TO COUNCILLOR:

Mrs R H Adams (Deputy Mayor)	Mrs H E Darling JP	Miss A Kaur
N Alam	M L Darr	Ms C D Kozlowski
L A Bentley	Mrs L Eaton JP	Mrs H E Loydall
G A Boulter	D A Gamble	K J Loydall
J W Boyce	F S Ghattoraya	D W Loydall
Mrs L M Broadley	Mrs S Z Haq	Mrs S B Morris
F S Broadley	Miss P V Joshi	R E R Morris
D M Carter	J Kaufman	Dr I K Ridley
M H Charlesworth	Mrs L Kaufman (Mayor)	

Dear Sir or Madam

I hereby **SUMMON** you to attend a meeting of the **FULL COUNCIL** to be held at the **COUNCIL OFFICES, STATION ROAD, WIGSTON** on **TUESDAY, 5 APRIL 2022** at **7.00 PM** for the transaction of the business set out in the Agenda below.

Yours faithfully

Council Offices
Wigston
28 March 2022

Mrs Anne E Court
Chief Executive

I T E M   N O.   **A G E N D A**   **P A G E   N O'S**

⊠   **Member Enquiry System | Informal Discussion Session**

Members are reminded that an informal discussion session regarding the Member Enquiry System (MES) is scheduled prior to the start of Full Council at 6:00 pm.

⊠   **Live Stream of Meeting | Instructions**

This meeting will be live streamed.

Press & Public Access:

YouTube Live Stream

A direct link to the live stream of the meeting's proceedings on the Council's YouTube Channel is below.

https://youtu.be/0pXYaMLFq5k

Postal Address: Council Offices, Station Road, Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 2DR
Refuse & Recycling Centre: The Depot, Wigston Road, Oadby, Leicestershire LE2 5JE
Tel: (0116) 288 8961   **Fax:** (0116) 288 7828   **Email:** csc@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

oadby-wigston.gov.uk   OadbyWigstonBC   @Oadby_Wigston
~ Page 1 ~

1. **Calling to Order of the Meeting**

   The meeting of the Council will be called to order to receive Her Worship The Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

   To receive apologies for absence from Members to determine the quorum of the meeting in accordance with Rule 7 of Part 4 of the Constitution.

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**

   To read, confirm and sign the minutes of the previous meeting in accordance with Rule 19 of Part 4 of the Constitution.

5. **Action List Arising from the Previous Meeting**

   There was no Action List arising from the previous meeting.

6. **Motions on Notice**

   To consider any Motions on Notice in accordance with Rule 14 of Part 4 of the Constitution.

   a. **Use of First Past the Post for General Elections**

      Proposed by Councillor M H Charlesworth and seconded by Councillor Mrs L M Broadley

7. **Petitions, Deputations and Questions**

   To receive any Petitions, Deputations and, or, to answer any Questions by Members or the Public in accordance with Rule(s) 11, 12, 13 and 10 of Part 4 of the Constitution and the Petitions Procedure Rules respectively.

   a. **Subsidising Funerals/Burials in the Borough**

      Submitted by Councillor M H Charlesworth

8. **Mayor's Announcements**

   To receive any announcements from the Mayor in accordance with Rule 2 of Part 4 of the Constitution.

   a. **Official Mayoral / Deputy Mayoral Engagements**

9. **Leader's Statement**

   To receive any statement from the Leader of the Council in accordance with Article 2.9.2(ii) of Part 2 of the Constitution.

10. **Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge (2022)**

    Report of the Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service

11. **Communication Strategy & Action Plan (2022-25)**

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Tuesday, 5 April 2022
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Report of the Communication & Marketing Manager

12. Scheme of Members' Allowances (2022/23)   **71 - 79**

Report of the Head of Law & Democracy.

13. Statement of Gambling Policy (2022-2025)   **80 - 116**

Report of the Senior Strategic Development Manager.

14. Exclusion of the Press and Public

The press and public are likely to be excluded from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (Exempt Information) during consideration of the item(s) below on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and, in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exempt item(s) outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

15. Refuse and Recycling Review (Exempt Presentation)

Exempt Presentation of the Senior Strategic Development Manager

For more information, please contact:

Democratic Services
Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
Council Offices
Station Road, Wigston
Leicestershire
LE18 2DR

t: (0116) 257 2775
e: democratic.services@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

**You can access all available public meeting documents
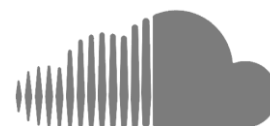and audio-visual live streams and recordings electronically on:**

Our website **oadby-wigston.gov.uk** under **'Your Council'** and **'Meeting Dates, Agendas & Minutes'**

Your smart **iPad**, **Android** or **Windows** tablet device with the **'Modern.Gov'** app

Our **YouTube** Channel **ow.ly/FYQW50zDNkc** or smart device with the **'YouTube'** app (facilitated by **'Zoom'**)

Our audio platform **soundcloud.com/ oadbywigstonbc** or smart device with the **'SoundCloud'** app

Full Council
Tuesday, 5 April 2022

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Agenda Item 4

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL HELD AT THE COUNCIL OFFICES, STATION ROAD, WIGSTON ON THURSDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2022 COMMENCING AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT

Mrs L Kaufman	Mayor
Mrs R H Adams	Deputy Mayor

COUNCILLORS

N Alam	
L A Bentley	
G A Boulter	
J W Boyce	Leader of the Council
Mrs L M Broadley	
F S Broadley	
D M Carter	
Mrs H E Darling JP	
F S Ghattoraya	Deputy Leader of the Opposition
Mrs S Z Haq	Deputy Leader of the Council
Miss P V Joshi	Leader of the Opposition
J Kaufman	
Mrs H E Loydall	
K J Loydall	
D W Loydall	
Mrs S B Morris	
Dr I K Ridley	

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

S J Ball	Assistant Solicitor
Ms T Bingham	Strategic Director / Section 151 Officer
C Campbell	Head of Finance / Deputy Section 151 Officer
Mrs A E Court	Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service
Mrs P Fisher	Head of Customer Service & Transformation
D M Gill	Head of Law & Democracy / Monitoring Officer
A Thorpe	Head of Built Environment
S Tucker	Democratic & Electoral Services Manager / Deputy Monitoring Officer
S Wheeliker	Democratic Services Officer

125. CALLING TO ORDER OF THE MEETING

The meeting of the Council was called to order to receive Her Worship The Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

A minute's silence was observed in memory of late Alderman Duncan Lucas and Councillor Robert Eaton.

126. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillors M H Charlesworth, M L Darr, Mrs L Eaton JP, D A Gamble, Ms C D Kozlowski and R E R Morris.

127. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

128. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 December 2021 be taken as read, confirmed and signed.

129. ACTION LIST ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

There was no Action List arising from the previous meeting held on 21 December 2021.

130. MOTIONS ON NOTICE

None.

131. PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

None.

132. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

132a. OFFICIAL MAYORAL / DEPUTY MAYORAL ENGAGEMENTS

By affirmation of the meeting, it was:

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The list of Official Engagements attended by The Mayor and/or Deputy Mayor be noted.

In accordance with Rule 6.3 of Part 4 of the Constitution, the Chair moved for the order of business to be altered and taken in the order as reflected in the minutes.

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

The order of business be altered accordingly.

133. COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2022/23

Councillor F S Ghattoraya entered the meeting at 7.13pm after the commencement of the debate, and therefore did not take part in the vote thereon.

The Council gave consideration to the report (as set out at pages 10 - 15 of the agenda reports pack) which asked it set and approve the amount of Council Tax for the Borough of Oadby and Wigston for 2021/22 in accordance with section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Localism Act 2011. A brief summary of

the proposals was delivered by the Vice-Chair of Policy, Finance and Development Committee, Councillor Dr I K Ridley, followed by an update from the Head of Finance.

A number of Members drew attention to the fact that the Borough Council only receives 12% of Council Tax collected, and requested that the Council should communicate clearly to its residents that despite being the collection authority, the majority of the percentage split (72%) goes to Leicestershire County Council.

A number of questions were raised by Members regarding how the £150 Council Tax rebate for properties in Bands A-D would be administered, and reassurance was sought that payments would be made to eligible households as efficiently as possible. It was confirmed by Officers that government guidance had only been issued the day before the meeting so the detail was still being reviewed, however residents were to be encouraged to sign-up for direct debit payments in order to receive the rebate automatically early in the financial year 2022/23. It was clarified that where the Council does not hold live direct debit instructions for an eligible household, contact would be made in order for them to make a claim.

The recommendations were moved en bloc by Councillor Dr I K Ridley, seconded by Mrs S B Morris and it was

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

A. **It be noted that under powers delegated to the Chief Financial Officer, the Council has calculated the amount of 17,602.15 as its Council Tax base for the financial year 2022/23 in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012.**

B. **It be noted that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2022/23 is £4,215,715.**

C. **The following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2022/23 in accordance with sections 30 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended):**

   (i) **£35,644,007 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in section 31A(2) of the Act.**

   (ii) **£31,428,292 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in section 31A(3) of the Act.**

   (iii) **£4,215,715 being the amount by which the aggregate at C(i) above exceeds the aggregate at C(ii) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 31 A (4) of the Act, as its Council Tax Requirement for the year.**

   (iv) **£239.50 being the amount at C(iii) divided by the amount at A above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 3 B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.**

(v) Valuation Bands

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Base Element of the 2022/2 Council Tax			
A	**B**	**C**	**D**
£	£	£	£
159.67	186.28	212.89	239.50
E	**F**	**G**	**H**
£	£	£	£
292.72	345.94	399.17	479.00

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at C(iv) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with section 36(1) of the Act, as the amount to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

D. It is noted that for the year 2022/23, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicester/shire, and the Leicester/shire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories shown below and that Leicestershire County Council have indicated that their provisional precept will be confirmed on 23 February 2022.

Precepting Authorities - Valuation Bands

Leicestershire County Council			
A	**B**	**C**	**D**
£	£	£	£
968.64	1,130.08	1,291.52	1,452.96
E	**F**	**G**	**H**
£	£	£	£
1,775.84	2,098.72	2,421.60	2,905.92

Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicester and Leicestershire

A	B	C	D
£	£	£	£
172.15	200.85	229.54	258.23
E	**F**	**G**	**H**
£	£	£	£
315.61	373.00	430.38	516.46

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Combined Fire Authority			
A	**B**	**C**	**D**
£	£	£	£
49.53	57.78	66.04	74.29
E	**F**	**G**	**H**
£	£	£	£
90.80	107.31	123.82	148.58

E. That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at C(v) and D above, the Council, in accordance with section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, set the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2022/23 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below.

Valuation Bands

Total Council Tax Payable by - Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Residents			
A	**B**	**C**	**D**
£	£	£	£
1,349.99	**1,574.99**	**1,799.99**	**2,024.98**
E	**F**	**G**	**H**
£	£	£	£
2,474.97	**2,924.97**	**3,374.97**	**4,049.96**

In accordance with Rule 18.3.2 of Part 4 of the Constitution, as required by Regulation 4 and Part 3 of Schedule 2 of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 (as amended), the names of the Members who casted a vote for the motion or against the motion or who abstained from voting were recorded as follows:

Votes For (18)	Votes Against (0)	Abstentions (0)
Mrs R H Adams		
N Alam		
L A Bentley		
G A Boulter		
J W Boyce		
Mrs L M Broadley		
F S Broadley		
D M Carter		
Ms H E Darling		
Mrs S Z Haq		
Miss P V Joshi		
J Kaufman		
Mrs L Kaufman		
K J Loydall		
D W Loydall		
Mrs S B Morris		
Dr I K Ridley		

134. BUDGET & MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2022/23

The Council gave consideration to the report as set out on pages 16 – 46 of the agenda, which asked it to review the draft budget estimates for 2022/23, the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) forecasts, and the 2022/23 Capital Programme and proposed sources of funding. A brief summary of the proposals was delivered by the Vice-Chair of Policy, Finance and Development Committee, Councillor Dr I K Ridley, followed by an update from the Head of Finance.

The Head of Finance tabled the following corrections to the original report:

(i) Page 21 Paragraph 9.2 - The General Fund balance is £1.348m and is forecast to be **£1.011m** at 1 April 2022, assuming current year financial outturn is as forecast at Q3; and

(ii) Page 35, Section E - The updated MTFP presents a total deficit by 2025/26 of **£320k**. There are currently plans being explored to create new funding streams, but the cost of implementation and the timing of the streams is a risk.

Acknowledging the continued pressures faced, Members commended the work undertaken by Officers to achieve delivery of a balanced budget.

It was moved by Councillor Dr I K Ridley, seconded by Councillor Mrs S Z Haq and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

(i) **The Section 151 Officer's statement on the robustness of the budget and**

the adequacy of reserves be noted;
(ii)   The Revenue Budget 2022/23 be approved;
(iii)   The HRA budget for 2022/23 be approved;
(iv)   The new Capital Schemes of the General Fund and HRA be approved; and
(v)   The Capital Strategy be approved.

135.   TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGIES 2022/23

The Council gave consideration to the report as set out on pages 47-85 of the agenda, which asked it to review the Treasury Management Policy, the Council's Prudential indicators, the Treasury Strategy and Plan and the Investment Strategy for 2022/23. A brief summary of the proposals was delivered by the Vice-Chair of Policy, Finance and Development Committee, Councillor Dr I K Ridley, followed by an update from the Head of Finance.

It was moved by Councillor Dr I K Ridley, seconded by the Leader of the Council and

RESOLVED THAT:

(i)   The Treasury Management Policy be approved;
(ii)   The Prudential Indicators for 2022/23 be approved;
(iii)   The Treasury Strategy and Plan 2022/23 be approved; and
(iv)   The Investment Strategy 2022/23 be approved;

Votes For:	**18**
Votes Against:	**0**
Abstentions:	**1**

136.   PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/23

The Council gave consideration to the report as set out on pages 86-95 of the agenda, which asked it to review the proposed Pay Policy Statement for the coming financial year 2022/23.

It was moved by Mrs L M Broadley, seconded by the Leader of the Council and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

(i)   The Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23 be approved;
(ii)   Once agreement at national level is reached, the pay structure incorporating the National Joint Council (NJC) 2021/22 pay award will be brought back to Council for approval; and
(iii)   The continued commitment to paying the Real Living Wage for 2022/23 be approved.

137.   AMENDMENT TO MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL BODIES (FEBRUARY 2022)

The Council gave consideration to the report as set out on pages 6-8 of the agenda update, which asked it to ratify amendments to the representation on the Committees, Sub-Committees and other Panels and Boards to which the Council appoints, as a consequence of a recent by-election in Wigston Meadowcourt Ward.

It was moved by the Leader of the Council, seconded by Mrs S B Morris and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED THAT:

(i) **The revised allocation of seats to political groups be approved; and**

(ii) **The proposed appointment of nominations to those seats be approved.**

138.   LEADER'S STATEMENT

The Leader of the Council presented a Statement outlining his recent work, the administration's plans and an overview of recent decisions taken since the previous meeting of the Council.

The Leader expressed shock and concern regarding the escalation of conflict in Ukraine and stated that the Borough would seek to support the settlement of refugees displaced by the violence. A Member suggested that it would send a message of solidarity if the Council were to raise the Ukranian Flag in Peace Memorial Park, Wigston.

The Leader called upon health providers to consider carefully the location and accessibility of Covid vaccination sites, given that parts of the Borough still lagged well behind the national average rates of vaccination. It was also announced that a Covid Recovery Plan, a refresh of the Council's Corporate Plan and a review of the Member Enquiry system would all be forthcoming.

It was confirmed that a Communications Strategy was currently being worked on with a view to being put before Members at either Policy, Finance and Development Committee in March 2022, or Full Council in April 2022. It was also confirmed that an update on the lunchtime opening of the Customer Service Centre would be provided to the March meeting of Service Delivery Committee.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.25 PM

✍

Mayor

Tuesday, 5 April 2022

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Council Offices, Station Road, Wigston, Leicestershire, LE18 2DR

Agenda Item 6a.

MOTION ON NOTICE

Full Council | Tuesday, 05 April 2022

Use of First Past the Post for General Elections

1. This Council notes that the UK is the only country in Europe to still use First Past the Post (FPTP) for General Elections aside from Belarus.

2. Created in the 1800's when the electoral choice was between the aristocratic Tories and Whigs and women were denied the right to vote, FPTP is structurally undemocratic. It means millions of votes do not matter, millions of votes are wasted, both "safe seats" and tactical voting are commonplace, and seats won in Westminster often bear little relationship to votes cast. In short, it is an archaic rigged system. How can Britain of the 2020's move forward when, in some constituencies, the same party has won in every election since those constituencies were created in 1832?

3. There is an alternative voting system. It is called proportional representation (PR). More than 80 nations around the world already elect their legislatures this way, including in Scotland, in Wales and in the Republic of Ireland. Why? Because it is far fairer and proportional.

4. This Council therefore calls on the Westminster government to reject First Past the Post, end minority rule, and support the introduction of a form of Proportional Representation for Parliamentary General Elections in which all votes count equally and seats match votes.

Councillor M H Charlesworth (Proposer)
Councillor Mrs L M Broadley (Seconder)

The above motion was duly received by the Head of Law & Democracy on 27 March 2022 in accordance with Rule 14, Section 1 of Part 4 of the Constitution of the Council.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Full Council | Tuesday, 05 April 2022

Subsidising Funerals/Burials in the Borough

1. Has the Council ended the practice of subsidising funerals/burials for residents whose faith is not catered for in the Borough?

2. If a life-long resident of the Borough has to go into long-term care outside the Borough (sometime for years) and then dies, will they be allowed to be buried in the Borough at residents' rates or will they be charged at non-resident rates?

Councillor M H Charlesworth

The above questions were duly received by the Head of Law & Democracy on 27 March 2022 in accordance with Rule 13, Section 1 of Part 4 of the Constitution of the Council.

