

Castle Community Meeting

**Leicester Adult Education College,
2 Wellington Street, Leicester
LE1 6HL**

**On Wednesday, 5 December 2012
Starting at 6:00 pm**

The meeting will be in two parts

6:00pm – 6:15pm

Meet your Councillors and local service providers dealing with:-

- City Wardens Services
- Policing Matters
- Home Energy Team
- Bike Locks for Sale
- General Council Matters
- Other Issues

6:15pm Onwards

Get involved in your area and planning for the future. There will be presentations and discussions on:

- Home Energy Team
- Licensing and Noise control
- Policing Update
- City Wardens Update
- The Castle Ward Budget

YOUR community. YOUR voice.

Your Ward Councillors are:

**Councillor Neil Clayton
Councillor Patrick Kitterick
Councillor Lynn Senior**

Making Meetings Accessible to All

WHEELCHAIR

Meetings are held in a variety of community venues. We will only hold meetings in venues where there is suitable access for wheelchairs. If you have any concerns about accessing a venue by wheelchair, please contact the Democratic Services Officer on the details provided.

BRILLE / AUDIO TAPE – CD / TRANSLATION

If you require this agenda or a particular part of it to be translated or provided on audio tape, the Democratic Services Officer can organise this for you (production times will depend on equipment facility availability). In certain cases, subject to the agreement of the local Councillors, translation facilities can be provided at the meeting.

INDUCTION LOOPS – HEARING AT MEETINGS

We provide a loop system at every meeting for people with hearing aids. If you have a hearing aid, please speak to the Democratic Services Officer at the meeting for further assistance if you think you won't be able to hear what's being discussed. There is also a facility which can help people hear better if you don't have a hearing aid but are hard of hearing, again please speak to the Democratic Services Officer about this.

INFORMATION FAIR

PLEASE SEE BELOW FOR DETAILS OF SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES YOU CAN TALK TO AT THIS MEETING

You can raise matters of concern, give opinions and find out information which may be of use

Ward Councillors and General Information Talk to your local councillors or raise general queries	Police Issues Talk to your Local Police about issues or raise general queries.
City Wardens Service Speak to your local City Warden about local environmental issues.	Home Energy Team An Officer will be present to discuss the district heating developments
Bike Locks for Sale The Community Safety Team will be offering for sale discounted bike	

The first part of the agenda covers formal items which the Councillors need to deal with to ensure that regulations on holding meetings are kept to.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillors will elect a Chair for the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The first main item on the agenda is Declarations of Interest where Councillors have to say if there is anything on the agenda they have a personal interest in. For example if a meeting was due to discuss a budget application put forward by a community group and one of the Councillors was a member of that group, they would not be able to take part in the decision on that budget application.

Councillors are asked to declare any interest they may have in the business on the agenda, and/or indicate that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applies to them.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous Castle Community Meeting, held on 9th October 2012 have been circulated, and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

This next part of the agenda covers items where input from you on issues that affect your community is welcomed.

5. HOME ENERGY TEAM

Milo Cereghino, Home Energy Team, will deliver a presentation.

6. LICENSING AND NOISE CONTROL

Annette Bryan and Rachel Hall, from Licensing and Pollution Control, will deliver a presentation to the meeting.

7. POLICING UPDATE

An update will be given on recent Police developments and successes.

8. CITY WARDENS UPDATE

The Local City Wardens will provide an update on work within the Castle Ward.

9. BUDGET

Councillors are reminded that they will need to declare any interest they may have in budget applications, and/or indicate that Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applies to them.

The following budget applications will be considered:

Application 1

Applicant: Shama Women's Centre

Amount: £1,750.00

Proposal: Access for the Disabled.

Summary: Installation of a lift to allow users to access the second floor.

Application 2

Applicant: Nigel Ward

Amount: £1,197.00

Proposal: Three additional bollards on the extended pavement outside Avenue Primary School

Summary: The bollards are to be positioned to supplement the existing Billy and Belinda bollards outside Avenue Primary School.

The purpose is to prevent vehicles mounting the pavement and creating a hazard for pedestrians and school children, and also further restricting the carriageway width causing congestion on the road.

Application 3

Applicant: Avenue Primary School Parent Teachers Association

Amount: £500.00

Proposal: Solar panels for Avenue Primary School

Summary: Contribution towards a total cost of £17,500 for the installation fo

solar panels.

Budget Applications Not Supported

Green Light Festival – Transition Leicester - £737.00

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Help us to make improvements!

Please help us to improve Community Meetings by filling in an **Evaluation sheet** to let us know what you thought of the meeting. Thank you.

For further information contact

Angie Smith, Democratic Services Officer or Surinder Singh, Members Support Officer, Resources Department, Leicester City Council, Town Hall, Town Hall Square, LEICESTER, LE1 9BG

Phone 0116 229 8897 / 8808

Fax 0116 229 8819

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www.leicester.gov.uk/communitymeetings

Appendix A Castle Community Meeting

Your Community, Your Voice

Record of Meeting and Actions

6:00 pm, Tuesday, 9 October 2012

**Held at: St Andrew' s Church Community Centre, Gateway Street,
Leicester**

Who was there:

Councillor Neil Clayton

Councillor Patrick Kitterick

Councillor Lynn Senior

INFORMATION SHARING – ‘INFORMATION FAIR’ SESSION

The following information stands were sited in the room. Members of the public visited the stands and were given an opportunity to meet Councillors, Council staff and service representatives.

Ward Councillor and General Information Local councillors were present to discuss general queries.	Police Issues Local Police were present to discuss any concerns or general enquiries.
District Heating Officers were available to discuss the new district heating system being installed around Leicester	City Wardens Service The local City Warden was in attendance to talk about local environmental issues.
Healthwatch An officer was present to provide information.	

