



Leicester
City Council

**MEETING OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY
COMMISSION**

DATE: THURSDAY, 28 JANUARY 2021
TIME: 5:30 pm
PLACE: Virtual Meeting Via Zoom

Members of the Committee

Councillor Thalukdar (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Ali, Aqbany, Govind, Joshi and Solanki
One unallocated Labour group place
One unallocated non group place

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

Anita Patel (Scrutiny Policy Officer)

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If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact: **Aqil Sarang, Democratic Support Officer on 0116 454 5591**. Alternatively, email Aqil.Sarang@leicester.gov.uk, or call in at City Hall.

For Press Enquiries - please phone the **Communications Unit on 0116 454 4151**.

PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

LIVE STREAM OF MEETING

The Live Stream of the meeting will be available on the link below:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=leicester+democracy

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are asked to declare any interests they may have in the business to be discussed.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Appendix A

The minutes of the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission held on 26 November 2020 are attached and Members are asked to confirm them as a correct record.

4. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer to report on the receipt of any petitions submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.

5. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer to report on the receipt of any questions, representations and statements of case submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.

6. COVID 19 RECOVERY PLANS 2021

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Environmental Services and the Director of Finance will provide a verbal update to the commission.

Members are requested to receive the update and pass comments to the Director of Neighbourhoods and Environmental Services and the Director of Finance.

7. COUNCIL DRAFT ANNUAL BUDGET REPORTS - REVENUE AND CAPITAL 2021/2022 **Appendix B**

The Director of Finance submits a report setting out the City Mayor's draft general fund budget and capital programme for 2021/22.

The Commission is recommended to pass any comments to the Overview Select Committee as part of its consideration of the reports before they are presented to the Council meeting in February.

8. LIBRARIES BOOK BUS REPLACEMENT CONSULTATION **Appendix C**

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Environmental Services submits a presentation on the Libraries Book Bus Replacement Consultation.

Members of the Commission are requested to note the presentation and pass any comments to the Director of Neighbourhoods and Environmental Services.

9. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ABUSE SERVICES - LEICESTER, LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND **Appendix D**

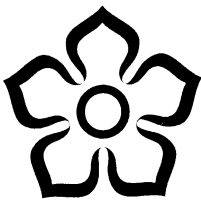
The Director of Neighbourhoods and Environmental Services submits a report and presentation on the Procurement of Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Services for Leicester.

Members of the Commission are recommended to consider the proposed procurement of domestic and sexual violence and abuse services for Leicester and pass comments to the Director of Neighbourhoods and Environmental Services.

10. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME **Appendix E**

The current work programme for the Commission is attached. The Commission is asked to consider this and make comments and/or amendments as it considers necessary.

11. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

Appendix A

Minutes of the Meeting of the
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2020 at 4:00 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Thalukdar (Chair)

In Attendance:

Councillor Ali
Councillor Joshi

Councillor Govind
Councillor Solanki

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69. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Aqbany, the Assistant City Mayor for Neighbourhood Services Councillor Master and the Director of Finance.

70. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest received.

71. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Agreed:

The minutes of the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission held on Thursday 28 September 2020 are confirmed as a correct record.

72. PETITIONS

The monitoring Officer reported the no petitions had been received.

73. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that no questions, representations or

statements of case had been received.

74. DRAFT LEICESTER LOCAL PLAN (2020-2036) PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Head of Planning and Development delivered a presentation informing the Commission on the Draft Local Plan (2020-2036) Public Consultation.

It was noted that the final plan would be delivered in Autumn 2021 and the progress on the final plan will start in 2022.

As part of the discussion it was noted that areas that have been put forward as proposals out for consultation and are not yet confirmed. The next stage would be to consider if the proposed sites were suitable for development.

It was noted that public transport links would be incorporate all proposed development sites and the strategy would also include both walking and cycling routes.

It was noted that the Council did not own the General Hospital site, but the NHS would release land for potential developments at the site.

Members of the Commission thanked Officers for the presentation and raised their concerns with the rise in population there would be a rise in public amenities. It was suggested that these should be incorporated within the plans to minimise the impacts later.

Members raised their concerns with what the local authority were doing to protect old green spaces. Officers noted that not all green spaces were proposed for development and that, new development sites would deliver good quality open spaces on site.

It was suggested that the policy on use classes would need to be considered as the majority of use classes were being categorised as one. This would help protect certain areas around the city.

It was recognised that places of worship for different faith groups in the city would still be needed across the city with the rise in population. It was suggested that appropriate locations such as employment areas would be considered. This would have the least impact on residential areas and highways.

The Chair raised his concerns with A5 dwellings. It was suggested that the Council should consider restrictions on certain locations around the city to minimise on concentration and protect other public amenities. Officers noted that this was an area that was being considered and work was in the process of its feasibility.

AGREED:

Members of the Commission recommended that that Head of Planning and Development be requested to:

- 1) Note the Comments made by Commission Members,
- 2) That new developments accommodate public amenities to meet the needs of a growing population through engagement with local Councillors,
- 3) That policies protect local areas across the city,
- 4) That green and open spaces are protected to promote well-being and protect wildlife,
- 5) Include guides on food hubs and their impacts on local areas,
- 6) And that, all future developments are energy efficient with green energy and green transport.

75. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no other items of urgent business the meeting closed at 05:15pm

Draft Capital Programme 2021/22

Decision to be taken by: Council

Date of meeting: 17th February 2021

Lead director: Alison Greenhill, Director of Finance

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Amy Oliver
- Author contact details: amy.oliver@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1.0

1. Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask the Council to approve a capital programme for 2021/22.
- 1.2 Capital expenditure is incurred on works of lasting benefit and is principally paid for by grant, tenants' rents, and the proceeds of asset sales (capital receipts). Money can also be borrowed for capital purposes, but the scope for this is limited as borrowing affects the revenue budget.
- 1.3 Traditionally, the Council has prepared a multi-year capital programme but for 2020/21 we set a one year programme due to the uncertainty over future resources. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic we are continuing to see uncertainty over future resources as well as significant slippage on our current programme. The uncertainty over future resources is detailed in the General Fund Budget Report 2021/22 (also on the agenda). We are therefore presenting another one year programme, which is essentially a skeleton programme. Schemes already approved and in the current programme for 2020/21 will continue to form part of the programme: in practice, much of our capital spending in 2021/22 will be catching up work we were unable to do because of COVID-19 restrictions.
- 1.4 The proposed programme set out in this report for the "General Fund" element of the capital programme will cost £20m. In addition to this, the HRA capital programme (which is elsewhere on the agenda) includes works estimated at £58m, £40m of which relates to the affordable homes programme.
- 1.5 The table below summarises the proposed spending for capital projects starting in 2021/22, as described in this report:-

	<u>£m</u>
<u>Proposed Programme</u>	
People & Neighbourhoods	4.4
Highways, Transport & Infrastructure	5.2
Tourism & Culture	1.7
Corporate	7.3
Policy Provisions	1.0
Total New Schemes	19.6

Funding

Monies ringfenced to Schemes	4.7
Unringfenced Resources	<u>14.9</u>
Total Resources	19.6

- 1.6 The table below presents the total spend on General Fund and Housing Revenue Account schemes:

	<u>£m</u>
General Fund	19.6
Housing Revenue Account	<u>57.8</u>
Total	<u><u>77.4</u></u>

- 1.7 In addition to the above, the current programme is still being delivered and therefore a number of significant schemes will be carried forward into future years.

- 1.8 The Council's total capital expenditure now forecast for 2021/22 and beyond is expected to be over £200m, including the HRA.

- 1.9 The Council continues to bid for significant sums from government initiatives and has been extremely successful during 2020/21. Examples include:

- Receiving £33m from the Transforming Cities Fund to expand our Connecting Leicester scheme that is working to achieve bus, walking and cycling improvements.
- £5.8m added to our highways maintenance programme upon receiving a number of additional grants.

- 1.10 The capital programme is split into two parts:-

- (a) **"Immediate starts"**, being schemes which directors have authority to commence once the council has approved the programme. These are fully described in this report;
- (b) **"Policy provisions"**, where the purpose of the funding is described but money will not be released until specific spending proposals have been approved by the Executive.

- 1.11 Immediate starts have been split into three categories:-

- (a) **Projects** – these are discrete, individual schemes such as a road scheme or a new building. These schemes will be monitored with reference to physical delivery rather than an annual profile of spending. (We will, of course, still want to make sure that the overall budget is not going to be exceeded);
- (b) **Work Programmes** – these will consist of minor works or similar schemes where there is an allocation of money to be spent in a particular year;

- (c) **Provisions** – these are sums of money set aside in case they are needed, but where low spend is a favourable outcome rather than indicative of a problem.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Council is asked to:-

- (a) Approve the capital programme described in this report and summarised at Appendices Two to Four, subject to any amendments proposed by the City Mayor;
- (b) For those schemes designated immediate starts, delegate authority to the lead director to commit expenditure, subject to the normal requirements of contract procedure rules and finance procedure rules;
- (c) Delegate authority to the City Mayor to determine a plan of spending for each policy provision, and to commit expenditure up to the maximum available;
- (d) For the purposes of finance procedure rules:
- Determine that service resources shall consist of service revenue contributions; HRA revenue contributions; and government grants/third party contributions ringfenced for specific purposes (but see below for LLEP investment programmes);
 - Designate the operational estate capital maintenance programme, highways maintenance programme and transport improvement programme as programme areas, within which the director can reallocate resources to meet operational requirements.
- (e) As in previous years, delegate to the City Mayor:
- Authority to increase any scheme in the programme, or add a new scheme to the programme, subject to a maximum of £10m corporate resources in each instance;
 - Authority to reduce or delete any capital programme provision, subject to a maximum of 20% of scheme value for “immediate starts”; and
 - Authority to transfer any “policy provision” to the “immediate starts” category.
- (f) In respect of Government investment programmes for which the Council receives grant as the accountable body to the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP):-
- Delegate to the City Mayor approval to accept Government offers of funding, and to add this to the capital programme;
 - Delegate to the Strategic Director, City Development and

Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Director of Finance, authority to allocate the funding to individual projects (in effect, implementing decisions of the LLEP);

- Agree that City Council schemes funded by the programme can only commence after the City Mayor has given approval;
- Delegate to the Director of Finance authority to reallocate programme funding between projects, if permissible, to ensure the programme as a whole can be delivered; and
- Note that City Council contributions to projects will follow the normal rules described above (i.e. nothing in this paragraph (f) permits the City Mayor to supplement the programme with City Council resources outside of normal rules).

(g) Delegate to directors, in consultation with the relevant deputy/assistant mayor, authority to incur expenditure in respect of policy provisions on design and other professional fees and preparatory studies, but not any other type of expenditure;

(h) Approve the capital strategy at Appendix 5.

3. Background and options with supporting evidence

Key Policy Issues

3.1 In preparing the 2021/22 capital programme, we have focused on catching up on delays in the current programme, and have restricted the new programme to urgent works and annual programmes.

3.2 The resulting capital programme is primarily focussed around some key priorities of the Council. The themes are:

- People & Neighbourhoods
- Highways, Transport & Infrastructure
- Tourism & Culture

3.3 The capital programme for 2021/21 is a one year programme because of the continued uncertainty around our budgets, and the fact that significant effort will be required to catch up unavoidable slippage in the 2020/21 programme. Nonetheless, it complements the existing programme and explicitly aims to support the City Mayor's delivery plan.

3.4 It is important to note that the council's commitment to tackling the climate emergency is most obviously but not exclusively addressed within the transport capital programme. This is part of the Connecting Leicester Programme.

3.5 However, addressing the energy and bio diversity requirements of all our capital projects is central to the entire capital programme. Recent years' capital projects have included energy saving and generating elements across the corporate estate, as well as a raft of energy efficiency measures in our schools and on our housing estates. The Council is currently working to obtain further government grant

funding to expand such schemes. The programme also includes £0.5m to support a tree programme.

- 3.6 Similarly, our commitment to invest in the whole city cuts right across our capital programme. The housing, neighbourhoods and transport capital investment programmes represent the largest components of this and likely future capital programmes. These capital investment strands will benefit the entire city from our outer estates to the city centre.

