



Oadby and Wigston Borough Council

TO COUNCILLOR:

G S Atwal
L A Bentley
Ms A R Bond
G A Boulter (Chair)
J W Boyce

Mrs L M Broadley
F S Broadley
D M Carter
Ms K Chalk
Miss M V Chamberlain

Mrs S Z Haq (Vice-Chair)
Dr T K Khong
K J Loydall
R H Thakor

Dear Councillor et al,

I hereby summon you to attend a meeting of the **SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITTEE** to be held at the Council Offices, Station Road, Wigston on **TUESDAY, 19 JANUARY 2016** at **7.00 PM** for the transaction of the business set out in the Agenda below.

Yours faithfully

Council Offices
Wigston
11 January 2016

Mark Hall
Chief Executive

AGENDA

PAGE NO'S

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Appointment of Substitutes**
3. **Declarations of Interest**

Members are reminded that any declaration of interest should be made having regard to the Members' Code of Conduct. In particular, Members must make clear the nature of the interest and whether it is 'pecuniary' or 'non-pecuniary'.

4. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 13 October 2015** 1 - 11
To read, confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting in accordance with Rule 17 of Part 4 of the Constitution.
5. **Action List Arising from the Meeting held on 13 October 2015** 12
6. **Petitions and Deputations**
To receive any Petitions and, or, Deputations in accordance with Rule 24 of Part 4 of the Constitution.
7. **Committee Revised Financial Position 2015/16 and Draft Budget 2016/17** 13 - 17

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITTEE HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, STATION ROAD, WIGSTON ON TUESDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2015 COMMENCING AT 7:00 PM

<u>IN ATTENDANCE:</u>		
Chair - Councillor G A Boulter Vice Chair - Councillor Mrs S Z Haq		
COUNCILLORS:		
G S Atwal J W Boyce Dr T Khong	L A Bentley D M Carter R H Thakor	Ms A R Bond Miss M V Chamberlain Mrs S B Morris
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:		
Mrs A E Court S Beard	C Raymakers S J Ball	Ms A Pathak-Mould

Min Ref.	Narrative	Officer Resp.
18.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>An apology for absence was received from Councillors F S Broadley, Mrs L M Broadley, Ms K Chalk and K J Loydall.</p>	
19.	<p>APPOINTMENTS OF SUBSTITUTES</p> <p>Councillor Mrs S B Morris substituted for Councillor K J Loydall.</p>	
20.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>None.</p>	
21.	<p>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 7 SEPTEMBER 2015</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce requested that Members' contributions to debates be herewith identified by name on the record of Committee minutes.</p> <p>RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 07 September 2015 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.</p>	
22.	<p>PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS</p> <p>None.</p>	
23.	<p>ACTION LIST</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce requested that a gap-analysis of advisory services within the Borough be added to the Action List for completion by the next meeting of this Committee on 19 January 2016.</p>	

	<p>RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The Action List be noted by Members.</p>	
24.	<p>COMMITTEE BUDGET REVIEW - APRIL TO AUGUST 2015</p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 20 - 22) as delivered by the Principal Accountant which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>He reported that the General Fund suggested an estimated net overspend for the year of £218,500. This was said to be due to the extension of fixed-term contract salaries and the fall in market price of recyclates owing to a discontinuation of a garden waste subsidy from Leicestershire County Council and a faltering in foreign-market purchasing of recyclates. He stated that there was a general trend of expenditure falling behind profile as departments experienced difficulty in fulfilling their respective allocations, although a review of the 2015/16 set budgets was currently being undertaken. It was said that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was predicted an outturn deficit of £2,121,000 for 2015/16 following under-spends in the preceding year.</p> <p>Councillor D M Carter commended the recent receipt of Heritage Lottery Funding secured since the drafting of the report in respect of the 'Reconnecting with Nature' Scheme (at page 22).</p> <p>Councillors Mrs S B Morris enquired as to why the HRA budget had not been adjusted to reflect the carrying-forward of the revenue and capital budgets. The Principal Accountant advised that the budget would be re-set following the review process with a revised figure due to be brought before the next meeting of this Committee.</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce requested that the capital and revenue programmes in the Budget Review be separated to enable Members to distinguish between the same and better indentify issues. Councillor S B Morris said she would raise the matter with the Section 151 Officer.</p> <p>Councillor R H Thakor sought clarification as to the meaning of the risk implication indicators 'CR1' and 'CR9' (at page 21) and whether these suggested any financial mismanagement on behalf of this Council.</p> <p>The Principal Account advised that these were broad strategic risk assessment matrixes assessing the Council's ability to meet financial commitments. 'CR1' was said to refer to a decrease in financial resources as a result of central Government policy. 'CR9' was said to refer to external economic changes and market-based influences.</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce stated that strategic risk assessment matrixes served a generic purpose and that, whilst acknowledging the potential budgetary pressures posed by central and local government policy, this Council was at a reduced risk of any financial mismanagement in view of a recent independent auditor's assessment confirming the same.</p> <p>RESOLVED THAT:</p>	

	The current position be noted by Members.	
25.	<p>FEES AND CHARGES 2016-17</p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 23 - 35) as delivered by the Principal Accountant which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>He added that the external leisure services providers were yet to submit their fees and charges (i.e. up to three months before the start of the financial year) in accordance with the contract, further advising that these would be submitted to a subsequent meeting of this Committee.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The proposed scale of fees and charges for 2016/17 be recommended to the Policy, Finance and Development Committee on 27 October 2015 for approval.</p>	
26.	<p>IMPACT ON HOUSING FOLLOWING GOVERNMENT BUDGET ANNOUNCEMENT</p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 36 – 41) as delivered by the Head of Community which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>She reported that the requirement for social housing rents to be reduced by 1% served to undermine the HRA Business Plan and that work was being undertaken in partnership with consultants to forecast any impacts and adjustments. With reference to the documented impacts (at pages 37 - 38), it was said that a review of this Council's housing policies was needed in order to carefully manage its obligations in its capacity as a landlord. She stated that the proposal to extend the Right to Buy scheme to registered providers raised concerns in respect of an increasing diminution of stock vis-a-vis an increase in housing demand thus impacting on homelessness and that the policy hitherto affording tenants lifetime tenancy options required a reconsideration.</p> <p>The proposed changes to welfare benefits implicating housing services detailed in the report were also said to be of concern, most notably in respect to changes to retrospective housing benefit regulations (at page 40) and the impact this will have on vulnerable residents' claims. It was also announced to Members that the introduction of the housing element of the Universal Credit (UC) scheme in respect of 18-25 years was due to be implemented in this Borough from January 2016.</p> <p>Councillor L A Bentley sought clarification as to age-bracket of those to due to receive a reduction in credits. The Head of Community advised that those aged 18-25 would be the first tranche of affected individuals whose reduction in credits would be contingent on their circumstances.</p> <p>Councillor Ms A R Bond raised a concern regarding the lack of advisory services available to residents within the Borough, citing the increased</p>	

	<p>workload upon the Helping Hands Advice Centre(s) in the Borough. Councillor J W Boyce stated that an open-bid procurement process was to be undertaken to replace those services whose contracts had lapsed once a gap-analysis of advisory services has been completed.</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce enquired as to the feasibility of rent convergence/s considering simultaneous reductions in rental rates. The Head of Community advised that rent convergence/s was now a redundant ten year target due to the recent changes in legislation. The Member therefore requested that an additional report be brought to this Committee exploring the specific implications of this subject-matter once the central Government's intentions were more clearly defined.</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce requested that risk implication indicator 'CR1' be added to the report (at page 41). He further opined that the recent announcements would significantly disadvantage those individuals who were not in work and, or, otherwise financially-illiterate, stating that an affordable provision of housing was preferentially required as opposed to intervention in the housing market on the part of the government.</p> <p>Councillor Ms A R Bond enquired as to whether the Chief Executive or the Leader of the Council had responded to a request for assistance by the Chairman of the Helping Hands Advice Centre. Councillor S B Morris advised that no formal approach had been made by the Helping Hands Advice Centre for service-delivery assistance although proactive steps were being taken by this Council to arrange a meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The report be noted and the review of the Rent policy be supported once further details were known of the impact on legislative changes.</p>	
27.	<p>COMMUNITY UPDATE</p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 42 - 45) as delivered by the Head of Community which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>Rent Collection</p> <p>She reported that rent collections were comparatively lower on this quarter due to the effects of recent welfare reforms. It was proposed that the rent collection target remain at an achievable target of 99%, however, the rent arrears target for tenants be revised to 3% from 2.5%. She re-affirmed that measures were to continue to be implemented by Officers to improve collections and support tenants experiencing difficulties in paying, particularly within non-collectable weeks.</p> <p>Councillor D M Carter requested that an additional row be herewith added to the table of the Community Update report (at page 42) expressing rent arrears month-by-month as a percentage figure.</p> <p>Gas Safety</p>	

	<p>The Head of Community advised that a 100% rate of gas safety compliance was recorded until 30 September and that appointments for safety certifications for December were currently being scheduled.</p> <p>Update on Capital Programme 2014/15 and Decent Homes</p> <p>The Head of Community advised that a separate report was being provided to examine the wider refurbishment and new build projects.</p> <p>Boulter Crescent Community House</p> <p>The Head of Community stated that the Community Development Officer was continuing to develop the activities held at the Community House and that redesign work was underway at the Community Flat in readiness for a re-opening before Christmas. It was also reported that the 'Build a Better Boulter Crescent' Residents' Association had re-grouped and that Members were to be duly invited to its AGM.</p> <p>Councillor Miss M V Chamberlain asked whether the levels of disruption to the day-to-day operations at the House caused by refurbishment works had since reduced. The Head of Community confirmed the same noting that the works had reached their half-way point (i.e. phase five).</p> <p>Supporting Leicestershire Families (SLF) and Early Help</p> <p>The Head of Community reported that at a meeting of the SLF Working Group on 29 September discussing the value of the partnership and programme, Jane Moore (Head of Service at Leicestershire County Council) delivered a service presentation and an annual service report. It was agreed that a further 3 year financial commitment be maintained by this Council at the same level as previously at £23,000 per year, subject to a report being brought before to the Policy, Finance and Development Committee on 27 October 2015.</p> <p>Community Payback Schemes</p> <p>The Head of Community advised that the painting of three bus shelters had been completed and that other service-areas were be explored to better capitalise on the resourcefulness of this partnership-work.</p> <p>The Chair moved the rent arrears target for be revised to 3% for a period of one-year only, seconded by Councillor Miss M V Chamberlain.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The proposed target for rent arrears set at 3% for a period of one-year be approved.</p>	
28.	<p>HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT (HRS)</p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 46 - 49) as delivered by the Head of Community which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p>	

She reported that the Supporting People Funding, supporting the Council's on-site Warden Provision, ceased in September 2015. It was stated that there was no financial scope to continue to deliver this provision unless a charged-service was introduced: this proposal was said to be rejected by tenants when consulted, with reference to the results of the consultation as outlined in the report (at page 46). It was proposed that this service-area ought to be remodelled so as to provide inclusive support to all affected tenants, most notably to the elderly, whilst maintaining some on-site presence and by redefining existing officers' job descriptions, as detailed in the report (at pages 47 - 48).

The Head of Community reported that referrals for adult respite accommodation were now to be accepted by the Falcon Centre in Loughborough. It was also confirmed that a protocol was in place for 16-17 year olds in terms of providing secure accommodation, noting that no duty was owned to any such young person at the present time.

Councillor L A Bentley asked whether the results of the October 2014 consultation (at page 46) accurately reflected the up-to-date and inclusive views of all tenants. The Head of Community advised that the consultation did rigorously engage with tenants in an all-encompassing manner, noting a response rate of 47%. It was said that the results of the consultation still held currency given the ongoing efforts to keep tenants well-informed and the need for finality. The introduction of any legal service-change was said to require 80% tenant agreement.

The Member continued to enquire as to what format the proposed morning calls would be provided (at page 47), and what measures were being taken to ascertain tenants' genuine needs. The Head of Community said that morning calls were to be provided through the individual alarm system and that tenants' support needs were assessed via partnership-work whilst being mindful of respecting tenants' wishes.

Councillor Mrs A R Bond asked whether an emergency pull-cord system was installed in affected properties and too noted that a more up-to-date consultation ought to be conducted. The Head of Community advised that such technology was installed and available to tenants.

