONSE TO THE PERFORMANCE ACHIEVED, TO BE FED BACK THROUGH THE NEXT CABINET PERFORMANCE REPORT.</b></li> </ol>	

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council prepared a new Council Delivery Plan during late 2023, and the Plan is scheduled to cover the lifetime of the Council administration for the period 2023/24 until a year beyond the next election in May 2027 (to ensure continuity in the aftermath of that election and to allow time for a new plan to be developed). The Plan was developed with inputs from the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and the opposition groups and was agreed by Council at its meeting on the 14 November 2023.
- 1.2 The Plan is being monitored in relation to the targets and a suite of performance indicators on a quarterly basis in line with the performance management framework. This involves quarterly reports to Cabinet with the outcomes of the reports then shared with the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.
- 1.3 The Council is at an early stage in the Council Delivery Plan's life cycle, the Plan having only been adopted in November 2023. Accordingly, the reporting progress is inevitably going to be restricted at this point in time. The reporting period for this report runs from 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024.
- 1.4 The performance report for the quarter July to September 2024 was presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 22 October 2024. The following is an extract from the Cabinet draft minutes when the item was presented: -

### **Cabinet 22 October 2024.**

*The Infrastructure Portfolio Holder presented the report. After setting out the progress against indicators achieved within the quarter, he set out his response to the comments of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 29 August 2024.*

*Guidance on sectorial best practice had been solicited as appropriate during the drafting process for the Council Delivery Plan, and there had been a number of opportunities for the Corporate Scrutiny Committee to have their input too. Therefore, there were no plans to revisit or redraft the current plan by the administration.*

*The Housing, Property and Customer Services Portfolio Holder said that manager level vacancies in the housing department were being filled which would significantly contribute to improving responses to housing complaints, which were the highest service area contributor to the overall total of complaints.*

*The Business and Regeneration Portfolio Holder noted that the Coalville and District-wide Regeneration Framework indicators were both on target at this moment. Furthermore, achievement of milestones around the commencing of regeneration projects also indicated a successful approach.*

*The Communities and Climate Change Portfolio Holder welcomed the development of the Tree Management Strategy and the increase in restaurants with a 5-star food hygiene rating in the District, and he expressed disappointment in the delay to the Waste Services Review due to a lack of guidance from Central Government.*

*The Strategic Director of Resources spoke on behalf of the Corporate Portfolio Holder. He advised that the publication of the Statement of Accounts for 2022/23 was imminent, and*



*both these accounts and the 2021/22 accounts would receive a Value for Money opinion on 9 December 2024, in keeping with statutory requirements to resolve the backlog.*

*Limited assurances from a recent internal audit were also a significant way towards being addressed. The appointment of a Transformation Officer was also imminent, and they would focus on improving efficiencies in systems and processes.*

*On behalf of the Planning Portfolio Holder, the Infrastructure Portfolio Holder welcomed the fact that the determination of major, minor, and other planning applications was all above target for the second quarter, whilst the progress on the good design guide continued to be made.*

*It was moved by Councillor K Merrie, seconded by Councillor R Blunt, and RESOLVED THAT: The report be noted.*

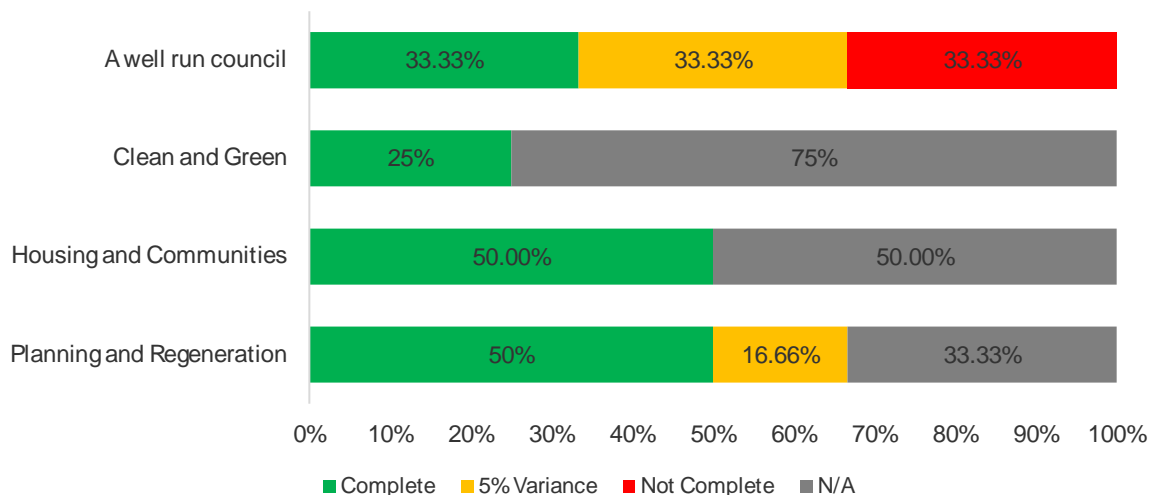
The following paragraphs are extracted directly from the report that was considered by Cabinet on the 22 October 2024. This information has been extracted to assist members of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee in having the summary information to hand when considering the headline performance data. The full report which contains more detail is available at the following link to the Cabinet papers.

[\(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 22/10/2024 17:00](#)

## **2.0 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

- 2.1** The Council Delivery Plan contains four key priority areas – notably “A well run Council, Clean and Green, Housing and Communities and Planning and Regeneration.”
- 2.2** There are 18 Key Performance Indicators (KPI’s) in the Plan. Six relate to Planning and Regeneration, five to Housing and Community Services, four relate to Clean and Green and three relate to A Well-Run Council.

The table below shows the performance in quarter 2 overall against each of the four priority areas. The table shows the priorities that have been completed, those that were within a 5% variance of being completed, those that were not completed at all and those that were not applicable (usually due to no data being available, because they are scheduled for completion at a later stage of the Plan.)



**2.3** Of the 18 Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) in the Council Delivery Plan.

Three relate to a Well-Run Council. One is not completed, one is within a 5% variance of completion, and one will be completed at a later stage of the Council Delivery Plan.

Six relate to Planning and Regeneration. Three have been completed, one is within a 5% variance of completion, two will be completed at a later stage of the Council Delivery Plan.

Five relate to Housing and Communities. Two are complete and two will be completed at a later stage of the Council Delivery Plan. The fifth Key Performance Indicator pertaining to “our private rental tenants across the district are able to live safely in their homes” has been divided into two elements as it is split across two distinct Services. It is comprised of Private Landlord compliance with MEES standards (dealt with by the Environmental protection Team) which is complete and the Private Landlord's Charter (which is dealt with by Housing), which is due for completion at another stage of the plan.

Four KPIs relate to the Clean and Green objective, one is complete, and three will be completed at a later stage of the Council Delivery Plan.

**2.4** Summary of progress in quarter 2.

The areas of key progress in the quarter (drawn from the detailed information in the tables below) are: -

- The Council has comfortably exceeded the Government targets in terms of timescales for determining major, minor, and other planning applications for the second consecutive quarter.

- The delivery of the Marlborough Square project (culminating in the opening ceremony) took place this quarter as well as the unveiling of the Mother and Child statue in its new location in the Belvoir Centre
- In respect of the compliance of Private Landlords with the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) policy, the number of non-compliant properties following enforcement intervention in Quarter 2, has seen a dramatic reduction in the space of twelve months to 18 non-compliant properties from a baseline of 118 in September 2023
- The target in respect of the number achieving a five-star food hygiene rating has been achieved.
- The development of a Transformation Plan with the aim of supporting the drive to delivery budget savings in the medium term. In addition to this the budget setting process for 2025/26 has started earlier than in previous years so that budget proposals can be considered in the early Autumn.

The only indicator with a RAG rating of Red this quarter pertains to obtaining an unqualified opinion on the Council's accounts by an external auditor- the remedial actions put in place this quarter to address this are: -

- The Procurement of additional temporary resource within the finance team to assist with the backlog of Statement of Accounts.
- Development of detailed action plans to address backlog of reconciliations.
- Recommendations highlighted in recent limited assurance reports are being addressed, with 50% of recommendations already completed.

The election of a new Government in July 2024 has resulted in the Council still awaiting clarity in terms of legislation/guidance impacting the Local Plan and Waste reviews.

The Waste review is currently delayed pending clarity from the government around the 'simpler recycling proposals' which fundamentally impact on which option for the future service are taken forward.

## **2.5 Transformation programme update**

The Council's Transformation Programme is to ensure financial sustainability and improve service delivery. A sum of £0.5m has been allocated to support various transformation initiatives. Transformation will be aligned with the Council Delivery Plan, which includes performance measures to ensure value financial health and better outcomes for residents.

In addition to the costs outlined above (excluding the CAFM system as this will be funded from the Business Rates Reserve), the Council has employed a Local Government Association Graduate Programme to support the Transformation Programme. The Graduate Programme is a fast-track development programme for bright and passionate graduates who want to make a difference in local government. It is a two-year programme where graduates are employed by councils.

The Council is recruiting to a Transformation Programme Officer vacancy with an appointment imminent. The costs of this will be met from reserves previously set aside to fund this post for the first two years and funded from savings identified thereafter.

The committed budget to date is summarised in the table below.

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£</b>
Additional communications support	13,603
HR support	64,038
Customer contact	75,984
LGA Graduate	86,647
<b>Total</b>	<b>240,272</b>

<b>Policies and other considerations, as appropriate</b>	
Council Priorities:	This report measures progress against all of the new Council priorities.
Policy Considerations:	Council Delivery Plan
Safeguarding:	No direct considerations
Equalities/Diversity:	No direct considerations, the Plan impacts across all of the district's communities.
Customer Impact:	The Plan seeks to improve customer contacts and interactions with our many customers. Indicators around customer response times are included.
Economic and Social Impact:	The Plan seeks to improve the economic and social impact of the Council's activities in the District.
Environment, Climate Change and Zero Carbon:	The Plan contains the Council's commitment to a clean, green and zero carbon District.
Consultation/Community/Tenant Engagement:	No current or planned consultations.
Risks:	Consideration has been given to the corporate risk register when compiling the plan.
Officer Contact	<p>Mike Murphy            Head of Human Resources and Organization Development  <a href="mailto:Mike.murphy@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">Mike.murphy@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Allison Thomas            Chief Executive  <a href="mailto:Allison.thomas@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">Allison.thomas@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a></p>

## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – THURSDAY, 5  
DECEMBER 2024

<b>Title of Report</b>	<b>LGA PEER REVIEW</b>	
<b>Presented by</b>	Allison Thomas Chief Executive	
<b>Background Papers</b>	N/A	<b>Public Report:</b> Yes
<b>Financial Implications</b>	None directly relating to the Peer Review feedback; however, the Council will need to assess any specific resource implications where applicable to addressing the recommendations contained in the report.	
	<b>Signed off by the Section 151 Officer:</b> Yes	
<b>Legal Implications</b>	None directly relating to the Peer Review feedback. Where actions to address the recommendations in the report require changes to the constitution, these will be addressed through the Council's annual constitution review, which is currently ongoing.	
	<b>Signed off by the Monitoring Officer:</b> Yes	
<b>Staffing and Corporate Implications</b>	None directly relating to the Peer Review feedback; however, the Council will need to assess any specific resource staffing and corporate implications where applicable to addressing the recommendations contained in the report.	
	<b>Signed off by the Head of Paid Service:</b> Yes	
<b>Reason Agenda Item Submitted to Scrutiny Committee</b>	To seek Corporate Scrutiny Committee's comments for inclusion in the report to Cabinet on 17 December 2024 on the proposed action plan in response to the Council's Corporate Peer Challenge Review Feedback report from the Local Government Association (LGA).	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>THAT THE COMMITTEE:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1) NOTES THE LGA PEER REVIEW TEAM'S FEEDBACK AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL FOLLOWING ITS CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE IN JUNE 2024.</b></li> <li><b>2) PROVIDES ANY COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT ACTION PLAN PREPARED IN RESPONSE TO THE FEEDBACK RECEIVED FOR CONSIDERATION BY CABINET ON 17 DECEMBER 2024.</b></li> </ol>	

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) is an improvement and assurance tool that is delivered by local government for local government. It is underpinned by the principles of sector led improvement put in place by councils and the Local Government Association (LGA) to support continuous improvement and assurance across the sector. CPC assists councils in meeting part of their Best Value Duty, with the UK Government expecting all local authorities to have a CPC at least every five years. It involves a team of senior local councillors and officers undertaking a comprehensive review of key finance, performance and governance information of the Council. The Council was subject to its last CPC in June 2019. However, since 2019 there have been a series of high-profile local government failures; and this has been recognised in a strengthened CPC assessment to provide more assurance to Government that councils are being managed effectively.
- 1.2 The review process was an intensive but positive experience for members, staff and key stakeholders and the outcome will help shape the Council's improvement over the coming years. A copy of the full report is attached at Appendix 1 to this report with a proposed Action Plan at Appendix 2. Many of the recommendations made had already been identified by the Chief Executive and her Corporate Leadership Team and were already in train at the time of the review.

## 2.0 PEER REVIEW PROCESS

- 2.1 The Council's CPC took place from 26-28 June 2024. The Peer Review team, who spent three days with the Council, comprised:

- Cllr Abi Brown, Chair of LGA Improvement & Innovation Board & Leader, Stoke on Trent City Council, 2019-23
- Tony Dale, Cabinet Member for Economy & Tourism, Car Parking & Transformation, Cotswold District Council
- Larissa Reed, Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council
- Adam Broome, LGA Finance Associate
- Paul Bellotti, Executive Director of Communities and Environment and Deputy Chief Executive, East Riding of Yorkshire Council
- Becca Singh, Regional Adviser, East Midlands Regional Team, LGA
- Katie Goodger, Regional Adviser, South East Regional Team, LGA

The five key areas that were covered by the review are set out below:

- **Local Priorities and Outcomes**  
Are the Council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the Council delivering effectively on its priorities? Is there a robust organisational-wide approach to continuous improvement, with regular monitoring, reporting on and updating or performance and improvement plans?
- **Organisational and Place Leadership**  
Does the Council provide effective local leadership? Are there strong and effective relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
- **Governance and Culture**  
Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of openness, transparency, challenge and scrutiny?

- **Financial Planning & Management**  
Does the Council have a clear understanding of its financial position? Does the Council have a strategy and a plan to address its financial challenges? What is the relative financial resilience of the Council like?
- **Capacity for Improvement**  
Is the organisation able to bring about the improvements it needs, including delivering on locally identified priorities? Does the Council have the capacity to improve?

In addition, the LGA was also asked to look at Regeneration and Housing (particularly Repairs) within these five themes.

- 2.2 Ahead of the CPC, the Council provided the peer team with a self-assessment of its current position which contained key facts, figures and background information. The process was very robust with the peer team carrying out 110 interviews during the three days they were on site. They spoke to a whole range of key partners and stakeholders across Leicestershire, community and voluntary sector and other partners in addition to staff and councillors. They also looked around the Council's offices and scrolled through the intranet / internet, reading key documents, policies and strategies.
- 2.3 The initial informal feedback following the review was very positive with the peer team highlighting a number of recommendations for the Council to consider. By its very nature, the CPC was a snapshot in time and it is recognised that some of the feedback may be about things the Council was already aware of and was in the process of addressing.

### **3.0 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 The Peer Review team felt that there is a renewed energy in the Council after the peer challenge in 2019 with a new Chief Executive and a refreshed and partly new group of senior officers, new headquarters and a new approach to communication. They observed a positive atmosphere in the Council offices and staff reported it was a good place to work and were motivated and enthusiastic about delivering good work.
- 3.2 The Peer Review team also recognised that the district had experienced some political changes after the 2023 election following a long period of stable administration and whilst the Alliance was working well together, and member/officer relationships were good, it had been a period of adjustment for both members and staff alike as the new arrangements bedded in.
- 3.3 In addition, the Peer Review team recognised:
- Good relationships with district councils in Leicestershire, with Leicestershire County Council and with other partners
  - A good record of engagement with local businesses
  - Positive engagement with parish councils by the Community Focus Team
  - Conditions for growth in the district are outstanding
  - Great progress has been made on the development of Coalville and the emergence of a district-wide regeneration programme.
  - Strong engagement with residents and members on the waste review
  - Highly valued leisure provision with improvements to existing facilities and new facilities well received.

- Ambitious targets for affordable homes
- Good performance against benchmarking data for council tax collection, planning and recycling and other key metrics.
- No major current risks on financial sustainability with good levels of income
- Good engagement with members on corporate and service risk management with Corporate and Service registers in place
- Ambitions for reaching net zero and the plans in place to ensure that these are fully costed and form part of the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- Commitment to apprentices, learning and development, ambitions to be a gold accredited Investor in People and a graduate from the LGA's new graduate development programme.
- Recognition that the Council is on an improvement journey in its Housing Service.

3.4 The following are the Peer Review team's key recommendations to the Council:

**Recommendation 1 - Build relations between councillors, and between councillors and officers through a programme of development workshops to build trust and openness** - The Alliance could be strengthened through top team development to enable councillors in the Cabinet to better step up to their role and provide a collegiate front for the council. Building on the developing relationships between the political leadership and the Corporate Leadership Team, there could be further development sessions helping to introduce more honest conversations about ways of working, so that councillors and officers all recognize and accept their specific role in the Council moving forwards.

**Recommendation 2: Use the Risk Register and the Annual Governance Statement to raise situational awareness and future concerns** - These documents could be better used to manage the council's risk appetite. Review the approach to both and consider the sector's best practice to make both documents work for you, as well as a strategic communications tool.

**Recommendation 3: Ensure that financial transactions and contracts are under consistent and robust review** - This includes fees, charges, the Leisure contract and commercial property investments. Regular robust reporting at Corporate Scrutiny of all major financial transactions, or actions that will have an impact on finance (such as the Transformation Programme and the Finance Improvement Programme) will help ensure that councillors are fully abreast of financial, commercial and savings matters when looking to establish corporate strategies. The Council uses PowerBI as a benchmarking tool, but the Peer Team was not shown how this was being used to inform strategic and operational planning.

**Recommendation 4: Establish a thorough two-way Corporate Communications and Engagement Plan** – The Chief Executive communicates frequently and regularly internally and this is appreciated by staff. However, staff reported that this is mostly information giving, rather than encouraging two-way engagement. The recent staff roadshows provided valuable feedback on how to improve this and the Council has taken this on board. The skilled staff in the Communications Team can advise and lead on how to ensure that internal communications are engaging and empowering. Explore how two-way engagement with internal and external stakeholders can maximise benefits for residents and businesses.



**Recommendation 5: Enhance the newly adopted Transformation Plan with a clear set of financial outcomes, deliverable dates, benefits, thirdparty dependencies and risks across all programme areas** - Enhance the recently agreed high level transformation plan to ensure that aims, deliverables and expected outcomes are agreed between Cabinet and senior officers, with appropriate levels of flexibility, as soon as possible. Involve communications professionals from the start of the process to help identify how staff can be genuinely engaged with the process, and potential or perceived impacts can be communicated.

**Recommendation 6: Conduct a wholesale process mapping and review of systems in Housing Repairs** - The Peer Review team recommends a wholesale process mapping and review of systems and processes as part of the Transformation agenda. Inefficient processes are reported to be hampering the Council's determination to clear the backlog of repairs. The Council has begun to address the issues in Housing, particularly through Scrutiny and Cabinet. It has established a Housing Improvement Board which has a plan for action. The Housing Regulator will look at repairs and tenant satisfaction, so it is imperative that the cultural issues within the service are tackled, alongside setting up clear, efficient systems and processes as a matter of urgency as soon as possible after the mapping exercise.

