



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, 22 MARCH 2016** at **7.00 PM** for the transaction of the business set out in the Agenda below.

Yours faithfully

Council Offices
Wigston
14 March 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 19 January 2016** 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 19 January 2016** 12
6. **Petitions and Deputations**
To receive any Petitions and, or, Deputations in accordance with Rule 24 of Part 4 of the Constitution.
7. **Community Services Update** 13 - 28

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITTEE HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, STATION ROAD, WIGSTON ON TUESDAY, 19 JANUARY 2016 COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM

<u>IN ATTENDANCE:</u>		
Chair - Councillor G A Boulter Vice-Chair - Councillor Mrs S Z Haq		
COUNCILLORS (10):		
G S Atwal	Mrs L M Broadley	
L A Bentley	F S Broadley	B Fahey
Ms A R Bond	D M Carter	K J Loydall
J W Boyce	Ms K Chalk	
OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE (3):		
S J Ball	S Glazebrook	M Hone

Min Ref.	Narrative	Officer Resp.
36.	<p><u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u></p> <p>A minute's silence was observed in memory of the late former Councillor, Mayor (1992-1993) and Honorary Alderman (2001) of the Borough, Mr R D Allen.</p> <p>An apology for absence was received from Councillors Miss M V Chamberlain, Dr T K Khong and R H Thakor.</p>	
37.	<p><u>APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES</u></p> <p>Councillor B Fahey substituted for Councillor Dr T K Khong.</p>	
38.	<p><u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
39.	<p><u>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2015</u></p> <p>In respect of 'New Build Programme / Refurbishment' (Minute Ref: 29) at paragraph 5, the Chair sought to clarify that two distinct subject-matters were reported: namely: (i) the purchase of former Council-owned properties under the Right to First Refusal (RFR) option afforded under the Right to Buy scheme; and (ii) the separate purchase of a private-sector property to which adaptations were currently being undertaken so to accommodate the intended occupants' disability requirements.</p> <p>RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>Subject to the point of clarification aforementioned, the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 13 October 2015 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.</p>	SJB

40.	<p><u>ACTION LIST ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2015</u></p> <p>RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The Action List be noted by Members.</p>	
41.	<p><u>PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
42.	<p><u>COMMITTEE REVISED FINANCIAL POSITION 2015/16 AND DRAFT BUDGET 2016/17</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 13 - 17) as delivered and summarised by Interim Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Interim Chief Financial Officer stated that the recommendation at 2.2. as set out in the report (at page 13) should be excluded.</p> <p>With reference to New Homes Bonuses (NHB's) at paragraph 3 (at page 14) citing an increase in the same, Councillor J W Boyce requested that a report be brought to a subsequent meeting of this Committee addressing its long-term potential.</p> <p>With reference to the Revised Budget for 2015/16 detailing the major variances at paragraph 4.1 (at page 15), the Member further requested that the budget be reviewed with the view to remove unnecessary budget heads (e.g. Senior Citizens Grants).</p> <p>The Interim Chief Financial Officer stated that although the £128,000 increase in NHB's was a reasonably healthy one based upon the current scheme, an ongoing central government-led consultation process was underway which sought to reduce this area of funding in future years. He advised that there was some uncertainty as to whether this would exclusively affect new grants or if it was to be applied retrospectively. He further provided an undertaking to review the Budget, accordingly.</p> <p>RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The revised General Fund revenue budget position for 2015/16 (as set out at paragraph 4.1. of the report) be noted by Members.</p>	MHo
43.	<p><u>HOUSING FINANCE UPDATE - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA)</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 18 - 20) as delivered and summarised by Interim Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer) which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>With reference to rent levels for 2016/17 at paragraph 4 (at page 19), Councillor L A Bentley enquired as to whether there was a possibility of a further decrease in rents and its discernible impact upon Housing Revenue</p>	MHo

	<p>Account (HRA) and, consequently, the point of service-delivery. The Member further suggested that a review of the Council’s non-dwelling sites and assets be undertaken to ascertain, and capitalise upon, any potential better use(s) of the same.</p> <p>The Interim Chief Financial Officer stated that the 1% reduction in rents per annum was to apply over the duration of the next four years, after which increases in accordance with CPI +1% would resume (subject to the discretion of central government policy). He advised that should rents continue to see a reduction by a further two to three years (2022-2023), the Council’s ambition for the redevelopment of its housing stock would not be achievable and would require a scaling-back of capital programmes and investment of £50,000 per annum: if extended over 30-years, the impact upon the HRA was said to be significant. In respect of non-dwelling sites and assets, it was reported that all local authorities were expected to undertake a purpose-review of their estates and dispose of any redundant holdings.</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce stated that the disposal of the Council’s highest-valued housing stock would not proportionately yield a commensurate return. He further expressed serious reservations in respect of the approximate, accumulative shortfall of £250,000 from the 1% reduction in rents and its impact on future capital projects.</p> <p>The Interim Chief Financial Officer advised that, due to the ongoing consultation process, there was still uncertainty as to criteria to be used to identify the Council’s highest-valued housing stock. It was suggested that this may involve the taking of a percentile-value calculated upon the valuation(s) of those highest-valued properties. He emphasised that the levy in question was compulsory and therefore would either necessitate the disposal of property or a payment rendered to the value thereof.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs S Z Haq sought clarification as to “void” at paragraph 3.4 (at page 18).</p> <p>Councillor Mrs L M Broadley sought further clarification as to the determination of “high-value” housing stock and whether the proceeds of the levy were to be retained by central government. The Member further raised concerns in respect of the ever-increasing diminution of housing stock, particularly under the new Right to Buy (RTB) scheme, and the impact upon the housing needs of social tenants. She was hopeful that the levy’s proceeds would be reinvested into social housing projects in the Borough.</p> <p>The Interim Chief Financial Officer was unable to provide further clarification to the points sought above until such time as the outcome(s) of the consultation process were known.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The report be noted by Members and the new levels of rent and service charges (as set out at paragraphs 4 and 5 of the report, respectively) be recommended to the Policy, Finance and Development Committee.</p>	
44.	<u>COMMUNITY SERVICES UPDATE</u>	SG

The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 21 - 31) as delivered and summarised by Interim Community Services Manager, together with the supplementary agenda update (at page 1), which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.

The Interim Community Services Manager directed Members' attention to particularly significant and noteworthy sections and paragraphs contained in the report. With reference to voids at paragraph 4 (at page 23), he added that a weekly-review process had been implemented to monitor the same and an update report detailing a comprehensive assessment of property voids was to be brought to the next meeting of this Committee on 22 March 2016.

With reference to future development and purchase opportunities at paragraph 11 (at page 26), the Chair opined that it was not advisable to enter into competition with the local Housing Association (HA) in terms of a "bidding war" for the provision of social and affordable housing. He welcomed the possibility of development and, or, purchase opportunities at Station Road, Wigston and Canal Street, South Wigston and suggested that a feasibility study be undertaken to assess the latter option.

With reference to the Housing Related Advice (HRA) services at paragraph 12 (at page 27), Councillor D M Carter enquired as to whether it was possible to distinguish between those providers that operated inside vis-a-vis outside the Borough.

The Interim Community Services Manager advised that of the nine known providers, Age UK, Christians Against Poverty, Helping Hands (HH), the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and the Red Cross had facilities accessible from within the Borough whereas Shelter, Housing Aid, The Bridge, Research Projects and the Saffron Resource Centre operated from Leicester City. He stated that the joint-initiative to use HH and the CAB would ensure the improved delivery of advisory services to Borough residents.

With reference to the Choice-Based Lettings (CBL) statutory consultation at paragraph 13 (at page 27), Councillor J W Boyce sought to clarify that the 'Resident Forums' referred to the Housing Resident Forum and not the three, Community Resident Forums.

With reference to voids at paragraph 4 (at page 23), Councillor J W Boyce questioned the "average" length of the void turnaround time (i.e. excluding the major works exceptions) and requested that greater clarity was needed.

The Interim Community Services Manager stated that the subject of clarity was, in part, a reporting issue inasmuch as lengthy void periods (for the reasons aforementioned) counted against any meaningful average. He added that the facility did exist statistically exclude the same and that the Housing Options Team had been tasked to improve this reporting mechanism. He noted that the turnaround times were greater than ideally anticipated and that new initiatives were to be implemented (viz. quicker maintenance, earlier advertisement during completion of works etc.) in order to substantially reduce this. He further stated that the implications stemming from a low-demand for sheltered accommodation were to be addressed

through the multiple-offer provisions(s) as allowed by the CBL scheme.

With reference to gas safety at paragraph 5 (at page 24), Councillor J W Boyce reiterated the a 100% compliance rate was the only acceptable figure and that more pro-active steps ought to be taken as soon as reasonably practicable to minimise any prolonged periods where such is not the case. The Member agreed with the Chair insofar avoiding competition with the local HA. He noted that any proposed redevelopment at Canal Street entertained significant risk given the building's approximate 30-year vacancy, suggesting that it may well be prudent to reopen the process to identify any third-parties interested in redeveloping the site in order mitigate the implications thereof as may be otherwise assumed by the Council.

With reference to HRA services, the Member further requested that a quantum of need vis-a-vis provision required mapping. With reference to Disabled Facility Grants (DFG's) at paragraph 14 (at page 27), he emphasised the need to be clear in respect of reporting back from the Lightbulb Project and under which defined circumstances. With reference to warden services at paragraph 16 (page 28), the Member stated that ongoing assessments ought to be undertaken to continually re/evaluate and address the ever-changing vulnerabilities faced by those residents affected.

The Interim Community Services Manager reported that he and the Chief Executive were to meet imminently with HH and CAB in order to establish a needs-analysis for advisory services within the Borough, together with a performance-assessment matrix and a method to record footfall. It was said that a process would be undertaken to identify any potential third-party developers for Canal Street.

Councillor L A Bentley agreed with the Chair and Councillor J W Boyce with regards to the means to provide more social and affordable housing within the Borough and endorsed the equity-sharing arrangements incorporated therein in order to better stimulate home ownership. The Member further enquired as to whether a Council-backed bond under any Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) indemnifying any later identified land propitiator of Canal Street site was financially-viable.

The Interim Community Services Manager advised that he was mindful of this implication and that the same would feature in the feasibility study to be conducted.

Councillor K J Loydall emphasised the importance of multi-agency partnership work as part of any advisory services framework so to better signpost service-users within the Borough.

Councillor Ms A R Bond enquired as to the frequency and location of the proposed drop-in surgeries for residents affected by Housing Related Support (HRS) remodel and whether Members were entitled to attend residents' advice sessions. She further requested that Members be informed as to the surgery dates once scheduled.

The Interim Community Services Manager reported that one-weekly surgery session was to be hosted at William Peardon Court, Wigston, and Chartwell and Marriott Houses, Oadby respectively, with an open invitation extended to those tenants living in dispersed bungalows. It was advised that residents

	<p>and Members alike would be informed accordingly once the logistical arrangements were finalised, the responsible Housing Support Officers had received the appropriate training and their obtaining job descriptions revised and approved.</p> <p>The Chair advised that Members would strictly be entitled to attend residents' advice sessions subject to the discretion of individual residents.</p> <p>Councillor Ms A R Bond enquired as to the future development and purchase opportunity at Chartwell House, Oadby at paragraph 11 (at page 26).</p> <p>The Interim Community Services Manager advised that a number of sites were currently being investigated, including Chartwell House and the possibility for the opening-up of a green-field site from the demolition of the garages sited thereat.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The report be noted by Members.</p>	
45.	<p><u>COMMUNITY SERVICES UPDATE - RENT ARREARS FOR QUARTER 3</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the supplementary agenda update (at page 1) which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p>	
46.	<p><u>HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY - ADAPTED PROPERTIES</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 32 - 33) as delivered and summarised by Interim Community Services Manager which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce stated that the recommendation at paragraph 2 (at page 32) made economic-sense and would serve to benefit those individuals with immediate disabled adaptations needs.</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce moved the recommendation contained in the report.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs L M Broadley stated that should any given property not be matched to a household's requirements, that the property in question ought not to be left void but be brought back into re-occupation within a reasonable period of time.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs L M Broadley seconded the recommendation contained in the report.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The amendment to the Housing Allocations Policy (as set out at paragraph 4 of the report) 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 be approved.</p>	
47.	<p><u>HOMELESS PREVENTION FUNDS POLICY</u></p>	

	<p>The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 34 - 35) as delivered and summarised by Interim Community Services Manager which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The making upto 20% of the Homeless Prevention Budget available to those who whilst meeting the existing criteria are deemed 'not in priority need' be approved.</p>	
48.	<p><u>EMPTY HOMES STRATEGY AND CORPORATE ENFORCEMENT UPDATE</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 36 - 38) as jointly-delivered and summarised by Interim Community Services Manager and Interim Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer), in the absence of the Director of Services, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>Empty Homes Strategy</p> <p>Councillor D M Carter welcomed the actions taken by Officers in seeking to bring back into occupation those 35 properties that have been empty for more than 2 years. He further enquired as to any targets set, and the timeframes in which those targets were to be achieved, in respect of the remaining 22 non-responding property owners.</p> <p>The Interim Community Services Manager advised that the Environmental Health Team had been tasked with continuing to formally pursue the non-responders in question and that an enforcement action-plan was to be devised, accordingly.</p> <p>With reference to the proposed delegated authority at paragraph a.3. (at page 37), Councillor J W Boyce enquired as whether Offices had a workable policy framework so to render any enforcement action safe and consistent and to ascertain realistic achievement levels within this policy area.</p> <p>The Interim Community Services Manager stated that it was his intention to shortly formulate a sufficiently-robust, written Policy to expedite the enforcement process.</p> <p>Councillor L A Bentley enquired as to the financial-viability, and the risks attached thereto to this Council, in so offering 100% discretionary grants under the Private Sector Housing Renewals (PSHR) Policy given the potentially indeterminate and unpredictable nature and extent of property renovation works.</p> <p>The Interim Community Services Manager advised that grant applications under the PSHR Policy would be carefully considered upon merit and on a case-by-case basis and that the necessary funds would be made available, accordingly.</p> <p>The Interim Chief Financial Officer reiterated the need for a like-for-like approach in respect of any grant offers made whilst taking a holistic</p>	SG/AC

	<p>assessment of the totality of the costs, the revenue streams available and the measure of beneficial occupation likely to be achieved.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs L M Broadley enquired as to whether the 150% council tax rate levied against empty properties had proved successful insofar as encouraging their reoccupation and if any counter provisions were in place to prevent the dual-occupancy of properties serving as a loophole to avoid the increased levy.</p> <p>The Interim Chief Financial Officer advised that all the 35 properties aforementioned have been, or continue to be, subject the increased levy. He added that options were available to close the loophole to which the Member referred and that information on the same would be brought back to a sequent meeting of this Committee.</p> <p>The Vice-Chair enquired as to whether the option of a CPO was still available against properties that had been empty for two years or more.</p> <p>The Interim Community Services Manager answered affirmatively,</p> <p>Corporate Enforcement Update</p> <p>With reference to the costs of electrical rewiring at paragraph b.3.2 (at page 37), Councillor K J Loydall enquired as to the realistic prospect of recharging the costs to the private landlord.</p> <p>The Interim Chief Financial Officer advised that a sundry debtors bill could be raised and that it was always this Council's intention to enforce upon its debts owing.</p> <p>The Chair further advised that the monies owing may well be recuperated by way of an entry on the Local Land Charges Register against the property in question.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The report be noted by Members; and (ii) Delegated authority to Officers to take appropriate enforcement action in pursuance of the Empty Homes Strategy (as set out at paragraph a.3. of the report) be authorised. 	
<p>49.</p>	<p><u>BROCKS HILL COUNTRY PARK UPDATE</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 39 - 41) as delivered and summarised by Interim Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer), in the absence of the Director of Services, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>With reference to the Stepping Stone Project at paragraph 3.3 (at page 41), the Chair noted that a net return has been accrued to this Council in the past through its partnership contribution to the project's budget as administered by Leicestershire County Council.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p>	

	<p>(i) The report be noted by Members; and</p> <p>(ii) Delegated authority to the Interim Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 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, be authorised.</p>	
50.	<p><u>OPERATIONS AND FACILITIES SERVICES UPDATE</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages 42 - 50) as delivered and summarised by Interim Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer), in the absence of the Director of Services, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>The Chair announced that across all the Leicestershire District and Borough Councils for 2014/15, this Council was: the best-performing in respect of the lowest rate of residual household waste (361.63 kg per household); and in the top-performing quartile in respect of the reuse, recycling and composting of household waste (48.84%) (Report to the Meeting of Thursday, 21 January 2016, Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Leicestershire County Council at page 47 - Appendix).</p> <p>With reference to Ervins Lock Footbridge at paragraph 3.1.1 (at page 42), Councillor L A Bentley expressed serious reservations as to the lengthy-protraction of the project and the potential dissipation of the £55,000 budget-allocation. He stated that although the potential use of the existed bridge was considered, it was never pursued. He emphasised that a significant number of residents had expressed that a means of crossing the waterway was urgently needed and that renewed efforts were essential to realise this sooner rather than later.</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce agreed with the sentiments of Councillor L A Bentley.</p> <p>The Chair informed Members as to the revised 5-day opening arrangements of the Oadby Waste Site, as circulated within a information leaflet issued by Leicestershire County Council (LCC) ('Essential Information for Leicestershire Residents').</p> <p>Councillor Mrs L M Broadley expressed concern as to the high, itemised price-tariff for the disposal of non-household items at the Waste Site (as of April 2016) citing, amongst other things, an increased potential for fly-tipping within the Borough. She requested that a letter be drafted to LCC outlining this Council's concerns regarding the aforementioned implications of itemised-charging for non-household items.</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce stated that the issue of fly-tipping was a pan-County subject-matter to be discussed with all Leicestershire District and Borough Councils.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The report be noted by Members.</p>	AC
51.	<p><u>CUSTOMER SERVICES TRANSFORMATION - PROGRESS REPORT</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report and appendices (at pages</p>	

	<p>51 - 54) as delivered and summarised by Interim Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer), in the absence of the Director of Services, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>Councillor Ms A R Bond stated that the Helping Hands Advisory service was operating from the Trinity Methodist Church, Oadby.</p> <p>With reference to the monthly statistics for October 2015 (at page 54) citing a substantial increase in face-to-face enquires, Councillor J W Boyce stated the increased turnover was a measure of the success achieved in terms of the improved efficiency provided to Borough residents through the provision of self-service facilities. He described this measure as both demonstrating customer-service and, moreover, transformational progress and commended all those involved in realising this.</p> <p>Councillor L A Bentley agreed with Councillor J W Boyce. With reference to the pedestrianisation of Bell Street, Wigston at paragraph 4.1 (at page 53), he requested that the black granite blocks be re-positioned to prohibit vehicular to the same.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>The report be noted by Members.</p>	
<p>52.</p>	<p><u>LEISURE CONTRACT - PROGRESS REPORT</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 55 - 57) as delivered and summarised by Interim Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer), in the absence of the Director of Services, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>Councillor J W Boyce acknowledged the Council's achievement in respect of the opening, and at a notable saving, of two new swimming pool facilities at Parklands Leisure Centre, Oadby and Station Road, Wigston within a single one-year period.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs L M Broadley echoed the sentiments of Councillor J W Boyce.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>(i) The report be noted by Members; and (ii) The leisure facilities be endorsed and promoted to the wider audience.</p>	
<p>53.</p>	<p><u>CUSTOMER SERVICE CHARTERS - EXCEPTION REPORT</u></p> <p>The Committee gave consideration to the report (at pages 58 - 60) as delivered and summarised by Interim Chief Financial Officer (Section 151 Officer), in the absence of the Director of Services, which should be read together with these minutes as a composite document.</p> <p>With reference to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests at paragraph 3.4 (at page 59), Councillor J W Boyce enquired as to whether 100% of all FOI request received were responded to in full over time.</p>	

	<p>The Interim Chief Financial Officer answered affirmatively.</p> <p>UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:</p> <p>(i) The proposed Service Delivery Charters be considered; and</p> <p>(ii) The performance standards that have not met the set target (as set out in paragraph 3 of the report) and the reasons why this has been be noted by Members.</p>	
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THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.47 PM



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CHAIR
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TUESDAY, 22 MARCH 2016
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Agenda Item 5

SERVICE DELIVERY COMMITTEE

ACTION LIST

ARISING FROM A MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 19 JANUARY 2015

Min Ref.	Title	Action To Be Taken	Officer	Target Date	On Target
42.	Committee Revised Financial Position 2015/16 and Draft Budget 2016/17	To provide a report addressing the long-term potential of New Home Bonuses (NHB's).	MHo	Apr-16	Yes
42.	Committee Revised Financial Position 2015/16 and Draft Budget 2016/17	To review the budget and remove any unnecessary budget heads (e.g. Senior Citizens Grants, SCG's).	MHo	Mar-16	Yes
43.	Housing Finance Update - Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	To undertake a review of the Council's non-dwelling sites and assets to ascertain any potential better uses.	MHo	Apr-16	Yes
44.	Community Services Update	To provide report detailing an assessment of property voids within the Borough.	SG	Mar-16	Yes
44.	Community Services Update	To undertake a feasibility study into development at Canal Street, South Wigston, and identifying any third-party developers.	AT/SM	Apr-16	Yes (Led by the Regeneration Team)
44.	Community Services Update	To prepare a quantum of need vis-a-vis provision, including a performance-assessment matrix and footfall record, in relation to Housing Related Advise (HRA) and other advisory services (i.e. HH / CAB).	SG	Mar-16	Yes (See report to PFD, 29 March 2016)
50.	Operations and Facilities Services Update	To draft a letter to Leicestershire County Council outlining this Council's concerns regarding the implications of itemised-charging for non-household items.	AC	Mar-16	Yes
53.	Customer Services Transformation - Progress Report	To re-position the black granite blocks on Bell Street, Wigston to prohibit vehicular access.	AC/BK	Mar-16	Yes



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 22 March 2016	Matter for Information
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Title: **Community Services Update**

Author: **Stephen 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.