Events attended by the Mayor May 2021 – March 2022

JUNE

| 24 | Oadby & Wigston BC – Armed Forces Week | Raising of the Flag for Armed Forces Week |

JULY

| 12 | Cllr David Carter – Oadby & Wigston BC | East Midlands in Bloom |
| 27 | Cllr Priti Joshi – Oadby & Wigston BC | Book Launch Event |

AUGUST

| 15 | Neighbours of The Mayor | Tea Party |

SEPTEMBER

4	East Midlands in Bloom	Visit of Judges
11	Wigston Framework Knitters Museum	Presentation of Socks to Mayor
12	University of Leicester	Conferral of Freedom of the Borough

OCTOBER

7	Haf Katib – Micro Data Management	Official 3G Opening
14	Councillor David Carter	Pride of the Borough Awards Evening
15	The Chairman of Trustees of LGS	Foundation Day Service
30	TEAMS (Charity)	Community Cup Presentation

NOVEMBER

2	Jennifer, Lady Gretton DCVO, JP	The Queen's Award for Voluntary Services
9	Marilyn Bowles – Aigburth Residential Care Home	Visit to Aigburth Residential Care Home
11	OWBC – Councillor Bill Boulter	Remembrance Service – Armistice Day at PMP
11	Colin Towell – Wigston Civic Society	Unveiling Ceremony of the Lancaster Bomber Crash
14	All Saints Church, Wigston	Remembrance Sunday Service

1

20	Chris Swan – Oadby Town Centre Association	Oadby Light Switch On
27	Oadby & Wigston Lions	Bell Street Festival Light Switch On

DECEMBER

18	Amrose – Flowers of Oadby	Official Opening
22	OWBC – Rob Helliwell	Japanese Cherry Tree Planting

JANUARY

25	OWBC	Presenting Awards for Shop Window Competition - Oadby, Wigston & S/Wigston
27	OWBC	Holocaust Memorial Service

FEBRUARY

3	OWBC	Health and Wellbeing in the Borough – Interfaith Walk
4	All Saints Church of England Primary School	Wings of Peace Memorial Service

MARCH

2	Resham Singh Sandhu, Sikh Welfare Cultural Society	Retirement Farewell for Simon Cole, Chief Constable of Leicestershire Police
5	Leicester Jewish Congregation	Sabbath Service (for Lily as Mayor)
7	OWBC	Raising of the Ukrainian Flag
8	Blaby District Council	Chairman's Charity Curry Night
17	O&W Hindu Community	Holi Festival

Events attended by the Deputy Mayor May 2021 – March 2022

NOVEMBER

| 14 | St Thomas Church, South Wigston | Remembrance Sunday Service |

DECEMBER

| 4 | St Peter's Church, Oadby | Christmas Fair Opening |
| 4 | OWBC | South Wigston Christmas Light Switch On |

MARCH

| 18 | Leicestershire County Council | Chairman's Charity Dinner at Beaumanor Hall |

	Full Council	Tuesday, 05 April 2022	Matter for Information

Report Title: **Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge (2022)**

Report Author(s):   **Anne Court (Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service)**

Purpose of Report:	To present to the Council the attached feedback report of the Peer team and to note the required next steps of preparing an Action Plan to implement the recommendations of the review.
Report Summary:	The Local Government Association (LGA) recommends all councils take up its offer of a Corporate Peer Challenge, every three to five years. The Council voluntarily agreed to take part, initially in 2017, with a review taking place in January 2022. The purpose of the challenge is to provide councils with a general "health check" based on five key themes, to consider how well it has appraised its own situation and how well prepared and focussed it is for the opportunities and challenges ahead. This report summarises the findings of the Peer team and sets out the next steps for the Council to take.
Recommendation(s):	A. **The Council notes the LGA's Feedback report, as published on 18 March 2022 on the Council's website and attached to this report at Appendix 1**; B. **The Council notes the requirement for the publication of an Action Plan within 8 weeks of the date of the published report. The Action plan to set out how the Council will deliver the Peer team recommendations; and** C. **The Action Plan to be reported to the first Council meeting in the 2022/23 municipal year to include the proposals for Members to develop a new long-term vision for the borough with local stakeholders.**
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	Anne Court (Chief Executive / Head of Paid Service) (0116) 257 2602 anne.court1@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Corporate Objectives:	Building, Protecting and Empowering Communities (CO1) Growing the Borough Economically (CO2) Providing Excellent Services (CO3)
Vision and Values:	"A Stronger Borough Together" (Vision) Accountability (V1) Respect (V2) Teamwork (V3) Innovation (V4) Customer Focus (V5)
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.

Financial:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Decreasing Financial Resources / Increasing Financial Pressures (CR1) Political Dynamics (CR3) Reputation Damage (CR4) Organisational / Transformational Change (CR8) Regulatory Governance (CR6) Economy / Regeneration (CR9)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications directly arising from this report. EA not applicable
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	As the author, the report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	None.
Background Papers:	None.
Appendices:	**1.** LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Report (Final) (2022)

1. Information

1.1. The Peer Challenge was conducted over four days between 24 and 27 January 2022. The Challenge is an independent and improvement support offer. A team of experienced elected Members and Senior Officers conduct it, from other councils outside of the Leicestershire area.

1.2. The Peer Challenge focuses on five key areas summarised as: -

- Does the Council understand the local place, i.e. the Borough, and use that to set its priorities?
- Does the Council provide effective local leadership and resilience of place and are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
- Are there clear and robust governance arrangements, are Member and Officers roles understood?
- Does the Council have a clear understanding of its current financial position with a strategy and a clear plan to address its financial challenges?
- Is the organisational capacity being utilised to best effect to deliver the Council's priorities?

Over the four days the Peer team explored these key areas with more than sixty-seven people including a range of Officers together with elected Members and external stakeholders, through a series of meetings, discussion sessions and focus groups.

1.3. In summary the Peer team found that since its last review in 2017, the Council has

undertaken a variety of work to improve its services and ways of working particularly by progressing its performance framework and prioritising channel shift to digital services. The team found "the *majority of building blocks are now in place to best deliver the council's work and serve its communities.*" The Peer team also acknowledged the Council responded well to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic through its support to the Borough's most vulnerable residents and local businesses as the economy opened up. The high levels of awareness by both Members and Officers, of the Council's financial position and the challenges it faces was acknowledged and particularly the proactive response to the LGA's financial health check in July 2021. The Peer team were once again complimentary about the staff, finding the general atmosphere at the Council as supportive and productive together with positive feedback from external partners on the Council's honest and open relationships.

1.4.   The key recommendations for the Council to now produce an Action Plan for implementation are in summary: -

- To plan, develop and communicate a long-term, Member-led vision for the borough with local stakeholders including residents and partners
- Members and Officers to work more effectively particularly to refresh the Corporate Plan and to resolve issues around the workings of the committee system.
- Continue to build on communications to promote the Council's priorities and its good work.
- Robust planning for allocating resources including capacity to deliver the Council's ambitions and major projects.
- Pick up pace on key areas such as staff recruitment, business support and engagement.
- Plan to ensure all residents can access the services, information, and advice that they need.
- Explore and apply for further external funding opportunities to deliver its notable ambitions through its strategic growth, corporate and other plans.

Local Government Association

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council

Monday 24 January to Thursday 27 January 2022

Feedback report

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18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ   www.local.gov.uk   **Telephone** 020 7664 3000   **Email** info@local.gov.uk   **Chief Executive:** Mark Lloyd
Local Government Association company number 11177145 Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government company number 03675577
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1. Executive summary

Since its last Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) in 2017, Oadby & Wigston Borough Council (OWBC) has undertaken a variety of work to improve its services and ways of working. The majority of building blocks are now in place to best deliver the council's work and serve its communities.

The council also responded well to the initial challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic from March 2020, eg through developing the community hub response with local partners and volunteers, supporting the borough's most vulnerable residents, and local businesses as the economy started to open after lockdown. Additionally, OWBC worked well with Leicester City Council and the county's public health colleagues to address their sustained high Covid-19 transmission rates further to the summer of 2020, which drew much national attention to both areas.

OWBC has an agreed corporate plan, which teams and individuals recognise, understand and base their work on at service and individual level. This forms a clear 'golden thread', identifying how each member of staff contributes to the plan. Members feel however that they did not fully own the objectives and priorities of the plan at the time they were set but need to, and those objectives and priorities need sharing more widely with staff and external stakeholders. The plan was mainly produced by officers and presented to members for comment and sign-off as a completed piece of work. Opportunities were missed for members to fully steer and own the plan's direction, and not all stakeholders know what the council's ultimate goals are. Stakeholders therefore are not sure how best to work with the council, and on what projects. Members and officers should therefore together refresh the corporate plan, or draft a new one, based on members priorities, and agree how it is monitored, then jointly communicate and promote the new plan internally and externally. This will help ensure residents, local businesses and members are all clear about the council's objectives and how they can interact with the council on shared aims.

The peer team observed that there was not a wider vision for the whole borough, or place, which involved local stakeholders beyond the council, eg partners and residents. OWBC therefore needs to plan and communicate a long-term, member-led

vision for the borough, with residents, partners and other stakeholders that includes the council's corporate plan as well as other stakeholders' plans and contributions to that wider version. This will ensure all the council's and partners' work contributes jointly and strategically to the needs of the borough. As part of this and refreshing the corporate plan, the council should further develop its positive relationships and work with neighbouring authorities and local partners to also drive efficiencies and effectiveness.

To further assist the corporate plan's refresh, development of the borough's vision and other projects, senior management should further engage with its communications team early to plan communications and consultation about such activities, and to promote OWBC's successes. This will help ensure all stakeholders are fully aware of what the council's latest services are and can engage with them on projects from the outset.

One of the key building blocks remaining is for the council to develop its capacity further. This will ensure that OWBC, through its Senior Leadership Team, works as strategically and effectively as possible, that staff undertaking additional work as a result of vacancies do not become overwhelmed, and change and innovation are driven throughout the council.

Member and officers have high levels of awareness of, and are undertaking a range of work to enhance OWBC's financial position. The council is increasing financial capacity through a newly appointed Section 151 Officer, as part of a new finance team with a clear vision, which it now needs to deliver. The council knows the related challenges, difficult decisions that may need making, and the need to develop the budget so it continues to be balanced and sustainable for future years. Much of OWBC's work on this has been in response to the LGA's financial health check of the council in July 2021 including its recommendations. This work needs to continue to strengthen the council's budget position and avoid potentially significant problems. Additionally, amongst other peer team suggestions, the council needs to align and maintain its Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to the corporate plan and projects to ensure resources are in place to deliver them.

Channel shift to more digital services, particularly throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, has resulted in many positive service improvements. Vulnerable residents however

have lost a degree of the face to face and written information and support that they need, which could impact negatively on their circumstances, health, wellbeing and perception of the council. Everyone understood at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic why face to face services had to stop. Almost two years on however, members and residents are starting to get frustrated with the council citing Covid-19 for not providing certain face to face support and meetings. This could impact on their trust in the council and on individual residents' circumstances, potentially requiring more expensive responses by the council that could be avoided by providing a wider range of support to those who need it at an early stage.

The council has notable ambitions, eg through its strategic growth, corporate and other plans, but as a small council has limited funds to deliver these ambitions. OWBC should therefore explore and apply for all relevant funding opportunities, increasing its bid writing capacity and effectiveness to do this successfully.

The council should also pick up pace on key areas outlined throughout this report, notably around delivering its communications strategy, business support and engagement. Whilst OWBC has made a lot of progress since its last CPC, it has been slow on some of those recommendations that are relevant to this CPC. The peer team also heard various examples generally of slow decision-making, and vacancies hindering service delivery. The council has opportunities however to make the most of recent increased staffing, new strategies around communications, and corporate plan ambitions around business support and engagement. These new staff and opportunities will increase general momentum, pace of change in service delivery, customer engagement and strategic planning such as the development of a new long-term vision for the borough.

There are some significant relationship issues between members and senior officers that need resolving at the earliest opportunity. Many members and officers for example do not fully understand or follow their roles and member/officer protocols, and it is not always clear who makes what decisions. Subsequently, it is not always clear how those decisions are communicated, who needs to action them and in what timescales. In addition, there appears to be issues around how meetings are organised and operated. Members often do not feel empowered or confident to make strategic or difficult decisions; they perceive, as do some external stakeholders, that committees are not operating to full effectiveness and efficiency. Such issues are

creating difficult working relationships between members and officers that urgently need resolving so they can best deliver council business. Externally facilitated themed workshops for members and officers together would bring an independent view to help resolve these issues.

The council's member enquiry system faces some problems, although there are examples of it working well. Members do not always receive notifications of how their enquiries are progressing and therefore do not necessarily know who to ask for updates. Additionally, the system does not differentiate between routine and urgent queries. This poses the risk that urgent queries may not be addressed in a timely way. As a result of such issues, some members are circumventing the system, approaching officers directly to resolve their queries, which is taking up more time and reducing the system's use and efficacy. Members and officers need to resolve these issues together to ensure the system works for members and in turn saves time for officers.

2. Key recommendations

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

2.1.   **Recommendation 1 – plan, develop and communicate a long-term, ie 10 to 20 year, member-led vision for the borough with local stakeholders including residents and partners. This includes working with neighbouring councils and the local Member of Parliament (MP), informally and formally** - the absence of this vision means missed opportunities to engage with residents and partners to improve the borough beyond the council's corporate plan. The council has good relationships with many local partners and should therefore further these through developing this vision and to refresh the corporate plan (the council's part in delivering the wider borough vision). Developing this vision with stakeholders will help ensure they are engaged, own and contribute to the borough's needs, and that all local resources are used to full effect.

2.2.   **Recommendation 2 – establish ways for members and officers to work**

more effectively together, especially to:

- **refresh the corporate plan, or draft a new one, and agree how it is monitored –** members do not feel they genuinely own the plans' objectives and priorities, the plan is now into its third year, and officers are looking to refresh the plan's key performance indicators (KPIs). There are therefore timely opportunities for members and officers to work together to refresh or draft a new corporate plan, based on member priorities, and agree how it is monitored, so that progress can be continually tracked, and any issues addressed

- **review the member enquiry system –** problems are hindering the system's effectiveness, eg the system is not differentiating between routine and urgent queries, and is not always notifying members of receipt of their queries or their progress, with members therefore approaching officers directly to resolve their queries. Members and officers must resolve these issues together so the system works for members and in turn saves time for officers

- **organise externally facilitated themed workshops for members and officers together, eg political awareness, making and actioning strategic decisions, committee programme forward planning and performance management** - significant relationship issues between members and officers are negatively impacting on working relationships, trust and the speed of the council's work. These must be resolved at the soonest opportunity so members and officers are clear about their and each other's roles and responsibilities, and can work together and progress council services as effectively as possible. External facilitators would bring an independent view to these issues to help resolve them through workshops that could provide a positive and non-threatening environment.

2.3. **Recommendation 3 - communicate and promote the refreshed corporate plan internally and externally** – members and some external stakeholders are not sure how the plan's objectives and priorities were developed. After

involving members more in the refresh or drafting of a new corporate plan, consultation of the new plan will help promote it to external stakeholders. This will help to ensure residents, local businesses and members are all clear about the council's objectives and how they can interact with the council on shared aims.

2.4. **Recommendation 4 - Corporate Management and Senior Leadership Teams should further engage the communications team on projects early to plan communications and consultation about what that council is looking to do, and promote the council's good work** – this will make the most of the communications team's new manager and strategy, eg to improve service take-up, communications and engagement with members, staff, local businesses, community groups and residents. There is a willingness by the business community to support the councils work, but they feel disengaged at this time. This particularly applies to the recommended work around the corporate plan refresh, developing the vision for the borough, and promoting the council's successes. Such work will help ensure all stakeholders can influence, are bought into and can make the most of what the council is doing from the earliest stages.

2.5. **Recommendation 5 - align and maintain your MTFP to the corporate plan and projects to ensure resources are in place to deliver them** – the council has a number of sizeable projects and activities that need allocated resources to deliver them properly. OWBC therefore needs to clarify how it will deliver its ambitions and new big projects, and manage them through robust business plans that identify allocated resources including capacity, and manage risk to avoid costly failures.

2.6. **Recommendation 6 - pick up pace on key areas, eg recruitment, communications strategy, business support and engagement** – OWBC has made a lot of progress since its last CPC in 2017 but progress has been slow on some of the recommendations that are relevant to this Challenge, and in other areas. The council should therefore pick up pace on key areas, especially where increased staffing capacity enables this. **These key areas include clarifying the role of the unfilled Strategic Director post and filling all vacancies, including appropriate interims as soon as possible,**

especially human resources staff to reduce pressure on staff and increase pace – this will drive strategic and operational change throughout the council. Some teams are stretched as they cover for vacancies, which is not sustainable. All vacancies therefore need filling as soon as possible, especially that of the Human Resources Manager to assist the recruitment of other posts.

2.7. **Recommendation 7 - plan to ensure that all residents can access the services, information and advice that they need** – many council services are now run digitally, which are more efficient. Vulnerable residents however who cannot access these services have lost a degree of face to face and written support and information. This could impact negatively on their circumstances and require more expensive interventions. These could be avoided by providing a wider range of support to those who need it.

2.8. **Recommendation 8 - explore opportunities to attract external funding to deliver council projects, including increasing your funding bid writing capacity** - the council has notable ambitions, eg through its strategic growth, corporate and other plans, but as a small council has limited funds to do this. OWBC should therefore explore and apply for further funding opportunities. This includes increasing bid writing capacity and effectiveness, which will be assisted by the increase in director-level staff resources and the development of a new/refreshed corporate plan.

3. Summary of the peer challenge approach

3.1. The peer team

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected the focus of the peer challenge, and peers were selected on the basis of their relevant expertise. The peers were:

- David Blake, Managing Director, Worcester City Council
- Cllr Emily Smith, Leader, Vale of White Horse District Council
- Chris Leslie, Director of Resources, Maldon District Council
- Mary Morrissey, Director of Economy and Infrastructure, Solihull

Metropolitan Borough Council

- Vicki Goddard, Peer Challenge Manager, LGA
- Suraiya Khatun, Project Support Officer, LGA.

3.2. Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five themes, which form the core components of all CPCs. These areas are critical to councils' performance and improvement, and were further tailored for OWBC.

1. **Local priorities and outcomes** - Are the council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering effectively on its priorities and achieving improved outcomes for all its communities? How effectively is the council consulting, engaging and communicating with its communities on a two-way/directional basis, eg virtually and through its Citizens' Panel?

2. **Organisational and place leadership** - Does the council provide and enable effective local leadership and resilience, especially through members' community leadership roles, eg via its community hub, social media, etc (over and above what the council can provide)? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities, including with the County Council and its district and borough councils in relation to combined authority/devolution discussions? Is the committee model and its decision-making, forward planning, meetings and processes fit for purpose and proactive, eg responsive to key challenges and opportunities, making necessary 'difficult' decisions, and enabling change and transformation to be successfully implemented? Is the Leader's role within the model clear and purposeful?

3. **Governance and culture** - Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of respect, challenge and scrutiny? Are member and officer roles and working protocols clearly defined, understood and adhered to by all, including what decisions members should make? How are member/officer relations? How effectively is the Senior

Management Team working, especially statutory officers?

4. **Financial planning and management** - Financial planning and management: Does the council have a clear understanding of its current financial position? Does the council have a strategy and a clear plan to address its financial challenges? How well have members and officers understood and progressed the recommendations of its LGA financial health check, particularly around the capital programme and strategy, and any asset strategy, management and action plan?

5. **Capacity for improvement** - Is the organisation able to support delivery of local priorities? Does the council have the capacity to improve, especially relating to finance and the Senior Management Team? How effective is the council's project planning board that reviews, plans and progresses internal systems? How can the council improve customer services, especially revenues and benefits and online services, further to the council's review on this? What more should the council be doing on agile working and what are the limits, eg maximum service hours? Should the council consider further shared services?

3.3.   The peer challenge process

Peer challenges are improvement focused; it is important to stress that this was not an inspection. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The peer team prepared by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the council and the challenges it is facing. The team then spent three and a half days onsite at OWBC, with one of the team participating wholly online, during which the peer team:

- gathered information and views from more than 32 meetings, in addition to further research and reading

- spoke to more than 67 people including a range of council staff together with

members and external stakeholders.

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

4. Feedback

4.1.   Local priorities and outcomes

OWBC's corporate plan is the 'golden thread' for all its work. There are strong, regularly reported performance and project management processes across the council, which various service and corporate teams mentioned. Service teams make changes to their work to improve performance, and regularly monitor and address their performance against the corporate plan's KPIs and individual performance appraisals. Committees scrutinise performance reports and make decisions as required. All this is helping OWBC deliver its services to maximum effect.