**Recommendation 7: Engage more proactively in partnership working in all settings, ensuring the maximum benefit for the district's businesses and residents** – The Council is in a strong position to lead some of the partnership working, such as the network of councils directly affected by the Freeport. This involves building relationships with other councils involved, but also other partners. This will help to ensure that the Council influences and directs the economic development in the district. Maximise the opportunities afforded by the different large-scale developments to enable the Council to deliver what it wants for its residents.

3.5 In response to the Peer Review feedback report a draft action has been developed at Appendix 2 for consideration and discussion at the Corporate Scrutiny Meeting prior to being presented to Cabinet.

<b>Policies and other considerations, as appropriate</b>	
Council Priorities:	The report relates to all aspects of the Council Delivery Plan and its key priorities of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planning and regeneration</li> <li>- Communities and housing</li> <li>- Clean, green and Zero Carbon</li> <li>- A well-run council</li> </ul>
Policy Considerations:	Medium Term Financial Plan Risk Management Strategy Housing Revenue Account Housing Asset Management Housing Repairs Policy

	<p>Coalville and District-wide Regeneration Frameworks  Communications Strategy  Constitution  Treasury Management Strategy  Equality and Diversity Strategy  Transformation Plan</p>
Safeguarding:	None arising from this report.
Equalities/Diversity:	The Council was commended for its work on Equality and Diversity and support provided by the HR team. However, the Council needs to demonstrate the added value that Equality Impact Assessments are providing.
Customer Impact:	None arising from this report.
Economic and Social Impact:	None arising from this report.
Environment, Climate Change and zero carbon:	The Peer Review team recognised the ambitions of the Council on net zero and that the Council is currently in the process of building robust costings to deliver these ambitions into its Medium-Term Financial Plan.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	<p>The Peer Review Team conducted 110 interviews over the three days they were on site. They spoke to elected members, partners and staff as part of the process.</p> <p>The Peer Review report will be published on the website.</p> <p>Any changes made as a result of the Review recommendations that require more formal consultation or engagement will be conducted in accordance with existing policies.</p>
Risks:	<p>That the report is not adequately considered to assist in the Council's continuous improvement activities.</p> <p>That there are insufficient resources to deliver the action plan.</p>
Officer Contact	<p>Allison Thomas  Chief Executive  <a href="mailto:allison.thomas@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">allison.thomas@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a></p>

# LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

North West Leicestershire District Council

26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Feedback report



**Corporate Peer Challenge**



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## 1. Introduction

Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) is a highly valued improvement and assurance tool that is delivered by the sector for the sector. It involves a team of senior local government councillors and officers undertaking a comprehensive review of key finance, performance and governance information and then spending three days on site at North West Leicestershire District Council to provide robust, strategic, and credible challenge and support.

CPC forms a key part of the improvement and assurance framework for local government. It is underpinned by the principles of Sector-led Improvement (SLI) put in place by councils and the Local Government Association (LGA) to support continuous improvement and assurance across the sector. These state that local authorities are: Responsible for their own performance, Accountable locally not nationally and have a collective responsibility for the performance of the sector.

CPC assists councils in meeting part of their Best Value duty, with the UK Government expecting all local authorities to have a CPC at least every five years.

Peers remain at the heart of the peer challenge process and provide a 'practitioner perspective' and 'critical friend' challenge.

This report outlines the key findings of the peer team and the recommendations that the council are required to action.

## 2. Executive summary

North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC) is in the centre of England, at the heart of various key centres of economic development. It has enjoyed a strong period of growth, maximising the benefits of the business rates locally. Partly as a result of this growth, and because of the political stability, it did not raise council tax for 15 years until an increase was implemented in 2024/25.

There is a renewed energy in the council after the peer challenge in 2019. There is a new Chief Executive with a refreshed and partly new group of senior officers, new headquarters, a new approach to communications. There is a positive feel in the

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council offices, and staff reported it was a good place to work.

The 2023 election left no party in overall control. This was the first time in sixteen years that the council was not a Conservative majority administration. The council is now led by an Alliance of Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Independent councillors, but has retained the same Leader as under the previous Conservative administrations, providing some stability at a time of flux. The administration is working well together, although there have been some challenges between officers and councillors getting used to their new roles and relationships. The council has demonstrated a willingness to address this. Councillors described the Alliance to the peer team as “a loose affiliation of political groups”, whilst at the same time clearly working well together. This can be disconcerting to officers and to partners when the Alliance uses language that sound like the administration is fragile, even though they are confident that it is stable. The peer team suggest that the Alliance use language that demonstrates the stability of the administration.

Several partners (public and private) told the peer team that they would like to work closer with the council and see more councillors active in the regional arena. NWLDC is confident that it has a good relationship with district councils in the county as well as Leicestershire County Council as well as a range of other partners. Some work may be needed to address perceptions externally to ensure that others view the council’s partnership commitments the way NWLDC would like them to.

There are no major current risks on financial sustainability, with good levels of income but, like many councils, there is significant delay on statutory financial reports. It is important to ensure a good transition to the new auditor and the council reported that onboarding discussions have already taken place. Corporate and Service Risk Registers are in place, however, there were some fundamental risks that the team expected to see which weren’t on the Corporate Risk Register for example, the East Midlands Freeport delivery. It is important that councillors understand corporate risks and are providing challenge to ensure that Officers are taking mitigating actions where needed. The risk register is considered at every Audit and Governance meeting to provide councillors with the information they need.

The council could make more of its use of its Annual Governance Statement each

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year to provide a narrative to the council's priorities and actions. This would help to link strategic issues together, eg risk management and governance arrangements.

The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is currently high-level and does not allow for scenario planning for different future possibilities. Some flexibility will need to be built in. The ambitions for reaching zero carbon need to be built into the MTFP. At the time of the review, this was being done but had not been completed.

### 3. Key Recommendations

There are several observations and suggestions within the main section of the report. The following are the peer team's key recommendations to the council:

#### 3.1 Recommendation 1: Build relations between councillors, and between councillors and officers through a programme of development workshops to build trust and openness

The Alliance could be strengthened through top team development to enable councillors in the Cabinet to better step up to their role and provide a collegiate front for the council. Building on the developing relationships between the political leadership and the Corporate Leadership Team, there could be further development sessions helping to introduce more honest conversations about ways of working, so that councillors and officers all recognise and accept their specific role in the council moving forwards.

#### 3.2 Recommendation 2: Use the Risk Register and the Annual Governance Statement to raise situational awareness and future concerns

These documents could be better used to manage the council's risk appetite. Review the approach to both and consider the sector's best practice to make both documents work for you, as well as a strategic communications tool.

#### 3.3 Recommendation 3: Ensure that financial transactions and contracts are under consistent and robust review

This includes fees, charges, the Leisure contract and commercial property investments. Regular robust reporting at Corporate Scrutiny of all major financial

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transactions, or actions that will have an impact on finance (such as the Transformation Programme and the Finance Improvement Programme) will help ensure that councillors are fully abreast of financial, commercial and savings matters when looking to establish corporate strategies. The council uses PowerBI as a benchmarking tool, but the peer team was not shown how this was being used to inform strategic and operational planning.

### **3.4 Recommendation 4: Establish a thorough two-way Corporate Communications Engagement Plan**

The Chief Executive communicates frequently and regularly internally, and this is appreciated by staff. However, staff reported that this is mostly information giving, rather than encouraging two-way engagement. The recent staff roadshows provided valuable feedback on how to improve this and the council has taken this on board. The skilled staff in the Communications Team can advise and lead on how to ensure that internal communications are engaging and empowering. Explore how two-way engagement with internal and external stakeholders can maximise benefits for residents and businesses.

### **3.5 Recommendation 5: Enhance the newly adopted Transformation Plan with a clear set of financial outcomes, deliverable dates, benefits, third party dependencies and risks across all programme areas**

Enhance the recently agreed high level transformation plan to ensure that aims, deliverables and expected outcomes are agreed between Cabinet and senior officers, with appropriate levels of flexibility, as soon as possible. Involve communications professionals from the start of the process to help identify how staff can be genuinely engaged with the process, and potential or perceived impacts can be communicated.

### **3.6 Recommendation 6: Conduct a wholesale process mapping and review of systems in Housing Repairs**

The peer team recommends a wholesale process mapping and review of systems and processes as part of the Transformation agenda. Inefficient processes are reported to be hampering the council's determination to clear the backlog of repairs.

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The Council has begun to address the issues in Housing, particularly through Scrutiny and Cabinet. It has established a Housing Improvement Board which has a plan for action. The Housing Regulator will look at repairs and tenant satisfaction, so it is imperative that the cultural issues within the service are tackled, alongside setting up clear, efficient systems and processes as a matter of urgency as soon as possible after the mapping exercise.

### **3.7 Recommendation 7: Engage more proactively in partnership working in all settings, ensuring the maximum benefit for the district's businesses and residents**

NWLDC is in a strong position to lead some of the partnership working, such as the network of councils directly affected by the Freeport. This involves building relationships with other councils involved, but also other partners. This will help to ensure that the council influences and directs the economic development in the district. Maximise the opportunities afforded by the different large-scale developments to enable the council to deliver what it wants for its residents.

## **4. Summary of peer challenge approach**

### **4.1 The peer team**

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced councillors and officer peers. The peer team reflected the focus of the peer challenge and peers were selected by the LGA for their relevant expertise. The team was:

- Councillor Abi Brown OBE, former leader, Stoke-on-Trent City Council
- Councillor Tony Dale, Cotswold District Council
- Larissa Reed, Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council
- Paul Bellotti, Executive Director, East Riding Council
- Adam Broome, LGA Finance Associate
- Katie Goodger - Regional Adviser, LGA
- Becca Singh - Peer Challenge Manager, LGA

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## 4.2 Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five themes which form the core components of all Corporate Peer Challenges. These areas are critical to councils' performance and improvement.

1. **Local priorities and outcomes** - Are the council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering effectively on its priorities? Is there an organisational-wide approach to continuous improvement, with frequent monitoring, reporting on and updating of performance and improvement plans?
2. **Organisational and place leadership** - Does the council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
3. **Governance and culture** - Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of challenge and scrutiny?
4. **Financial planning and management - Does the council have a grip on its current financial position?** Does the council have a strategy and a plan to address its financial challenges? What is the relative financial resilience of the council like?
5. **Capacity for improvement** - Is the organisation able to bring about the improvements it needs, including delivering on locally identified priorities? Does the council have the capacity to improve?

As part of the five core elements outlined above, every Corporate Peer Challenge includes a strong focus on financial sustainability, performance, governance, and assurance.

In addition to these themes, the council asked the peer team to provide feedback on Housing repairs, regeneration and economic growth. This feedback has been included in the main five themes.

### 4.3 The peer challenge process

Peer challenges are improvement focused; it is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals and nor is it an inspection. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The peer team prepared by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the council and the challenges it is facing. This included a position statement prepared by the council in advance of the peer team's time on site. This provided a clear steer to the peer team on the local context at NWLDC and what the peer team should focus on. It also included a comprehensive LGA Finance briefing (prepared using public reports from the council's website) and a LGA performance report outlining benchmarking data for the council across a range of metrics. The latter was produced using the LGA's local area benchmarking tool called LG Inform.

The peer team then spent three days on site at NWLDC, during which they:

- Gathered evidence, information, and views from more than forty meetings, in addition to further research and reading.
- Spoke and listened to around 110 people including a range of council staff together with councillors and external stakeholders.
- Collectively spent nearly 300 hours working on the peer challenge. This is the equivalent of one consultant spending nearly nine weeks in the council full time.

This report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. In presenting feedback, they have done so as fellow local government officers and councillors.

## 5. Feedback

### 5.1 Local priorities and outcomes

Conditions for growth are outstanding in North West Leicestershire, which is one of the fastest growing districts in the country. The peer team saw great progress on the development of the principal town of Coalville, and a district-wide regeneration plan is in the final stages of its development, reflecting the diverse towns and villages across the area. Some voices from local communities are concerned about the understandable strong focus on regenerating Coalville; consultation on the new strategy should ensure that residents and businesses clearly understand the council's district-wide approach. There was strong engagement with residents on the Waste Services Review. This is a good learning opportunity to help improve engagement on other issues and reviews.

The council has been part of a national pilot on design coding and is developing a new local design code. The team heard good feedback on this work.

The council has an ambitious target for an increase in 1,000 new affordable homes by 2026. This depends on ongoing partnership working, as they will need to be delivered by a variety of partners, including Registered Providers, Section 106 money and any direct building work the council may be able to do. NWLDC faces substantial challenges with reduced supply from planning gain due to viability and reduced take up by registered providers. Council resourcing issues have also slowed the roll-out of the delivery of new affordable Council homes. This is critical and important work to provide decent affordable homes for families, children and older residents on the Council's waiting list to secure their future well-being.

The council has a good record on relationships with local businesses, prioritising start-up businesses and a growing apprenticeship programme. Currently the council has ten apprentices in post, plus four employees undertaking apprenticeship-funded training. It is also benefiting from the LGA's New Graduate Development Programme

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with a graduate recruited and due to commence in September 2024. The council engages with several training providers to support a range of skills development amongst local communities.

The new leisure centre and improvements to the Ashby Leisure Centre have been well-received by residents and are highly valued. However, given the long-term nature of the leisure contract it will be important to ensure that established close working relations include robust reporting arrangements to help early identification of any risks.

Relationships with Parish and town councils are mixed. Feedback is very good for the staff in the Community Focus team whose role it is to liaise with Parish Councils, but the parish councils would feel more included in discussions if senior staff and councillors attended meetings when there is a particularly contentious issue, or something which requires more technical understanding.

There is an ambitious zero carbon policy, with a roadmap to achieve by 2030. At the time of the review, there was no clear link to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). This is in development to ensure a clearer, direct link to the finances of the council. The LGA's [sustainability hub](#) includes a range of resources to help the council measure, monitor and reduce emissions, as well an opportunity to network and share experiences with other councils. The LGA's [Councillor Workbook on the local pathway to net zero](#) could assist councillors in developing their skills further to help the authority progress this agenda.

There is scope for better and more widespread understanding of the needs of different communities in the district. At the last census, 4.1% of the population are from a black or minority ethnic background, and 7.9% described themselves as non-white UK. 20% of the population is over 65 years of age and 19.9% are under 18.

According to the Indices of Multiple Deprivation, NWLDC is ranked 214 out of 326 authorities in England, with 1 being the most deprived. At the time of the peer challenge, Equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) issues were not fully embedded in strategies, such as economic growth and waste management, nor were those issues included in action planning for service delivery. A new EDI Strategy is due to be

presented to councillors later this year. The recent waste review, with considerable resident responses, were analysed by gender, ethnicity and a range of other indicators which should assist in action planning for the new service. The new district-wide regeneration framework will need to ensure that EDI, and the needs of different communities, is reflected adequately.

### **5.1.1 Performance**

The Council's performance metrics are good against the benchmarking data from LG Inform (mostly 2022/23 performance data except where stated) although there are several areas where data is missing including spending on health and leisure, housing levels of spend, net budget on economic development (2023/24 data), unemployment levels, and community safety spending. The full [LG Inform report](#) prepared for this CPC is available online.

Council tax collection rates are good, with 97.15% collected compared to 97.9% in the CIPFA group of nearest neighbours. Non-domestic rates collections are also good with 99.1% of business rates collected compared to 96.76% in England and average of 98.13% within the CIPFA group.

There were 17.5 households per thousand households on the housing waiting list, compared to 70.89 nationally, and an average of 38.2 households per thousand in the CIPFA group. 0.47 households per thousand were living in temporary accommodation compared to 4.7 households per thousand nationally, and an average of 1.03 in the CIPFA group. 73 affordable homes were built compared to 125 in the CIPFA comparison group.

Planning Services in 2023 Q4 demonstrated that NWLDC processed 91.4% of planning applications for major developments on time compared to 87.7% in England and 86.2% in the CIPFA group. On non-major developments, the council processed 86.5% of applications compared to 86.8% in England and 85.6% of in the CIPFA group. The new Local Plan has been out to consultation, resulting in around 650 responses. After these have been analysed and considered, the intention was to submit the plan for examination in mid-2025. In response to the new Government's priorities, this timetable has shifted appropriately.

Recycling and waste figures are good compared to the council's CIPFA nearest

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neighbour median amounts: 43% of household waste recycled (CIPFA group median 42.9%), residual waste (non-recycled) collected per household was 465.1kg CIPFA group median amount of 469.5kg). No data was available for recycling contamination.

There were 51.4 new businesses registered per 10,000 of the registered population aged 16 and above. This compared to 64.6 per 10,000 nationally and 55.8 per 10,000 in the CIPFA group.

Council Tax, along with fees and charges, has increased for 2024/25 after a long freeze period, with increases planned for future years. The council uses Power BI for benchmarking, which led them to identify the need for reviews of Waste and Parking. However, this was not made available to the Peer Team at the time of the peer challenge. The council could make more of the benchmarking so that residents, businesses and partners understand how NWLDC compares to other similar councils, for example through performance information on its website. The peer team recommends that NWLDC demonstrates its use of benchmarking to identify further opportunities for service efficiencies and financial savings.

Staff reported that there is a new performance management system which is bedding in. Staff the peer team engaged with, reported a lack of understanding how their role fits in with the wider picture, and a sense that councillors are not aware of the pressures that different roles have, particularly at different times of year.

The Council Delivery Plan (CDP) sets out the Alliance's eighteen key objectives. The Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet appear well aligned with their priorities. However, these priorities have not been turned into a strategic vision. Most of the 'business as usual' work of the Council consciously does not appear in the CDP. This is set out in Business and Service Plans, which councillors are briefed on at their regular portfolio and shadow portfolio briefings. Councillors could, however, be made more aware of the daily pressures staff face at these briefings. The peer team heard several times from staff that there is a lack of 'golden thread' between high level priorities and the day-to-day business of the council and its services. The peer team heard from councillors that they don't always see progress on their priorities and staff reported not being able to see what they are aiming for, nor how their own

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work fits in. All staff have access to an individual development review, where this can be explored in more depth. The peer team recommend reinforcing the links between the Council Delivery Plan, the Business and Service Plans, and individual Development Reviews, and ensure that the CDP, and associated business and service plans, continue to reflect the priorities for residents and businesses.

### **5.1.2 Housing Repairs**

The council's concerns about Housing Repairs were a focus for this peer challenge, and the peers took time to consider this area carefully. It was not always clear whilst the team was on site what was known about, and what was already planned. This was because the Director with responsibility for Housing was on leave during the onsite work, and although there was a very positive and useful Teams meeting with the housing lead on the peer team before they were on leave, this did not allow for the usual further discussions at a senior level as evidence was collated.

The feedback below is to encourage NWLDC to continue along its path, and to be aware of the long-term nature of some of the changes it wants to make. The team also wants to ensure that councillors are aware of the depths of the challenges, and how much this may take officers away from some of the council's other priorities. In addition, the peer team would like to strongly encourage NWLDC to work with others, including the LGA's transformation programme, and other councils that have been in similar situations, to enable them to advance quickly on its improvement journey.

It is important to note that the peers were impressed with the dedication of Housing staff, who are passionate about the role of housing services but are very concerned about the quality and the impact of the housing repairs service.

NWLDC is aware of the need to improve the service, and has set up a Housing Improvement Plan, supported by a Board of councillors, to oversee the recovery of the service. New managers are in place, and a service restructure is beginning to take shape. The backlog of repairs is significant, and the council has appointed an external contractor specifically to clear this. The peer team agreed that this was a



good way forward.

Staffing, systems, processes and culture in the service mean that repairs are not adequately recorded or managed, and this leads to errors at all stages. Staff reported that the council cannot currently satisfy itself that the repairs backlog or current planned repairs lists are accurate. Whilst on site, live examples of this inefficiency were provided to the peer team involving separate incidents on the same day. A new team manager role has been created as part of the restructure to address this issue specifically. The technology that is already available is not being maximised, and staff reported little transactional capability on the tenant portal.