At the conclusion of this informal session members of the public were invited to take their seats and take part in the formal session of the meeting.

FORMAL SESSION

61. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Councillor Senior was elected as Chair for the meeting.

62. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from PS Butler, Wendy and Dennis Allum and Angela Murphy.

63. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors were asked to declare any interests they had in the business on the agenda, and/or indicate if Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 applied to him.

Councillor Senior declared an Other Disclosable Interest in Item 8 on the agenda 'Policing Update' as she was one of three representatives for Leicester City Council on the Police Authority Board, and would absent herself when discuss the funding application from Leicestershire Constabulary to be discussed under Agenda Item 10, Budget.

Councillor Senior declared an Other Disclosable Interest as her partner was an employee in Highways and Transportation at Leicester City Council.

The agenda items were heard out of order to the printed agenda.

64. WELFARE REFORM

Karen Wenlock, Revenue and Benefits Manager, delivered a presentation on the Welfare Reform changes to come, and the presentation is attached to the minutes for information, accompanied by a booklet on Advice Services and poster highlighting important government changes to housing benefit and council tax benefit. Karen highlighted the following points from the presentation:

- The Welfare Reform will save £20 billion welfare benefits bill. A further £10 billion benefits cuts are planned.
- The reforms will simplify the benefits system and there will be one point of contact for people claiming.
- The changes will not affect pensioners, at present from 62 years of age, but the age limit will increase.
- Income related benefits will be affected, and income support / incapacity benefits will be reassessed.
- Disability Living Allowance will be replaced by Personal Independence Payments (PIPs) and will no longer be lifelong. There will be two levels of assessment instead of three, and the numbers of people eligible will reduce.

- The new Universal Credit (UC) covers both in/out of work claimants, and covers Housing Benefit and Council Tax Credit.
- Mainly an online service, payments will be made directly to tenants.
- Claimants will lose some existing premiums, for example, disability and carer credits.
- Changes come into force on October 2013 for new claimants and change of circumstances.
- 25-34 year single people are no longer eligible for the one bedroom rate other than shared accommodation, which will be reduced from £91.15 to £58.00 per week. The new rate applies to new claimants and those coming up for a review. No payments will be made to people under 25 years.
- Consultation on the new scheme will complete on 30th October 2012.
- Council Tax Support will replace Council Tax Benefit from April; 2013. Pensioners will be protected, but the contribution from working age people will increase.
- Benefit Income Capping will commence from April 2013, (£500 per week for families / lone parents, £350 per week for singles), regardless of the number of children in a household.
- Any other 'benefit income' above £500 will not be paid, for example, Housing Benefit. This will affect the public and private rented sector. Council Tax Benefit is not affected.
- Exemptions will apply if people are in receipt of:
 - Disabled Living Allowance
 - War widow / widower
 - Support element of ESA (and Universal Credit when in)
 - Working Tax Credit
 - 'Grace period'
- The cap will not be applied for 39 weeks if people who have worked continuously for 12 months lost their job through no fault of their own.
- Housing Benefit restrictions or the 'bedroom tax' affects working age claimants in social housing:
 - 14% reduction for one extra bedroom
 - 25% reduction for two or more extra bedrooms
 - No allowance if a claimant has children part-time.
- There are exemptions to the Housing Benefit restriction:
 - Claimant is of pensionable age
 - Shared ownership property
 - Non-mainstream rental, e.g. caravan site
 - Temporary accommodation, e.g. statutory homeless provision
 - Supported 'exempt' accommodation.
- Local Authorities will have a Discretionary Housing Payment fund to cover some of the Welfare Reform changes, though not at a level to cover all who experienced cuts, and each case would be considered on its own merits.
- Welfare Assistance responsibility would be passed to Local Government with £178 million nationally to distribute in the form of grants, at the discretion of the Local Authority.

Karen then referred to the presentation which provided a list of organisations that could offer advice and assistance to claimants. The meeting was informed that the

Revenue and Benefits service on Leicester City Council's website had details of the changes that would take place. She added that money advice could also be obtained through the service.

A resident raised the issue that if Housing Benefit was paid directly to tenant instead landlords, people might not pay the rent but use the money elsewhere, also there were a lot of people unable to take control of their finances for example, people with mental health issues. Karen stated that ways for people to take on responsibility for their rent payments would be looked at, for example, Direct Debit payments. The Government anticipated that only 20% of claimants would not manage and would have assistance, but Karen said that the Housing Benefits and Revenue Section were concerned over the collection of rents. The meeting was informed that there would be pilot schemes at six different authorities to trial direct payments and find any pitfalls. There would also be exemptions for direct payments, for example, people in sheltered accommodation and hostels. Karen said a separate scheme would be run outside of the Universal scheme by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Councillor Kitterick asked if people had questions, or were aware of anyone needing help, it would best be sought sooner rather than later, and if information could not be found online or by phone, then where could they find help? Karen reported that there would be articles in link, but information was changing all the time, and up-to-date information on where to go for help would be sent to every household. Also, the Welfare Advice Partnership Group linked up advice available around the city. Karen reported that some agencies were funded by legal aid which would be cut in April 2013, and it was planned to hold a money advice session once a week at the City Council. Karen stated that the main problem was that until the changes in benefits came into effect people did not know they would be affected. People who would be affected by the 'bedroom tax' and banding changes had been written to, and a mailshot in January 2013 would warn people of the changes.

Members thanked Karen for the presentation.

65. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous Castle Community Meeting held on 17th July 2012 were approved as a correct record.

66. DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Jit Pandya and Sheri Paice, De Montfort University, were present to provide information on community engagement.