The corporate plan is viewed by many within the council and the peer team as an ambitious, positive basis for the council's work. Staff also recognise that three years on, it contains too many KPIs - 94. This makes it potentially unwieldy to monitor and progress them all. Service teams are therefore starting to review their KPIs to refine and reduce them, especially as achievements are delivered. Such work needs to include members and continue to ensure the council delivers, scrutinises and improves the right activities to deliver the corporate plan's intended achievements. A careful eye should be kept on the review process to ensure KPIs measure the right things; outcomes and the impact on the community should not be over-looked by applying too great a focus on operational process targets.

Members and external stakeholders are unsure how OWBC's corporate plan's objectives and priorities were developed and consulted on. Some local and neighbouring stakeholders are unsure what members' long-term vision and goals are, so are not sure how best to work with the council and on what projects.

The peer team heard how the corporate plan was mainly produced by officers and presented to members for comment and sign-off as a completed piece of work. Members possibly felt obliged to agree to it and because of this, they do not feel they genuinely or fully own the plans' objectives and priorities but should do, and opportunities were missed for members and other stakeholders to fully steer the

plan's direction.

Given that the corporate plan is now into its third year, officers are looking to refresh its KPIs, and members need to lead and own the plan's objectives and priorities, there are now timely opportunities for OWBC to establish ways for members and officers to work together to refresh the corporate plan, or draft a new one, based on member priorities. The agreed plan will then need consulting on/engaging with, communicating and promoting internally and externally at the earliest opportunity. This will ensure that members consider the views of all stakeholders including partners, residents and council staff when making their decisions about the priorities and aims for the council to include in their corporate plan. This will also enable all local stakeholders to be clear about the council's objectives and how they can interact with OWBC on shared aims. Members and officers can then agree a revised process to monitor and performance manage the plan, which can also be used to inform each committee's work programme.

OWBC also needs to plan and communicate - with its members, staff, local stakeholders including residents and partners - a long-term vision for the wider borough, or place, to which the corporate plan contributes. This should be member-led, and involve local stakeholders beyond the council, eg partners and residents, to help ensure that all partners' work, plans and contributions, as well as the council's, contributes jointly and strategically to the borough's needs, using all local resources to full effect.

To further strengthen members' involvement in the corporate plan, the vision for the borough and the council's wider work, committee chairs must be fully engaged in the plan's creation and performance management. Allocated senior lead officers need to support each of these chairs so they can best undertake their roles. The peer team heard how committee chairs do not always receive or read their meeting papers in sufficient time, there are not always pre-meetings to prepare committee meeting business, and support for such meetings can differ from committee to committee. These inconsistencies and lack of clarity as to what each chair should expect, has resulted in chairs not feeling in best control of their committees and timely decision-making being impacted.

OWBC's community and customer services teams' performance are particularly

strong. They are continually enhancing service delivery, responding to customer needs and improving customer satisfaction, which the peer team heard from many council staff, external stakeholders and customer representatives. OWBC received a national Customer Service Excellence Award in December 2020 and continues to progress this work. Other positive performance examples, from OWBC's LG (Local Government) Inform Headline Report, include the council processing 100 per cent of its planning applications within set/agreed times, and improvements in household waste recycling.

The Headline Report also highlights areas relating to this CPC whereby performance is reducing. Council tax and non-domestic rate non-collection for example was 3.58 per cent and 12.94 per cent respectively in 2020/21, compared to the mean for East Midlands district councils of 3.11 per cent and 4.53 per cent respectively. OWBC therefore needs to address issues like this as part of its plan to improve its long-term financial stability, and recognises this in its corporate plan.

Channel shift to more digital services, particularly throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, has resulted in many positive service improvements, eg increased process speeds via more cost-effective, automated forms. Many staff and stakeholders identified however that vulnerable residents and tenants have lost a degree of the face to face and written information and support they need, including 1:1 support, community events and leaflets, which could impact negatively on their circumstances, health and wellbeing. Vulnerabilities include frailty, isolation, worsening mental health, poverty, lack of digital devices, skills and connectivity - all of which could be exacerbated if any required support is not in a resident's first language. Vulnerabilities are especially prevalent in parts of the borough like South Wigston, where OWBC has funded the Helping Hands Advice Service to provide legal, financial and other practical support – digital, face to face and written. Vulnerable residents cannot however always access the services they need, especially if they are only available digitally, and do not address their specific questions and requirements including being in their first language.

Everyone understood at the beginning of the pandemic that face to face services had to stop to minimise transmission of Covid-19 whilst alternative service delivery developed. Almost two years on however, the peer team heard, particularly from community representatives and members that they are frustrated that the council is

still citing Covid-19 for not providing certain face to face support to its most vulnerable residents, and certain face to face meetings with members. The lack of such support could impact on trust in the council and on individual residents' health, finances and housing, potentially leading to more expensive responses by the council that could be avoided by providing a wider range of support to those who need it.

The peer team heard little about the current use of demographic data breakdowns, eg ethnicity, religion, deprivation and digital access to monitor and improve service delivery and customer engagement. When they asked officers about this however, staff recognised that collating, analysing and responding to such information could help address residents' needs and engage with them more, especially at a more preventative stages, and that work is commencing on this through the communications, customer services and other teams. The council's ordering of GovDelivery, a recognised communication tool, should further progress how OWBC targets and communicates with a wider reach of customers. GovDelivery should be implemented by March 2022 and its impact will be regularly reviewed.

4.2.   Organisational and place leadership

The council's Senior Leadership Team, especially the Chief Executive, understands, is accessible and responds to the needs of council staff. The peer team heard this throughout its visit, it is much appreciated by officers and forms a supportive basis on which the council is delivering its services. Examples include increasing staff resources where services require them, and staff able to approach senior managers.

Community, customer and street scene services are particularly well regarded, especially by external community stakeholders. These services' work includes continuously improving engagement and service delivery with their customers.

External partners throughout the peer team's visit also spoke very positively about their work with OWBC, and the council's honest and open relationships with them, especially through the Leader and senior officers. Even when the council has different views to partners, council representatives remain professional and constructive. This enables the council to further its work with others, making the most of what each partner can offer to enhance the borough and ways of working.

OWBC is also working well with neighbouring councils, eg via the county-wide member code of conduct that Leicestershire councils including OWBC developed and agreed, and shared climate change officer, town centre manager, environmental health officer, and shared resilience partnership officer posts with neighbouring Leicestershire district and borough councils. Another key example is the Lightbulb service that helps support Leicestershire residents to remain safe and well in their own homes; it involves Leicestershire's borough, district and county councils as well as health services. OWBC is also part of the Leicestershire southern alliance, a group of the four south Leicestershire councils that considers how best to deliver services and align/join up their Local Plan. Through these and other projects, OWBC is working with others to best deliver work such as its strategic growth plan and site development. This puts the council in good stead to develop a vision for the borough and make the most of council assets, eg to deliver new housing, improve local transport, digital and other infrastructure.

Local businesses, community groups and residents did however raise poor communication with and capacity within OWBC to work with them effectively. These groups understand the constraints the council is working under, particularly as a result of the pandemic, and so appreciate there is a limit to what staff can do. The council nevertheless needs to improve its communications throughout the borough, not least because not all residents can access services digitally and therefore need to otherwise be kept informed about the council's plans, service changes, etc as outlined above. Local businesses are still struggling as a result of the pandemic so need council support, which they feel they are not receiving to the level required. Support for local businesses on OWBC's website for example is dated and not easy to navigate.

The council should pick up pace on key areas outlined throughout this report, notably around delivering its communications strategy, business support and engagement. OWBC has made a lot of progress since its last CPC in 2017. This includes progressing its performance framework and prioritising channel shift to digital services. The peer team observed however that progress has been slow on some of those recommendations relevant to this Challenge, eg building into the communications plan a confidence about the council's achievements and celebrating its successes, and finalising the structure at the earliest opportunity to free the Chief

Executive from operational matters. The peer team also heard examples generally of where decision-making has been slow, and vacancies have been hindering service delivery. There are therefore opportunities for OWBC to make the most of recent increased staffing, new strategies around communications, and corporate plan ambitions around business support and engagement to increase general momentum, the pace of change in service delivery, customer engagement and strategic planning such as a vision for the borough.

Corporate Management and Senior Leadership Teams should further engage with the communications team on projects early to plan communications and consultation about what that council is looking to do, and promote the council's good work. This will help ensure all stakeholders are fully aware of what the council's latest services are and can engage with them on projects from the outset.

There are also opportunities for senior and service teams to engage with the communications team to enhance the borough's demographics data - especially of vulnerable groups - to re-imagine service delivery where necessary, improve service take-up, communications and engagement throughout the council with members, staff, local businesses, community groups and residents. This particularly applies to refreshing the corporate plan, developing the vision for the borough, and to promote the council's successes. Such work will help ensure all stakeholders and partners can influence, are bought into and can make the most of the council's projects from the earliest stages.

4.3. Governance and culture

OWBC is a small council, serving a population of 57,300 in an area of about nine square miles. Most of the current 183 staff are based in the council's main offices and depot when not working from home, making it easier than in other councils to get to know each other. The peer team heard throughout its visit that staff feel they can approach their managers easily, and teams similarly approach other teams as necessary. The general atmosphere at OWBC is supportive and productive, whereby issues and ideas to take the council's work forward are resolved and progressed.

Members and officers are passionate about supporting their communities and residents, as particularly evidenced through the council's community, customer and other frontline services, and by members and officers generally engaging with their

communities and customers to respond to their needs and improve services.

OWBC has made significant, bold decisions through the corporate plan to enhance service delivery and the borough, eg introducing a selective licensing scheme for all private sector housing rentals to improve general house conditions across the borough, bringing its information technology provision in-house, and is building, then will be relocating to the council's new headquarters in Brocks Hill Country Park. This new building's state of the art specification includes agile and green (eco-friendly) working considerations.

There are however significant relationship issues between members and officers, which the peer team heard throughout its visit, that are negatively impacting on working relationships, trust and the speed at which decisions are made and actioned:

- members and officers do not always fully understand or follow their own roles and protocols and/or those of the other. There is a lack of shared understanding and communication between members and officers as to how each committee is organised and what members have asked for and can expect. These are similar issues to those relating to committee chairs, which are outlined above. As a result, some members do not feel fully supported by, or trust the officers they work with. A number of officers however work significant additional hours and evenings to support committee members. As a result all round, a culture of blame and a lack of trust has developed between members and officers, not only through democratic services due to their central involvement in committee administration, but also through other service teams where issues emerge through committees. This is hindering effective decision-making and working relationships, so needs resolving at the earliest opportunity to ensure the council works as effectively as possible

- there is a lack of clarity between members and officers about who makes what decisions, including no clear distinction between political/strategic decisions made by members, operational decisions made by officers, and who accordingly communicates and actions each decision. The peer team heard several times that members thought that officers had presented/made the decision to stop publishing the council newsletter to save money, which was then carried out. Some members who learned of this afterwards did not know whether this decision

had been taken by officers or members. Examples like this highlight consequences of unclear protocols, including the breakdown of trust and confidence between members and officers, and potential delays to decision-making and backtracking where decisions should have been made by others. It also raises the need to communicate to members, in a clear and timely way, what forthcoming decisions need making, when, by whom, what those decisions were, who needs to action them, when and how, so everything is clear to all, avoiding unnecessary issues that require further attention

- as a result of the above, members' and officers' behaviour and beliefs are negatively affected. The peer team heard for example that some members do not feel empowered or confident to make effective strategic/difficult decisions through committee processes, eg because they are not invited to make such decisions or to get involved in related discussions or consultations. The peer team also heard various instances of low committee meeting and training attendance, which may be signalling members' lack of confidence or empowerment to make decisions or improve their decision-making. Officers, on the other hand, feel that that their efforts, particularly their additional hours and commitment to supporting members, are disregarded, impacting negatively on their morale.

The impact of these serious relationship issues is that members perceive, as do external stakeholders working with the council on related matters, that committees are not operating in the most effective and efficient manner, and therefore trust and confidence in such decision-making is not as high as it should be. These issues must therefore be resolved and roles and protocols clarified at the earliest opportunity so members and officers are clear about their and each other's roles and responsibilities and can best work together and progress council services as effectively as possible. For example, there is a need for a greater understanding of the scheme of delegation, and clear work programmes for each committee, so that members and officers can prepare in good time for decisions to be made.

As part of this, OWBC should organise externally facilitated themed workshops, via the LGA for example, for members and officers together, eg on political awareness, making and actioning strategic decisions, committee programme forward planning and performance management. These could provide a positive and non-threatening environment to address these issues. There are also opportunities within the council

to clarify how these and other governance issues are agreed, eg through the Policy, Finance and Development Committee, the Audit Committee or elsewhere.

The council's member enquiry system aspires to answer members' questions quickly and efficiently. The peer team heard examples of how the system is working well but also heard how problems are hindering its effectiveness. Members for example are not always notified how their enquiries are progressing. This is especially problematic when they do not get a response for weeks, and their query is on behalf of a resident or other stakeholder, who is expecting a quick response. It also means that members do not always know who to follow their query up with and how long to wait.

The member enquiry system also does not differentiate between routine and urgent queries. This potentially means that all queries are processed the same way in the order the system receives them. There can therefore be substantial delays to urgent queries. A key example quoted by several members was a broken pavement posing a risk to public safety. This may not have been the council's responsibility to fix, but the delay meant that members did not know what the situation was and therefore how to respond to those raising the issue.

The peer team heard how such issues have resulted in members circumventing the member enquiry system by approaching officers directly to resolve their queries. This is how members used to raise queries, and why the system was introduced, so they could be responded to in the most efficient way. Circumventing the system however is taking up more officer time and reducing the system's use and efficacy.

Setting up notifications and categorising queries into levels of urgency will significantly improve the member enquiry system and help give members the information they need in a timely way. Members and officers need to resolve these issues together so officers can best provide members the information they need.

4.4. Financial planning and management

The LGA's financial health check outlined key observations about the council's financial situation and recommendations to address them. These included identifying that the council's general fund reserve was projected to be £753,000 by the end of the financial year, close to the recommended minimum level of £700,000. Projections needed to be extended to cover several years to ensure the medium-term financial

position could be better understood and addressed.

The check also identified significant issues with previous, ambitious capital projects. Plans for substantial unsupported borrowing designated as self-funding were for example not supported by adequate detail. This raised questions as to their affordability, how they would be achieved, and the need for further due diligence before making any commitments to spend. The MTFP, capital programme, treasury management strategy and a forthcoming, required capital strategy needed to align with the corporate strategy. Capital financing was initially identified as overspending by £163,000 without explanation, and service and capital financing overspend was identified as £178,000 by Quarter 3. The 2021/22 approved capital programme needed thorough reassessment, and the 2022/23 budget needed rebasing to reflect volatility and the impact of capital and other decisions.

Since the health check, OWBC has published an updated MTFP and presented it to the Policy, Finance and Development Committee in February 2022. The committee report showed the projected year-end balance had improved to £1,189,000, and the 2022/23 budget was balanced without the need to use the general fund reserve. The report also however forecasted a £797,000 gap for 2023/24, further increasing to £836,000 in 2024/25. If the general fund reserve were required to fill this gap, the council would then fall below the minimum level by the end of 2023/24, and that level would further deplete during 2024/25. The report recognised the council's financial position and highlighted that it "must find ongoing savings and/or ongoing new income streams" to ensure the council continues as an ongoing concern.

Members and officers have high levels of awareness of OWBC's financial position, challenges and the need to address the council's budget. This is not only through the council's usual day to day financial work but through its positive, proactive response to the LGA's financial health check. The council has subsequently commenced a range of work, which needs to continue to ensure the council's budget continues to be balanced and is also sustainable in future years.

Most significantly, the council is addressing its financial capacity. The newly appointed Section 151 Officer took up her role as this CPC took place. A new finance team is also being created with a clear vision, which it now needs to deliver to address the council's immediate and longer-term financial issues and enable the

effective delivery of advice. The finance team must ensure the most strategic direction of the budget across the council's services. It must also robustly challenge the council's corporate and service team budgets, especially business cases and capital projects. This robust challenge should be emphasised as part of general project management systems, as this will help ensure the council has considered every avenue to keep the council's budget balanced and sustainable in future.

Service managers across the council, as well as the central finance team, regularly monitor and discuss their respective budgets to address issues and make savings. OWBC has significantly scaled back its capital projects but still needs to considerably focus on this to ensure remaining projects are delivered to budget and time.

Members and officers recognise that difficult financial decisions may need making at any time and it was made absolutely clear to the peer team that nothing is off limits. Staff are encouraged as part of this to put forward ideas that could for example generate income, save money and make services more efficient. These ideas will not only enhance the council's budget but help ensure everyone at the council owns it.

Corporately, OWBC's MTFP must clearly align with the corporate plan and projects to ensure resources are in place to deliver them. The council has a number of sizeable projects and activities, especially large-scale capital projects, which need allocated resources to properly deliver them and avoid previous issues. This could be in the form of some additional fixed-term resources to ensure projects are delivered on time, to budget and to the required quality. The LGA financial health check also highlighted the need to assess the capacity to deliver programmes. OWBC therefore needs to clarify through this financial work how it will deliver its ambitions and new big projects. The council needs to manage those ambitions and projects through robust business plans that identify allocated resources and manage risk to avoid costly failures.

Given the range and amount of work that OWBC is undertaking to address and sustain its finances, the council's new finance team, with service managers and members, needs to develop an overall plan. This should include aligning the council's finance structure to meet the council's needs at operational and strategic levels, and developing a sustainability plan to address the budget gap. This will ensure all financial issues are being addressed in a co-ordinated, efficient and strategic way.

4.5.   Capacity for improvement

Overall, staff like working for OWBC, which enables a positive, proactive and productive working environment. Reasons for this are outlined in section 4.3 but additionally, because of the friendly, family-like atmosphere cited, staff know where to get help and seek it to address issues and make improvements. Many staff commented on senior managers openness to innovation and improvements, so staff put forward and discuss their ideas within their teams and then with managers for their consideration and action.

Customer services' transformation programme is driving real change in service delivery and customer engagement, including specialist advisers in areas such as homelessness/housing and benefits, and 'how to improve' surveys taking place to enhance non-digital dissemination. Key to this is having staff capacity, outside of the usual day to day work, to consider what the service and its impacts could look like in future. The wider council transformation work being undertaken by this team is also landing successes across all areas. Consideration should therefore be given to increasing such resources on an 'invest to save' basis throughout the council where there is the business case to do so, as not all teams have capacity to consider how to improve their services and what they could look like in the future.

There have also been notable staff increases in key areas of the council's work, eg within its finance, communications and economic development teams, which are making a positive difference. The communications team for example is considering how local demographic and service take-up data can be further developed, monitored and used to enhance service delivery and customer engagement. The new finance team will additionally help secure and improve the council's finances. Such staff increases provide opportunities for change and innovation, as well as further capacity for day to day work.

Some teams are however stretched to deliver their day to day work as they cover for vacancies over time. Staff can cover the additional work in the short-term but the peer team heard from several sources that this is not sustainable where vacancies remain. Staff covering such posts are feeling the strain and could be overwhelmed, impacting on their health and wellbeing. They therefore need support, for themselves, through interims as needed, and the vacancies need filling permanently as soon as possible. A priority vacancy to fill is that of the Human Resources

Manager, who once in post will be able to help recruit to other vacancies. OWBC recognises this and is already in the process of recruiting to this and other posts throughout the council.