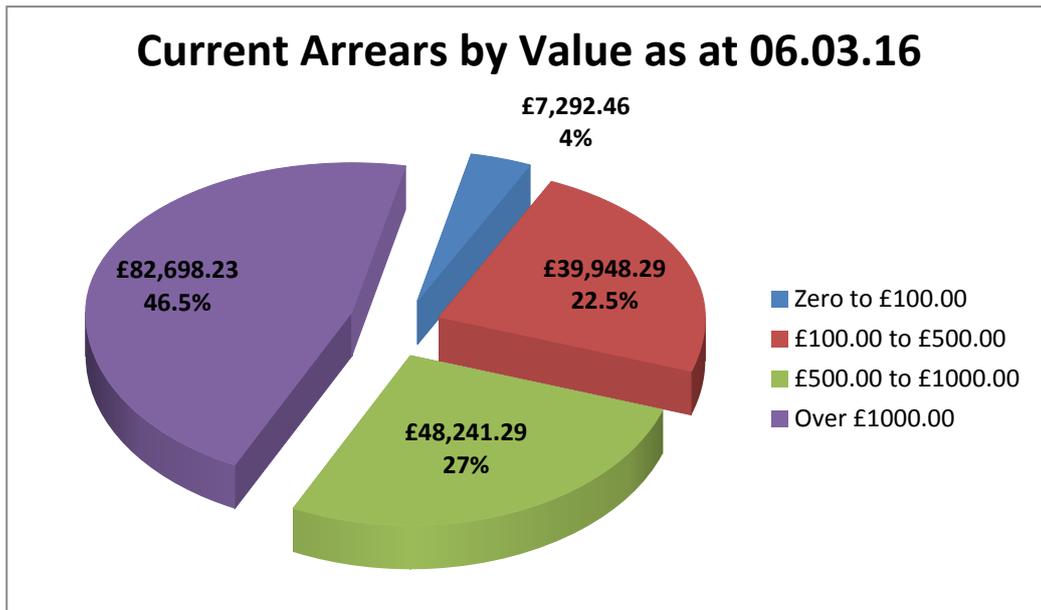
3. Rent Arrears - Situation Quarters 4 (2015-16)

Quarter 4 is not yet complete and so far rent arrears have continued to decrease during the first two months of the quarter. Current Tenant (Gross) arrears levels at the beginning of the quarter stood at £180,411.00 (Wk 40) and have now reduced to £178,180.27 as at 6th March 2016 (Wk 48).

A summary of the situation at the close of Wk 48 complete with comparisons to both Q3 2015-16 and Q4 Wk 48 last year (2014-15) is set out below:

Period	Gross Arrears	Net Arrears (Net of prepaid)	Comparison Q3 2015-16 (Gross Arrears)	Comparison Q3 2015-16 (Net Arrears)
Quarter 4 to date 2015-16 (Wk 48)	£178,180.27	£117,435.12	Decrease £8,713.76 ↓4.6%	Increase £10,464.13 ↑9.78%
			Comparison Q4 2014-15 (Gross Arrears)	Comparison Q4 2014-15 (Net Arrears)
			Decrease £32,670.73 ↓15.5%	Increase £34,905.88 ↓23%
Comparator Information				
Q3 2015-16	£186,894.03	£106,970.99		
Q4 to date (Wk48) 2014-15	£210,851.00	£152,341.00		

The breakdown of the debt in terms of value bandings at the close of Wk 48 is set out below:



These figures show that the cases that lie at the top end of the Value range, (Cases over £1000) have continued to fall as a result of the main thrust of the income officers' efforts until recently. Whilst efforts in this range will be maintained the thrust of our efforts over the last two months of the financial year will be switched to address those debts between £100 and £1000.

The number of cases in arrears, whilst variable on a week to week basis, has continued to drop during the course of Q4.

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 continue to maintain a steady increase in service of Notices of Intention to Seek Possession, new applications to court for possession and also in warrants for eviction as it continues to get to grips with cases. In addition as at 4th March 2016 all of the cases that had accrued zero to £500 during the month had been contacted and suitable actions taken or arrangements for repayment made.

The current level of arrears has significantly improved from the peak Of £252K in July 2015 to £178K as at week 48, a reduction of £74K. This is mainly due to having a settled team in place and by introducing a more performance based approach. Performance is continuing to improve month on month and the team will shortly be embarking on the last of 3 intensive campaigns carried out since December 2015, where every tenant who is in arrears will be contacted by letter and as far as possible, a visit or telephone call advising of the need to make payments towards reducing their debt during the next "Non Collectable" weeks which are the last two weeks of the financial year in March 2016.

It is confidently expected that we will achieve and beat the target set by Committee in respect of the current tenant arrears by the end of the financial year.

4. Gas Safety

Compliance as at 8 March 2016 was 99.9% due to one outstanding safety check where the previous safety certificate expired 12th February 2016. We have what we

believe to be a firm appointment made for Saturday 12 March 2016 to complete this work, however, should the tenant not keep this appointment we will commence legal action to gain entry.

Of 158 service / safety checks due in March 154 have been completed. The 4 outstanding remain in date at the time of writing this report.

Of 113 due in April, 90 have already been completed.

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

Gas Safety Compliance Date	8 March 2016
Oldest case CP12 expired (CP12 = Gas Safety Certificate)	12 February 2016
% CP12's compliant	99.9%

5. Empty Properties (Voids)

Voids Situation (2015-16)

5.1. Overall Voids Performance Year to Date

Overall void performance (Average Turnaround Time) for the financial year to date currently stands at:

48 Properties let at an average of **36.5** Working Days

This represents a significant improvement on previous performance and follows a number of measures being introduced from 4th January 2016 to gain tighter control and faster turnaround of void properties which are not subject to major works. The two main measures introduced are, advertising future vacancies on the Leicestershire Choice Based Lettings system prior to them becoming empty and during the outgoing tenants' notice period. Weekly voids meetings have also been set up involving Housing Management, Housing Options and Property Maintenance where actions in respect of void properties are reviewed and action taken to eliminate or minimise delays.

5.2. Voids Performance Since 04 January 2016

A summary of the performance for the period since the measures have been introduced (04/01/16 to 06/03/16) complete with a comparison to the situation prior (Year to date as at 03/01/16) is set out below:

Period	Average Void Turnaround Time
4 January - 6 March 2016	<u>25</u> Working Days (15 properties let)
Year to Date up to 3 January 2016	<u>42</u> Working Days (33 properties let)

These figures show that the measures so far, have significantly improved performance and the Committee should note that the last seven properties let (since 1 February) have been let at an average of **10.28** Working Days.

It is the intention to meet a target routine void period of no more than 20 Working Days per property in order to maintain the decrease in the overall average turnaround time and improve upon this during the course of the next financial year. This is regarded as upper quartile performance when compared to other organisations in the social housing sector.

The Committee should note however that a potential threat to continued improvement in the management of voids is that some properties are less popular to applicants and consequently are more difficult to let. Currently these are identified as Studio/Bedsit Flats and also Sheltered Flats (principally William Peardon Court & Marriott House). The latter have only become a recent issue which is illustrated by the fact that a number of properties in the CBL advertising cycles attracted no bids from suitable applicants. An initial investigation into this shows that in the week commencing 22nd February 2016 there were a total of 32 sheltered accommodation units being advertised across Leicester and the immediate surrounding areas, which in effect increases the choice and opportunities for suitable applicants, which dilutes overall demand for these type of properties. We are currently exploring other methods of advertising which may boost demand for the future.

6. Update on Capital Programme 2014/15

An update on the current capital programme is included at Appendix 2. A number of schemes have been contracted to run over the year end and into 2016/17. The Boulter Crescent project is a 24 month contract that was due to come to an end in May 2016. We have reported previously that the original phasing gave too little time to complete the works and decanting and action was taken to counter this by, wherever possible, having three blocks on site rather than two at any one time. Despite this the works will not now complete until August or September 3 or 4 months later than the original end date. As the delays have been related to both works periods and decanting logistics neither party is currently incurring any financial penalties and are working together to complete the project as soon as possible.

In terms of the number of homes this affects there will be 30 homes still to complete in 2016/17. Of these, 14 are already on site or will be by 31 March (8 scheduled to complete within the original contract period; 6 scheduled to run 2 weeks over.

The final phase of 16 homes will only just have started when the contract was due to end and will be completed between end of July and September.

7. Proposed Capital Programme Projects 2016/17

The proposed projects for 2016/17 are set out in Appendix 3. These comprise of projects that straddle the year end; a small number of projects that have been tendered in advance of 2016/17 and the balance of projects we expect to be able to procure and complete by the end of the next financial year.

8. Future Development and Purchase Opportunities

Architects have looked at the old garage block in Churchill Close Oadby and we are awaiting their proposals.

Following the decision at the last meeting to look for an external partner for development of the old Shoe Factory in Canal Street there has been no interest to date.

The scheme at Kirkdale Road that is due to come on stream in 2017 is being developed by Waterloo Housing Association and will provide 58 new homes. The Council has direct nomination rights to 6 properties and the other remaining properties will be let through the Choice Based Letting Scheme.

The Affordable Homes element of the Station Road Development which is a mixture of shared ownership and homes for rent is currently under negotiation between the developer and a registered provider.

There are also a small number of possible development and purchase opportunities at present which are currently being pursued.

9. Providers of Housing Related Advice Services

Members will recall that the Council currently has an interim arrangement with CAB and Helping Hands for the provision of advice services within the Borough. The arrangement runs until the end of May 2016 and a joint proposal from CAB will be presented to the next Policy Finance and Development Committee.

10. 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 now been completed. A separate report is attached for Members to consider.

11. Disabled Facility Grants (DFG's)

Following the decision to allocate 2 suitable pilot projects to the Lightbulb project this has been done. 2 Schemes to install level access showers have been given to Lightbulb and a report once they are completed will be brought back to a future meeting of this Committee.

This will enable Members based on the outcomes of the pilots to consider using the Lightbulb Project as a means of delivering DFG's and adaptations for disabled tenants.

12. Housing Related Support and Warden Services

A separate report regarding housing related support and warden services is attached for Members to consider.

13. Community Payback Schemes

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

14. Energy Conservation

Work is progressing on the development of a comprehensive energy conservation strategy which will be used to drive our future planned maintenance programmes. Currently we are checking the EPC's (Energy Performance Certificates) to assess the most poorly performing properties. Where the information is not available we are using cloning methods to update the information.

External Wall Insulation to solid wall properties will be a high priority to reduce energy bills for tenants and to reduce greenhouse gasses.

Other measures may include the replacement of inefficient heating systems and new boiler controls, cavity wall and increased loft insulation; low energy bulbs in common areas.

15. Private Sector Empty Homes Update

Further to the decision taken at the previous Committee to give delegated authority to officers take action to reduce the number of empty homes in the Borough this is an update of the situation to date.

15.1. Background and Scope of Action Plan

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council are committed to reducing the numbers of long term empty properties within the Borough and thereby increasing the number of homes available for occupation. The identification and targeting of empty properties will enable the authority to make better use of this wasted resource whilst better responding to complaints made by the general public.

Current council tax records (March 2016) indicate that there are 159 empty residential dwelling within the Borough and a lesser amount of vacant commercial premises. This report outlines a brief description of how empty properties will be targeted. Previous work has extended to mailshots of known empty properties in August 2014 and July 2015 undertaken by Capacity Grid. Reporting from the Uniform database used by Environmental Health and Planning Teams will be utilised to highlight public complaints related to specific empty properties.

15.2. Empty Residential Dwellings

There are currently 32 empty residential dwellings which have been empty for longer than two years and its owner eligible to pay 150% council tax rates. These will be targeted as a priority and in the first instance offered an empty property grant (discussed below). All other empty properties will be visited and contact made to establish the intentions of the owners and the offer of grant assistance made if appropriate.

An incremental enforcement approach will be taken by correspondence to empty property owners ranging from informal in the first instance to becoming progressively enforcement orientated. The intention of this is to make it clear what may happen if the owner takes no action. Each property owner will receive three letters before enforcement action is taken.

If no action is taken by the owners and the offer of grant assistance is not taken an options appraisal will be undertaken to decide if enforcement action is necessary and proportionate. This will largely depend on the following (list not exhaustive):

- a. How long property has been empty;
- b. Likelihood of property returning to use without council intervention;
- c. Number of complaints received;
- d. Detrimental impact on amenity of area; and
- e. Ease and cost of conversion if undertaken by the authority.

15.3. Grant Assistance Scheme

A 100% grant is available for owners of empty properties and this will be offered initially in order to facilitate bringing properties back into use. The money is limited and will be decided on a case by case basis. Allocation of this money will depend on the number of applications, cost of renovation, the benefit to local area and the most in demand property size (e.g. 1, 2 or 3 bedroom).

As part of this project the following will be undertaken in relation to the grant scheme:

- Writing of procedural documents;
- Grant terms & conditions;
- Repayment terms when grant conditions not met;
- Linkage with the housing options team developed including tenant; and nomination rights for a set period of 5 years

Increasing public awareness – it may be necessary to publicise the offer of grant assistance in local press if long term empty owners do not take up the grant. All information will be required to be uploaded to the Council's website.

The Council will also seek to create a match making database holding details of empty property owners and developers looking to buy empty homes so that properties can be bought back into use.

15.4. Empty Property Enforcement

As have previously been agreed the following enforcement action will be commenced where necessary as identified by an options appraisal to bring homes back into use:

- a. Compulsory Purchase Orders
- b. Empty Dwelling Management Orders
- c. Work in default and subsequent enforced sale
- d. Section 215 Planning Powers

15.5. Commercial Premises

Discussion with the planning department will be undertaken to identify how empty commercial office accommodation can be converted into residential dwellings as this no longer requires planning permission.

15.6. Timescales

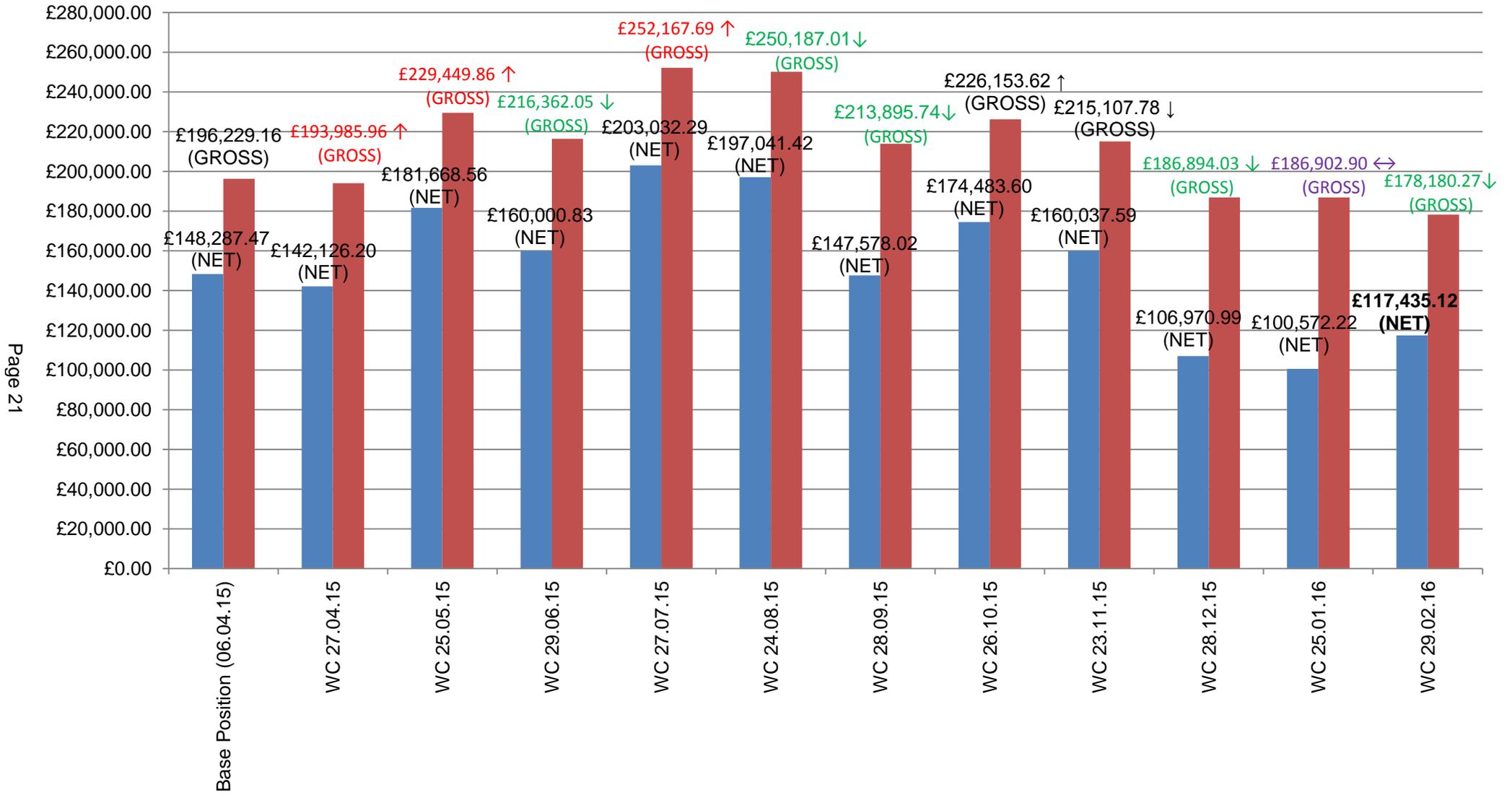
Empty property cases can take a significant amount of time to see through to a positive conclusion. It is estimated that setting up the initial processes and procedures together with contacting all the empty property owners and reaching the point where enforcement action can be instigated will take around 3 months.

Email: stephen.glazebrook@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Tel: (0116) 257 2674

Implications	
Financial (CR)	CR1 - Decreasing financial resources. The level of arrears and void turnaround times 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 (AC)	No significant implications.
Risk (SG)	CR1 - Decreasing financial resources. CR4 - Damage to reputation by failing to tackle empty homes in the private sector. CR9 - Economy.
Equalities (AC)	No significant implications.