A resident asked why the students left waste bins in the street after collection day, and left rubbish outside as it caused litter and rats and was very stressful. It was also stated that orange bags were used by the students, but not always correctly and had the wrong sort of waste in them. Jit responded that messages were constantly sent out to students, and that warnings were given that they could be fined. Students were also given links to the city Council website and Biffa. Information was also passed on to students using social media, such as Twitter and Facebook. Jit also

stated that if it was established that issues in the area were caused by students, the University took the matter very seriously. He asked that residents find out if the property where problems were occurring was occupied by students and inform the University. Nik Krneta, City Warden, reported that the fine was now £80 per household due to changes in legislation. Nik added that if a property was full of students, each and every person was responsible. The landlord was responsible if the property was vacant.

Nik stated there was an issue with rats and litter, and there was a particular problem around Ellesmere and Windermere. Councillor Kitterick said there were problems with rats in the area and hedges had been cut back, and rat boxes put out, but the issues was exacerbated as some residents were feeding the birds, which encouraged rats into the area.

A resident raised concerns regarding the closure of Mill Lane, as it had impacted on surrounding residential streets, namely Jarrom Street and Grasmere Street. He stated that it was hard to cross the road due to the heavy traffic, and asked that a traffic survey be undertaken, as prior to the road closure the impact was 'best guess', and a follow-up survey was required. Jit responded that the issue would be taken back to De Montfort University, and if there was funding, thought the survey was a good idea. The Chair stated that even if a survey could not be undertaken, then a forum should be arranged to take on board the concerns of residents, and would provide a better form of communication for residents.

A resident asked the representatives of De Montfort University and Leicester University if they contacted residents in the areas surrounding the two universities to find out if residents had any issues, as he had never received correspondence or had any visits from University representatives. He added if the Universities had taken any steps to gain a proper insight of the area around the campuses? He asked that a meeting be arranged with local residents to discuss issues, as each year there were problems, with only one contact number at the University Estates department. He suggested that the universities only looked after the interests of students and not local residents, whose issues needed to be taken on board. A resident suggest that a student/resident charter should be created, and that the University should work in partnership with the community. Jit informed the meeting that there was a student charter outlining roles and responsibilities, and residents asked if the charters for the two universities could be brought to a future meeting. Sheri stated that 100n volunteers from the Students Union worked in the community, and that all students were encouraged to sign up and be involved in community work.

A resident asked that better publicity be sent regarding the community meeting. The Chair stated that the agenda was published on the website, and publicity was sent to libraries and community centres. She added that people could ask to be included on the mailing list for publicity and the agenda, and there was not the funding to leaflet every house.

Councillor Kitterick said he appreciated there were budget issues with communication, but leaflets would not work when trying to contact students. He suggested that residents be invited to forum meeting four times a year, at the end of an academic year and before the new year commenced. He suggested the Vice-

Chancellor, senior people and Student Union be invited to the meeting. Issue that students faced could also be included on the agendas. He added that he appreciated that students were involved with volunteering in the community, but suggested that the information about student involvement should be publicised more widely to inform residents.

The Chair thanked Jit Pandya and Sheri Paice for attending the meeting.

67. CITY LIBRARIES

Adrian Wills, Head of Libraries, was present to provide an update on City Libraries, and reported on the following:

- In the City, there were 16 Libraries, 2 Bookbuses for outer estates, and 23 Children's Centres.
- Libraries helped thousands of people of all ages each year to use computers, which people also enjoyed.
- 50 book groups round the city were supported, which brought people together.
- Hundreds of events were held, including author visits, live bands and tea dances. A major programme had just been completed called 'Everybody Reading'.
- There were volunteering opportunities for 70 people in a number of roles, for example, taking books to external people with disabilities that were unable to access a library. It was hoped the number of volunteers would increase.
- On-line services included book renewal, item requests, book reviews, an e-library of information sources including family history, to which library members could subscribe to.
- 150 new PCs had been purchased for use in libraries across the city
- There would be self-service machines in 4 libraries in 2013, including Leicester Central Library.
- Free Wi-Fi access is available in 13 of the 16 libraries, and library Wi-Fi in the Town Hall Square.
- Major children's reading events were held, including the annual summer reading scheme. The 'Our Best Book' event involved 20 schools in voting for Leicester's favourite book. The scheme would be extended to 33 schools next year.
- Support reading and educational programmes such as Everybody's Reading , Black History Month, Adult Learning week, World Book Day were held. There were also 'Taste and Try' sessions and open Health days to support the Health Agenda.
- There was reading and homework help for older children each week, and under-five sessions where children were read to.
- 70,000 new books were available in libraries per year.
- There was a 10% discount on Phoenix tickets for library card holders.
- There was greater use of Facebook and Twitter to update residents on services.
-

Adrian reported on changes to opening hours for libraries due to budget restrictions, but informed the meeting that Sunday opening was still retained at Belgrave, Hamilton and Westcotes libraries. Adrian opening time information for Castle, Knighton and Westcotes Ward libraries as follows:

Leicester Central Library

Monday –Thursday	9.30-7.00pm
Friday	9.30-5.00pm
Saturday	9.00-4.00pm

Knighton Library

Monday – Thursday	10.00-6.30pm
Friday	10.00-5.00pm
Saturday	10.00-4.00pm

Westcotes Library

Monday – Wednesday	10.00-7.00pm
Friday – Saturday	10.00-5.00pm
Sunday	12.00-4.00pm

Councillor Kitterick encouraged people to visit the new Central Library following its refurbishment, which Adrian had been involved with. Adrian stated there had been an investment made in the library, but savings would be made since moving from the building on Belvoir Street. He informed the meeting that works had restored the coloured glass ceilings which were now visible.

The Chair thanked Adrian for the update.