Furthermore, there is a disconnect between those taking repairs calls, and operatives carrying out those repairs. The repairs are reported to be not always allocated in a way which maximises the skills and time of the operatives, which can lead to inefficiencies and delays. The peer team heard that poor behaviours were being reported but changes in behaviour were not always apparent or leading to improved efficiency. At the time of the review, there were also vacancies across two management tiers, leading to understandable reduced management support for improvement to the culture of the service.

The peer team recommends a wholesale process mapping and review of systems and processes as part of the Transformation agenda to satisfy the council that the issues will not recur. Since the review, the council reported that this is in place. When this exercise is completed, and relevant changes implemented, this should lead to a marked improvement in efficiency and productivity.

Twelve tenant satisfaction measures are much lower than the council would want to hear from its tenants, for example, 36% of tenants are dissatisfied with the repairs service. This is an area that the Housing Regulator will explore. The Council is working to address this; however, no comparator data was available to compare the Council with at the time of the review.

Culture change takes time, and usually meets with resistance before it embeds in any organisation. The peer team encourages NWLDC to continue apace with its plans for Housing Repairs but to be patient about how long it might take for plans to

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be fully realised.

### **5.1.3 Economic Growth**

This was one of the focus areas for the council, and the peer team spent considerable time on this area. The peer team feel that the council is taking advantage of its good fortune being centrally located and has excellent road transport links to the rest of the country. There are several key development zones within the district and the council is in the enviable position of having one of the highest economic growth rates in the country.

These circumstances are beneficial to the council and its residents, partly with the income from Business Rates retention, but also because of the employment opportunities this provides for the residents of the district. Local firms in supply chains could benefit from the economic development that others may be driving which brings positive outcomes from NWLDC residents and businesses. The peer team visited one of the sites being developed, talked with several different partners and read documents provided to the team by the council.

There are misconceptions locally, including within the councillor cohort about the logistics sector. Such developments were referred to, several times during the peer challenge by different councillors, as “just big sheds” and being all low grade and low paid jobs “not what we want”. However, the logistics sector has a wide variety of jobs including highly technical and highly skilled. There are roles for local residents with varying levels of education and experience. The council has a role in addressing these myths and ensuring residents see the opportunities they could have.

The council is developing a new Local Plan. The peer team highly recommends that the council maximises every opportunity for networking to continue to build relationships across relevant sectors, and subsequently direct development in the way that it wants. Otherwise, the council risks the situation where developments and growth happen ‘to’ the district, rather than ‘with’ the district. The council needs to be at the heart of influencing and leading the growth that it wants to see. The peer team saw and heard several strong examples of where NWLDC had outlined its expectation of new developments to a very high standard, which had subsequently been delivered. NWLDC shouldn’t underestimate its ability to influence appropriate

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development.

The East Midlands Freeport is an important part of the economic growth picture for the district. The council has been involved in the development of the Freeport company, with a councillor a regular and active attender of board meetings, as well as legal and planning work. The councillor representing NWLDC on the board was not available to talk to the peer team, so feedback from the team is therefore only able to report on what it heard, saw and read whilst on site and in background reading.

The LGA and the peer team recognise that some of the issues that arise for the development that goes alongside the Freeport are challenging and can be political contentious and very sensitive for different communities. Some decisions may be outside the reach of the District Council and that they may be hard to reconcile with local priorities. Communication is key to how decisions are felt by the council, local residents and businesses. The peer team recommends working more closely with the Freeport team in the [Planning Advisory Service \(PAS\)](#) to help navigate those challenging areas sensitively.

Every freeport site is different, but there is value in engaging with different councils working with different freeports, sharing challenges and successes with this new way of working. This should help ensure that locally, NWLDC leads some developments, and influences others as much as possible to come out with the best options for its residents and businesses. It is a means to an end, not an end in itself, providing a great opportunity to create more jobs, drive regeneration and improve the skills and aspirations for local residents complementing the regeneration and other economic work that the council is doing. It is worth noting, however, that the impact of the Freeport is a high corporate and economic risk, and the peer team would expect that it is included on the Corporate Risk Register. The peer team recommends that NWLDC continues to engage actively and positively with the Freeport. Its role as Community leader is not to be underestimated when dispelling myths and addressing resident concerns.

At the time of the peer challenge, the District-wide regeneration plan was in development and was not available to the peer team. The team suggests that

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external communications around all the various economic development projects and sites, regardless of which organisation is leading it, could be brought together to maximise the benefits of all the work that the council is doing, and the opportunities all the developments bring to the residents and businesses in the district. This includes the Coalville regeneration programme, the District-wide regeneration programme, and the overall Economic Growth Strategy (including the work with the Freeport where appropriate).

## **5.2 Organisational and place leadership**

The Chief Executive and Leader are both well respected by partners who spoke highly of NWLDC. However, there are examples where improved partnership working could boost the reputation of the council, and influence decisions taken at a regional and sub-regional level to maximise the benefits to the residents and businesses in the district. Relationships are good with the County Council on one level, but there are reports that partners within the district would appreciate support from NWLDC in working with the County.

The peer team recognises that the work that the council has done to date has been supporting setting up the East Midlands Freeport (EMF). Members took decisions to enable the council to be part of the EMF company once formed and the council's engagement will move to the next phase of work. The peer team recognises the sensitivities around the EMF and recommend that NWLDC works with PAS to help the balance of its various roles as Planning Authority, Interested Party, and Community Leader.

Relations between councillors and officers are broadly good. However, there are examples where increased two-way trust would lead to a more productive relationship, and subsequently better service delivery. The peer team recommends that the council considered how senior councillors and senior officers work together to demonstrate local leadership from a united council. Further work could be considered on developing increased understanding by councillors of how strategic decisions relate to 'business as usual'. The council could also identify opportunities for councillors to have a higher profile both internally and externally, with the support of senior officers, without becoming operational managers. The LGA can help with

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relevant development workshops.

The nuances of the current political arrangements are well managed but a longer-term view of this is needed. Full Council meetings can feel like an unknown quantity, and officers must prepare for multiple scenarios before every meeting. This increases the workload and reduces efficiency. The peer team recommends that all councillors recognise the impact this has on how effectively staff can work and consider ways to minimise this effect.

Positive advocacy of cross-regional working by Councillors would strengthen the council's reputation and voice as a significant place in the region. It would strengthen the district's visibility and increase the impact and influence with partners and inward investment (for example EMF). NWLDC also has some strong examples it could use to raise its own profile within the region and indeed the sector, whether in regeneration or adapting to a changing political landscape.

Having now worked together for just over a year, there is also the opportunity for leading councillors to reflect on how they view a longer-term arrangement, to the next election. The peer team recommends that councillors consider what has worked well so far, and what could be improved in both their political relationships, and with senior officers.

### **5.3 Governance and culture**

The Leader has provided stability in an environment of 'No Overall Control'. However, the political change is beginning to be felt by officers. Honest, strategic conversations are needed between the Cabinet and senior officers, and with the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) to ensure that the focus is on the long-term future for the council.

The Risk Register is a live document demonstrating how risks are mitigated. Councillors are aware of its importance and the consequence of different corporate risks. The East Midlands Freeport did not appear on the Corporate Risk Register, despite it having a significant impact on future economic, employment and development prospects. The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) provides an opportunity to demonstrate Councillors' oversight and management of risk.

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The emerging People Strategy needs to reflect and address the high levels of staff turnover in key areas, particularly where there are critical vacancies, for example in Housing. The council should continue to look at what it can do differently to help recruit in these areas. NWLDC is part of an East Midlands Councils group focusing on recruitment and retention, which has enabled shared learning and ideas. It could also work with neighbouring authorities to explore partnership recruitment possibilities. The council is also participating in Impact – The Local Government Graduate Development Programme and has a graduate starting in September 2024.

The Transformation programme was in its infancy at the time of the Peer Challenge. Councillors backed the programme at a high level with a budget of £500,000, but key dates and goals will need to be agreed to ensure the programme's success. A clear programme of activities, owners, milestones, benefits realisation, dependent parties and councillor involvement would help add focus to delivery.

This is an opportunity to comprehensively oversee what the council does, and what it wants to do, and review how to deliver its aims. The LGA's Transformation Programme can help NWLDC with specific elements or overall with its transformation agenda through resources and information on its [Transformation Hub](#). Support is provided to councillors as well as officers to enable them to engage fully with the transformation process and ensure that the council is driving forward in the same direction. The peer team encourages NWLDC to engage with this support, most of which is available free of charge.

Since the peer challenge, the council reports that things have moved on with the Transformation Programme. Key staff posts have been advertised, and concrete plans have been developed. A Communications Plan has now been developed, alongside the Transformation Programme. The Communications Team has already been identified as needing an uplift in resources to ensure the extra demands needed by the Transformation Programme. Plans are owned by the Cabinet who monitor performance regularly and Scrutiny is also involved. The peer challenge took place too early in the process for this work to have started, and the peer team did not hear about this work. It is good to see progress is being made.

Current regular internal communications tend to be in a broadcast style. Staff

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roadshows were held to capture ideas from staff to help shape the Transformation Programme, but the council could maximise the skills and knowledge of the skilled staff in the Communications Team more, who can advise how to ensure that staff can be actively engaged, using multiple channels of empowering two-way engagement. The Internal Comms plan was not available at the time of the Peer Challenge, and the Transformation Communications Plan was being developed. Enabling the Communications team to lead more on internal comms with additional capacity will support the Transformation work. The peer team recommend that NWLDC continues its engagement with LGA Communications, more information available: [Comms Hub – communications support | Local Government Association](#)

#### **5.4 Financial planning and management**

The last audited accounts for the council were 2020/21, signed off unqualified in April 2023. There were no identified risks of significant weakness in relation to Financial Sustainability, Governance, or improving economy efficiency and effectiveness. Risks of significant weakness were identified for Governance linked to statutory financial reporting, because of inaccurate property records and insufficient capacity in the Finance Team. However, this is some time in the past, and officers have been working with external auditors since that time to address this.

NWLDC will be changing external auditors for the audit of 2023/24 Statement of Accounts onwards. It will be important that the council manages well the production of remaining outstanding financial statements and the transition from current to new external auditors. The council has recognised that need, and reports that engagement with the new auditors is progressing well.

The council is forecasting a General Fund revenue overspend for 2023/34 of £333,000. In-year pressures for 2023/24 have been largely offset by additional investment income and savings on financing costs due to slippage on the Capital programme. The council has set a balanced budget for 2024/25 with savings of £1.7m in place but it was not completely clear at the time of the peer challenge what the methodology was for identifying, delivering and capturing savings for 2024/25 onwards. It will be important to robustly manage delivery of these savings. The council has taken steps to reduce the forecast scale of deficit for 2028/29 from circa

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£4m to £1.9m.

The council receives significant funding from the Business Rates Retention scheme. The new UK government may review this scheme and NWLDC will need to consider as a potential risk, what effect this might have on its local forecasting. Timescales on reviewing the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) need to be clear, along with managing and delivering outcomes. The council recognises that this is something it needs to keep abreast of.

The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is high-level. It could be affected by the new UK government's plans. The MTFP does not yet capture costs associated with the council's plans to be carbon neutral by 2030. Since the peer challenge, the council has reported that this is being done. The peer team recommends scenario planning, considering how to reflect its future pressures, and looking at a variety of outcomes, including potential changes to business rates income and how these might affect the scale of savings plans required.

The Council is currently developing a Finance Improvement Plan to clearly capture all planned improvements underway in the Finance Service, Systems and Processes and to set clear delivery objectives and timescales. The peer team recommends that it will be important to keep under robust review and to report management, performance and value of Commercial Property Investments.

## **5.5 Capacity for improvement**

Staff are motivated and enthusiastic about delivering good work. They are keen to support the new political administration in achieving its aims. There is some very good work being done around staff welfare, including informal social activities as well as formal support. However, not all activities are accessible to all staff, particularly if they are not based in the Whitwick Business Centre. NWLDC recognises this risk, and a health and wellbeing plan has recently been developed to address this.

Staff are understandably nervous about the future, and what the Transformation agenda may hold for them, but new senior staff, including a new Chief Executive, have helped to enthuse officers and renew their commitment to the district.

The work that NWLDC did with the LGA to develop a council narrative is being

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embedded across the council. It has been used in full in the Council Delivery Plan, words and phrases are used in the Communications Strategy and is being used in recruitment and in customer contacts.

NWLDC has gained Investors In People at Silver which is an excellent achievement and the trajectory to Gold by 2025 is sound and progressive. However, the peer team heard that a high level of sickness absence in public facing services such as Waste and Housing is having a detrimental effect on managing change in those areas, and the team did not see a plan to address this, although it was identified in the Transformation Plan.

Support is provided by Human Resources (HR) to raise awareness of the impacts of making assumptions and unconscious bias, neurodiversity, and value of Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) on the internal leadership programme. However, it is not clear if the impact of this support has been evaluated to demonstrate if this is making a difference.

In enhancing both customer contact and communications the peer team noted exceptional commitment of the officers involved and the clarity of their thinking on the opportunities that exist to improve the web site and their willingness to create new ways of working.

The Customer Contact programme is designed with a clear understanding of the potential benefits and articulation of the resources required to achieve an improvement in Customer Experience. The £33k opportunity needs to be translated into deliverable savings for the Council, more commensurate with the investment levels, with clarity on how reduced officer hours will translate into actual payroll savings or redeployment to vacant roles. There may be external third-party dependencies and unidentified costs in redesigning e-forms for revenues and benefits claims as they are delivered through the shared services organization.

## 6. Next steps

It is recognised that senior political and managerial leadership will want to consider, discuss and reflect on these findings. The LGA will continue to provide on-going

support to the council. As part of the CPC, the council are also required to have a progress review and publish the findings from this within twelve months of the CPC. The LGA will also publish the progress review report on their website.

The progress review will provide space for a council's senior leadership to report to peers on the progress made against each of the CPC's recommendations, discuss early impact or learning and receive feedback on the implementation of the CPC action plan. The progress review will usually be delivered on-site over one day. The Progress Review at North West Leicestershire District Council is due by the end of April 2025.

In the meantime, Mark Edgell, Principal Adviser for the East Midlands, is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association. As outlined above, Mark is available to discuss any further support the council requires.

[Mark.Edgell@local.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.Edgell@local.gov.uk).

Area	Ref	Recommendations	Response & Actions	By	Change to Constitution	Timescale A 1-3 months B 3-6 months C 6-12+ months
Relationships	1	<b>Build relations between councillors, and between councillors and officers through a programme of development workshops to build trust and openness</b>	<p>The Chief Executive and Directors meet with the leading group fortnightly to discuss a range of topics and embryonic policy development.</p> <p>Officers have regular Portfolio Holder and shadow Portfolio Holder meetings.</p> <p>The Chief Executive meets with political groups by invitation.</p> <p>Informal workshops are held on key topics of interest (waste service, budget, housing improvement, audit).</p> <p>A comprehensive member induction is held following Council elections. Investment has been made in a member development and training programme.</p> <p>Cross party working informally and formally on key projects – i.e. waste review.</p> <p>Members views on how to address this recommendation specially will be sought through Corporate Scrutiny and Cabinet meetings. Would external support (for example from the LGA) assist with helping to address this recommendation?</p>	Chief Executive	No	<b>Ongoing but additional items over the next 6-12 months.</b>

<b>Risk Management</b>	2	<b>Use the Risk Register and the Annual Governance Statement to raise situational awareness and future concerns</b>	<p>The Corporate Risk Register is regularly reported to Audit and Governance Committee and to Corporate Leadership Team.</p> <p>The annual governance statement is presently drafted by the Section 151 Officer and subsequently reviewed by both the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer. In the future the AGS will be developed in partnership with the corporate leadership team and aligned with the Oflog best value guidance.</p> <p>The Council has been recognised as an exemplar by the LGA for its work on Governance and Assurance</p> <p>Departmental and Service Plans contain risk registers to cover their specific areas of service across the Council.</p> <p>A Corporate Risk Group has been established comprising representatives from each department to oversee the development of the corporate and service risk registers and to regularly review the Council's approach to risk management and to ensure key risks have been identified and mitigating actions put in place.</p> <p>Training for CLT and extended leadership team and members has been delivered.</p>	Director of Resources	No	<b>12 months</b>
<b>Financial Management</b>	3	<b>Ensure that financial transactions and contracts are under consistent and robust review</b>	<p>The Council has recently procured the services of V4 – a procurement and contracts specialist to provide additional procurement support to the Council.</p> <p>The key focus will be finalising a new Procurement Strategy and support in maintaining a robust contracts' register that is regularly reviewed by CLT to ensure the Council is compliant with its contract procedures.</p>	Director of Resources	Yes – change to contract procedure rules.	<b>6 months</b>

			<p>The introduction of the Procurement Act 2023 provides additional complexity to procurement activity. A task and finish group is currently reviewing the changes to systems and processes. A key element of this is the review of the Council's contract procedure rules. This work is already in train, however, V4 should be able to provide additional advice and support.</p> <p>Officers will also receive training in respect of the Procurement Act 2023.</p> <p>The S151 Officer has been working closely with the new external auditors to ensure successful transition and good progress has been made in publishing the 2021/2 and 2022/3 Statement of Accounts. In respect of the Statement of Accounts for 2023/4 the Council will not be in a position to meet the backstop date like many councils across the Country. The Council is not an outlier in this regard; however, the S151 Officer has made contact with MHCLG to inform them of this and awaits further guidance. The Council's external auditors are fully sighted on this issue and will be working closely with the Council to mitigate this position.</p> <p>Significant work has been undertaken with the Council's Internal Audit Service to ensure a comprehensive Internal Audit Plan is delivered.</p>			
<b>Communications</b>	4	<b>Establish a thorough two-way Corporate Communications Engagement Plan</b>	<p>The Corporate Communications Strategy is updated every year. This year includes a focus on developing new channels for internal communications. This includes internal comms brand "We are NWL".</p> <p>A separate Communications Strategy has been developed for the Council's transformation programme and is being rolled out. Staff roadshows took place in July and in early November across the Council including for front-line and remote workers.</p>	Chief Executive	No	<b>Completed</b>

			<p>Virtual “in conversation” topic-based all-staff information and dialogue sessions are planned, the first one being in respect of governance.</p> <p>There is an expanded weekly all-staff email and there are now knowledge sharing events in place. There are also specific communications plans for certain activities and areas – e.g. Transformation and the Housing Service.</p>			
<b>Transformation</b>	5	<b>Enhance the newly adopted Transformation Plan with a clear set of financial outcomes, deliverable dates, benefits, third party dependencies and risks across all programme areas</b>	<p>A monitoring form has been established with key metrics for the delivery of each project/scheme. This is monitored by the Transformation Steering Group.</p> <p>The successful appointment of a Transformation Programme Officer, together with the LGA Graduate, will ensure that all future projects/schemes are regularly reviewed.</p> <p>Transformation performance is reported regularly to Members as part of the quarterly performance monitoring to Cabinet and Scrutiny including the monitoring of the £500k allocated for transformation work.</p> <p>Business cases for new projects and schemes are reviewed by the Council’s Transformation Steering Group, with funding requests drawn from the £500k Transformation Fund.</p>	Director of Resources	No	<b>12 months</b>
<b>Housing</b>	6	<b>Conduct a wholesale process mapping and review of systems in Housing Repairs</b>	<p>The Council has recognised its housing service is not providing as good a service as it should be. In recognition of this Cabinet set up a Housing Improvement Board in the Spring 2024 consisting of representatives of all major political parties and is working its way through a number of topics including repairs management and has already drawn up a Housing Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Between the Peer Review and the publication of this action plan the Council has already reviewed its repairs policy. This has gained political agreement and has been actioned.</p>	Director of Communities	No	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p><b>Completed</b></p> <p><b>Completed</b></p>