There are also opportunities to develop succession planning as part of the council's wider workforce/people strategy. This includes scaling up the use of apprenticeships and graduates throughout OWBC, further to successful schemes already taking place, eg in the Chief Executive's department. Succession planning would also benefit the Senior Leadership Team, so that as and when senior managers leave, the council is best prepared to address those vacancies.

The latest proposed Senior Leadership Team structure, including the vacant Strategic Director post, will bring in capacity at strategic level to drive change and innovations throughout the council. It will also free up the Chief Executive to take on further external relationship and other work. The Senior Leadership Team needs to clarify and communicate the role of that post, as well as who reports to it, so it can be advertised and recruited to as soon as possible.

Agile working, eg flexible hours, remote working, the use of information technology, is being embedded throughout the council, including its depot. The new in-house IT service will further support and embed these flexibilities, and improve service and financial efficiencies across the council. The peer team heard how staff welcome and use such flexibilities through Team Charters developed around the work requirements of each service team, eg the hours that services must be staffed. These charters mean that agile working is used in some teams more than others. Where such differences are not fully justified or clear, staff see these as unfair, which is creating some resentment within and between teams. Service managers should therefore review their Team Charters with their teams to ensure maximum agile working is available within the parameters of the work required, and that differences across teams and the council are clear, transparent and evidenced as appropriate. Managers should also be empowered to bring staff together in the office for team building and work planning activities. This is particularly important where new staff have recently joined the organisation.

The general, positive progress that the council has made on agile working however will support the move to the new council offices in 2022. Some staff will continue to

work remotely and will therefore be more isolated from colleagues than others. The council will therefore need to continue engaging with its staff to ensure that their wellbeing is considered and supported before, during and after the office move.

The council also has many opportunities to further its already positive relationships, partnerships and work with neighbouring authorities and local partners. This will help drive efficiencies and effectiveness, and improve the lives of residents and the local economy. It will also help refresh OWBC's corporate plan and develop a wider vision for the borough with its partners, including local businesses, universities, the police (particularly with regard to the local Community Safety Partnership), its local MP - Neil O'Brien MP – not least because of his role as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities – the local integrated care system and health and wellbeing board.

The council has notable economic development ambitions and ideas through its strategic growth, corporate and other plans. These include possible joint ventures, new road infrastructure, enhanced use of council assets and modular housing. Given the size and complexity of some of these projects, OWBC will need to recruit specialist resources, eg finance, legal and technical, to support council officers. This will ensure that all these projects are undertaken and financed in the most robust, evidenced and consulted ways possible.

The council should also explore and apply for further funding opportunities to assist such large scale projects. Whilst it has already applied for such funding through various means, OWBC has not always been successful in doing so, and it is understood that competition is fierce for limited funding. This not only results in not acquiring the funding requested but is also disheartening for officers who have invested their time in these bids. To improve the success rate of these bids, the council should increase its writing capacity and effectiveness to bid for such funding, eg via training or bringing in additional, external expertise, which will be assisted by the increase in director-level staff resources and the development of a new/refreshed corporate plan. OWBC is Priority 2 for Levelling Up funding. This, coupled with the local MP being the Levelling Up Minister, presents timely opportunities that have not been available previously.

The council should additionally promote its successes more, eg receiving a national

Customer Service Excellence Award, being awarded external funding and installing electric car charging points. This includes internal promotion to members and staff, who did not necessarily know of all such achievements and therefore could not signpost residents and other local people to such resources and good news. The council should similarly promote such successes externally, so that local partners, businesses, residents and visitors to the area can use such facilities and further engage and work with the council accordingly.

There was little evidence or conversation around OWBC's ambitions around climate change. Given the national spotlight on this area, this will need addressing in terms of communications with local stakeholders on how the council and those stakeholders will deliver ambitions in this area.

5. Next steps

It is recognised that senior political and managerial leadership will want to consider, discuss and reflect on these findings.

Both the peer team and the LGA are keen to build on the relationships formed through the peer challenge. The CPC process includes a six-month check-in session, which provides space for the council's senior leadership to update peers on its progress against the action plan and discuss next steps.

In the meantime, Mark Edgell, Principal Adviser for the East Midlands, Yorkshire and the Humber, and the North East, is the main contact between your authority and the LGA. Mark is available to discuss any further support the council requires at mark.edgell@local.gov.uk or by telephone via 07747 636910.

Agenda Item 11

	Full Council	**Tuesday, 05 April 2022**	**Matter for Information and Decision**

Report Title: **Communication Strategy & Action Plan (2022-25)**

Report Author(s):   **Robert Helliwell (Communication & Marketing Manager)**

Purpose of Report:	The purpose of this report is to ask Members to approve the Council's Communication Strategy and Action Plan for the next three years covering 2022 – 2025.
Report Summary:	This report outlines how the Council will approach its Communications Strategy, indicating the framework it intends to follow and the actions it intends to undertake
Recommendation(s):	**That Members approve the Council's Communication Strategy and Action Plan for 2022-25 (at Appendix 1 and 2).**
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	Philippa Fisher (Head of Customer Services and Transformation) (0116) 257 2677 philippa.fisher@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Robert Helliwell (Communications & Marketing Manager) (0116) 257 2618 robert.helliwell@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Corporate Objectives:	Providing Excellent Services (CO3) Building, Protecting and Empowering Communities (CO1) Growing the Borough Economically (CO2)
Vision and Values:	"A Stronger Borough Together" (Vision) Accountability (V1) Respect (V2) Teamwork (V3) Customer Focus (V5) Customer Focus (V5)
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Financial:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Reputation Damage (CR4) Organisational / Transformational Change (CR8) Other Corporate Risk(s)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising from this report. EA not applicable.
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.

Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	All Members.
Background Papers:	None.
Appendices:	**1.** Communication Strategy (2022-25) **2.** Communication Strategy Action Plan (2022-25)

1. Introduction

1.1 As part of the Council Peer Review by the Local Government Association (LGA) which took place in January 2022, a key recommendation was to pick up pace on the implementation of our Communications Strategy.

1.2 The Council's Policy, Finance & Development Committee were consulted on the framework for the Communications Strategy at their meeting in March 2022 and the Communication Strategy takes into account this feedback.

2. Background

2.1 There are strong links between the council that keep our residents, businesses, organisations, and partners informed. However, a stronger Communication Strategy can further improve communication and lead to high satisfaction levels.

2.2 To help manage our reputation, we need a framework for engagement through effective communications. Effective communication is vital in managing our reputation, promoting our priorities and services to local people and demonstrating that we are open and accountable.

3. Communications Strategy

3.1 The Communications Strategy aims to provide a framework for effective communications. It will make sure our work in areas is planned, meaningful, timely, co-ordinated, and delivered.

3.2 The Strategy is a detailed document which has been made available to read in full.

3.3 Our Communications Strategy acknowledges that the future of communication is digital and that we should be giving priority to developing and enhancing channels of this nature.

3.4 The strategy sets out the importance of digital communication and how we can use insights to expand our reach and improve the quality of the information shared.

3.5 Hard-to-reach groups and those unable or unwilling to engage with the council through digital means must not be forgotten and the strategy sets out that we will communicate to every household through paper communications at least twice a year.

4.   Action Plan

4.1   The Action Plan aims to pull together use the themes, aims and direction of the Communications Strategy to create a detailed set of targets and action for completion.

4.2   The actions set out in this plan are designed to be targeted and measurable so that results can be analysed and evidenced.

5.   Flexibility in our Communication Strategy

5.1   The world of communications is an ever-changing picture, and it is proposed that both the strategy and action plan are reviewed on annual basis.

5.2   It is our intention to involve a focus group of Members in the annual review process of these documents.

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Communications Strategy April 2022 – April 2025

Created by Communications Manager, April 2022
Review date – April 2023

Introduction

It is vital that we have strategically planned communications at the Council to ensure we are engaging fully with our residents, customers, partners, businesses, council tenants, Members and staff.

The Covid-19 pandemic has shone a light on the importance of timely and effective communications and the borough council has invested into its Communications & Marketing Team to enhance and expand its level of service in this area.

We need to embrace digital channels to help get our key messages and information to the right people, at the right time and in the right way, acknowledging that this is how the majority like to engage with content and news in the modern world.

It is not just about broadcasting messages. We need to use these same channels to gather customer feedback, opinions, views and ideas. We need to join in the conversations taking place about how we make our borough a better, safer and more prosperous place.

Utilising digital channels will also enable us to build solid networks within our communities and that applies to more than just the communications team, but other staff and members as well.

We must also recognise that we have diverse communities in our borough and many still prefer traditional communication methods, and some cases do not have access to the internet. These harder-to-reach audiences must be considered and we must make efforts to engage and communicate with these groups, including through paper communication.

Ensuring our communications are audience focused will make them more effective.

Our Corporate Plan and Vision set out a number of priorities and targets that help drive our work. Therefore it is essential that this strategy supports the Corporate Plan and helps us achieve our goals.

What we are striving for is an outstanding communications function that is inextricably linked to achieving our business goals.

Executive Summary

The strategy sets out how we will develop the Council's external and internal communications to meet the needs and demands of our customers, staff, members and partners over the next three years.

The primary areas of focus will be:

- Launching, developing and expanding a new digital communication tool that can deliver targeted messages to subscribers with an email address
- Further expansion social media and other digital channels to engage with customers and develop networks
- Ensuring that we communicate with hard-to-reach groups through more traditional methods, such as paper, while encouraging them to embrace our digital channels too
- To use our communication channels to enhance and improve the council's reputation
- Developing campaigns to support the aim of the Corporate Plan and ensure that they are fully evaluated

1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1   The communications landscape continues to change at speed.

1.2   The print audiences of local media continue to decline with the local media's website and social media audiences growing

1.3   The Covid-19 pandemic has encouraged more and more people to engage with digital channels, for example having internet access to communicate with friends and family and email addresses to order shopping and Covid-19 tests

1.3   The Council's own social media channels have continued to grow in popularity

1.4   While digital communications will increase, the strategy needs to acknowledge our hard-to-reach groups and be creative in how we target them with key information

1.5   As we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic, we need to ensure we increase our visibility and face to face communications

1.6   The purpose of the strategy is to provide a clear direction for the development of Communications across the organisations.

2. Key Objectives and Outcomes

2.1   The objectives are to:
- Be driven by our corporate plan, our strategic objectives and our council values
- Grow the council's own audiences using digital channels
- Enhance the council's reputation using all available communications channels
- Execute three key campaigns each year which support the Corporate Plan and are fully evaluated to measure success.
- Improve our communication reach and effectiveness for hard-to-reach groups and individuals within the borough
- Ensure that web content is well-managed, easy-to-read and meets stringent accessibility requirements
- Improve and develop internal communications channels to meet the needs of the organisation and support member and staff engagement
- Offer effective marketing support to income generating ideas to sell council services
- Successfully lead on the delivery of the council's events programme
- Drive an effective and beneficial consultation strategy that ensures we receive useful feedback and insights from stakeholders throughout our communities

3. Our Communication Principles

3.1   We will communicate the **right information** with the **right people** at the **right time** in the **right way** to make sure our priorities, key decision and actions are understood.

- We will be **proactive and transparent** – even when the story is a negative one
- Wherever possible, we will only talk publicly about things that are **definite**
- Those who communicate should act as leaders – **inspiring, confident and empowering**.
- We will make sure the most **affected people know the information first**
- We will **target particular audiences** depending on what we're talking about
- We will use the **right tools** for the job e.g. digital vs face to face

4. How we will speak

4.1   Our tone of voice will be professional and approachable

- Use of our corporate Style Guide to ensure plain English
- Friendly, approachable tone of voice in all communications

4.2   We'll push the use of digital communications

- Many customers are now comfortable transacting with organisations online

- We will push digital communications, giving us the chance to focus telephone and email contact for our customers who need more support
- We will use Gov Delivery to enhance and expand quality and reach of our communication

4.3   We'll use the right tool for the job

- We will use the evidence we have already to make sure communication is targeted in the right way
- We will acknowledge that not all customers have access to digital channels and respond accordingly

4.5   We will constantly evaluate all communication to continually learn the best ways of communicating with our audiences

4.6   Our communication principles will guide all communication activity across the whole organisation.

5. Who we'll talk to

5.1   Our communications is not limited to, but needs to account for, all of the following:

- Staff
- Members
- Customers
- Direct partners e.g. Leicestershire County Council, neighbouring district and county councils, health partners, the emergency services, skills providers/employment/DWP
- Businesses
- Tenants
- Community groups
- Stakeholders
- Specific interest groups

6. Gov-Delivery digital communication tool

6.1   Using its new tool, the Council will drastically expand the number of digital communications it sends and increase the number of topics covered

6.2   A new topic will be created for council tenants, opening a new and innovative way of communicating with our tenants

6.3   Create a communications plan to support the launch, maximising the number of people aware of the tool and how to subscribe

6.4   We will use customer feedback to improve our use of the tool and provide the information and news that subscribers both need and want to hear

6.5   We will use training and workshops to embed a communication culture within the organisation to ensure there is a flow of content, news and information for all offered topics.

6.6   Insights

7. Social Media

7.1   The Council has four main corporate social media platforms:

- Twitter
- Facebook
- Instagram
- LinkedIn

We also have specialist community and wellbeing social media channels, managed by the health and wellbeing team, delivering a wide range of information through various methods, including video.

7.2   The Council's Facebook page continues to grow and receive substantial community engagement through its 3,500 followers

7.3   Our Twitter account has also grown and now has 2,500 followers.

7.4   Sentiment on social media can often be negative and positive news focusing on successes and achievement can combat this

7.5   Social media offers excellent opportunity for two-way conversations and to engage with our communities.

8. Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Website

8.1   The Council website is hosted by Cuttlefish. Oadby and Wigston Borough Council is part of a web unity group, including Charnwood and North West Leicestershire Councils. Charnwood is the lead authority in the unity group and holds the contract with Cuttlefish.

8.2   After substantial amounts of work, the website is compliant with WCAG 2.2 Government accessibility requirements, with work ongoing to improve this further

8.3   A new microsite will be launched to support the Economic Regeneration department promoting our offering as the South Leicestershire Gateway. This will include business offering, tourism offering and living offering

8.4   A network of website champions will be created among staff to improve website content and keep information up to date and current

8.5   Create and publish internal guides that set out accessibility requirements and how we achieve them.

8. The Media & PR

8.1   Deliver a proactive and reactive media relations service to improve the reputation and influence in the local, regional, trade and national agendas, and building and strengthening relationships.

Below is a list of the main media organisations operating in Oadby and Wigston and who cover Council activities and businesses:-

- Leicester Mercury
- BBC Radio Leicester
- BBC East Midlands Today
- ITV Central

8.2   We will proactively monitor our media coverage to understand how much positive and negative coverage we receive and the frequency of it

8.3   Difficult decisions the council has had to make to combat financial challenges have had a challenging impact on its reputation and public perceptions, and there is a need to get our successes and achievements into the local media

8.4   Ensure that a healthy rotation of members are used to showcase the council's work, its successes and its achievements in its work with local media

8.4   Continue to provide a proactive approach to Council news and supply local media with ready to use copy, pictures and video. More focus on selling-in of stories is to be encouraged and the development of relationships with key journalists

8.5   We will conduct internal workshops to encourage more good news stories to be presented to the communication team for publication.

9. Campaigns

9.1   The team has a set of corporately agreed priority campaigns to help meet the organisation's strategic objectives (see campaigns plan)

9.2   By prioritising campaigns, the team is able to deliver planned, well researched, targeted and measurable campaigns which influence and change perceptions and behaviours of the residents and businesses

9.3   This does not detract from the reactive communications work which inevitably occurs on a day to day basis e.g. press releases.

9.4   Each campaign has a structure plan approved by a service lead detailing the objectives, audience, budget, channels, timeline and evaluation methods and how it links to corporate objectives.

9.5   There will be a balanced approach, looking at the link with corporate objectives and also if the campaign will support services that can generate revenue for the Council.

The Government Communications Service says campaigns must contain:

- Objectives
- Audience/Insight
- Strategy/Ideas

- Implementation
- Scoring/Evaluation

9.6   Each of the campaigns will have their own objectives and desired outcomes, but the high-level objectives are as follows:

- To influence attitudes, behaviours and life choices for the benefit of the Borough.
- To ensure there is a clear and consistent dialogue with our target audiences, ensuring messages are effectively communicated.
- Build residents' and businesses' confidence in the council as a decision maker
- To provide sound communications advice for members, senior officers, staff and partners.
- To ensure our own staff are informed, motivated and empowered
- To manage and protect the brand (logo, designs and narrative) ensuring it remains a symbol of quality.

10. Consultations

10.1   The team will develop a consultation strategy (currently under development) to serve as a blueprint for council officers or members considering the merits, requirements and need of consultation.

10.2   The strategy will help the Council meet its consultation duties by ensuring that all levels of community engagement are carried out in the most appropriate way with different methods of engagement used relevant to the activity and circumstances.

11. Internal Communications (Members and Staff)

Staff

11.1   Internal communications helps leaders inform and engage employees in a way which motivates them to maximise their performance and deliver the business strategy in the most effective way

11.2   The council is committed to utilising all internal communications channels to ensure employees are engaged, have a voice, have a clear understanding of the organisation's objectives and how their roles fit in with those objectives.

11.3   The Council has a number of key internal communication channels which are used to interact with around 150+ staff. The key channels used by the Communications Team are:

- All-staff weekly newsletter
- Intranet
- Microsoft Teams
- Quarterly staff briefings
- Corporate Management Team Meetings
- Email
- Working groups

11.4   We will continue with quarterly all staff briefings led by SLT, which are hybrid of online and face to face to support agile working

11.5   We will review our current intranet provision and look for alternate options that will improve this communication channel.

<u>Members</u>

11.6   The key channels used to communicate with members are the weekly bulletin, email, committees, working groups

11.7   The member enquiry system will be reviewed with members surveyed to understand how this system can be improved

11.8   We will survey both staff and members to gain feedback on our newsletters/bulletin with a view to improving content

11.9   We will implement a new member hub to give members better access to resources, information and council news

11.10   We will act upon the recommendations from the Corporate Peer Review published in January 2022, to improve communication between staff and members across the council.

12. Resources

12.1   The Communications Team handles external and internal communications which includes managing the content of the Council's corporate website and intranet.

Communications Team Responsibilities (do we need to insert events /campaigns/consultations	
Compiling proactive media releases	Producing content for our new digital communication tool and its various topics
Handling media inquiries	Planning proactive communications activity for a number of campaigns and consultations
Monitoring media coverage	Producing digital content, including video, to support campaigns
Horizon scanning for potential reputational issues	Maintaining and managing content on the Council website
Providing strategic media and communications advice to the Senior Leadership Team, Leader of the Council and Chief Executive	Issuing all staff e-mails and key messages on the intranet and through newsletters
Co-ordinate the council's annual events programme, including Remembrance	Providing an ad-hoc design service for various marketing materials
Managing the Council's corporate social media accounts	Producing weekly Digital Members' Bulletins
Supporting and advising staff in the use of social media	Producing speeches and briefings
	Guardians of the Council's branding
	Co-ordinating translations and interpretations
	Producing weekly Digital staff Bulletins

12.2   The Communications team comprises of two FTE.

13. Events

13.1   The Council has an event calendar (see separate document) that sets out the events, festivals, charity days, and similar that the council supports during a calendar year

13.2   We will ensure Remembrance services and parades have council backing and support and work with local organisations to make them happen

13.3   In 2022, the Queen's Jubilee is a priority event for the council and we will work to ensure inclusive events take place across the borough during the four-day weekend.