68. POLICING UPDATE

PC Ryan Mahoney gave an update on Policing issues and answered questions from residents, highlighting the following points:-

- A beat surgery was held on a Wednesday once a month at Walnut Street.
- Monthly duties would be advertised in the Tenants and Residents Association when open.
- Following discussions heard at the meeting, PC Mahoney stated there would be a community consultation to which a couple of questions would be added regarding Universities and Students issues in the area.
- Crime statistics in the ward for the period July to September 2012 had fallen in comparison with the same period in 2011, but robberies had increased. In the City Centre there had been eight robberies reported over two days recently. Plain clothed Police Officers had witnessed robberies occurring in front of them.
- A lot of proactive work was taking place in the Ward regarding street drinkers, beggars and anti-social behaviour.
- There had been a slight increase in criminal damage in the area, namely tagging and arson. The Police were looking at the 'SO12' tag in particular which had popped up in the City Centre and Clarendon Park, and asked residents to email photos of the tag to the Police and the location.

- With regards to anti-social behaviour, PC Mahoney stated that incidents were not caused by students alone, but by some residents also. The Police were working with Midland Heart Housing Association to issue acceptable behaviour contracts to residents, and asked that members of the public inform the Police of any issues with residents.
- Residents near to and around Grasmere Street were being consulted upon as to whether they wanted alleyway gates fitted for added security, though it would not be compulsory for residents to have them installed.

A resident asked what were the emergency services views on Mill Lane being closed? PC Mahoney responded that queuing had increased in the surrounding areas due to increased traffic, and the queue for the Leicester Royal Infirmary Car Park had also increased. He also mentioned that the emergency services had the code for the bollards at the end of the roads, which had previously been an issue.

A resident asked if the decrease in crime figures for 2012 was due to an increase in figures in 2011 due to the disorders that had taken place in the City. PC Mahoney responded that he did not think the crime figures had increased in 2011. He added that crime was defined according to National Recording Standards, and that crime mapping statistics for the city were good.

Chino Cabon from The Race Equality Centre Leicester & Leicestershire asked how low-level hate crime could be reported in the area. PC Mahoney reported that there was one reporting centre at the Tenants and Residents Association, and a beat office at the Leicester Royal Infirmary near to Accident and Emergency entrance, or crime could be reported on (0116) 2222222.

Councillor Senior reported that information would be brought to the next meeting in respect of specific hate crime reporting centres, and how people could report incidents.

The Chair thanked PC Mahoney for his update.

69. CITY WARDENS UPDATE

Nik Krneta gave an update on issues dealt with in Castle Ward, and questions from residents were answered:

- The previous two weeks had seen clubs leafleting along Mill Lane with no licences. 30 Fixed Penalty Notices had been issued, and over 2,000 leaflets confiscated. One promoter was being taken to court.
- Bins left on streets would result in an £80FPN being issued to households, and each person in the household would be responsible for payment. If the penalty was not paid, each person in the household would be taken to court, and the fine would rise to £500, to be paid within 28 days. Tower Street, Newton Street and Lower Hastings Street had been targeted, with Clarendon Park area to follow. Nick stated that bins should be taken in by the next day after collection day at the latest, and that information packs would be put through doors to remind people. Nik reported that the Council had worked closely with Leicestershire Fire and

Rescue Service, as gas pipes were situated on the front of terraced houses and could have serious implications with regards to bin fires.

- Between 30th October and 3 November, Leicester City Council would work with the Tenants and Residents Association in a clean-up operation in the area.
- Information would be brought to the next meeting on Fixed Penalty Notices.

The City Warden was thanked for his update.

70. BUDGET

Budget Items for consideration

Application 1 – Oxjam – Oxjam Leicester Takeover (multi-venue music festival in aid of Oxfam)

The application was for £820.00 towards the event. The event was to be held in Leicester's Cultural Quarter using venues in the area and one outdoor stage, with all proceeds going to Oxfam.

RECOMMENDED:

That the application not be supported.

Members stated they had quite a few applications for funding for events that would take place in the City Centre, but benefitted residents city-wide, and were not specific to Castle Ward residents.

Matters Approved Under the Fast Track Procedure

The following budget request was included on the agenda for formally noting as it had been agreed by Councillors in between meetings to enable the project to take place.

- a) Notice Boards around inner city ball courts - £97.98. Councillor Kitterick informed the meeting that he had requested at the JAG that a notice not to play ball games on the court after a certain time at night be erected at the ball court.

The Chair, Councillor Senior, left the meeting at this point prior to discussions around the following budget application, as she was a member of the Police Authority. The Chair was passed to Councillor Clayton.

- b) Alleygate, St Leonards Road - £480

RESOLVED:

that the previously agreed funding applications be noted.

Councillor Senior returned to the meeting and resumed position as Chair.

71. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (i) A resident asked if there was access to Section 106 funding money from developments that had taken place in the area. The Chair stated that information would be sought and brought back to a future meeting. The meeting was also informed that Section 106 monies was separate to Community Meeting monies.
- (ii) Residents asked that a road traffic survey be undertaken to observe the shift of traffic in the area, due to the closure of Mill Lane. Councillor Kitterick observed that problems occurred at specific times, and that he would request a traffic survey of the area as soon as possible. Councillor Kitterick also informed the meeting that there was a commitment from the three Castle Ward Members to work to a solution. The meeting was informed that Traffic Officers from Leicester City Council would be invited to the next meeting. Councillor Senior stated that she might have to absent herself from the meeting should her partner be one of the present officers at the meeting when the item was under discussion.