			<p>Since the Peer Review a whole home contractor has been procured to assist with the management and delivery of the repairs service, focusing on the work in progress and delayed repairs delivery.</p> <p>At the time of the Peer Review there were significant gaps in the housing management team inhibiting the ability to deliver services. Significant work has been undertaken over the summer to recruit to key roles to enable the delivery of the service and progress improvements. A Knowledge Information Management self-assessment as set out by the Regulator for Social Housing has also been undertaken and an action plan will be developed. In addition, work around the Culture Issues covered in the report are and continue to be addressed as part of the Improvement Plan process.</p>			<b>Within 6/12 months</b>
<b>External Stakeholders</b>	7	<b>Engage more proactively in partnership working in all settings, ensuring the maximum benefit for the district's businesses and residents</b>	<p>The Council has reinvigorated its Parish Liaison meetings, including being led by a member of the senior leadership team. The Chief Executive, Director of Resources and other members of the CLT have attended a meeting of parish clerks and have agreed to share the Council's Forward Plan in the future to ensure that key items of interest are flagged in advance.</p>	Director of Communities	No	<b>Completed and ongoing in terms of Forward Plan</b>
			<p>The Council has recently agreed a District-wide Regeneration Frameworks to sit alongside its Coalville Regeneration Framework. The Council engaged with a range of partners in its development and will work closely with key partners on its delivery over the next few years.</p>	Director of Place	No	<b>12 months Annual Review</b>
			<p>The Chief Executive will continue to have regular planned 'catch up' meetings with the two MPs covering North West Leicestershire, Trade Unions, The National Forest Company, East Midlands Airport, Health providers, the East Midlands Freeport and social housing providers.</p>	Chief Executive	No	<b>Ongoing</b>





			<p>Health and Wellbeing Strategy was approved for consultation earlier this year and is being finalised.</p> <p>The Council is on course for its Investor in People assessment in March 2025.</p>	<p>Head of HR and OD</p>		
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## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – THURSDAY, 5  
DECEMBER 2024

<b>Title of Report</b>	<b>GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON ENABLING REMOTE ATTENDANCE AND PROXY VOTING AT LOCAL AUTHORITY MEETINGS</b>	
<b>Presented by</b>	Kate Hiller Interim Head of Legal and Support Services and Monitoring Officer	
<b>Background Papers</b>	<a href="#">Enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings - GOV.UK</a>	<b>Public Report:</b> Yes
<b>Financial Implications</b>	There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. Should the requirements for holding and attending meetings change in the future, the financial implications (if any) will be assessed at that time.	
	<b>Signed off by the Section 151 Officer:</b> Yes	
<b>Legal Implications</b>	<p>Currently paragraph 39 of Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires councillors to attend meetings in person in order to take part in the debate and vote.</p> <p>In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the then government passed the Coronavirus Act 2020. Section 78 of the 2020 Act authorised the making of regulations to make provision for the way Members may attend, speak at, vote in, or otherwise participate in, local authority meetings. The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 facilitated this and enabled formal council meetings to take place remotely. The regulations were limited in application to local authority meetings to be held or held before 7 May 2021. The 2020 Act was repealed on 24 March 2024.</p> <p>A change in the law would be required to enable remote attendance and proxy voting of Members at meetings.</p>	
	<b>Signed off by the Monitoring Officer:</b> Yes	
<b>Staffing and Corporate Implications</b>	There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.	
	<b>Signed off by the Head of Paid Service:</b> Yes	
<b>Reason Agenda Item Submitted to Scrutiny Committee</b>	To ask that the Corporate Scrutiny Committee to consider and debate the Government's consultation enabling remote meetings and proxy voting and pass any comments to Cabinet.	

<b>Recommendations</b>	<p><b>THAT THE COMMITTEE:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. CONSIDERS THE GOVERNMENT’S CONSULTATION ON “ENABLING REMOTE MEETINGS AND PROXY VOTING AT LOCAL AUTHORITY MEETINGS”</b></li> <li><b>2. CONSIDERS ANY FEEDBACK PROVIDED BY MEMBERS AND PROVIDES ANY COMMENTS TO CABINET WHO WILL CONSIDER THE COUNCIL’S RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION AT THEIR MEETING ON 17 DECEMBER 2024</b></li> <li><b>3. NOTES THAT THE CONSULTATION IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS UNTIL 19 DECEMBER 2024.</b></li> </ol>
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**1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Currently the law requires that councillors attend formal council meetings in person in order to take part in the debate and vote (Schedule 12, Local Government Act 1972). Councillors are required to exercise their own votes and proxy voting is not allowed. During the Covid 19 Pandemic the then Government enacted temporary legislation which enabled formal council meetings to be held remotely with councillors being able to join the debate and vote (The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020). Many councillors will recall meetings held during this period via Microsoft Teams. The Council successfully held a range of meetings which also included public participation, such as Planning Committee.
- 1.2 The regulations came to an end automatically on 7 May 2021 and the Council returned to full in person meetings in line with any social distancing restrictions in place at the time.
- 1.3 The return to in person meetings was challenged in Judicial Review proceedings by the Association of Democratic Services Officers (ADSO), Lawyers in Local Government (LLG) and Hertfordshire County Council in 2021. The Court refused to extend the emergency temporary regulations and determined that this was a policy matter to be considered by Parliament, requiring new legislation and not by the courts.

**2.0 GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION**

- 2.1 The Deputy Prime Minister’s speech at the Local Government Association (LGA) conference included an announcement about the consultation on proposals for remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings.
- 2.2 For ease of reference, find here the full text of the speech – [Local Government Association Conference - GOV.UK](#).
- 2.3 The consultation entitled “Enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings” can be found here [Enabling remote attendance and proxy voting at local authority meetings - GOV.UK](#). This consultation will close at 11.59pm on 19 December 2024. The consultation is open to individuals, councillors and councils.

- 2.4 Details of the consultation have been shared with all members via email, on the members hub and the Leader referred to it in his announcement at Council on 5 November 2024, encouraging Members to respond. The Leader requested that the Chair of Corporate Scrutiny add an item on this agenda to enable Members to debate the issue before Cabinet considers the Council's response to the consultation at their meeting on 17 December 2024. As well as submitting their own consultation responses, Members have been invited to share any views on the questions with the Democratic Services Team Manager before Scrutiny Committee, to enable any comments to be considered by the meeting. No comments were received from individual members.
- 2.5 A copy of the consultation questions are attached at Appendix A to this report. Officers have provided members with comments for consideration, based on processes that were in place for the temporary use of Remote meetings during the Covid-19 Pandemic, informal feedback which has been received by members on remote meetings since that time and on officers' experience in the procedures and practice of local authority meetings.
- 2.6 Members are requested to discuss the consultation and provide comments on the consultation questions to then be considered by Cabinet. In particular views are sought in response to the following questions:
- Remote meetings - Questions 2, 3, 4b, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9
  - Proxy Voting – Questions 11, 12 and 13

<b>Policies and other considerations, as appropriate</b>	
Council Priorities:	A well-run council
Policy Considerations:	The Council's Constitution would need to be reviewed and amended to take account of remote meetings should the legislation change to allow them.
Safeguarding:	None
Equalities/Diversity:	An Equalities Impact Assessment would need to be completed should the legislation change, and the Council needs to consider how it implements any changes to the way it runs its formal council meetings.
Customer Impact:	None directly arising at this time. The impact on customers would need to be considered should the legislation change, and the Council needs to give thought to how it runs its formal council meetings.
Economic and Social Impact:	None directly arising at this time.
Environment, Climate Change and zero carbon:	None directly arising at this time.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Public Government Consultation.
Risks:	None directly arising at this time.

Officer Contact	Kate Hiller, Interim Head of Legal and Support Services and Monitoring Officer <a href="mailto:Kate.Hiller@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">Kate.Hiller@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a>

## **APPENDIX A – CONSULTATION QUESTIONS AND OFFICER COMMENTS**

The following document contains the questions that form the consultation. Officers have provided comments for the Committee to consider as part of this report. The comments are set out in blue.

### **QUESTION 1**

Please tick all that apply - are you responding to this consultation as:

a) an elected member – if so please indicate which local authority type(s) you serve on

- Town or Parish Council
- District or Borough Council
- Unitary Authority
- County Council
- Combined Authority / Combined County Authority
- Fire and Rescue Authority
- Police and Crime Panel
- Other local authority type - please state

b) a council body – if so please indicate which local authority type

- Town or Parish Council
- District or Borough Council ✓
- Unitary Authority
- County Council
- Combined Authority / Combined County Authority
- Fire and Rescue Authority
- Police and Crime Panel
- Other local authority type - please state

c) a member of the public

d) a local government sector body – please state

## **THE PROPOSAL FOR REMOTE ATTENDANCE**

The Government intends to legislate to give local authorities the flexibility to allow elected members to attend formal council meetings remotely. We believe that this modernising measure of providing broad flexibility to enable remote attendance will have the dual positive impacts of diversifying the representation of those willing and able to stand for elected office and enhance the resilience of local authorities in the face of local or national emergencies.

The intent is that this legislative change would give local authorities the flexibility to allow members to attend remotely.

## **QUESTION 2**

Do you agree with the broad principle of granting local authorities powers to allow remote attendance at formal meetings?

Yes/No – As proven by the Covid-19 Pandemic, another situation may arise where being limited to only holding Council meetings in person, could put the authority at risk of not being able to make any required decisions. which would allow the Council to continue to operate. However, officers feel that limitations and/or use in exceptional circumstances should be considered, with reasoning for this being set out within comments below

If you answered No to the above question please go directly to question 4.

## **QUESTION 3**

If you answered Yes to the above question, do you think that there should be specific limitations on remote attendance? - Yes – There is always the risk that members wishing to join remotely may experience technical difficulty and could leave the meeting inquorate and therefore decisions not being made. Based on the experience of the Council during the Covid pandemic this risk is low.

Please tick all the options below that correspond with your view and use the free text box for any other comments.

a) Any formal meeting allowing remote attendance should have at least two thirds of members in physical attendance. – This should explicitly include both the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee, so that advice from officers can be sought as required throughout the meeting.

b) Members should only be able to attend Council meetings remotely in exceptional circumstances, such as those who are medically or physically unable to attend, or for reasons of local or national emergencies.

~~c) There should be no limitations placed upon councils with regard to setting arrangements for remote attendance of council meetings, up to and including full remote attendance.~~

d) [Free text box]

## **Question 4**



If you are an elected member can you anticipate that you personally may seek to attend some of your council meetings remotely?

- yes
- no
- I am not an elected member

#### **Question 4a**

If you answered No please use the free text below

[Free text box]

#### **Question 4b**

If you answered Yes, could you indicate below which of the following options best describes your likely pattern of attending meetings remotely - This is a question for members of the Committee to put the views forward on at the meeting and the Democratic Services Team Manager will then add any views provided by members prior to the meeting to it, to be able to select the appropriate response.

- very occasionally
- from time to time
- regularly but not always
- all the time

#### **Question 5**

If you are responding to this consultation on behalf of a council as a whole, what proportion of the Council's current elected members are likely to seek to attend Council meetings remotely over the course of a year? – This is a question for members of the committee to put the views forward on at the meeting and the Democratic Services Team Manager will then add any views provided by members prior to the meeting to it, to be able to select the appropriate response:

- less than 10%
- more than 10% but less than 50%
- more than 50% but less than 90%
- most of them 90% to 100%

#### **QUESTION 6**

The Government recognises that there may be cases in which it is necessary for councils to hold meetings fully remotely. Do you think there should be limitations placed on the number of fully remote meetings councils should be able to hold? As with comments made at question 3, those attending remotely may experience technical difficulties, therefore, making

a meeting inquorate and decisions not being made. Based on the experience of the Council during the Covid pandemic this risk is low.

~~a) Councils should be able to allow full remote attendance at up to half of council meetings within a twelve-month calendar period.~~

b) Councils should only have the flexibility to change a meeting from in-person to online, or vice versa, due to unforeseen and exceptional circumstances.

~~c) Councils should not have the flexibility to conduct fully remote meetings to ensure there is always an in-person presence~~

d) [Free Text Box]

### **QUESTION 7**

Do you think there are there any necessary procedural measures that would help to ensure a remote or hybrid attendance policy is workable and efficient? – Officers would advise that all 3 options listed below should be considered as part of the measures, along with the suggested comment at d)

Please tick all the options that correspond with your view and use the free text box for any other comments.

a) Councils should be required to publish a list of attendees joining the meeting remotely and give notice if a meeting is being held with full remote attendance. – All local authorities by law must publish the location of the meeting on the agenda front, therefore publishing whether a meeting will be hybrid or fully remote would be included as part of this practice.

b) Councils should be required to ensure that standard constitutional arrangements are followed for hybrid and fully remote meetings.

c) Councils should be required to make arrangements to ensure restricted items (where a Council decision is taken in private to protect confidentiality) are managed appropriately and to require remotely attending members to join from a private location.

d) Other – Should the Government progress with this legislation, this Council puts forwards a recommendation that the Local Government Association, in consultation with local authorities, produces a standard constitutional template for local authorities to adopt.

### **QUESTION 8**

Do you think legislative change to allow councillors to attend local authority meetings remotely should or should not be considered for the following reasons? – Views/comments from the committee are welcomed on this section.

Tick all the statements below that apply to your point of view.

**Should be considered because****Should not be considered because**

---

It is a positive modernising measure.

Councillors should be physically present at all formal meetings.

---

It would likely increase the diversity of people willing and able to stand for election in their local area, making councils more representative of the communities they serve.

It could lead to a significant number of councillors habitually attending remotely and ultimately reduce the effectiveness of councils.

---

Councils would be more resilient in the event of local or national emergencies which prevent in-person attendance.

It would be more difficult for councillors to build personal working relationships with colleagues, and engage with members of the public in attendance at meetings.

---

Free text box – please state any other reasons

Free text box – please state any other reasons

---

**QUESTION 9**

In your view, would allowing councillors to attend formal local authority meetings remotely according to their needs particularly benefit or disadvantage individuals with protected characteristics, for example those with disabilities or caring responsibilities? -

[Views/comments from the Committee are welcomed on this section.](#)

Please tick an option below:

- it would benefit members
- it would disadvantage members
- neither

Please use the text box below to make any further comment on this question.

**PROXY VOTING – Members comments are welcomed on this aspect for Cabinet to consider.**

Proxy voting is a form of voting whereby a member of a decision-making body may delegate their voting power to another representative to enable a vote in their absence.

It is possible some members may find that, due to their personal circumstances, they are temporarily unable to participate in meetings even if remote attendance provisions are in place. Provisions for proxy voting could provide additional flexibility to those who really need it on a time-limited basis, allowing affected members to indirectly exercise their democratic duty, participate in their local authority's governance, and ensure that their views are taken into consideration. In the context of local authorities, the representative would have to be another elected member of the local authority.

**QUESTION 10**

In addition to provisions allowing for remote attendance, do you consider that it would be helpful to introduce proxy voting?

- yes
- no
- unsure

**QUESTION 11**

If yes, for which of the following reasons which may prohibit a member's participation in council meetings do you consider it would be appropriate?

Please select all that apply:

- physical or medical conditions
- caring responsibilities
- parental leave or other responsibilities
- other [Free text box]

**QUESTION 12**

Are there circumstances in which you feel proxy voting would not be appropriate?

**QUESTION 13**

If you think proxy voting is appropriate, are there any limitations you think should be placed upon it?

[Free text box]

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## NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – THURSDAY, 5  
DECEMBER 2024

<b>Title of Report</b>	<b>COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS AND EXEMPTIONS</b>	
<b>Presented by</b>	Paul Stone Director of Resources	
<b>Background Papers</b>	None.	<b>Public Report:</b> Yes
<b>Financial Implications</b>	The additional income from the proposed changes is expected to raise approximately £70,000 in additional Council Tax for the Council based on statistics as at November 2024.	
	<b>Signed off by the Section 151 Officer:</b> Yes	
<b>Legal Implications</b>	The legislation for charging premiums on empty homes and second homes is derived from the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.	
	<b>Signed off by the Monitoring Officer:</b> Yes	
<b>Staffing and Corporate Implications</b>	An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been prepared to evaluate the implications of proposed changes to Council Tax discounts and exemptions.	
	<b>Signed off by the Head of Paid Service:</b> Yes	
<b>Reason Agenda Item Submitted to Scrutiny Committee</b>	To provide Corporate Scrutiny Committee with details of proposed changes to Council Discounts and exemptions.	
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>THAT CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE NOTES THE PROPOSALS IN RESPECT OF COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS AND PREMIUMS AS SET OUT IN THE REPORT AND PROVIDES COMMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION AT CABINET ON 17 DECEMBER 2024.</b>	

**1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Council Tax discounts and exemptions play a vital role in supporting residents and ensuring that local authorities can tailor their policies to meet the unique needs of their communities.
- 1.2 Local authorities have the discretion to establish their own criteria for discounts and exemptions, allowing them to address specific circumstances such as financial

hardship, disability, or the presence of students. This flexibility enables councils to create policies that reflect local priorities and promote fairness in the taxation system.

- 1.3 The Council has conducted a review of its discounts and exemptions and is now proposing changes aimed primarily at addressing the issues related to empty homes and the premium on second homes. These measures will generate additional revenue for the Council. By focusing on empty homes, the Council aims to promote occupancy and alleviate housing shortages. The proposed changes align with other local authorities in the Leicestershire Revenues and Benefits Partnership.
- 1.4 The Empty Homes Premium and Second Homes Premium are additional charges levied on properties that are not the primary residence of the owner. The Empty Homes Premium applies to properties that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a specific period, while the Second Homes Premium targets properties used as a secondary residence.
- 1.5 In addition to proposals in respect of empty and second homes, there are further proposals in respect of empty, unoccupied and unfurnished discount and major repairs. Further detail in respect of all the proposals is set out in the paragraphs below.
- 1.6 Through these measures, the Council hopes to create a fairer and more sustainable approach to Council Tax that benefits the entire community.

## **2.0 EMPTY HOMES PREMIUM**

- 2.1 The Local Government Finance Act 2012 introduced the power to charge premiums in addition to the standard Council Tax for properties that have been unoccupied (empty) and substantially unfurnished for more than two years.
- 2.2 Since 1 April 2013, billing authorities have been able to charge this premium of up to an extra 50% of the Council Tax on the property. Since the introduction of The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018 it has been possible from April 2019 to increase this premium to 100% (i.e., pay double the standard Council Tax charge in total) for non-exempt properties that remain empty longer than two years.
- 2.3 The Act also phased in over the next two years further increases for properties empty for longer than five years (200%) and ten years (300%). This legislation has recently been amended by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 which received royal assent in October 2023. In summary the new amendments, reduce the time threshold that the empty homes premium can be applied (from 2 years to 12 months) from 1 April 2024 and additionally introduce the option to charge a new second homes premium from 1st April 2025 (see below).
- 2.4 The Council currently charges a premium of 50% for properties empty between two and five years, and a 200% premium for properties empty for more than five years. The proposal is to charge a 100% premium between one and five years, 200% premium between five and 10 years and a 300% premium for over 10 years. Approximately 700 properties will be affected by the proposed changes.

## **3.0 SECOND HOMES PREMIUM**

- 3.1 In addition to long term empty properties the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act allows billing authorities to introduce a 100% premium for second homes (furnished homes which are not a main residence) A billing authority wishing to use this power must give



12 months' notice before it first uses it. Therefore, the Council is required to decide before 1 April 2025, if it intends to introduce the charge from 1 April 2026.