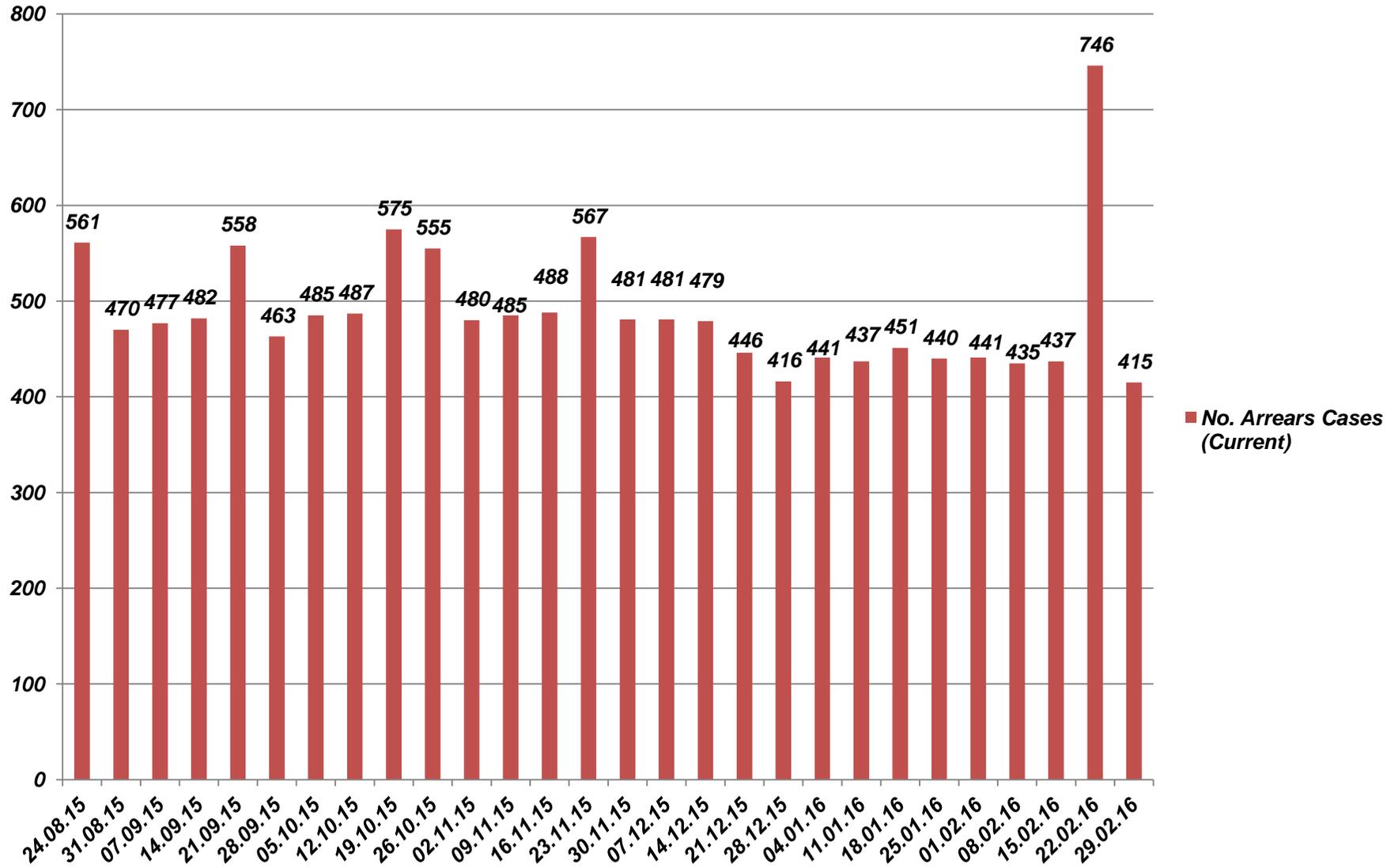
Current Tenant Balance Monthly 2015-2016



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	2.8%	3.6%	3.2%	4%	3.9%	2.9%	3.5%	3.2%	2.1%
Month	January	February							
Arrears (Net)	£100,572.22	£117,435.12							
Arrears as % of Annual Rent Debit	1.9%	2.3%							

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%
Month	January	February							
Arrears (Gross)	£186,902.90	£178,180.27							
Arrears as % of Annual Rent Debit	3.7%	3.5%							

No. Arrears Cases (Current Tenants)



APPENDIX 2

2015/16 Capital Programme – update			
Scheme	Number of Homes	Type of scheme	Progress Update
Properties with major structural defects	3	Introduction of piled foundations and new floor slabs. New internal layout and full refit. 2 vacant one requiring decant	All completed and occupied. Extensive ramped access now added to the two bungalows at St Peters Path.
Boulter Crescent Wigston	136	Whole home approach, strip to bare shell, reconfigure internal layout and refit. Full decanting programme.	2 year contract due to complete in May 2016 – now expected to complete in August.
King Street, Oadby	19	Whole home approach, within existing layout, partial decanting programme.	Contract now completed and in defects period
King Street (Phase 2) Oadby	External Works	Reconstruction and reconfiguration of failed retaining walls housing drying areas.	Tenders now in and being evaluated
Queen Street Oadby	13	Whole home approach, reconfiguration of bathroom and toilet arrangements partial decanting programme.	10 homes have been completed and the remaining three will be completed by May
Queen Street (Phase 2) Oadby	External Works	External Insulation to homes constructed with solid brickwork (no cavity)	We have established planning permission is not required – ready to tender once confirmed in writing
William Peardon Court Wigston	36	Kitchen Replacement	Contract now completed and in defects period
Kings Drive & Gibson Close Wigston	23	Kitchen Replacement	Contract let, works commence on 14 th March
Property Purchase (Right to buy replacement)	1	Purchase of house with ground floor bedroom to mobility standards; adapt further & carry out full refurbishment	Works completed 2 nd March, property let from 7 th March 2016.

Major works at relet where homes do not meet current standards	26	One or more of Kitchen / Bathroom / Heating / Rewiring / DPC /changes to layout/ (+ internal finishes) as required	3 empty homes are being extensively upgraded while vacant
Major Adaptations	29	Mostly bathroom conversions for level access bathing but also includes building of three extensions completed in the year	Currently visiting and designing project referrals made by County up to November 15.
Car Hard Standing	4	Continuation of commitment to add a small number of hard-standings each year	Includes 2 on order to be completed by 31.03.16
Boiler Replacements	36	In response to breakdown – unable or uneconomical to repair	Arrangements being made for further pro – active replacements in 2016-17
Customer Services Centre	Office	Design and build contract	Completed but awaiting fitting of platform lift for full DDA / Building Reg. Compliance.
Community Flat	1	Strip out to bare shell and refitting plus external works subject to planning permission.	Works on site

APPENDIX 3

2016 – 17 Proposed Capital Programme Projects (Subject to confirmation of roll over of budget from 2016 – 17 for schemes on site + not yet allocated)

Scheme	Number of Homes	Description	Procurement Method
Schemes on site or tendered <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boulter Crescent – whole home • King Street - external works • Queen Street– whole home • Queen St – external insulation • Kings Dr Gibson Close - Kitchens 	30 8 3 13 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance of 2 year contract for 143 homes • Retaining walls and landscape affects 8 flats • Balance of contract for 13 homes • Full contract currently at tender stage • Contact commences 14th March 	Tendered by Ridge Consultants
Kitchens and Bathrooms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kenilworth Drive - both • William Peardon Ct – Bathroom only • Kings Dr Gibson Close – Bathroom only • Malham Way – Both • Countesthorpe Rd – Both • Bassett Street 	10 >36 >23 >25 >7 >8	To deliver balance of original ten year programme <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be surveyed • Level access showers in most cases - some done • Level access showers in most cases - some done • Some done at relet – to be surveyed • Some done at relet – to be surveyed • Some done at relet – to be surveyed 	To be tendered using consultants
Previously Refused Decent Homes Work	15 to 20 (estimate)	Examples: electrical upgrades or rewiring; DPC and re-plastering; heating upgrades, kitchens and bathrooms	By quotation, Schedule of Rates or priced against SOR book.

Boiler Replacement Programme	100	In two batches of fifty – traditional heat only boilers (15 – 18 years old) with hot water cylinders. To be replaced with combi boilers and new controls. System upgrades will be added where radiators are in poor condition, need resizing or are badly silted up.	Priced item in Gas Service Contract Schedule of Rates awarded via NHC procurement framework.
Communal Heating Replacement Phase 1 – William Peardon Court	36	There are a number of possible options, replacement of commercial size boilers, complete replacement of communal heating system, provision of individual heating systems to each flat.	Specialist heating consultants to be appointed to help identify best solution and tender works.
Replacement of Door Entry Systems	All door entry controlled blocks	Current systems becoming obsolete as spare parts and replacement fobs are no longer available.	We have not found a pre-procured framework so will be looking to use consultants to help specify and tender.
Chartwell House Concrete Repairs	41	Concrete repairs to be followed by external redecoration (walkway ceilings etc.)	Works scheduled being prepared by structural engineers to be tendered
Brabazon Road Concrete Repairs	Shops and leasehold maisonettes	Survey and make safe currently being undertaken	Quotation or tender depending on extent of works
External Doors	Phases of 50	Replacement of failed composite doors (original contractor went out of business)	Pre – tendered framework e.g. LHC framework launched 02.03.16.
External insulation to Solid Wall Homes	TBC	The aim is to come up with a programme to insulate all solid wall homes	Tender (possibly framework procurement)

External Works - Junction Road, Maromme Square, Burgess Street	Estate Works	Demolition of screen walls and delivery of revised communal garden facilities in consultation with residents.	Quotation or tender depending on extent of woks
Fire Safety Upgrades <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marriott House • Junction, Maromme, Burgess 	27 54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to roof space compartments • Upgrading flat doors and communal areas 	To be tendered using consultants
Disabled Adaptations	30	Assuming a similar number of referrals to 2015/16	Quotation / Tender
Car Hardstanding	5	From waiting list (plus any agreed budget carry over)	Quotation



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 22 March 2016	Matter for Information and Decision
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Title: **Choice-Based Lettings Residency Changes**

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

1. Introduction

At the October 2015 meeting Members discussed changing the Housing Allocations Policy by increasing the residency criteria to 2 years. A consultative exercise took place in January - February 2016 the results of which are reported below.

2. Recommendations

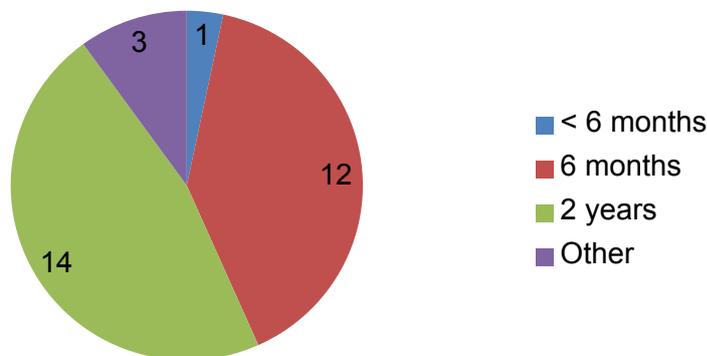
- 2.1. It is recommended the residency criteria is increased to 2 years.
- 2.2. If a 2-year residency criteria is selected, Members must additionally decide whether this will be applied retrospectively to all existing housing applicants or just to those applying from now on. It is felt however that it would be unfair to apply the new criteria retrospectively and it is recommended that the new rule should apply to fresh applications only.

3. Consultation

- 3. Two surveys were carried out, one aimed at Private Registered Providers (Housing Associations) and other agencies and a second aimed at residents with connections to the area forums.

Chart 1 - Shows the views of the 30 respondents when combined

Consultation Response



Survey 1 – Professionals (PRP, agencies, OWBC website)

10 responses

<6 months	1
6 months	6
2 years	2

1 person suggested 12 months

Survey 2 – Participants in the Area Forums Only

20 responses

<6 months	0
6 months	6
2 years	12

2 residents suggested 12 months

In summary professionals favoured maintaining the status quo whereas , residents favoured an increase to 2 years.

Email: steve.nash@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Tel: (0116) 257 2662

Implications	
Financial (CR)	No significant implications.
Legal (AC)	CR6 - It is unlikely to be subject to a legal challenge as it is in accord with Government guidance.
Risk (SN)	CR4 - There may be a reputational risk in that some applicants may be disadvantaged by the change in policy.
Equalities (AC)	CR4 - The policy will be equally applied to all applicants and will be subject to a full equality assessment.



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 22 March 2016	Matter for Information and Decision
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Title: **Housing Related Support (HRS)**

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

1. Introduction

This report is to provide an update to the Service Delivery Committee on the provision of Housing Related Support following the County Council's reduction in the level of Supporting People funding at the end of September 2015

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Council enters into an agreement with Charnwood Borough Council to provide the call monitoring services in respect of its properties in supported and sheltered housing.

3. Information

At its meeting on 13 October 2015 the Committee agreed to reshape the support services for elderly people as follows:

- Morning calls via the warden call system or telephone who request one;
- Intensive support for those who require assistance in organising their individual care plans;
- Prospective tenants supported before and during the early stages of new tenancies; and
- Drop in surgeries to provide advice and assistance to residents as necessary.

All of the above have now been implemented and the arrangements are working satisfactorily although there have been some adverse comments made about the reduction in the level of service namely the removal of the full time warden post following the withdrawal of the Supporting People Funding. It is planned to review the situation again at the end of May once the new level service has bedded in and a further report will be brought back to Committee when this has been done.

The other major implication of the reduction in the Supporting People funding is that the financial support for the monitoring costs of the warden call system has also been reduced and only those residents who qualify for assistance by way of a needs analysis and financial assessment will have their assistive technology paid for through Supporting People which is administered by Leicestershire County Council.

Oadby and Wigston currently have a contract with Service 24 who handle its alarm calls as well as providing the out of hours emergency repairs service for all of its tenants.

The County Council have procured a contract with Tunstall Response to set up a call

handling service to respond to calls for assistance from residents and it was envisaged that Oadby and Wigston Borough Council would transfer in to this contract and 6 months notice was given to Service 24 in October 2015 to terminate the existing arrangement. It is worth noting that apart from Seven Locks Housing in Market Harborough none of the other authorities in Leicestershire have gone with the County Council Contract.

The current cost for handling the alarm calls is 0.67 pence unit. There are a total of 319 users connected to the system which equates to an annual cost of £11,114.

The comparable cost for the new service from Tunstall Response is £3.78 per week plus VAT. It is estimated that approximately 60% of residents will be self funders and will have to meet the costs themselves. Residents would also be expected to enter into an individual contract with Tunstall and to set up a direct debit arrangement to pay the weekly charge.

During the consultation exercise carried out in 2014 approximately 60% residents said that they were not prepared to pay for the warden call service and if the majority of these residents opted out of the service it would seriously impact on the integrity of the Council's supported housing provision.

The new County Council contract with Tunstall Response at £3.78 per week represents a substantial increase in costs for the same level of service compared to the current contract and it is felt does not offer good value for money. Part of the difference in costs is that the County Council contract provides for the replacement of the existing equipment. The equipment is largely in good condition and not in need of replacement apart from a number of bungalows where it is necessary to replace the radio activated smoke alarms which can be done for a minimal cost.

The Council has already reduced the level of cover in its sheltered and supported housing and to expect 60 % of residents to enter in to individual arrangements with Tunstall is an unrealistic expectation. This may leave residents exposed in the event of an emergency which may also adversely impact on the image of Oadby and Wigston Borough Council.

Service 24 who currently provide the call monitoring service have indicated that they would be prepared to reduce their costs to 0.65 per unit per week which equates to an annual cost of £10,782.

Charnwood Borough Council who run their own control centre have offered to provide the same level of service as Service 24 for £0.40 pence per unit which equates to an annual cost of £6,635..

4. Summary

The County Council procured contract does not offer good value for money for residents and to expect self funders who have to pay for the service themselves to enter into an individual agreement with Tunstall Response is an unrealistic expectation This may leave some residents who elect not to pay for the service in a vulnerable situation without any cover in the event of an emergency situation and could also damage the Councils reputation.

The offer from Charnwood Borough Council will enable Oadby and Wigston Borough

Council to offer a free of charge call monitoring service to all of its residents in supported and sheltered housing which can be accommodated within existing budgets.

Email: stephen.glazebrook@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Tel: (0116) 257 2674

Implications	
Financial (CR)	CR1 - The costs can be accommodated within existing budgets.
Legal (AC)	CR6 - Data Protection Policy will need to be adhered to in relation the transfer of personal data
Risk (SG)	CR4 - By providing the service to everyone it will provide a safety net for all residents and protect the Council's position.
Equalities (AC)	It will provide equal access to the service for all residents in supported and sheltered housing.

Agenda Item 10



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 22 March 2016	Matter for Information and Decision
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Title: **Withdrawal of Recycling Credit Payments by
Leicestershire County Council**

Author: **Mark Hall - Chief Executive**

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is for Members to consider and agree a response to Leicestershire County Council's (LCC) consultation on its proposal to stop paying recycling credit income to the Borough. The consultation deadline is 30th March 2016.
- 1.2. Based on this response, together with the responses from all the other district Councils, LCC have stated that it will make a final decision on this issue later in the summer. LCC has also stated that the changes to the recycling credit scheme will be effective from April 2018.
- 1.3. Recycling Credits are an important source of income which has assisted this Council introduce very effective and successful recycling schemes over a number of years that are popular with residents and have had a positive effect on the environment. This has helped to reduce the amount of residual waste produced by householders and sent to landfill. The Council consistently recycles over 50% of its waste.
- 1.4. LCC is consulting on four options which would result in the partial or complete withdrawal of all recycling credit payments to the Council. The amount of income at risk to this Council is estimated to be between £49k and £430k per annum and is totally dependent upon on how much money LCC wish to save.
- 1.5. The consequences of any significant reduction of income by LCC is likely to be that the Council has to reduce the quality of its present recycling service which will in turn will have a negative impact on existing recycling rates.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That Members note the options being considered by LCC for reducing its current expenditure on recycling and how this will affect the Borough.
- 2.2. That Members approve the key points to be incorporated into the consultation response as set out in Section 4 of this report and that the Chief Executive be tasked to write an appropriate response based on those. The final wording of the response should be agreed by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and Leader of the Council.

3. Information

- 3.1. The responsibility for the collecting and disposing of waste in two tier areas is split between the county and district/Borough Councils. Locally Oadby & Wigston Borough Council (O&WBC) acts as the Waste Collection Authority (WCA) and

Leicestershire County Council (LCC) acts as the Waste Disposal Authority (WDA) with responsibility for the disposal of any waste collected.

- 3.2. In recognition of the need to divert waste from landfill, the Government introduced the recycling credit scheme through the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA 1990) to incentivise recycling and composting of household waste by WCA's and by third parties. It makes available to recyclers, including this Council, the savings in disposal costs made by LCC that result from recycling household waste.
- 3.3. The introduction of this legislation meant that the WDA (LCC) had an obligation to pay the WCA's (O&WBC) the money it saved by diverting waste from landfill. The amount paid was directly linked to the cost of landfill disposal. As an exception to this regulation, WDAs are permitted to direct WCAs to use a processing facility of their choice. In this circumstance, the WDA would be liable for the processing costs and would not be obligated to pay recycling credits to WCAs. LCC elected, at that time, to pay recycling credits and to allow WCAs to make their own processing arrangements.
- 3.4. All WCAs have used the recycling credits to offset the cost of introducing higher performing recycling services. In 2006, a variation to this was agreed in Leicestershire due to the rising costs of landfill (linked to the introduction of Landfill Tax). The current level of recycling credit (£51.37 per tonne) equates to approximately half of the cost of disposing of residual waste.
- 3.5. Present legislation allows LCC to cease paying recycling credits to the districts if LCC directs a district where to take its waste, however LCC must then pay for any processing costs in addition to the existing disposal costs.
- 3.6. From April 2015, LCC in its capacity as the WDA, made the decision to direct the district/Boroughs for the treatment of garden waste and withdrew all of the green recycling credits. The net loss in income to O&WBC from this change was in the region of £80k per annum. At that time O&WBC Members recognised the value of this service to local residents and the loss of this income from LCC was offset by O&WBC finding additional efficiency savings. No change was passed onto the residents of the Borough with the green waste service remaining free to all. With the exception of one other district Council in Leicestershire all the other districts either introduced or increased the charge they made for the collection of green waste as a result of this.
- 3.7. The four options that LCC are consulting on are as follows:

a. Reach a local agreement to reduce the value of the Recycling Credit.

This will not be beneficial to O&WBC if the level of the revised Recycling Credit falls below its cost of collection and processing.

b. Develop and agree a new payment to incentivise reduction in residual waste/increase recycling.

This is far too complex and relies on too many variables and unknowns which will place huge financial risks on O&WBC. O&WBC already has one of the

very lowest levels of residual waste per household in the country so any incentive scheme would have little value for the Council.

- c.** LCC procures capacity for all district dry recycling and directs the districts to use it.

No recycling credits will be paid by LCC to any of the districts but LCC will have to bear all the cost of processing and will keep any income from the sale of recyclates.

- d.** LCC to build a Materials Recycling Facility and direct Districts to use it.

No recycling credits will be paid by LCC to any of the districts but LCC will have to bear all the cost of processing and will keep any income from the sale of recyclates.