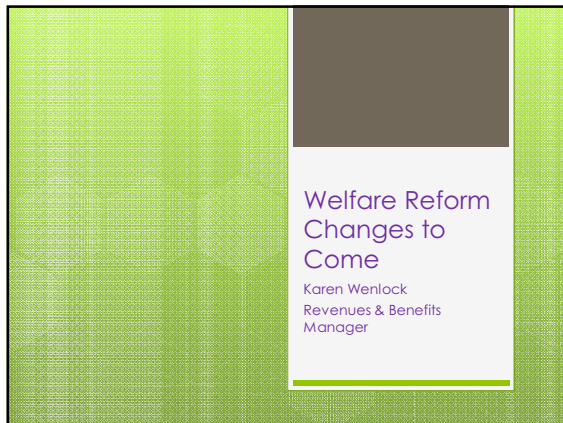
72. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 6th December 2012.

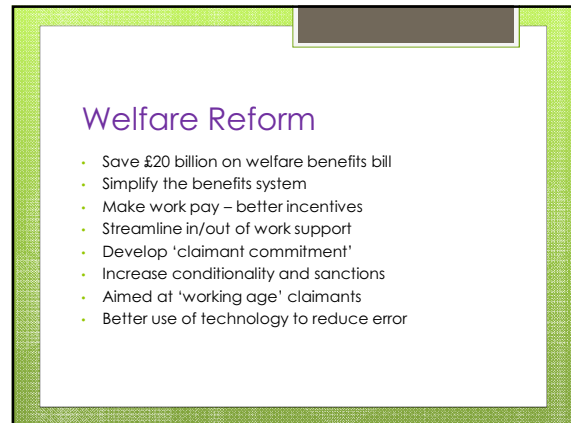
73. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.41pm.

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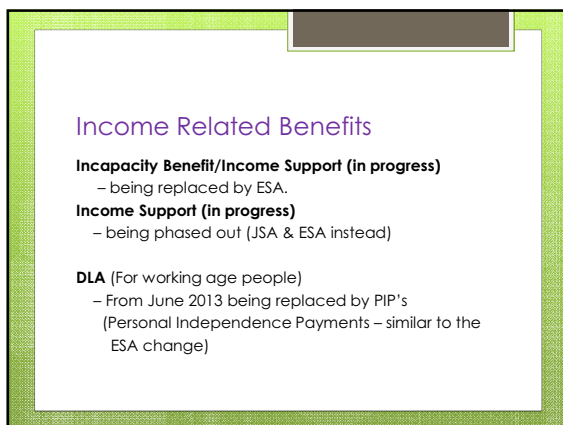


**Welfare Reform
Changes to
Come**
Karen Wenlock
Revenues & Benefits
Manager



Welfare Reform

- Save £20 billion on welfare benefits bill
- Simplify the benefits system
- Make work pay – better incentives
- Streamline in/out of work support
- Develop 'claimant commitment'
- Increase conditionality and sanctions
- Aimed at 'working age' claimants
- Better use of technology to reduce error

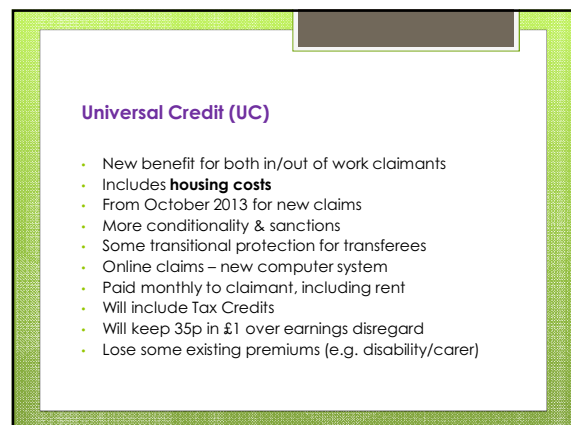


Income Related Benefits

Incapacity Benefit/Income Support (in progress)
– being replaced by ESA.

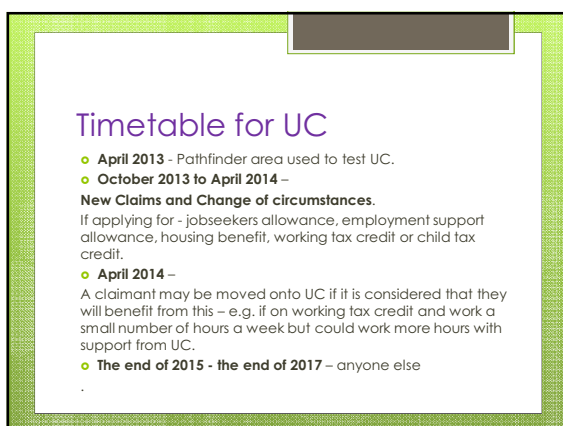
Income Support (in progress)
– being phased out (JSA & ESA instead)

DLA (For working age people)
– From June 2013 being replaced by PIP's
(Personal Independence Payments – similar to the
ESA change)



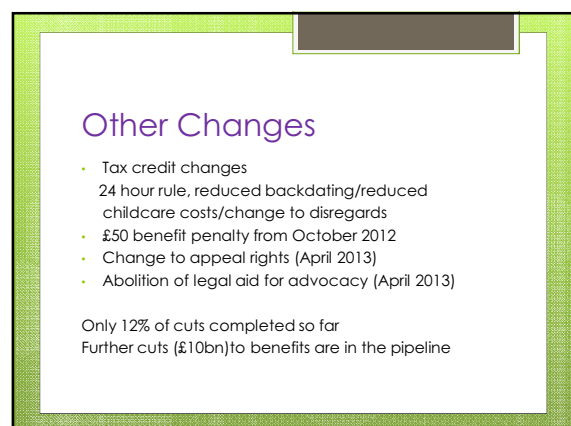
Universal Credit (UC)

- New benefit for both in/out of work claimants
- Includes **housing costs**
- From October 2013 for new claims
- More conditionality & sanctions
- Some transitional protection for transferees
- Online claims – new computer system
- Paid monthly to claimant, including rent
- Will include Tax Credits
- Will keep 35p in £1 over earnings disregard
- Lose some existing premiums (e.g. disability/carer)