Resources

- 3.7 Resources available to the programme consist primarily of Government grant and capital receipts (the HRA programme is also supported by tenants' rent monies). Most grant is unringfenced, and the Council can spend it on any purpose it sees fit.
- 3.8 Appendix One presents the unringfenced resources available to fund the proposed programme, which total some £15m. The key funding sources are detailed below.
- (a) £5.8m of general capital receipts and £0.7m of Right to Buy Receipts;
 - (b) £8.3m of unringfenced grant funding;
 - (c) £1.9m from a review of policy provisions in the 2021/22 programme.
- 3.9 The Council has a policy of not committing capital receipts until they are received. This increases the resilience of the capital programme at a time when revenue budgets continue to be under pressure. Since setting the 20/21 capital programme, decisions have been taken to spend £1.7m of receipts received subsequently. £5.8m is now available for 21/22 based on receipts received or due at the time of writing. Subsequent receipts will be available to fund the 2022/23 programme.
- 3.10 The exception to not committing receipts in advance is the expected receipts from the sale of council housing. Where tenants exercise their "Right to Buy" the RTB receipts are layered, with different layers being available for different purposes. A sum of £0.7m will be available for general purposes: this is predictable. Further tranches are available to us but must be used for new affordable housing or returned to the government.
- 3.11 During the year the Council has reviewed the current policy provisions. As part of this, £1.9m of have been identified as no long being required from the Commercial Property Acquisitions policy provision. This will be released as part of this report to fund the 21/22 programme.
- 3.12 In addition, £1.8m has been ringfenced for potential additional costs on current schemes associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Separate decisions will be required to add any of the £1.8m to the capital programme on individual schemes.
- 3.13 For some schemes the amount of unringfenced resources required is less than the gross cost of the scheme. This because resources are ringfenced directly to

individual schemes. Ringfenced resources are shown throughout Appendix Two and include the following:

- (a) Disabled Facilities Grant – an estimated £1.5m will be received from the Government for the year to support the making of grants to householders in the private sector requiring disabled adaptations;
- (b) Borrowing. Because borrowing has an impact on the revenue budget, it is only used for reasons detailed in Capital Strategy at Appendix 5 of this report.

3.14 Finance Procedure Rules enable directors to make limited changes to the programme after it has been approved. For these purposes, the Council has split resources into corporate and service resources. These are similar to, but not quite the same as, ringfenced and unringfenced resources. Whilst all unringfenced resources are corporate, not all ringfenced monies are service resources. Borrowing, for instance, is treated as a corporate resource requiring a higher level of approval.

3.15 Directors have authority to add schemes to the programme, provided they are funded by service resources, up to an amount of £250,000. This provides flexibility for small schemes to be added to the programme without a report to the Executive.

Proposed Programme – Immediate Starts

3.16 Schemes classified as immediate starts can commence as soon as required, once the Council has approved the capital programme. No further approval is necessary. The whole programme is summarised at Appendix 2. Almost all of this year's programme consists of immediate starts. Responsibility for the majority of projects rests with the Strategic Director of City Development and Neighbourhoods. The exception is the Foster Carer Capital Contribution, which is the responsibility of the Director of Adults' and Children's Services.

3.17 £4.4m is provided for People & Neighbourhoods. This area is focused around improving the neighbourhoods of the city but also improving the lives of the city's residents. In addition, to this it is proposed that £0.5m is transferred from corporate resources into an earmarked reserve to fund future tree programmes.

- (a) £1.8m has been provided to continue with the **Children's Capital Improvements** Programme within our schools. The programme will include routine maintenance in our schools, such as boiler and window replacements, playground improvements and maintenance of roofs.
- (b) One of main schemes within this area will be **Disabled Facilities Grants** to private sector householders, with £1.5m available to support the scheme in 2021/22. This is an annual programme which has existed for many years. These grants provide funding to eligible disabled people for adaption work to their homes, and help them maintain their independence. This cost will be fully funded by the government in 2021/22 with no local contribution.

- (c) £400,000 has been provided for **Local Environmental Works** in our wards. This scheme will focus on local neighbourhood issues relating to residential parking, local safety concerns, pedestrian routes, cycle ways and community lighting and will be spent after ward member consultation..
- (d) £250,000 has been provided for a **Foster Carer Capital Contribution Scheme**, continuing last year's scheme. Money has been provided to invest in the homes of foster carers of looked after children, to ensure that foster care is an option in as many cases as possible.
- (e) £200,000 is provided in 2021/22 to continue the programme of **Repayable Home Repair Loans**. These grants aid vulnerable, low income home owners to carry out repairs or improvements to their homes, to bring properties up to decent home standards. Any loan will remain in place until a change of ownership or sale of the property, after which repayment of the loan is required.
- (f) £50,000 continues to be made available to top up **the Long Term Empty Home Acquisitions** pot in 2021/22. The Empty Homes Team gives advice and assistance to owners, helping them bring homes back into occupation. As a last resort, when all avenues have been exhausted, we have to use compulsory purchase. £50,000 covers the incidental costs associated with acquisition where CPO or negotiated purchase is required, where such costs cannot be recouped from the sale proceeds.
- (g) £50,000 is set aside for **Conservation Building Grants**. These grants are provided to city residents and organisations to repair historic buildings or reinstate original historic features that have been lost, and are applied for. The funding seeks to acknowledge the additional cost of owning an historic building.
- (h) £50,000 is included as part of the continued rolling programme to replace **Festive Decorations**.

3.18 £5.2m is provided to support Highways, Transport & Infrastructure capital works within the city. The capital works in this area are work programmes and regularly feature in our capital programmes.

- (a) £2.6m is provided in 2021/22 to continue the rolling programme of works constituting the **Transport Improvement Programme**. Some of the priority areas include:
 - Delivering cross cutting cycling, walking and public transport benefits.
 - Local safety schemes: sites are planned to include Narborough Road, Redhill Circle/Loughborough Road and Halifax Drive.
 - 20mph programme: continuation of the rolling programme to reduce the speed of vehicles. Traffic calming sites are planned to include Braunstone Community School, Calver Hey Road and Gilmorton Estate.

- Delivery of the Local Transport Plan
- (b) £2.1m is provided as part of the continued **Highway Capital Maintenance Programme**. This is a rolling annual programme and spending is prioritised to reflect asset condition, risk and local neighbourhood priorities. The proposed programme is shown at Appendix 4;
- (c) £300,000 is provided to continue the **Flood Strategy, Flood Defence and Watercourse Improvements Programme** into 2021/22. The programme supports the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and action plan, and the delivery of our statutory role to manage and reduce flood risk in collaboration with the Environment Agency & Severn Trent Water.
- (d) **Front Wall Enveloping:** £200,000 is a continuation of previous schemes. It involves the enclosure of small spaces in front of housing. Enveloping schemes can make a significant improvement to local neighbourhoods and enable occupiers to tend house fronts more effectively.
- 3.19 £1.7m has been made available to support Tourism & Culture in the City. The main area of focus is De Montfort Hall.
- (a) £1.4m has been set aside for **De Montfort Hall** for various improvements which include the replacement of stage equipment, refurbishment of toilets and replacement of seating. This project has a forecast completion date of October 2021.
- (b) Following the success of the first scheme, £270,000 has been put aside for the extension of the **Heritage Interpretation Panels Programme**. This scheme uses digital technology to interpret heritage stories in new ways e.g. via mobile devices.
- 3.20 £7.3m has been made available to fund three general corporate budgets.
- (a) £3.1m has been made available to fund the annual **Fleet Replacement Programme** as part of a rolling programme. This programme is funded from borrowing, which is repaid from existing budgets.
- (b) £1.7m has been provided to support the annual **Operational Estate Capital Maintenance Programme**. This will support works to the properties the Council uses. This programme includes items such as roof repairs, replacement of the hearing loops in the Attenborough Hall and heating/ventilation improvements.
- (c) £1.4m is available to fund the **Capital Projects Team and Other Staff Costs**, which will support the delivery of the construction projects in the capital programme.
- (d) £1.1m has been provided to support works to **Phoenix and Sovereign**

House. These works are to enable the Council to further optimise its operational estate as it transforms the way staff work in the future. This 'spend to save' approach is common across the public sector as it becomes more agile and has a lesser reliance on physical space. It supports the Council's strategy of ceasing the occupancy of leasehold property and provides the opportunity to market properties for an immediate rental return or to better utilise them for the Council's own purposes. Works to these two properties includes window replacements, internal refurbishments, and mechanical, heating and ventilation upgrades.

Proposed Programme – Policy Provisions

- 3.21 Policy provisions are sums of money which are included in the programme for a stated purpose, but for which a further report to the Executive (and decision notice) is required before they can be spent. Schemes are usually treated as policy provisions because the Executive needs to see more detailed spending plans before full approval can be given.
- 3.22 Executive reports seeking approval to spend policy provisions must state whether schemes, once approved, will constitute projects, work programmes or provisions; and, in the case of projects, identify project outcomes and physical milestones against which progress can be monitored.
- 3.23 Two policy provision have been identified as part of this programme:
(a) £0.5m to assist with Black Lives Matter;
(b) £0.5m for a tree replacement programme.

Capital Strategy

- 3.24 Local authorities are required to prepare a capital strategy each year, which sets out our approach for capital expenditure and financing at high level.
- 3.25 The proposed capital strategy is set out at Appendix 5. This also includes the policy on repaying debt and the prudential indicators which assess the affordability of new borrowing.

Consultation

- 3.26 Update to be provided after consultation.

4. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

4.1 Financial implications

- 4.1.1 This report is exclusively concerned with financial matters.

- (a) There is some proposed prudential borrowing in the programme for replacement of vehicles of £3.1m. The anticipated revenue costs arising will be £0.3m per year, for which revenue budget exists. This borrowing is affordable, sustainable and prudent (this is further described in the Treasury Strategy on your agenda).

4.1.2 No schemes are expected to lead to higher ongoing costs and some will lead to savings.

4.2 Legal implications

4.2.1 As the report is exclusively concerned with financial matters, there are no direct legal implications arising from the report. There will be procurement and legal implications in respect of individual schemes and client officers should take early legal advice. In accordance with the constitution, the capital programme is a matter that requires approval of full Council.

Kamal Adatia, City Barrister and Head of Standards.

4.3 Equalities implications

4.3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have statutory duties, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions they have to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

4.3.2 Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

4.3.3 People from across all protected characteristics will benefit from the improved public good arising from the proposed capital programme. However, as the proposals are developed and implemented, consideration should continue to be given to the equality impacts of the schemes in question, and how it can help the Council to meet the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty.

4.3.4 The capital programme includes schemes which improve the city's infrastructure and contribute to overall improvement of quality of life for people across all protected characteristics. By doing so, the capital programme promotes the PSED aim of: fostering good relations between different groups of people by ensuring that no area is disadvantaged compared to other areas as many services rely on such infrastructure to continue to operate.

4.3.5 Some of the schemes focus on meeting specific areas of need for a protected characteristic: disabled adaptations within homes (disability), home repair grants which are most likely to be accessed by elderly, disabled people or households with

children who are living in poverty (age and disability), and provision of funds for festive decorations (religion and belief).

- 4.3.6 Other schemes target much larger groups of people who have a range of protected characteristics reflective of the diverse population within the city. Some schemes are place specific and address environmental issues that also benefit diverse groups of people. The delivery of the capital programme contributes to the Council fulfilling our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). For example, schemes which support people in being able to stay in their homes, to continue to lead independent lives, and to participate in community life help promote equality of opportunity, another one of the aims of the PSED.
- 4.3.7 Where there are any improvement works to buildings or public spaces, considerations around accessibility (across a range of protected characteristics) must influence design and decision making. This will ensure that people are not excluded (directly or indirectly) from accessing a building, public space or service, on the basis of a protected characteristic.

4.4 Climate Emergency implications

- 4.4.1 The city council declared a climate emergency in February 2019 and has now published its new Climate Emergency Strategy & Action Plan, setting out the ambition to make Leicester a carbon neutral city. The council is one of the largest employers and land owners in the city, with carbon emissions of 33,872tCO₂e from its buildings and schools in 2019/20, and has a high level of influence in the city. The council has a vital role to play in reducing emissions from its buildings and operations, and leading by example on tackling the climate emergency in Leicester. As discussed in this report, many of the projects outlined will play a positive role in reducing carbon emissions in the city.
- 4.4.2 There is not sufficient information within this report to provide specific details of climate change implications for individual projects, which may have significant implications and opportunities. Detailed implications should therefore be produced for individual projects as and when plans are finalised. At a high level, there are some general principles that should be followed during the planning, design and implementation of capital projects, as detailed below. A toolkit is also being developed to support the achievement of reduced carbon emissions in council capital construction and renovation projects.
- 4.4.3 New buildings should be constructed to a high standard of energy efficiency, and incorporate renewable energy sources where possible, with projects aiming to achieve carbon neutral development or as close as possible to this. Maintenance and refurbishment works, including replacement of systems or equipment, should also seek to improve energy efficiency wherever possible. This will reduce energy use and therefore bills, delivering further benefits. Major projects will also need to meet Climate Change policy CS2 in the Leicester City Core Strategy planning document, which requires best practice in terms of minimising energy demand for heating, ventilation and lighting, achieving a high level of fabric efficiency, and the use of low carbon or renewable sources of energy.