Councillor R H Thakor enquired as to whether Leicestershire County Council was to fund the proposed purchase of a young people's secure-unit in Oadby. The Head of Community confirmed this stating further information was to be received. The Member further raised a concern about the long-term financial viability and sustainability of the service.

Councillor J W Boyce recognised that this service-area was fraught with complexities yet endorsed a preventative approach. He further noted that affected individuals ought to be encouraged to prudently invest any direct receipts in housing related support, further lending to the need for a gap-analysis of advisory services. He stated that the proposed re-structure was the best that could be achieved within this Council's limited financial capacity and invited further work to be completed.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

	The proposals to re-structure the Housing and Community Support services and roles as set out in the report be approved.	
29.	<p>NEW BUILD PROGRAMME / REFURBISHMENT</p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 50 - 56) as delivered by the Head of Community which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>She reported that the tenant satisfaction survey conducted at Boulter Crescent indicated high levels of satisfaction pertaining to many aspects of the refurbishment works, with an average of three out of four residents fielding a “more than satisfied” response. She noted that there had been some mid-term difficulties in decanting tenants however these were adequately addressed. A copy of the full report and summary was said to be deposited in the Members’ Room for inspection by Members.</p> <p>The Chair commended the successful opening of the new Customer Contact Centre on Bell Street, Wigston on 12 October and congratulated all personnel who contributed to its efficient operation.</p> <p>Councillor L A Bentley enquired as to whether funding had been secured in respect of the development of new Council-built houses at Kirkdale/Station Road (at page 55). The Head of Community confirmed that the obtaining planning permission and section 106 agreement had been finalised. She stated that grant-funding would be applied for from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) at the appropriate time.</p> <p>The Head of Community reported that the purchase of a former Council-owned property (at page 55) had since been completed utilising the ‘Right to First Refusal’ (RFR) option afforded under the Right to Buy scheme, adding that the necessary adaptations to the property were currently being undertaken so to accommodate the intended occupants’ needs. It was said that the RFR option would continue to be investigated with the view to increasingly add to the Council’s housing-stock.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The report be noted by Members and that the continued purchase of existing properties to replace houses sold under the Right to Buy scheme, to be let at 80% of market rent, be approved.</p>	
30.	<p>CHOICE BASED LETTING SYSTEM - RESIDENCY CHANGES</p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 57 - 48) as delivered by the Head of Community which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document, adding that further details would be provided in due course in respect of the statutory consultation.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs S Z Haq enquired as to whether any other neighbouring Leicestershire authorities had amended their minimum residency conditions in line with the report. The Head of Community advised that Leicester City Council was the only known authority to have done so.</p>	

	<p>Councillor J W Boyce raised a concern as to the potential increase in immigration from the City if the Borough's current minimum six-month residency condition was not similarly amended to two years.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The report be noted by Members and the necessary statutory consultation be approved.</p>	
31.	<p>DISABLED FACILITY GRANTS (DFG'S)</p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 59 - 67) as delivered by the Head of Community which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>She advised that the Council was in receipt of a grant from Leicestershire County Council to discharge what is a mandatory statutory duty and that this Council invested additional funding to ensure reasonable living conditions for those affected residents. An explanation of the Lightbulb Project (LP) was given in terms of a new, integrated delivery mechanism, incorporating both DFG's and Council house adaptation schemes, with reference to the SWOT analysis provided (at page 61). She added that current demand was marginally above predicted levels.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs S B Morris enquired as to whether an aliquot proportion of any pooled-fund under the LP would be ring-fenced for the Borough. The Member also raised a concern as to a breakdown in rapport with local contractors employed by this Council to fulfil the necessary work.</p> <p>The Head of Community confirmed that the Borough's funding allocation would be ring-fenced and independently audited with an identical top-up arrangement from this Council available. She also advised that service-delivery would continue to proceed with Officers working in close partnership with local contractors on a on a pilot basis.</p> <p>The Chair raised a concern regarding the discrepancy between this Council being legally responsible for discharging the statutory duty whilst Leicestershire County Council being in account of the budget.</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce raised a concern as to the long-term financial viability of the LP insofar as its absorption of the significant salaries awarded under the project. The Member stated that the LP would need to undergo the proper procurement scrutiny so as to not enter into any unlawfully competition with alternative DFG providers, requesting that written legal advice be provided to that effect (or otherwise). He opined that the LP was still an untested DFG delivery mechanism and that a contingency plan ought to be considered as part of any ongoing work.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs S B Morris stated that an in-house delivery mechanism was an advantage to ensure adherence to this Council's statutory duty.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>Options for the Council to join the Lightbulb Project as the means of</p>	

	<p>delivering DFG's and adaptations for disabled tenants be explored further with a view to joining the project as soon as possible and subject to a further report containing all the necessary details and assurances.</p>	
32.	<p>UPDATE FOLLOWING CLOSURE OF KENNEDY HOUSE HOSTEL</p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 68 - 69) as delivered by the Head of Community which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>She reported that pro-active steps have been taken by Housing Options Officers as detailed in the report (at page 68) to address the individual housing needs of Borough-originating residents since the closure of Kennedy House on 30 September. She confirmed that the new provider, the Falcon Centre, had invited referrals from Kennedy House. It was said that no further information had been received from the Shaw Group as to what the House's prospective purpose or use(s) were.</p> <p>RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The report be noted by Members.</p>	
33.	<p>CORPORATE ENFORCEMENT UPDATE</p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 70 - 71) and the supplementary Corporate Enforcement Update appendix (at pages 1 - 8) as delivered by the Director of Services which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>She asked Members to take notice of the draft Graffiti Policy provided in the supplementary appendix. She added that the Policy hitherto contained no specific charging framework provision however noted that this could be considered and introduced by Members. It was said that training in respect of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) and Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO) would be delivered sooner than noted in the report (at page 70) in a local-authority partnership. It was also reported that the Revenue and Benefits department would be writing to all owners of properties vacant for two plus years to ascertain their intentions in the view to assist in these properties' re-occupation.</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce enquired as to whether a council tax charge is being levied against empty properties. The Directors of Services confirmed that a council tax rate of 150% is levied against the same.</p> <p>The Chair requested that an update report in respect of empty houses be provided at the next meeting of this Committee on 19 January 2016.</p> <p>RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The report be noted by Members.</p>	
34.	<p>ACHIEVEMENTS AT BROCKS HILL AND OPERATIONS SINCE JULY 2015</p>	

The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 72 - 76) as delivered by the Director of Services which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.

It was said that the use of the Jubilee Amphitheatre at Brooks Hill Country Park for theatre performances during the Summer was well received and attended from far afield. She also commended the recent receipt of Heritage Lottery Funding to allow for a salaried 'Natural Discovery Voluntary Development Project Officer' post at Brooks Hill.

It was reported that there had been a lack of engagement by the Canals and Rivers Trust (CaRT) in respect of the Ervins Lock Footbridge and that the Council would proceed with the project and obtain planning permission for which the CaRT would become a statutory consultee.

She reported that further research into the proposal for an advertising company to install and maintain bus shelters in the Borough yielded insufficient prime locations to make a contract viable. The capital refurbishment programme of existing shelters would therefore continue and requests for new shelters be received via the Residents' Forums.

It was advised that there had been difficulty in obtaining a quote for the proposed dog fouling bin-bag scheme. A single quote was received at £500 for a quantity of 50,000 bags. It was noted that although additional work was required to fully realise the proposal, it was too acknowledged that cost-based decisions have been taken by other neighbouring Leicestershire authorities to discontinue schemes of a similar nature.

Members were also informed that a further East Midlands in Bloom Gold Award had been achieved through the joint working of the Clean and Green Team and the Pride of the Borough Group.

Councillor J W Boyce requested that the respective Brocks Hill and Operations service-areas be herewith presented in separate reports.

Councillor L A Bentley enquired as whether the CaRT has the authority to proscribe the building of the Ervins Lock Footbridge if the proper planning permission were to be granted. The Director of Services advised that to proceed with the course of action aforementioned would ensure an appropriate level of engagement on the part of the CaRT.

Councillor A R Bond enquired on behalf of a Borough resident as to whether the Council intended to replace the wooden gates at Oadby Cemetery. The Chair advised that the matter would be investigated.

Councillor J W Boyce stated that any direct approaches to Officers from Borough residents ought to be noted in the Members' Enquiry System.

The Chair stated that following a recent meeting with Arriva Midlands, it was reported that no further requests for bus shelter installations would be accepted ahead of a review due on the 17 November by Arriva Midlands to reassess the bus routes and services within the Borough.

RESOLVED THAT:

	The progress made be noted by Members.	
35.	<p>LEISURE CONTRACT - UPDATE</p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 77 - 81) as delivered by the Director of Services which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>She reported that the building programme in respect of Parklands Leisure Centre and Wigston Swimming Pool was progressing well with prospective opening dates of the 04 and 10 December, respectively. The performance against the Council's contract requirements was said to be continuing to be closely monitored and that it remained positive, with increased membership, footfall and constructive feedback.</p> <p>Councillor Dr T Khong enquired as to the opening arrangements at the two sites. The Director of Service advised that the opening arrangements by the Council will be put in place imminently, with the Mayor attending, and that SLM would be hosting an "Oceans of Fun" event at both sites on 10 January 2016, with sporting celebrities also attending.</p> <p>RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The progress made be noted by Members.</p>	

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8:58 PM



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CHAIR

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TUESDAY, 19 JANUARY 2016

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Agenda Item 5

SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITTEE

ACTION LIST

ARISING FROM A MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 13 OCTOBER 2015

Min Ref.	Title	Action To Be Taken	Officer	Target Date	On Target
21.	Minutes of the Last Meeting Held on 7 September 2015	To identify Members' contributions by name on the record of Committee minutes.	SB	Jan-16	Yes
23.	Action List	To provide a gap-analysis in respect of advisory services within the Borough.	APM	Jan-16	Yes
24.	Committee Budget Review - April to August 2015	To separate the capital and revenue programmes in the Committee Budget Review.	JD	Jan-16	Yes
26.	Impact on Housing Following Government Budget Announcement	To add risk implication indicator 'CR1' to the report entitled 'Impact on Housing Following Government Budget Announcement'.	APM	Jan-16	Yes
27.	Community Update	To add an additional row to the Community Update report expressing rent arrears as a month-by-month percentage figure.	APM	Jan-16	Yes
31.	Disabled Facility Grants (DFG's)	To obtain written legal advice to the procurement regulations in respect of awarding DFG's to the LP.	AC/CA	Jan-16	Yes
33.	Corporate Enforcement Update	To provide an update report in respect of empty houses.	CA/APM	Jan-16	Yes
34.	Achievements at Brocks Hill and Operations since July 2015	To present the 'Brocks Hill' and 'Operations' service-areas in separate reports.	AC	Jan-16	Yes



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 19 January 2016	Matter for Information and Decision
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Title: **Committee Revised Financial Position 2015/16
and Draft Budget 2016/17**

Author: **Martin Hone - Interim Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer)**

1. Introduction

This report concentrates on the revised General Fund revenue budget for 2015/16 and the draft General Fund revenue budget for 2016/17 for this Committee.

Full details of the overall revised General fund revenue budget for 2015/16, the draft General Fund revenue budget for 2016/17 and the draft Capital Programme for 2016/17 will be reported at the Policy, Finance and Development Committee on 2 February 2016.

2. Recommendations

That Members:

- 2.1.** Consider the Committee revised General Fund revenue budget position for 2015/16 (section 4.1 of report).
- 2.2.** Recommend to the Policy, Finance and Development Committee the Committee's draft General Fund revenue budget for 2016/17 (section 4.2 of report).

3. Information

In February 2015 the Council set the Council Tax and the budget for the General Fund for 2015/16. In March 2015, the Council's forward forecast to 2017/18 was set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which was approved by the Policy, Finance and Development Committee.