14. Equalities

14.1   The Council is committed to ensuring that all people from diverse groups are not discriminated against or disadvantaged by our actions in any way.

14.2   All internal and external communications should use language that treats people with the respect that they deserve, be non-discriminatory and accessible to a wide audience. Plain English should be used all the time.

14.3   It means the Council must also consider the ways in which people want to access information and engage with the Council. Although the use of digital channels is increasing and will continue to do so, there remains people in Oadby and Wigston who still do not have access to the internet.

14.4   The Council's corporate website should be accessible to people with disabilities and meet WCAG 2.2 requirements.

14.5   The council will continue to offer translations and interpreters.

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council Communications Action Plan 2022-2025

Developed, March 2022

Appendix 2

Communications Strategy 2022-25 Action Plan

Below is a table of the planned tactics to achieve the objectives and overall aim, including targets, how it can be measured and its impact. It is not an exhaustive list as more campaigns will be identified as the three-year period advances.

		Activity	Date	Measurement	Responsibility	Impact
1. Grow the Council's own audiences on digital channels						
	1.1	Continue to grow social media audiences	Ongoing	Target to have 3,000 followers on Twitter and 4,000 followers on Facebook by 2025	Communications Manager	Direct communication with customers, peers, stakeholders which can pass on key information, messages, enhance reputation, build trust and engage in two-way conversations
	1.2	Develop more engaging social media content to explain Council priorities and vision, the role of the borough council (and the services it delivers) and get across key information to customers and stakeholders	Ongoing	Social media and digital analytics to gauge viewing figures as well as taking on board customer feedback	Communications Manager	Greater impact and engagement with customers regarding Council campaigns, information, key messages
	1.3	Rollout new Granicus Gov Delivery communication tool and demonstrate month on month growth in subscribers across all topics	2022-2025	Month of month growth in subscribers across all topics	Communications Manager	A new way of directly communicating with customers and stakeholders that only requires the user to have an email address. Communications is proactive – lands directly in inboxes and far more targeted, using data and preferences set by the user.
	1.4	Support the rollout and management of a business/investor website	Spring/ summer 2022	Website going live is the initial milestone followed by evidence of an increase of page views month by month in the first year.	Communications Manager & Business regen manager	The microsite will create a clear one stop shop for all businesses and potential investors, tightening the connection between the council and these stakeholders.

1.5	Establish a new digital communication channel for council tenants using Gov Delivery	Summer 2022	See month on month increase in number of subscribers Tenant feedback	Communications Manager Housing Manager	To establish a regular method of communication with tenants in addition to paper communications.
1.8	Support services in the development of their own topics as part of an expansion of our Gov Delivery use	Autumn 2022	Increase the number of council topics offered on Gov Delivery and see increases in those subscribing to them	Communications Manager	To explore and expand upon our communication of council topics that we perhaps don't communicate a lot about at the moment.

		Activity	Date	Measurement	Responsible	Impact
	2. Enhance the council's reputation using the media and social media					
2.1		Continue to provide a proactive approach to Council news and supply the local media with ready to use copy, pictures and video. More focussed selling-in of stories is to be encouraged and the development of relationships with key journalists (print, radio, TV)	Ongoing	Aim for at least 90% of news releases to be covered by at least one media outlet	Communications Manager	Key messages reaching a wide audience, reputation enhanced and protected
2.2		Continue to monitor the media for reputation issues and take action if necessary as well as scan the horizon for potential issues	Ongoing	Percentage of positive and negative coverage	Communications Manager	Reputation of Council protected Customers can trust what the council says
2.3		Revamp and rebrand social media pages to become more community orientated	Autumn 2022	Social media engagement and feedback	Communications Manager	Reach a wider audience, raise the borough's profile, improve community spirit and enhance reputation

3. Improve our communication reach and effectiveness for hard-to-reach groups and individuals within the borough					
	Activity	Date	Measurement	Responsible	Impact
3.1	Have a minimum of two paper communications delivered to all households in the borough per year	Ongoing	Delivery of two paper communications	Communications Manager	Guarantees all households have the opportunity to read council news and information
3.2	Support the re-establishment of face to face (supported with a hybrid digital offer where possible) community forums and increase engagement	Ongoing	Number of attendees Feedback	Community & Wellbeing Team Communications Manager	Reaches wide audience and offers good option to reach people without internet access.
3.3	Extensive Gov Delivery comms plan	Ongoing	Number of subscribers Subscription insight data	Communications Manager	Maximising the reach of Gov Delivery to potential users with an email address across the borough
3.4	Conduct a review of tenant communication, including face to face, paper and using Gov Delivery	Summer 2022	Discussions arranged with relevant parties. Tenant newsletter planned and can be measured Tenant feedback	Communications Manager Housing Manager	Reach more tenants, more often, more effectively
3.5	Hard to reach stakeholders to form a clear part of all relevant communication plans	Ongoing	Physical changes to comms planning documents	Communications Manager	Communication plans as standard acknowledge the need to identify stakeholders not on digital channels and consider these needs.

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3.6	Review and improve process of using town centre screens, ensuring all are fully functional	Spring 2022	Having a minimum of 12 different sets of graphics shared through the year – i.e. refreshed at least once a month.	Communications Manager Town Centre Manager	Key messages reach those that spend time in our town centres but perhaps don't engage with digital channels

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		Activity	Date	Measurement	Responsible	Impact
4.		**Execute three key campaigns each year which support the Corporate Plan and are properly evaluated to measure Success**				
4.1		Recycling Campaign to support waste/recycling strategy	Autumn 2022	Contaminated waste Volume of recycling Volumes in low recycling areas	Communications Manager Waste services	Increase recycling rates Reduce contaminated waste Better education among residents
4.2		Brocks Hill Office Move and Agile working (subject to planning permission approval)	Throughout 2022	Staff engagement Member engagement Positive media encourage Staff feedback	Communications Manager	Motivated, positive and engaged staff and members that feel enabled by agile working and the opportunities it brings, in additional to being comfortable with the very different working environment of Brocks Hill.
4.3		Campaign to support the launch of Gov Delivery and to secure significant numbers of subscribers across all topics, including those from hard-to-reach groups	Throughout 2022	Number of customers that subscribe	Communications Manager	Better service to customers, increased use of online services, reduced number of phone calls
4.4		Campaign to showcase the services the council delivers, demonstrate how taxpayer money is spent, and how we offer value for money	End of 2022	Customer feedback Customer satisfaction	Communications Manager	Customers have a better understanding of the role of the borough council in our communities and how we spend our funding and council tax

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		Activity	Date	Measurement	Responsible	Impact
	5	**Ensure the web content is well-managed, easy-to-read and highly-rated by any independent assessment**				
5.1		Developing the Council's website content in order to meet WCAG Accessibility guidelines	Through 2022	Maintain Council's 98% A and AA WCAG ratings and increase our AAA rating from 82% to 90% by end of 2022	Communications Manager	Improved online experience for customers and to meet Government requirements.
5.2		Produce accessibility guides that can be used across the organisation	By autumn 2022	Our WCAG triple AAA rating	Communications Manager	Staff across the organisation understanding accessibility requirements will create a better user experience for customers
5.3		Conduct staff training to ensure website content is up to date and accessible	By summer 2022	Our WCAG triple AAA rating Customer feedback	Communications Manager Managers across the council	Staff and teams understand the need to keep information up to date at all times, giving website users a more positive experience.
5.4		Set up a website content review plan that ensures staff are engaged in regularly checking the accuracy and quality of our content	Through 2022	Customer feedback	Communications Manager	Content on the website is kept up to date and is customer orientated

		Activity	Date	Measurement	Responsible	Impact
6.	**Improve and develop internal communications channels to meet the needs of the organisation and support member and staff engagement**					
6.1		Quarterly briefings for staff, led by SLT and supported by comms, to update them on performance and issues affecting the whole organisation	Ongoing	Attendance and feedback	Communications Manager SLT	A more engaged workforce
6.2		Review our staff intranet and develop improvement plan so that staff can access information and news, share content, access documents more efficiently	End of 2022/ early 2023	Usage and feedback	Communications Manager	Easier to share information, news and documents with our staff population
6.4		Research and develop a member hub	Summer 2022	Usage and feedback	Communications Manager	Improve Member engagement and make accessing council news, information and documents simpler and more intuitive.
6.5		Communications workshop with managers	Spring 2022	Manager feedback Number of attendees Successful actions	Communications Manager	To embed a stronger communication culture in the organisation and bring managers on board with the themes of the comms & marketing strategy and this action plan

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6.6	Annual review of Communication Strategy with members	Next review early 2023	Engagement with members	Communications Manager	To ensure members can share their views and give direction on our communication strategy on an annual basis
6.7	Support the rollout of internal health and wellbeing hub for staff	Spring/ summer 2022	Engagement of staff Results of next health and wellbeing survey	Health & Wellbeing Team Communications Manager	Help motivate and increase the health and wellbeing staff Positive impact on sickness levels due to a healthy workforce

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7. Lead on the delivery of the council's events programme					
	Activity	Date	Measurement	Responsible	Impact
7.1	Develop a calendar of Equality, Diversity, Inclusion Events & Festival Days 2022-23, that sets out which the council will support and how	By May 2022	Website, social media, newsletter engagement	Communications Manager	Reaches wide audience and offers best option to reach people without internet access. Sets out which the council can support with the resource available to it.
7.2	Remembrance parades	November each year	Resident feedback Numbers in attendance	Communications Manager	Ensure a fitting tribute to the fallen and our Armed Forces while enhancing council reputation
7.3	Queen's Jubilee	June 2022	Target of one major event each day 2-5 June Feedback	Communications Manager	Community cohesion Council reputation
7.4	ARTIC awards – internal	December each year	Number of staff in attendance Feedback	Communications Manager	Boosts staff morale and celebrates our achievements.

8. Drive an effective and beneficial consultation strategy that ensures we receive useful feedback and insights from stakeholders throughout our communities					
	Activity	Date	Measurement	Responsible	Impact
8.1	Develop a specific consultation strategy document to guide our approach	By May 2022	Completion of guide	Communications Manager	Ensures a streamlined approach to consultation across the council. Encourages consultation to be well planned, thought out and easy to be evaluated
8.2	Effectively use the Citizens Panel and encourage its growth so that it provides an excellent cross-section of our community which can feedback to us	Ongoing	Numbers involved Resident feedback	Communications Manager	Allows us to gather views and opinions from local people on a variety of topics

8.3	Conduct a resident communication survey	Summer 2022	Number of responses Customer feedback	Communications Manager	To gain feedback on the council's communication activity and the channels we use, identifying gaps and understanding the preferences and needs of people in the borough
8.4	Conduct communication surveys with staff and members	Summer 2022	Number of responses Feedback	Communications Manager Customer Experience Manager	To assess and gain feedback on view of the council's internal and member communication
8.5	Support the re-establishment of community forums and increase engagement (see 3.2)	(see 3.1)	(see 3.1)	(see 3.1)	(see 3.1)

Review Date:

April 2023 by Communications Manager

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	Full Council	Tuesday, 05 April 2022	Matter for Information and Decision

Report Title: Scheme of Members' Allowances (2022/23)

Report Author(s): David Gill (Head of Law & Democracy / Monitoring Officer)

Purpose of Report:	To consider and adopt a Members' Allowance Scheme for the municipal year 2022/23.
Report Summary:	The report sets out the considerations and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP).
Recommendation(s):	**That Council adopts the Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2022/23 as recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) set out in paragraph 1 of the report (Appendix 1).**
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	David Gill (Head of Law & Democracy / Monitoring Officer) (0116) 257 2626 david.gill@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Steven Tucker (Democratic & Electoral Services Manager) (0116) 257 2605 steven.tucker@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Corporate Objectives:	Not applicable.
Vision and Values:	Not applicable.
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	The implications are as set out in the introduction to Appendix 1.
Financial:	There are no implications directly arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Political Dynamics (CR3) Reputation Damage (CR4) Regulatory Governance (CR6)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising from this report. EA not applicable
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	As the author, the report is satisfactory.

Consultees:	None
Background Papers:	[The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003](#)
Appendices:	1. Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel and Proposed Scheme of Members' Allowances for 2022/23.

1. Information

1.1. This report asks Council to consider and adopt a Members' Allowance Scheme for 2022/23 ("the Scheme") under the Local Authorities' (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 ("the 2003 Regulations") based on the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP).

1.2. The Council is required to have regard to the views of the IRP as expressed in their report each year before reaching a decision on what level of allowances is appropriate.

1.3. A copy of the report of the IRP is attached at **Appendix 1** for consideration.

Members' Allowances Review

for

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council

Report of the

Independent Remuneration Panel

April 2022

1. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel makes the following **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1.1   The Council approves that the basic allowance remains at a level of £4,750 per annum.

1.2   Special Responsibility Allowances (SRA) be agreed as set out in Column 2 of the Table below:

Table of Special Responsibility Allowance Payments

Special Responsibility	SRA (£)
Leader of the Council	10,000
Deputy Leader of the Council * halved where shared	2,500*
Leader of the Opposition Group # pro rata based on the total membership of groups where applicable	2,500#
Chairman of Policy, Finance & Development, Service Delivery, Development Control Committee, and Mayor	3,500
Committee Vice Chairman and Deputy Mayor	1,000
Chairman of Licensing & Regulatory Committee	2,500
Generic Task Group (pro rata if the Group disbands), Forum Chairman and any other committee (Audit, People etc.)	1,000

1.4   The Members' Allowance Scheme included at Schedule 1 to this report be adopted, to be effective for the period from 10 May 2022 to 3 May 2023.

1.5   The Guidance for Use of Delegated Power by the Chief Executive in respect of Members' Conferences, Seminars and Meetings, attached at Schedule 2 be adopted as part of the Scheme.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1   The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2001, requires Local Authorities to establish and maintain an Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP). The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, placed additional responsibilities on the role of the Panel.

2.2   The purpose of the Panel is to make recommendations to the Authority about allowances to be paid to Elected Members. The Panel has a duty, each year, to advise the Authority on its scheme and the amounts to be paid. The Council must have regard to this advice.

3. MEMBERSHIP OF THE PANEL

3.1 The Panel comprises of the following individuals;-

Mr Laurie Faulkner - retired Head of Business Development and Magistrate

Mr David Wood - Self Employed Local Resident

Mr John Whiting - Local Resident and retired Tax Inspector and Magistrate

4. PROCESS OF REVIEW

4.1 The Panel has addressed the requirements of the Regulations in drawing up the recommendations for the Council's 2022/23 scheme.

4.2 The Panel has previously assessed Members Allowances on the basis of the Council's current decision-making structure and a comparison with a cluster of similar authorities.

4.3 In 2021 the Panel identified a new cluster of authorities for comparison purposes after a number a number of the authorities that formed part of the previous 'comparison cluster' either ceased to exist following local authority reorganisation or adopted Cabinet structures so they are no longer directly comparable. This is the same cluster that formed the basis of for this year's comparison.

4.4 Inclusion within the cluster was based on three factors:

a) The authority had a similar population to OWBC
b) The authority had a similar number of councillors to OWBC; and
c) The authority had a similar governance structure to OWBC.

4.5 The membership and allowance details of the cluster is set out below with an additional column showing any movement in allowances for the financial year 2021/22:

Authority	**Population**	**Number of Councillors**	**Basic Allowance 20/21**	**Allowance 21/22**
Craven District Council	56,832	30	£4,690	£4,690
Maldon District Council	63,975	31	£5,286	£5,286
Ribble Valley Borough Council	60,057	40	£3,716	£3,818*
Richmondshire District Council	53,244	24	£3,083	£3,083
Ryedale District Council	54,920	24	£3,958	£4017*
West Devon Borough Council	55,528	31	£4,580	£4,580
Average (excluding OWBC)	57,426	30	**£4,219**	**£4,245**
Oadby and Wigston Borough Council	57,056	26	**£4,750**	**£4,750**
OWBC/Average (excluding OWBC)	99%	87%	113%	111%

* Index linked to staff pay rise

4.6 Having reviewed the various Members Allowance Schemes the Panel noted that there had been very little movement in the allowances paid save for those authorities that increased in line with the annual staff pay rise and therefore the Panel recommend that the Basic allowance remains at £4,750 which is the second highest of payments within the cluster.

4.7 In its last report the Panel introduced a simplified scheme of Special Responsibility allowances which rationalised the number of SRA's at 4 and the Panel do not recommend any changes to that aspect of the scheme.

4.8 In its report last year the panel said that in the longer term it intended to undertake a more detailed comparison of other SRAs across the cluster of similar authorities, including those for the Deputy Leader, Deputy Mayor, and vice chairman roles, in consultation with members.

4.10 Dure to the continuation of the pandemic and lockdown restrictions it was not possible to undertake a meaningful comparison and the Panel intended to progress that work during 2022/23.

Schedule 1

OADBY AND WIGSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES – 2022/23

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, in exercise of the powers conferred by the

Local Authorities' (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, hereby

makes the following scheme:-

1. This scheme may be cited as the Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Members' Allowances Scheme and shall have effect for the period from 10 May 2022 to 03 May 2023.

2. In this scheme,

   "Councillor" means a member of the Oadby and Wigston Borough Council who is a Councillor

   "Year" means the period ending with 3 May 2023.

Basic Allowance

3.1 Subject to paragraph 6, a Basic Allowance of **£4,750** shall be paid to each Councillor.

3.2 Members' allowances are not intended to compensate for loss of earnings, nor are they to recompense for the total number of hours Councillors spend on their duties, bearing in mind the voluntary element of service in fulfilling the role of a local Councillor, as recognised in government guidance. Councillors are not paid employees of the Council and their allowances should not be treated as salary.

Special Responsibility Allowances

4.1 A Special Responsibility Allowance shall be paid to those Councillors (in addition to the Basic Allowance) who hold the special responsibilities in relation to the Authority that are specified in Paragraph 12 of this Scheme.

4.2 Subject to paragraph 6, the amount of each such allowance shall be the amount specified against that special responsibility in that Schedule.

4.3 Councillors be permitted to claim no more than two Special Responsibility allowances. Where it appears to a Councillor that this policy has brought about an inequitable situation, that person may appeal to have the matter reviewed, to the independent Adjudication Panel (see paragraph 6 (7) post).

4.4 The Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and having regard to the guidance provided at Schedule 2 below, be authorised to approve the attendance of Councillors at appropriate events where they would be representing the Council and to make payment of any other relevant travel and subsistence expenses covered by the Scheme for the relevant period of absence from home, providing that authority for attendance is given by the Chief Executive in advance of the event taking place.

Claiming of Allowances

5. A Councillor may by notice in writing given to the Head of Law and Democracy claim any part of his or her entitlement to an allowance under this Scheme.

Part-Year Entitlements

6.1 The provisions of this paragraph shall have effect to regulate the entitlements of a Councillor to Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances where, in the course of the year, this Scheme is amended or that Councillor becomes, or ceases to be, a Councillor or accepts or relinquishes a Special Responsibility in respect of which a Special Responsibility Allowance is payable.