- 3.2 Second homes can contribute to a shortage of available housing for local residents. When properties are often taken off the market for long-term rentals, exacerbating the housing crisis.
- 3.3 There are currently 165 properties identified on the Council Tax system as second homes.
- 3.4 Currently, the Council does not impose a premium on second homes. However, the proposal is to introduce a 100% premium on these properties. This change aims to encourage owners of second homes to either sell or rent out their properties, thereby increasing the availability of housing for residents.
- 3.5 The primary objective of the proposed long-term empty and second home premiums is to bring unoccupied property back into use. However, where owners choose not to do so, they will be subject to the premium which will result in additional Council Tax revenue. Whilst the report provides numbers of properties that are potentially subject to amended premiums, these have not been included within financial forecasts at this stage. Where changes are introduced actual 'new income' will need to be monitored throughout the forthcoming year in order a robust forecast can be included in future years as part of the more detailed Council Tax setting and collection.

#### **4.0 EMPTY, UNOCCUPIED AND UNFURNISHED DISCOUNT**

- 4.1 Under the Council's current discount scheme, a property that is empty and unfurnished is not be charged Council Tax for one month. The proposal is to remove the discount i.e. the charge becomes payable from day one.
- 4.2 The estimated number of properties that will be affected is 165.

#### **5.0 MAJOR REPAIRS**

- 5.1 If a property is unoccupied and unfurnished in need of, or undergoing, major repair work or structural alteration which is not cosmetic, then it is entitled to a 50% reduction in Council Tax for up to six months - after which the full charge is payable. It is proposed to remove the discount. It is estimated approximately 40 properties will be affected by this change.

#### **6.0 LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 Section 11B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (the 1992 Act) (as amended by section 79 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023) (the 2023 Act) gives the Council as a billing authority the power to charge a discretionary Council Tax premium for properties empty for at least one year up to a maximum level set by law, depending on the length of time the property has been empty.
- 6.2 Section 11C of the 1992 Act inserted by the 2023 Act gives the Council as a billing authority power to charge a discretionary Council Tax premium of up to 100% for properties which are periodically occupied, referred to as second homes.
- 6.3 A second home is defined as a dwelling that is substantially furnished and has no resident (i.e., it is not someone's sole or main residence). Section 11C (3) of the 1992

Act requires that the first decision to impose a premium for second homes must be taken at least 12 months before the financial year to which it would apply. This means that if the Council decides to apply a premium for second homes it cannot not take effect until the 2026/27 financial year at the earliest.

- 6.4 However, it is essential that a decision is made by the Council at the latest before 31 March 2025 to give the required one-year notice. The Council has discretion on whether to apply a premium and at what level to apply the charge below these maximums.
- 6.5 The 1992 Act also provides the framework for Council Tax including provisions for discounts and exemptions.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The implementation of the premiums and discounts outlined above represents an opportunity to raise additional income as well as the incentives to bring homes back into use.
- 7.2 The Council will conduct annual reviews to adjust the number of properties and premium rates as necessary, ensuring that the calculations reflect current data and any changes in property status.

## **8.0 CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 In line with the Council's commitment to transparency and community engagement, a consultation has been conducted regarding proposed changes to Council Tax discounts and exemptions. The consultation was issued to gather feedback from stakeholders.
- 8.2 The consultation began on 28 October and ran for a period of three weeks, concluding on 18 November. Letters were sent to property owners with empty homes and second homes, informing them of the proposed changes and inviting their input. Email survey subscribers were made aware of the consultation which consists of approximately 64,000 subscribers.
- 8.3 In addition to reaching out to affected property owners, precepting authorities and parish councils were also notified of the consultation. This step was taken to ensure that all relevant stakeholders had the opportunity to participate in the discussion and provide their insights.
- 8.4 The primary goal of the consultation is to assess the potential impact of the proposed changes on the community and to gather valuable feedback that will inform the decision-making process. By engaging with residents and local authorities, the Councils aim to create a fair and equitable Council Tax system that reflects the needs of our community.
- 8.5 The feedback collected during the consultation will be crucial in shaping the final proposals for Council Tax discounts and exemptions.
- 8.6 Details of the consultation (Appendix One), together with the responses, are set out in Appendix Two and are summarised below
- 8.7 The survey asked for opinions on four proposals:

- Proposal 1- Second Home owners would pay double Council Tax (a 100% surcharge) from day one
- Proposal 2- Remove six-month 50% CT discount for major repairs and charge full council tax from the point of ownership
- Proposal 3 - Remove one month 100% council tax discount for empty, unoccupied and unfurnished properties and charge full council tax from the point of ownership.
- Proposal 4 – Charge Empty one to five years, twice standard council tax (200%), Empty five-10 years three times the standard council tax (300%), Empty 10 years or more four times the standard council tax (400%).

8.8 2,242 responses were received, and the table below shows the support for each proposal.

Proposal	Promoters	Passives	Detractors
1 - Second Homes	922 41%	244 11%	1063 48%
2 - Major Repairs	661 30%	187 8%	1384 62%
3 - Empty Properties	964 43%	174 8%	1088 49%
4 - Long Term Empty Properties	1300 58%	248 11%	691 31%

8.9 Two responses were also received via email (Appendix Three) and also a response from Leicestershire Fire and Rescue (Appendix Four).

8.10 In addition to the formal consultation, there were two Facebook posts seen by a total of approximately 17,000 users. There were some comments, which were generally against the proposals, however, there was criticism of empty properties in the district.

## 9.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 As the Council considers proposals for changes to Council Tax discounts and exemptions, it is essential to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). This assessment will help ensure that its decisions promote fairness and do not disproportionately affect any particular group within the District. The EIA allows the Council to identify and address any potential inequalities that may arise from the proposed changes.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	- Planning and regeneration - A well-run council
Policy Considerations:	North West Leicestershire District Council Local Council Tax Support Scheme.
Safeguarding:	Assessing how changes may affect low-income families, the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups. Ensuring that these

	populations are not disproportionately burdened by increased costs is crucial. This was addressed in the Equality Impact Assessment.
Equalities/Diversity:	<p>Changes to discounts and exemptions may disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, including low-income families, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities. It is essential to assess how these groups might be impacted by increased financial burdens and to ensure that support mechanisms are in place.</p> <p>Adjustments to Council Tax policies can influence housing availability. For instance, removing discounts on empty homes may encourage property owners to bring their properties back into use, potentially increasing housing stock. However, it is vital to consider how this might affect those who are temporarily unable to occupy their homes due to circumstances like illness or caregiving responsibilities.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.</p>
Customer Impact:	There has been engagement with residents during the consultation process which has allowed for feedback.
Economic and Social Impact:	While there are opportunities for increased revenue and improved housing availability, careful consideration must be given to the potential burdens on households and the need for equitable solutions.
Environment, Climate Change and zero carbon:	In summary, changes to Council Tax discounts and premiums can have significant environmental and climate change implications. By promoting sustainable housing practices, reducing carbon emissions, and supporting local climate initiatives, these proposals can contribute positively to both the environment and community resilience.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Consultation and engagement is set out in section 8.0 of the report.
Risks:	If collecting the higher Council Tax proves challenging, or if property owners employ strategies to evade the premium, the anticipated additional income—after accounting for exemptions—may not be fully achieved.
Officer Contact	<p>Paul Stone  Director of Resources  <a href="mailto:paul.stone@nwleicestershire.gov.uk">paul.stone@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</a></p>

**Council Tax Discounts, Exemptions and Premiums Survey**

1. Please provide your age
2. Do you have a disability?
3. Please provide the postcode to your home
4. Are you the owner of a second home within North West Leicestershire?
5. Are you the owner of an unoccupied, unfurnished property?
6. Are you in need of or currently carrying out major repairs to the property?
7. Are you the owner of a furnished, unoccupied property?
8. Are you in need of or currently carrying out major repairs to the property?
9. Is your property:
  - a) Subject to probate
  - b) An emergency situation
  - c) Owner in hospital or residential care home
  - d) Other

**10. Proposal 1 – Second homes**

Second home owners currently pay the standard rate of council tax on those properties in North West Leicestershire.

**We are proposing that these property owners would pay double council tax (a 100% surcharge) from day one.**

Do you support or disagree with this proposal?

11. Do you have any comments about proposal 1?

**12. Proposal 2 - Major repairs**

NWLDC currently gives a 50% council tax discount on major repairs (major repair work / structural alteration that is not cosmetic) for six

months. This means people carrying out major repairs on a property pay half council tax for six months.

**We are proposing to remove this discount and charge full council tax from the point of ownership.**

Do you support or disagree with this proposal?

13. Do you have any comments about proposal 2?

**14. Proposal 3 - Empty properties**

NWLDC currently gives a 100% council tax discount on empty, unoccupied and unfurnished properties for one month. This means owners of empty properties pay no council tax for one month.

**We are proposing to remove this discount and charge full council tax from the point of ownership.**

Do you support or disagree with this proposal?

15. Do you have any comments about proposal 3?

**16. Proposal 4 Long-term - empty properties**

What currently happens? NWLDC currently charges one and a half the standard council tax rate (150%) if a property has been empty for

between two and three years, rising to double the standard rate (200%) if its empty for three years or more.

**We are proposing that council tax on long term empty properties will be charged as follows:**

- **Empty 1-5 years – double standard council tax (200%)**
- **Empty 5 – 10 years – triple standard council tax (300%)**
- **Empty 10 years or more – four times standard council tax (400%)**

Do you support or disagree with this proposal?

17. Do you have any comments about proposal 4?

# Appendix Two



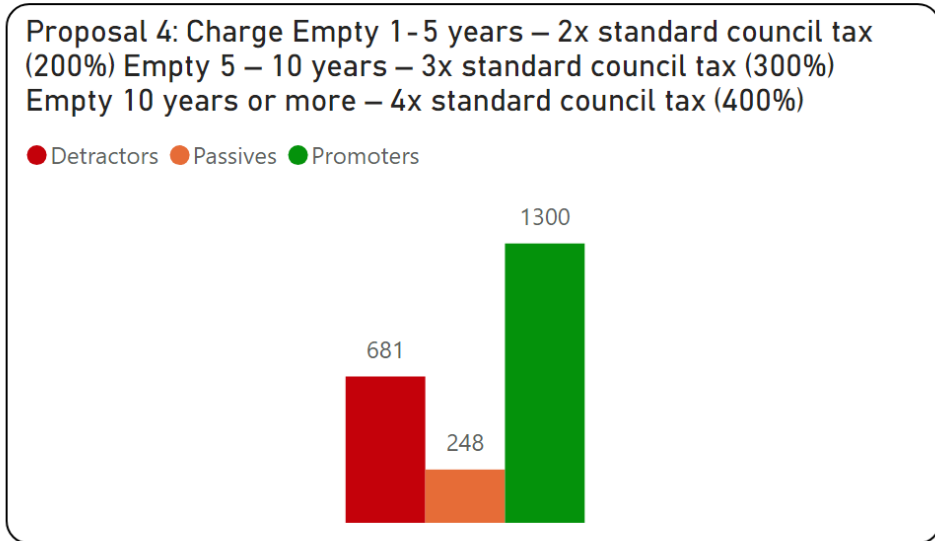
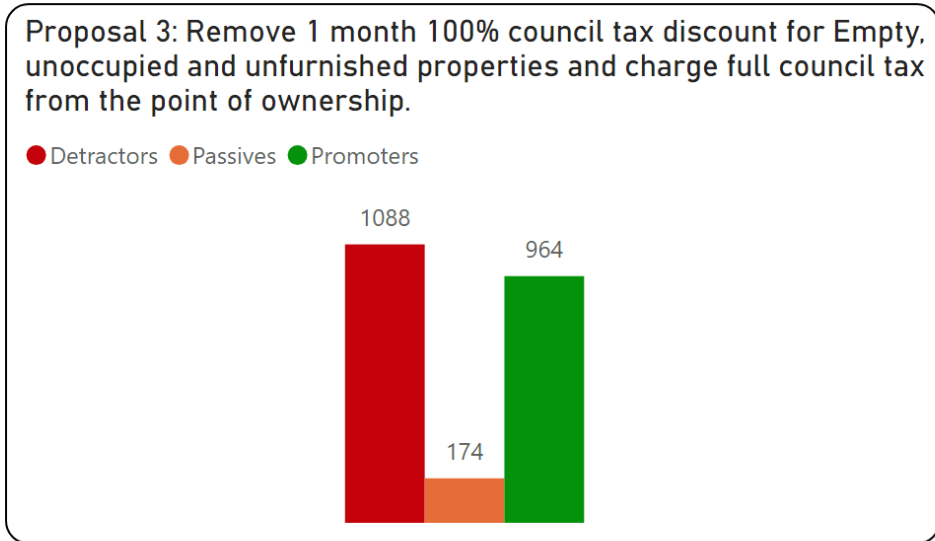
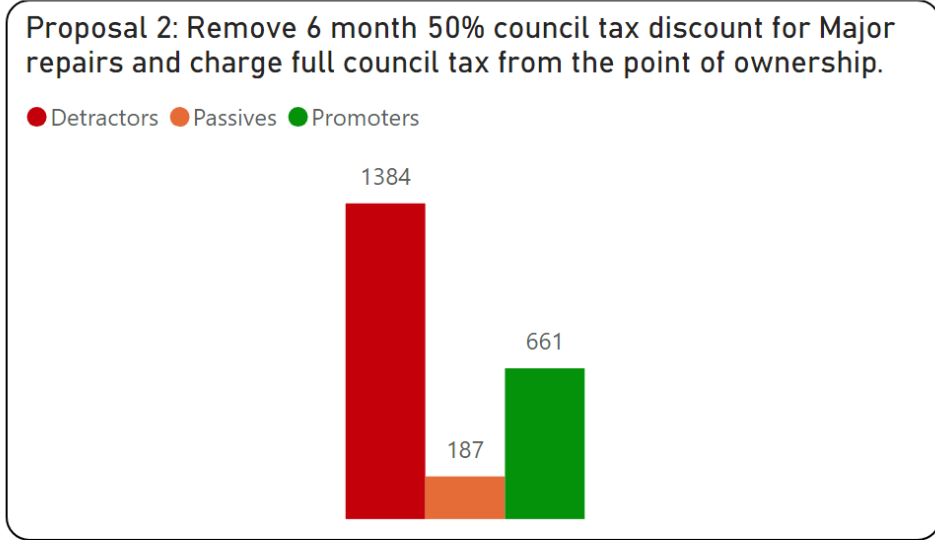
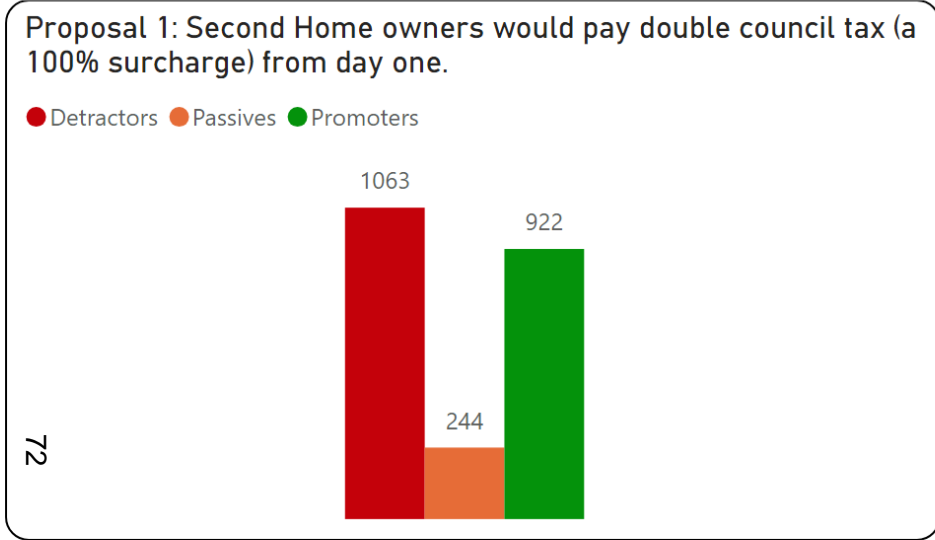
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## Council Tax Survey review

November 2024

# Council tax discounts, exemptions and premiums overview.

Overall Respondents disagreed with Proposals 1 to 3. Proposal 2 had the highest level of disagreement with 62% of respondents. Proposal 4 was most supported by the Respondents (58% of respondents supporting this). Proposals 1 & 3 had a narrow margin between disagreement and support (13% for Proposal 1 and 11% for Proposal 3).



Age Group

District Ward

Number of responses

# 2242

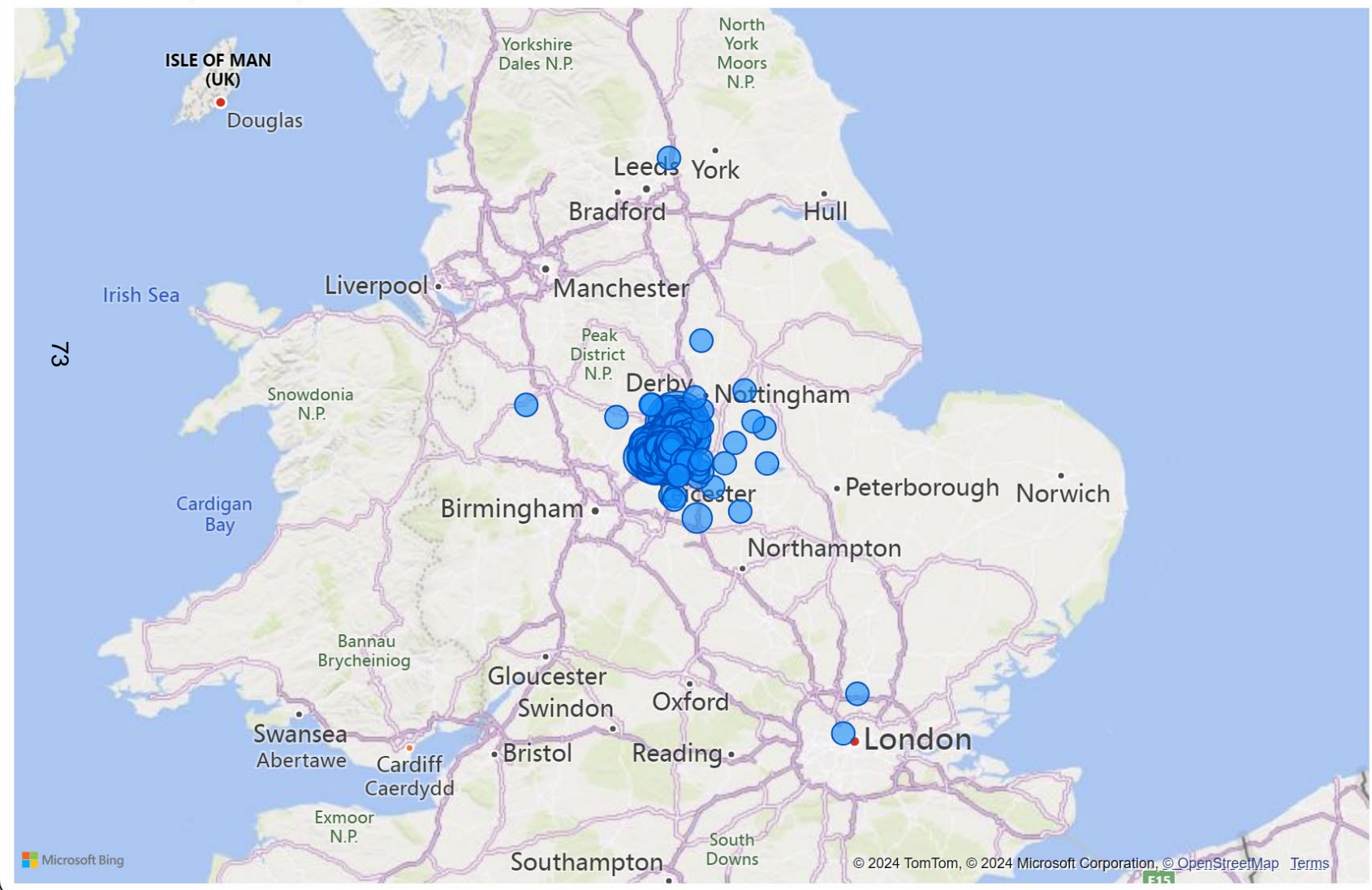


# Survey Responder locations.



Responses were fairly split across the North West Leicestershire Wards. The top 3 Wards (Ravenstone & Packington, Ashby Castle and Appleby) made up 12 % of the total responders.