- 3.8.** The income derived from recycling credits during 2015/16 is currently expected to be £180k (based on a recycling credit rate of £51.37 per tonne). This is expected to be £185k in 2016/17.
- 3.9.** During the year 2012/13 the recycling income for the onward sale of the dry recyclates (not including green) produced by the Council's Material Recycling Facility (MRF) was £388k. As a result of significant market changes and increased regulation, this reduced to £230k in 2015/16. The sales income for 2016/17 is expected to be £230k as markets have plateaued out at present.
- 3.10.** For Option 1, the financial impact is difficult to assess as the exact amount of recycling credit that would be paid by LCC to the districts is not known. Assuming the recycling credit is reduced in line with the current LCC savings requirement (73% of existing figure), the credit would be £37.50 per tonne, giving a total of £131k per year based on current levels. The annual loss to O&WBC would therefore be £49k per annum in 2018/19. O&WBC would still retain all income from the sale of the recyclates.
- 3.11.** LCC have stated that if any of the district Councils were to accept this option then they would be legally required to continue to provide the level of recycling service that they do at the moment i.e the method of collection and frequency of collection.
- 3.12.** It is important to emphasise that if this option was agreed by LCC and resulted in it achieving its present saving target of £1 million per year from all of the districts that LCC has still not ruled out the need to find further savings under this option. On that basis that could amount to having to finding a total of up to £3.4 million in savings per year from all the districts. In the worst case this would mean the withdrawal of all recycling credits, other than paying a notional amount, to every district. If this were to be the case then O&WBC would have to review its entire recycling operation to reduce the cost of the service in order to compensate for LCC withdrawing the recycling credit income. Out of financial necessity, the Council would have to completely review how its collects the recyclates, the frequency of how often it is collected, if it is viable to continue to operate its MRF and if the Council should

charge for the collection of green waste

- 3.13.** For Option 2, the financial impact cannot be assessed as the incentive mechanism is yet to be identified. This could be implemented in addition to any of the other options being considered. It is recommended that this option is rejected at the present time as the risks to O&WBC are unquantifiable. It should also be noted that O&WBC already has one of the very lowest levels of residual waste per household in the country so any incentive scheme would have little value for the Council.
- 3.14.** Option 3 and 4 would have the same impact financially. O&WBC would lose all the income from all the recycling credits of £180k (based on current year figures) together with the loss of all the income from the sale of the recyclates which would be £230k i.e a total loss of income of £430k per year. Under both of these options LCC would then be under an obligation to pay for the processing of the recyclates which is currently borne by O&WBC in the form of its own MRF.
- 3.15.** The Council would therefore no longer need to operate its MRF and could collect the recyclates in a more cost effective way and less frequently.
- 3.16.** For Options 3 and 4 LCC could direct O&WBC to take its recycling to a processing site that isn't conveniently located for tipping. Each recycling vehicle currently tips off at least twice a day on collection days. This could therefore have an impact on permitted driving hours and may result in inefficient rounds. Tipping away fees may be payable by LCC in some circumstances but these will be minimal and will not compensate O&WBC for the level of service disruption.

4. Suggested Response

That as a result of the consideration of this report by Members that the Chief Executive be tasked to write to LCC in response to its consultation on the following basis.

That Oadby & Wigston B.C:

- i.** Deplores LCC's proposal to withdraw recycling credit payments as this is purely a financially based decision that does not take into account the negative knock on effect that this will have on district Council services to residents or to the environment in the form of recycling rates and the diversion of waste from landfill.
- ii.** That reluctantly the Council would consider Option 1 as long as the level of the recycling credit agreed was at least £37.50 and there was an agreement that this was not then reduced in subsequent years as LCC searches for further savings
- iii.** That the Council would not presently consider Option 2. The Council would be prepared to look at it when more detailed work has been done and there is reassurance that O&WBC was not going to be penalised for already having very, very low residual waste arisings, one of the lowest in the country.
- iv.** That if LCC pursues Options 3 or 4 where all of the recycling credits are withdrawn then the Council would have no option other than to review and significantly downgrade the quality of its existing recycling service. This would be highly likely to have a negative effect on recycling rates and therefore

increase the amount of residual waste that LLC would have to pay to have land filled.

Email: mark.hall@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Tel: (0116) 257 2600

Implications	
Financial (CR)	As set out in the report.
Legal (AC)	Independent legal advice confirms that LCC are able to legally withdraw the recycling credit payments as set out in the report as long as it has been through a formal consultation process with the district Councils.
Risk (MH)	Significant financial risk to O&WBC that will be factored into the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.
Equalities (AC)	If as a result of the withdrawal of recycling credit payments the quality of the Councils recycling service has to be reduced then this will affect all residents.



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 22 March 2016	Matter for Information and Decision
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Title: **Bell Street, Wigston - Update on Prohibition of Vehicular Access**

Author: **Anne Court - Director of Services and Monitoring Officer
Adrian Thorpe - Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager**

1. Introduction

1.1 This report provides an update on the trial pedestrianisation scheme currently in place on part of Bell Street in Wigston and considers various options for preventing unauthorised access to the pedestrianised area.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that a like for like telescopic bollard remains the method used to prevent unauthorised vehicular access into Bell Street, due to the ease of use, matching design with the Bell Street public realm and relatively low costs to maintain and manage.

3. Information

3.1 The trial pedestrianisation scheme was brought into effect in December 2015. Since implementation the Council has not received any formal complaints as a result of the trial pedestrianisation, and in general, it has been supported by the local community.

3.2 As part of the public realm improvements scheme in Wigston the gate which restricted access to Bell Street was replaced by a bollard, in-keeping with the design of the new street furniture. At the time of the implementation of the trial pedestrianisation scheme the bollard was locked into its up position in order to prevent unauthorised vehicular access. At the same time arrangements were brought into effect to ensure that the emergency services could operate the bollard in order to be able to access Bell Street in the event of an emergency.

3.3 Unfortunately during the week of 15th February the bollard was struck, apparently by a vehicle and damaged beyond repair. In addition, the damage inhibited its operation and therefore it had to be removed so as to enable access by the emergency services. Temporary barriers were placed across the access to Bell Street, and despite providing a very visual barrier, appear to have been moved by members of the public on a frequent basis. This has led to unauthorised access to Bell Street by vehicles.

3.4 A 'like for like' replacement bollard has been ordered and at the time of writing this report, delivery is awaited. In addition, a further two bollards have been ordered to the same specification, so that if this situation happens again, the Council will be able to respond swiftly.

3.5 As a result of this damage to the bollard so soon after the implementation of the trial pedestrianisation, the opportunity has been taken to consider the options that are available to the Council in order to prevent unauthorised access in the future.

4. 'Like For Like' Replacement Bollard

- 4.1** This bollard is relatively easy to use, we already have the keys cut for this system and have supplied these keys to the emergency services. The bollard also allows the general public to walk through easily without a blockage. A system such as this is ideal as the bollard does not need to be removed very often.
- 4.2** This bollard also ties in with the look and feel of the new public realm within Bell Street. There is minimal maintenance on this style of bollard, so ongoing costs are reduced.
- 4.3** The disadvantage with this bollard is that if a vehicle hits the bollard at speed, it requires a complete replacement of the bollard and it's underground socket.
- 4.4** The indicative cost for purchasing one of these bollards is £390 and the installation is up to £400, therefore a replacement cost is £790 every time it is seriously damaged.



5. Automatic Rising Bollard

- 5.1** An automatic bollard would allow easy access to Bell Street at all times and would not require keys to operate. There would either be a key code system or a card access system. These bollards are extremely robust and if they were hit by a vehicle, they would still be able to operate.
- 5.2** These bollards have some very sophisticated electronics, enabling it to detect when a vehicle is in range and lowering when a code/card is entered. The bollards would then lower for the vehicle, and detect when the vehicle has passed and then raise. This means only one vehicle at a time is allowed and they are usually programmed to lower automatically when leaving the area.
- 5.3** The disadvantages with this type of bollard are that there is not the need to access Bell Street on multiple occasions through a day as it is currently pedestrianised, which is the main advantage of this system. Also the bollard needs regular servicing (approx £300 per visit) and cards would have to be allocated to people who are allowed to

access (cost of £20 per card). This would then need to be monitored and an officer made responsible for issuing cards and managing the bollards.

- 5.4 They are also very expensive to install, with a minimum cost of around £20,000. There would also be a lot of disruption to install these bollards.



6. Rising Barrier

- 6.1 These barriers are very effective in preventing access, as well as being very visible. Also if a vehicle does hit this style of barrier, it should be relatively cheap to repair, as it is bolted to the ground (rather than rooted into the ground).
- 6.2 The disadvantage with this style of barrier is that it would stop pedestrians being able to walk freely into Bell Street. Although very visible, it would also detract from the look of the new public realm in Bell Street. Also a lifting barrier could be a safety risk to the public when people are accessing the barrier, due to the nature of a bar being lifted and lowered.
- 6.3 A barrier like this would cost approximately £800 to purchase and approx £1,200 to install. The ongoing maintenance of this would come in at around £200 per year.

(Continued overleaf)



7. Gate

- 7.1 A Gate would be very similar to the rising barrier and are very effective in preventing access, as well as being very visible. Also if a vehicle does hit this style of barrier, it should be relatively cheap to repair, as it is bolted to the ground (rather than rooted into the ground).
- 7.2 The disadvantage with this style of barrier is that it would stop pedestrians being able to walk freely into Bell Street. Although very visible, it would also detract from the look of the new public realm in Bell Street
- 7.3 A barrier like this would cost approximately £700 to purchase and approx £1,200 to install. The ongoing maintenance of this would come in at around £200 per year.

(Continued overleaf)



8. Conclusion

- 8.1 From these 4 options it is proposed that the current style of bollard is maintained as this offers good value for money and an attractive design. It also offers an easy to use system that is already in place.
- 8.2 A review of the operation of the bollard will take place within the next six months, whereby if further damage is taking place to the bollard we can revisit these options or explore other methods of barrier.

Email: mark.hryniw@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Tel: (0116) 257 2706

Implications	
Financial (CR)	Included within the report
Legal (AC)	No significant implications.
Risk (AC)	CR1 decreasing financial resources – the recommended option would appear to be the most appropriate in context of the current budget. CR4 Reputation damage – it is proposed to order 2 additional bollards so that they can be replaced more quickly should damage occur again.
Equalities (AC)	No significant implications.

Agenda Item 12



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 22 March 2016	Matter for Information
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Title: Corporate Enforcement Update

Author: David Lingard - Community Safety & Tenancy Manager

1. Introduction

This report is intended to provide an update to Members on the corporate enforcement activity of the Council.

2. Recommendations

To note the contents of the report which is presented for information only.

3. Information

3.1. Graffiti in the Borough

The Council's Community Safety Manager, Environmental Health Team, Environmental Development and Operational Services (EDOS) Team along with our Policing partners of Leicestershire Police and British Transport Police are working better together in a more proactive and co-ordinated approach. Work is underway to identify persons or person responsible for damage to area's around South Wigston rail station and associated land where a number, approximately four incidents of graffiti have occurred in the past month. The Community Safety Manager is in contact with Network Rail who have improved fencing to area's prone to vandalism.

Our EDOS team respond promptly (within 24hours) prioritising graffiti removal where it impacts on:

- Safety;
- Offensive, racist and of a sexist nature;
- Visible to the community; and
- Other graffiti as resources allow.

Our Environmental Health Team work with private land and property owners who have ultimate responsibility for graffiti removal however, we assist, where we are able in removal. A recent example:

- Graffiti clearance around Blunts Lane, Wigston – graffiti on private land was cleared by OWBC with condition that in future it will be cleared by private owners. This action taken was due to regularly used thoroughfare and impact on our public.

3.2. Fly Tipping

Fly tipping investigations – We recently completed two investigations following complaints. One resulted in the offender removing the vehicle, the same day but it was not in the public interest to prosecute. Another case example demonstrates the difficulties we have when householders use unregistered waste carriers. The case involved a householder using an unregistered waste carrier to remove waste which was later found fly tipped. Homeowners are still responsible under their 'Duty of Care'. We were unable to trace the alleged offender. Three members of the public reported this but only one witnessed it taking place but refused to give a formal statement making investigation difficult to progress.

3.3. Abandoned Vehicles

We received 28 complaints and we have removed seven abandoned vehicles as a result since November 2015.

3.4. Dog Fouling

The Community Safety Manager responds promptly to reports from our members and members of our community to incidents of dog fouling. The Community Safety Manager with volunteer staff embark on impromptu patrols to identified hotspots and public spaces such as parks, car-parks and our Brocks Hill Country Park. Patrols are conducted by upwards of four officers wearing hi-vis jackets aimed at raising awareness to the possibility of 'enforcement', please see example photograph, below.



The intention behind the patrols is to raise awareness and promote responsible dog ownership through advice, education, support and where necessary enforcement although we still have some work to do around the enforcement aspect which, is being

addressed.

Members of our community are becoming increasingly aware of our dog fouling patrols as are our members. Recently several members have asked for patrols to be implemented around Oadby and South Wigston however, we are happy to report that the Borough cannot be described as a dog fouling hot spot as officers tend to witness responsible dog ownership with very little evidence of wide scale dog fouling. Where potential hot spots or areas emerging as possible hot spots have been identified we work, implement initiatives with Environmental Health colleagues to stencil pavements, footpaths and park area's to alert dog owners of possible penalties.

Our Environmental Health Team, Environmental Development and Operational Services (EDOS) work proactively with us in installation of additional dog waste bins.

The Anti Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 presents greater opportunities for possible dog control where education and raising awareness fails to tackle particular problem areas.

Public Spaces Protection Orders would enable the Council, with approval of members, to introduce controls such as:-

- Exclusions of dogs from particular areas;
- Requirements to pick up dog mess in specified areas;
- Requirements to have dogs on leads in specified areas; and
- Persons in control of dogs to carry the means to pick up dog mess.

At the moment dog fouling does not present a major problem within our Borough but we are ever mindful of this increasing particularly in the spring and summer months when we will step up various initiatives.

Our Environmental Health service has been going through a number of improvements and is recruiting permanent staff. Once the recruitment process has taken place we will be looking at reporting to members on the possible use of new powers to allow us to take action where other initiatives aimed at education may not be working.

3.5. Licensing Update

A full time licensing officer has been recruited to complement the existing team and we anticipate our new colleague will commence work with us later this month.

Proactive work around the general licensing remit has presented some difficulties due to staffing which we hope we have now resolved.

We have been particularly busy around licensing taxi driver and vehicle licensing however, we will mitigate this when our new colleague takes up the post.

A new chairperson has been elected to the Pub-watch scheme their next meeting was held on the 8th March.

The Community Safety Partnership (funded by The Council and Office of The Police and Crime Commissioner) have funded several Test Purchase (TP) operations where a young person is used in attempts to purchase alcohol.

During January to the 6th March this year (2016) twenty two premises licensed to sell alcohol on or off the premises were visited by a specially recruited young person aged 16 years and undisclosed months (the young person is not recruited from within the Borough or surrounding area) who attempts to purchase alcohol. In all cases Inn keepers and vendors refused the sale of alcohol. Test purchases will continue throughout 2016

It may help members to know that if licensees sell alcohol they are dealt with proportionately by the police and trading standards. Sanctions may include warnings and interventions such as to compel failing sellers to take the BTEC Level 2 – Award in preventing underage sales course.

Email: david.lingard@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Tel: (0116) 257 2692

Implications	
Financial (CR)	No significant implications.
Legal (AC)	No significant implications.
Risk (AC)	CR6 – Complying with relevant legislations. CR1 – Decrease in financial resources.
Equalities (AC)	No significant implications.

Agenda Item 13



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 22 March 2016	Matter for Information
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Title: Leisure Contract Monitoring

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. Leisure Centre Attendances

Attendances 2013/14	Leisure Connection 271,000	Actual Contract
Attendances 2014/15	SLM 426,000	Actual Contract
Attendances 2015/16	SLM 440,000 <i>SLM</i> <i>500,000</i>	Target Attendances <i>Estimate Attendances</i>

3.2. Swimming Numbers

Oadby swimming pool used to average 9300 swim visits per month. Since the opening of the new pools, Parklands is averaging 9,400 and Wigston 9,500 per month.

3.3. Group Exercise Classes

One of the greatest successes for Parklands Leisure Centre is the group exercise program, which has an availability of 1,800 spaces per week. There is regularly over 1,600 users attending each week.

3.4. Staffing

Wigston Leisure Centre welcomed the new General Manager Neil Cowdrey to the team, an experienced Manager with Everyone Active who was previously in similar role at both Hinckley Leisure Centre and Enderby Leisure Centre.

Parklands Leisure Centre is currently upskilling a number of its fitness team members to include a further GP/ Exercise Referral Coach and a Falls Prevention Instructor, these roles are helping to help expand the health action plan to improve the health and wellbeing of the local community, in line with the contract requirements.

Everyone Active has also increased the team with the appointment of Luke Parratt who again has a wealth of experience in group and contract management. This new role for the Oadby and Wigston Contract is that of 'Active Communities Manager'. Luke will be using his skills to develop networks and activities throughout the whole community to help increase sports and activity participation and also to increase the health of the local population.

3.5. Oceans of Fun Open Day

Wigston Pool & Fitness Centre and Parklands Leisure Centre welcomed a number of Olympic athletes to the Open Day on 10 January 2016. Double gold medal winner Rebecca Adlington OBE and the Mayor of Oadby and Wigston, Councillor Latif Darr officially opened the two new swimming pools. Over 300 children took part; learning new skills like Synchro Swimming, Water Polo, Lifesaving and all had the chance to race against an Olympian. With parents and other associated spectators the events saw well over 1,500 people attending on the day.

3.6. Breast Care Unit

Parklands Leisure Centre is again hosting the Leicestershire Health Breast Screening unit, which has now arrived on site. This allows for more people to be able to access this Health Service locally.

3.7. Further Developments to the Sites

Wigston Swimming Pool are introducing easy access steps, these will be removable steps that will be used as required to help those who are less mobile to get in and out the pool with ease.

Parklands Leisure Centre is currently building a new 'bin housing' area for all waste disposal bins. This will allow for the site to remove the large bin currently in use and free up and additional parking bays for the public to use.

3.8. Comments from Users

The leisure centres have been very well received by the community. The following are comments from leisure users across the two sites:

- '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'
- 'The graduated steps at Parklands into the pool are a fantastic addition'
- 'The new Wigston Gym is an asset to the whole community'
- 'We like it that we can train and swim together as a family'
- 'The new gym and equipment certainly helps me to push and improve

my lifestyle'

Email: avril.lennox@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Tel: (0116) 257 2673

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



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 22 March 2016	Matter for Information
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Title: **Customer Service Transformation Update**

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

Answering call times

Our promise to customers is to answer calls within 20 seconds (6 rings) for the period 12/10/15 to end of Feb 2016 our average call answering time is 13 seconds (4 rings)

Footfall

Footfall has seen a large increase since moving to Bell St, in the first two months of this year this has been 5326 visiting the centre compared to 3157 in the same period last year.

Use of Self-Service

In February 2015 we helped 39 to self service in February 2016 we helped 190 people – this includes using the payment kiosk and the three self serve terminals where customers can search for more information about the services OWBC provide and other services such as the gov.uk website, Money Advice, Citizen’s Advice , Choice Based Lettings

Partners

The partners listed below all run regular surgeries from Bell Street:

- CAB
- Helping Hands
- Womens Aid
- Money Advice
- Police

Customer Feedback

Feedback from customers has been positive, they like the new location and also the fact that one officer can deal with multiple enquiries.

CS will be running a customer satisfaction survey during week commencing March 14 2016 and thereafter twice a year in October and April – the results will be published on our website.

We are aiming for a satisfaction rating of 95%.

Email: jacky.griffith@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Tel: (0116) 257 2612

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



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 22 March 2016	Matter for Information
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Title: **Brocks 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 January 2016 when activity was last reported.

2. Recommendations

That Members note the report made.

3. Communication Plan Brocks Hill (BH)

Regular media releases, based around events and activities across the Borough have been distributed. This has generated coverage in the Local media. Events and activities continue to be promoted via Letterbox.

4. Commissioned Events & Activities

Events have been commissioned by Food for Life (one of the GtB partners) as part of their annual awards in 2016. This will include guided walks and taster craft sessions for primary age school children.

The commissioned series of events for South Leicester College around orienteering/team building, these were completed in December 2015. The group are interested in running this annually. Participants include less mobile vulnerable young adults.

Further talks on the Natural Discovery Volunteer Development programme, which is supported by HLF, have been given at local forums and the youth council.