4.4.4 Projects involving procurement, including for construction works, should follow the Council’s sustainable procurement guidelines. This includes the use of low carbon and sustainable materials, low carbon equipment and vehicles and reducing waste in procurement processes. Transport projects should seek to enable a greater share of journeys to be safely and conveniently undertaken by walking, cycling or public transport wherever possible, and many of the planned works will directly contribute to this. Flood risk works are also a key part of increasing resilience to a changing climate in the city.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer

4.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

Equal Opportunities	Yes	Paragraph 4.3
Policy	Yes	The capital programme is part of the Council’s overall budget and policy framework, and makes a substantial contribution to the delivery of Council policy.
Sustainable and Environmental	Yes	Paragraph 4.4
Crime and Disorder	No	
Human Rights Act	No	
Elderly/People on Low Income	Yes	A number of schemes will benefit elderly people and those on low income.

5. Background information and other papers:

6. Summary of appendices:

Appendix One – Corporate & Unringfenced Capital Resources.

Appendix 2a – Immediate Starts – People & Neighbourhoods.

Appendix 2b – Immediate Starts – Highways, Transport & Infrastructure.

Appendix 2c – Immediate Starts – Tourism & Culture.

Appendix 2d – Immediate Starts – Corporate

Appendix 3 – Policy Provisions.

Appendix 4 – Highways Maintenance Capital Programme

Appendix 5 – Capital Strategy 2020/21.

7. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

8. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?

Report Author: Amy Oliver

Date:

Capital Resources

Unringfenced Capital Resources

	20/21 <i>{£000}</i>
<u>Capital Receipts</u>	
General Capital Receipts	5,822
Council Housing - Right to Buy Receipts	700
Total Receipts	6,522
 <u>Unringfenced Capital Grant</u>	
Education Maintenance	3,672
Integrated Transport	2,556
Transport Maintenance	2,102
Total Unringfenced Grant	8,330
 <u>Other</u>	
Policy Provisions Review	1,933
Less: Potential Additional Costs associated with COVID-19 Pandemic	(1,800)
Total Other	133
 TOTAL UNRINGFENCED RESOURCES	14,985
 Ringfenced Resources	4,695
 TOTAL CAPITAL RESOURCES	19,680

Immediate Starts – People & Neighbourhoods

	Scheme Type	Corporate Programme Funding {£000}	Ringfenced Funding {£000}	Total Approval {£000}
<u>People & Neighbourhoods</u>				
Children’s Capital Improvement Programme	WP	1,836	0	1,836
Private Sector Disabled Facilities Grant	WP	0	1,539	1,539
Local Environmental Works	WP	400	0	400
Foster Carer Capital Contribution	WP	250	0	250
Repayable Home Repair Loans	WP	150	50	200
Conservation Building Grants	WP	50	0	50
Long Term Empty Homes Purchase	PV	50	0	50
Festive Decorations	WP	50	0	50
		2,786	1,589	4,375

Key to Scheme Types : PJ = Project ; WP = Work Programme ; PV = Provision ; Oth = Other

Summary of Ringfenced Funding

	{£000}
Disabled Facilities Grant	1,539
Loan Repayments	50
TOTAL RINGENCED FUNDING	1,589

Immediate Starts – Highways, Transport & Infrastructure

	Scheme Type	Corporate Programme Funding {£000}	Ringfenced Funding {£000}	Total Approval {£000}
<u>Highways, Transport & Infrastructure</u>				
Transport Improvement Works	WP	2,556	0	2,556
Highways Capital Maintenance Programme	WP	2,102	0	2,102
Flood Strategy, Flood Defence & Watercourse Improvements Programme	WP	300	0	300
Front Walls Enveloping Programme	WP	200	0	200
		5,158	0	5,158

Key to Scheme Types : PJ = Project ; WP = Work Programme ; PV = Provision ; Oth = Other

Immediate Starts – Tourism & Culture

	Scheme Type	Corporate Programme Funding {£000}	Ringfenced Funding {£000}	Total Approval {£000}
<u>Tourism & Culture</u>				
De Montfort Hall Building Works & Technical Equipment*	PJ	1,440		1,440
Heritage Interpretation Panels	WP	270	0	270
		1,710	0	1,710

Key to Scheme Types : PJ = Project ; WP = Work Programme ; PV = Provision ; Oth = Other

Immediate Starts – Corporate

	Scheme Type	Corporate Programme Funding	Ringfenced Funding	Total Approval
		{£000}	{£000}	{£000}
<u>Corporate</u>				
Fleet Replacement Programme	WP	0	3,106	3,106
Operational Estate Capital Maintenance Programme	WP	1,715	0	1,715
Capital Projects Team & Other Staff Costs	Oth	1,370	0	1,370
Phoenix & Sovereign House	Oth	1,130	0	1,130
		4,215	3,106	7,321

Key to Scheme Types : PJ = Project ; WP = Work Programme ; PV = Provision ; Oth = Other

Summary of Ringfenced Funding

	{£000}
Prudential Borrowing	3,106
TOTAL RINGENCED FUNDING	3,106

Policy Provisions

	Corporate Programme Funding	Ringfenced Funding	Total Approval
	<i>{£000}</i>	<i>{£000}</i>	<i>{£000}</i>
Black Lives Matter	500	0	500
Tree Programme	500	0	500
POLICY PROVISIONS TOTAL	1,000	0	1,000

Proposed Highways Maintenance Capital Programme

Description	Amount £000's
Major Public Realm & Transport Improvement Schemes - Essential maintenance associated with Horsefair Street, Pocklington's Walk & Market Place South	100
LEAN Carriageway & Pothole Repairs – Target large carriageway pothole repairs to provide longer term repairs in readiness for surface dressing.	500
Principal Roads – Uppingham Road, Coleman Road to Overton, Thurmaston Lane/Victoria Road East Roundabout, Oxford Street and Infirmary Road.	355
Classified Non-Principal Roads – Saffron Lane continuation (The Fairway to Pork Pie Roundabout)	160
Unclassified Neighbourhood Roads – Scraptoft Lane (Colchester Road to Thurncourt Road)	100
Emergency Carriageway Rutting/ concrete bay repairs	55
Carriageway Joint Sealing Programme – Prevents water ingress & onset of potholes.	35
Road Hump Replacements - Reconstruction/replacement of failed block paved road humps and speed cushions.	15
Footway Relays and Reconstructions – Focus on local neighbourhood priorities; Narborough Road continuation.	170
Strategic Bridge Deck Maintenance & Replacement Works Thurcaston Road Footbridge, Friday Street, canal and river footbridges linked to River Soar accessibility programme.	400
Bridge Improvement & Maintenance Works – Parapet replacements, structural maintenance works and technical assessment review project.	100
Traffic Signal Installations Renewals – King Richards Road, Fosse Road, Glenfield/Fosse Road.	150
Lighting Column Replacements – Replace 50 dangerous columns.	40
Vehicle Activated Signs – Ward priorities	10
DfT / Whole Government Accounting Lifecycle Asset Management Development Project – Strategic asset management development, data analysis, lifecycle planning and reporting in support of DfT Challenge Funding bidding linked to asset management performance.	300
TOTAL *	2,490

*This scheme is deliberately over-programmed to manage risks from scheme co-ordination clashes and other factors affecting timing of works.

Capital Strategy 2021/22

1. **Introduction**
 - 1.1 It is a requirement on local authorities to prepare a capital strategy each year, which sets out our approach to capital expenditure and financing at a high level. The requirement to prepare a strategy arises from Government concerns about certain authorities borrowing substantial sums to invest in commercial property, often outside the vicinity of the Council concerned (something Leicester City Council has never done).
 - 1.2 There is also a requirement on local authorities to prepare an investment strategy, which specifies our approach to making investments other than day to day treasury management investments (the latter is included in our treasury management strategy, as in previous years). The investment strategy is presented as a separate report on your agenda.
 - 1.3 This appendix sets out the proposed capital strategy for the Council's approval. It incorporates our policy on repaying debt, which used to be approved separately.
2. **Capital Expenditure**
 - 2.1 The Council's capital expenditure plans are approved by the full Council, on the basis of two reports:-
 - (a) The corporate capital programme – this covers periods of one or more years, and is always approved in advance of the period to which it relates. It is often, but need not be, revisited annually (it need not be revisited if plans for the subsequent year have already been approved);
 - (b) The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme – this is considered as part of the HRA budget strategy which is submitted each year for approval.
 - 2.2 The capital programme is split into:-
 - (a) Immediate starts – being schemes which are approved by the Council and can start as soon as practical after the council has approved the programme. Such schemes are specifically described in the relevant report;
 - (b) Policy provisions, which are subsequently committed by the City Mayor (and may be less fully described in the report). The principle here is that further consideration is required before the scheme can start.
 - 2.3 The corporate capital programme report sets out authorities delegated to the City Mayor. Decisions by the City Mayor are subject to normal requirements in the constitution (e.g. as to prior notice and call-in).

- 2.4 Monitoring of capital expenditure is carried out by the Executive and the Overview Select Committee. Reports are presented on 3 occasions during the years, and at outturn. For this purpose, immediate starts have been split into three categories:-
- (a) **Projects** – these are discrete, individual schemes such as a road scheme or a new building. These schemes are monitored with reference to physical delivery rather than an annual profile of spending. (We will, of course, still want to make sure that the overall budget is not going to be exceeded);
 - (b) **Work Programmes** – these will consist of minor works or similar schemes where is an allocation of money to be spent in a particular year.
 - (c) **Provisions** – these are sums of monies set aside in case they are needed, but where low spend is a favourable outcome rather than indicative of a problem.
- 2.5 When, during the year, proposals to spend policy provisions are approved, a decision on classification is taken at that time (i.e. a sum will be added to projects, work programmes or provisions as the case may be).
- 2.6 The authority does not capitalise expenditure, except where it can do so in compliance with proper practices: it does not apply for directions to capitalise revenue expenditure.
- 2.7 The table below forecasts the past and forecast capital expenditure for the current year and 2021/22. It therefore, includes expenditure from the 2020/21 programme that will be rolled forward.

Department / Division	2020/21 Estimate £m	2021/22 Estimate £m
People & Neighbourhoods	51.6	52.4
Highways, Transport & Infrastructure	66.7	71.5
Promoting Business	2.8	2.8
Tourism & Culture	12.9	13.6
Corporate	5.5	11.3
Strategic Acquisitions	0.0	4.0
Total General Fund	139.5	155.6
Housing Revenue Account	48.3	70.3
Total	187.8	225.9

- 2.8 The Council's Estates and Building Services Division provides professional management of non-housing property assets. This includes maintaining the properties, collecting any income, rent reviews, ensuring that lease conditions are complied with and that valuations are regularly updated at least every 5 years. A capital programme provision is made each year for significant improvements or renovation.

- 2.9 The Housing Division provides management of tenanted dwellings. Apart from the new build, the HRA capital programme is almost entirely funded from tenants' rents. The criteria used to plan major works are in the table below:-

Component for Replacement	Leicester's Replacement Condition Criteria	Decent Homes Standard: Maximum Age
Bathroom	All properties to have a bathroom for life by 2036	40 years / 30 years
Central Heating Boiler	Based on assessed condition	15 years (future life span of new boilers is expected to be on average 12 years)
Chimney	Based on assessed condition	50 years
Windows & Doors	Based on assessed condition	40 years
Electrics	Every 30 years	30 years
Kitchen	All properties to have an upgraded kitchen by 2036	30 years / 20 years
Roof	Based on assessed condition	50 years (20 years for flat roofs)
Wall finish (external)	Based on assessed condition	80 years
Wall structure	Based on assessed condition	60 years

3. **Financing Capital Expenditure**

- 3.1 Most capital expenditure of the Council is financed as soon as it is spent (by using grants, capital receipts, revenue budgets or the capital fund). The Council will only incur spending which cannot be financed in this way in strictly limited circumstances. Such spending is termed "prudential borrowing" as we are able to borrow money to pay for it. (The treasury management strategy explains why in practice we don't need to borrow on the external market: we must still, however, account for it as borrowing and make "repayments" from revenue each year). Circumstances in which the Council will use "prudential borrowing" are:-
- (a) Where spending facilitates a future disposal, and it is estimated that the proceeds will be sufficient to fully cover the initial costs;
 - (b) Where spending can be justified with reference to an investment appraisal (this is further described in the separate investment strategy). This also includes social housing, where repayment costs can be met from rents;
 - (c) Other "spend to save" schemes where the initial cost is paid back from revenue savings or additional income;
 - (d) Where, historically, the Council has used leasing for vehicles or equipment, and revenue budgets already exist to meet the cost;

(e) “Once in a generation” opportunities to secure significant strategic investment that will benefit the city for decades to come.