Number of responses by location

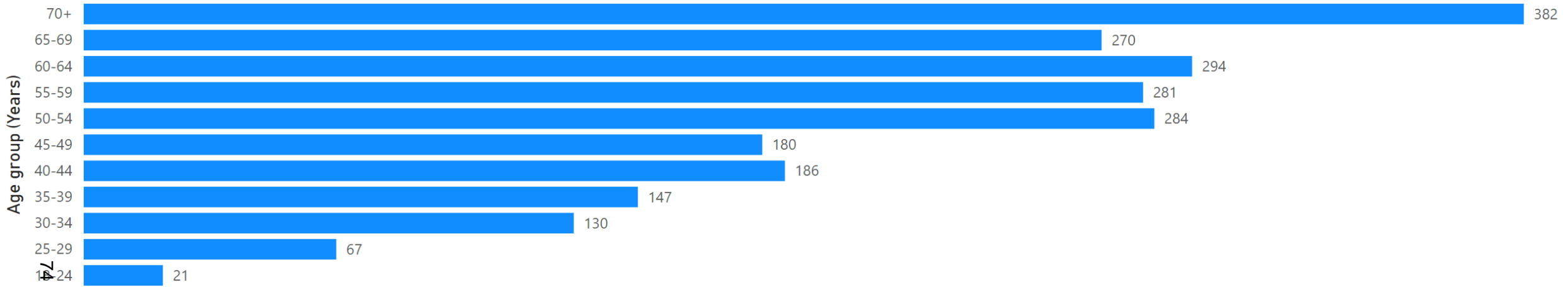


District Ward	Number of responses
Not specified	145
Ravenstone & Packington	97
Ashby Castle	93
Appleby	83
Worthington & Breedon	81
Castle Donington Central	77
Valley	73
Ashby Ivanhoe	72
Ashby Holywell	71
Ashby Money Hill	71
Hugglescote St John's	71
Daleacre Hill	70
Long Whatton & Diseworth	67
Thornborough	65
Castle Donington Park	60
Kegworth	59
Castle Donington Castle	58
Hugglescote St Mary's	58
Ashby Willesley	51
Ashby Woulds	50
Broom Leys	50
Blackfordby	48
Coalville East	48
Bardon	45
Ilkeston West	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>2242</b>

# 67% of the survey respondents were aged 50 or over.

The 70+ age group was most represented age group making up 17% of the total respondents. 18 to 24 age group was the least with 1% of the total. The estimated average age of the survey respondent was 55.

Number of responses by Please provide your age



Proposal 1 response

Age group	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
70+	5.56%	2.29%	9.11%
65-69	5.79%	1.12%	5.11%
60-64	5.83%	1.66%	5.56%
55-59	5.97%	1.39%	5.20%
50-54	6.73%	1.12%	4.80%
45-49	4.53%	0.63%	2.87%
40-44	4.71%	0.85%	2.78%
35-39	3.59%	0.76%	2.24%
30-34	2.92%	0.58%	2.33%
25-29	1.53%	0.40%	1.08%
18-24	0.54%	0.13%	0.27%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.69%</b>	<b>10.95%</b>	<b>41.36%</b>

Proposal 2 response

Age group	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
70+	9.22%	1.44%	6.29%
65-69	6.97%	1.08%	4.00%
60-64	7.37%	1.35%	4.32%
55-59	7.73%	0.90%	3.91%
50-54	7.82%	1.44%	3.37%
45-49	5.62%	0.36%	2.07%
40-44	5.80%	0.58%	1.98%
35-39	4.54%	0.58%	1.48%
30-34	4.23%	0.40%	1.21%
25-29	2.07%	0.18%	0.72%
18-24	0.63%	0.09%	0.22%
<b>Total</b>	<b>62.01%</b>	<b>8.41%</b>	<b>29.59%</b>

Proposal 3 response

Age group	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
70+	6.08%	1.49%	9.33%
65-69	5.72%	0.95%	5.36%
60-64	5.99%	1.08%	5.99%
55-59	6.04%	0.99%	5.59%
50-54	6.80%	0.86%	4.96%
45-49	4.73%	0.54%	2.75%
40-44	4.51%	0.72%	3.15%
35-39	3.79%	0.36%	2.48%
30-34	3.06%	0.36%	2.34%
25-29	1.67%	0.36%	0.99%
18-24	0.54%	0.09%	0.32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48.94%</b>	<b>7.80%</b>	<b>43.26%</b>

Proposal 4 response

Age group	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
70+	3.06%	1.67%	12.12%
65-69	2.57%	1.80%	7.71%
60-64	3.79%	1.67%	7.57%
55-59	4.10%	1.31%	7.21%
50-54	4.55%	1.35%	6.67%
45-49	3.38%	0.59%	4.06%
40-44	3.15%	1.08%	4.15%
35-39	2.70%	0.54%	3.38%
30-34	1.85%	0.63%	3.38%
25-29	1.08%	0.32%	1.62%
18-24	0.32%	0.18%	0.45%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30.55%</b>	<b>11.13%</b>	<b>58.31%</b>

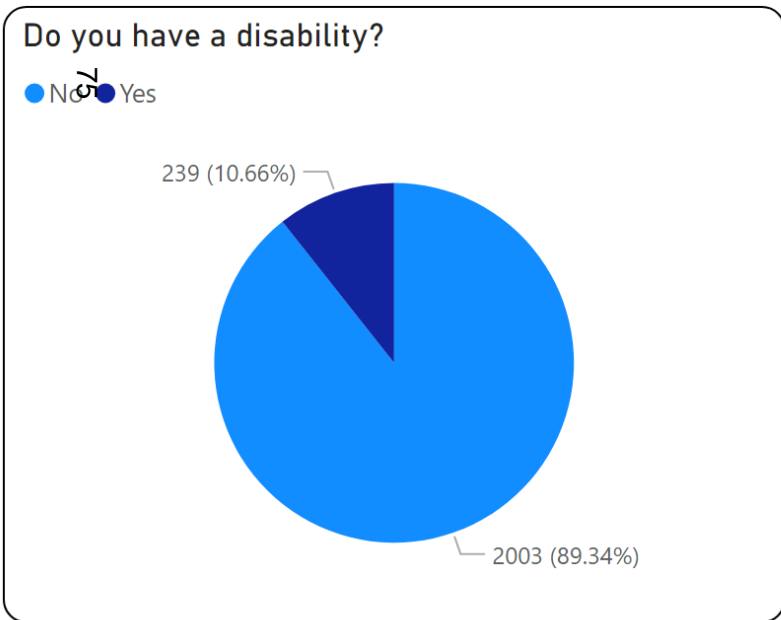
# 89% of the survey respondents did not class themselves as disabled.

Proposal 4 was the highest supported across both groups with 64% of disabled respondents and 58% of non disabled respondents voting for it (58% of all respondents supported it).

Proposal 2 was least popular with both groups. 57% of disabled responders and 63% of non disabled responders disagreed with it (62% of all respondents disagreed with it).

Disabled responders also supported Proposals 1 and 3 the most (46% and 47%).

Non disabled responders disagreed with Proposals 1 and 3 (49% and 49%).



**Proposal 1 response**

Disability?	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	43.38%	9.56%	36.43%
Yes	4.31%	1.39%	4.93%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.69%</b>	<b>10.95%</b>	<b>41.36%</b>

**Proposal 2 response**

Disability?	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	55.89%	7.87%	25.58%
Yes	6.12%	0.54%	4.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>62.01%</b>	<b>8.41%</b>	<b>29.59%</b>

**Proposal 3 response**

Disability?	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	44.24%	6.86%	38.33%
Yes	4.65%	0.95%	4.97%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48.89%</b>	<b>7.81%</b>	<b>43.30%</b>

**Proposal 4 response**

Disability?	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	27.48%	10.32%	51.65%
Yes	2.90%	0.86%	6.79%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30.38%</b>	<b>11.18%</b>	<b>58.44%</b>

# Do you have any comments about proposal 1?



### Opposition to the Discount:

Many argue that it is unfair to penalize second homeowners who may not use council services as much as primary residents.

They believe it is a form of money-grabbing and could negatively impact landlords, renters, and those who inherit properties.

Some suggest that the proposal could lead to higher rents and fewer rental properties available.

### Support for the Discount:

Others support the proposal, stating that it could help address the housing shortage by encouraging the use or sale of empty properties.

They believe that those who can afford second homes should contribute more to the community.

### Suggestions and Concerns:

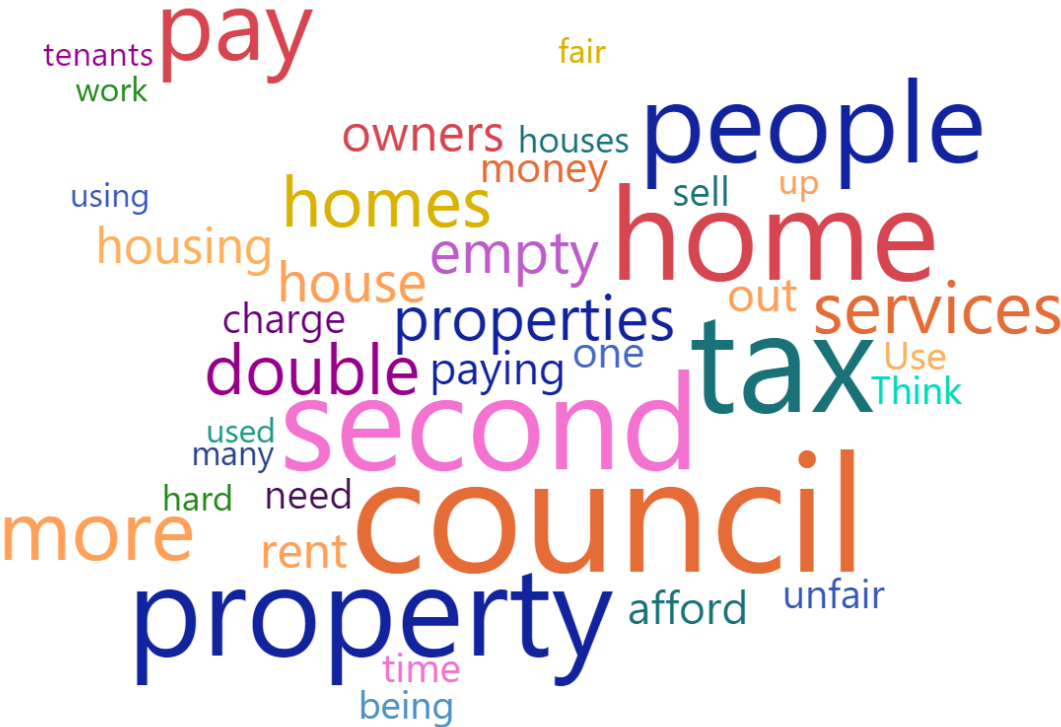
Some suggest a middle ground, such as a 50% surcharge instead of double, or a grace period for those inheriting properties or making repairs.

There are also calls for exemptions in specific circumstances, like probate or temporary vacancies between tenants.

There are concerns about the potential administrative burden and the fairness of applying the surcharge from day one.

Some believe the proposal could have unintended consequences, such as discouraging investment in property improvements or leading to legal challenges.

Overall, comments highlight the complexity of the issue and the need for careful consideration of various factors and potential impacts.





# Do you have any comments about proposal 2?



## Opposition to the Discount:

Some argue that if a property owner can afford major repairs, they should be able to pay full council tax.

The discount might be abused by those who delay repairs to benefit from reduced council tax.

Charging full council tax could incentivize quicker completion of repairs and bring properties back into use faster.

## Support for the Discount:

Many believe the discount helps homeowners and landlords financially while they improve properties, making them habitable and contributing to the housing market.

Removing the discount could discourage people from buying and renovating properties, leading to more empty and derelict homes.

Major repairs are costly and time-consuming, and the discount provides necessary financial relief.

## Suggestions and Concerns:

Some suggest a compromise, such as reducing the discount period to 3 months or offering a smaller discount.

Concerns about the impact on first-time buyers and those with limited financial resources who buy properties needing significant repairs.

The need for clear criteria to distinguish between necessary major repairs and cosmetic improvements.

Overall, there is a mix of support and opposition to the proposal, with many emphasizing the importance of encouraging property improvements while balancing financial responsibilities.





# Do you have any comments about proposal 4?



### Opposition to the Discount:

Many agree that long-term empty properties should be penalized to encourage owners to sell or rent them out, thus addressing the housing shortage and preventing properties from falling into disrepair.

### Support for the Discount:

**Unfair Financial Burden:** Some believe the increased rates are unfair, especially for those facing financial difficulties, legal issues, or health problems that prevent them from managing their properties.

**Probate and Legal Delays:** Several comments highlight that probate and legal processes can take years, making it unfair to penalize owners during this period.

**Lack of Services:** Many argue that empty properties do not use council services, so charging higher rates is unjustified.

**Impact on Investments:** Some feel that targeting second home owners and investors is unfair, as they have worked hard to acquire these properties.

### Suggestions for Improvement:

**Exemptions and Support:** Proposals for exemptions for those in care homes, undergoing probate, or facing financial hardship.

Some suggest offering support or incentives to help owners bring properties back into use.

**Compulsory Purchase:** A few suggest that the council should have the power to compulsorily purchase long-term empty properties to bring them back into use.

Overall, while there is support for the idea of discouraging long-term empty properties, many believe the proposed tax increases are too harsh and could have unintended negative consequences.



# Major Repairs for 2nd Home Unfurnished unoccupied Properties

This question was answered by 3% of the total responders and all 4 Proposals were disagreed with by these responders.

Proposal 2 was the least popular with responders in need or carrying out major repairs (93% disagreed).

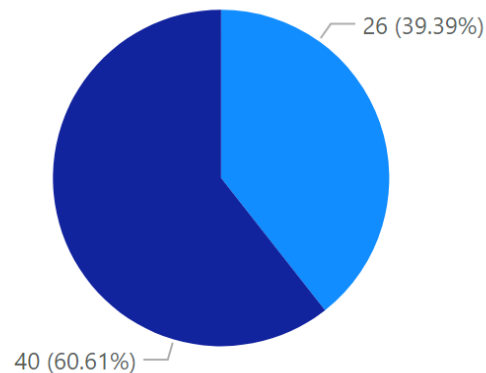
Proposal 3 was the least popular with responders who were not in need or carrying out major repairs (85% disagreed).

Of those responders that did support the Proposals, Proposal 4 had the most support from responders in need or carrying out major repairs (33%).

Proposal 2 had the most support from responders who were not in need or carrying out major repairs (28%).

Are you in need of or currently carrying out major repairs to the property?

● No ● Yes



## Proposal 1 response

Major Repairs	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	32.31%		7.69%
Yes	50.77%	3.08%	6.15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>83.08%</b>	<b>3.08%</b>	<b>13.85%</b>

## Proposal 2 response

Major Repairs	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	27.69%		10.77%
Yes	56.92%	3.08%	1.54%
<b>Total</b>	<b>84.62%</b>	<b>3.08%</b>	<b>12.31%</b>

## Proposal 3 response

Major Repairs	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	33.85%		6.15%
Yes	49.23%	3.08%	7.69%
<b>Total</b>	<b>83.08%</b>	<b>3.08%</b>	<b>13.85%</b>

## Proposal 4 response

Major Repairs	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	27.27%	1.52%	10.61%
Yes	37.88%	3.03%	19.70%
<b>Total</b>	<b>65.15%</b>	<b>4.55%</b>	<b>30.30%</b>



# Major Repairs for Furnished unoccupied Properties

This question was answered by 2% of the total responders and all 4 Proposals were disagreed with by these responders.

Proposal 1 was the least popular with responders in need or carrying out major repairs (100% disagreed).

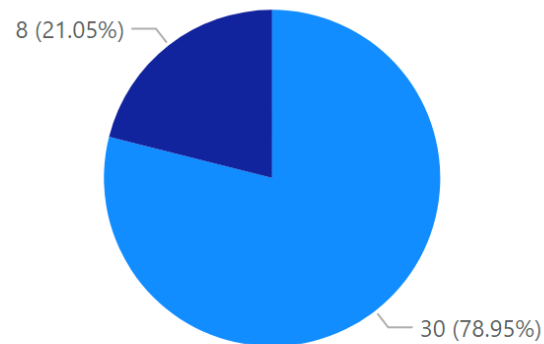
Proposal 2 was the least popular with responders who were not in need or carrying out major repairs (93% disagreed).

Of those responders that did support the Proposals, Proposal 4 had the most support from responders in need or carrying out major repairs (38%).

Proposal 3 had the most support from responders who were not in need or carrying out major repairs (27%).

Are you in need of or currently carrying out major repairs to the property?

● No ● Yes



## Proposal 1 response

Major Repairs	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	62.16%	5.41%	13.51%
Yes	18.92%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>81.08%</b>	<b>5.41%</b>	<b>13.51%</b>

## Proposal 2 response

Major Repairs	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	73.68%		5.26%
Yes	18.42%	2.63%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>92.11%</b>	<b>2.63%</b>	<b>5.26%</b>

## Proposal 3 response

Major Repairs	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	52.63%	5.26%	21.05%
Yes	15.79%		5.26%
<b>Total</b>	<b>68.42%</b>	<b>5.26%</b>	<b>26.32%</b>

## Proposal 4 response

Major Repairs	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	52.63%	10.53%	15.79%
Yes	13.16%		7.89%
<b>Total</b>	<b>65.79%</b>	<b>10.53%</b>	<b>23.68%</b>

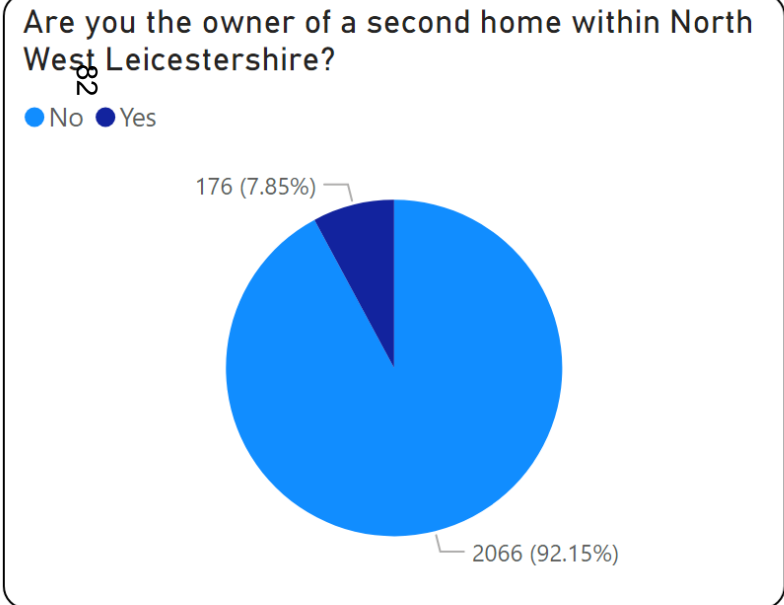
# Property Ownership 2nd Home in North West Leicestershire

Overall Proposal 2 was the least supported and Proposal 4 the most supported by these responders.

Proposal 2 was the least popular with responders who owned a second home in North West Leicestershire (87% disagreed).