Further to this, the Policy, Finance and Development Committee approved the budget strategy for 2016/17 in October 2015. The strategy continued the approach adopted in previous years, where the base budget for the year in question is derived from the previous year's original budget less one-off growth items. The base budget was then further reduced by adjusting for items which had been consistently under spent in the previous three years. The MTFS highlighted the key issues that will impact on the 2016/17 budget:

- The current financial position of the Council including working balances and level of reserves
- The local government financial settlement
- The review and retention of the business rates pooling system
- The review and revision of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme
- The roll out of Universal Credit and other welfare reforms

- Any changes to New Homes Bonus funding
- The availability of capital resources and prudential indicators
- The Housing Revenue Account and the impact of reductions in rent levels over the next four years
- Service transformation

The provisional settlement information for 2016/17 that has been released shows that the Council has seen a further reduction in Government funding.

	2015/16	2016/17	Inc/(Dec)
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Revenue Support Grant	1,130	718	(412)
Non Domestic Rates	1,357	1,411	54
New Homes Bonus	318	446	128
	2,805	2,575	(230)

The reduction was greater than anticipated in the MTFS.

It is clear from the current national economic position and consequential impact on local government resourcing that the Council needs to continue to reassess its costs, service provision, sources of income (including levels of Council Tax), and opportunities to deliver efficiencies. As central funding continues to decline the Council will increasingly need to take advantage of opportunities to increase resources that are primarily dependent on business and residential growth in the borough. However, announcements in the Autumn Statement regarding changes to the New Homes Bonus Scheme and Business Rate retention may make this approach more challenging in future years. A report will be presented to Policy, Finance and Development Committee in March 2016 that updates the MTFS to reflect these changes.

4. Financial Position

- 4.1.** For the current year of 2015/16 the Committee revised General Fund financial position shows a projected outturn position of £3,826,710 which is an overspend against the original budget of £ 243,210 or 6.8%.

Set out below is a table detailing the main original to revised budget variances for 2015/16 together with notes explaining the principal changes.

(Continued overleaf)

Original to Revised Budget 2015/16 Major Variances		
Additional Costs		
GP Referral		3
Core Funding		2
Swimming Pool Contractor Costs		7
Green House Gas Project		2
Increase in charges from other departments		30
Other minor increases		10
		54
Reductions in Income		
Recycling Income	1	184
Reduction in Recycling Credits	2	83
Reduction in Pest Control Income		4
		271
Savings		
Grant to Senior Citizens		(5)
Neighbourhood Management Scheme		(2)
Refuse Sacks	3	(23)
Refuse and Recycling Hired Staff	3	(21)
Reduction in Transport Costs	4	(11)
Floral Displays		(6)
Grounds Maintenance Hired Staff		(13)
		(81)
Net Change on Committee		244

- (1) The income received for recyclable materials has continued to be eroded due to market forces in what continues to be a volatile market. At present officers cannot see the situation improving in the short to medium term and as a result 2016/17 income budgets have been reduced by a similar amount.
- (2) Leicestershire County Council has ceased giving recycling credits for garden waste in 2015/16 resulting in a considerable drop in income. This will continue in 2016/17 however members should note the County Council are planning further reductions in 2017/18.
- (3) The food waste collection scheme terminated September 2015. This has resulted in savings in both manpower and materials.
- (4) The Council has benefited from the continuing low fuel prices during the year.

Background Papers:

Report to Council on 19 February 2015 – Budget Proposals 2015/16

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Implications	
Financial	Incorporated within the body of the report.
Legal	No significant implications.
Risk	CR1 - Decreasing Financial Resources CR9 - Economy.
Equalities	No significant implications.

Risk Management Implications

Risk	Risk Score before any control measures have been put in place to reduce the risk	Control measures, actions and assurances that are currently in place and working that are reducing the risk	Current Risk Score	Strategies and actions that could be introduced to further reduce the risk, including those proposed within the report	Fully controlled risk score indicating the level to which the risk could be reduced in the future.
<p>Category: Financial</p> <p>Risk: Failure to ensure that net expenditure is contained within the approved budget will result in failure to safeguard the Council's overall financial position</p>	<p>High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the financial implications of new Government policy • Respond to Government consultation and other initiatives. • Develop and maintain sustainable revenue budgets supported by adequate levels of reserve. • Regular budget monitoring, including forecasting the outturn position by Heads of Service, finance officers and Senior Management Team • Actively manage those aspects of the budget that consist of significant demand-led expenditure income. • Manage delivery of the transformation programme through identifying efficiencies and budget pressures at an early stage. 	<p>Medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to both external and internal events that may influence the budget position including changes in legislation and funding levels. • Consider affordability of new proposals and future levels of Council Tax 	<p>Medium</p>

Agenda Item 8



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 19 January 2016	Matter for Information and Decision
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Title: **Housing Finance Update - Housing Revenue Account (HRA)**

Author: **Martin Hone - Interim Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer)**

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report provides the committee with an update on progress in implementing the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30 year business plan.
- 1.2. Since approval of the business plan by Service Delivery Committee, the plan has been updated and regularly reported to the Policy, Finance and Development Committee.
- 1.3. A further update of the plan will be taken to the next meeting of the Policy, Finance and Development Committee.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That Members should note the report and recommend to Policy, Finance and Development Committee the new levels of rent and service charges described in sections 4 and 5 below.

3. Information

- 3.1. The new financial regime for Local Authority Housing came into force in 2013/14 giving local authorities more control over their housing stock's finances, particularly in relation to the retention of rental income and the raising of funding for capital investment.
- 3.2. There are a number of changes to Central Government policy which will impact on the HRA going forward.
- 3.3. The Government through the July Budget brought in significant changes to legislation which will adversely affect income streams within the HRA and therefore the stability of its business plan. These include:
 - a) A new rent policy which will see rents reducing by 1% per annum for the next 4 years; and
 - b) The impact of the Housing and Planning Bill which sees Right to Buy being brought into the Housing Association sector and the introduction of a levy on Councils, based on stock values as well as the moving of higher earning tenants to market rent.
- 3.4. The Government is currently collecting information from Councils relating to the open market value of its stock and the time each property remains void. This is likely to form the basis of the charge that the Government will make on Councils. At present it is too

early to predict how large this charge will be but it is conceivable that it will severely impinge on the Council's future capital programme.

4. Rent Levels 2016/17

4.1. As stated rent levels will decrease for 2016/17. Currently a 1% decrease in all households rent will move the average rent for a property from £78.65 to £77.86 which equates to a drop in annual rental income of around £50,000.

4.2. The range covered by the new rent levels are listed below.

	Weekly Rent	Weekly Rent	Decrease per week	Change	Property Type
	£	£	£	%	
Highest Rent	98.08	97.10	0.98	1%	3 Bedroom House
Lowest Rent	58.49	57.91	0.58	1%	Bedsit
Average Rent	78.65	77.86	0.79	1%	

4.3. The HRA Business Plan update taken to the Policy, Finance and Development Committee in October 2015 demonstrated that the business plan was still viable although working HRA balances would drop to their minimum sustainable level and remain there until around 2023.

5. Service Charges and Garage Rents

5.1. Non dwelling rents are not subject to the rent reduction described in part 4 of this report and as a result it is recommended that they are increased by CPI +1% in line with the previous rent and charging policy.

6. Capital Programme

6.1. The Council will continue to bring its stock up to the Decent Homes Standard through its whole unit refurbishment strategy. It is currently estimated that there will be considerable slippage (around £1.4million) of the 2015/16 programme into 2016/17. This will bring the 2016/17 programme to £3.9million, which will be funded by the continuation of the Major Repairs Allowance (MRA), Revenue Contributions and around £2million of borrowing.

6.2. At present it is unknown if the government will continue the MRA beyond the transitional five year period set out in the Self Financing Agreement and assumed in the Business Plan. Unless this arrangement continues or a similar satisfactory arrangement is put into place then future capital works will be severely hampered.

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Implications	
Financial	Contained in the report.
Legal	No significant implications.
Risk	CR9 - Economy. CR1 - Decreasing financial resources
Equalities	No significant implications.



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 19 January 2016	Matter for Information and Decision
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Title: **Community Services Update**

Author: **Steve Glazebrook – Interim Community Services Manager**

1. Introduction

This report is to provide an update to the Service Delivery Committee regarding the delivery of landlord Services and related community activities.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to note the contents contained within the report.

3. Rent Arrears - Situation Quarters 2 & 3 (2015-16)

3.1. Quarter 2

Rent arrears peaked during July in Quarter 2, at which point the Gross Arrears stood at **£252,167.69** and the Net Arrears were **£203,032.39**. Since this point both debt levels have fallen and a summary of the situation at the close of the period (Wk 26) complete with comparisons to both Q1 2015-16 and Q2 last year (2014-15) is set out below:

Period	Gross Arrears	Net Arrears (Net of prepaid)	Comparison to Q1 2015-16 (Gross Arrears)	Comparison to Q1 2015-16 (Net Arrears)
Quarter 2 2015-16 (Wk 26)	£213,895.74	£147,578.02	Decrease £2,466.31 ↓1.13%	Decrease £12,422.81 ↓7.76%
			Comparison to Q2 2014-15 (Gross Arrears)	Comparison to Q2 2014-15 (Net Arrears)
			Increase £35,744.24 ↑20.06%	Increase £31,581.21 ↑27.2%
Comparator Information				
Q1 2015-16	£216,362.05	£160,000.83		
Q2 2014-15	£178,151.50	£115,996.81		

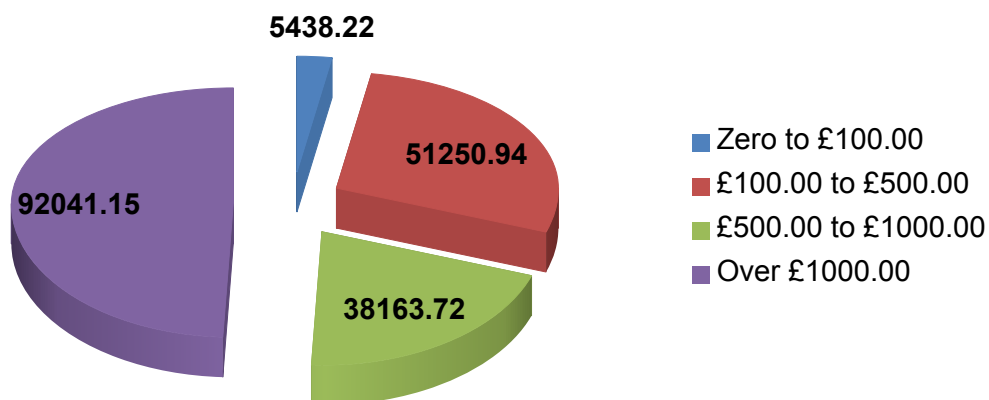
3.2. Quarter 3

Rent arrears have continued to fall during Quarter 3 and a summary of the situation at the close of the period (Wk 39) complete with comparisons to both Q2 2015-16 and Q3 last year (2014-15) is set out below:

Period	Gross Arrears	Net Arrears (Net of prepaid)	Comparison to Q2 2015-16 (Gross Arrears)	Comparison Q2 2015-16 (Net Arrears)
Quarter 3 2015-16 (Wk 39)	£186,894.03	£106,970.99	Decrease £27,001.71 ↓12.6%	Decrease £40,607.03 ↓27.5%
			Comparison to Q3 2014-15 (Gross Arrears)	Comparison Q3 2014-15 (Net Arrears)
			Increase £11,576.18 ↑6.6%	Increase £36,458.17 ↑51.7%
Comparator Information				
Q2 2015-16	£213,895.74	£147,578.02		
Q3 2014-15	£175,317.85	£70,512.82		

The breakdown of the debt in terms of value bandings at the close of Q3 is set out below:

Current Arrears by Value Close Quarter 3



These figures show that the areas of most concern lie at the top end of the Value range, (Cases over £500), in particular over £1000, which is where the main thrust of the income officers' efforts have been directed and will continue to be so.

As part of a number of basic monitoring measures recently introduced, the number of cases in arrears has been recorded since 24th August 2015. Whilst this is variable week to week, overall the number of cases has dropped during the course of both Q2 & Q3.

The debt level for the year to date, number of cases in arrears and analysis of the current tenant arrears on a monthly basis is set out in Appendix 1.

The team has now settled in terms of staffing and the Income Officers and have begun to come to terms with the highest level arrears cases resulting in an increase in the service of Notices of Intention to Seek Possession, new applications to court for possession and also in warrants for eviction. In addition as at the end of December the majority of cases that had accrued zero to £500 during the month had been contacted and suitable actions taken or arrangements for repayment made.