3.2 The Council measures its capital financing requirement, which shows how much we would need to borrow if we borrowed for all un-financed capital spending (and no other purpose). This is shown in the table below:-

	2020/21 Estimate £m	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
HRA	241	258	276	287
General Fund	269	269	269	270

(The table above excludes PFI schemes).

3.3 Projections of actual external debt are included in the treasury management strategy, which is elsewhere on your agenda.

4. **Debt Repayment**

4.1 As stated above, the Council usually pays for capital spending as it is incurred. However, this has not always been the case. In the past, the Government encouraged borrowing and money was made available in Revenue Support Grant each year to pay off the debt (much like someone paying someone else’s mortgage payments).

4.2 The Council makes charges to the general fund budget each year to repay debt incurred for previous years’ capital spending. (In accordance with Government rules, no charge needs to be made to the Housing Revenue Account: we do, however, make charges for newly built and acquired property).

4.3 The general underlying principle is that the Council seeks to repay debt over the period for which taxpayers enjoy the benefit of the spending it financed.

4.4 Where borrowing pays for an asset, debt is repaid over the life of the asset.

4.5 Where borrowing pays for an investment, debt is repaid over the life of the Council’s interest in the asset which has been financed (this may be the asset life, or may be lower if the Council’s interest is subject to time limits). Where borrowing funds a loan to a third party, repayment will never exceed the period of the loan.

4.6 Charges to revenue will be based on an equal instalment of principal, or set on an annuity basis, as the Director of Finance deems appropriate.

4.7 Debt repayment will normally commence in the year following the year in which the expenditure was incurred. However, in the case of expenditure relating to the construction of an asset, the charge will commence in the year after the asset becomes operational or the year after total expenditure on the scheme has been completed.

4.8 The following are the maximum asset lives which can be used:-

(a) Land – 50 years;

- (b) Buildings – 50 years;
- (c) Infrastructure – 40 years;
- (d) Plant and equipment – 20 years;
- (e) Vehicles – 12 years.

4.9 Some investments governed by the treasury strategy may be accounted for as capital transactions. Should this require debt repayment charges, an appropriate time period will be employed. Share capital has a maximum “life” of 20 years.

4.10 Authority is given to the Director of Finance to voluntarily set aside sums for debt repayment, over and above the amounts determined in accordance with the above rules, where she believes the standard charge to be insufficient, or in order to reduce the future debt burden to the authority.

4.11 The law permits the Council to “claim back” sums set aside voluntarily in previous years by reducing subsequent years’ debt repayment. The Council will only do this in the following circumstances:-

- (a) To support the Council’s treasury management strategy. For instance, using these sums gives the Council access to a wider pool of collective property investments than we could otherwise use because of accounting restrictions (and hence access to better investment opportunities);
- (b) For the acquisition of other investments permitted by the investments strategy, where it is appropriate to capitalise spending so that revenue savings can be delivered immediately.

4.13 Once investments acquired through sums “claimed back” are redeemed, the receipt will be set aside again for debt repayment.

4.14 In circumstances where the investment strategy permits use of borrowing to support projects which achieve a return, the Director of Finance may adopt a different approach to debt repayment to reflect the financing costs of such schemes. The rules governing this are included in the investment strategy.

4.15 The ratio of financing costs to net revenue budget is estimated to be:-

	2020/21 %	2021/22 %	2022/23 %
General Fund	2.0	2.1	2.2
HRA	11.1	11.6	12.0

5. **Commercial Activity**

5.1 The Council has for many decades held commercial property. It may decide to make further commercial investments in property, or give loans to others to support commercial investment. Our approach is described in the investment strategy, which sets the following limitations:-

- (a) The Council will not make such investments purely to generate income. Each investment will also benefit the Council’s service objectives (most

probably, in respect of economic regeneration and jobs). It will, however, invest to improve the financial performance of the corporate estate;

- (b) The Council will not make investments outside of the LLEP area (or just beyond its periphery) except as described below. We would not, for instance, borrow money to buy a shopping centre 100 miles from Leicester;
- (c) There is one exception to (b) above, which is where the investment meets a service need other than economic regeneration. An example might be a joint investment in a solar farm, in collaboration with other local authorities; or investment in a consortium serving local government as a whole. In these cases, the location of the asset is not necessarily relevant.

5.2 Such investments will only take place (if they are of significant scale) after undertaking a formal appraisal, using external advisors if needs be. Nonetheless, as such investments also usually achieve social objectives, the Council is prepared to accept a lower return than a commercial funder might, and greater risk than it would in respect of its treasury management investments. Such risk will always be clearly described in decision reports (and decisions to make such investments will follow the normal rules in the Council's constitution).

5.3 Although the Council accepts that an element of risk is inevitable from commercial activity, it will not invest in schemes whereby (individually or collectively) it would not be able to afford the borrowing costs if they went wrong. As well as undertaking a formal appraisal of schemes of a significant scale, the Council will take into account what "headroom" it may have between the projected income and projected borrowing costs.

5.4 In addition to the above, the Council's treasury strategy may permit investments in property or commercial enterprises. Such investments may be to support environmental and socially responsible aims, and are usually pooled with other bodies. For the purposes of the capital strategy, these are not regarded as commercial activities under this paragraph as the activity is carried out under the treasury strategy.

6. **Knowledge and Skills**

6.1 The Council employs a number of qualified surveyors and accountants as well as a specialist team for economic development who can collectively consider investment proposals. It also retains external treasury management consultants (currently Arlingclose). For proposed investments of a significant scale, the Council may employ external specialist consultants to assist its decision making.

Draft General Fund Budget 2021/22

Decision to be taken by: Council

Decision to be taken on/Date of meeting: 17th February 2021

Lead director/officer: Director of Finance

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Catherine Taylor and Mark Noble
- Author contact details: Catherine.taylor@leicester.gov.uk mark.noble@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: 1

1. **Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask the Council to consider the City Mayor's proposed budget for 2021/22 and to present medium-term projections up to 2024.
- 1.2 The proposed budget is described in this report, subject to any amendments the City Mayor may wish to recommend when he makes a firm proposal to the Council.
- 1.3 This report is written in advance of the Government's local government finance settlement, and will therefore change to reflect actual figures when received.

2. **Summary**

- 2.1 The Council is currently facing an unprecedented and difficult financial situation. Following on from the severe spending cuts the Government has imposed in the last 10 years, the coronavirus pandemic has put huge pressure on service spending and on income streams. There are also unavoidable, and continuing, underlying cost pressures, particularly in demand-led social care services.
- 2.2 Added to this, the budget is made more difficult because we do not know the level of funding available beyond the current financial year, nor the extent to which spending pressures from the Covid-19 pandemic and / or consequent economic downturn will continue. Nor do we know how services may need to be reshaped to meet new expectations in a post-Covid future.
- 2.3 The Council's previous approach to achieving the budget reductions required by the Government has been based on the following approach:-
 - (a) An in-depth review of discrete service areas (the "Spending Review Programme");
 - (b) Building up reserves, in order to "buy time" to avoid crisis cuts and to manage the Spending Review Programme effectively. We have termed this the "managed reserves strategy".
- 2.4 The Spending Review approach has served us well: savings of nearly £50m have been made since 2014, and left the Council with a relatively healthy level of reserves at the start of 2020/21 (compared to other authorities). However, the achievement of Spending Review savings has stalled in 2020/21 due to the Covid pandemic. The

pandemic may, additionally, have significant implications for the way we deliver services in future and we are not yet in a position to know what we can afford. The future shape of the Council's services will be strongly influenced by the long term consequences of the pandemic, and review will be needed to ensure we are fit to meet new challenges. This will range from new ways of providing services, to best use of IT, and the optimum configuration of our existing office portfolio if home working becomes a permanent feature of our future working arrangements. Furthermore, a significant amount of the Council's reserves may be required to meet pandemic costs.

2.5 As a consequence, the following approach has been adopted:-

- (a) The budget for 2021/22 has been balanced using reserves, and can be adopted as the Council's budget for that year. This is effectively a "standstill" budget representing the underlying position before any further cuts;
- (b) We have "drawn a line" under the spending review programme, but have included in this budget assumptions about savings which can be achieved without detriment to service provision;
- (c) A comprehensive financial review of the Council's position will be undertaken before setting the budget for 2022/23, to ensure ongoing financial sustainability. This work needs to commence as soon as possible, given the way this budget will use up reserves.

2.6 **What this means is that, in substance, the budget proposed is a one year budget, pending a fuller (post-pandemic) review.**

2.7 It should also be noted that there are some significant risks in the budget. These are described in paragraph 13.

2.8 The draft budget provides for a council tax increase of 5% in 2021/22, which is the maximum available to us without a referendum. 3% of this 5% is for the "social care precept" – the Government has permitted social care authorities to increase tax by more than the 2% available to other authorities, in order to help meet social care pressures (unlike a grant, of course, we have to pay for this ourselves).

2.9 In the exercise of its functions, the City Council (or City Mayor) must have due regard to the Council's duty to eliminate discrimination, to advance equality of opportunity for protected groups and to foster good relations between protected groups and others. There are no proposals for decisions on specific courses of action that could have an impact on different groups of people – such decisions as may be needed will be taken subsequently. Therefore, there are no proposals to carry out an equality impact assessment on the budget itself, apart from the proposed council tax increase (this is further explained in paragraph 12 and the legal implications at paragraph 16). Where required, the City Mayor has considered the

equalities implications of decisions when they have been taken and will continue to do so for future decisions.

- 2.10 Best practice now expects me to present a medium term financial strategy for approval, and this is attached (see Appendix Five). It contains projections of the position up to 2024, although in the context of the pandemic longer range projections must be seen as unreliable. High and low forecasts have not been prepared, because it is not possible to ask members to take decisions based on them – this will follow from the review described above.

3. **Recommendations**

3.1 Subject to any amendments recommended by the City Mayor, the Council will be asked to:-

- (a) approve the budget strategy described in this report, and the formal budget resolution for 2021/22 which will be circulated separately;
- (b) note comments received on the draft budget from scrutiny committees, trade unions and other partners (*to be added for final budget report*);
- (c) approve the budget ceilings for each service, as shown at Appendix One to this report;
- (d) approve the scheme of virement described in Appendix Two to this report;
- (e) note my view that reserves will continue to be adequate during 2021/22, and that estimates used to prepare the budget are robust;
- (f) note the equality implications arising from the proposed tax increase, as described in paragraph 12 and Appendix Three;
- (g) note the medium-term financial strategy and forecasts presented at Appendix Five, and the significant financial challenges ahead.

4. **Budget Overview**

4.1 The table below summarises the proposed budget for 2021/22. Due to the level of uncertainty in future budgets, only one year is presented here (summary projections for a three-year period are included in the medium term strategy at Appendix Five):

	2021/22 £m
Service budget ceilings	293.5
Corporate Budgets	
Capital Financing	6.5
Miscellaneous Corporate Budgets	1.6
Contingency	2.0
Total forecast spending	303.5

Rates retention scheme:	
Business rates income	62.2
Top-up payment	48.0
Revenue Support Grant	29.0
Other resources:	
Council Tax	127.8
Collection Fund deficit	(2.4)
Govt funding towards Collection Fund	1.8
Social Care grants	12.0
New Homes Bonus	4.9
Total forecast resources	283.3

Underlying gap in resources	20.2
Proposed funding from reserves	(20.2)
Gap in resources	NIL

4.2 The proposed budget for 2021/22 has an underlying budget gap of just over £20m, which represents a £15m deterioration from the most optimistic forecast presented in February 2020. This includes adjustments to the budget to better reflect the true underlying position and unavoidable pressures, as explained in section 6 below. £20m has been added to service budgets: to the extent that this is required for adult social care, only part of the cost has been met by new funding (and most of the new

funding provided is permission to increase council tax rather than Government grant). The budget gap also reflects decreased forecasts for locally-raised tax income, due to the economic downturn caused by the pandemic.

5. **Construction of the Budget and Council Tax**

- 5.1 By law, the role of budget setting is for the Council to determine:
 - (a) The level of council tax;
 - (b) The limits on the amount the City Mayor is entitled to spend on any service (“budget ceilings”; the proposed budget ceilings are shown at Appendix One)
- 5.2 In line with Finance Procedure Rules, Council must also approve the scheme of virement that controls subsequent changes to these ceilings. The proposed scheme is shown at Appendix Two.
- 5.3 The City Council’s proposed Band D tax for 2021/22 is £1,694.92, an increase of just under 5% compared to 2020/21.
- 5.4 The tax levied by the City Council constitutes only part of the tax Leicester citizens have to pay (albeit the major part – 84% in 2020/21). Separate taxes are raised by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Combined Fire Authority. These are added to the Council’s tax, to constitute the total tax charged.
- 5.5 The actual amounts people will be paying in 2021/22, however, depend upon the valuation band their property is in and their entitlement to any discounts, exemptions or benefit. Almost 80% of properties in the city are in band A or band B, so the tax will be lower than the Band D figure quoted above.
- 5.6 The Police and Crime Commissioner and Combined Fire Authority will set their precepts in February 2021. The formal resolution will set out the precepts issued for 2021/22, together with the total tax payable in the city.