Proposal 2 was also the least popular with responders who did not own a second home in North West Leicestershire (60% disagreed).

Of those responders that did support the Proposals, Proposal 4 had the most support from responders who owned a second home in North West Leicestershire (41%). Proposal 4 was also the most popular with responders who did not own a second home in North West Leicestershire (60%).



### Proposal 1 response

2nd Home Owner	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	41.00%	10.59%	40.60%
Yes	6.68%	0.36%	0.76%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.69%</b>	<b>10.95%</b>	<b>41.36%</b>

### Proposal 2 response

2nd Home Owner	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	55.20%	7.97%	28.99%
Yes	6.81%	0.40%	0.63%
<b>Total</b>	<b>62.01%</b>	<b>8.38%</b>	<b>29.61%</b>

### Proposal 3 response

2nd Home Owner	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	42.32%	7.50%	42.32%
Yes	6.56%	0.31%	0.99%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48.88%</b>	<b>7.82%</b>	<b>43.31%</b>

### Proposal 4 response

2nd Home Owner	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	26.60%	10.45%	55.05%
Yes	3.95%	0.67%	3.28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30.55%</b>	<b>11.13%</b>	<b>58.32%</b>

# Property Ownership Furnished Unoccupied

Overall Proposal 2 was the least supported and Proposal 4 the most supported by these responders.

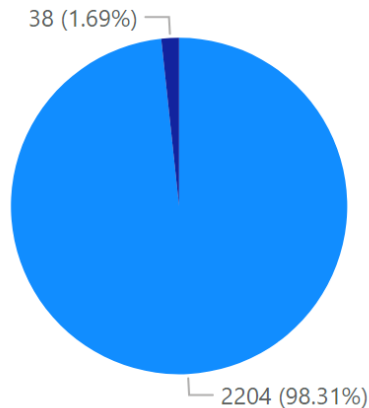
Proposal 2 was the least popular with responders who owned a Furnished unoccupied property (92% disagreed).

Proposal 2 was also the least popular with responders who did not own a Furnished unoccupied property (61% disagreed).

Of those responders that did support the Proposals, Proposal 3 had the most support from responders who owned a Furnished unoccupied property (26%). Proposal 4 was the most popular with responders who did not own a Furnished unoccupied property (59%).

## Are you the owner of a furnished, unoccupied property?

● No ● Yes



### Proposal 1 response

Furnished, unoccupied	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	46.34%	10.86%	41.14%
Yes	1.35%	0.09%	0.22%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.69%</b>	<b>10.95%</b>	<b>41.36%</b>

### Proposal 2 response

Furnished, unoccupied	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	60.44%	8.33%	29.53%
Yes	1.57%	0.04%	0.09%
<b>Total</b>	<b>62.01%</b>	<b>8.38%</b>	<b>29.61%</b>

### Proposal 3 response

Furnished, unoccupied	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	47.71%	7.73%	42.86%
Yes	1.17%	0.09%	0.45%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48.88%</b>	<b>7.82%</b>	<b>43.31%</b>

### Proposal 4 response

Furnished, unoccupied	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	29.43%	10.95%	57.92%
Yes	1.12%	0.18%	0.40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30.55%</b>	<b>11.13%</b>	<b>58.32%</b>

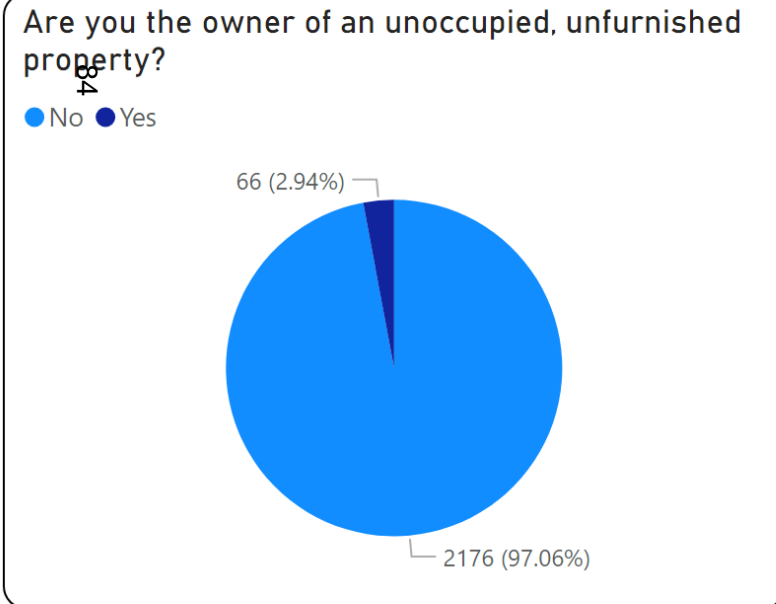
# Property Ownership Unfurnished Unoccupied

Overall Proposal 2 was the least supported and Proposal 4 the most supported by these responders.

Proposal 2 was the least popular with responders who owned a Unfurnished unoccupied property (85% disagreed).

Proposal 2 was also the least popular with responders who did not own a Unfurnished unoccupied property (61% disagreed).

Of those responders that did support the Proposals, Proposal 4 had the most support from responders who owned a Unfurnished unoccupied property (30%). Proposal 4 was also the most popular with responders who did not own a Unfurnished unoccupied property (59%).



### Proposal 1 response

Unfurnished, unoccupied	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	45.27%	10.86%	40.96%
Yes	2.42%	0.09%	0.40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47.69%</b>	<b>10.95%</b>	<b>41.36%</b>

### Proposal 2 response

Unfurnished, unoccupied	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	59.54%	8.29%	29.26%
Yes	2.46%	0.09%	0.36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>62.01%</b>	<b>8.38%</b>	<b>29.61%</b>

### Proposal 3 response

Unfurnished, unoccupied	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	46.45%	7.73%	42.90%
Yes	2.43%	0.09%	0.40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>48.88%</b>	<b>7.82%</b>	<b>43.31%</b>

### Proposal 4 response

Unfurnished, unoccupied	Detractors	Passives	Promoters
No	28.62%	10.99%	57.42%
Yes	1.93%	0.13%	0.90%
<b>Total</b>	<b>30.55%</b>	<b>11.13%</b>	<b>58.32%</b>

# Property Situation

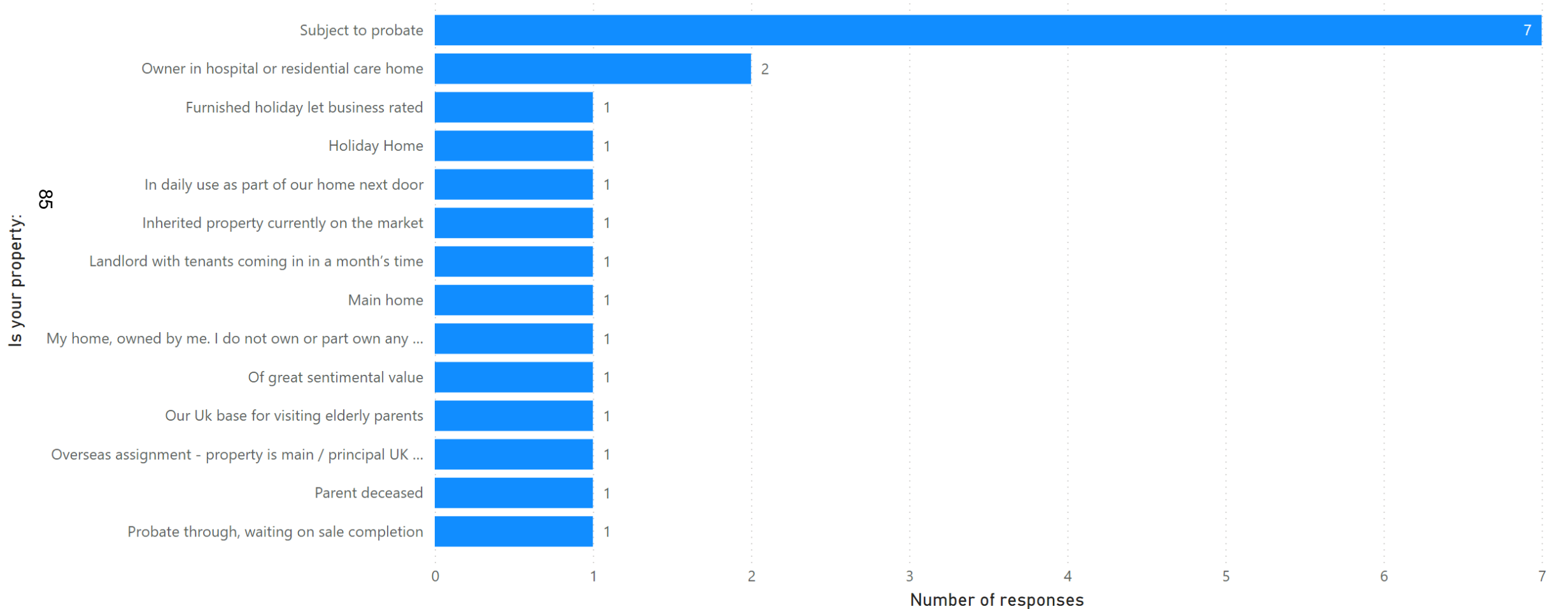
This question was only answered by 1% of Survey respondents.

Of those 33% stated the property was subject to probate.

10% stated the Property Owner was in hospital or in residential care.

10% also stated the Property was used as a UK base when supporting elderly family.

## Is your property?



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### Survey Responses Received via Email

#### Received by email 29 October 2024

Dear North West Leicestershire District Council,

I am writing as a local resident (not a second home or empty property owner) regarding the proposed council tax premium changes. While I support the council's efforts to address housing availability and budget pressures, I have concerns about the potential unintended consequences these proposals could have on our local economy and communities.

As someone who lives and works in the area with a growing family, I care deeply about sustainable local economic growth and housing affordability. I don't own a second home or empty property, but I am concerned these proposals could have wider negative impacts on our community.

#### Analysis of Current Proposals and Concerns:

##### Proposal 1 - Second Homes (100% Premium)

###### Economic Risks:

- May reduce property investment in the district
- Could impact local tourism-dependent businesses
- Risk of reducing property values in desirable areas
- Likely to affect seasonal economic activity
- May lead to artificial primary residence declarations

##### Proposal 2 - Major Repairs (Removing 50% Discount)

###### Negative Implications:

- Disincentivises property improvements and renovation
- May lead to delayed maintenance and deteriorating housing stock
- Risk of rushed, lower quality renovations
- Could particularly impact historic property preservation
- May increase costs for legitimate property developers

##### Proposal 3 - Empty Properties (Removing 1-month Grace)

###### Market Disruption:

- Reduces flexibility in property transactions
- May force rushed sales or lettings
- Could impact market liquidity
- Increases costs during legitimate property transitions
- May affect property chain completions

##### Proposal 4 - Long-term Empty Properties (Up to 400% Premium)

###### Severe Economic Risks:

- Forced distressed sales affecting wider market values
- Creation of artificial ownership arrangements
- Reduction in property market investment
- Impact on neighbouring property values
- Risk of urban decay in affected areas

These concerns stem not from personal interest, but from wanting to ensure our local economy remains strong and our housing market stable. I worry these policies could affect all property values and market stability.

#### Alternative Approaches:

##### 1. Incentive-Based Solutions

- Implement time-limited council tax reductions for bringing properties into use
- Create renovation grant schemes
- Develop empty property purchase schemes with housing associations
- Establish a property matching service
- Offer council-backed renovation loans

##### 2. Administrative Improvements

- Streamline planning permission processes
- Fast-track conversion applications
- Reduce administrative burdens
- Create a dedicated empty homes team
- Implement a property management service for absent owners

##### 3. Partnership Approaches

- Work with local estate agents to market empty properties
- Partner with developers for empty property renovation
- Create links with social housing providers
- Establish landlord support services
- Develop local builder approved lists

#### Expected Positive Outcomes from Alternatives:

1. Maintains market stability while increasing housing stock
2. Preserves property values across the district
3. Encourages voluntary participation
4. Supports local economic growth
5. Creates sustainable long-term solutions
6. Maintains investment confidence in the area
7. Protects existing homeowners' equity

I believe these alternative suggestions could achieve the council's objectives while protecting our local economy and property market. They represent a more collaborative approach that could benefit all residents, not just those directly affected by the current proposals.

I would welcome the opportunity to further discuss these ideas, perhaps at a public consultation meeting. Despite having no direct financial interest in these proposals, I believe it's important for ordinary residents to engage in decisions that could affect our whole community's economic future.

Best regards, Name.removed?resident.within.North.West.Leicestershire



## Received by email 21 November 2024

Empty and second homes - council tax changes survey.

I would feedback the time given was too short consultations should be over six months not less than one month.

Good morning

Apologies for not completing the form by the the deadline.

I trust that my feedback will be included in the consultation. Please confirm.

Please aim to improve the quality of life, health and housing stock for all.

Please reconsider these proposals, focus on finding ways to help people in these difficult times.

Not being able to afford to eat or heat homes will increase costs and stretch services.

Proposal one and two should remain as they are fair on most homes.

Consider An increase on a second homes council tax only applied above a property value of £50 0.000.00.plus on the NWL property. People with second homes have planned and saved struggled in many cases to achieve their dream. Some work away. Second home owners are in the main pensioners who have already been hit.

This proposal will be not be a fair or respected move

Proposal Two

First time buyers would be aided by paying no council tax for a year.

Perhaps consider extending Proposal two to 50% for two years...the rate of council tax should remain as they are it would be cruel to change them at this time when the council's constituents are already struggling with so many difficulties in making ends meet, families, individuals encounter enough difficulties meeting the increases in costs, the world is turbulent, NWL constituents should be encouraged to invest in the best solutions for their home/ property not limited to cut corners. People who live in NWL should not be subjected to extra costs of council tax increase it would not serve the public whom the council serve.

By Imposing this council tax rise ..They would be trapped by the system this proposal is not going to increase home ownership or the upkeep/ repair of the properties or improve the housing stock.

Proposal three

Would be fair to remain.. moving is stressful and expensive any help is appreciated.

Proposal four

The present system isn't working as they are already charged large increases in council tax.

Do these owners pay such enormous amounts what is their incentive ?

Why are they sitting on the empty property? Establish communication to find the reasons why?

Or are debt collectors employed, contracted firms benefiting rather than the council?

It is a pity that these homes /property remain empty . Perhaps the council should discuss with the owner to find their future intentions . To find a way forward..Perhaps it would be more cost effective to invest in these properties so they can be used, to provide grants..or reduce the council tax while these are improved rather than trapping them in a situation it must be very difficult to move forward from. Unless you are a large property company. Perhaps companies would be best fined. Due to causing the community hardship.

If occupied would that increase council tax revenue?

Exemptions.

Exemptions of six months is fair for people renting or marketing property.

Sale 12 months. providing there is no war or pandemic. Which would impact the situation.

People making extensive repairs would perhaps benefit from 18 months.

Please give longer to any one inheriting property, show compassion please allow at least two years, for grieve, mitigating circumstances, letting go, working with gov departments and professionals and the land registry plus adjustment.

I had hoped to reply to the email but the system deleted my input.

With gratitude. Name.removed?resident.within.North.West.Leicestershire



**LEICESTERSHIRE**  
**FIRE and RESCUE SERVICE**



Our Ref: 0043/CF/JG  
Your Ref:  
Please ask for: CFO Callum Faint (callum.faint@leics-fire.gov.uk)  
Date: 14 November 2024

For the attention of Mr P Stone MBA, FCPFA  
Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer)  
[PAUL.STONE@nwleicestershire.gov.uk](mailto:PAUL.STONE@nwleicestershire.gov.uk)  
North West Leicestershire District Council

**By email only.**

Dear Paul,

**Ref: Council tax precept consultation**

Thank you for your letter dated 1 November 2024 and the opportunity to consult on the proposed amendments.

Having considered the proposals and potential impacts Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service are in support of all four of the proposed changes.

Should you need any further information or discussion please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Callum Faint  
Chief Fire and Rescue Officer

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**Corporate Scrutiny Committee – WORK PROGRAMME (as at 25/11/24)**

Date of Meeting	Item	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Indicative Agenda Item Duration
<b>January 2025</b>				
7 January 2025	<p>Draft Budget 2025/26</p> <p>To present the component elements of the budget reports, ahead of them being presented to the Cabinet on 9 January 2025, as an important step in the 2025/26 budget consultations.</p>	Paul Stone, Strategic Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer)		30 minutes
<b>March 2025</b>				
13 March 2025	<p>Performance Monitoring Report</p> <p>To report on the Council’s performance during 2024/25 Q3, measured against the indicators as set out in the Council Delivery Plan 2023-2028</p>	Mike Murphy, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development		30 minutes
13 March 2025	<p>2024/25 Q2 Finance Performance Monitoring</p> <p>For Members to note and comment on the performance of the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budgets, during 2024/25 Q2.</p>	Anna Crouch, Head of Finance		30 minutes

Date of Meeting	Item	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Indicative Agenda Item Duration
13 March 2025	<p>Workforce Strategy</p> <p>To consider new medium and long-term policies relating to the Council's workforce, i.e., recruitment, retention, the use of apprenticeship schemes and aims to reduce the use of agency staff, ahead of the new strategy being presented to the Cabinet.</p>	Mike Murphy, Head of Human Resources and Organizational Development		30 minutes
13 March 2025	<p>Housing Repairs Performance Annual Update</p> <p>The Committee having previously agreed that this report is to be a standing item annually, this report will set out housing repairs performance and highlight the issues impeding delivery of an efficient and good housing service to Council tenants.</p>	Jane Rochelle, Head of Housing		30 minutes
<b>May 2025</b>				
8 May 2025	<p>Performance Monitoring Report</p> <p>To report on the Council's performance during 2024/25 Q4, measured against the indicators as set out in the Council Delivery Plan 2023-2028.</p>	Mike Murphy, Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development		30 minutes

Date of Meeting	Item	Lead Officer	Witnesses	Indicative Agenda Item Duration
8 May 2025	<p>2024/25 Q3 Finance Update</p> <p>For Members to note and comment on the performance of the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budgets, during 2024/25 Q3.</p>	Anna Crouch, Head of Finance		30 minutes
8 May 2025	<p>Customer Services Annual Report</p> <p>The Committee having previously agreed that this report is to be a standing item annually, this report will set out performance metrics used and what action has and is planned to be taken to address any areas of concerns, the current strategies and recent history of changes impacting on the service, current and historic performance, comparison to other councils and corporate complaints performance.</p>	Nichola Oliver, Customer Services Team Manager		30 minutes

**Work requests considered by the Scrutiny Work Programming Group**

<b>Corporate Scrutiny Committee</b>	
<b>Request</b>	<b>Update</b>

No current work requests.



## **Principles and Criteria used for Assessing Items Put Forward**

### **Identify** Issues for consideration by Scrutiny

- Consulting with members of Scrutiny Committees, senior officers, Cabinet members – horizon scanning on policy development
- Looking at the corporate priorities, Council Delivery Plan and Cabinet Forward plan – identify key issues/topics for investigation/inquiry
- Considering events and decisions in the Council's calendar which could require an input/consultation via scrutiny – eg budget setting, CDP development
- Considering requests from members – eg via another forum or scoping report submitted
- Evaluating the Council's performance – eg quarterly reports, end of year reports, reviewing success of a particular scheme or initiative
- Reviewing any follow up work required after previous scrutiny work

### **Prioritise** the potential list of scrutiny topics based on factors including

- the resources required to deliver it (from members, offices and financially)
- the value and level of impact which could be achieved
- link to the council's priorities
- whether it is a regular recurring item which requires consideration before Cabinet/Council approval
- consideration of the guidance for selecting scrutiny topics

Topics <b>are</b> suitable for Scrutiny when	Topics <b>are not</b> suitable for Scrutiny when
Scrutiny could have an impact and add value	The issue is already being addressed elsewhere and change is imminent
The topic is of high local importance and reflects the concerns of local people	The topic would be better addressed elsewhere (and will be referred there)
The resources are available that would be required to conduct the review – staff and budget	Scrutiny involvement would have limited or no impact on outcomes
It avoids duplication of work elsewhere	The topic would be sub-judice or prejudicial to the councils interests
The issues is one that the committee can realistically influence	The topic is too broad to make a review realistic
The issue is related to an area where the council or one of its partners is not performing well	New legislation or guidance relating to the topic is expected in the next year

### **PREVIOUS SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET**

Since the last meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, the Cabinet has been presented with the comments of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion report, and the Corporate Charging Policy report, at the meeting of the Cabinet in September 2024; the Cabinet were also presented with the comments of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on the Quarter 1 2024/25 Performance Monitoring report in October 2024, in line with the process agreed in the Council Delivery Plan in November 2023. However, as the Committee did not formally move any recommendations on these reports, none were presented to the Cabinet.