5. Social Media

www.facebook.com/BrocksHillCountryPark has continued to increase our marketing reach. There is significant engagement and sharing of page posts, with the page now having 2,018 followers (January 2016). When the page was 'claimed' June 2014, this was 292 (a 591.1% increase). Booking details, collated as part of the assessment for events, has shown social media is now an important marketing tool for the site, with over 25% of bookings coming via this promotional tool.

6. Brocks Hill Updates

6.1. 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.

6.2. Country Park Facilities

- 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.

6.3. Community Engagement

- The door counters recorded visitor tallies in the Centre of

November	6,707
December	5,106
January	4,342
February	7,874
Total April 2015 – Feb 2016	125,378
Total Jan 2015 – Jan 2016	140,856

- Christmas holiday events had strong bookings. Events included up to three sessions a day. These included salt dough Christmas decorations and a number of drop-in craft days.
- Leicester De Montfort Rotary Club has continued to photograph Brocks Hill as one of their 2015-16 environmental projects. The group presented a cheque to the Friends Group to buy a dedicated digital frame for the conservatory to display their images.
- Borough-wide Archaeology Field Work Group continues to meet at BH.
- Menphys sponsored walk will take place at BH in May 2016.
- Through the Friends of Brocks Hill, contacts links have been made with Keyham SEN school. Year 9 pupils visited 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. The group had discussions with officers, leaving with plenty of ideas. This project will continue throughout 2016.
- Support for Oadby Remembers event (commissioned input) continues.
- Borough Hindu Association will be holding a Holi festival event on site in March.
- 2,163 school children have had commissioned activities at Brocks Hill since April 1st with one school attending November – January.
- Brocks Hill family Christmas craft fair was fully booked and well attended. Officers are now working on Easter craft extravaganza.
- Continued working with Oadby and Wigston Lions for use of legacy money around the site to enhance facilities e.g. benches and sculptures.
- Preparation for the BH garden party is underway. This will see local natural history

groups and organisations coming together for the second year, to promote BH as the home for natural history on world environment day.

6.4. Centre and Building Work

- The planned capital re-development work to the conservatory has been put on hold due to the construction company instructed going into administration.
- Water leak repair completed. A new water main was installed with minimum disruption to site operation.

Email: anne.court1@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Tel: (0116) 257 2602.

Implications	
Financial (CR)	No significant implications.
Legal (AC)	No significant implications.
Risk (AC)	No significant implications.
Equalities (AC)	No significant implications.

Agenda Item 16



Service Delivery Committee	Tuesday, 22 March 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 January 2016 when activity was last reported.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That Members note the information provided within the report.
- 2.2. That Members decide if additional verge cutting in 2016/17 is required as set out at paragraph 6 of this report.
- 2.3. That Members approve the Draft Tree Strategy to go out to public consultation.

3. Capital Projects 2015/16

- Ervins Lock footbridge – A site meeting was held on 18th February with William Saunders and Danaher and Walsh who are currently working with Leicester City Council on installation of a footbridge across the canal in the city. William Saunders has agreed to put forward a proposal to Oadby and Wigston on the Ervins Lock footbridge based on their experience. This report is awaited but will include the process for taking the project forward, the likely budget requirements and advice on how we might deal with the on-going liabilities for maintenance and repairs.
- Memorial Safety - on-going. Cemetery staffs 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.
- Wigston Cemetery Boundary Wall repairs – work to be carried out in March depending on weather.

4. Forum Projects:

- Ellis Park Drinking Fountain – as agreed with Chair of Oadby Forum this work will be carried out in July 2016.
- Bus shelters – three shelters (for Paddock Street, Horsewell Lane and Oadby Road) have been delivered and are awaiting installation. Bus shelter licences have been applied for and the outcome is awaited from Leicestershire County Council. LCC also require applications for temporary excavations in the highway which have also been submitted. Installation cannot take place until these approvals have been received.
- Chicken Alley – quote accepted and work to be carried out during late spring

school holiday (start date 31st May). The alley will need to be closed during the works and advance notice will be distributed to local residents.

5. Other Facilities Work

- Sheila Mitchell Pavilion – quotes are awaited for installation of CCTV, re-lining the multi use games area, and repairs to the water fountain. Repairs to the canopy roof have been approved as a capital bid for 2016-17 and work should start on this in early April.
- Freer Centre – a protective covering has been installed on the low level walls to the main hall and meeting room to prevent damage by users and to save on repairs. The walls have been re-painted to door height and a high level deep clean has been completed.
- New notice boards have been installed at Wigston Road and Aylestone Lane allotments.
- Slabs have been levelled around Ellis Park bowls green

5. Borough Gateway Signage:

- A report was submitted to Greening the Borough Working Group relating to the 'Welcome' signs at the entry points into the Borough. The existing 'Welcome' signs are in need of refurbishment and it has been suggested that this forms part of a sponsorship scheme. Sponsorship could also extend to include planting and encouraging 'local distinctiveness' by incorporating sculpture or artwork at specific locations (for example golf clubs by the entry sign on the A6 outside of Glen Gorse Golf Club). The Working Group requested an action plan and further report for their next meeting which should look at refreshing the oldest signs first and how sponsorship could be secured. It was generally agreed that, if possible, excessive planting should be avoided as this is susceptible to vandalism and can detract from the sign itself.

6. Grounds Maintenance

Grass Verges

For 2016/17, Leicestershire County Council have now agreed to fund 6 cuts contracted to Blaby District Council. As in last year, Blaby will carry out a further verge cut in 1206/17 at 50% of the cost (i.e. £2,350.). Budgetary provision will need to be made Members agree to this.

Works that have taken place over the past months are summarised below:-

Peace Memorial Park, Wigston

- Planting of 3 new Cherry Trees (2 either side of tennis court and 1 next to the memorial seat;
- Revamp of the Sensory Garden, with new planting;
- Hawthorn whips planted as fence line; and
- Application submitted for Green Flag status.

St Peters Path, Oadby

- Longstanding overgrown area alongside Marriott House now cleared; and
- Whips planted for hedge line.

Portland Walk, Oadby

- Pride of the Borough volunteers took on a piece of land to develop for planting from LCC, the team assisted with the new planting area by carrying out the initial rotivation and weed spraying.

Bull Head Street, Wigston

- Slabs removed at area of open space as continually broken up by cars driving over, trip hazard. Slabs removed, replaced with topsoil for planting/turfing. The area has been flagged up to the Pride of the Borough as a potential area for Food Trail Project.

Pride of the Borough/Take Pride Campaign

- Team supply Pride of the Borough Volunteers with litter pickers and bags and direct to hotspot areas . Litter picks by volunteers carried out 2-3 times per annum

7. Draft Tree Strategy

To meet the aims of the Council's Greening of the Borough Strategy, in particular Aims 6 and 11 as set out below, a Tree Strategy has been drafted.

Aim 6 – to increase the number of trees on public property, and to seek to reverse the trend of removing trees from gardens which has had a detrimental effect on the appearance and ecology of many streets.

Aim 11 – To educate the residents, employees, organisations and businesses of the borough on environmental issues to encourage changes in behaviour.

It is not intended to provide a specific planning led policy document. Almost all aspects of planning control over the protection or loss of trees are the subject of legislation or Central Government policy and, in terms of process or procedure it would be hard to improve upon these. The emerging document is therefore aspirational and focussed upon enhancing the care and regard for otherwise protected trees and woodlands more generally. However, if the aspirations of the document are to carry any "weight" as material planning considerations in future then its text must be the subject of a local public consultation.

A draft of this strategy was presented to the Greening of the Borough Working Group, some minor suggestions were made and amendments are being made by the external consultant, the updated draft will be circulated prior to 22 March. Members are requested to approve the draft strategy to go out for public consultation

The Council now has a dedicated Tree Officer in post.

Email: margaret.smith@oadby-wigston.gov.uk (Facilities) **Tel:** (0116) 257 2832

Email: brian.kew@oadby-wigston.gov.uk (Operations) **Tel:** (0116) 257 2841

Implications	
Financial (CR)	No significant implications.
Legal (AC)	No significant implications.
Risk (AC)	No significant implications.
Equalities (AC)	No significant implications.



**Oadby and Wigston
Borough Council**

Draft Tree Strategy for consultation

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council

DATE: 25 November 2015

1.0 Purpose of this strategy

This document is about the best and most versatile product in the world; trees! They beautify, cleanse, nourish, and heal. They are useful, practical and renewable. They create landscapes, habitats and communities. They are an asset that gets more valuable with time. Everyone has seen and touched them. Oadby and Wigston Borough Council recognise the importance of trees and this strategy is for everyone, as trees touch all of our lives.

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council has three corporate priorities; to create:

- A good quality of life for all residents
- A clean, greener and safer environment
- A successful economy

Trees are an integral part of delivering these priorities; connecting commerce, recreation and public health. Information on the role of trees in your Borough, how to look after the tree scape, and get involved with your local trees, is an important part of this strategy. This strategy sets out how the council will look after our own trees, how we will deal with protected trees, and how we will consider trees and development.

Getting involved

This is a draft for public consultation. Getting involved will refine this document, and make it the most effective it can be. You can comment [at xxxxxx](#)

The consultation process is: [xxxxxxxxx](#)

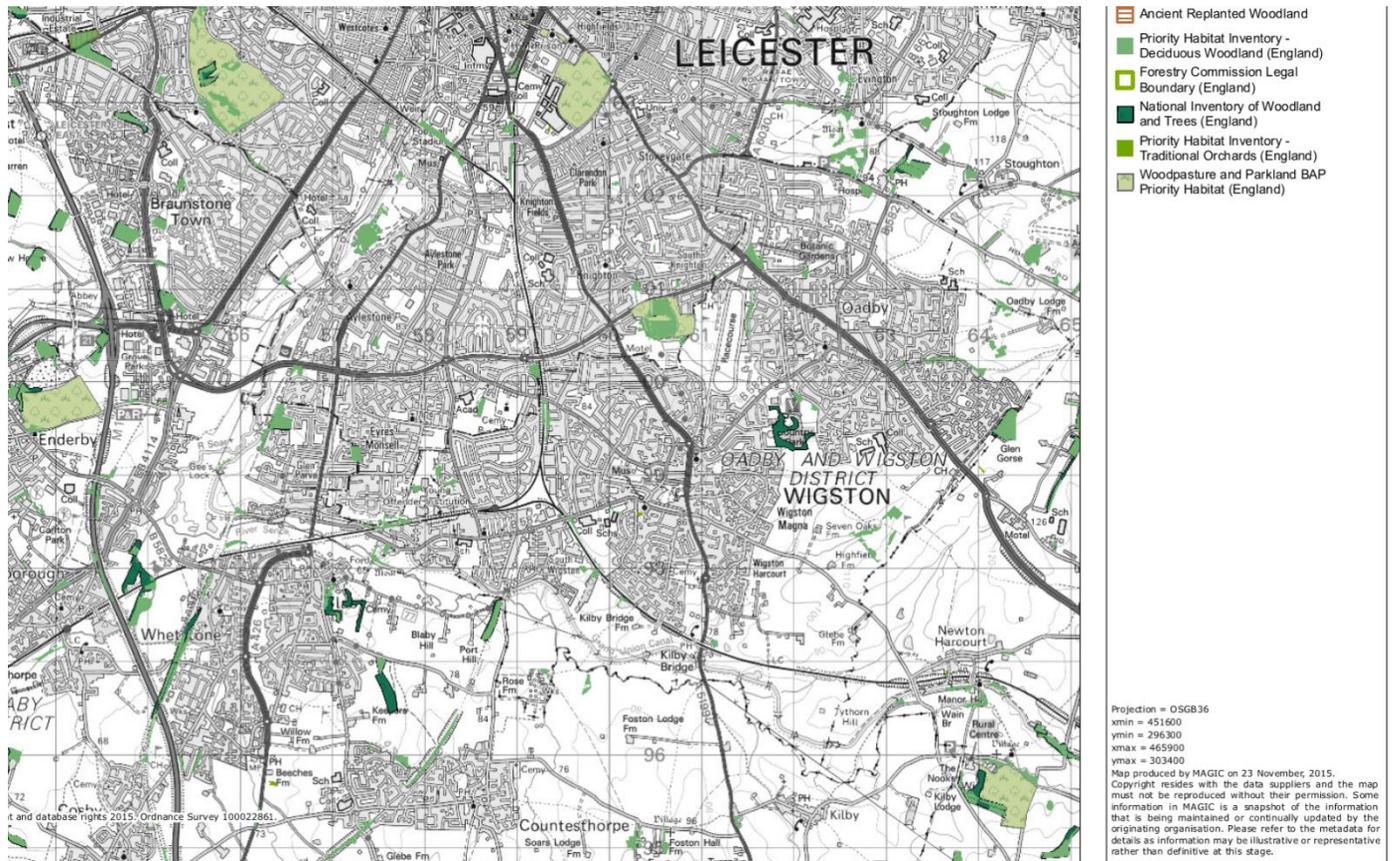
2.0 General assessment of current tree stock

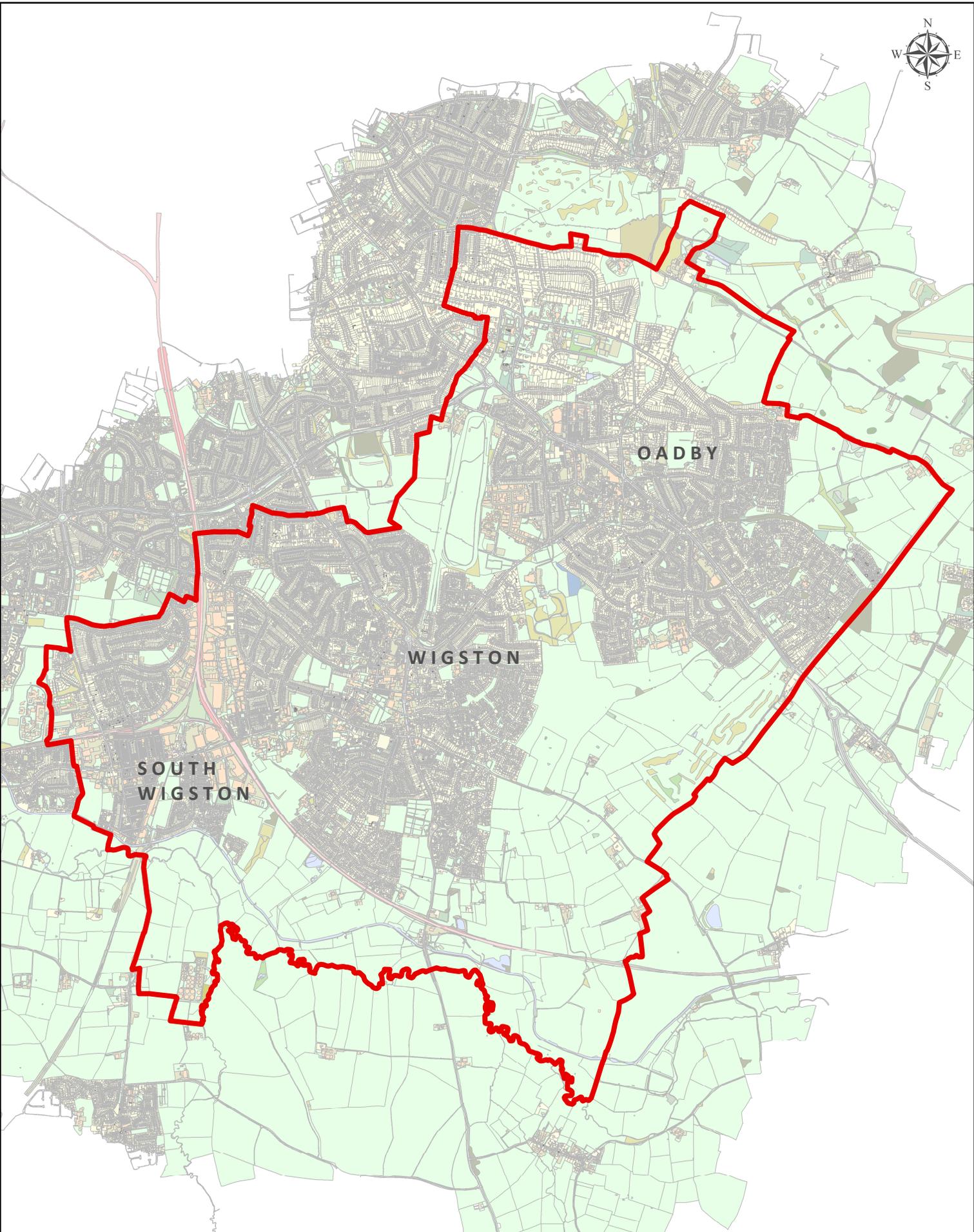
Woodland is a scarce resource in the Borough, well below the national average of 8%. None of the woodland is classified as ancient, but there is isolated semi-natural secondary woodland in the urban and rural areas. Substantial new woodland planting has taken place, in particular on Brocks Hill Country Park.

The ash tree is dominant in Leicestershire and is extensive throughout the Borough as hedgerow trees or mature woodland trees, and oak is predominant. There are opportunities for further tree planting within the towns, as identified by the Greening the Borough Strategy. There are a high proportion of veteran trees in the rural area and a network of hedgerows. The Council will be surveying trees on their own land over the next few years.

Hedgerows are a characteristic of the Borough, linking the town and countryside and creating wildlife corridors. The urban edge is well integrated into the landscape by hedgerows, trees and subtle changes in the landform which filter and limit views of the townscape from the open countryside.

Trees on Highway land are the responsibility of Leicestershire City Council and beyond the scope of this document.





3.0 The benefits of the current tree stock

Landscape

Trees are the largest living landscape feature and define the character, views and sense of place. They soften the visual impact of the edge of the towns when looking from the open countryside, which is particularly important on the southern edge of the Oadby and Wigston. Trees enhance the setting on the built environment (see photo 1), screen unattractive buildings and create 'vistas' to enhance an attractive view. Trees provide a sense of maturity for new developments and help blend new buildings into the landscape. They are an important component in creating a sense of place and many landscapes we admire and visit have a high tree population, and marking as they do, the passing of the seasons. However, not all trees are appropriate for their setting, and an understanding of the right tree, in the right place is important to make sure that tree has room to grow and does not cause a conflict.



Photo 1 of St Peter's Church, Oadby



Photo 2 trees marking the passing of the seasons

Ecological benefits

Trees individually provide significant ecological benefits and provide roosting, feeding and nesting for birds, food and habitat for insects, habitat and roosting for bats and hollow trees and provide a home for new mammals. Fungi, mosses, liverworts and lichens are a rich and complex part of our ecology. Many protected and rare insects and fungi are entirely dependent on old trees to survive. Dead wood (either fallen, standing or dead twigs) and general wood decay are essential for nutrient recycling which is important for soil health. Collectively, trees have added value as wildlife corridors for mammals, bats and birds. All trees provide ecological benefits, however some species have a higher ecological value than others. An oak tree, for example, can support over 270 different species. Generally, the older the tree, the more complex and diverse an ecological community it supports.

Ecosystem services

Trees intercept heavy rainfall and reduce flash flooding. They filter the air and removes various pollutants from the atmosphere. They cool buildings in summer and diffuse moisture loss and reduce wind speeds, therefore reducing heat loss in winter.



Photo 3 of woodland management and standing dead wood at Brocks Hill Country Park



Photo 4 of a yellow hammer at Brocks Hill Country Park

Our well-being

Walking outside amongst trees has been proven to make us feel better. This has been proved medically with research proving that blood pressure can be lowered, mild depression lifted and overall fitness improved. Trees can reduce the incidence of asthma as air is filtered. Stress-related illnesses are reduced not only by the calming effect of the looking at trees, but by the fact that attractive, well maintained public spaces with trees encourage walking, and, by association, incidental social interaction. Trees cast shade and may have a role to play in reducing skin cancer. Studies have shown that patients in hospital rooms with views of green space (in particular, trees), recover from surgery quicker than patients looking out onto buildings. A recent report from Faculty of Health states that:

‘Access to nature can significantly contribute to our mental capital and wellbeing’ and that ***‘Safe, green spaces may be as effective as prescription drugs in treating some forms of mental illnesses’***



Photo 5 of Brocks Hill Country Park

Cultural value

Trees – and in particular, veteran trees, are often linked to local events and customs.

Getting involved

Can you help us provide information on important local trees which are connected to a local story?
We would love to publish stories and pictures here.