6. **Departmental Budget Ceilings**

- 6.1 As stated in the summary at paragraph 2.5, a different approach has been taken to preparing departmental budgets this year. A thorough review is required before we can set meaningful post-Covid budgets. It would be premature to carry out such a review now, and (as described above) a one year budget is proposed to get us through this current period of pandemic and uncertainty. The approach will use our “managed reserves” to enable a smooth transition year.
- 6.2 The approach is therefore to maintain existing budgets wherever practical, but:-
 - (a) Build in unavoidable growth, which would normally be compensated by departmental savings;

- (b) Anticipate savings to be made from a number of residual spending reviews which have minimal impact on front line services. Where necessary, equality assessments will be carried out prior to implementation of these proposals.

6.3 Budget ceilings for each service have been calculated as follows:

- (a) The starting point is last year's budget, subject to any changes made since then which are permitted by the constitution (e.g. virement), and excluding one-off additions identified in the 2020/21 budget.
- (b) An allowance for non-pay inflation has been added to the budgets for independent sector adult care (2%), foster care (2%) and the waste PFI contract (RPI, in line with contract terms). Apart from these areas, no allowance has been made for non-pay inflation;
- (c) Decisions previously taken by the Executive in respect of spending reviews, where the savings take effect in 2021/22, have been deducted from the ceilings;
- (d) Changes have been made for growth and savings as described below.

6.4 The budget ceilings shown at Appendix One do *not* include any allowance for pay inflation. At the time of writing, the local government pay scales for 2021/22 had not been determined, and therefore a provision is being held centrally to meet the cost. This is based on the Government's expectations for public sector pay set out in November, which include pay awards only for lower-paid staff. The provision will be distributed to departmental budget ceilings when the details of the pay award are known.

6.5 The role of the Council is to determine the financial envelopes within which the City Mayor has authority to act. Notwithstanding the way the budget has been constructed, the law does not enable the Council to determine how the City Mayor provides services within these envelopes: this is within his discretion. Paragraphs below describe how the City Mayor currently expects to achieve savings to enable him to spend within budget ceilings. The scheme of virement provides scope for alternative ways to live within budgets if any proposal cannot be delivered (e.g. if equality assessments reveal impacts that require a different approach).

City Development & Neighbourhoods

- 6.6 The department provides a wide range of statutory and non-statutory services which contribute to the wellbeing and civic life of the city.
- 6.7 The department's costs are not subject to the same levels of volatility as social care services, and pressures tend to be easier to predict in advance.
- 6.8 The following pressures have been reflected in the proposed budget:-

	2021/22	2022/23
	£000	£000
Tourism, Culture & Inward Investment		
Markets income	250	250
Festivals and Events	50	50
Records Office	45	45
Estates & Building Services		
Property maintenance and income	1,500	1,500
Housing		
Fleet	750	750
Total Growth	2,595	2,595

- 6.9 The growth is described below:-
- (a) The income expectations at the retail market (£1.3m) have become increasingly unrealistic, and the additional £250,000 p.a. will rectify the position;
 - (b) Additional resource is required for festivals and events to offset rising costs of infrastructure and to support some other events that could generate significant economic benefit for the city;
 - (c) The Council needs to pay an increased contribution to the Records Office, following a review of the budget (and percentage shares) by the County Council;
 - (d) Property maintenance costs have increased due largely to a higher than expected need for routine repairs and statutory compliance following the introduction of the corporate landlord model. Additionally, an on-going reduction in the amount of capital construction activity supported by the Division, particularly as school expansions are now largely nearing completion, is reducing the income from capital fees.

- (e) In recent years, vehicles in the Council's fleet have been used for a longer period following a review of useful lives: this has meant far fewer vehicles have been purchased than usual, as less vehicles reached the end of their service. Vehicles are acquired by means of borrowing, for which the department makes revenue provision – in part, the proposed growth represents a step up in vehicle acquisition after this lull. Budgets are also under pressure because, although we are working towards electrification of the corporate fleet, we are not yet seeing savings through reduced maintenance and acquisition of parts (repair costs have in fact increased due to the fleet becoming older). A delay in rectification work after the fire at Leycroft Road depot has also delayed work to introduce an MOT offer.

6.10 The following savings have been reflected in the proposed budget:

	2021/22	2022/23
	£000	£000
Planning, Development & Transport		
Car parking	500	500
Bus lane enforcement – back office	50	100
Planning efficiencies	25	25
Neighbourhoods & Environmental Services		
Rationalisation of bring banks	25	25
Procurement savings on running costs	60	60
Total Savings	660	710

6.11 The savings are described below:-

- (a) Current parking charges are in multiples of £1, which are convenient for the public but constrain our ability to review charges. Work has been taking place for some time converting parking meters to cashless payment, which will facilitate a review once the pandemic is over. An adjustment is proposed to the department's budget, but it is recognised that review will be dependent on coming out of Covid restrictions. To the extent that the proposed saving cannot be achieved until later in the year, this will be compensated from one-off resources (see paragraph 9).
- (b) Efficiency savings are anticipated from rationalising back office functions for collecting bus lane infringement penalties;
- (c) A saving of £25,000 will be made following a review of the conservation team establishment and consolidation of ecology duties;

- (d) Savings are forecast from the rationalisation of bring banks, particularly those most susceptible to anti-social behaviour. Whilst the number of sites will be reduced, approximately 20 sites where new bins would be installed have been selected taking into account feedback from the public consultation, access issues, existing levels of fly tipping (where applicable), space available and existing levels of usage;
- (e) Procurement savings on running costs have already been achieved.

6.12 The department continues to face (and expects to manage) pressures associated with waste, due chiefly to increased amounts of waste to be disposed of.

Adult Social Care

6.13 Adult Social Care services nationally are facing severe cost pressures. This is recognised by the Government, although long-term solutions have been continually deferred (and now further deferred as a consequence of the pandemic). The Government has now stated that it expects to carry out a review “next year.”

6.14 Consequently, the Government has been providing additional resources on a year by year basis, at inadequate levels, with no guarantee that these will be increased (or indeed maintained) in future years.

6.15 The Adult Social Care Department has managed its budget well in recent years. This is a consequence of additional funding which has been provided in council budgets, and measures to contain costs (including staffing reductions of 20% and tight controls ensuring the service can only be accessed by people with a statutory entitlement).

6.16 In 2021/22 and beyond, the department continues to face significant demand led pressures:-

- (a) The growth in need of people already using services, resulting in additional support being added to their existing package of care;
- (b) Growth in numbers of people using services (both older people and working age adults with mental health conditions and learning disabilities);
- (c) The cost of meeting need, which is rising by more than inflation, due to the impact of continuing increases in the National Living Wage (NLW) which drives care costs. The NLW will increase by 2.2% in 2021/22 (less than previously anticipated); the Government intends it to reach two-thirds of median wages by 2025, which implies higher increases in future years.

6.17 The combination of the above pressures means the aggregate cost of social care packages is expected to increase by 12% in 2021/22. It is proposed to increase the budget for Adult Social Care by £10.2m in 2021/22 rising to £30.2m by 2022/23. Government support will meet some, but not all of these costs: although exact

allocations are not yet confirmed, we expect to receive around £2m in additional grant support. This is obviously considerably short of what the Council needs (permission to increase council tax by 5% will raise an additional £3.6m).

- 6.18 The following savings will be deducted from the budget (all of which have already been achieved):

	2021/22	2022/23
	£000	£000
Admin savings	140	140
Pension costs for TUPE'd staff	154	154
Total Savings	294	294

- 6.19 Work is taking place to reduce the burden of growing costs. This includes:

- (a) A deep dive analysis to understand trends in care;
- (b) Investment in technology enabled care (TEC) which experience elsewhere suggests has scope for significant savings;
- (c) Further strengthening of prevention.

Education and Children's Services

- 6.20 In common with authorities across the country, increasing demand for social care services has been putting considerable pressure on the budget of the department (and the Council).

- 6.21 The pandemic has however made no appreciable difference to demand for social care, although new demand may surface once restrictions are completely lifted.

- 6.22 £14m was added to the budget of the department in 2020/21, £3m of which was described as temporary in anticipation of savings. Consideration of these savings has been derailed by the pandemic, and the budget therefore proposes to make this growth permanent. That aside, the department currently believes that no new monies will be required to meet growth in demand.

- 6.23 The budget does, however, propose the following growth:-

	2021/22	2022/23
	£000	£000
SEN home to school transport	2,382	2,382
Special Education Service – additional resource	425	425
Connexions review not proceeding	241	241
Total Growth	3,048	3,048

6.24 The growth is described below:-

- (a) The budget for SEN transport has been under pressure for some time reflecting cost increases for both the in-house fleet service and taxis. This has been exacerbated by growth in user numbers arising from Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). The amount of additional money required has been offset by savings expected from the use of individual Passenger Transport Budgets (PTBs) (£0.5m p.a.) and from a new taxi framework contract (£0.8m p.a.);
- (b) Additional funding has been provided for more staff in the Special Education Service to ensure timely preparation of EHCPs. We have seen a growth of 62% in the number of EHCPs since 2016 and there has been no permanent increase in staffing to deal with this;
- (c) The budget for 2020/21 assumed savings would arise from a review of the Connexions Service. Whilst review has taken place, reductions to the service have not been made due to the impact the savings would have on the service, particularly given the economic impact the pandemic is likely to have.

6.25 Work is taking place to reduce pressure in social care costs:-

- (a) Developing internal residential placements to reduce expensive external costs;
- (b) Developing a wider range of semi-independent placements;
- (c) Enhancing and promoting our foster care offer;
- (d) Developing an advanced foster carer scheme.

6.26 The recent introduction of therapy teams has secured a reduction in the number of care placements which would otherwise have been required, and is operating at full capacity.

6.27 In addition to the general fund, DSG budgets for higher needs pupils continue to be under severe pressure.

Health & Wellbeing

6.28 The Health and Wellbeing Division consists of core public health services, together with sports and leisure provision. It is partly funded from Public Health Grant and partly from the general fund. Public Health Grant has been falling in recent years, but was maintained at current levels in 2020/21 (after inflation).

6.29 The future of Public Health Grant beyond 2021/22 is unclear – it is anticipated that it will eventually be consolidated into the new 75% business rates retention scheme

(assuming this is implemented). This, however, remains uncertain as it is subject to agreement between the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; and the Department of Health and Social Care – the latter may wish to impose requirements on how former Public Health Grant is spent in the future.

6.30 The proposed budget includes the following growth:.

	2021/22	2022/23
	£000	£000
Business Manager	55	55
Statutory advice to CCGs	75	75
Total Growth	130	130

6.31 This growth is described below:-

- (a) The business manager post is essential to supplement existing capacity in the wake of the pandemic and recruitment is underway. If growth is not approved, compensating savings will need to be found;
- (b) A part time consultant is proposed to deliver public health care to fulfil our statutory duty to support CCGs, and to have senior public health influence and leadership of the Integrated Care System. This will ensure that the health economy prioritises tackling inequalities in the city and places much greater emphasis on primary and secondary prevention.

6.32 The sports service is expected to suffer continued loss of income in 2021/22, as users are hesitant to return following the pandemic. Additionally, the pandemic will delay achievement of the savings expected from the recent Spending Review (£0.6m). These costs will be met from one-off resources (see paragraph 9).

6.33 To provide funding for the above, the following savings are proposed:-

	2021/22	2022/23
	£000	£000
Contraception Services	100	100
Services for Children aged 0 to 19	0	200
Lifestyle Services	35	35
Total Savings	135	335

6.34 These savings are described below:-

- (a) Reduced levels of expenditure by GPs providing contraception services;

(b) Savings are anticipated from the Children’s 0-19 contract with Leicestershire Partnership Trust, when it is renewed prior to 2022/23;

(c) Miscellaneous Lifestyle Services savings can be achieved through more efficient targeting of the promotion of healthy food and physical exercise within schools.

Corporate Resources & Support

6.35 The department primarily provides back office support services, but also some public facing services such as benefits and collection of council tax. It has made considerable savings in recent years in order to contribute to the Council’s savings targets. It has nonetheless achieved a balanced budget each year.