Performance is now improving month on month and a set of measures have been put into place to try and ensure that arrears levels continue to improve through to the end of the financial year, these include:

- Monthly One to One monitoring sessions with both of the Income Officers during which progress of all cases is examined.
- At least 3 intensive campaigns on outstanding current tenant debt to be carried out between October 2015 and the end of the financial year, two of which will be targeting the “Non Collectable” weeks that occur during December 2015 (Christmas) and at the last two weeks of the financial year in March 2016. The third will be targeted at Monthly and Fortnightly payers during January & early February. The campaigns include as far as possible all Housing Management staff.

The first of these has been carried out during December 2015 and the success of this is reflected in a reduction of 13% in the Gross Arrears total and 33% in the Net Arrears total.

- A thorough review of the Orchard System - Rent Arrears Module set up; in particular the Arrears Case Progression element is to be carried out during Q4 (January to March 2016) as this currently presents a risk to further improvement in respect of arrears collection. Several glitches have been identified to date with the system since the total update went live in October 2014.

In addition to this it is our intention to arrange regular meetings between the Housing Benefit Team Leader, the Income Officers and the Community Housing Team Leader to ensure prompt processing of HB claims, resolution of any outstanding issues and also that suitable submissions for Discretionary Housing Payment are made promptly and followed up. Also it is planned to carry out a review of the current methods of payment available to tenants and an assessment made of additional ways to pay i.e. the introduction of All Pay will be considered during Q4 with a view to making changes to current practices and introducing new payment options for the new financial year.

4. Voids

The average void turnaround time for the period October/November was 50 working days. This includes long term voids where major works were necessary which has distorted the figures and increased the overall void period. The average void covers the period from the date that the property becomes empty until the date that the new tenant moves in. Good practice dictates that Social Landlords should minimise the time that properties are empty between each letting. A number of factors will affect performance including demand, stock condition and the type of stock. However upper quartile performance for the average number of days to re-let a general needs

property is 20 days and a key priority going forward is to achieve that target.

5. Gas Safety

Compliance as at 31 December 2015 was 99.9% due to one outstanding safety check where the previous safety certificate expired on 23 October 2015. Access was subsequently gained after extensive efforts by staff and currently compliance is back to 100%.

Going forward, as a disproportionate number of services fall in the first quarter of the calendar year (January to March), the busiest period for repairs and heating breakdowns we are making earlier appointments to bring forward anniversary dates and improve the profile over the year.

As a result 143 safety checks/services scheduled in January 2016, 139 had already been completed by the end of December and 195 due in February have also been completed. Work will shortly start on 158 safety checks/services due in March.

Detail of the Gas Safety Performance is set out in the table below:

Gas Safety Compliance Date	31 December 2015
Oldest case CP12 expired (CP12 = Gas Safety Certificate)	23 October 2015
% CP12's compliant	99%

6. Update on Capital Programme 2014/15

6.1. Customer Contact Centre - Bell Street - Building Works

This project is now complete and operational, subject to the usual 12 months defects liability period.

6.2. Huts Demolition

A planning application is in preparation to replace the final section of fencing and this should be erected in the spring to conclude this project.

6.3. Boulter Crescent – Full Strip Out and Refurbishment – 136 Homes

It was reported in October that this contract continued to run well and to budget but was subject to some slippage against the original programme. This has now been addressed by increasing the number of blocks being worked on from three to five in the current phase. Having taken this action we continue to work to the original contract completion date of June 2016.

Defect inspections are now being carried out and the contractor has allocated a specific resource to follow up any works identified.

6.4. Boulter Crescent - Community Flat

This project is now on site with the structural works completed and fitting out now started. Due to unforeseen circumstances we were not able to conclude the final

specification and complete works before Christmas. Completion of internal works is now due mid-February. Hopefully seeing this work on site will have addressed residents concerns that this project may not go ahead.

A planning application is being prepared to cover continued change of use from residential to community facility and for some changes to the external areas to provide a buggy shelter and revised access ramps/paths.

6.5. King Street – Whole Home Refurbishment of 19 Homes and Estate Works

Work to tenant's homes was completed in December. Contractors are now working on refurbishment of the final flat which is vacant having been used for partial decanting of tenants of both this project and Queen Street. The work will be completed by the end of January.

While this contract has run beyond what was originally intended in the main relates to piloting whole home improvements without full decanting of tenants. This has not resulted in financial penalty either for the contract or OWBC when agreeing extensions to the contract.

It is expected to contract let the second phase of works at this estate (to rebuild and landscape drying areas) by end of February for work to start in March.

6.6. Queen Street – Balance of Decent Homes Work, Improved Layouts and External Insulation – 11 Homes

This project started in August 2015 and is due to be completed by March 2016. Work is progressing well with 7 homes completed

A second phase to provide external insulation is still to go out to tender.

6.7. William Peardon Court – Kitchen Replacements 36 homes

Works commenced on 28 September with a contract period of three months. In view of the start date the aim was to finish by Christmas. The contract has run slightly beyond this with the final 3 kitchens going on site in January.

Kitchen replacement for Kings Drive and Gibson Close (part of the same overall development) is due to go out to tender in January.

7. Works to Properties with Major Structural Defects

7.1. Falmouth Drive

Structural works (full piled foundation introduced), internal reconstruction to new layout with fourth bedroom and fit out completed. Property let, in defects period.

7.2. Bungalows at St Peters Path

Structural works to two homes (sleeved pile foundations introduced), internal reconstruction to new layout that is adaptable to full mobility standards with the addition of external ramping. One home is tenanted and the decanted tenant has returned. The second home has been allocated and external ramping is currently being provided. Both properties are now in defects period.

The second pair of Bungalows at this site are both occupied following letting of the decant property and will be subject to ongoing periodic monitoring of the structure as reported previously.

A programme of reduction / removal of poplar trees that has contributed the structural damage is to be established over a number of years.

8. Structural Survey of Properties at Churchill Close, Oadby

Works arising from the survey (which was reported in summary at the last meeting) will be programmed in future years looking to start in 2016/17 with works which will enable repainting of the concrete above the walkways.

9. Junction Road – Requiring Full Refurbishment and Feasibility Study to Convert to Two Flats

Following the preliminary designs reported at the last meeting Western Power (responsible for the electrical supply infrastructure) has visited to assess the feasibility and cost of providing separate supplies. We are currently awaiting feedback and prices following which it will be possible to decide if we move forward with full designs to progress the conversion or refurbish as a single dwelling.

10. Ravensthorpe Drive

This house is the Council's first purchase under the commitment made to replace houses sold under the Right to Buy. Works are now on site to carry out further adaptations to the property and to bring it up to decent homes standard.

11. Future Development and Purchase Opportunities

There are a number of possible development and purchase opportunities at present which are currently being pursued namely:

- Canal Street South Wigston
- Chartwell House Oadby
- Kirkdale Road South Wigston
- Station Road Wigston

A full progress report will be presented to the next meeting.

12. Providers of Housing Related Advice Services

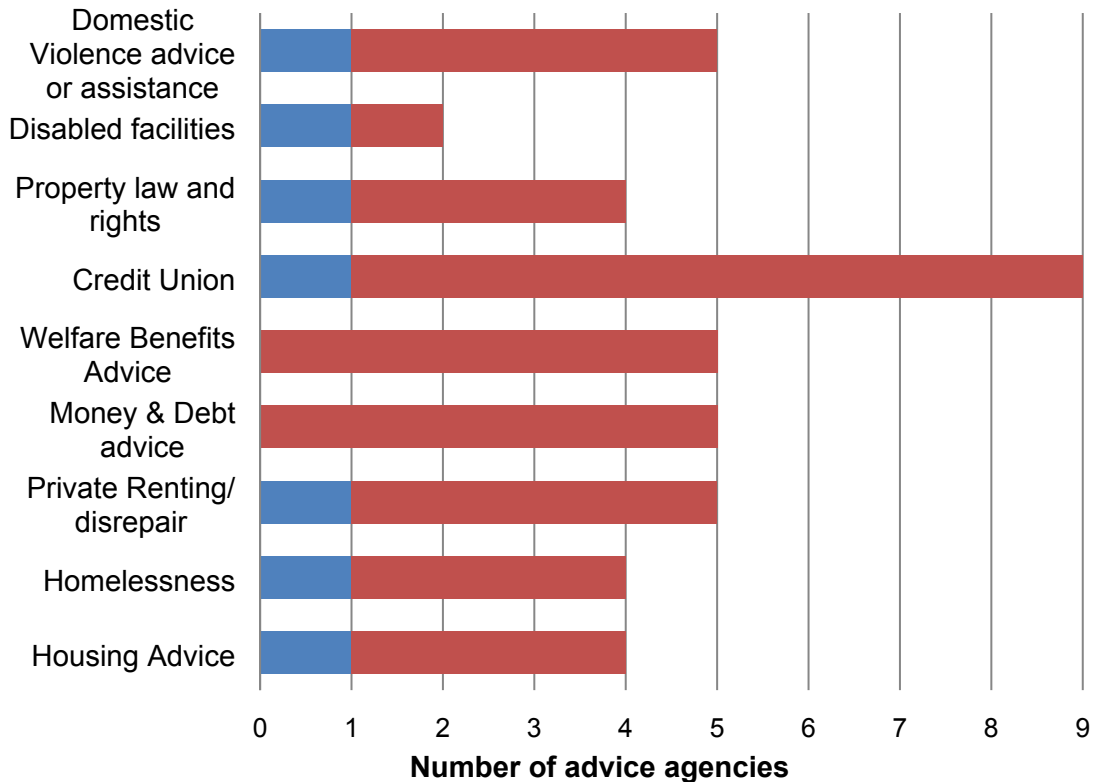
Members asked for a gap analysis of advice services within the Borough and the table below shows that there are 2 providers for each of the areas in question.

The sections in blue show the areas covered by the Council and those in red show those provided by voluntary agencies some of which are provided in Leicester e.g. Shelter provide services to Oadby and Wigston residents from their Advice Centre in Leicester.

Members will note that all of the key areas are covered to some degree either in-house or externally. More detailed information could be supplied if necessary to a future meeting.

(Continued overleaf)

Providers of Advice



13. CBL Statutory Consultation

Further to the report submitted to this committee in October 2015 regarding the review of the Housing Allocation Policy the statutory consultation process has commenced.

We have contacted the other registered providers who are part of Choice Based Lettings Consortium, placed an on line survey on the Council's web site and are consulting with the Resident Forums.

The results of the consultation will be reported to the next meeting.

14. Disabled Facility Grants (DFG's)

It was agreed at the last meeting that options be explored for the Council to join the Lightbulb Project as a means of delivering DFG's and adaptations for disabled tenants.

We have recently received further information from the Lightbulb Project as to how it would deliver the service and it has been agreed that an initial informal arrangement for the project to deliver 2-3 applications on behalf of this Council on a trial. The outcome of this trial will be reported to a future committee. An initial consideration of the Public Contract Regulations 2006 is that where there is informal joint working/co-operation among contracting authorities in the carrying out of public functions,

European procurement rules do not apply however this has to be kept under review. Further consideration will be given to the legal position following the trial.

15. Kennedy House Hostel

Following the update report given to the last meeting regarding the closure of the Kennedy House Hostel there have been no further developments at this stage as to its future use.

Members will be kept informed as and when there is something to report.

16. Warden Services

Following the decision to restructure the Housing and Community Support Services consultation with the affected staff is ongoing and a further report will be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

In the meantime we are in the process of identifying those residents who are considered to be the most vulnerable and finalising the new arrangements for the revised service.

17. Community Payback Schemes

Following the successful completion of the previous schemes further projects are being planned for the spring of 2016.

18. Energy Conservation

Members have asked for a position statement regarding climate change and carbon reduction. A report addressing these issues with a view to devising a comprehensive energy conservation strategy will be brought to a future meeting of this committee.