Putting a value on trees

Recently, a number of methods to value trees have been developed to quantify their diverse roles, and assess how important they are to our economy, ecology and wellbeing.

i-tree eco

i-tree eco measures the urban forest structure, environmental effects and value to communities. This is calculated by using specialized software which processes information from tree surveys

(usually a number of plots within a town), together with meteorological data and air pollution. A number of studies have been carried out through the world. The largest study in the world was in London and was completed in early 2015. Preliminary findings are located at:- <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/london-itree>

Treezilla

Treezilla is a citizen science platform that aims to map every tree in Britain. Anyone can get involved, and the information will help populate the software on what 'ecosystem services' trees provide.

Getting involved

Take a photo, and provide details of a tree (with the owner's permission), and upload it to the map at:-

<http://treezilla.org>

CAVAT

Aside from the cost of buying, planting and looking after a tree, there are a number of methods for working out the financial value of a tree. The most recently developed system is CAVAT. This provides a method for managing trees as public assets, and provides a financial value for the tree; not to replace it, but as its value to the local area. The final figure is calculated from a number of variables, but, to summarize, the bigger, healthier and more accessible the tree is, the higher its value.



Photo 6 of a tree warden training session, in November 2015, on CAVAT and Treezilla. The value of this mature Austrian pine in Peace Memorial Park is calculated under CAVAT as £116,142.

4.0 Geographical assessment

Oadby & Wigston is a small, highly urbanised Borough, which adjoins the south-east edge of the City of Leicester. The total area covers approximately 9 square miles, and the built up area occupies just over 60% of the Borough, close to the City boundary. The council serves a population of approximately 56,170 residents. There are 15 parks and sports grounds and two large open spaces, and we believe these are essential to the well-being of residents, as well as providing ecological

benefits. The Grand Union Canal is an important landscape feature and leisure facility, as well as being of ecological benefit.



Photo 7 of Peace Memorial Park

5.0 Soil assessment

The soil type influences tree populations, particularly in rural areas. In urban areas, the top of the soil has often changed over the years of development and gardening. The scientific description of the soil type is found below:

The soil type is a slowly permeable, seasonally wet slightly acid, but base-rich loamy and clayey soil. The drainage is slightly impeded and the soil has a moderate fertility. The habitat type is a seasonally wet pasture with occasional woodland.

6.0 Biodiversity

The Biodiversity Audit 2005 found the following:

Hedgerows – there is no ‘typical hedgerow’, however a frequently occurring hedgerow is predominantly hawthorn with occasional blackthorn, elder and dog rose. Ash and English elm occurs as shrubby trees and standards, whilst oak is always a standard. The total length of the hedgerows recorded was 85km. Mature crack willow are a common feature with the hedgerows between the River Sence and Grand Union Canal. Several hedgerows, totaling 700m within the Borough, have been identified as being ‘species-rich’ (i.e. averaging at least 5 woody species per 30m)

Getting involved

The Tree Council have a 'Hedge Tree' Campaign which encourages tree tagging of saplings in the hedges to avoid them from being flailed. Contact The Tree Council for more information. Tree tagging must only be carried out with the owner's permission. The Tree Council has launched a Hedgerow Harvest initiative which seeks to reconnect people to this heritage of free local healthy food (<http://www.hedgerowharvest.org.uk/>) .

Woodlands – broad leaved plantation makes up the largest proportion of woodland character of the Borough. It is either young (less that 20 years old) or approaching maturity. Broadleaved woodland survives as scattered stands of a once large area, mostly confined around the Oadby area. The woodlands mainly comprise of oak, ash and beech with an under storey of hawthorn, holly, elder and blackthorn.

Stoughton Farm Park contains the only area of mixed plantation in the Borough and contains veteran, and potentially veteran oaks.



Photo 8 of the woodlands at Brocks Hill County Park

Getting involved

Oadby and Wigston Council have a number of events at Brocks Hill which you can take part in [http://www.oadby-](http://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/what_is_happening_at_brocks_hill_visitor_centre_and_country_park)

[wigston.gov.uk/pages/what_is_happening_at_brocks_hill_visitor_centre_and_country_park](http://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/what_is_happening_at_brocks_hill_visitor_centre_and_country_park) or 'like' their facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/BrocksHillCountryPark/?fref=ts>

The Tree Council encourage a Walk in the Woods and Seed Gathering Season to promote well-being, enjoyment of our local resources, and to gather seeds of local provenance.



Photo 9 of a woodland walk at Brocks Hill County Park



Trees of special interest – 185 trees were identified in the survey as being of special interest, and 112 were of veteran status. Ancient and other veteran trees are a vital and treasured part of our history, and our natural and cultural landscape, and Britain has the greatest number of ancient trees in northern Europe (source <http://www.ancienttreeforum.co.uk/>). Ancient and veteran trees are a unique host to some protected species (such as the violet click beetle). An **ancient tree** is generally low, fat, squat (because the crown has reduced in size through age), and has a wide trunk which is often hollow. A **veteran tree** shows ancient characteristics. A **heritage tree** is linked to a local event, history or local person, or is botanically scarce. **Notable trees** are memorable, usually due to their size and/or setting. They need not be veteran. Finally **Champion trees** are the largest of the species in a particular area.

Getting involved

Veteran Trees can be recorded on the ancient tree hunt website <http://www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk/> . Seek the owner's permission before entering land and uploading tree data.

Getting involved

The Tree Council have a National Tree Week (NTW) in late November/early December every year since inception in 1975. In the 40th year of NTW the council aim to plant one million trees. Their website <http://www.treecouncil.org.uk/Take-Part> provides a wealth of detail on how to take part.



Photo 10 having fun den building at Brocks Hill County Park

7.0 How trees grow

Trees grow taller by growth from new cells from branch tips. As they mature the trunk and branches get wider and the crown forms a network of sub-divided branches. They obtain their energy from sunlight which creates photosynthesis. The trees give out oxygen, and take in carbon dioxide as part of this process. The roots are woody and taper out to the edge of the crown. These roots subdivide and fine feeder roots take up water and nutrients, and carry out gaseous exchange. Roots often have a helpful relationship (symbiotic) with beneficial fungi (mycorrhizae) which help them gather more water and nutrients from a wider area. Most tree roots are within the top 1.5m, sometimes as shallow as 0.6m. Tree roots are damaged by trenching, soil compaction, and raising or lowering the ground. The effects of damage do not usually show for a few years, unless the damage is so severe that the tree blows over.

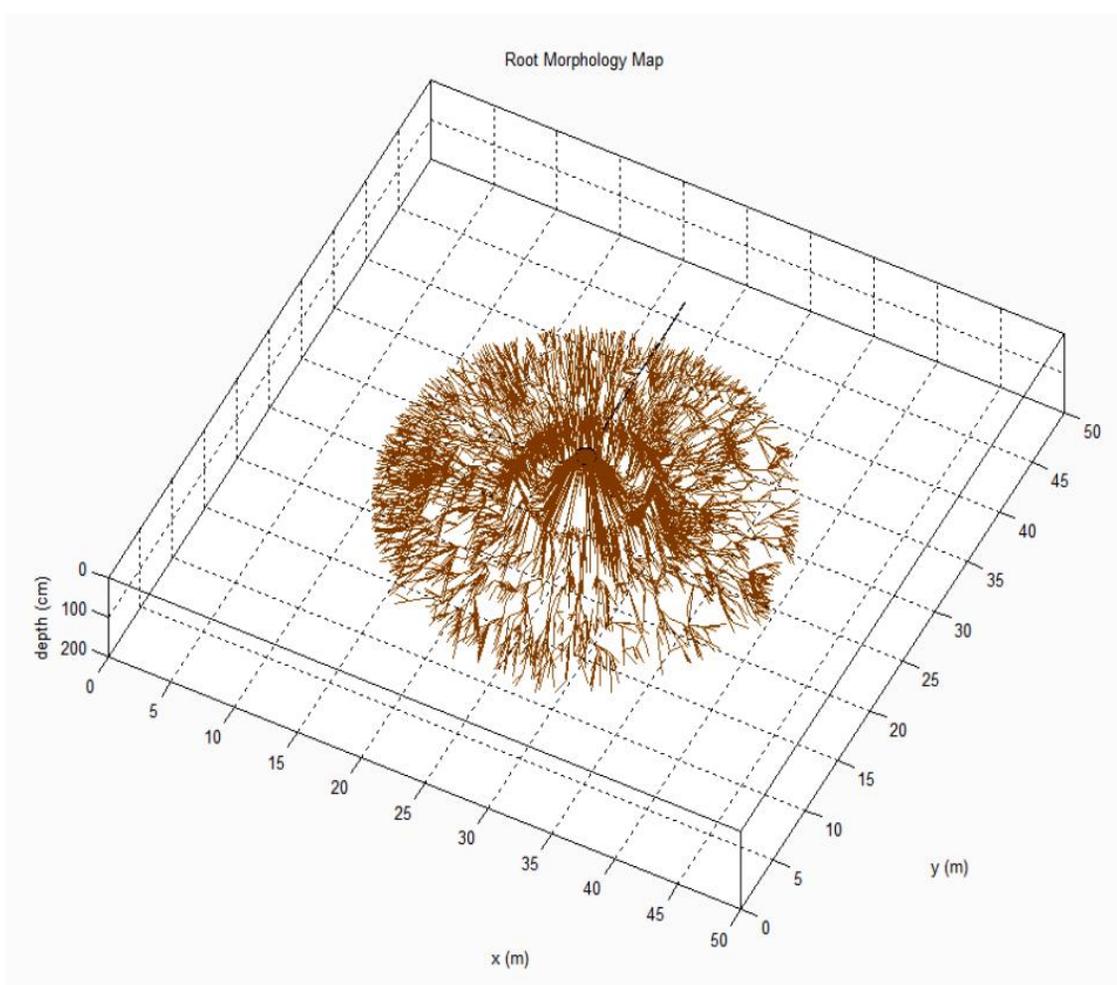


Figure 2 – Root morphology map of a large mature oak tree using ground penetrating radar (TreeRadar). Sharon Hosegood. For further details see

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0619k6l>

Getting involved

Can you help us find the largest tree in the Borough?

8.0 Pests and diseases

The number of pests and diseases affecting trees in the UK has increased rapidly in the UK. This is due to a number of factors, some of which are the subject of current research. Climate change, increased transportation and mobilization of pests during cargo transport are some factors. Extremes of weather, especially hot, dry summers, can make trees more susceptible to disease. The effect of a pest or disease that only affects one tree species can have a big impact on the landscape, especially in areas where only one species is dominant. In future planting, we should aim to provide a mix of species to build resilience in the landscape.

There are three main pests and diseases; fungi, bacteria and insects. Tree health is a complex matter and trees have evolved to have a good and helpful relationship with many fungi and insects (for example, pollution). If in doubt, seek advice from a tree expert.

The Forestry Commission has a helpful website on pests and diseases which is found at:

<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pestsanddiseases>

Current diseases of concern are:

Chalara dieback of ash

This is a fungal disease in trees which causes leaf loss, crown dieback and often death; either by weakening the tree to other pests and diseases or by directly killing. There is no treatment, so the approach is to slow the spread of the disease. This has been carried out by destroying young and newly planted trees, with mature trees being retained for wildlife and landscape reasons. The loss of ash in Oadby and Wigston Borough would have a big impact on the landscape, therefore new planting should be of a different native species, such as oak, field maple, hornbeam or lime.

Massaria Disease of London Plane trees

The disease, commonly known as Massaria disease, infects branches of plane trees. The fungus has usually been considered to be a weak parasite causing only minor damage such as twig dieback in warmer Mediterranean climates. However, in the 21st century it has been found associated with branch death and rapid decay within other parts of Europe.

The disease seems to be specific to the London plane, the Oriental plane and the Occidental plane, and the disease causes large lesions on the upper sides of branches associated with branch drop

Acute oak decline

This condition affects several thousand oak trees. It is characterised by dark fluid oozing from cracks in the bark, rapid decline of the tree and death. Often, it is associated with D shaped exit holes in the bark from a wood boring insect.

This list is not exhaustive, and is ever changing. The Council will continue to actively monitor and manage the trees in Oadby and Wigston Borough with regard to different tree disease that may occur, and will remain vigilant in identifying new diseases.

9.0 Climate change and adaptation

Climate change is a serious threat to all forests, woods and trees. Extreme weather events affect tree stability and health. Some diseases lie latent in the tree and infect the tree when it is stressed. Climate change will affect woodland habitats and the species they support by affecting life cycles, altering the relationships between species.

Increased woodland planting may help mitigate some of the negative impacts of climate change by protecting soils from erosion, reducing the likelihood and impact of flash flooding, and supporting biodiversity. It can also contribute benefits to other land uses, providing shade and shelter to livestock, improving water quality and flows, and making urban environments more habitable.

10.0 Building damage

Trees can cause damage to buildings in the following ways:

- Direct damage
- Indirect damage

Direct damage – this is caused by the direct action of growing roots pushing against a structure, or lifting a pavement. This normally happens close to the trunk where the base of the trunk and the thickest branches. When planting new trees close to buildings, walls and footpaths allow a suitable distance from the tree; at least the distance from the eventual crown spread of the trees plus 2m as a rough guide. For further guidance, speak to an arboriculturist or a landscape architect.

Indirect damage – This is known as subsidence and occurs on a shrinkable soil (such as a heavy clay) when trees take moisture out of the ground underneath the foundations and cause the ground to shrink. The amount of subsidence is dependant on a number of factors: soil type (how ‘shrinkable’ it is or, ‘*the plasticity index*’), how dry the soil is, the type of tree, the size of tree, and its water demand classification (as per table 12 in NHBC Chapter 4.2 ‘*Building near trees*’.), the distance between the tree and the building and finally, the type of foundation. Tree related subsidence causes a seasonal variation in building movement, with the ground shrinking in summer (and the cracks opening) and re-wetting in winter (the cracks close, or reduce). The way this is measured is by level monitoring (to see if the ground rises and falls over the seasons) and crack monitoring (to see if the cracks open in summer and close in winter). Soil samples and root analysis is carried out. It can take only a few fine roots to cause subsidence and it can be from some distance from the tree. The analysis of the cause should be a combined approach by and

engineer, soil laboratory analysis and an arboriculturist. Subsidence can be caused by non-tree related causes (such as faulty drains) therefore a full 12 months analysis to see if there are any seasonal variations is important.

11.0 **Design, planning and development**

Sensitive design, stemming from policy on both land allocation and development control, can provide opportunities for good tree care and new planting. Conversely, poor design can lead to unacceptable tree loss, and contribute to how a lack of vision can erode landscape character and a sense of place.

The council expects to see a full tree report (an Arboricultural Impact Assessment) with a planning application (to BS 5837:2012 '*Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. Recommendations*' (BS)) on site where there are trees. This includes offsite trees close to the boundary. The quality of the tree population and the constraints they pose should be considered at a very early stage in the design process. The council will consult their arboriculturist on their professional opinion on whether the detail is sufficient, and in accordance with the BS, so as to make a recommendation on whether an application is harmful to the visual amenity of the area. This does not mean that all trees should be retained. Low quality trees, trees in decline, diseased, or providing low visual amenity, would not normally be retained. Higher quality trees would normally be retained, unless there is an overriding justification for development.

Development is an opportunity for new planting and this should be considered at the earliest stage to be an integral part of the design and how the site will function. It is important to consider the eventual size of the mature tree to avoid conflict. Planting in groups is generally more visually and ecologically effective, more likely to be sustainable, with the resultant effect that the trees more likely to survive. A mix of species is ideal to ensure variety of texture, colour and seasonal interest, whilst also ensuring that if a pest or disease that affects only one species takes hold, the entire population is not affected as a result. Native species are generally favoured in the countryside, with a mix of native and non-native in urban areas. Reference should be made with the councils Landscape Character Assessment to ensure that the planting scheme is in keeping. A suitable distance between trees and new buildings should be calculated by a landscape architect or arboriculturist to ensure that the risk of damage (direct or indirect) is greatly reduced and that the tree does not cast an unreasonable amount of shade to the new building or present a nuisance in other ways.

Trees can be supplied in a variety of sizes, from cell grown (less than 30cm tall) through to semi-mature. Younger trees tend to be more successful in establishing than large trees, although there

are excellent products on the market to aid successful tree establishment. Trees supplied as bare root can only be planted between October – March, whereas container grown trees can be planted all year round. Aftercare is absolutely critical to success, and the three basic points to consider are ‘watering, watching and weeding’. Keeping a tree well-watered in dry periods in the growing season, and making sure that a 1m wide circle around it is kept clear of weeds and grass for up to three years is one of the most important things. Mulching with 7 – 8cm deep of matured woodchip also keeps moisture in and weeds down. A low stake (a third of the height of the clear stem) and rubber tie will keep the tree upright until established, but the tie must be loosened as the tree grows. A stake too high (up to the height of the trunk) will prevent the trunk from growing strong. Any weak branches, or branches growing too low on the trunk should be pruned off when the tree is young. Excellent advice on tree establishment is found in BS 8545 ‘*Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape. Recommendations*’.

12.0 Tree surgery and woodland management

The British Standard relating to Arboricultural work is BS 3998: 2010 ‘*Tree Work – Recommendations*’. Trees are generally pruned for safety reasons (to remove dead or dangerous branches), or to provide room for people or buildings. Occasionally trees are pruned to reduce the risk of structural defects causing a collapse. Fruit trees are pruned to encourage new fruit. Wounds should not be painted and any cuts should be made to suitable growing points to the branch collar. Tree work is a skilled and dangerous operation and a use of a competent, insured and qualified tree surgeon is recommended. A list of tree surgeons approved by the Arboricultural Association is found at www.trees.org.uk

Definition of Tree Terms

Tree Felling

Felling is defined as the cutting down of a tree or shrub to leave a stump to a certain height. If the stump is to be left, then it should be at least 30cm to prevent a trip hazard. The stump will need to be treated with stump killer to prevent re-growth. Alternatively the stump can be ground out.



Photo 11 tree works at Brocks Hill County Park

Coppicing

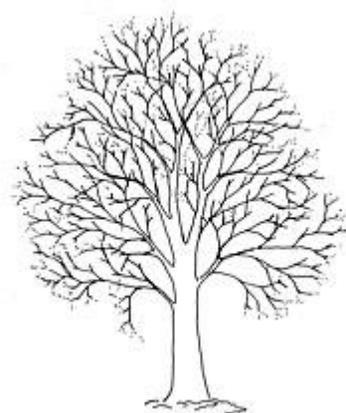
This traditional woodland management technique is carried out by cutting down to about 30 – 60cm high to produce multiple shoots which are re-coppiced every 7 – 15 years depending on species and the management objective. Not all broad leaved trees respond well to the treatment. Species that have been traditionally coppiced are hazel, willow, small leaved lime, hornbeam and ash.

Pollarding

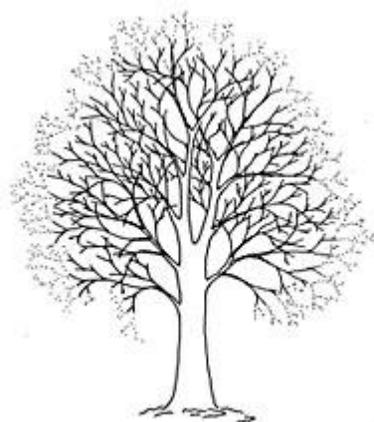
This is the traditional practice of cutting the crown back to a height of 2 – 3m to allow the ‘poles’ to re-grow, and was a useful technique when managing farms. It usually promotes longevity, and some of our oldest trees have been managed as pollards. Many urban limes and planes are managed as pollards in streets. Pollards need to be first cut when the tree is young, and the cycle repeated every 5 – 10 years depending on rate of growth, management objective, and species. Not all species pollard successfully and pollards that have not been cut for a long time might need to be managed by a crown reduction rather than pollarding, to avoid too much of a shock for the tree. This needs to be assessed by an arboriculturist.

Crown Thinning*

Crown thinning is the removal of a proportion of the small secondary live woody growth (in addition to weak, damaged, dead, crossing or duplicated branches and soft growth) to reduce the leaf area of the canopy by a percentage. This reduces the density, but often the tree 'fills in the gaps' within a couple of years.



Crown Reduction*



Crown reduction is the reduction of the canopy, from the tips of the branches towards the main trunk, by pruning growth to an appropriately sized lateral branch, twig or bud to leave a flowing silhouette. It is described as a measurement in metres (e.g. between 1 – 1.5m to suitable growing points). Only a modest amount of crown reduction is appropriate to avoid creating large wounds and causing stress to the tree. Ideally crown thinning and crown reduction should take place midsummer or mid-winter. Frosty weather and hot scorching sun should be avoided when carrying out work. Cherry trees are best cut in August to avoid silver leaf disease. Some species tolerate pruning better than others. The advice of an arboriculturist should be sought.