Timetable for UC

- **April 2013** - Pathfinder area used to test UC.
- **October 2013 to April 2014** –
New Claims and Change of circumstances.
If applying for - jobseekers allowance, employment support allowance, housing benefit, working tax credit or child tax credit.
- **April 2014** –
A claimant may be moved onto UC if it is considered that they will benefit from this – e.g. if on working tax credit and work a small number of hours a week but could work more hours with support from UC.
- **The end of 2015 - the end of 2017** – anyone else



Other Changes

- Tax credit changes
24 hour rule, reduced backdating/reduced childcare costs/change to disregards
- £50 benefit penalty from October 2012
- Change to appeal rights (April 2013)
- Abolition of legal aid for advocacy (April 2013)

Only 12% of cuts completed so far
Further cuts (£10bn) to benefits are in the pipeline

Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) from January 2012

Affects single people aged between 25 – 34 living in property, other than shared accommodation

- Exemptions – MAPPA level 2, Severe Disability Premium, Hostel resident 3 months

Example

1 bed rate before the change £ 91.15 pwk
After change will get SAR £ 58.00 pwk
Loss £ 33.15 pwk

**Additional change from April 2012 –
LHA Rate Frozen will now be an annual increase**

CHANGES TO COME

- Council Tax Support
- Benefit capping
- Reductions to HB for social housing (The Bedroom Tax)
- Discretionary Housing Payments
- Welfare Assistance

Council Tax Support

Council Tax Benefit will be abolished from April 2013

- Replaced with Council Tax Support
- 10% reduction (Loss of at least £3m for Leicester)
- Pensioners will be protected
- Biggest impact felt in working age population

Likely that most households will pay around £200 per year towards Council tax bill

Consultation is in progress – have your say until 30th October 2012

Benefit Income Capping

April 2013

- Benefit income for working age benefit claimants will be restricted
- £500 pwk week for families/ lone parents
- £350 pwk for singles.
- Any 'benefit income' above £500 will not be paid.
- Housing benefit is included in this but **NOT Council Tax Benefit** which will not be paid in the same way from April 2013.

Impact – The change will affect mainly families with 4+ children

Benefit Income Capping continued

The DWP are providing LA's with the details of those claimants they think will be affected by this cap.

These claimants are being sent a letter from the DWP stating they are likely to be affected by the change. Direct.Gov web site have a telephone Helpline & online available for people to check if they will be affected by these changes:-

Helpline number 0845 6057044/ textphone 0845 6088551

On line:- www.direct.gov.uk/benefitcap.

The LA will also be contacting these customers before the change occurs.

Benefit Income Capping continued

Exemptions will apply if the claimant is in receipt of

- Disabled Living Allowance/PIP/AA,
- War widow/widower,
- Support element of ESA (& UC when in) and
- Working Tax Credit.
- "Grace Period"

Cap not applied for 39 weeks for people who have worked continuously for previous 12 months and have lost their job through no fault of their own.

HB Restriction – April 2013

This is being referred to as **The Bedroom Tax**

- Working Age customers in **social housing**
(Housing Association and Local Authority Tenancies)

14% reduction for 1 extra bedroom*
25% reduction for 2 or more extra

This % amount is a reduction from the eligible rent then the HB award is calculated on the lower amount.

*The room allowances are in line with LHA so it does not always mean there is a spare bedroom as some young children are required to share.

Room Allowance

One bedroom for each of the following:

- a couple
- a person who is not a child (aged 16 and over)
- two children of the same sex
- two children who are under 10
- any other child,
(other than a foster child or child whose main home is elsewhere).
- a carer (or group of carers) providing overnight care

The Bedroom Tax - Exemptions

They are:-

- Where the claimant is of a qualifying pension age)
- The property is shared ownership
- Rental is non-mainstream e.g. mooring charges, caravan site rent
- Temporary Accommodation. (The claimant was placed in the accommodation as homeless)
- Supported "Exempt" accommodation

Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP's) - Limited Budget to help meet housing costs

- Under the changes LA's are required to consider using the DHP pot to cover some of the Welfare reform changes
- The bedroom tax could affect entitlement to foster carers and claimants where their accommodation has had significant alterations carried out due to their disabilities.

In these circumstances DHP payment will need to be considered to help make up some/all of the shortfall – again each case will be assessed on its own merits.

Welfare Assistance 2013

- **Community Care grants and other Crisis loans will be abolished, a new award will be paid out by Local Authorities, instead of the DWP.**
- Will be a grant
- Administered at the discretion of the LA
- Nationally £178m to distribute
- It will be local schemes but funding will not be ring-fenced
- LA's will use existing powers to administer payments

Currently the R&B Service are leading the project to implement this change.

What help is available?

- Revenues & Benefits (R&B) Service
Telephone 0116 252 7006
On Line
www.leicester.gov.uk/housingbenefits
In person
Wellington House, 22-32 Wellington Street
- Money Advice Service ("MA" appointments available via R&B service, telephone number as above)

What help is available?

- Customer Service Centres
- Housing Options*
 - *LCC is reviewing the homelessness policy
 - *LCC is reviewing the allocations policy
- Welfare Rights Service

ADVICE SERVICES

in Leicester



What kind of advice do you need?

W Welfare benefits

- I need help to claim benefits and tax credits
- I need advice about how to challenge a benefits decision

H Housing and Homelessness

- I'm worried about losing my home
- What can I do if I become homeless?