6.2 If an amendment to this Scheme changes the amount to which a Councillor is entitled by way of a Basic Allowance or a Special Responsibility Allowance, then in relation to each of the periods

(a) beginning with the year and ending with the day before that on which the first amendment in that year takes effect, or

(b) beginning with the day on which an amendment takes effect and ending with the day before that on which the next amendment takes effect, or (if none) with the year, the entitlement to such an allowance shall be to the payment of such part of the amount of the allowance under this Scheme as it has effect during the relevant period as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of the days in the period bears to the number of days in the year.

6.3 Where the term of office of a Councillor begins or ends otherwise than at the beginning or end of a year, the entitlement of that Councillor to a Basic Allowance shall be to the payment to such part of the Basic Allowance as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days during which his or her term of office subsists bears to the number of days in that year.

6.4 Where this Scheme is amended as mentioned in sub-paragraph (2) above, and the term of office of a Councillor does not subsist throughout the period mentioned in sub-paragraph (2)(a) above, the entitlement of any such Councillor to a Basic Allowance shall be to the payment of such part of the Basic Allowance referable to each such period (ascertained in accordance with that sub-paragraph) as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days which his or her term of office as a Councillor subsists bears to the number of days in that period.

6.5   Where a Councillor has during part of, but not throughout, a year special responsibilities as entitle him or her to a Special Responsibility Allowance, that Councillor's entitlement shall be to the payment of such part of that allowance as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days during which he or she has such special responsibilities bears to the number of days in that year.

6.6   Where this Scheme is amended as mentioned in sub-paragraph (2) above, and a Councillor has during part, but does have throughout the whole, of any period mentioned in sub-paragraph (2)(a) of that paragraph any such special responsibilities as entitle him or her to a Special Responsibility Allowance, that Councillor's or Independent Person's entitlement shall be to the payment of such part of the allowance referable to each such period (ascertained in accordance with that sub-paragraph) as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days in that period during which he or she has such special responsibilities bears to the number of days in that period.

6.7   A meeting of an Adjudication Panel comprising the Chief Executive, a member of the Independent Remuneration Panel and a senior Councillor, be called to consider and decide upon any issue of uncertainty or ambiguity that might arise in interpretation of the Scheme.

Travelling and Subsistence Allowances

7.   Councillors may claim Travelling and Subsistence Allowances in respect of the following categories of meetings, subject to them being held outside the Borough, at the rates prescribed in Schedule 2 to this Scheme.

- Conferences and meetings where attendance is authorised by the Council, a Committee or by the Chief Executive
- Outside Bodies to which the Councillor has been appointed by the Council, a Committee or by the Chief Executive

Note: Councillors may not claim Travelling and Subsistence Allowances in respect of any meetings held inside the Borough. Allowance for such expenses is reflected in the Basic Allowance.

Childcare and Dependant Carers' Allowance

8.   Childcare and Dependent Carers' Allowances be paid for the actual receipted cost incurred to a Councillor, providing this does not exceed £10 per hour. The Allowances to cover attendance at any meeting of the Council for which the Councillor is a member or for attendance at any meeting of an outside body for which the Councillor is attending that meeting as a representative of the Council.

Claims

9.   Claims for the payment of Travelling and Subsistence Allowances under this Scheme must be made on the official forms provided within two months of the date on which the meeting took place. These forms are available from Democratic Services.

Payments

10.1   Payments shall be made in respect of Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances, subject to paragraph 6(2), in instalments of one-twelfth of the amount specified in this Scheme direct into Councillor's bank/building society account on the 25th day of each month or as close thereto as is possible.

10.2   Where a payment of one-twelfth of the amount specified in this scheme in respect of Basic Allowance or a Special Responsibility Allowance would result in a Councillor receiving more than the amount to which, by virtue of paragraph 6, he or she is entitled, the payment shall be restricted to such amount as will ensure that no more is paid than the amount to which he or she is entitled.

Updating

11.   This Scheme shall be updated on 04 May in line with the level of the Retail

Price Index in any year when there is no independent review.

Special Responsibility Allowances

12.   A Special Responsibility Allowance at the amount specified below may be paid per annum to those Councillors who have the special responsibilities in relation to the Council as specified below:-

Special Responsibility	SRA (£)
Leader of the Council	10,000
Deputy Leader of the Council * halved where shared	2,500*
Leader of the Opposition Group # pro rata based on the total membership of groups where applicable	2,500#
Chairman of Policy, Finance & Development, Service Delivery, Development Control Committee, and Mayor	3,500
Committee Vice Chairman and Deputy Mayor	1,000
Chairman of Licensing & Regulatory Committee	2,500
Generic Task Group (pro rata if the Group disbands), and Forum Chairman	1,000

Travelling and Subsistence Allowances

A. Travelling

1. Motor Car – 50.5p per mile regardless of engine size *

> Motor Car Passengers - 3.0p per mile for the first passenger and 2.0p per mile for the second and subsequent passengers up to 4 (to whom a travelling allowance would otherwise be payable)

2. Motorcycle - 26p per mile

3. Bicycle - 10p per mile

4. Toll, ferry, and parking fees (including overnight garaging) – actual cost on production of a receipt

5. Taxis - actual fare (plus reasonable gratuity) either in case of urgency or where no public transport is reasonably available

6. Public Transport - second class or any available cheap day fare unless there are exceptional circumstances approved by the Chief Finance Officer for first class fare.

* Mileage rate for Council officers.

B. Subsistence

1. Absence not involving absence overnight – up to the following limits on production of a receipt

(a) Breakfast (leaving home before 7.30am) £ 6.50

(b) Lunch (absent between 12 noon and 2pm) £ 8.00

(c) Tea * (arriving home after 5.30pm) £ 6.00

(d) Evening Meal *(arriving home after 8.30pm) £12.00

* only one of these may be claimed

2. Absence overnight covering continuous period of 24 hours – reasonable cost of accommodation and meals on production of a receipt

3. Main meals on trains (i.e. breakfast, lunch or dinner) – reasonable cost (inc. VAT) on production of a receipt (in lieu of the subsistence allowance for the appropriate meal period)

Schedule 2

GUIDANCE FOR USE OF DELEGATED POWERS BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN

RESPECT OF MEMBERS CONFERENCES/SEMINARS/MEETINGS

Introduction

1. Under the Scheme of Delegation, the Chief Executive has been granted delegated authority, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to approve attendance by Members at conferences, seminars or meetings which have not previously been approved by the Council.

2. In exercising his/her delegation the Chief Executive must have regard to these guidelines.

Guidelines

3. The Chief Executive must ensure that these is sufficient budgetary provision

taking into account:-

a) The financial provision required for the support and development needs of all Members for the financial year in question.

b) The cost and quality of the seminar/conference/meeting where applicable.

4. The Chief Executive must ensure that:-

a) The meeting/conference/seminar is relevant to the Member's role and responsibilities at the Council, (i.e. by virtue of membership of a Committee, Sub Committee, Task Group, Panel or Outside Body) or, his/her position as Chairman or Vice-Chairman of a Committee, Sub-Committee, Task Group, Panel or Outside Body, OR

b) Attendance would be beneficial to the Council or non-attendance would be prejudicial to the Council or its standing in the wider community, OR

c) The conference/seminar/meeting provides necessary or relevant training or education to the Member in his/her capacity as a Borough Councillor.

Agenda Item 13

	Full Council	**Tuesday, 05 April 2022**	**Matter for Information and Decision**

Report Title: **Statement of Gambling Policy (2022-2025)**

Report Author(s):   **Jon Wells (Senior Strategic Development Manager)**

Purpose of Report:	To consider the final version of the proposed Statement of Gambling Policy (the Policy) 2022-2025, approve and adopt its contents and agree implementation from 9 May 2022.
Report Summary:	The current Policy expires in 2022 and it is essential that this is refreshed and updated to ensure the effective ongoing regulation of gambling. An updated version attached at Appendix 1 has been consulted on and this gives a framework that applicants can use when formulating an application as well as giving an overview of how the Council will determine applications.
Recommendation(s):	**That the final proposed Statement of Gambling Policy 2022-2025 (as set out at Appendix 1) be approved and adopted for commencement on 9 May 2022.**
Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):	David Gill (Head of Law and Democracy / Monitoring Officer) (0116) 257 2626 david.gill@oadby-wigston.gov.uk Jon Wells (Senior Strategic Development Manager) (0116) 257 2692 jon.wells@oadby-wigston.gov.uk
Corporate Objectives:	Providing Excellent Services (CO3)
Vision and Values:	Accountability (V1) Customer Focus (V5)
Report Implications:-	
Legal:	Section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005 imposes a statutory requirement on the Council (as the Licensing Authority) to prepare and publish a 'Statement of Principles' (known as a Policy) once every three years. Following public consultation, any amendments to the Policy are required to be considered and the final policy approved by Full Council. Section 349(2) of the Gambling Act 2005 allows the Licensing Authority to review its Statement/Policy from time to time. The Gambling Act 2005 (Licensing Authority Policy Statement) (England and Wales) Regulations 2006 sets out the legal requirement and procedure for drafting and preparing the Statement/Policy and any revisions to this which must be considered and adhered to.
Financial:	There are no implications directly arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Regulatory Governance (CR6) Reputation Damage (CR4)

Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	Gambling Act 2005 applications and notifications are not assessed based on the characteristics of the applicant; they are issued in accordance with the law and depend on the application being correctly submitted.
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Statutory Officers' Comments:-	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees:	As detailed in Appendix 1 of the Statement of Gambling Policy 2022-2025
Background Papers:	None.
Appendices:	**1.** Statement of Gambling Policy (2022-2025)

1.   Introduction

1.1   Under section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005 (the Act), Licensing Authorities are required to prepare and publish a policy which they intend to apply when exercising their functions under the Act.

1.2   Section 349 of the Act requires Licensing Authorities to review their statement every three years, and this is now due.

2.   Policy Review

2.1   The current statement has been reviewed and arising from that a final proposed document has been produced.

2.2   There has been very little in the way of major reviews of the legislation since the start of the current policy and consequently the proposed policy is fundamentally unchanged. The changes made are therefore those focussed on local information and the local area profile of gambling premises.

3.   Consultation

3.1   The Act requires that the proposed Policy is subject to wide consultation. Consultation therefore commenced on 28 February 2022 for four weeks, ending on 28 March 2022 to those detailed in Appendix 2 of the Policy. The draft policy was also considered and approved by the Licensing and Regulatory Committee on 10 March 2022. The final proposed document is now attached at **Appendix 1**.

3.2   No representations have been received during this process.

4.   Approval Process

4.1   On approval, the Statement must be published by way of a public notice in a local newspaper and on the Council's website four weeks prior to it coming into force on 9 May 2022.

OADBY & WIGSTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

STATEMENT OF GAMBLING POLICY 2022-2025

Policy Version Number: 1.0
Policy Author: Jon Wells
Committee Approval:
Date of Policy Review: 2025

Contents

Appendices
Appendix 1: Map of the Borough of Oadby and Wigston
Appendix 2: List of Bodies Consulted

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1.0 Foreword

The Gambling Act has been in force since 2006 and this is 6th edition of Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's statement of Licensing Principles.

A Licensing Authority is required to prepare and publish a Statement of Licensing Policy. From the inception of the Act, the Policy has aided the promotion of the main licensing objectives, these are:

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

The Licensing Authority has considered and evaluated the effectiveness of the previous policy and with partners has decided which elements of the Policy should be retained.

The Policy will be consulted on with stakeholders and the intention is to formally adopt it from April 2022.

2.0 Introduction

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council is the Licensing Authority under the Gambling Act 2005 ("the Act") and this Statement of Gambling Policy is intended to meet the Council's obligations under Section 349 of the Act. The Licensing Authority is responsible for granting a variety of permissions under the Act within the Oadby & Wigston Borough. The Licensing Authority also has a role alongside the Gambling Commission in regulating gambling within the area.

'Gambling' is defined in the Act as either gaming, betting or taking part in a lottery.

- **Gaming** means playing a game of chance for a prize
- **Betting** means making or accepting a bet on the outcome of a race, competition, or any other event; the likelihood of anything occurring or not occurring; or whether anything is true or not
- **A lottery** is where persons are required to pay in order to take part in an arrangement during the course of which one or more prizes are allocated by a process which relies wholly on chance

The Borough of Oadby & Wigston

Oadby and Wigston is a Borough Council based in South East Leicestershire which is one of the smallest in the Country in terms of both population and area. Despite this the area contains a wealth of activity and resource for people of all ages, ethnicity, and gender.

The Borough is principally a residential area which consists of 3 towns, Oadby, Wigston and South Wigston covering an area of 9 square miles (2,436 hectares). The 2020 population estimate of the Borough showed an estimated population of 57,313.

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Residents are well provided for by a wide range of shopping facilities, leisure activities by both public and private facilities with Community Colleges offering extended access to educational resources to the public. Leicester University has various Halls of Residence and other educational facilities within the district.

The majority of factories and industrial buildings are located on industrial estates with a wide variety of manufacturing activity; such as hosiery, footwear, general engineering, and printing and food products.

3.0 Declaration

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

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

4.0 Licensing Objectives

In exercising most of their functions the Licensing Authority will have regard to the licensing objectives as set out in section 1 of the Act.

The licensing objectives are:

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

5.0 Responsible Authorities

These are generally public bodies that must be notified of applications and who are entitled to make representations to the Licensing Authority if they are relevant to the licensing objectives.

Section 157 of the Act defines those authorities as :-

- The Gambling Commission
- The Police
- The Fire Service
- The local planning authority
- Environmental health

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- HM revenue and Customs
- A licensing authority in whose area the premises is situated
- The Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Board

In accordance with Section 157(h) the Licensing Authority designates the Leicestershire Police to advise the authority on child protection issues.

It should also be noted that applications for some types of permit will also need to be sent to some of the above authorities.

6.0 Interested Parties

An interested party can make representations about a licence application or apply for a review of an existing licence and is defined by Section 158 of the Act as someone who:

- lives sufficiently close to the premises to be likely to be affected by the authorised activities, or
- has business interests that might be affected by the authorised activities, or
- represents persons in either of the two groups above (see notes below)

In determining whether someone lives sufficiently close to a particular premise so as to be affected the Licensing Authority will take into account, among other things:

- the size of the premises
- the nature of the premises
- the distance of the premises from the person making the representation
- the nature of the complainant
- the potential impact of the premises

NB Interested parties can be persons who are democratically elected such as Councillors and MP's. Other than these persons, this authority will require written evidence that a person 'represents' someone who either lives sufficiently close to the premises, and/or has business interests that might be affected by the authorised activities. A letter from one of these persons requesting the representation is sufficient.

This authority will not generally view bodies such as trade associations and trade unions, and residents' and tenants' associations as interested parties unless they have a member who can be classed as one under the terms of the Gambling Act 2005 e.g. lives sufficiently close to the premises to be likely to be affected by the activities being applied for.

Each case will be decided upon its merits. This authority will not apply a rigid rule to its decision making. It will consider the examples of considerations provided in the Gambling Commission's Guidance to local authorities.

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7.0 Information Exchange

In fulfilling its functions and obligations under the Act the Licensing Authority will exchange relevant information with other regulatory bodies and will establish protocols in this respect. In exchanging such information, the Licensing Authority will conform to the requirements of data protection and freedom of information legislation in accordance with the Council's existing policies.

Details of those persons making representations will be made available to applicants to allow for negotiation and, in the event of a hearing being held, will form part of a public document. Anyone making representations or applying for the review of a premises licence will be informed that their details will be disclosed.

8.0 Licensing Authority Functions

The main functions of the Licensing Authority are to:

- License premises for gambling activities
- Grant permits for gambling and gaming machines in clubs
- Regulate gaming and gaming machines in alcohol licensed premises
- grant permits to family entertainment centres for the use of certain lower stake gaming machines
- grant permits for prize gaming
- consider notices given for the temporary use of premises for gaming
- consider occasional use notices for betting at tracks
- register small societies lotteries
- provide information to the Gambling Commission and HM Revenue and Customs
- maintain registers of licences, permits and registrations

9.0 Local Risk Assessments

The Gambling Commissions Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice (LCCP issued October 2020) requires operators to consider local risks in their applications.

As part of the application process licensees are required to submit a local risk assessment when applying for a new premises licence. An exception to this may be Racing Tracks, as they are not required to have an operating licence unless they are providing facilities for betting themselves. An updated risk assessment must be submitted:

- When applying for a variation of a premises licence
- To take account of significant changes in local circumstances, including those identified in a licensing authority policy statement
- When there are significant changes at a licensee's premises that may affect their mitigation of local risks.

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

10.0 Local Area Profile

The following local area profile has been included to facilitate operators being able to understand the environment for the Oadby and Wigston Borough, therefore proactively alleviate risks to the licensing objectives.

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council have a total of 7 gambling premises licences. The number, and make-up, of current licences remains the same since the last policy edition.

The Breakdown

By Premises
Bingo - 0
Adult Gaming Centres - 0
Betting (on course) - 1
Betting - 6

By Location
Oadby Town Centre – 1 Racecourse, 2 Betting Premises
Wigston Town Centre – 3 Betting Premises
South Wigston Town Centre – 1 Betting Premises

In Oadby Town Centre there are 2 betting premises with 5 Primary Schools located within 5 miles, a figure which has remained consistent since the inception of the Act.

Betting premises can also be found in Wigston and the smaller community of South Wigston.

Leicester Racecourse is situated alongside the A6 carriageway to Market Harborough and is only open for gambling activities on race days. Although the venue is on the whole marketed as a family venue it goes without saying that the premises will attract a larger proportion of gamblers. It is considered that under age gambling would be a low risk as younger people are more likely to be present with their parents.

The district remains without any bingo premises and as there are only two bingo premises in the whole of greater Leicester it could be assumed that there isn't enough demand for further expansion in this form of gambling. Should a bingo hall be developed in the area during the life time of this document arrangements will be made to ensure that it has a low impact on the life of the district.

During the short term it is deemed that Oadby and Wigston Borough is low risk for underage and problem gambling and although the population of the borough is set to rise significantly the focus of gambling as a leisure time pursuit will always be the larger Leicester City district.

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In relation to the use of B2 or Fixed Odds betting terminals (FOBT), by licensing enforcement officers have highlighted a high level of compliance by the industry and this is backed up by the historically low, almost nil, complaints received about individual premises. Oadby and Wigston Borough will endeavour and continue to monitor and ensure high compliance levels are maintained

11.0 Registers

The Licensing Authority keeps registers of the premises licences it has issued. They can be viewed at the Council's offices during normal office hours 8.30am – 5pm. Copies of the register can be requested but a charge will be administered.

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12.0 General Statement of Principles

The Act provides for three categories of licence

- Operating Licences
- Personal Licences
- Premises licences

In general terms, the Gambling Commission is responsible for issuing Operating Licences and Personal Licences. The Licensing Authority is responsible for issuing Premises Licences. In addition to Premises Licences the Licensing Authority is also responsible for granting permits, temporary and occasional use notices and registrations under the Act. In specific terms Oadby & Wigston Borough Council is the local Licensing Authority.