6.36 The following growth is proposed:-

	2021/22	2022/23
	£000	£000
Making Temporary Teams Permanent		
Digital Transformation Team	660	660
Service Analysis Team	235	235
Smart Cities	250	250
Entrepreneurial Councils	125	125
Finance Projects Team	260	260
Other Growth		
Revenues & Benefits	250	250
Childcare & contract lawyers	469	469
Total	2,249	2,249

6.37 This growth is described below:-

(a) A number of teams delivering new ways of working and modern services have been funded from annual savings achieved from other budgets, or departmental reserves. In line with our overall approach to 2021/22 (a transition year) it is proposed to build these costs into the main budget. These services are seen as enabling new approaches which will be critical as we plan for 2022/23;

(b) Costs of the Revenue and Benefits Service are increasing due to difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff as the Government moves claimants onto Universal Credit, and continuing Government grant reductions;

- (c) Childcare and contract legal work has been underfunded compared to the growing volumes of work in these areas, and has previously been funded on a year by year basis.

6.38 The following savings are proposed:-

	2021/22	2022/23
	£000	£000
Finance Division Review	400	400
IT – efficiency savings	36	36
VCS infrastructure	50	100
Total Savings	486	536

6.39 These savings are described below:-

- (a) An organisational review of the Finance Division is taking place, to make further efficiency savings;
- (b) Efficiency savings can be achieved by IT Services, consequential to Spending Review 4 savings;
- (c) The VCS infrastructure contract will be re-procured with a view to achieving savings and to focusing the contract specifically on supporting the sustainability of the sector. This is in line with a VCS strategy which is in development, and in light of other activity which has been developed in recent years to support the VCS (such as crowdfunding). It will also build on the benefits of the volunteering, relationships and engagement approach which has been part of the Covid pandemic response.

7. **Corporately Held Budgets and Provisions**

- 7.1 In addition to the service budget ceilings, some budgets are held corporately. These are described below.
- 7.2 The budget for **capital financing** represents the cost of interest and debt repayment on past years' capital spending. This budget is not controlled to a cash ceiling, and is managed by the Director of Finance. Costs which fall to be met by this budget are driven by the Council's treasury management strategy, which will also be approved by Council in February, and are affected by decisions made by the Director of Finance in implementation of this policy.
- 7.3 A **contingency** of £2m has been included in the budget, to manage significant pressures that arise during the year. This is particularly appropriate due to the level of uncertainty in the budget this year.

7.4 **Miscellaneous central budgets** include external audit fees, pensions costs of some former staff, levy payments to the Environment Agency, bank charges, general insurance costs, monies set aside to assist council taxpayers suffering hardship and other sums it is not appropriate to include in service budgets. These budgets are offset by the effect of recharges from the general fund to other statutory accounts of the Council (which are reducing over time). A provision is also held (as in previous years) for the implications of Government reform to the High Needs Block of DSG, although this will have the practical effect of reducing recharges.

8. **Resources**

8.1 This draft budget has been prepared before we have the local government finance settlement for 2021/22, and without knowing our precise grant allocations. We have therefore made estimates based on the national Spending Review published on 25th November. Given the level of uncertainty about the public finances in the future, the government has again produced a one-year Spending Review for 2021/22, and deferred a multi-year plan until the following year. We are expecting that the financial settlement for 2021/22 will largely roll forward existing funding allocations, with little reallocation between authorities.

Business Rates Retention Scheme

8.2 Since 2013, local government has retained 50% of the business rates collected locally, with the other 50% being paid to central government. In Leicester, 1% is paid to the fire authority, and 49% has been retained by the Council. This is known as the “Business Rate Retention Scheme”.

8.3 In recognition of the fact that different authorities’ ability to raise rates do not correspond to needs, there are additional elements of the business rates retention scheme:

(a) a **top-up to local business rates**, paid to authorities with lower taxbases relative to needs (such as Leicester) and funded by authorities with greater numbers of higher-rated businesses.

(b) **Revenue Support Grant (RSG)**, which has declined sharply in recent years as it is the main route for the government to deliver cuts in local government funding (and the methodology for doing this has disproportionately disadvantaged deprived authorities).

8.4 The planned reform to the funding system has now been delayed, so this draft budget is based on the 2020/21 settlement being rolled forward with an addition for inflation.

8.5 Forecasts of business rates income are particularly sensitive to assumptions about the length and severity of the economic downturn caused by the pandemic. The figures in this draft budget are based on the rates base as it stood at autumn (6

months into the pandemic), and assume a further reduction in yield of 2% (resulting in a reduction in income of £3m compared to the 2020/21 budget).

- 8.6 The government has recently announced that the rates multiplier will be frozen for 2021/22, which means that less income will be collected from ratepayers (compared to our original assumptions). However, we will be reimbursed by government grant, so there should be no net effect on our budget.

Council Tax

- 8.7 Council tax income is estimated at £127.8m in 2021/22, based on a tax increase of just below 5% (the maximum allowed without a referendum). The proposed tax increase includes the additional “social care levy” allowed since 2016/17, and designed to help social care authorities mitigate the growing costs of social care; the Government will expect us to demonstrate that the money is being used for this purpose.
- 8.8 The assumed taxbase for 2021/22 has reduced slightly since last year’s budget. This is largely the result of an increased provision for bad debt, as the ongoing economic effects of the pandemic will lead to more residents having difficulty in paying. There has also been an increase in the cost of the council tax support scheme during the pandemic (this had been consistently decreasing in previous years), and the increase will not be eradicated immediately the pandemic is over.

Other grants

- 8.9 The Government also controls a range of other grants. The majority of these are not shown in the table at paragraph 4.1, as they are treated as income to departments (departmental budgets are consequently lower than they would have been). Those held corporately are described below:

- a) **New Homes Bonus (NHB)**. This is a grant which roughly matches the council tax payable on new homes, and homes which have ceased to be empty on a long term basis. The future of NHB is in doubt.
- b) Additional funding to support **Social Care** has been made available each year since 2017/18, although this has been as a series of one-off allocations rather than a stable funding stream. For 2021/22, the total funding nationally will be £1.8 billion (a £300 million increase from 2020/21). Our estimated share of this is around £12 million.

Collection Fund surplus / deficit

- 8.10 Collection fund surpluses arise when more tax is collected than assumed in previous budgets. Deficits arise when the converse is true. This year, in common with authorities nationally, tax collection has significantly reduced during the Covid restrictions.

- 8.11 In 2020/21, as part of the response to the pandemic, the Government granted a raft of new rates reliefs to businesses: we have been compensated by Government grant. In itself, this has no net cost to the Council (in fact it is helpful because we do not have to recover monies from individual ratepayers). Due to accounting rules, the effect of this in our accounts will look peculiar. For clarity, the figures in this report show the true underlying position.
- 8.12 Collection fund deficits are particularly difficult to predict this year, due to the uncertainty over the path of the pandemic. The initial estimates included in this draft budget will be reviewed in the light of more up-to-date information, before the final budget is presented to Council in February.
- 8.13 Under temporary rules introduced to deal with these income losses, the collection fund deficit arising in 2020/21 will be spread over the following three years. In addition, the government is proposing a scheme whereby local authorities will be funded for 75% of their irrecoverable losses on council tax and business rates.
- 8.14 The Council has an estimated **council tax collection fund deficit** of £4.9m, after allowing for shares paid to the police and fire authorities. This will be recovered between 2021/22 and 2023/24. The majority of this relates to reduced collection rates arising from the pandemic and lockdown, and assumptions made about how much will eventually be collected. If eventual collection rates are better than these assumptions, the additional amount will be brought back into the budget in future years. It also includes the estimated amount of additional council tax support which will be paid in 20/21.
- 8.15 The Council has an estimated **business rates collection fund deficit** of £1.8m (again, this will be recovered over 3 years). This is largely the result of an increased bad debt provision, as collection has declined during the pandemic and lockdown. Some however arises from additional exemptions for properties which have become vacant.

9. **Managed Reserves Strategy**

- 9.1 The pandemic and the change in our approach to the budget strategy has had a significant impact on our requirement for reserves. The amounts previously set aside to manage future budgets will largely be required to balance 2021/22 and to deal with pandemic pressures.
- 9.2 The Council has agreed to maintain a minimum balance of £15m of reserves. The new strategy does not propose to change this.
- 9.3 The Council also has a number of earmarked reserves, which are further discussed in section 10 below. Key amongst these was the managed reserves strategy which is dealt with below.

9.4 Since 2013, the Council has used a managed reserves strategy, contributing money to reserves in the early years of the strategy, and drawing down reserves in later years. This policy has bought time to more fully consider how to make the substantial cuts which have been necessary. The pandemic has, in effect, made significant inroads into these reserves:

- (a) we are expecting that up to £20m will be required in 2020/21 to meet costs over and above Government grant we have received for the pandemic;
- (b) similarly, a sum of £10m has been set aside for one-off costs associated with the pandemic in 2021/22. This is likely to include income losses which are expected to persist, particularly car parking, sports and De Montfort Hall. The Government will make some grant funding available to local authorities for costs in 2021/22, but at this stage we have no way of knowing whether this will be sufficient.

9.5 Conversely, a review of earmarked reserves has resulted in £4.8m becoming surplus to requirements and has been added back to managed reserves.

9.6 The estimated reserves at the end of 2022/23 are shown below, and emphasise the need for a fundamental budget review as soon as possible:

	£m
Brought forward 1 st April 2020	66.8
Add transfers from earmarked reserves	4.6
Minus use planned in 2020/21 budget	(2.4)
Additional unfunded Covid costs	(20.0)
Forecast carry forward 1st April 2021	49.0
Required in 2021/22	(20.2)
Provision for Covid costs in 21/22	(10.0)
Uncommitted balance for 22/23	18.8

10. Earmarked Reserves

10.1 In addition to the general reserves, the Council also holds earmarked reserves which are set aside for specific purposes. These include ring-fenced funds which are held by the Council but for which we have obligations to other partners or organisations; departmental reserves, which are held for specific services; and corporate reserves, which are held for purposes applicable to the organisation as a whole.

10.2 Earmarked reserves are kept under review, and amounts which are no longer needed for their original purpose can be released for other uses, including the managed reserves strategy.

10.3 Earmarked reserves are shown at Appendix Four.

11. **Medium Term Strategy**

11.1 Planning for the budget beyond 2021/22 is extremely difficult, as the government's spending plans for this period will not be announced until the middle of 2021 at the earliest. Nevertheless, we need to ensure the Council's finances are sustainable in the longer term. Best practice now requires us to include a medium term strategy, which is exceptionally difficult in the middle of a pandemic. A medium-term financial forecast is attached at Appendix Five to this report.

12. **Budget and Equalities**

12.1 The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity for its residents; both through its policies aimed at reducing inequality of outcomes, and through its practices aimed at ensuring fair treatment for all and the provision of appropriate and culturally sensitive services that meet local people's needs.

12.2 In accordance with section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council must "have due regard", when making decisions, to the need to meet the following aims of our Public Sector Equality Duty :-

- (a) eliminate unlawful discrimination;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- (c) foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

12.3 Protected groups under the public sector equality duty are characterised by age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

12.4 When making decisions, the Council (or decision maker, in this case the City Mayor) must be clear about any equalities implications of the course of action proposed. In doing so, it must consider the likely impact on those likely to be affected by the recommendation; their protected characteristics; and (where negative impacts are anticipated) mitigating actions that can be taken to reduce or remove that negative impact.

12.5 This report seeks approval to the proposed budget strategy. The report sets out financial ceilings for each service which act as maxima above which the City Mayor cannot spend (subject to his power of virement). However, decisions on services to be provided within the budget ceilings are taken by managers or the City Mayor separately from the decision regarding the budget strategy. Where appropriate, an individual Equalities Impact Assessment for any service changes will be undertaken when these decisions are developed.

12.6 While this report does not seek approval to any specific service proposals, it does recommend a proposed council tax increase for the city's residents. The City

Council's proposed tax for 2021/22 is £1,694.92, an increase of just below 5% compared to 2020/21. As the recommended increase could have an impact on those required to pay it, an assessment has been carried out to inform decision makers of the potential equalities implications. This analysis is provided at Appendix Three.

- 12.7 Whilst there has been some support specifically arising from the impact of Covid-19 it is unclear what support will be in place in 2021/22. Council officers should continue to ensure that if any additional or on-going support that is put in place in the future, efforts are made to ensure that all sections of the community are able to access the support that they are entitled to. This may involve ensuring that there are accessible and possibly targeted communications where there may be barriers to access.
- 12.8 A number of risks to the budget are addressed within this report, such as the impact of Covid-19, economic downturn, adult social care pressures, costs of looked after children, the impact of Brexit and the uncertainty of not knowing plans for local government funding for next year. If these risks are not mitigated effectively, there could be a disproportionate impact on people from particular protected characteristics backgrounds and therefore ongoing consideration of the risks and any potential disproportionate equalities impacts, as well as mitigations to address disproportionate impacts for those with a particular protected characteristics, is required.