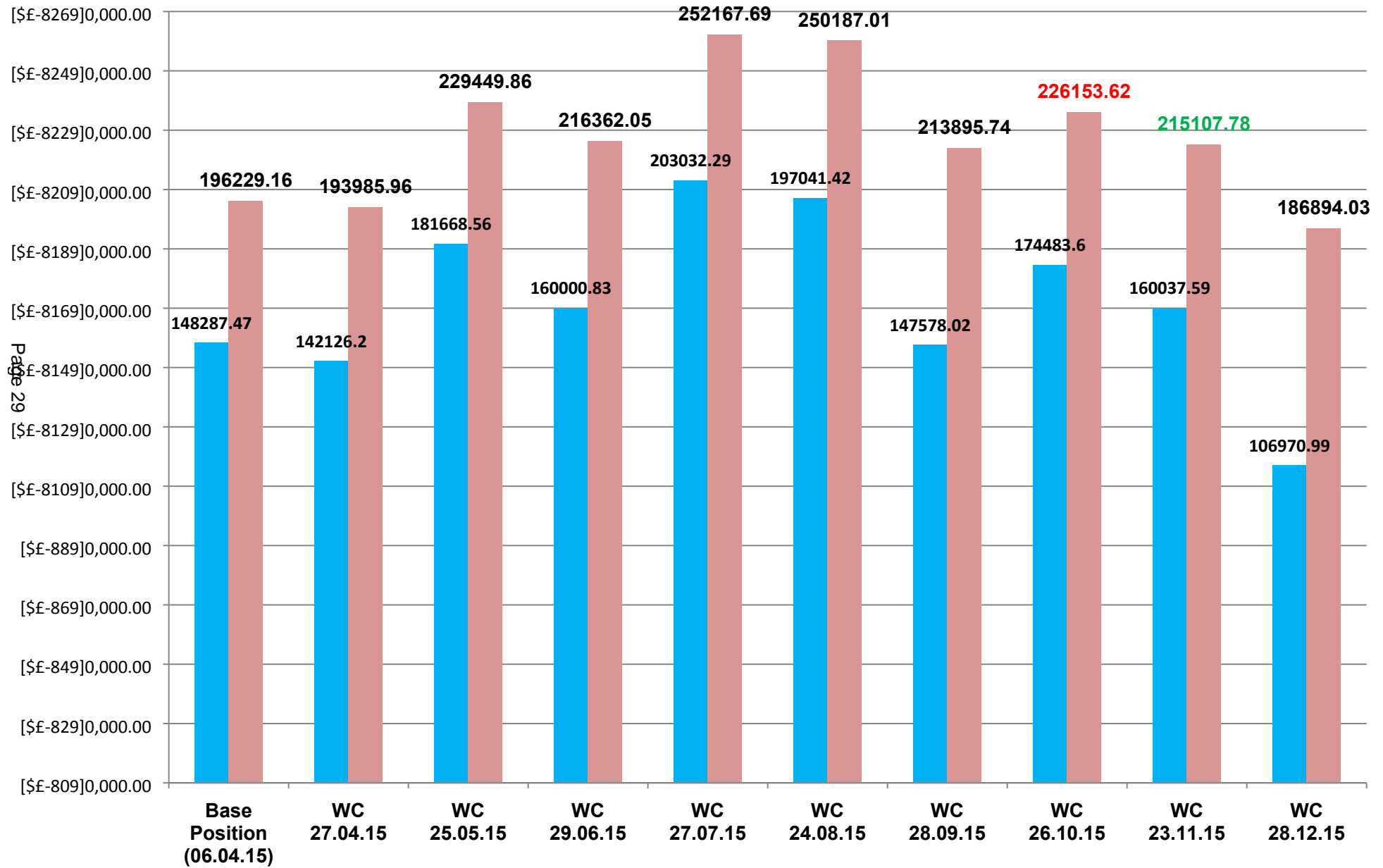
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Implications	
Financial	The levels of arrears will affect the Council's net current assets position on its balance sheet and needs intensive management. Progress on the Capital schemes will affect the projected out-turn position.
Legal	No significant implications.
Risk	CR1 - Decreasing financial resources. CR4 - Damage to reputation regarding the change to warden services and changes to residential qualification. CR9 - Economy.
Equalities	Subject to the outcome of the consultation regarding the change to the residential qualification an equalities impact assessment will be carried out.

APPENXDIX 1

Current Tenant Balance Monthly 2015-2016

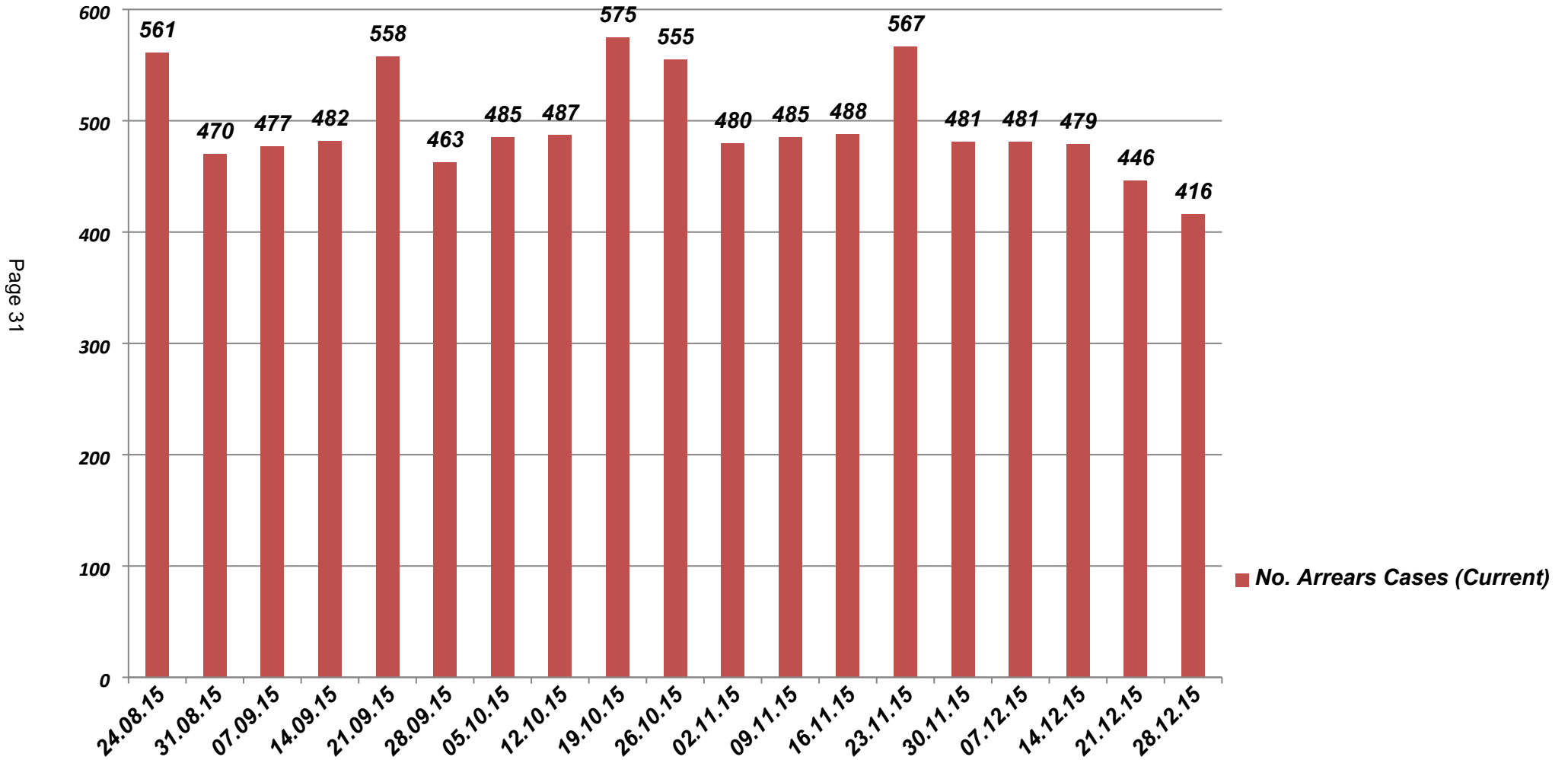


APPENXDIX 1

Month	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Arrears (Net)	£142,126.20	£181,668.56	£160,000.83	£203,032.29	£197,041.42	£147,578.02	£174,483.60	£160,037.59	£106,970.99
Arrears as % of Annual Rent Debit	3.7%	3.6%	3.2%	4%	3.9%	2.9%	3.5%	3.2%	2.1%

Month	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Arrears (Gross)	£193,985.96	£229,449.86	£216,362.05	£252,167.69	£250,187.01	£213,895.74	£226,153.62	£215,107.78	£186,894.03
Arrears as % of Annual Rent Debit	3.8%	4.5%	4.3%	5%	4.9%	4.2%	4.5%	4.2%	3.7%

No. Arrears Cases (Current Tenants)



Agenda Item 10



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 19 January 2016	Matter for Information and Decision
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Title: **Housing Allocations Policy - Adapted Properties**

Author: **Steve Nash - Housing Options Team Leader**

1. Introduction

The Housing Allocations Policy is used to determine the preference given to housing applications and the eligibility for particular properties.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to consider a minor amendment to the Housing Allocations Policy to permit properties with pre-existing adaptations for the disabled to be matched to households that require those adaptations in preference over those who do not.

3. Background

The Council adapts homes under the Disabled Facilities scheme. It has been custom and practice to recycle these adaptations by considering applicants who need these adaptations before other applicants. It has been drawn to the Council's attention that the Housing Allocations Policy does not specifically state that we will do this. This amendment will provide clarification.

The reasoning behind this is that moving a household which requires adaptations can mean a cost saving in not having to adapt their existing home.

4. Suggested Amendment

Under paragraph 9 (Other eligibility criteria) is inserted;

Property Type/Size:	Preference Given To:
Properties which have been adapted for the disabled including those with Level Access Showers, extensions providing ground floor sleeping accommodation, through floor platform lifts.	1. Households requiring the specific adaptations; 2. Other eligible households.

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Implications	
Financial	Adopting this policy will ensure that investment in carrying out adaptations to properties is utilised for those that need it and it will help to reduce expenditure on further adaptations.

Legal	No significant implications.
Risk	CR1 - Decreasing financial resources. CR5 – Effective utilisation of assets.
Equalities	An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be carried out to assess the impact on other applicants.

Agenda Item 11



**Service Delivery
Committee**

**Tuesday, 19 January
2016**

**Matter for Information
and Decision**

Title: Homelessness Prevention Funds Policy

Author: Steve Nash - Housing Options Team Leader

1. Introduction

The Council agreed a policy in October 2014 which focused financial assistance to those homeless residents who were deemed to be 'in priority need'.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to consider making upto 20% of the Homeless Prevention Budget available to those who whilst meeting the existing criteria are deemed 'not in priority need'.

3. Background

The existing scheme has assisted 'priority' cases with securing privately rented accommodation over a number of years. Increasing rents, tighter underwriting conditions and the impact of welfare reforms has reduced the numbers of households assisted.

	2014/15	2015/16 - To Date
Budget	£49,000.00	£48,000.00
Priority Households Assisted	13	10
Expenditure	£11,410.00	£6,087.00

Housing Options Officers have identified an unmet need to assist those households who are deemed 'not in priority need'. These are usually single people and childless couples of a working age.

This need has always existed but has become a pressing issue as in September 2015 the Kennedy House Hostel closed its doors. This hostel had been a destination for many homeless people deemed 'not in priority need', including a proportion from the Borough. The alternative and smaller provision is located in Loughborough.

The Housing Options team now need the flexibility to assist 'not in priority need' homeless Borough residents with securing private accommodation.

All other aspects of the policy will remain in force including the need for accommodation to be suitable and affordable. Virtually all assistance is provided by way of interest free loans.

4. Resources

The cost of providing this assistance will be met from the existing Homeless Prevention Budget which is provided by the Department for Local Government as grant.

If agreed, £2000 will be provided for the remainder of 2015/16 and £9000 for 2016/17.

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Implications	
Financial	Extending the scope of the payments can be contained within the existing budget.
Legal	A written policy is required to ensure that Local Authorities are able to provide financial assistance to persons in the private sector.
Risk	CR1 - Decreasing financial resources. CR6 - Regulatory governance. The Council is expected to determine the needs of its residents There is also the risk that by extending the scope of the payments, it may generate additional demand.
Equalities	By extending the scope of the payments, it will ensure equality of access to all.