Crown Lifting*



Crown lifting is the removal of lower branches to a specified height to provide clearance. The illustration denotes the maximum acceptable amount of crown lifting, any more makes the tree top heavy and less stable, and would result in large wounds on the trunk. It is best to crown lift a tree when young to avoid making large wounds.

Formative Pruning

Formative pruning is defined as the pruning of the aerial growth of a tree in its youth, to result in an appearance considered typical for the species or variety of tree concerned. The object of formative pruning is to produce a clean stemmed tree and the establishment of a good branch structure and canopy by the removal of a number of small branches leaving therefore only small, quickly occluding wounds. Root pruning may also be undertaken as part of formative pruning.

Cleaning out

Cleaning out is the removal of dead, dying or diseased branch wood, broken branches, or stubs left from previous tree surgery operations, together with all unwanted objects.

Dead-wooding

Dead-wooding is defined as the removal from the tree of dead, dying or diseased branch wood, broken branches or stubs left from previous tree surgery operations and from within any cavities within the tree.

** Illustrations courtesy of European Arboricultural Council*

13.0 Trees and the law and best practice

There are two distinct forms of law affecting trees. These are Statute and Common Law.

- Statute Law Acts of Parliament e.g.: the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.
- Common Law - Decisions of judges in Courts of Law.

Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)

Any species and size of tree, or trees, can be protected by a TPO. The order can protect individuals, groups, woodland and areas, but the order must be "*Expedient in the interests of amenity to make provision for the preservation of trees*". Everyone has a right to object to an order within 28 days of it being served. Appropriate works can be carried out to protected trees provided consent is granted by the council. Anyone can apply to carry out works, but it is helpful, and sometimes essential, to seek professional advice from an arboriculturist. The form and guidance notes are found at: http://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/works_to_trees_in_a_conservation_area_or_subject_to_a_tree_preservation_order

Applications take 8 weeks to process and there are usually conditions and informatives placed on any consent. There is a right to appeal to the planning inspector if the application is refused, or against any conditions attached to the consent. Information on what is needed in an application form is found at our website link above.

The TPO is in the Part VIII of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and in the Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999 and more recently, Town and Country (Tree Preservation) (England) Regulations 2012

TPOs prohibit the cutting down, uprooting, topping, willful damage or destruction of trees, groups of trees, or woodlands, without the consent. Consent is required before works can take place. An application to carry out work is required and the council have eight weeks to process. The form is found at http://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/works_to_trees_in_a_conservation_area_or_subject_to_a_tree_preservation_order

Exemptions in the Act

- Tree(s) that are are dead or dangerous (5 days written notice is required).
- Woodlands subject to Forestry Commission Felling Licence or Grant
- Works to facilitate planning permission, providing all pre-commencement conditions have been discharged.
- Act of Parliament e.g. Highways Act, Railways Act
- Rights of statutory undertakers (Electricity/gas/water/telecommunications)
- Nuisance - must be actionable - causing actual damage.
- Fruit trees – cultivated for fruit production

Penalties

Any person who:-

- Cuts down, uproots or willfully destroys a tree, or
- Tops, lops or willfully damages in a way that is likely to destroy it, is guilty of an offence. Anyone found guilty of this offence is liable if convicted in the Magistrate's Court to an unlimited fine. In serious cases a person may be committed for trial in the Crown Court.
- A tree replacement notice can also be served.

Conservation Areas

The law relating to Conservation Areas (CA) is in Part II of the Planning Act (Listed Buildings and CA) Act 1990. Trees in Conservation Areas are often a very important feature and contributes to the overall character of the area. The council requires six weeks' notice of intent to carry out work, including pruning. The council can either raise no objection (and cannot place any conditions) or if it considers the work to be harmful to the tree of visual amenity, it must serve a TPO. The same exemptions apply and this legislation on applies to trees with a diameter greater than 75mm at 1.5m from the ground, or 100mm if it is for silvicultural thinning.

Felling Licenses and Woodland Grant Schemes

Forestry Commission (FC), are required to promote the interests of forestry and the supply of timber whilst balancing the effect on nature and landscape conservation.

Felling Licenses take 13 weeks to process and the form and information is found at: <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-6dfkxf>

Brocks Hill Country Park is under a Forestry Woodland Grant Scheme

Exemptions are not required

- For felling trees with a diameter not exceeding 80mm at 1.3m from the ground or in the case of thinning, below 100mm or in the case of coppice or under wood, below 150mm in diameter.
- For the felling of trees in an orchard, garden, churchyard, or public open space. Note that country parks are not exempt.
- For pruning works to trees.
- For the prevention of danger or the abatement of a nuisance.
- For the felling of trees in compliance with statutory requirement
- For the felling of trees at the request of the Electricity utility company
- For felling of trees required to facilitate planning permission, providing all pre-commencement conditions are discharged
- If the felling is in accordance with an approved plan of operations under the Forestry Commission Woodland Grant scheme
- Felling of up to 5m³ of timber provided no more than 2m³ is sold in any three months (calendar quarter). There is a useful timber volume calculator on the Forestry Commission website.

Common Law Issues

Trees and Boundaries

Overhanging branches may be cut back to the boundary line, and in theory, should be offered back to the owner. This can often be the cause of dispute between neighbours, therefore try to discuss this with the owner first. If a large tree is growing close to the boundary, common law allows for cutting back to the boundary line, however, this will make the tree lopsided and create large wounds, possibly leading to instability, or death to the tree concerned. If the tree is protected by a TPO, or in a Conservation Area, consent is needed to carry out the work.

Roots may also be pruned back to the boundary under Common Law, but it is possible that such work might harm the tree and make it unstable. Advice from an arboriculturist should be sought.

If the tree is protected by a TPO, or in a Conservation Area, consent is needed to carry out the work (including root pruning).

Responsibilities of Tree Owners

Tree owners have a duty to take reasonable care for the safety of those who may come within the vicinity of a tree, or any property nearby. The courts state the standard of care is that of ‘the reasonable and prudent landowner’. The tree owner is not expected to guarantee that the tree is safe (trees are living organisms and prone to disease and subject to extreme weather events). However a tree inspection regime, proportionate to the scale of the land/trees/number of people is good practice. Any defects found should be addressed accordingly. Further details are found at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/safetreemanagement>

The Legislation affecting this is the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 and 1984 for all tree owners, and in addition the Health and Safety at Work Act for public and commercial land.

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions Act) 1976

Section 23 of this act gives a Local Authority powers to enter private land to make a tree safe that is considered to be in imminent danger of causing harm to persons or property. It is generally a rarely used legislation and matters are usually resolved by negotiation.

Hedgerow Regulation 1997

Under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 (51 No. 1160):

- It is against the law to remove most countryside hedgerows without permission.
- To get permission to remove a hedgerow, you must apply to your local planning authority.
- If the Council decide to prohibit removal of an important hedgerow, it must let you know within 6 weeks.
- There is a set of criteria that a hedge must meet to be protected by this legislation.
- If you remove a hedgerow without permission (whether it is important or not) you may face an unlimited fine. You may also have to replace the hedgerow.

Further information is found at

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/commonprojects/highhedges/>

The Office of Public Sector Information website provides full wording of the Hedgerow Regulations.

Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 (Part 8) and the High Hedges (appeals England) 2005

Provided neighbours have tried and exhausted all other avenues for resolving a hedge dispute, people are now able to take their complaint about a neighbouring evergreen hedge to the council.

A high hedge is defined as ‘a line of two or more evergreen, or semi-evergreen, trees or shrubs which are two or more metres in height’.

Our role is not to mediate or negotiate between the complainant and the hedge owner, but to adjudicate on whether the hedge is adversely affecting the complainant's ‘*reasonable enjoyment of their property*’. In doing so, the council will take account of all relevant factors and strike a balance between the competing interests of the complainant and hedge owner, as well as the interests of the wider community.

If the council consider the circumstances justify it, it will issue a formal notice to the hedge owner which will set out what they must do to the hedge to remedy the problem, and when by. Failure to carry out the works required by the authority is an offence which, on prosecution, could lead to a fine.

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council charge £450 for this service. Please see the Council's website at http://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/high_hedges

14.0 Policy context

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's (OWBC) adopted Core Strategy 2010

Investment in the Borough's Green Infrastructure has enhanced biodiversity and created a stronger understanding within local people about their role in the conservation of habitats and species, and the links with the urban environment. (Core Strategy 2010 section 4.12),

Spatial Objective 12: Protecting and Enhancing Green Infrastructure

Development should be respectful of the natural environment, landscape and townscape character and contribute towards Biodiversity Action Plan targets of protecting, creating, managing and enhancing important habitats and green assets. Due to the predominantly urban nature of the Borough, to ensure that new development includes proposals to enhance the landscape and biodiversity, for example, through planting trees, creating ponds and other natural habitats.

Policy 5 – Green infrastructure. Veteran trees, trees of special interest, hedges and woodlands have been identified through the Phase 1 Habitat Survey and the Biodiversity Audit (2005) as a key component of Green Infrastructure (see section 7.0 Biodiversity for further details).

Core Strategy Policy 14 - Design and Construction

Proposals for new development and major refurbishment will need to demonstrate how the proposed development will provide opportunities to promote biodiversity

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council's (OWBC) Local Development Scheme 2014

This sets out the process for the review of the Oadby and Wigston Local Plan last reissued in 2013. The following two policies have been saved by Direction of the Secretary of State.

LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL 12: [OLP]

A tree planting scheme to improve the boundary of the green wedge adjacent to the water reclamation works and the Borough depot will be prepared, and implemented by the Local Planning Authority.

LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL 13: [OLP]

The Local Planning Authority will enhance and improve the appearance of the built edge of Oadby between Hidcote Road, Belper Close, Oxted Rise, Broxfield Close, Briar Meads and Tilton Drive by a scheme of tree and hedge planting in the Oadby/Leicester/Wigston green wedge.

OWBC - Nature Conservation Strategy 2007-2017

The strategy discusses the integral role that trees, hedgerows and woodland play in the Nature Conservation value of the Borough. It discusses the critically importance of the two Green Wedge areas within Oadby and Wigston in defining the form and direction of urban growth, providing links to the open countryside, recreational facilities, and, as an attractive feature. Trees and hedgerows create the landmarks within Green Wedges. The collective importance of our seemingly fragmented urban habitats (such as cemeteries, gardens and allotments, parks and school grounds) is recognized, and is a point of focus for the review of the Biodiversity Action Plan (objective 1.3 of the Strategy). The objectives of the document are nearly all relevant to trees, either directly or indirectly. Of particular relevance is the following:

Objective 2.1

To work in partnership with Leicestershire County Council to work towards the establishment of a South Leicestershire Community Forest.

Objective 4.3

To continue to support the Volunteer Tree Warden Scheme

OWBC - Landscape Character Assessment

This divides the Borough into different Landscape Character types defined by the nature of the habitat, townscape, and farmed landscape. It provides a detailed analysis of character, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Full details are found at

http://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/landscape_character_assessment

Of particular relevance is the following policy:

BW/1

Protect the existing positive contribution made to the urban character by trees and identify opportunities to increase tree cover.

- ***BW/1/a – Encourage formal street tree planting***
- ***BW/1/b – Encourage informal street tree and garden tree planting***
- ***BW/1/c – Increase the contribution of urban fringe trees to the landscape character.***
- ***BW/1/d – Improve the contribution of green frontages and open space to Landscape character and biodiversity***

OWBC - Green Infrastructure Plan March 2012

This document identifies components of Green Infrastructure planning and provides an evidence base for the emerging Local Development Framework. Veteran trees, urban trees, woodlands and hedgerows are recognized as an important component of the Green Infrastructure Plan.

The strategy recognizes the fact that any new tree planting to extend the existing woodland areas of the Borough will improve the townscape. This includes planting some of the wider grass verges near woodlands. There are no woodland areas within Wigston and the strategy discusses various impetuses for new woodland planting; from agri-environment schemes to new development. The strategy identifies areas for new tree planting and a timescale for delivery (2014 – 2026)

Space4trees

Is the East Midlands' first Regional Forestry Framework which sets out the approach to the issues and opportunities that face our trees and woodlands. It has been developed as part of the region's Integrated Regional Strategy. The strategy has a series of objectives found at [http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/space4trees_stage3_doc.pdf/\\$FILE/space4trees_stage3_doc.pdf](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/space4trees_stage3_doc.pdf/$FILE/space4trees_stage3_doc.pdf)

OWBC - Greening the Borough strategy 2012 – 2022

This is a diverse series of initiatives that:

- creates a more attractive Borough;
- leads to a place people choose to live, work and visit;
- gives people an opportunity to play a part to improve and care for local natural open spaces;
- attracts participation, interest, and celebrates local distinctiveness;



Aim 1 - To improve the interest and impact of highway verges through enhanced maintenance, colourful and interesting planting, and an increase in the amount of trees and shrubs.

Aim 4 – Entrance points to the borough shall be of a high quality and interest and give a clear indication that the borough within is one that takes great pride in itself. This raised standard will be continued along the main highway routes with imaginative planting schemes, tree planting and areas of distinction.

Aim 6 - To increase the number of trees on public property, and to seek to reverse the trend of removing trees from gardens which has had a detrimental effect on the appearance and ecology of many streets.

15.0 Tree wardens

The Tree Council is the UK's lead charity for trees, promoting their importance in a changing environment. Their vision is one; of more trees in streets, parks, hedgerows and woodland across the UK, bringing benefits to people and wildlife, enhancing landscapes and engaging people in biodiversity and environmental issues. They work in partnership with our volunteer Tree Wardens, schools, communities, organizations and government to make trees matter to everyone.

Tree Wardens are volunteers, usually appointed by parish councils or other community organisations, who gather information about their local trees, get involved in local tree matters and encourage local practical projects related to the trees and woods. The Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's Tree Warden Scheme is part of the wider Leicestershire Tree Warden Scheme and seeks to involve local volunteers in championing and managing their local trees and to meet

locally with like-minded people for training, field trips and practical activities. To support this, the Council runs training events locally, supporting the volunteers wherever possible, and in whatever way appropriate. This will include providing information on changes to legislation and current research on new pests and disease alerts. The most recent training was on CAVAT on 23 November 2015 in the Peace Memorial Park.

Getting involved

For more information about joining the tree warden scheme see http://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/volunteering_with_the_tree_warden_scheme

Getting involved

Record your local trees on the Treezilla website. The more records we have, the easier it is to quantify the benefits of the trees. The following description is from their website:

What is Treezilla?

Treezilla is an exciting new platform for citizen science that everyone from school children to university students and the general public can get involved with. The idea is to map every tree in Britain. This will create a data-rich platform on which a wide range of citizen science investigations can be built.

Getting involved

The Pride of the Borough Group is an umbrella group, working with the council to organize our entry into East Midlands in Bloom. The group was formed in 2004 and aims to improve the environment, working with the council and others and encourage and support relevant community activities. Further operations details are found in Appendix one. Contact details are found on the website http://www.oadby-wigston.gov.uk/pages/pride_of_the_borough1.

16. Tree Strategy Policies

Overall policies

Policy 1 – we will develop the tree population. The tree stock will be expanded with new tree planting where appropriate and practicable.

Policy 2 – we will provide and maintain a high quality and sustainable tree stock. Native species will be planted to maximize indigenous flora and fauna, particularly, but not exclusively, in rural areas. A diversity of species will be established to mitigate against pests and disease that can threaten entire species.

Policy 3 – we will provide and promote the highest standards of tree care to the British standard BS 3998: 2010 ‘*Tree Work – Recommendations*’ as well as adopting relevant arboricultural legislation and research development.

Policy 4 – we will resist the unnecessary removal of trees unless there are justifiable arboricultural, planning or legal reasons. (If you own or you buy a property, then the nearby and valued trees and your responsibilities towards those trees are all part of that same property).

Policy 5 – we will continue to run the tree warden scheme, but incorporate this within the councils Volunteer Policy and Procedure (when adopted)

Council owned trees

The council own trees in parks, cemeteries, allotments and country parks. We will:

Policy 6 - Take all reasonable steps to fulfil duties and obligations to ensure tree safety for public and property.

Policy 7 – carry out replacement planting when a tree is removed. The replacement planting location and species of tree will be assessed.

Policy 8 – The council will not normally undertake any tree pruning works or removal of trees in direct response to any natural or seasonal phenomena, for example:

- a. falling leaves;
- b. sap exudation, (honeydew);
- c. falling fruits, nuts or seeds;
- d. bird droppings;
- e. blossom or pollen;
- f. reduction or increased moisture to gardens;
- g. germinating seeds from council owned trees;
- h. blocked or obstructed drains, gutters, flat roofs from tree deposits and leaves; or
- i. presence of algae, moss build up.

Policy 9 – The council will not normally undertake any tree pruning work due to:

- a. Loss or interference with TV or satellite signal reception;
- b. Loss of sunlight or man-made lighting during any part of the day;
- c. Damage or “heave” to adjacent surfacing due to a nearby tree;
- d. Blocking or obstruction of a view from a residence.

Policy 10 – The council will not normally prune trees to avoid shading solar panels.

Policy 11 – The council will not remove or prune a tree even if someone is willing to pay

Policy 12 - Where birds are found to be nesting in trees, tree works will normally be delayed until the end of the nesting season, or the birds have fledged (whichever is sooner).

Policy 13- Any trees identified and confirmed to be supporting roosting bats will not be worked on until Natural England is consulted. We will then act upon the advice given to us.

Policy 14- When investigating claims of subsidence/heave and damage to properties from underground tree roots evidence will be required from claimants by way of a report from an appropriately qualified person. The report should discuss the following.

- a. A description of the property, including a description of the damage and the crack pattern, the date that the damage first occurred/was noted, details of any previous underpinning or building work, the geological strata for the site identified from the geological map.
- b. Details of vegetation in the vicinity and its management since discovery of the damage. Include a plan showing the vegetation and affected building or surfacing material.
- c. Measurement of the extent and distribution of vertical movement using level monitoring.
- d. A profile of a trial/bore hole dug to identify foundation type and depth of soil characteristics
- e. The sub-soil characteristics including soil type (particularly that on which the foundations rest), liquid limit, plastic limit and plasticity index.
- f. The location and identification of roots found. Where identification is inconclusive, DNA testing should be carried out.
- g. Proposals and estimated costs of options to repair the damage.
- h. A report from an Arboriculturist to support the tree work proposals, including arboricultural options for avoidance or remediation of indirect tree-related damage.

In the case of other structural damage to garden walls, drains, paving, drive surfaces, technical evidence should be provided by a relevant engineer, Architect, building/drainage surveyor or other appropriate expert. Removal of the tree may not be the only appropriate option.

Policy 15- We will continue to develop opportunities to use the woodchip, logs, timber from our own tree works.



Photo 12 council owned copper beech enhancing the local setting

Woodland management policies

Policy 16 - We will take reasonable steps to preserve and enhance woodland trees, particularly those that are indigenous to the area served by Oadby and Wigston Council. We will work with other towards the establishment of a South Leicestershire Community Forest.

Policy 17 - Where possible we will encourage natural regeneration in our woodlands.

Policy 18 - Where possible, subject to public safety assessments, we will retain dead trees in woodlands preferring to prune rather than fell. In situ dead timber and felled trees are left to benefit habitat creation, or where appropriate with funds permitting, public art.



Photo 13 using dead wood as art at Brocks Hill County Park

Policy 19 - We will manage woodlands as a long term sustainable resource. This includes the woodland management technique of woodland thinning of young to enable the best trees to flourish.

Policy 20 - We will actively support and encourage community involvement in the planning and operation of woodland management.



Photo 14 getting involved with woodland management at Brocks Hill County Park

Policy 21 - We will produce and implement woodland management plans for all our woods which will take into account the wider landscape, historic and ecological issues.

Policy 22 – We will apply for the appropriate licenses for felling, from the Forestry Authority, within Oadby and Wigston Council Country Parks

Privately owned trees

Policy 23 – We will strive for provision of space for planting new trees on development and privately owned site by means of the planning application process. Foundation details should follow the recommendations of the National House Building Councils practice note 4.2 *Building*

near trees and distance from buildings complies with BS 5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. Recommendations'.

Policy 24 – We will expect to see tree reports in accordance with *BS 5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. Recommendations'* with submitted planning applications where nearby trees might be affected.

Policy 25 - We will expect to see works on construction sites that might affect trees, to be carried out in accordance with *BS 5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. Recommendations'* and that foundation details follow the recommendations of the National House Building Councils practice note 4.2 *Building near trees*.

Policy 26 – We will impose robust, tree specific planning conditions to ensure that trees are cared for during construction work. This will include arboricultural site supervision when it is appropriate and proportionate. We will enforce any breach of such safeguarding conditions.