13. **Risk Assessment and Adequacy of Estimates**

- 13.1 Best practice requires me to identify any risks associated with the budget, and section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires me to report on the adequacy of reserves and the robustness of estimates.
- 13.2 In the current climate, it is inevitable that the budget carries significant risk, even more than in previous years. In my view, although very difficult, the budget for 2021/22 is achievable subject to the risks and issues described below.
- 13.3 The most significant risks in the 2021/22 budget include (but are not limited to) the ongoing effects of the coronavirus pandemic, which are affecting almost all areas of the Council's operations. However, there are also pre-existing pressures which continue to pose a risk to the financial position:
- (a) Adults social care spending pressures, specifically the risk of further growth in the cost of care packages;
 - (b) The costs of looked after children, which have seen growth nationally. These have not been significantly impacted by the pandemic, but we may see pressure build again when restrictions end;
 - (c) Continued shortfalls in service income, particularly in areas where service operation and demand have been affected by the pandemic. This includes sports and leisure facilities, De Montfort Hall and parking income;

- (d) If the economic downturn is longer or more severe than predicted, this could result in new cuts to grant; falling business rate income; and increased cost of council tax reductions for taxpayers on low incomes. It could also lead to a growing need for council services and an increase in bad debts;
- (e) This draft budget has been prepared before we know the full details of funding for 2021/22, or the Government's plans for local authority funding for 2022/23;
- (f) The impact of Brexit, after the transition period ends on 31st December 2020, is yet to be seen.

13.4 The budget seeks to manage these risks as follows:-

- (a) A minimum balance of £15m reserves will be maintained;
- (b) A further £10m of reserves has been identified to support short-term losses from the Covid pandemic in 2021/22;
- (c) A contingency of £2m has been included in the budget for 2021/22;
- (d) A prudent estimate of reserves required in 2020/21 has been made.

13.5 Subject to the above comments, I believe the Council's general and earmarked reserves to be adequate. I also believe estimates made in preparing the budget are robust. (Whilst no inflation is provided for the generality of running costs in 2021/22, some exceptions are made, and it is believed that services will be able to manage without an allocation).

14. **Consultation on the Draft Budget**

14.1 Comments on the draft budget will be sought from:-

- (a) The Council's scrutiny function;
- (b) Key partners and other representatives of communities of interest;
- (c) Business community representatives (a statutory consultee);
- (d) The Council's trade unions.

14.2 Comments will be incorporated into the final version of this report.

15. **Financial Implications**

15.1 This report is exclusively concerned with financial issues.

15.2 Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 makes it a criminal offence for any member with arrears of council tax which have been outstanding for two months or more to attend any meeting at which a decision affecting the budget is to be made unless the member concerned declares the arrears at the outset of the meeting and that as a result s/he will not be voting. The member can, however, still speak. The rules are more circumscribed for the City Mayor and Executive. Any executive member who has arrears outstanding for 2 months or more cannot take part at all.

16. **Legal Implications (Kamal Adatia, City Barrister)**

- 16.1 The budget preparations have been in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules – Council's Constitution – Part 4C. The decision with regard to the setting of the Council's budget is a function under the constitution which is the responsibility of the full Council.
- 16.2 At the budget-setting stage, Council is estimating, not determining, what will happen as a means to the end of setting the budget and therefore the council tax. Setting a budget is not the same as deciding what expenditure will be incurred. The Local Government Finance Act, 1992, requires an authority, through the full Council, to calculate the aggregate of various estimated amounts, in order to find the shortfall to which its council tax base has to be applied. The Council can allocate greater or fewer funds than are requested by the Mayor in his proposed budget.
- 16.3 As well as detailing the recommended council tax increase for 2021/22, the report also complies with the following statutory requirements:-
- (a) Robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations;
 - (b) Adequacy of reserves;
 - (c) The requirement to set a balanced budget.
- 16.4 Section 65 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992, places upon local authorities a duty to consult representatives of non-domestic ratepayers before setting a budget. There are no specific statutory requirements to consult residents, although in the preparation of this budget the Council will undertake tailored consultation exercises with wider stakeholders.
- 16.5 The discharge of the 'function' of setting a budget triggers the duty in s.149 of the Equality Act, 2010, for the Council to have "due regard" to its public sector equality duties. These are set out in paragraph 12. There are considered to be no specific proposals within this year's budget that could result in new changes of provision that could affect different groups of people sharing protected characteristics. Where savings are anticipated, equality assessments will be prepared as necessary. Directors and the City Mayor have freedom to vary or abort proposals under the scheme of virement where there are unacceptable equality consequences. As a consequence, there are no service-specific 'impact assessments' that accompany the budget. There is no requirement in law to undertake equality impact assessments as the only means to discharge the s.149 duty to have "due regard". The discharge of the duty is not achieved by pointing to one document looking at a snapshot in time, and the report evidences that the Council treats the duty as a live and enduring one. Indeed case law is clear that undertaking an EIA on an 'envelope-setting' budget is of limited value, and that it is at the point in time when policies are developed which reconfigure services to live within the budgetary constraint when impact is best assessed. However, an analysis of equality impacts has been

prepared in respect of the proposed increase in council tax, and this is set out in Appendix Three.

16.6 Judicial review is the mechanism by which the lawfulness of Council budget-setting exercises are most likely to be challenged. There is no sensible way to provide an assurance that a process of budget setting has been undertaken in a manner which is immune from challenge. Nevertheless the approach taken with regard to due process and equality impacts is regarded by the City Barrister to be robust in law.

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DRAFT

Budget ceilings

	2020/21 budget (revised)	Non- pay inflation	Spending Reviews already approved	Growth from budget reviews	Savings from budget reviews	2021/22 budget ceiling
<u>1. City Development & Neighbourhoods</u>						
<u>1.1 Neighbourhood & Environmental Services</u>						
Divisional Management	271.4					271.4
Regulatory Services	3,005.1					3,005.1
Waste Management	17,534.1				(25.0)	17,509.1
Parks & Open Spaces	3,891.3					3,891.3
Neighbourhood Services	5,761.3		(255.0)		(60.0)	5,446.3
Standards & Development	1,632.3					1,632.3
Divisional sub-total	32,095.5	0.0	(255.0)	0.0	(85.0)	31,755.5
<u>1.2 Tourism, Culture & Inward Investment</u>						
Arts & Museums	4,064.9			95.0		4,159.9
De Montfort Hall	550.4					550.4
City Centre	178.6					178.6
Place Marketing Organisation	377.8					377.8
Economic Development	26.4		(80.0)			(53.6)
Markets	(391.1)			250.0		(141.1)
Adult Skills	(870.4)					(870.4)
Divisional Management	181.0					181.0
Divisional sub-total	4,117.6	0.0	(80.0)	345.0	0.0	4,382.6
<u>1.3 Planning, Transportation & Economic Development</u>						
Transport Strategy	9,897.2		(50.0)		(550.0)	9,297.2
Highways	3,466.4					3,466.4
Planning	1,000.8				(25.0)	975.8
Divisional Management	134.4					134.4
Divisional sub-total	14,498.8	0.0	(50.0)	0.0	(575.0)	13,873.8
<u>1.4 Estates & Building Services</u>	4,667.1		(75.0)	1,500.0		6,092.1
<u>1.5 Housing Services</u>	2,591.8			750.0		3,341.8
<u>1.6 Departmental Overheads</u>						
School Organisation & Admissions	452.7					452.7
Overheads	568.3					568.3
Divisional sub-total	1,021.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1,021.0
DEPARTMENTAL TOTAL	58,991.8	0.0	(460.0)	2,595.0	(660.0)	60,466.8

Budget ceilings

	2020/21 budget (revised)	Non- pay inflation	Spending Reviews already approved	Growth from budget reviews	Savings from budget reviews	2021/22 budget ceiling
2. Adults						
2.1 Adult Social Care & Safeguarding						
Other Management & support	728.2					728.2
Safeguarding	146.1					146.1
Preventative Services	6,547.8					6,547.8
Independent Sector Care Package Costs	109,171.0	2,285.5	(70.0)	10,200.0		121,586.5
Care Management (Localities)	6,890.1					6,890.1
Divisional sub-total	123,483.2	2,285.5	(70.0)	10,200.0	0.0	135,898.7
2.2 Adult Social Care & Commissioning						
Enablement & Day Care	3,012.9					3,012.9
Care Management (LD & AMH)	5,011.3					5,011.3
Preventative Services	1,382.7				(90.0)	1,292.7
Contracts, Commissioning & Other Support	5,515.9				(50.0)	5,465.9
Departmental	(31,130.1)				(154.0)	(31,284.1)
Divisional sub-total	(16,207.3)	0.0	0.0	0.0	(294.0)	(16,501.3)
DEPARTMENT TOTAL	107,275.9	2,285.5	(70.0)	10,200.0	(294.0)	119,397.4
3. Education & Children's Services						
3.1 Strategic Commissioning & Business Support						
	1,296.0					1,296.0
3.2 Learning Quality & Performance						
Raising Achievement	494.8					494.8
Learning & Inclusion	1,055.7			241.0		1,296.7
Special Education Needs and Disabilities	9,499.8			2,807.0		12,306.8
Divisional sub-total	11,050.3	0.0	0.0	3,048.0	0.0	14,098.3
3.3 Children, Young People and Families						
Children In Need	11,235.0					11,235.0
Looked After Children	43,270.3	202.1				43,472.4
Safeguarding & QA	2,375.3					2,375.3
Early Help Targeted Services	5,355.3					5,355.3
Early Help Specialist Services	3,174.3					3,174.3
Divisional sub-total	65,410.2	202.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	65,612.3
3.4 Departmental Resources	(1,957.4)			3,000.0		1,042.6
DEPARTMENTAL TOTAL	75,799.1	202.1	0.0	6,048.0	0.0	82,049.2

Budget ceilings

	2020/21 budget (revised)	Non- pay inflation	Spending Reviews already approved	Growth from budget reviews	Savings from budget reviews	2021/22 budget ceiling
4. Health and Wellbeing						
Adults' Services	8,984.7				(100.0)	8,884.7
Children's 0-19 Services	8,544.5					8,544.5
Lifestyle Services	1,222.2				(35.0)	1,187.2
Staffing & Infrastructure & Other	2,134.4			130.0		2,264.4
Sports Services	2,493.7		(650.0)			1,843.7
DEPARTMENT TOTAL	23,379.5	0.0	(650.0)	130.0	(135.0)	22,724.5
5. Corporate Resources Department						
5.1 Delivery, Communications & Political Governance	5,960.1			1,035.0	(50.0)	6,945.1
5.2 Financial Services						
Financial Support	4,735.5			495.0	(400.0)	4,830.5
Revenues & Benefits	6,412.4			250.0		6,662.4
Divisional sub-total	11,147.9	0.0	0.0	745.0	(400.0)	11,492.9
5.3 Human Resources	3,952.3					3,952.3
5.4 Information Services	9,190.3		(17.0)		(36.0)	9,137.3
5.5 Legal Services	2,745.2			469.0		3,214.2
DEPARTMENTAL TOTAL	32,995.8	0.0	(17.0)	2,249.0	(486.0)	34,741.8
TOTAL -Service Budget Ceilings	298,442.1	2,487.6	(1,197.0)	21,222.0	(1,575.0)	319,379.7
<i>less public health grant</i>	(26,599.0)					(26,599.0)
<i>add provision for pay award</i>						700.0
NET TOTAL	271,843.1	2,487.6	(1,197.0)	21,222.0	(1,575.0)	293,480.7

Scheme of Virement

1. This appendix explains the scheme of virement which will apply to the budget, if it is approved by the Council.

Budget Ceilings

2. Directors are authorised to vire sums within budget ceilings without limit, providing such virement does not give rise to a change of Council policy.
3. Directors are authorised to vire money between any two budget ceilings within their departmental budgets, provided such virement does not give rise to a change of Council policy. The maximum amount by which any budget ceiling can be increased or reduced during the course of a year is £500,000. This money can be vired on a one-off or permanent basis.
4. Directors are responsible, in consultation with the appropriate Assistant Mayor if necessary, for determining whether a proposed virement would give rise to a change of Council policy.
5. Movement of money between budget ceilings is not virement to the extent that it reflects changes in management responsibility for the delivery of services.
6. The City Mayor is authorised to increase or reduce any budget ceiling. The maximum amount by which any budget ceiling can be increased during the course of a year is £5m. Increases or reductions can be carried out on a one-off or permanent basis.
7. The Director of Finance may vire money between budget ceilings where such movements represent changes in accounting policy, or other changes which do not affect the amounts available for service provision.
8. Nothing above requires the City Mayor or any director to spend up to the budget ceiling for any service.

Corporate Budgets

9. The following authorities are granted in respect of corporate budgets:
 - (a) the Director of Finance may incur costs for which there is provision in miscellaneous corporate budgets, except that any policy decision requires the approval of the City Mayor;
 - (b) the Director of Finance may allocate the provision for the 2021/22 pay award;
 - (c) The City Mayor may determine how the contingency can be applied.