Agenda Item 12



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 19 January 2016	Matter for Information and Decision
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Title: **Empty Homes Strategy and Corporate Enforcement Update**

Author(s): **Steve Glazebrook – Interim Community Services Manager
Anne Court - Director of Services and Monitoring Officer**

a. Empty Homes Strategy

a.1. Introduction

This part of the report is to provide an update to the Service Delivery Committee on progress in tackling empty homes within the Borough.

a.2. Recommendations

Members are asked to note this part of the report and to approve the following actions contained within the report.

a.3. Information

There have been several reports in the past regarding empty homes and action has been taken to address the issue but so far with limited success.

Currently there are 132 properties which have been empty between 6 months and 2 years and a further 35 properties that have been empty for more than 2 years.

During 2012 a number of properties were identified as needing renovation works to make them habitable. The owners were contacted and offered financial assistance towards the cost of the works. This was on the basis of a 50% grant unfortunately none of the offers of financial assistance was taken up, the main stumbling block being the requirement for the owners to find the other 50% of the costs.

The Private Sector Housing Renewals Policy (June 2014) states that the Council can offer up to 50% grant to a maximum of between £10-£30K dependent on the size of the property. There is however the discretion to offer up to 100% of the costs of the works and for the scheme to have any chance of success it is recommended that on a case by case basis a grant of up to 100% be offered. In return the Council would expect 5 year nomination rights in respect of new tenants. Alternatively the owner of the property can lease the property to the Council under the Private Sector Leasing Scheme whereby the Council would manage the property for the period of the lease.

There is no specific budget for the provision of financial assistance for empty homes and applications will be dealt with on a case by case basis according to merit and value for money.

During the autumn of 2015 the owners of 31 long term empty properties were contacted to ascertain their intentions with regard to future occupation. In addition the owners were made aware that the Council could provide financial assistance to

bring the properties back in to use. They were also informed that the Council has legal powers to take over the property by way of compulsory purchase and enforced sale of properties.

To date we have received 9 responses the details of which are as follows:

- 1 property has been renovated and is up for sale;
- 4 properties are undergoing renovation works;
- 1 property is awaiting listed building consent;
- 2 properties are now occupied; and
- 1 property awaiting possible redevelopment.

In addition 2 of the above owners have enquired about possible financial assistance. These enquiries are currently being followed up.

There are a range of measures available to the Council to tackle the problem of empty homes and in cases where the property owners do not voluntarily renovate the property it is recommended that delegated authority be given to officers to take the appropriate action including the following:

- Enforced sales procedure;
- Empty Dwelling Management Orders under the Housing Act 2004;
- Section 215 Town and Country Planning Act 1990; and
- Compulsory Purchase Orders.

b. Corporate Enforcement Update

b.1. Introduction

This part of the report is to provide an update to the Service Delivery Committee on Corporate Enforcement matters.

b.2. Recommendations

Members are asked to note this part of the report.

b.3. Information

b.3.1. Benefit Prosecutions - None heard in the last quarter and 4 pending.

b.3.2. Environmental Health - Officers have in recent weeks utilised Private Sector Housing powers to tackle unsafe housing conditions, where a young family are living. Contractors were instructed to undertake significant electrical rewiring in a property to provide heat and light. The costs will be recharged to the private landlord.

b.3.3. Food Safety Inspections – With the exception of 13 Category E premises (very low risk premises) the inspections are now up to date.

b.3.4. Graffiti – The public toilets at Aylestone Lane were a hotspot during the school holidays. Another area at Baldwin Avenue, bordering Leicester City, has also been a recent hotspot but working in partnership with Leicester City Council, has reduced clean-up costs.

b.3.5. Use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000(RIPA) to carry out covert surveillance for enforcement purposes - The 3 yearly inspection by the Information Commissioner Office was carried out on 11 December. The verbal feedback given was the policies and procedures the Council has in place is satisfactory with some minor suggestions for inclusion. The Council has not utilised its powers under RIPA in the past 3 years. Quarterly reports on use of RIPA will be included in further Corporate Enforcement updates.

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Implications	
Health	Empty properties may attract vermin and the threat of disease and harmful waste products. CR4 - Reputational risk. CR5 - A good quality of life for residents.
Environment	Land may become contaminated. Empty properties may blight an area. CR4 - Reputational risk. CR5 - A good quality of life for residents.
Community Safety	Empty Homes may attract anti social behaviour. CR5 - A good quality of life for residents.
Financial	CR1 - Decreasing financial resources.
Legal	CR6 - Complying with relevant legislation.
Equalities	No significant implications.



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 19 January 2016	Matter for Information and Decision
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Title: **Brooks Hill Country Park Update**

Author: **Anne Court - Director of Services and Monitoring Officer**

1. Introduction

This report covers progress and developments at Brocks Hill Country Park (BH) and as requested by the Chair of Service Delivery Committee setting out achievements and work in progress since October 2015 when activity was last reported.

A further report shall be brought to the next Service Delivery Committee on 22 March 2016 with proposals for efficiency savings and maximising income at BH.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That Members note the report made.
- 2.2. Delegation be given to the s151 Officer to review in-year the continued funding towards the Stepping Stone project as necessary, following further proposals for the project from Leicestershire County Council.

3. Information

3.1. Brocks Hill Country Park and Habitat Management

- Routine conservation management of site. All projects other than woodland thinning and tidying of stone/brash stores completed.
- Assistant Ranger post funded by GtB reserves completed 6th October 2015.
- TCV delivered a commissioned course at Brocks Hill which saw four students learn about hazel coppicing. The material was processed to make stakes and binders for future hedge laying courses. This was then purchased by TCV as part of the new wood sales from the site.
- Some work has been undertaken on boundary habitats based on feedback from neighbours with regard to ASB. One landowner approached for a "land grab" in the spring has subsequently removed the fences and laid boundary hedgerows.

3.2. Country Park Facilities

- Jubilee Amphitheatre used for equinox festival by Leicestershire and Rutland Pagan Federation. Meetings held with Borough Hindu Federation for Holi in March 2016. Discussions underway with theatre companies for 2016 tours.
- Volunteers have maintained fencing, wood chip and brash supplies around

the den building and fencing around the memorial mound. Brash is now coming from winter felling.

- Music/low key “busking” events with Wigston Magna Music Band and other local performers have provided popular weekend additions both at the Sundial, Centre and Amphitheatre. This promotion has led to Oadby and Wigston Scout Band doing a free performance at the Christmas Craft Fair. This helps local bands with their own recruitment and promotion and has been working well.

3.3. Community Engagement

- The door counters recorded visitor tallies in the Centre of:

September	9,561
October	11,777
Total Since April 1st	101,349
Total Since Jan 1st	124,701

- The Friends of Brocks Hill have continued to fundraise and promote the NDVD Programme. Their talks and events such as the Food Fair and heritage focussed talks continue to provide an added attraction to the site and bring in different audiences.
- Half-term holiday events had strong bookings. Events included up to three sessions a day. Over 90 people attended an event in association with Leicester Hedgehog Rescue and 60 attended a pilot evening with the Leicester Astronomical Society. The latter will be developed as paid for events in future, now there is a proven demand.
- Adult events are steadily building a profile, with excellent feedback and new visitors attracted.
- Leicester De Montfort Rotary Club has continued to photograph Brocks Hill as one of their 2015-16 environmental projects. A weekend guided walk was run for five members in October. The group are presenting funds to the Friends Group to buy a dedicated digital frame for the conservatory to display their images. They are looking at having an exhibition of images in 2016.
- Borough-wide Archaeology Field Work Group continues to meet at BH.
- Working with colleagues in Leisure Development for Brocks Hill to host the 2016 Sports Relief mile in March.
- Planning meeting held for Menphys sponsored walk May 2016.
- Through the Friends of Brocks Hill, contacts links have been made with Keyham SEN school. Year 9 pupils will visit on the 30th November for a guided walk to inspire them to make sculptures and features for around the Centre/play areas that reflect their thoughts about nature and being outdoors. This will be an ongoing project into 2016. This will link to the Natural Discovery Volunteer Development programme objectives.
- Support for Oadby Remembers event (commissioned input).
- Working with Community Engagement Officer discussions progressed with Borough Hindu Association around events and links to site in the Borough, outdoor yoga; community funding and events.

- Over 2,100 school children have had commissioned activities at Brocks Hill since April 1st with six schools attending September-November with 350 children. The highest number of pupils attending in a full year previous recorded was 1400 for the whole year 2011-12.
- Working with the Leicestershire Scout Federation on the centenary event February 2016.
- Brocks Hill family Christmas craft fair has continued to be fully booked to showcase local artisans/crafters.
- Working with Oadby and Wigston Lions for use of legacy money around the site to enhance facilities e.g. benches and sculptures.
- Stepping Stones Project, Community engagement and participation in environmental projects – Leicestershire County Council are proposing to reduce the resource available in September 2016, an options paper to suggest possible ways forward will be produced. For the time being, funding contributions by the District Council, approximately £4,000 per annum are being requested to remain the same with any under spend to be either refunded or carried over. Delegation to the S151 Officer is requested to, if necessary, take steps to review the funding towards this project.

3.4 Centre and Building Work

- Interim arrangement SLM for café delivery and catering for events continue. Planning application approved for BH capital works so this is scheduled for the New Year.
- Water leak repair scheduled. Most cost effective solution was a full new main.
- Volunteer gardeners continue working on site. The group is growing and often attracts carers with vulnerable adults (Lead volunteer is DBS checked through OWBC).
- Continued work with advisors on the shop and stocking.
- Responsive maintenance has included dealing with water temperature failures, rain water harvesting and electric failures.
- Health and Safety and Resilience: Continued work on a full Business Continuity Plan. Street Car Park, Oadby.

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Implications	
Financial	No significant implications.
Legal	No significant implications.
Risk	No significant implications.
Equalities	No significant implications.

Agenda Item 14



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 19 January 2016	Matter for Information
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Title: Operations and Facilities Services Update

Author: Anne Court - Director of Services and Monitoring Officer

1. Introduction

This report covers progress and developments within the Operations and Facilities Services setting out achievements and work in progress since October 2015 when activity was last reported.

2. Recommendations

That Members note the information provided within the report.

3. Information

3.1. Facilities

3.1.1. Capital Projects 2015-16

Ervins Lock Footbridge - £55k has been set aside for this project. Negotiation with Canal and River Trust (CRT) are proving frustrating with much conflicting advice and information. Given that there is no in-house experience of undertaking a project of this nature nor of bridge design it is suggested that, in order to move this project forward, external professional advice is sought in order to:

- a) Advise whether the available budget for this project is sufficient
- b) Advise on the process for taking this project forward in order to fully understand upfront what will need to be taken into consideration from start to finish of the project including such things as:
 - Bridge design and procurement;
 - Navigational clearance requirement for the bridge (which in turn would dictate the length of ramps / bridge design);
 - Potential easement arrangements with CRT and / or land purchase on towpath side;
 - Planning permission;
 - Surveys (structural, ecological etc);
 - Project management and co-ordination;
 - Access issues for lifting bridge into place and whether this can be done from canal-side or from the waterway;
 - Applying for a restriction or stoppage on the waterway during installation;
 - Disabled access;

- Maintenance and ongoing liability issues including risk assessments; and
- Potential fees required by CRT (enquiry fees, use of air space, discharge of surface water into canal, indemnity etc).

3.1.2. Memorial Safety – On-going. Cemetery staff continue to carry out remedial work to memorials on an as required basis with stonemasons carrying out work on larger more complex memorials if required.

3.1.3. Wigston Cemetery Boundary Wall repairs – Work to be carried out in March 2016.

3.1.4. Car Park re-surfacing – Quotes are being invited for re-surfacing of a section of East Street Car Park, Oadby.

3.2. Forum Projects

- Burton's Corner, Oadby – completed.
- Ellis Park Drinking Fountain – as agreed with Chair of Oadby Forum this work will be carried out in July 2016.
- Bus shelters – on order.
- Chicken Alley – one quote obtained, two further quotes being sought.

3.3. Other Facilities work:

- Crow Mills – roof of picnic shelter has been replaced, fences mended and two picnic benches installed.
- Wigston Cemetery – slabs re-laid around taps and soak aways created to drain ponding water away.
- Oadby Cemetery – barrier wall installed to create compound for spoil; car parks signs installed.
- The Facilities Office has successfully relocated from Oadby Depot to Room 31 of Council Offices; this was managed without disruption to services, in particular cemeteries.