CC Community Care

- I need advice about how to apply for equipment and services so that I can live independently
- I think my community care assessment is wrong

D Debt

- I have taken out a loan and I can't afford the repayments
- I can't pay my bills
- My benefits have been cut

E Employment

- I'm having problems at work
- I've lost my job

I Immigration

- I need advice about my right to remain in the UK
- I need help with my application for British Citizenship
- I need to claim benefits

F Family

- I have separated from my partner and I want to see my children
- I'm thinking of getting divorced

CP Consumer problems

- I'm not happy with something I bought
- I want to change my mobile phone contractor/gas/ electricity provider

Services available to everyone in Leicester

Community Legal Advice Centre (CLAC) **W, H, CC, D, E, F, CP**

Tel 0845 456 0074 or (0116)242 6720

Drop in sessions: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday:

9.00am – 4.30pm; Wednesday 9.00am – 2pm.

Outreach sessions at community venues: appointments available

60 Charles Street, 3rd Floor, Leicester LE1 1FB

E-mail: leicester@communitylegaladvice.org.uk

Website: www.clac.leicester.gov.uk/leicester/

Welfare Rights Service, Leicester City Council **W**

Tel (0116) 256 8211

Advice line: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 1.00pm – 4.00pm

Appointments available in Children's Centres

E-mail: welfare.rights@leicester.gov.uk

Website: www.leicester.gov.uk/council-services/welfare-rights/

Community Advice and Law Service **D, W, H, E**

Tel (0116) 242 1120

Appointments available at Epic House and at outreach sessions at community venues

County Court desk 10.00am – 1.00pm, 2.00pm - 4.00pm daily

1st Floor, Epic House, Charles Street, Leicester LE1 3SH

E-mail: enquiries@cals.uk.net

Website: www.cals.uk.net

Shelter Housing Aid and Research Project (SHARP) **W, H**

Tel (0116) 254 6064

Emergency drop in and advice service: Monday – Thursday

10.00am – 4.00pm; Friday 10.00am – 3.30pm

13 Welford Road, Leicester LE2 7AD

Website: www.leicestershelter.org.uk/

Citizens' Advice Bureau H, W, F, I, E, CP

Tel (0116) 217 1852

4th Floor, Apex House, 74-76 Charles Street, Leicester LE1 1FB

Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Revenue and Benefits, Leicester City Council W, H, D

Advice for Council Tax, business rates, housing and Council Tax benefit.

Tel (0116) 252 7006 (Housing benefits);

(0116) 252 7005 (Council Tax)

Advice line: Monday to Friday: 8.00am – 6.00pm

Drop in sessions: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: 8.30am - 5.00pm;

Wednesday: 9.30am - 5.00pm; Friday: 8.30am – 4.30pm

Wellington House, 22-32 Wellington Street, Leicester LE1 6HL

Website: www.leicester.gov.uk/housingbenefits

Housing Options, Leicester City Council H, D

Advice on housing and homelessness

Tel (0116) 252 7008

Advice line: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 9.00am – 5.00pm;

Tuesday 1.00pm – 5.00pm; Friday 9.00am – 4.30pm

Drop in sessions at Welford Place: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 9.00am – 4.00pm; Tuesday 1.00pm – 4.00pm

Phoenix House, 1 King Street, Leicester LE1 6RN

Website: www.leicester.gov.uk/applying-for-council-housing/

Advice Services for particular groups or communities

Mosaic: shaping disability services W, CC

Who can we help? Disabled people and carers

Tel (0116) 231 8720

Advice line: Monday – Thursday 9.00am – 5.00pm;

Friday 9.00am – 4.30pm

2 Oak Spinney Park, Ratby Lane, Leicester LE3 3AW

Website: www.mosaic1898.co.uk

Age UK W, CC

Who can we help? People over 50 years of age

Tel (0116) 299 2233

Advice line: Monday – Thursday 1.30pm – 4.30pm;

Friday 1.30pm – 4.00pm

Clarence House, Humberstone Gate, Leicester LE1 3PJ

Website: www.ageukleics.org.uk

Highfields Centre CC, D, F, H, I, W

Who can we help? Primarily Highfields and St Matthews residents

Tel (0116) 253 1053

Drop in sessions: Monday 9.30am – 12 noon;

Tuesday 9.30am – 12.30pm; Wednesday 4.00pm – 6.30pm;

Thursday 9.30am – 12.30pm

96 Melbourne Road, Leicester LE2 0DS

Website: www.highfieldscentre.ac.uk

Saffron Resource Centre W, H, D

Who can we help? Freeman, Eyres Monsell and Aylestone residents

Tel (0116) 283 7212

Appointments available: Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm

423 Saffron Lane, Leicester LE2 6SB

E-mail: info@srcentre.org.uk

Website: www.srcentre.org.uk/

The Race Equality Centre W, H, I

Who can we help? Refugees

Tel (0116) 299 9807 or (0116) 299 9800

Drop in sessions: Monday – Friday 10.00am – 4.00pm

3rd Floor, Epic House, Lower Hill Street, Leicester LE1 3SH

Website: www.theraceequalitycentre.org.uk/

Somali Development Services W, D, H

Who can we help? Refugees and other migrants

Tel (0116) 285 5888

Drop in sessions: Monday – Friday 9.00am – 2.00pm

39 Abingdon Road, Leicester LE2 1HA

Website: www.sds-ltd.org

Welfare Rights (Mental Health) Leicester Partnership Trust W

Who can we help? Telephone advice for people with mental health conditions and their carers

Tel (0116) 225 6222

Advice line: Tuesday – Friday 9.30am – 12.30pm

Brandon Mental Health Unit, Leicester General Hospital,

Gwendolen Road, Leicester LE5 4PW

Website: www.lampdirect.org.uk

The Income Management Team, Leicester City Council D, W

Who can we help? Council tenants only

Tel (0116) 252 7007- ask for Income Management Team

Who can they help? Leicester City Council tenants Advice line:

Monday - Friday, 9.00am - 5.00pm

No public address but appointments can be arranged

Legal Aid Private Solicitors in Leicester

The following list includes private solicitors who have a contract with the Legal Services Commission.