This Policy sets out principles that the Licensing Authority will apply when making decisions upon applications or notifications made for:-

- Premises Licences
- Temporary and Occasional Use Notices
- Permits as required under the Act
- Registrations as required under the Act

The Licensing Authority, when making decisions about Premises Licences, is required by Section 153 of the Act to aim to permit the use of premises for gambling in so far as it thinks it is:

- In accordance with any relevant code of practice issued by the Gambling Commission
- In accordance with any relevant guidance issued by the Gambling Commission
- Reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives and
- In accordance with the authority's statement of licensing policy

The Licensing Authority recognises the wide variety of premises that will require a licence or a permit. These include casinos, bingo halls, betting shops, pubs, clubs and amusement arcades.

To ensure the licensing objectives are met the Licensing Authority will establish a close working relationship with the police, the Gambling Commission and, where appropriate other responsible authorities.

This Licensing Authority will not seek to use the Act to resolve matters more readily which can be dealt with under other legislation.

The overriding principle is that each application and the circumstances prevailing at each premises will be considered on their own merits.

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13.0 Consultation

In developing this Statement the Licensing Authority has consulted with the groups set out below,

- Leicestershire Constabulary
- Representatives of the holders of the various licences for premises within the Borough who will be affected by this policy
- Persons/bodies representing the interests of persons likely to be affected by this policy
- Other responsible authorities/groups that the Licensing Authority considers appropriate.

14.0 Period of Validity and Review

This statement of licensing policy will come into effect on 9 May 2022 (a period of 4 weeks after approval) and will be valid for three years.

The policy will be kept under review during the period of validity and if necessary amendments made.

Before a new policy is adopted or amendments made to the existing one the Licensing Authority will undertake consultation in accordance with Section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005.

15.0 Conditions

The starting point in determining applications will be to grant the application without conditions. Conditions will only be considered where they are needed to meet the requirements of the licensing objectives. When considering any conditions to be attached to licences, the Licensing Authority will primarily focus on the direct impact of the activities taking place at licensed premises on members of the public living, working or engaged in normal activity in the area concerned. Premises licences are already subject to mandatory and default conditions provided by regulations issued by the Secretary of State.

Licensing authorities are able to exclude default conditions and also attach others, where it is believed to be appropriate.

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

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

Decisions upon individual conditions will be made on a case by case basis, although there will be a number of control measures this licensing authority will consider utilising should there be evidence of a risk to the licensing objectives, such as the use of door supervisors, supervision of adult gaming machines, appropriate signage for adult only areas and betting machines in licensed betting

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premises. The Council will not impose further conditions relating to door supervisors at a Betting Track, as they are already required by the Licensing Act 2003 and the Private Security Industry Act 2001 to provide licensed door supervisors in some roles.

The overriding principle is that each application and the circumstances prevailing at each premises will be considered on their own merits.

16.0 Legislation and Strategies

In undertaking its licensing function under the Gambling Act 2005, the Licensing Authority is also bound by other legislation.

However, the policy is not intended to duplicate existing legislation and regulation regimes that already place obligations on employers and operators.

The Licensing Authority will seek to discharge its responsibilities identified by other national and local strategies and policies, in so far as they impact on the objectives of the licensing function. The licensing authority also recognises the importance of co-ordination and integration of the Gambling Policy with these strategies and policies.

The Licensing Authority, in undertaking its licensing function, will have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equality and good relations between persons of different racial groups.

17.0 Promotion of Equality

In developing this strategy, the Licensing Authority has recognised its responsibility under the Race Relations Act 1976 (as amended), to consider the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equal opportunity and good race relations between persons of different racial groups. This Licensing Policy therefore supports and is supported by the Licensing Authority's Multi-Cultural Aims.

The Licensing Authority also recognises that this policy should promote equality in a wider sense and has therefore assessed the potential impact on disadvantaged groups in general, as well as from a race equality perspective. It has considered and consulted with this in mind.

The following actions, which have been identified as being necessary to promote equality, and within the scope of the Act and supporting guidance, will be implemented by the Licensing Authority:

- The Licensing Policy and associated documents will be available on the internet, and in other formats upon request.
- The licensing objective of protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling will be promoted.

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- Support will be offered to licence applicants, licence holders and potential objectors who are socially excluded.
- Account will be taken of the effect of specific applications on community cohesion, including the need to balance the benefits of cultural and community activities with limited local disturbance.
- Action will be taken to endeavour to ensure the safety of vulnerable people in licensed premises.
- Action will be taken to ensure that all applications, particularly those for disadvantaged groups, are dealt with fairly.

The Licensing Authority is aware that there may be particular sensitivities of certain buildings, for example religious buildings, to certain gambling activities taking place in close proximity. Where this proximity has an impact on the promotion of one of the licensing objectives this is a matter for the Licensing Authority. Where the impact does not affect the promotion of the licensing objectives, there may be other control mechanisms, such as the planning system, that could be applicable.

18.0 Disabled Access

The guidance supporting the Act advises that conditions relating to disabled access should not be attached to licences, as this would duplicate existing statutory requirements. The Licensing Authority therefore takes this opportunity to remind operators of premises of their duties under the Equality Act 2010. This includes a duty that any person who provides a service to the public must make reasonable adjustments to any physical feature that makes it impossible or unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to access a service, or to provide the service by a reasonable alternative means.

19.0 Relationship with Planning

When considering applications for premises licences the Licensing Authority cannot take into consideration "irrelevant matters" such as the expected 'demand' for facilities, the likelihood of planning permission being granted or building control approval.

An applicant can apply for a "provisional statement" if the building is not complete or if he does not yet have a right to occupy it. Such an application is however a separate and distinct process to the granting of planning permission or building control approval.

The lack of planning permission does not prevent an applicant from applying for a premises licence and does not preclude an application for a premises licence being granted. The Licensing Authority is required to consider each application on its merits.

The Gambling Commissions guidance to Licensing Authorities advises that when granting a licence the licensing authority must be satisfied that the premises are going to be ready to be used for gambling in the near future.

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Where planning permission has not been obtained to use the premises for gambling the Licensing Authority must be satisfied as a matter of fact and degree in the particular circumstances of that case that the premises is not ready to be used for gaming. In such instances the Licensing Authority may feel that granting the licence would not promote the licensing objectives.

The Licensing Authority therefore recommends that when planning permission has not been obtained applicants apply for a provisional licence.

20.0 Decision Making

The Council's Licensing Officers will deal with all licensing applications where either no representations have been received, or where representations have been received and it is agreed by the parties that a hearing is not necessary.

A Licensing Sub-Committee of three Councillors will sit to hear applications where representations have been received from interested parties and/or Responsible Authorities. Ward Councillors will not sit on a Sub-Committee involving an application within their ward.

Where a Councillor who is a member of the Licensing Committee is making or has made representations regarding a licence on behalf of an interested party, in the interests of good governance they will disqualify themselves from any involvement in the decision making process affecting the licence in questions.

Decisions as to whether representations are irrelevant, frivolous or vexatious will be made by Council Officers, who will make the decision on whether representations or applications for licence review should be referred to the Licensing Sub-Committee. Where representations are rejected, the person making that representation will be given written reasons as to why that are the case. There is no right of appeal against a determination that representations are not admissible.

The current scheme of delegations in relation to the Gambling Act can be found in the Council's Constitution.

21.0 Promotion of Licensing Objectives

Preventing gambling from being a source of crime and disorder

The Gambling Commission will play a leading role in preventing gambling from being a source of crime and will maintain rigorous licensing procedures that aim to prevent criminals from providing facilities for gambling.

The Council places a considerable importance on the prevention of crime and disorder, and will fulfil its duty under s17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in the borough. A high standard of control is therefore expected to be exercised over licensed premises.

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The Council will, when determining applications, consider whether the grant of a Premises Licence will result in an increase in crime and disorder.

Applicants are encouraged to discuss the crime prevention procedures in their premises with the Council's Licensing Officers and Leicestershire Constabulary before making a formal application.

Applicants for a premises licence will have to be granted an Operating Licence by the Gambling Commission before a premises licence can be issued. Operators will already have satisfied the Gambling Commission that they have policies in place that promote the licensing objectives.

The Licensing Authority would not intend to duplicate these policies as conditions on the premises licence, but they and the responsible authorities, may wish to know how such policies will be put in place at the premises.

Where concerns about a person's suitability arise the Council will bring those concerns to the attention of the Commission.

As far as disorder is concerned, there are already powers in existing anti-social behaviour and licensing legislation to deal with measures designed to prevent nuisance, whether it arises as a result of noise from a building or from general disturbance once people have left a building. The Council does not therefore intend to use the Act to deal with general nuisance issues

The Council will only seek to address issues of disorder under the Act if the disorder amounts to activity which is more serious and disruptive than mere nuisance. A disturbance could be serious enough to constitute disorder if police assistance was required to deal with it. Another factor the Council is likely to take into account is how threatening the behaviour was to those who could see or hear it, whether those people live sufficiently close to be affected or have business interests that might be affected.

When making decisions in this regard the Licensing Authority will give due weight to any comments made by the police.

Ensuring gambling is conducted in a fair and open way

The Gambling Commission does not expect licensing authorities to become concerned with ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way. This will be a matter for either the management of the gambling business or will be in relation to the suitability and actions of an individual. Both issues will be addressed by the Commission through the operating and personal licensing regime.

Because betting track operators do not need an operating licence from the Commission the Licensing Authority may, in certain circumstances require conditions of licence to ensure that the environment in which betting takes place is suitable.

Protecting children and other vulnerable people from gambling

The access of children and young person's to those gambling premises which are adult only environments will not be permitted. The Gambling Commission has issued a number of Codes of Practices for each sector of the gaming industry in ensuring that children and young person's do not access adult only environments.

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The Licensing Authority will consider whether any measures are necessary to protect children when considering whether to grant a premises licence or permit. The Licensing Authority may also wish to see evidence from the operator of how any code of practice will be complied with in respect of the premises in question.

In seeking to protect vulnerable people the licensing authority will include people who gamble more than they want to, people who gamble beyond their means, and people who may not be able to make informed or balanced decisions about gambling, perhaps due to a mental impairment, alcohol or drugs.

The Council will consult with the Leicestershire Police on any application that indicates there may be concerns over access for children or vulnerable persons

The Licensing Authority will always treat each case on its own individual merits and when considering whether specific measures are required to protect children and other vulnerable people will balance its considerations against the overall principle of aiming to permit the use of premises for gambling.

Applicants for premises licences are required to hold an operator's licence granted by the Gambling Commission before trading under a premises licence. All applicants for Premises Licences will be required to set out how they will promote the licensing objectives and what measures they intend to employ to ensure compliance with them.

22.0 Types of Licence

Casinos

There are currently no casinos operating within the Borough.

The Licensing Authority has not passed a 'no casino' resolution under Section 166 of the Gambling Act 2005, but is aware that it has the power to do so.

Should the licensing authority decide in the future to pass such a resolution, this will be a resolution of Full Council following a considered debate, and the reasons for making this resolution will be given.

There is no right of appeal against this resolution.

Adult Gaming Centres

Premises licensed as an Adult Gaming Centre are permitted to provide an unlimited amount of category D and C machines and up to 20 percent of the total machines can be category B machines. Persons under the age of 18 years old are not permitted to enter an Adult Gaming Centre. The need to protect children and vulnerable persons from harm and/or being exploited by gambling is a an important licensing objective. Before granting a premises licence the Licensing Authority will need to

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be satisfied that there will be sufficient measures to ensure that under 18 year olds do not have access to the premises.

The Licensing Authority recommends that any premises licensed for gambling purposes adopts a policy of requiring proof of age from any person where there is any doubt as to whether they are over 18. The authority would suggest as best practice, that proof of age could be in the form of a passport, photographic driving licence, or a proof of age card complying with the Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS) launched in January 2003 by the British Retail Consortium.

As regards the protection of vulnerable persons, the licensing authority will consider measures such as the use of self-barring schemes, provision of information leaflets / helpline numbers for organisations such as GamCare.

Betting Premises (off-course)

Off course betting premises are any premises licensed to accept bets that are not situated at a track.

Children and Young persons are not permitted to enter a Betting Premises, and the Authority would need to see appropriate measures in place to be satisfied that children and young persons will not gain access to the premises.

The Licensing Authority is aware of its power to restrict the number of betting machines, their nature and the circumstances in which they are made available by attaching a licence condition to a betting premises licence or to a casino premises licence (where betting is permitted in the casino)

In the event that the Authority considers whether to impose such a condition on any particular licence it may, among other things, take into account the size of the premises, the number of counter positions available for person to person transactions, and the ability of staff to monitor the use of the machines by children and young persons or by vulnerable persons.

As regards the protection of vulnerable persons, this licensing authority will consider measures such as the use of self-barring schemes, provision of information leaflets / helpline numbers for organisations such as GamCare.

Family Entertainment Centres (licensed)

A family entertainment centre is permitted to provide any number of category C and category D machines. Category D machines can be played by children and young persons but not category C machines.

This licensing authority will specifically have regard to the need to protect children and vulnerable persons from harm or being exploited by gambling and will expect the applicant to satisfy the authority that there will be sufficient measures to ensure that under 18 year olds do not have access to the adult only gaming machine areas. It is a requirement that category C machines are segregated from D machines so that there is no access to them by children.

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As regards the protection of vulnerable persons, this licensing authority will consider measures such as the use of self-barring schemes, provision of information leaflets / helpline numbers for organisations such as GamCare.

This licensing authority will, refer to the Commission's website to see any conditions that apply to operator licences covering the way in which certain areas of the premises should be delineated. This licensing authority will also make itself aware of any mandatory or default conditions on these premises licences, when they have been published.

Bingo Premises

The primary purpose of a Bingo premises licence is to permit the premises to be used for the playing of Bingo. Bingo premises are permitted to make any number of C and D machines available for use and up to 20 percent of the total machines can be category B machines.

Where children and young persons are allowed to enter premises licensed for bingo the operator must ensure that they do not participate in any gambling other than on category D machines. Where category C or above machines are available in premises to which children and young person are admitted the Licensing Authority will require that

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

The Licensing Authority will take into account guidance issued about the particular issues that licensing authorities should take into account in relation to the suitability and layout of bingo premises.

Tracks

Tracks are defined under the Act as "a horse race course, greyhound track or other premises on any part of which a race or other sporting event takes place or is intended to take place". Examples of tracks include:

- A horse racecourse
- A greyhound track
- A point to point horse race meeting
- Football, cricket and rugby grounds

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- An athletics stadium
- A golf course
- Venues hosting darts, bowls or snooker tournaments
- Premises staging boxing matches
- Sections of river hosting a fishing competition
- A motor racing event

This list is not exhaustive, but gives an example of the types of venue which could accommodate the provision of betting facilities.

There are three types of authorisation under which betting facilities may be made available at a sporting event:

- An occasional use notice
- A temporary use notice and
- A track premises licence.

Betting in relation to tracks may be provided either as on course, or off course betting. The different types of betting are explained in detail in the Guidance issued by the Gambling Commission, and an up to date excerpt of this guidance is published at www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk. As discussed previously Oadby & Wigston Borough Council is home to Leicester Racecourse which makes the provisions in the section of the policy more relevant.

A betting premises licence permits premises to be used for the provision of facilities for betting, whether by:

- Making or accepting bets
- Acting as a betting intermediary; or
- Providing other facilities for the making or accepting of bets.

Tracks are the only class of premises that may be subject to more than one premises licence, provided that each licence relates to a specific area of the track. This allows track venues to develop leisure facilities such as a casino and apply for a (casino) premises licence for that part of the track.

There is no special class of betting Premises Licence for a track, but the Act does contain rules which apply specifically to Premises Licences granted in respect of tracks.

Special rules apply to applicants for a Premises Licence in relation to a track. Most importantly the applicant need not hold an Operator licence. That is because, unless the occupier of the track wishes to offer pool betting (or general betting) facilities himself (for which he will need a licence) the betting that is provided upon the track will not be provided by him, but will be provided by other operators who come on-course. Since those people will require the necessary Operator Licences, the Act allows the track operator to obtain a Premises Licence without also having to hold an Operator Licence. This track Premises Licence then authorises anyone upon the premises with a valid Operator Licence to offer betting facilities.

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Track premises licences are distinguished from all other premises licences because children and young persons are allowed to be present on the track while betting is taking place on those licensed premises.

Track premises that safeguard the achievement of the three licensing objectives may generally be considered fit for gambling. By using the following general principles licensing authorities can establish whether a track is fit for provision of gambling facilities:-

Licensing objective	Issues to consider	Reason to consider a track premises unfit for gambling purposes?
The protection of children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling	Tracks permit access to children	No - Children are allowed access to tracks on race days
	Bet receipt terminals in areas where there is no supervision which would allow children or young persons to use machines undetected	No - It is a mandatory condition of the operating licence that operators ensure that bet receipt terminals are supervised. This is not an issue for the premises licence.
	Children are allowed access to areas holding category B and C gaming machines	It is a mandatory condition of the operating licence that operators ensure that children are not allowed access to areas where Category B and C gaming machines are provided. However, section 182 of the Act also creates a premises licence condition that children and young persons must be excluded from areas where any gaming machines other than Category D are located.
	Betting areas adjacent to areas where children/young persons are present such as play areas	No - Children are allowed access to tracks on race days and so will be exposed to gambling areas. It is a mandatory condition of the operating licence that operators do not accept bets from children or young persons.
	Betting areas adjacent to areas where children/young persons are present such as play areas	The Commission considers that the location of betting does not generally pose a risk to this licensing objective. Licensing authorities may impose their own local conditions there they perceive problems.
Ensure gambling is conducted in a fair and open way	The rules of betting are not displayed on the premises	No (not an issue at application stage) - it is a mandatory condition of the premises licence that the rules of betting are displayed.

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Licensing objective	Issues to consider	Reason to consider a track premises unfit for gambling purposes?
	Unlicensed betting operators are allowed to operate on tracks	No (not an issue at application stage) - it is a mandatory condition of the premises licence that licence holders make arrangements to ensure that they only allow licensed operators on tracks.
	Betting takes place out of approved hours.	No (not an issue at application stage) - it is a mandatory condition of the premises licence that betting only takes place within the specified hours
Prevent gambling from being a source of crime and disorder	Betting is allowed in all parts of a track resulting in greater difficulties for track premises licence holders to identify instances of illegal Betting.	No - the Commission's view is that this does not generally pose a risk to this objective. Licensing authorities may impose their own conditions should they perceive a problem
	No formal exit/entry points allowing easy access for unapproved operators and customers	No - the Commission's view is that this does not generally pose a risk to this objective. Licensing authorities may impose their own conditions should they perceive a problem.

The Licensing Authority will take any such guidance into consideration when determining an application for a track premises licence.

Access to premises and other parts of the track

Access between premises licensed for gambling and non-gambling areas is an important local licensing consideration, for reasons such as the following:

- to prevent operators from seeking to circumvent the Act by artificially subdividing a premises and securing separate premises licences for its composite parts;
- to ensure that operators do not circumvent regulations governing the maximum number of gaming machines applicable to specific premises;
- to ensure that people who have entered a premises for one type of gambling are not exposed to another, potentially harder, form of gambling;
- to ensure that there is no direct access between gambling premises to which children have access and those which they are prohibited from entering;
- to ensure that all gambling premises have publicly accessible entrances; and
- to ensure that gambling premises are not developed in the backrooms of other commercial premises.