Policy 27 – We will make Tree Preservation Orders when expedient in the interests of amenity.

Policy 28 – When considering applications to carry out works to trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order or in Conservation Areas we will expect to see all required information and process the application within 8 weeks. Applications to carry out work will not normally be permitted when the considerations highlighted in policies 7, 8 and 9 apply.

Policy 29 – When considering applications to carry out work where subsidence/heave is alleged, the level of detail set out in policy 14 is required.

Policy 30 – We will enforce and where appropriate will prosecute tree related contraventions.

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Photos from Brocks Hill Facebook page, or by the main author Sharon Hosegood, Chartered arboriculturist FICFor FArborA BSc (Hons) Tech Cert (Arbor A)

Glossary

Abscission	The shedding of a leaf or other short-lived part of a woody plant, involving the formation of a corky layer across its base.
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Access facilitation pruning	One-off tree pruning operation, the nature and effects of which are without significant adverse impact on tree physiology or amenity value, which is directly necessary for operations on site.
Adaptive growth	In tree biomechanics, the process whereby the rate of wood formation in the cambial zone, as well as wood quality, responds to gravity and other forces acting on the cambium. (This helps to maintain a uniform distribution of mechanical stress).
Adventitious	Describing shoots which develop neither from terminal nor axillary buds (see also Epicormic and dormant bud) or roots which form other than through primary development.
Anchorage	In trees, the holding of the root system within the soil, involving the flow of forces from the stem through the branches of the roots system to the cohesive root/soil interface.
Ancient hedgerow	Hedgerows which existed before the Enclosure Acts (1720-1840). These support a great variety of plants and animals, being species-rich with on average five or more native wood species in a 30m length.
Ancient woodland	In the UK, a site which has been woodland since at least 1600CE
Apical dominance	The hormone-induced regulation of the development of a tree or a branch, whereby the apical shoot(s) grows more than the laterals.
Arboriculture	Formerly all aspects of the culture of trees, especially for forestry. Latterly, the art and science of cultivating and managing trees as groups and individuals, primarily for amenity and other non-forestry purpose.
Arboriculturist	A person who has, through relevant education, training and experience, gained expertise in the field of trees in relation to construction.
Arboricultural method statement	Methodology for the implementation of any aspect of development that is within the root protection area, or has the potential to result in loss of or damage to a tree to be retained.
Arboriculturist	Person who has, through relevant education, training and experience in the field of trees in relation to construction.
Architecture	In a tree, a term describing the pattern of branching of the crown or root system.
Backfill medium	Material used for refilling an excavated planting hole.

Bacteria	Microscopic single celled organisms, including many species that break down dead organic matter, together with others that can cause disease in other organisms.
Bark	A term usually applied to all the tissues of a woody plant lying outside the vascular cambium, thus including the phloem, cortex and periderm.
Biodiversity	The variability among all living organisms of an ecological complex.
Biomechanical	Pertaining to the mechanical functions and properties of living organisms, such as trees.
Body language	In trees, the outward display of growth responses and/or deformation in response to mechanical stresses.
Bolling	A term used to describe pollard heads or sometimes the entire permanent framework of a pollarded tree.
Branch	A limb extending from the main stem or parent branch of a tree.
Branch bark ridge	The raised arc of bark tissues that forms the acute angle between a branch and its parent stem
Branch collar	The swelling or roughened bark often found at the base of a branch which should be left intact if the branch is to be pruned off.
Brown-rot	A type of wood decay in which cellulose is degraded, while lignin is only modified.
Bucking	An irreversible deformation of a structure subjected to a bending load.
Burr	A term for various kinds of atypical woody protuberances, especially those derived from the mass proliferation of adventitious buds.
Buttress zone (root flare)	The basal part of a tree, where the major lateral roots join the stem with buttress-like formations on the upper sides of the junctions.
Canker	A lesion in which bark and cambium have been killed, sometimes exposing the wood and often showing a swollen appearance owing to the encircling growth of new tissues.
Cambium	Layers of meristematic cells in the cells peripheral to the phloem that give rise to bark.
Canopy	The topmost layer of twigs and foliage in a tree.
Chlorosis	A yellowing of the leaves and other green parts of a plant owing to low chlorophyll content, typically caused by nutrient deficiencies or other adverse conditions.

Chlorophyll	The pigment in green plants that permits photosynthesis.
Chlorophyll fluorescence	Light energy may be absorbed by the chlorophyll in a leaf or re-radiated in the infra-red (heat) or far red (fluorescence) parts of the spectrum. The fluorescence from a dark-adapted leaf subjected to a pulse of light can be measured by a fluorescence by a fluorimeter to infer photosynthetic capacity, an index of stress hence an early warning sign of deteriorating health.
Co-dominant	In trees, a similarity between two or more stems or branches with regard to their size and their position within the canopy.
Column	In the wood or phloem of a tree, an axially elongated zone of tissue that is distinguished from the surrounding tissue; e.g. Live versus dead or decayed versus non-decayed.
Construction exclusion zone	An area based on the root protection area from which access is prohibited for the duration of the project.
Containerised tree	Tree grow using containerizing nursery production system.
Compartmentalise	The confinement of disease or other dysfunction within an anatomically discrete region of plant tissue, due to passive and/or active defenses operating at the boundaries of the affected region.
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	This is a new mechanism to deliver investment into local infrastructure. The levy will be a standard charge decided by local planning authorities and levied by them on new development.
Coppard	A hybrid word (from coppice and pollard), describing a tree consisting of several coppice stems, each of which has been pollarded.
Coppicing	The cutting of a woody plant near ground level to encourage the development of multiple stems.
Coupe	An area of woodland that has been (or is about to be) selectively clear-felled or coppiced.
Crown	In arboriculture, the main foliage-bearing portion of a tree.
Crown lifting	The removal or shortening of the branches that form the lower part of the crown of a tree.
Crown reduction	Pruning in order to reduce the size of the crown of a tree.
Crown thinning	Pruning inside the crown of a tree in order to reduce its density.
Defect	In relation to tree hazards, any feature of a tree which detracts from the uniform distribution of mechanical stress, or which makes the tree mechanically unsuited to its environment.

Dessication	The state of extreme dryness, the drying out of roots.
Dieback	The death of part of a plant, usually starting from a distal point and often progressing proximally in stages.
Direct damage	Direct physical damage to a structure of surface from pressure exerted by the trunk or growing roots.
Dormant bud	An axillar bud which does not develop into a shoot until after the second season following its formation. Many such buds persist through the life of a tree and develop only if stimulated to do so.
Ecosystem services	The benefits that a particular species or range of species bestow upon others (including humans) though ecological relationships. Such services can sometimes be estimated in a form that allows them to be included in financial accounting.
Epicormic	Pertaining to shoots or roots which are initiated on mature woody stems; shoots can form in this way from dormant buds or they can be adventitious.
Failure	In connection with tree hazards, a partial or total fracture within woody tissues or loss of cohesion between roots and soil.
Flush cut	A pruning cut close to the parent stem which removes part of the branch bark ridge.
Foreseeable	In hazard assessment, pertaining to failure and associated injury of damage which are predictable on the basis of evidence from a tree and its surroundings.
Fungi	Organisms of several evolutionary origins, most of which are multicellular and grow as branched filamentous cells within dead organic matter or living organisms.
Geographic Information System (GIS)	This is an information system for capturing, storing, analysing, managing and presenting data that is spatially referenced.
Green Infrastructure	This is a network of connected, high-quality multi-functional open spaces, corridors and the links in between that provide environmental services and multiple benefits for people and wildlife.
Girdle scar	A ring of minute scars encircling a shoot, which is left by the abscission of bud scales; useful for demarcating increments of shoot extension.
Hazard	A thing, a process or a potential event that has the potential to cause harm.
Heartwood	The dead or predominantly dead central wood of various tree species whose outer living wood, sapwood, has a finite and pre-determined lifespan.

Herbicide (weedkillers)	Chemical or biological materials that kill plants. They are usually applied in a spray to control weeds. Classified as residual or systemic. Herbicide may cause damage by drifting onto other plants.
Included bark	Bark of adjacent parts of a tree (usually forked stems, acutely joined branches or basal flutes) which is in face-to-face contact; i.e. without a woody connection. Such a structure lacks inherent strength but is in many instances strongly reinforced by a surrounding 'shell' of wood.
Independent in the landscape	Point at which a newly planted tree is no longer reliant on excessive or abnormal management intervention in order to grow and flourish with realistic prospects of achieving its full potential contribute to the landscape.
Level arm	A mechanical term denoting the length of the lever represented by a structure that is free to move at one end, such as a tree or an individual branch.
Landscape character	A distinct, recognisably and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that make one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.
Mulch	Material laid down over the rooting area of a tree or other plant to help conserve moisture, suppress weeds and encourage a beneficial microflora.
Mycorrhizal	Pertaining to an intimate symbiotic association between plant roots and specialized fungi.
Necrosis	The death of specific areas of living tissue owing to some adverse factor.
Occlusion	The process whereby a wound in a tree is progressively closed by the formation of new wood and bark around it.
Pathogen	A micro-organism that causes disease in another organism.
Phloem	Conductive tissue of trees and other plants, via which dissolved sugars are translocated from the foliage to tissues where they are needed for growth or for storage. In trees, phloem makes up the innermost layer of the living bark.
Photosynthesis	The process whereby plants use light energy to split hydrogen from water molecules, combining it with carbon dioxide to form the molecular building blocks for synthesizing carbohydrates and other biochemical products.
PICUS	The Picus Sonic Tomograph is a non-invasive tool for assessing decay in trees. It works on the principle that sound waves passing through decay move more slowly than sound waves traversing solid wood. By sending sound waves from a number of points around a tree stem to a number of receiving points, the relative speed of the sound can be calculated and a

	two-dimensional image of the cross-section of the tree can be generated
Pollard	A term for a pollarded tree
Pollarding	The complete or partial removal of the crown of a young tree so as to encourage the development of numerous branches; also, further cutting to maintaining this growth pattern.
Probability	A statistical measure of the chance that a particular event (e.g. a specific failure of a tree or specific kind of harm to persons or property) might occur.
Reaction zone	A defensive zone (usually dark in colour) within the wood of a living tree, which forms a boundary between fully functional sapwood and dysfunctional or decaying wood.
Resistograph	<p>This system is based on the measurement of drilling resistance.</p> <p>The IML-RESI operates in a similar manner to a normal drill. A drilling needle with a diameter of 1.5mm is inserted into the wood under constant drive. While drilling, the resistance is measured as a function of the drilling depth of the needle. The data is printed and stored electronically at a scale of 1:1 simultaneously.</p> <p>Although invasive the relatively small needle diameter causes very little damage, testing is normally only undertaken to confirm the remaining stem wall thickness in decaying trees.</p>
Retrenchment	Progressive reduction in the size of the crown of an old tree, by means of the dieback or breakage of twigs and small branches, accompanied by the enhanced development of the lower or inner parts of the crown.
Risks	The likelihood of the potential harm from a particular hazard becoming actual harm.
Root protection area	A layout tool indicating the minimum area around a tree deemed to contain sufficient roots and rooting volume to maintain the tree's viability, and where the protection of the roots and soil structure is treated as a priority. BS 5837:2012 ' <i>Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations</i> '.
Root flare	Thickened and expanded base of a tree stem at ground level form which buttress roots form.
Rootplate	The central part of the root system of a tree, consisting of the large-diameter main roots and a dense mass of smaller roots and soil.
Sapwood	The living xylem of a wood part, which either loses viability gradually over a number of years or decades or becomes converted in to a distinct, largely dead heartwood.

Service	In construction, any above-or below-ground structure of apparatus for utility provision.
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	A designated area in the UK, at which specified activities are controlled by law for the purpose of conserving wildlife or other natural features.
SULE	Safe useful life expectancy of a tree (Barrell)
Supplementary planning documents	This is a piece of guidance supplement the policies and proposal in development plan documents.
Stag-headed	In a tree, a state of dieback in which dead branches protrude beyond the current living crown.
Stress	In plant physiology, a condition under which one or more physiological functions are not operation within their optimum range, for example owing to lack of water, inadequate nutrition or extremes of temperature.
Stub cut	A pruning cut which is made at some length distal to the branch bark ridge.
Target pruning	The pruning of a twig or branch so that tissues recognizably belonging to the parent stem or branch are retained and not damaged.
Targets	In tree hazard assessment, persons or property or other things of value which might be harmed by mechanical failure of the tree or by objects falling from it.
Tree Preservation Order	In Great Britain, an order made by a local authority, whereby the authority's consent is generally required for the cutting down, topping or lopping of specified trees.
Tree protection plan	Scale drawing, informed by descriptive text where necessary, based upon the finalized proposal, showing trees for retention and illustrating the tree and landscape protection measures.
TreeRadar Inc.	This equipment is ground penetrating radar that scans the ground for objects and records the data from live roots on a field computer.
Utility	An undertaker by statute that has a legal right to provide customer services (e.g. communication, electricity, gas and water).
Veteran tree	<i>'A tree that has passed beyond maturity and is old, or aged, in comparison with other trees of the same species'</i> . Ancient Tree Guide No. 4 (ATF, 2008).
Veteranization	Controlled infliction of damage on a tree to achieve a specific habitat objective.

Vigour	In tree assessment, an overall measure of the rate of shoot production, shoot extension or diameter growth.
Vitality	In tree assessment, an overall appraisal of physiological and biomechanical processes, in which high vitality equates with near-optimal function, in which high vitality equates with healthy function.
Visual Tree Assessment (VTA)	In addition to the literal meaning, a system expounded by Matteck and Breloer (1995) to aid the diagnosis of potential defects through visual signs and the application of mechanical criteria.
White-rot	Various kinds of wood decay in which lignin, usually together with cellulose and other wood constituents, is degraded.
Wound	Injury caused to a tree by a physical force.
Xylem	Plant tissue with the special function of translocated water and dissolved mineral nutrients.

Agenda Item 17



Services Committee	Tuesday, 22 March 2016	Matter for Information and Decision
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Title: **Parking at Blaby Road Park, South Wigston**

Author: **Margaret Smith - Facilities and Administration Manager**

1. Introduction

1.1 Over the last few months the number of complaints relating to abuse of the car park usage in Blaby Road Park, South Wigston has increased. There are 8 marked parking bays including three disabled bays. The complaints include:

- non disabled drivers using the disabled bays
- cars parking along the access road (ie not in a marked bay)
- non park users parking in the car park to the exclusion of park users.

2. Recommendations

That Members consider implementing one of the options given below:

2.1. Option 1

Agree to leave the situation as it is.

2.2. Option 2

Purchase and install signage displaying parking rules to enable the Civil Enforcement Officers to issue Penalty Charge Notices for parking offences. In line with the current Parking Order for Blaby Road Park this would allow parking in a marked bay for up to 12 hours. Cost of implementing this option approx £600 which could be done from an existing budget.

Option 3

2.3.

As above but amend the current Parking Order so that Blaby Road Park is limited to a maximum of 3 hours parking in a marked bay. Amending the current Order is a lengthy statutory process with the requirement to place notices in the press and allow a statutory consultation period. Cost of implementing this option inclusive of signage approx £2.5k. This option would require a supplementary budget allocation.

3. Information

3.1 When Blaby Road Park was re-landscaped the opportunity was taken to move the car park to the far side of the park near to the pavilion in order to deter non park users from parking there. At the time the re-development was completed there was no intention of re-installing signage relating to parking restrictions.

3.2 Prior to the re-development of the park signage in the car park gave details of the parking restrictions and penalties for non compliance. The sign (erroneously) allowed

parking for up to 3 hours and was enforced by the Civil Enforcement Officers with penalty notices being issued for overstaying, not parking in a marked bay and for abuse of disabled parking spaces. However, the Parking Order that was in force at the time gave the maximum stay as 12 hours. This discrepancy was picked up at almost the same time the re-development got underway and, as the sign was removed at this point, there was no need to take any action to resolve the error.

- 3.3 In April 2015 a new Parking Order came into force; the narrative of the order was not changed for car parks within parks which all have a maximum stay of up to 12 hours.
- 3.4 In order for parking restrictions to be enforced signage has to be displayed in compliance with the Traffic Management Acts. Installation of signage would deal with the issues of abuse of the disabled bays and cars not parking in a marked bay but would not prevent non park users using the parking bays. Signage is already displayed stating that the car park is for park users only but non compliance is not an enforceable offence.
- 3.5 There is a perception that the parking spaces are being used by students of South Leicestershire College. The Facilities and Administration Manager has twice written to the Principal asking that students be reminded to make use of the college car park. In response the College has confirmed that they do remind students of this but state that *'it is not possible to distinguish 'student cars' so beyond reminders it is difficult to carry out any further actions.'*
- 3.6 Implementation of Option 2 or Option 3 would affect football and bowls team members who frequently overspill the parking spaces and park along the access road. This problem was foreseen at the time the park was re-developed and negotiations were held with the Tesco store who agreed to the use of their car park by footballers and bowlers. This was communicated to the teams at the time but there has been reluctance by players of both sports to take advantage of this agreement.
- 3.7 Option 3 would allow up to 3 hours parking but this may be detrimental to Members of the bowls club as matches often exceed this amount of time.
- 3.8 It should also be noted that none of the options will stop non park users parking in the parking bays so long as the driver is complying with the enforceable parking regulations.

Email: margaret.smith@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Tel: (0116) 257 2832

Implications	
Financial (CR)	Other than option 3, no significant implications.
Legal (AC)	No significant implications.
Risk (AC)	Loss of car parking spaces at Council facilities.
Equalities (AC)	No significant implications.

Agenda Item 18



Service Delivery Committee	Thursday, 22 October 2015	Matter for Information
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Title: **Customer Service Charters - Exception Reporting**

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

1. Introduction

This report provides information on where promised performance standards within the Customer Service Charters of each service-area have not been met. The Community Service standards are reported within the Community Service Update report on this Committee's agenda.

2. Recommendations

That Members 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. The other service-areas whose performance standards which are slightly below the set targets are as follows:-

- **Corporate Resources** - "Respond in full to all Freedom of Information (FOI) requests within the statutory twenty working days."

Whilst all FOI requests were responded to and completed, 92 % were completed within the 20 working day timescale. Emphasis of the importance of this will be cascaded across the Council and the current recruitment drive will provide extra capacity.

- **Corporate Resources** "We will ensure that draft minutes of all Council meetings are published on the Council's website within 15 working days of the meeting"

There were three instances of minutes being published later than the 15 working day deadline. This is/was due to having one sole clerk being responsible for the minute-taking of all standing committees whilst managing additional service-area workloads.

- **Financial Services** -"Ensure that a minimum of 98% of all suppliers and other creditors are paid within 30 days of receipt of the invoice or within the agreed payment terms"

This is currently running at approximately 90%. With the implementation of planned upgraded financial systems in 2016/17, this rate will improve".

- **Financial Services** – “We will ensure that all sundry debtors are raised within 7 days of receipt of requests from departments”

This has been achieved for 99% of all invoice requests to date. In 2015/16, the actual numbers are small and are for various reasons e.g. VAT queries.

- **Financial Services** – “We will ensure that at least two training sessions per year are held on the use of financial systems, budgetary control and procurement”

These have been ad-hoc in 2015/16 but training will be scheduled into 2016/17 once the current recruitment exercise is completed.

- **Revenues & Benefits** - “We will process new claims or changes to entitlement to benefit and discounts accurately. Claims and changes processed will be at least 98% accurate”

For the period 1 April 2015 to 29 February 2016, the accuracy is currently at 92.49%. A target of 98% is challenging but it is important that the service strives to process claims accurately first time. There is a robust quality checking programme which provides feedback to assessors to link errors to actions and solutions to drive improvements in accuracy rates.

- **Revenue & Benefits** - “We will assess new claims and changes in entitlement quickly and ensure that payments due are made without delay.”

- *New claims will be processed on average in 15 working days;*
- *Changes will be processed on average in 8 working days;*
- *For the period 1 April 2015 to 29 February 2016;*
- *New claims have been processed on average in 16.73 days;*
- *Changes have been processed on average in 6.31 days; and*
- *A plan has been implemented to improve processing times for new claims.*

Email: anne.court1@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Tel: (0116) 257 2602

Implications	
Financial (CR)	The Charters inform the financial planning process and ultimately the setting of the budgets year to year
Legal (AC)	The Council is required to provide as a minimum, services that are a statutory requirement
Risk (AC)	CR1 – Decreasing financial resource. CR2 – Supplier/partner failure.
Equalities (AC)	The Council’s services are accessible to all.