3.4. Dog Bins/Bags

A supply of dog waste bags are now available in the new Customer Service Centre at 40 Bell Street, Wigston. We are currently giving out to 5/10 people max per week. Feedback from customers is positive that we provide these (including non dog owners – especially people that have an issue with dog fouling in their area). There will also be a supply available from Brocks Hill Country Park reception.

3.5. Waste Collection

Garden waste collection ceased on 27 November 20 15 and will resume on 29 February 2016. We have now delivered over 14,000 garden waste bins this is approximately 65% of the Borough. There continues to be the ongoing issues with garden waste bags.

Food waste ceased on 27 November 2015. A good communications exercise by

the recycling officers explaining the rationale for stopping the collection resulted in only a very few initial complaints and there has been nothing further.

3.6. Public Cleansing

NI 195 outturn for October to December 2015 for the streets and sites surveyed is that none are below “B” grading (good) with the majority being B+ and above. Attached as an appendix are the assessment sheets for each of the 3 months.

3.7. Grounds Maintenance

The winter maintenance programme has included the reducing and raising of crowns on trees across the Borough, particular sites include crown reductions at All Saints, Wigston, St Peter’s Path, Oadby, Meadows Open Space and Wigston. Replacement trees have been re-planted in Peace Memorial Park and restocking of beds.

3.8. Green Flag Award – Peace Memorial Park

Unfortunately, the Park was not awarded the Green Flag in 2015. Issues highlighted in the report have been addressed as follows:-

- Sensory Garden, The Fountain – despite repairing a few months ago this has been vandalised again and so further repair will be undertaken. Re-stocking of the garden is in-hand in the near future;
- Wooden slats around fountain base – Some require replacement due to rotting timbers, again this repair will be undertaken; and
- Canopy roof of pavilion – A capital bid has been submitted for this as the fixing rafters are rotten and require replacement which is beyond the revenue budget

The application for 2016 will need to be submitted by 31 January.

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Implications	
Financial	No significant implications.
Legal	No significant implications.
Risk	CR2 - Key supplier/partnership failure. CR5 - Effective utilisation of assets.
Equalities	No significant implications.

Class	Date	Time	Surveyors	Ward	Transect location	From	To	LITTER	DETRITUS	GRAFFITI	WEEDS
Other highways	20/10/2015		VC	St Wolstans	Cooks Lane	Willowbrk farm	Alleyway	A	b+	A	B
Other highways	20/10/2015		VC	Westfield	Black Pad	Central Ave	Station Rd	B	b+	A	b+
Other highways	06/10/2015		VC	All Saints	Dorchester	18 Dorchester	21 Barnstaple	A	A	A	A
Industry / whse / retail sheds	07/10/2015		VC	St Peters	Kenilworth Rd	Red cross	Oadby Plastics	b+	b+	B	B
Industry / whse / retail sheds	20/10/2015		VC	Fairfield	St Thomas R	Gibbs & Danc	S Wigston Sign	B	b+	B	b+
Industry / whse / retail sheds	20/10/2015		VC	Westfield	Bullhead St	fire station	petrol station	b+	b+	A	b+
Recreation areas	07/10/2015		VC	Brooks Hill	Coombe Park	Park sign	Goal Post	b+	b+	b+	b+
Recreation areas	07/10/2015		VC	St Peters	Iliffe Park	Ent	Far bench	A	b+	b+	b+
Recreation areas	20/10/2015		VC	Brookside	Ellis Park	Ent	slide	B	b+	b+	b+
High obstruction housing	20/10/2015		VC	S Wigston	Matlock Ave	3	9	b+	b+	b+	B
High obstruction housing	07/10/2015		VC	Grange	Beaumont St	27	34	b+	b+	A	b+
High obstruction housing	06/10/2015		VC	Bassett	Bassett St	15	20	b+	A	b+	b+
Medium obstruction housing	20/10/2015		VC	Central	Collaton Rd	25	15	b+	A	b+	b+
Medium obstruction housing	20/10/2015		VC	All Saints	Seaton Ave	14	26	A	b+	A	b+
Medium obstruction housing	07/10/2015		VC	Brookside	James Gav	7	14	A	A	A	b+
Rural roads	06/10/2015		VC	Brookside	A6	201	193 Glen Rd	B	b+	A	b+
Rural roads	20/10/2015		VC	St Wolstans	Welford Road	junc cooks la	Kilby bridge	b+	b+	b+	B
Rural roads	20/10/2015		VC	St Wolstans	Newton Lne	A6	169	A	b+	A	b+
Low obstruction housing	07/10/2015		VC	Grange	The Fairway	19	28	A	b+	b+	b+
Low obstruction housing	07/10/2015		VC	Grange	The Broadway	37	44	A	b+	A	b+
Low obstruction housing	06/10/2015		VC	Grange	Meadowct Rd	4	10	b+	b+	A	b+

Class	Date	Time	Surveyors	Ward	Transect location	From	To	LITTER	DETRITUS	GRAFFITI	WEEDS
Other highways	05/11/2015		VC/RP	South Wigston	Albion St	one way sign	alley glengate	b+	b+	A	b+
Other highways	10/11/2015		VC/RP	Bassett	Countesthpe Rd	6	opp carpark	b+	b+	A	B
Other highways	05/11/2015		VC/RP	St Wolstans	Arndale	Newton Lane	20 Arndale	B	b+	A	B
Industry / whrse / retail sheds	10/11/2015		VC/RP	Westfield	Bullhead St	paddock st	Aldi carpark	A	b+	b+	b+
Industry / whrse / retail sheds	10/11/2015		VC/RP	Brookside	Asda	opp 69 Leics Rd	lamp 32	b+	b+	b+	B
Industry / whrse / retail sheds	05/11/2015		VC/RP	All Saints	Chartwell Dr	3	10	A	A	A	b+
Recreation areas	10/11/2015		VC/RP	All Saints	Uplands Pk	car park	ent play area	b+	A	A	b+
Recreation areas	05/11/2015		VC/RP	Grange	Nidderdale os	rear 12 rosed	rear 13 rosedale	A	A	A	b+
Recreation areas	10/11/2015		VC/RP	All Saints	Horsewell lan	ent	slide	b+	b+	b+	B
High obstruction housing	10/11/2015		VC/RP	Grange	Regent Street	11	55	b+	b+	A	b+
High obstruction housing	05/11/2015		VC/RP	All Saints	Pullman Rd	64	84	b+	b+	b+	b+
High obstruction housing	05/11/2015		VC/RP	Bassett	Timber St	30	37	b+	b+	A	b+
Medium obstruction housing	10/11/2015		VC/RP	St Wolstans	Two Steeple Sq	9	19	A	A	A	A
Medium obstruction housing	10/11/2015		VC/RP	All Saints	Homestead D	6	2a	A	b+	A	b+
Medium obstruction housing	05/11/2015		VC/RP	Oadby Uplands	Brookside Dr	35	27	b+	b+	A	b+
Rural roads	05/11/2015		VC/RP	St Wolstans	Welford Rd	jun Homestead	Cemetery	b+	B	A	b+
Rural roads	10/11/2015		VC/RP	St Wolstans	Cooks Lane	Railway Br	Navigation pub	b+	b+	A	B
Rural roads	05/11/2015		VC/RP	Grange	Gartree Rd	40mph	1 New Cottage	B	b+	A	b+
Low obstruction housing	10/11/2015		VC/RP	Brookside	Manor Rd Ex	15	11	A	B	A	b+
Low obstruction housing	10/11/2015		VC/RP	Grange	Powys Ave	9	16	A	A	A	A
Low obstruction housing	10/11/2015		VC/RP	Grange	Knighthor Gr	F26	32	b+	B	A	b+

Class	Date	Time	Surveyors	Ward	Transect location	From	To	LITTER	DETRITUS	GRAFFITI	WEEDS
Other highways				Brookside	Isia Close	8 Isis Cl	Tamar Road	A	b+	A	A
Other highways				St Wolstans	Stanhope Rd	34 Stanhope	16 Little Dale	B	b+	A	b+
Other highways				Brocks Hill	Devenshire W	26	opp 51	b+	b+	b+	b+
Industry / whse / retail sheds				St Peters	Kenilworth Dr	R Mason	Joeseph Ball	b+	b+	B	b+
Industry / whse / retail sheds				Bull Head Street	Bull Head Str	B & Q	Ross Lane	b+	B	b+	b+
Industry / whse / retail sheds				St Peters	Kenilworth Dr	Assoc stairlift	Jolly Vending	b+	A	b+	b+
Recreation areas				Brocks Hill	Coombe Rise	Park sign	goal post	b+	A	b+	b+
Recreation areas				Brookside	Hunters Way	entrance	end	A	b+	A	A
Recreation areas				Brookside	Florence Wra	entrance	slide	b+	A	b+	b+
High obstruction housing				Westfield	Elizabeth Ct	Block 21-28	Ent Drying area	B	A	b+	b+
High obstruction housing				Bassett	Irlam Street	13	19	b+	A	b+	A
High obstruction housing				Grange	Spencer St	7	14	A	b+	b+	b+
Medium obstruction housing				All Saints	West Ave	8	22	A	b+	b+	b+
Medium obstruction housing				Brookside	Smore Slade	13	19	b+	b+	A	b+
Medium obstruction housing				Brookside	Waldron Dr	10	17	b+	A	b+	A
Rural roads				Grange	Cartree Rd	Cow & Plough	Junec Shady Lane	b+	A	b+	b+
Rural roads				St Wolstans	Welford Road	Roundabout	ent to Rugby grs	b+	b+	A	b+
Rural roads				Grange	Cartree Rd	Spire Hospita	117 Cartree Roe	A	b+	A	b+
Low obstruction housing				St Wolstans	Spring Lane	4	7	b+	A	b+	b+
Low obstruction housing				Grange	The Fairway	2	8	A	b+	A	b+
Low obstruction housing				Grange	Wych Elm Rd	20	25a	A	A	b+	b+



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 19 January 2016	Matter for Information
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Title: **Customer Services Transformation - Progress Report**

Author: **Anne Court - Director of Services and Monitoring Officer**

1. Introduction

This report provides an update for Members on the progress of the Customer Service Transformation programme since the opening of the Council's new Customer Service Centre at 40 Bell Street, Wigston.

2. Recommendations

That Members note the information provided within the report.

3. Information

3.1. In order to meet the Council priorities of protecting front line services and delivering efficiency savings to meet continuing budget cuts it has been necessary for the Council to continuously review its services, organisational structure, processes and culture. One major area that was identified in 2014 in this respect was Customer Services and the way that the Council greets, deals with, assists and otherwise involves itself with members of the public as well as the internal processing of information amongst its staff.

3.2. Phase One of the Customer Services Transformation project saw the successful opening of the new Customer Services Centre at 40 Bell Street, Wigston on 12 October 2015.

3.3. Progress to Date

In the initial 8 weeks of operation (12 Oct – 5 Dec) the new Centre has dealt with:

- Face to Face visitors, 2,290; and
- Telephone callers, 3,927.

With the IT investment, detailed statistics can be produced and since the opening, the statistical information demonstrates that the change in location to a town centre has increased face to face contact significantly. In the first month of opening there was a 31 % increase in full enquiries and 57% increase in quick enquiries. An example of the monthly statistics breakdown is attached as at Appendix 1. The upward trend of increased face to face contact has continued.

The service has also implemented a totally electronic method of referring enquiries to 15 other services in the Council. The use of this DASH (dashboard) system has allowed measurement of the enquiries both dealt with by Customer Services and referred back to these Service Areas.

The largest numbers of interactions are in the following areas:

- Housing, 1,618;
- Waste Management, 1,570;
- Benefits, 847 (nearly all face to face, as most telephone calls remain with the back office);
- Council Tax and Business Rates, 650 (as with Benefits, most phone calls remain with the back office);
- Client Services (Cleansing etc.), 465;
- Environmental Health, 386;
- Planning and Building Control, 155;
- Licensing, 123; and
- Electoral Services, 79.