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# Notice of Executive Key Decisions

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

The date of publication of this notice is Friday, 6 December 2024. The Deadline for making any representations as to why items marked as private should be considered in public by **Cabinet on 9 January 2025 is 5pm Monday, 30 December 2024.**

## Key Decisions

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

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

## The Council's Executive

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

Councillor R Blunt	-	Leader
Councillor M Wyatt	-	Deputy Leader and Communities & Climate Change
Councillor T Gillard	-	Business and Regeneration
Councillor K Merrie MBE	-	Infrastructure
Councillor N J Rushton	-	Corporate
Councillor A Saffell	-	Planning
Councillor A Woodman	-	Housing, Property & Customer Services

## Confidential Items and Private Meetings of the Executive

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

## Access to Agenda and Related Documents

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

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

## Executive Decisions

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private  (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker	Considered by Scrutiny or other Committee
<b>December 2024</b>							
102 Consultation on Enabling Remote Attendance and Proxy Voting at Local Authority Meetings	Cabinet	Key	Public	17 December 2024	Councillor Keith Merrie MBE Tel: 07596 112270 keith.merrie@nwleicester shire.gov.uk  Democratic Services Team Manager Tel: 01530 454529 claire.hammond@nwleice stershire.gov.uk	Report & Consultation document Consultation on Enabling Remote Attendance and Proxy Voting at Local Authority Meetings	Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 5 December 2024
Car Parking Review	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	17 December 2024	Councillor Michael Wyatt Tel: 07773 341531 michael.wyatt@nwleicest ershire.gov.uk  Head of Community Services Tel: 01530 454832 paul.sanders@nwleiceste rshire.gov.uk	Car Parking Review	Community Scrutiny Committee, 12 December 2024.
2024/25 Quarter 2 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Finance Update	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	17 December 2024	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleic estershire.gov.uk  Finance Team Manager Tel: 01530 454684 sarah.magill@nwleicester shire.gov.uk	2024/25 Quarter 2 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Finance Update	Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 13 March 2025

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker	Considered by Scrutiny or other Committee
2024/25 Quarter 2 General Fund Finance Update	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	17 December 2024	<p>Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Finance Team Manager Tel: 01530 454684 sarah.magill@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	2024/25 Quarter 2 General Fund Finance Update	Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 13 March 2025
LGA Peer Review  103	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	17 December 2024	<p>Councillor Keith Merrie MBE Tel: 07596 112270 keith.merrie@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Chief Executive Tel: 01530 454500 allison.thomas@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	LGA Peer Review	Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 5 December 2024
Extension of the Coalville Conservation Local Development Order	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	17 December 2024	<p>Councillor Tony Gillard Tel: 01530 452930 tony.gillard@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Economic Regeneration Team Manager Tel: 01530 454822 Barrie.Walford@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	EXTENSION OF THE COALVILLE CONSERVATION AREA LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER	The report is seeking a temporary extension to the existing Local Development Order to finalise the three existing Coalville frontage Improvement Projects.

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker	Considered by Scrutiny or other Committee
Repurchase of land at Wood Street, Ellistown	Cabinet	Key	Public	17 December 2024	<p>Councillor Andrew Woodman Tel: 07970 520357 andrew.woodman@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Property and Regeneration Tel: 01530 454 354 paul.wheatley@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Repurchase of land at Wood Street, Ellistown	N/A
Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions  104	Cabinet	Key	Public	17 December 2024	<p>Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Strategic Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer) Tel: 01530 454495 paul.stone@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions	Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 5 December 2024
Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy	Cabinet	Key	Public	17 December 2024	<p>Councillor Tony Saffell Tel: 01332 810706 tonyc.saffell@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Planning and Infrastructure Tel: 01530 454668 chris.elston@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Request from Leicestershire County Council Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy	The Council is only being asked to agree to publication of the strategy for consultation purposes.



Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private  (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker	Considered by Scrutiny or other Committee
Acquisitions and Disposals	Cabinet	Key	Private	17 December 2024	<p>Councillor Andrew Woodman Tel: 07970 520357 andrew.woodman@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Housing, Head of Property and Regeneration Tel: 01530 454502, Tel: 01530 454 354 jane.rochelle@nwleicester.gov.uk, paul.wheatley@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Acquisitions	Delegated Cabinet function
Supplementary Estimates, Virements and Capital Approvals	Cabinet	Key	Public	17 December 2024	<p>Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454492 anna.crouch@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Supplementary Estimates, Virements and Capital Approvals	Delegated Cabinet function
Award of Contracts	Cabinet	Key	Private	17 December 2024	<p>Councillor Andrew Woodman Tel: 07970 520357 andrew.woodman@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Strategic Director of Communities Tel: 01530 454819 andy.barton@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Award of Contracts	Delegated Cabinet function

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private  (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker	Considered by Scrutiny or other Committee
<b>9 January 2025</b>							
Draft Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators	Cabinet	Key	Public	9 January 2025	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicester.gov.uk  Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454492 anna.crouch@nwleicester.gov.uk	Draft Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators	Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 7 January 2025
Draft 2025/26 Robustness of Budget Estimates	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	9 January 2025	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicester.gov.uk  Strategic Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer) Tel: 01530 454495 paul.stone@nwleicester.gov.uk	Draft 2025/26 Robustness of Budget Estimates	Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 7 January 2025
Draft 2025/26 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Rent Setting	Cabinet	Key	Public	9 January 2025	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicester.gov.uk  Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454492 anna.crouch@nwleicester.gov.uk	Draft 2025/26 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Rent Setting	Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 7 January 2025

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private  (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker	Considered by Scrutiny or other Committee
Draft 2025/26 General Fund Budget and Council Tax	Cabinet	Key	Public	9 January 2025	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454492 anna.crouch@nwleicester-shire.gov.uk	Draft 2025/26 General Fund Budget and Council Tax	Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 7 January 2025
<b>28 January 2025</b>							
Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund  107	Cabinet	Key	Public	28 January 2025	Councillor Tony Saffell Tel: 01332 810706 tonyc.saffell@nwleicester-shire.gov.uk  Head of Planning and Infrastructure Tel: 01530 454668 chris.elston@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund	N/A - proposal will be subject to public consultation.
Council Tax Base 2025/26	Cabinet	Key	Public	28 January 2025	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454492 anna.crouch@nwleicester-shire.gov.uk	Council Tax Base 2025/26	N/A - Approving the Council Tax Base is the responsibility of Council. The Council Tax Base is calculated in line with legislation.

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private  (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker	Considered by Scrutiny or other Committee
Commercial Lettings	Cabinet	Key	Private	28 January 2025	<p>Councillor Andrew Woodman Tel: 07970 520357 andrew.woodman@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Property and Regeneration Tel: 01530 454 354 paul.wheatley@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Commercial Lettings	Delegated Cabinet function
Acquisitions and Disposals  108	Cabinet	Key	Private	28 January 2025	<p>Councillor Andrew Woodman Tel: 07970 520357 andrew.woodman@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Housing, Head of Property and Regeneration Tel: 01530 454502, Tel: 01530 454 354 jane.rochelle@nwleicester.gov.uk, paul.wheatley@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Acquisitions	Delegated Cabinet function
Supplementary Estimates, Virements and Capital Approvals	Cabinet	Key	Public	28 January 2025	<p>Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454492 anna.crouch@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Supplementary Estimates, Virements and Capital Approvals	Delegated Cabinet function

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private  (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker	Considered by Scrutiny or other Committee
Award of Contracts	Cabinet	Key	Private	28 January 2025	<p>Councillor Andrew Woodman Tel: 07970 520357 andrew.woodman@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Strategic Director of Communities Tel: 01530 454819 andy.barton@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Award of Contracts	Delegated Cabinet function
Former Tenant Rent Arrears, Current Tenant Rent Arrears, Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates and Sundry Debts Write Offs	Cabinet	Key	Public	28 January 2025	<p>Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454492 anna.crouch@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Former Tenant Rent Arrears, Current Tenant Rent Arrears, Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates and Sundry Debts Write Offs	Delegated Cabinet function.
Robustness of Budget Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	28 January 2025	<p>Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Strategic Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer) Tel: 01530 454495 paul.stone@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Robustness of Budget Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves	Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 7 January 2025

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private  (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker	Considered by Scrutiny or other Committee
Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators - 2025/26	Cabinet	Key	Public	28 January 2025	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicester.gov.uk  Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454492 anna.crouch@nwleicester.gov.uk	Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators - 2025/26	Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 7 January 2025
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Rent Setting - 2025/26  110	Cabinet	Key	Public	28 January 2025	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicester.gov.uk  Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454492 anna.crouch@nwleicester.gov.uk	Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Rent Setting - 2025/26	Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 7 January 2025
General Fund Budget and Council Tax - 2025/26	Cabinet	Key	Public	28 January 2025	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicester.gov.uk  Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454492 anna.crouch@nwleicester.gov.uk	General Fund Budget and Council Tax - 2025/26	Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 7 January 2025

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private  (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker	Considered by Scrutiny or other Committee
Data Centre, Wide Area Network and cloud infrastructure contract renewal	Cabinet	Key	Public	28 January 2025	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicester.gov.uk  ICT Team Manager  sam.outama@nwleicester.gov.uk	Data Centre, Wide Area Network and cloud infrastructure contract renewal	As this is a delegated decision, it is not required to go before scrutiny.
Minutes of the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party  111	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	28 January 2025	Councillor Tony Gillard Tel: 01530 452930 tony.gillard@nwleicester.gov.uk  Head of Property and Regeneration Tel: 01530 454 354 paul.wheatley@nwleicester.gov.uk	Minutes of the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party	N/A - the CSEWP is a Working Party with powers delegated from Cabinet.
<b>February 2025</b>							
Performance Monitoring Report	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	25 February 2025	Councillor Keith Merrie MBE Tel: 07596 112270 keith.merrie@nwleicester.gov.uk  Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development Tel: 01530 454518 mike.murphy@nwleicester.gov.uk	Performance Monitoring Report	Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 13 March 2025

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private  (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker	Considered by Scrutiny or other Committee
Commercial Lettings	Cabinet	Key	Private	25 February 2025	<p>Councillor Andrew Woodman Tel: 07970 520357 andrew.woodman@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Property and Regeneration Tel: 01530 454 354 paul.wheatley@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Commercial Lettings	Delegated Cabinet function
Acquisitions and Disposals  112	Cabinet	Key	Private	25 February 2025	<p>Councillor Andrew Woodman Tel: 07970 520357 andrew.woodman@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Housing, Head of Property and Regeneration Tel: 01530 454502, Tel: 01530 454 354 jane.rochelle@nwleicester.gov.uk, paul.wheatley@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Acquisitions	Delegated Cabinet function
Supplementary Estimates, Virements and Capital Approvals	Cabinet	Key	Public	25 February 2025	<p>Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454492 anna.crouch@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Supplementary Estimates, Virements and Capital Approvals	Delegated Cabinet function



Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private  (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker	Considered by Scrutiny or other Committee
Award of Contracts	Cabinet	Key	Private	25 February 2025	<p>Councillor Andrew Woodman Tel: 07970 520357 andrew.woodman@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Strategic Director of Communities Tel: 01530 454819 andy.barton@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Award of Contracts	Delegated Cabinet function
Empty Property - Compulsory Purchase  113	Cabinet	Key	Public	25 February 2025	<p>Councillor Michael Wyatt Tel: 07773 341531 michael.wyatt@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Community Services Tel: 01530 454832 paul.sanders@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Empty Property - Compulsory Purchase	Delegated Cabinet function
<b>March 2025</b>							
Tree Management Strategy and General Fund Action Plan	Cabinet	Key	Public	25 March 2025	<p>Councillor Michael Wyatt Tel: 07773 341531 michael.wyatt@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Community Services Tel: 01530 454832 paul.sanders@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Tree Management Strategy and General Fund Action Plan	Community Scrutiny Committee, 6 February 2024

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private  (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker	Considered by Scrutiny or other Committee
2024/25 Quarter 3 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Finance Update	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	25 March 2025	<p>Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Finance Team Manager Tel: 01530 454684 sarah.magill@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	2024/25 Quarter 3 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Finance Update	Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 8 May 2025
2023/24 Provisional Financial Outturn - General Fund  114	Cabinet	Key	Public	25 March 2025	<p>Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Finance Team Manager Tel: 01530 454684 sarah.magill@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	2023/24 Provisional Financial Outturn - General Fund	N/A
2023/24 Provisional Financial Outturn - Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	Cabinet	Key	Public	25 March 2025	<p>Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Finance Team Manager Tel: 01530 454684 sarah.magill@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	2023/24 Provisional Financial Outturn - Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	N/A

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private  (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker	Considered by Scrutiny or other Committee
2024/25 Quarter 3 General Fund Finance Update	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	25 March 2025	<p>Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Finance Team Manager Tel: 01530 454684 sarah.magill@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	2024/25 Quarter 3 General Fund Finance Update	Will be considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 8 May 2025
Commercial Lettings  115	Cabinet	Key	Private	25 March 2025	<p>Councillor Andrew Woodman Tel: 07970 520357 andrew.woodman@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Property and Regeneration Tel: 01530 454 354 paul.wheatley@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Commercial Lettings	Delegated Cabinet function
Acquisitions and Disposals	Cabinet	Key	Private	25 March 2025	<p>Councillor Andrew Woodman Tel: 07970 520357 andrew.woodman@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Housing, Head of Property and Regeneration Tel: 01530 454502, Tel: 01530 454 354 jane.rochelle@nwleicester.gov.uk, paul.wheatley@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Acquisitions	Delegated Cabinet function

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private  (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker	Considered by Scrutiny or other Committee
Supplementary Estimates, Virements and Capital Approvals	Cabinet	Key	Public	25 March 2025	<p>Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454492 anna.crouch@nwleicester-shire.gov.uk</p>	Supplementary Estimates, Virements and Capital Approvals	Delegated Cabinet function
Award of Contracts  116	Cabinet	Key	Private	25 March 2025	<p>Councillor Andrew Woodman Tel: 07970 520357 andrew.woodman@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Strategic Director of Communities Tel: 01530 454819 andy.barton@nwleicester-shire.gov.uk</p>	Award of Contracts	Delegated Cabinet function
Former Tenant Rent Arrears, Current Tenant Rent Arrears, Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates and Sundry Debts Write Offs	Cabinet	Key	Public	25 March 2025	<p>Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454492 anna.crouch@nwleicester-shire.gov.uk</p>	Former Tenant Rent Arrears, Current Tenant Rent Arrears, Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates and Sundry Debts Write Offs	Delegated Cabinet function

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private  (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker	Considered by Scrutiny or other Committee
Minutes of the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	25 March 2025	Councillor Tony Gillard Tel: 01530 452930 tony.gillard@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Property and Regeneration Tel: 01530 454 354 paul.wheatley@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Minutes of the Coalville Special Expenses Working Party	N/A - the CSEWP is a Working Party with powers delegated from Cabinet.
<b>April 2025</b>							
Disabled Facilities Grants Review  117	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	22 April 2025	Councillor Michael Wyatt Tel: 07773 341531 michael.wyatt@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Community Services Tel: 01530 454832 paul.sanders@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Disabled Facilities Grants Review	Community Scrutiny Committee, 10 April 2025
Workforce Strategy	Cabinet	Key	Public	22 April 2025	Councillor Keith Merrie MBE Tel: 07596 112270 keith.merrie@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development Tel: 01530 454518 mike.murphy@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Workforce Strategy	Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 13 March 2025

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker	Considered by Scrutiny or other Committee
Performance Monitoring Report	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	22 April 2025	<p>Councillor Keith Merrie MBE Tel: 07596 112270 keith.merrie@nwleicester shire.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development Tel: 01530 454518 mike.murphy@nwleiceste rshire.gov.uk</p>	Performance Monitoring Report	Corporate Scrutiny Committee, 8 May 2025.
Commercial Lettings 118	Cabinet	Key	Private	22 April 2025	<p>Councillor Andrew Woodman Tel: 07970 520357 andrew.woodman@nwlei cestershire.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Property and Regeneration Tel: 01530 454 354 paul.wheatley@nwleicest ershire.gov.uk</p>	Commercial Lettings	Delegated Cabinet function

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker	Considered by Scrutiny or other Committee
Acquisitions and Disposals	Cabinet	Key	Private	22 April 2025	<p>Councillor Andrew Woodman Tel: 07970 520357 andrew.woodman@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Housing, Head of Property and Regeneration Tel: 01530 454502, Tel: 01530 454 354 jane.rochelle@nwleicester.gov.uk, paul.wheatley@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Acquisitions	Delegated Cabinet function
Supplementary Estimates, Virements and Capital Approvals	Cabinet	Key	Public	22 April 2025	<p>Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454492 anna.crouch@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Supplementary Estimates, Virements and Capital Approvals	Delegated Cabinet function
Award of Contracts	Cabinet	Key	Private	22 April 2025	<p>Councillor Andrew Woodman Tel: 07970 520357 andrew.woodman@nwleicester.gov.uk</p> <p>Strategic Director of Communities Tel: 01530 454819 andy.barton@nwleicester.gov.uk</p>	Award of Contracts	N/A delegated Cabinet function

Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private  (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker	Considered by Scrutiny or other Committee
<b>May 2025</b>							
Former Tenant Rent Arrears, Current Tenant Rent Arrears, Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates and Sundry Debts Write Offs	Cabinet	Key	Public	20 May 2025	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454492 anna.crouch@nwleicester-shire.gov.uk	Former Tenant Rent Arrears, Current Tenant Rent Arrears, Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates and Sundry Debts Write Offs	Delegated Cabinet function
<b>June 2025</b>							
2024/25 Provisional Financial Outturn - Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	24 June 2025	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Finance Team Manager Tel: 01530 454684 sarah.magill@nwleicester-shire.gov.uk	2024/25 Provisional Financial Outturn - Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	To be confirmed when the schedule for the civic year 2025/26 has been agreed.
2024/25 Provisional Financial Outturn - General Fund	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	24 June 2025	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Finance Team Manager Tel: 01530 454684 sarah.magill@nwleicester-shire.gov.uk	2024/25 Provisional Financial Outturn - General Fund	To be confirmed when the schedule for the civic year 2025/26 has been agreed.



Decision	Decision Maker	Status of Decision	Public or Private (and reason – where private)	Date of Decision	Contacts	Documents to be submitted to the Decision Maker	Considered by Scrutiny or other Committee
Treasury Management Stewardship Report 2024/25	Cabinet	Non-Key	Public	24 June 2025	Councillor Nicholas Rushton Tel: 01530 412059 nicholas.rushton@nwleicestershire.gov.uk  Head of Finance Tel: 01530 454492 anna.crouch@nwleicestershire.gov.uk	Treasury Management Stewardship Report Treasury Management Stewardship Report 2024/25	Audit & Governance Committee, 4 June 2025

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