Free advice is only available for people who are eligible for legal aid. To see if you qualify for legal aid the link below is to a legal aid calculator: www.legalaidcalculator.justice.gov.uk/calculators/

Immigration Advice I

- **Midland Immigration Services**
255 Melton Road, Leicester LE4 7AN
Tel. 0800 0304 998 or (0116) 266 9697
Website: www.misuk.org/contactus.html
- **Thaliwal Bridge Solicitors**
298 Welford Road, Leicester LE2 6EG
Tel. (0116) 274 5252
Website: www.thaliwalbridge.co.uk/

Family Advice F

- **The Smith Partnership**
14 York Road, Leicester LE1 5TS
Tel. (0116) 247 2000
Website: www.smithpartnership.co.uk
- **Bray and Bray**
36-42 Humberstone Road, Leicester LE5 0AE.
Tel. (0116) 254 8871
Website: www.braybray.co.uk
- **Scutt Beaumont**
102 New Walk, Leicester LE1 7EA
Tel. (0116) 254 4200
Website: www.sbs-solicitors.co.uk

- **Emery Johnson Solicitors**
3 & 5 Welford Road, Leicester LE2 7AD
Tel. (0116) 255 4855
[Website: www.emeryjohnson.com](http://www.emeryjohnson.com)
- **Johar and Company**
66 London Road, Leicester LE2 0QD
Tel. (0116) 254 3345
[Website: www.johars.com](http://www.johars.com)
- **Nelsons**
Provincial House, 37 New Walk, Leicester LE1 6TU
Tel. (0116) 222 6666
[Website: www.nelsonslaw.co.uk](http://www.nelsonslaw.co.uk)
- **Dodds Solicitors**
32 Friar Lane, Leicester LE1 5RA
Tel. (0116) 253 8585 or (0116) 262 8596
[Website: www.dodds-solicitors.co.uk](http://www.dodds-solicitors.co.uk)
- **Jones and Duffin**
142 Narborough Road, Leicester LE3 0BT
Tel. (0116) 222 1555
[Website: www.jonesduffin.co.uk](http://www.jonesduffin.co.uk)
- **Cartwright King**
31 Horsefair Street, Leicester LE1 5BU
Tel. (0116) 253 9222
[Website: www.cartwrightking.co.uk](http://www.cartwrightking.co.uk)

Key Website Addresses for Information on Welfare Law Advice

Community Legal Advice Direct

www.legaladviserfinder.justice.gov.uk

Tel. 0845 345 4345

National Debt Line

www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

Tel. 0808 808 4000

Citizens Advice Consumer Service

www.oft.gov.uk/consumer

Tel. 0845 4040 505

Benefits Advice

www.turn2us.org.uk

Tel. 0808 802 2000

ACAS (advice and guidance)

www.acas.gov.uk

Tel. 0845 7474 747

Shelter Housing Advice Line

www.shelter.org.uk

Tel. 0808 800 4444

How much do these telephone calls cost?

0800 or 0808 Freephone Numbers

A number of organisations use Freephone numbers including some helplines and charities such as those above.

Calls are normally free of charge from landlines but charges may apply from mobile phones. However, the operator must make an announcement before the call is connected telling the caller that they will be charged (the announcement does not state the exact charge). Calls from mobiles typically cost up to 40p per minute.

0845 Numbers

Calls are typically charged at between 1p and 11.5p per minute depending on the time of day for landline customers. Calls from mobile phones generally cost between 20p and 41p per minute.

This booklet has been prepared in partnership by the Social Welfare Advice Forum and Leicester City Council.

Its aim is to provide people in Leicester with information about the free social welfare advice services available in the city.

Contact with most services has to be made by telephone. Only a few services offer drop in sessions where no appointments are necessary.

The information in the booklet gives the key areas of advice that services provide. Many also may have specialist areas of expertise.

Most services provide free advice. However some can only be provided free with legal aid and this is subject to an eligibility test.

The information in this booklet will change after April 2013.

For further assistance with this booklet please call Customer Services at Leicester City Council on (0116) 252 7000.

Important government changes to housing benefit and council tax benefit.

Who will be affected, how and when?

If you or your household	The change is	The date of the change	The effect of the change
are aged 25–35 single and live on your own	You will now receive the lowest rate of housing benefit which is the shared accommodation rate	from January 2012	Housing benefit payments will reduce
are working age council tax payers and receive council tax benefit	Council tax benefit will be replaced by more local support for council tax	From April 2013 Details of Leicester's scheme are currently being considered	Protection for some but many people who currently receive council tax benefit will have to start paying towards council tax
are working age and receiving housing benefit while renting a housing association or council property (social housing)	Reduced housing benefit payments to those who live in houses with more bedrooms than they need	From April 2013	housing benefit will be reduced by: 14% for 1 extra bedroom 25% for 2 or more extra bedrooms. There will be some exemptions
receive Local Housing Allowance (LHA)	LHA rates frozen from April 2012 and then increased in line with (<i>Consumer Price Index</i>)	From April 2013	the current connection with LHA rates and local rents charged will be lost
are working age and in receipt of benefits	Benefit rates are capped for working age households at £500 a week for a family £350 a week for people living by themselves	From April 2013	Larger families will lose more money when capping rules start There are some exemptions for example those in receipt of working tax credit some benefits are not included in the cap calculation
are working age people in receipt of benefits	The Department of Work and Pensions will administer a single benefit called Universal Credit	From Oct 2013 -2017	It will replace many benefits including housing benefit Some benefits are not included in Universal Credit

For more information on any of the above changes contact Revenues and Benefits

Telephone: **0116 252 7006**

Web: **leicester.gov.uk/housingbenefits**

Or visit: **direct.gov.uk**



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