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Access by children – special dispensation for tracks

The Act forbids all persons under 18 years old to enter premises when betting facilities are being provided, other than at tracks. This dispensation allows families to attend premises such as greyhound tracks or racecourses on event days, and children to be permitted into areas where betting facilities are provided, such as the betting ring, where betting takes place. This dispensation does not, however, apply to:

- areas within a track where category C or above machines are provided; or
- other premises to which under 18 year olds are specifically not permitted access.

Licensed betting operators at tracks are bound by their operating licence conditions which prevent them from accepting bets from persons who are under 18 years old. The track premises licence holder is also required through premises licence conditions to display a notice in a prominent place at every public entrance stating that no person under the age of 18 is permitted to bet on the premises.

There may be some specific considerations with regard to the protection of children and vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling, the need to ensure entrances to each type of premises are distinct and that children are excluded from gambling or betting areas where they are not permitted to enter.

Children and young persons will by law be permitted to enter track areas where facilities for betting are provided on days when dog racing and/or horse racing takes place, although they are still prevented from entering areas where gaming machines (other than category D machines) are provided. The Licensing Authority will normally expect Premises Licence applicants to demonstrate suitable measures to ensure the children do not have access to adult only gambling facilities.

Appropriate measures may include:

- Proof of Age schemes
- CCTV
- Door Supervisors
- Supervision of entrances/machine areas
- Physical separation of areas
- Location of entry
- Notices/signage
- Specific opening hours
- The location of gaming machines
- Self-barring schemes
- Provision of information leaflets/helpline numbers for organisations such as GamCare or Gamble Aware

This list is not mandatory, nor exhaustive, and is merely indicative of example measures.

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Betting on event and non-event days

Hours of betting on event days

Premises licence holders will be expected to comply with the mandatory and default conditions applicable to them on both event and non-event days. The licensing authority will not generally expect to re-assess a licence application as a result of a change to the dates of sporting events, but would expect applicants and licence holders to make information about sporting fixtures available as part of the application.

Significant changes to the fixture/events listing have a bearing on the licence conditions in that track premises licence holders will be expected to comply with the mandatory and default conditions applicable to them on both event and non-event days.

On days when no public sporting event is taking place on a track, gambling facilities may only be provided on the track between the hours of 7am and 10pm. Where the premises user intends to continue to offer facilities for gambling outside the proposed gambling hours on non-event days these facilities should be provided by virtue of an occasional use notice.

On non-event days, tracks become similar to licensed betting offices on the high street. Tracks may achieve this requirement by:

- locating all betting areas inside an area of the premises that is separated from the remainder of the premises by a physical barrier, thereby preventing access other than through a designated entrance;
- only admitting adults to the part of the track where betting areas are located, by establishing procedures for verifying customer ages and refusing entry to adult-only areas for those unable to produce an acceptable form of identification (and taking action where there are unlawful attempts to enter adult-only areas); and
- placing prominent notices in front of and inside each entrance stating that access to the area is prohibited to persons under 18. The Licensing authority may consider reducing the default gambling hours, providing any reduction is in line with the principles set out in section 153 of the Act.

Bet receipt terminals

Licensed operator may install bet receipt terminals on tracks. There is no restriction on the number of bet receipt terminals that may be in use but operators must, by virtue of their operating licence conditions, supervise such terminals to prevent them being used by those under 18 years of age.

There is no formal requirement on track premises licence holders to involve themselves in the procedures used by betting operators to supervise their bet receipt terminals unless specific local conditions specifying supervisory arrangements are added to the track premises licence by the licensing authority terminals.

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Gaming machines

A track premises licence does not of itself entitle the holder to provide gaming machines, as this type of premises licence can be held without any corresponding operating licence.

Where a track owner holds both a track premises licence and a pool betting operating licence issued by the Commission (in effect, greyhound tracks only), they may site up to four gaming machines within categories B2 to D on the track.

Some tracks may also hold a premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003. As such they will be automatically entitled under section 282 of the Act to two gaming machines of category C or D.

In such scenarios the operating licence entitlement does not take precedence, and each licence has its own requirements that must be complied with.

Applications for permits to allow additional gaming machines are not permitted where the premises is already covered by a track premises licence.

It is a condition of section 282 of the Act that alcohol-licensed premises licence holders (not necessarily the owners) must comply with any relevant provision of a code of practice under section 24 about the location and operation of a gaming machine. The gaming machine permits code of practice can be found on the Commission's website.

Where track premises licence holders possess a pool betting operating licence, the Commission places a mandatory licence condition on such operators that they must:

- have and put into effect documented policies and procedures to
- prevent underage gambling; and
- monitor the effectiveness of these.

Track administration

Administration of betting

Administrative and quasi-regulatory arrangements in place to ensure that activities held on tracks run smoothly for paying customers, track operators and betting operators are considered to be outside the remit of the Act unless they affect the licensing objectives.

The role of track premises licence holders

The responsibilities of track premises licence holders are established by the mandatory and default licence conditions attaching to their premises licence.

The licensed betting operators authorised by track owners to provide betting facilities at tracks must comply with their operating licence conditions and codes of practice issued by the Commission.

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Track premises licence holders have a responsibility to report regulatory breaches or potential breaches relating to the premises itself or to betting operators.

Acceptance of bets

Track premises licences for greyhound tracks and racecourses are subject to mandatory licence conditions requiring access to be offered at the track-side to betting operators generally. This prevents track premises licence holders who are also pool betting operators from becoming a monopoly supplier of betting on tracks.

While this does not mean that there must be independent betting operators on tracks on event days, track premises licence holders cannot hold events days without at least making places available to licensed operators. This matter is the responsibility of the Gambling Commission and not the Licensing Authority.

Pool betting

Under the Act, holders of track premises licences on licensed greyhound tracks are given exclusivity to offer pool betting facilities on greyhound racing.

They may also authorise other people to conduct such pool betting on their behalf, although in all cases a relevant operating licence will be required to license this activity.

A totalisator on a licensed greyhound track will only be permitted while the public are admitted to the track for the purpose of attending greyhound races, and no other sporting events are taking place. A mandatory condition is attached to the premises licence to this effect.

Admission of betting operators

It is a mandatory premises licence condition of track premises licences that the licence holder makes arrangements to ensure that the betting operators they admit to their track operate under valid operating licences.

Track premises licence holders are responsible for determining their own arrangements for the verification of betting operators. As part of this process, the track premises licence holder should make arrangements for ensuring that the betting operator holds an operating licence. Additionally, both parties should agree a procedure for assessing that persons accepting bets on behalf of a betting operator either themselves hold operating licences in their own right, or are employed by the operator under a written contract of employment.

Removal of illegal betting operators

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Track premises licence holders are required by a mandatory licence condition to take reasonable steps to remove from the racecourse anybody found to be providing facilities for gambling without authorisation. Failure to uphold this requirement could result in action being taken against the premises licence holder.

Track premises licence holders are not expected to have proactive policies and procedures for identifying illegal gambling other than the mandatory requirement to verify that betting operators offering betting facilities on their track hold suitable operating licences.

Display of rules

It is a mandatory condition of premises licences that clear and accessible information about the terms on which a bet may be placed must be displayed at betting premises, including tracks.

The track premises licence holder should make the necessary arrangements to ensure that betting rules are accessible to all customers, regardless of which area of the track they are in. If certain areas are restricted to certain customers (such as different stands within a football ground) then rules could be displayed at various parts of the track. Other measures could be taken to ensure that they are made available to the public, such as printing them in the race-card or programme. The requirement could also be met by making a copy of the rules available in leaflet form from the main track office, and customers could be given a copy if they request one.

Betting operators offering betting facilities on racecourses and at greyhound tracks are required through the conditions of their operating licence to clearly display any of their own rules that differ from those that the track premises licence holder elects to display, and their rules concerning voids, late bets, and maximum pay-outs. For racecourses and greyhound tracks, the maximum pay-out will vary according to the rules of individual on-course operators.

Approved betting areas

Betting areas

In considering applications, the licensing authority will take into account the licensing objectives and assess whether these objectives are compromised by proposed betting arrangements. The location of betting areas (other than those for gaming machines and bet receipt terminals) is not considered a threat to the licensing objectives and therefore no additional conditions would normally be imposed by licensing authorities, unless the circumstances are such that the Licensing Authority considers that the licensing objectives would be undermined.

Multiple licences

The Act permits a Licensing Authority to issue more than one premises licence for a track provided that each licence relates to a distinct specified area of the track (although there cannot be more than one premises licence covering the same area of the track).

This enables track owners to extend existing facilities to provide other gambling facilities such as a casino on their existing tracks, whereby these additional gambling activities are covered by separate premises licences.

Where an application is made for an additional premises licence, the Licensing Authority will consider the following matters when determining an application:

- access issues in particular whether access to the desired premises will be allowed directly from the track. Direct access between a track and other betting premises (other than a track betting shop) is not permitted. The track owner would need to make arrangements so that access to a casino or bingo hall would be via a street, not via the track itself.

Where a particular area of a track is already subject to a premises licence, and a person wishes to apply for a licence to offer another type of activity in that area, an application must be made to the licensing authority to vary the original premises licence. The new track premises licence can only be granted at the same time as, or after, the original licence has been varied.

Where the Licensing authority receives an application indicating separate betting areas that may not necessarily have clear physical boundaries, such as walls or fencing, it may grant the licence where it is satisfied that the area is clearly delineated, both in terms of making it clear to the public that they are entering a 'betting office', and to keep out persons aged under 18.

Where the licensing authority is not satisfied that a new activity in an existing area is clearly delineated, it may consider refusing the application.

Social responsibility considerations for tracks

The Act places a condition on the track premises licence that the licensee shall ensure that children and young persons are excluded from any area where facilities for betting are provided (unless on race days at racetracks and at greyhound tracks).

Travelling Fairs

A travelling fair is defined under the Act as a "fair consisting wholly or principally of the provision of amusements" and is provided "wholly or principally by persons who travel from place to place for the purpose of providing fairs".

A travelling fair meeting the statutory definition will be permitted to make one or more category D gaming machines available for use as no more than an ancillary amusement at the fair. A travelling fair can only be sited on a piece of land that has not been used for the purposes of a fair, for more than 27 days per calendar year.

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The Licensing Authority will monitor pieces of land within the borough to ensure that 27 day statutory period is not exceeded in any one calendar year regardless as to whether it is the same or different travelling fairs occupying the land.

This Licensing Authority will ensure that the provision of category D machines, which are made available for use at a travelling fair, amount to no more than an ancillary amusement at the fair.

Premises Licences

In carrying out the licensing function under the Act the Licensing Authority will aim to permit the use of premises for Gambling as long as it is considered to be:-

- In accordance with any relevant Codes of Practise issued by the Gaming Commission
- In accordance with any relevant Guidance issued by the Gambling Commission
- In accordance with this Statement of Gambling Policy
- Consistent with the licensing objectives.

A premises licence can authorise the provision of facilities at the following:

- casino premises
- bingo premises
- betting premises, including betting tracks
- adult gaming centres
- family entertainment centres

Section 152 of the Gambling Act 2005 defines "Premises" to be "any place" but prevents more than one premises licence applying to any one place. A single building can be subject to more than one premises licence provided that the licences are for different parts of the building and those parts can be genuinely regarded as being different 'premises'.

Due to concerns by the Gambling Commission that some operators may try to circumvent legislation by artificially sub-dividing premises in order to be granted separate premises licences for the same place, and thus be able to provide extra high pay-out machines, further guidance has been issued.

In order to ensure that operators do not attempt to circumvent the spirit of the Gambling Act the Licensing Authority will look carefully at any proposed breakdown of premises and consider the suitability of any such separation, its locations and whether it can comply with mandatory codes of practice.

The Gambling Act distinguishes between different types of premises, by doing so the intention is that the gambling activity authorised by that premises licence is the primary activity. A new operating licence conditions are now in place requiring that Casino, Bingo and Betting operators can only provide machines as an ancillary to the primary activity they are licensed for.

The Licensing Authority will consider very carefully whether applications for premises licence in respect of certain gambling premises located very close to a school, or a centre for gambling addicts should be granted in light of the third licensing objective. If an applicant for a premises licence can

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show how licensing objective concerns can be overcome, that will have to be taken into account. Each case will be decided on its merits, and will depend to a large extent on the type of gambling that it is proposed will be offered on the premises.

23.0 Reviews

Once granted a premises licence may still be subject to Review proceedings if there are concerns that a premises is not promoting the licensing objectives. The Licensing Authority will carry out a review of a Premises Licence where it has received a formal application for review in accordance with the Act. Requests for a review of a premises licence can be made by interested parties or responsible authorities,

Due consideration will be given to all relevant representations, a representation will be relevant unless they fit the following:-

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

The licensing authority can also initiate a review of a licence on the basis of any reason which it thinks is appropriate.

24.0 Permits and Registrations

Prize Gaming Permits

An application can be made by anyone who occupies or plans to occupy relevant premises for a Prize Gaming Permit. In the case of an individual applicant the individual must be aged over 18 years of age.

There a number of conditions within the Act that will apply to a prize gaming permit, but the licensing authority cannot attach any further conditions. .

The conditions in the Act are:

- The limits on participation fees, as set out in regulations, must be complied with;
- All chances to participate in the gaming must be allocated on the premises on which the gaming is taking place and on one day; the game must be played and completed on the day the chances are allocated; and the result of the game must be made public in the premises on the day that it is played;

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- The prize for which the game is played must not exceed the amount set out in regulations (if a money prize), or the prescribed value (if non-monetary prize); and
- Participation in the gaming must not entitle the player to take part in any other gambling.

A permit can only be granted if the Licensing Authority has consulted with the chief officer of police. Any rejection will have to give the applicant an opportunity to respond both orally and in writing.

Unlicensed Family Entertainment Centres

An unlicensed family entertainment centre can provide category D machines only by virtue of a permit issued by the Licensing Authority. Children are permitted to play category D machines and such premises may need to have stringent measures in place.

The Licensing Authority will expect the applicant to show that there are policies and procedures in place to protect children from harm. Harm in this context is not limited to harm from gambling but includes wider child protection considerations. The efficiency of such policies and procedures will each be considered on their merits; however, they may include CRB checks for staff, training covering how staff would deal with unsupervised very young children being on the premises, or children causing perceived problems on / around the premises.

Club Gaming Permits & Club Machine Permits

A Members' Club or Miners Welfare Institute may apply to the Licensing Authority for either a Club Gaming Permit or a Club Machine Permit. A commercial members club may apply for a Club Machine Permit only.

This Licensing Authority is aware that it may only refuse an application on the grounds that:

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

Both permits allow for the premises to provide up to three gaming machines of either category B, C or D to be made available and a Club Gaming permit also permits the club to provide certain types of Gaming at the premises as may be prescribed by the Secretary of State. Currently this is Bridge and Whist.

Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permits

Premises licensed to sell alcohol for consumption on the premises without any conditions restricting the sale as an ancillary to food, are automatically entitled to have 2 gaming machines. Provided they notify the licensing authority in writing and pay the prescribed fee.

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If a premises wishes to have more than 2 machines a Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permit must be applied for. The licensing authority must consider that application based upon the licensing objectives, any guidance issued by the Gambling Commission and any relevant matters.

This licensing authority considers that "matters" will be decided on a case by case basis but generally there will be regard to the need to protect children and vulnerable persons from harm or being exploited by gambling and will expect the applicant to satisfy the authority that there will be sufficient measures to ensure that under 18 year olds do not have access to the adult only gaming machines.

As regards to the protection of vulnerable persons the applicants may wish to consider the provision of information leaflets / helpline numbers for organisations such as GamCare.

Temporary Use Notices

Part 9 of the Gambling Act 2005 allows gambling to be carried out in specified circumstances on a temporary basis, subject to a temporary use notice being served on the Licensing Authority, the Gambling Commission, the Police and HM Revenue & Customs. All these persons can raise objections having regard to the licensing objectives.

A Temporary Use Notice can only be given by the holder of an operating licence and can only authorise gambling for which that operating licence authorises. A set of premises cannot be authorised for more than 21 days under Temporary Use Notices. A notice must be served not less than three months and one day before the day on which the event may begin.

The licensing authority will consider each application and the objections on their own individual merits.

Small Society Lotteries Registration

The Licensing Authority is responsible for registering small society lotteries. To be eligible to register the society must be established and conducted for charitable purposes, for the purpose of enabling participation in, or of supporting sport, athletics or a cultural activity or for any other non-commercial purpose other than that of private gain.

When receiving an application for a small lottery registration, as soon as practical it must:

- Enter the details on the register
- Notify the applicant of the registration and
- Notify the Gambling Commission of the registration

The Licensing Authority will exercise its functions under this Act in relation to lotteries in accordance with the guidance issued by the Gambling Commission, particularly the need to be satisfied that the organisation falls within the definition of a small society and may request a signed declaration from the organisation that they are bona fide non-commercial society.

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25.0 Enforcement

The Gambling Commission will take the lead role in investigation and, where appropriate, the prosecution of illegal gambling.

The Licensing Authority intends to use appropriate enforcement to promote the licensing objectives. Once licensed, it is essential that premises are monitored to ensure that they are run in accordance with the provisions of the Gambling Act, codes of practice and in compliance with any licence conditions. It will also be important to monitor the Borough for unlicensed premises.

The Licensing Authority will seek to work actively with the Gambling Commission, Leicestershire Police and other responsible authorities where appropriate in enforcing licensing legislation and intends to establish a protocol with Leicestershire Constabulary on enforcement issues to ensure an efficient deployment of police and council officers.

Enforcement activities will be targeted in terms of risk and so as best to promote the licensing objectives. In addition account will be taken of the general enforcement policy of the licensing authority, which aims to ensure that enforcement is open, fair, reasonable and proportionate.

26.0 Complaints against Licensed Premises

The Licensing Authority will investigate complaints against licensed premises in relation to matters relating to the licensing objectives for which it has responsibility. In the first instance, complainants are encouraged to raise the complaint directly with the licence holder or business concerned to seek a local resolution.

Where an interested party has made either a valid representation about licensed premises or a valid application for a licence to be reviewed, the Licensing Authority may initially arrange a conciliation meeting to address and clarify the issues of concern.

This process will not override the right of any interested party to ask that the licensing committee consider their valid objections or for any licence holder to decline to participate in a conciliation meeting.

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27.0 Further Information

Further information about the Gambling Act 2005, this Statement of Licensing Policy, the application process, and fees, can be obtained from:-

Licensing Section
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council
Station Road
Wigston
Leicestershire
LE18 2DR
Tel: 0116 257 2637
E-Mail: licensing@oadby-wigston.gov.uk

Information is also available at

Gambling Commission
Victoria Square House
Victoria Square
Birmingham
B2 4BP
Tel: 0121 230 6666
Website: www.gamblingcommission.gov.uk

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Appendix 1: Map of the Borough

Appendix 2: List of Bodies Consulted

- Leicestershire Constabulary
- Association of British Bookmakers
- British Amusement Catering Trades Association
- Bingo Association
- British Horse Racing Board
- Working Men's Club and Institute Union
- British Beer and Pub Association
- Gamcare
- Racecourse Association
- Salvation Army
- The local Citizens Advice Bureau
- Leicestershire Partnership NHS
- Leicestershire Fire Service
- Gambling Commission
- Betfred
- Gala Leisure
- Ladbrokes
- All Betting Premises within the Borough of Oadby and Wigston
- Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Environmental Health Department
- Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Planning Department
- All Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Councillors

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