3.4. Phase 1 of the project consisted of the following deliverables:

- Brand new Customer Services Centre open to the public:-
 - 1 Meet and Greet desk;
 - 3 Self Service PCs;
 - 3 Face to Face desks for Customers to speak to staff;
 - 2 Private interview rooms;
 - 1 Payment kiosk (to take cash and card payments);
 - 10 desk Telephone Call Centre; and
 - 1 “Hot Desk” room.
- Saturday morning opening;
- Late night Wednesday opening; and
- New telephone call centre – supported by a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system supplied by Firmstep & intelligent call routing / queuing system supplied by Lloyds Telecom.
- The recruitment and training of:-
 - 1 Customer Services Supervisor post;
 - 8 new Technical Officer posts (1 more currently undergoing training);
 - 6 Public Liaison Officer posts (2 more currently undergoing training).
- The development of:-
 - 145 electronic forms and processes; and
 - 139 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to assist in service delivery.

3.5. The trial of late night Wednesday opening demonstrated that there was little demand with very low footfall. In view of this, with the little value to residents and the costs of operating, late night Wednesday opening ceased on 6 January 2016.

3.6. There is provision within the Centre for Partners to hold surgeries. The Police, Women’s Aid, Money Advice are all utilising the premises and the Citizen’s Advice Bureau will be doing so shortly.

The second phase of the transformation project to commence shortly will be to deliver

- Online forms for customers to use in place of calling or visiting the Customer Service Centre;
- The ability to pay for services in the same form as requesting that service (online);
- A My Account facility to allow Customers to check balances and make adjustments to their details; and

- Integration with a number of back office systems to remove “double keying” operations and unnecessary phone calls, visits or correspondence with the Council. Not only improving the customer experience, but reducing wasteful use of Council resources.

3.7. Implementing the project required significant workloads on a very small team of people for which they are to be congratulated on delivering the new Service which has been very well received with high levels of use and many compliments on the way it operates.

3.8. A service continues to be delivered from Oadby Library from 10 am to 1 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday (the library is closed on Thursdays). Over the last 12 months there has been reliability issues accessing the Council’s IT systems from the library which affects service provision for users and duplication of work. To improve the situation so that residents in Oadby who choose to access services from the library will receive an effective service there will be upgrading to a point to point network link. This will be the same type of connection that has been installed at the Bell Street Centre.

4. Other Town Centre Matters

4.1. A trial of full pedestrianisation of Bell Street, Wigston commenced in mid-December following a consultation exercise that demonstrated public support for the move. The trial will be up to 18 months. All vehicles are excluded from the area 24 hours a day as part of continued work to enhance the visitor experience in the town.

4.2. Christmas lights schemes were in all 3 town centres over the recent festive period. Overall these were successful and work will now commence on planning for the 2016 lights. There were some issues that will be addressed for the future, such as securing the cone tree in the Oadby centre and addressing some lighting failure in South Wigston, subject to budget additional tree lighting will be put in place and the need for extra power supplies in all centres, be explored.

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Implications	
Financial	There is budgetary provision for the customer services transformation.
Legal	No significant implications.
Risk	CR1 - Decreasing financial resources. CR4 - Reputation damage.
Equalities	No significant implications.

Customer Services Monthly Stats - October 2015

Channel	Face to Face Full Enquiries		Face to Face Quick Enquiries		Phone Full Enquiries		Phone Quick Enquiries & Switchboard calls		Total Enquiries
	684		1026		1145		1222		
Date	Sep-15	Oct-15	Sep-15	Oct-15					
Benefits	194	272	Directions	0	7	Benefits	10	Directions	0
Client Services (Cleansing, Parks & Grounds)	0	9	Form Issued	20	96	Client Services (Cleansing, Parks & Grounds)	94	Sign post to other agency	39
Complaints Comments	0	2	General Enquiry	62	155	Complaints Comments	2	Sign post to County	83
Council Tax / Business Rates	100	128	Giving out recycling bags	109	248	Council Tax / Business Rates	53	Sign post to Liberty	55
Electoral Services	16	17	Handing in post/cheque	93	65	Electoral Services	10	Switchboard	1008
Environmental Health	4	14	Looking up account reference	36	31	Environmental Health	93	Tip opening times	37
Finance/other	31	2	Self service assistance	117	365	FAQ	52	Wheelee Bin Suggestion	0
Housing	96	145	Sign post to other agency	11	59	Finance	2		
Licensing	16	21	Wheelee Bin Suggestion	0	0	Housing	353		
Planning and Building Control	8	15	Totals	438	1026	Leisure	4		
Waste Management	5	59	Increase	57%		Licensing	3		
Totals	470	684				Planning and Building Control	40		
Increase	31%					Waste Management	429		
Data comparison 3 weeks in Sept 2015 at Bushloe House 3 weeks in Oct 2015 at Bell Street									

Breakdown Details

Wednesday's Evening Figures				Saturday's Figures			
Type	W1	W2	W3	Type	W1	W2	W3
Desk Enquiries	1	2	3	Desk Enquiries	7	19	13
Quick Enquiries	2	5	1	Quick Enquiries	41	17	17
Total	3	7	4	Total	48	36	30



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 19 January 2016	Matter for Information
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Title: **Leisure Contract - Progress Report**

Author: **Anne Court - Director of Services and Monitoring Officer**

1. Introduction

This report provides an update for Members on the Council's Leisure Contract.

2. Recommendations

That Members note the information provided within the report and endorse and promote the leisure facilities to the wider audience.

3. Information

3.1. Wigston Pool & Fitness Centre

The new Wigston Pool & Fitness Centre opened to the public on Saturday 12 December 2015. The first weekend of activities provided the following attendances:

- 800 people attended swimming lessons;
- 800 spectators;
- 700 'general' swimmers;
- 500 people touring the gym;
- Of these, 100 people took out a membership; and
- Approx 2,800 in total through the door during the full weekend.

The centre was very well received by the community. A number of positive comments were made including:

- 'Glad to see cubicle showers in both the wet and dry changing facilities';
- 'The gym kit is brilliant and there is more than the old Gym'; and
- 'The quality of finish of the building is very good'.

One area of concern was the lack of easy access steps into the pool. Unfortunately the portable steps from Oadby pool did not fit. A specialist company is currently making adjustments to the steps; once this has been completed and the appropriate holes drilled onto poolside the steps will be back in operation.

Due to a pipe work failure over the Christmas period, the pool was forced to close for a few days until the contractors rectified the problem. Swimmers were signposted to Parklands pool to swim free of charge. Buckingham Pools and Morgan Sindall are producing a report detailing what went wrong and why and also providing some mitigation actions in order to prevent this happening again.

3.2. Parklands Leisure Centre

The new pool at Parklands Leisure Centre opened on Saturday 19 December. Details of attendances were as follows:

- 500 general swimmers;
- 50 people used the gym on the workout for free offer;
- 25 people took out a new membership; and
- Approx 550 additional people through the door during the weekend.

There were many positive comments about the new pool including:

- 'Lovely swimming pool, not as claustrophobic as the old Oadby pool';
- 'Nice open changing facilities, great that I can get changed with my kids';
- 'The overall quality and finish of the pool is very good';
- 'What a fabulous addition to what is already a great centre'; and
- 'The graduated steps into the pool are a fantastic addition'.

The site was very busy, particularly the new cafe, which provides another new facility to the site, for the benefit of the community.

3.3. Final Works - Parklands

Due to extra works on the diversions and fascias the contractors did not complete all the 'external' works by the time Parklands pool opened on 19 December. The contractors are currently completing the side elevation fascias (above the Function Suite) and some of the parking bays which are currently located under the contractors mobile offices in the yard. In addition, some landscaping and seeding work will be completed in the growing season.

3.4. Formal Opening of the New Leisure Facilities

Double Olympic gold medal winner, Rebecca Adlington, together with the Mayor of Oadby and Wigston, Councillor Latif Darr, will formally open the new Wigston Pool & Fitness Centre and the new Pool at the refurbished Parklands Leisure Centre on Sunday 10th January 2016.

The opening events will include the opportunity for our younger residents to try out different types of swimming, including water polo, fast swimming and synchronised swimming. Rebecca will be joined by fellow swimming athletes James Goddard, Craig Figes, Fran Leighton, Vicki Lucass and Zoe Cooper, who will lead the sessions. The day will also be hosted by 2004 Olympic bronze medallist and BBC sports commentator, Steve Parry.

3.5. Old Oadby Pool

The building was closed on Friday 11 December 2015. It was agreed by Members at Council on Tuesday 8th December that the Oadby Swimming Pool building will be secured and will not be available for any alternative use in its present state. The Council will be looking at all of the potential options for the site in the new year, and as part of that, we will come to a view on how best to take account of the views of the local community. Ellis Park will remain open and accessible to all.

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Implications	
Financial	The finance department monitor the management fee payments and interim payments for the new build.
Legal	No significant implications.
Risk	CR2 - Key supplier/partnership failure. CR5 - Effective utilisation of assets.
Equalities	No significant implications.

Agenda Item 17



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 19 January 2016	Matter for Information
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Title: **Customer Service Charters - Exception Report**

Author: **Anne Court - Director of Services and Monitoring Officer**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This is an exception report for Members consideration and information where performance standards have not been met in respect of Service Charters across the Council and the reasons why performance standards have not been met.

2. Recommendations

That Members:

- 2.1. Consider the proposed Service Delivery Charters; and
2.2. Note the performance standards that have not met the set target as reported at paragraph 3 of this report and the reasons why this has been.

3. Information

- 3.1 Overall the service performance promises have in the majority been met as at December 2015, set out below are the exceptions.

3.2. Customer Services / Revenue and Benefits

Benefits

Average time to process new claims

Cumulative average to end of December 2015	16.98 days
Target	15 days

The average number of days to process new claims is slightly below target but has shown an improvement for the last 4 months. We expect to meet our 15 day target by the end of March 2016.

Benefits

New claims and changes processed will be at least 98% accurate

Cumulative average to end of December 2015	92.16%
Target	98%

The target for accuracy is ambitious but it is important that claims and payments are calculated accurately. A quality checking programme is in place whereby feedback is given to assessors to link errors to actions and solutions to drive improvements in accuracy rates.

Council Tax

We aim to collect 98.5% of the Council Tax that is due in the year

The collection rate at the end of December 2015 is 87% which is 0.2% below target.

We expect to meet our target of 98.5% by the end of March 2016.

3.3. Planning Policy and Regeneration Service

In respect of keeping up to date and monitoring the performance of the Local Plan, (including the preparation, consultation and adoption of reviewed Local Plan by December 2016) this has been delayed due to Duty to Co-operate/Evidence Base Requirements. The Local Plan review is now scheduled to be completed by February 2018

3.4. Corporate Resources (CR) Service

Compliance

In respect of responding in full to all Freedom of Information (FOI) requests within the statutory twenty working days, 436 requests under FOI were made between 07 January 2015 to 06 January 2016. 95.7% were responded to within 20 working days. This was due to an unprecedented level staff turnover impacting on workloads and turnaround times.

Democratic Services

In respect of ensuring that draft minutes of all Council meetings are published on the Council's website with 14 working days of the meeting, all but two draft minutes of Council meetings were published on the Council's website within 14 working days of the meeting. This was due to having one sole Officer being responsible for the minute-taking of all standing Committees (whilst managing additional CR workloads).

Licensing

The Licensing team has not carried out compliance checks of licensed premises in conjunction with the Leicestershire Police. This was due to an unprecedented staff turnover impacting on workloads. Two Pub Watch meetings have been arranged by the Council, but as yet there is no Pub Watch Chair.

Legal / Land Charges

There was a temporary significant reduction in the turnaround of searches for land charges in the late part of 2015 due to resources. A shared arrangement is now in place with Blaby District Council to provide resilience and by 18 December the backlog was cleared and a return to searches being turned around in approximately 7 working days, (and will likely reduce in the new year). This is in line with other Leicestershire District Councils. This is for both official searches and for access to the land charges register under EIR/Personal Search. The arrangement with Blaby DC is in place for the remainder of this financial year, whilst considering options.

3.5. Finance and Accountancy

The target for a minimum of 98% of all suppliers and other creditors to be paid within 30 days of receipt of the invoice or within the agreed payment terms – the indicator is currently running at late eighties. Steps will be taken to improve the authorisation of invoices once they are initially processed.

The budget/finance systems training have been put on hold to roll out when the new software version is available, as it is due shortly.

3.6. Community Services

An update is within the earlier report on this agenda - Community Services Update.

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Implications	
Financial	Nothing significant
Risk	CR1 - Decreasing financial resources. CR2 - Supplier/partner failure.
Legal	The Council is required to provide as a minimum, services that are a statutory requirement.
Equalities	The Council's services are accessible to all.