Earmarked Reserves

10. Earmarked reserves may be created or dissolved by the City Mayor. In creating a reserve, the purpose of the reserve must be clear.
11. Directors may add sums to an earmarked reserve, from:

- (a) a budget ceiling, if the purposes of the reserve are within the scope of the service budget;
 - (b) a carry forward reserve, subject to the usual requirement for a business case.
12. Directors may spend earmarked reserves on the purpose for which they have been created.
 13. When an earmarked reserve is dissolved, the City Mayor shall determine the use of any remaining balance.

DRAFT

Equality Impact Assessment

1. **Purpose**

1.1 This appendix presents the equalities impact of a proposed 4.99% council tax increase.

2. **Who is affected by the proposal?**

2.1 As at October 2020, there are 129,850 properties liable for Council Tax in the city (excluding those registered as exempt, such as student households).

2.2 All working age households in Leicester are required to contribute towards their council tax bill. Our current council tax support scheme (CTSS) requires working age households to pay at least 20% of their council tax bill and sets out to ensure that the most vulnerable householders are given some relief in response to financial hardship they may experience. For 2021/22, some additional relief is also expected to be given, which the Government will fund as part of its response to the Covid pandemic. Details are not yet known.

2.3 Council tax support for pensioner households follows different rules. Low-income pensioners are eligible for up to 100% relief through the CTSS scheme.

3. **How are they affected?**

3.1 The table below sets out the financial impact of the proposed council tax increase on different properties, before any discounts or reliefs are applied. It shows the weekly increase in each band, and the minimum weekly increase for those in receipt of a reduction under the CTSS for working-age households. It disregards any additional Covid-related relief.

Band	No. of Properties	Weekly increase	Minimum Weekly Increase under CTSS
A-	267	£0.86	£0.17
A	77,269	£1.03	£0.21
B	25,803	£1.20	£0.24
C	14,833	£1.38	£0.41
D	6,181	£1.55	£0.58
E	3,351	£1.89	£0.93
F	1,518	£2.24	£1.27
G	591	£2.58	£1.62
H	37	£3.10	£2.13
Total	129,850		

Notes: "A-" properties refer to band A properties receiving an extra reduction for Disabled Relief. Households may be entitled to other discounts on their council tax bill, which are not shown in the table above.

3.2 For band B properties (almost 80% of the city's properties are in bands A or B), the proposed annual increase in council tax is £62.76; the minimum annual increase for households eligible under the CTSS would be £12.55 (for a working-age household, and excluding the impact of any other discounts).

- 3.3 In most cases, the change in council tax (around £1.20 per week for a band B property with no discounts; and less than 25p per week if eligible for the full 80% reduction under the CTSS) is a small proportion of disposable income, and a small contributor to any squeeze on household budgets. A council tax increase would be applicable to all properties - the increase would not target any one protected group, rather it would be an increase that is applied across the board. However, it is recognised that this may have a more significant impact among households with a low disposable income.
- 3.4 Many households at all levels of income have seen significant income shocks due to the coronavirus pandemic and the economic downturn. However, to date, these have been partly cushioned by national policies including furlough and self-employment support schemes, the £20/week increase to universal credit, and mortgage payment holidays. As these policies draw to an end, some households' disposable income is likely to fall further.
- 3.5 It is difficult at this stage to know where these pressures will fall in future, but it is likely that some protected groups will see greater impacts. Up to September, there were higher rates of job losses among younger people; Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups; and lower-paid workers¹.
- 3.6 Ongoing welfare system reforms will also have a disproportionate effect on some lower-income groups, in particular the rollout of Universal Credit. Research before the pandemic by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF) has identified certain groups who are particularly likely to be on a low income² and may therefore see a disproportionate effect from a small (in absolute terms) increase in council tax. These include lone parents, single-earner couples and larger families (with 3 or more children).

4. **Alternative options**

- 4.1 Whilst the current budget does not propose significant reductions to services, this is very much a holding position due to the pandemic. Cuts in future years are believed to be inevitable. Without a council tax increase, or with a lower council tax increase, over time there would have to be greater cuts to services. A reduced tax increase would represent a permanent diminution of our income unless we hold a council tax referendum in a future year. In my view, such a referendum is unlikely to support a higher tax rise. It would also require a greater use of reserves (which are then unavailable to spend on services) or cuts to services in 2020/21. Whilst there is a Government suggestion that the ASC precept may be capable of being phased over more than one year, we do not have the details or understand the implications.
- 4.2 It is not possible to say where these cuts would fall; however, certain protected groups (e.g. older people; families with children; and people with disabilities) could face disproportionate impacts from reductions to services. Over half of the increase

¹ *Jobs, Jobs, Jobs: Evaluating the effect of the current economic crisis on the UK labour market*, Resolution Foundation, October 2020

² *A Minimum Income Standard for the United Kingdom in 2019*, JRF, July 2019; updated July 2020.

(3% of the proposed 5%) is for the Social Care precept, which is specifically to support the increasing cost pressures in these areas.

5. **Mitigating actions**

- 5.1 For residents likely to experience short term financial crises as a result of the cumulative impacts of the above risks, the Council has a range of mitigating actions. These include: funding through Discretionary Housing Payments, Council Tax Discretionary Relief and Community Support Grant awards; the council's work with voluntary and community sector organisations to provide food to local people where it is required – through the council's or partners' food banks; through schemes which support people getting into work (and include cost reducing initiatives that address high transport costs such as providing recycled bicycles); and through support to social welfare advice services. The Council is also running a welfare benefits take-up campaign, to raise awareness of entitlements and boost incomes among vulnerable groups.
- 5.2 In the November Spending Review, the government announced additional funding in 2021/22 to support households that are least able to afford council tax. Details of this had not been made available at the time of writing; but it is hoped that this will allow us to further reduce the impact on low-income households.

6. **What protected characteristics are affected?**

- 6.1 The table below describes how each protected characteristic is likely to be affected by the proposed council tax increase. The table sets out anticipated impacts, along with mitigating actions available to reduce negative impacts.
- 6.2 Some protected characteristics are not, as far as we can tell, disproportionately affected (as will be seen from the table) because there is no evidence to suggest they are affected differently from the population at large. They may, of course, be disadvantaged if they also have other protected characteristics that are likely to be affected, as indicated in the following analysis of impact based on protected characteristic.

Analysis of impact based on protected characteristic

Protected characteristic	Impact of proposal:	Risk of negative impact:	Mitigating actions:
<p>Age</p> <p>65</p>	<p>Older people are least affected by a potential increase in council tax. Older people (pension age & older) have been relatively protected from the impacts of the recession & welfare cuts, as they receive protection from inflation in the uprating of state pensions. Low-income pensioners also have more generous (up to 100%) council tax relief. However, in the current financial climate, a lower council tax increase would require even greater cuts to services in due course. While it is not possible to say where these cuts would fall exactly, there are potential negative impacts for this group as older people are the primary service users of Adult Social Care.</p> <p>Working age people bear the brunt of the impacts of welfare reform reductions – particularly those with children. Whilst an increasing proportion of working age residents are in work, national research indicates that those on low wages are failing to get the anticipated uplift of the National Living Wage. There is some evidence that low-paid workers, and younger people, have been more likely to lose their jobs in the pandemic.</p>	<p>Working age households and families with children – incomes squeezed through low wages and reducing levels of benefit income.</p> <p>Younger people more likely to have faced job losses in the pandemic.</p>	<p>Access to council discretionary funds for individual financial crises; access to council and partner support for food; and advice on managing household budgets.</p>
<p>Disability</p>	<p>Disability benefits have been reduced over time as thresholds for support have increased.</p> <p>The tax increase could have an impact on such household incomes. However, in the current financial climate, a lower council tax increase would require even greater cuts to services in due course. While it is not possible to say where these cuts would fall exactly, there are potential negative impacts for this group as disabled people are more likely to be service users of Adult Social Care.</p>	<p>Further erode quality of life being experienced by disabled people as their household incomes are squeezed further as a result of reduced benefits.</p>	<p>Disability benefits are disregarded in the assessment of need for CTSS purposes. Access to council discretionary funds for individual financial crises; access to council and partner support for food; and advice on better managing budgets.</p>

Protected characteristic	Impact of proposal:	Risk of negative impact:	Mitigating actions:
Gender Reassignment	No disproportionate impact is attributable specifically to this characteristic.		
Pregnancy and Maternity	Maternity benefits have not been frozen and therefore kept in line with inflation. However, other social security benefits have been frozen, but without disproportionate impact arising for this specific protected characteristic.		
Race	Those with white backgrounds are disproportionately on low incomes (indices of multiple deprivation) and in receipt of social security benefits. Some BME people are also low income and on benefits. Nationally, one-earner couples have seen particular falls in real income and are disproportionately of Asian background – which suggests an increasing impact on this group. There is some evidence that minority ethnic groups have been more likely to face job losses in the pandemic.	Household income being further squeezed through low wages and reducing levels of benefit income.	Access to council discretionary funds for individual financial crises, access to council and partner support for food and advice on managing household budgets. Where required, interpretation and translation will be provided in line with the Council's policy to remove barriers to accessing the support identified.
Religion or Belief	No disproportionate impact is attributable specifically to this characteristic.		
Sex	Disproportionate impact on women who tend to manage household budgets and are responsible for childcare costs. Women are disproportionately lone parents. Analysis has identified lone parents as a group particularly likely to lose income from welfare reforms.	Incomes squeezed through low wages and reducing levels of benefit income. Increased risk for women as they are more likely to be lone parents.	If in receipt of Universal Credit or tax credits, a significant proportion of childcare costs are met by these sources. Access to council discretionary funds for individual financial crises, access to council and partner support for food and advice on managing household budgets.
Sexual Orientation	No disproportionate impact is attributable specifically to this characteristic.		

Earmarked Reserves

1. The table below shows the current position on our Earmarked Reserves, these balances will be different at the end of the year. These figures take account of the release of £4.6m from departmental reserves to support the managed reserves strategy:

	Current Balance £000
<u>Ring-fenced Reserves</u>	
School Balances	14,740
DSG not delegated to schools	5,577
School Capital Fund	2,750
Schools Buy Back	2,486
Education & Skills Funding Agency Learning Programmes	863
Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation Funding	822
Subtotal Ring-fenced Reserves	27,238
<u>Departmental Earmarked Reserves</u>	
Children's Services Pressures	8,820
Social Care Reserve	8,322
ICT Development Fund	6,265
City Development & Neighbourhoods	5,161
Delivery, Communications & Political Governance	2,971
Health & Wellbeing Division	2,888
Financial Services Reserve	2,849
NHS Joint Working Projects	2,483
Housing	2,118
Other Departmental Reserves	464
Subtotal Departmental Reserves	42,341
<u>Corporate Reserves</u>	
Managed Reserves Strategy	69,055
Capital Programme Reserve	57,666
Covid 19 Grants	10,849
Insurance Fund	8,519
BSF Financing	7,493
Welfare Reserve	5,505
Severance Fund	4,821
Service Transformation Fund	3,730
Other Corporate Reserves	4,537
Subtotal Corporate Reserves	172,175
Total Earmarked Reserves	241,754

2. Earmarked reserves can be divided into ring-fenced reserves, which are funds held by the Council but for which we have obligations to other partners or organisations; departmental reserves, which are held for specific services; and corporate reserves, which are held for purposes applicable to the organisation as a whole.
3. Ring-fenced reserves include:-
 - Reserves for schools:
 - School Capital Fund
 - Schools Buyback
 - Dedicated Schools Grant
 - Schools balances
 - Two smaller reserves held because grant funding has been received to fund specific schemes.
4. Departmental reserves include amounts held by service departments to fund specific projects or identified service pressures. Significant amounts include:-
 - **Children's Services:** to balance the 2020/21 and future years' budgets.
 - **Social Care Reserve:** to assist in the management of budget pressures in adults' and children's social care.
 - **ICT Development Fund** this reserve funds a rolling programme for network and server upgrades and replacement of PC stock. It also includes funding put aside at the 2019/20 outturn to fund initiatives to make our ICT more resilient and improve the remote working offer.
 - **City Development and Neighbourhoods:** to meet known additional pressures, including one off costs associated with highways functions and the cost of defending planning decisions.
 - **Health & Wellbeing:** to support service pressures, channel shift and transitional costs. As part of the review of departmental reserves, £1.2m has been released to the Managed Reserves Strategy.
 - **Delivery, Communications & Political Governance:** This reserve was principally setup for the funding of the Digital Transformation Team and other temporary staffing costs. As part of this report, the cost of these teams is being included in the base budget, thus releasing £1.6m to the Managed Reserves Strategy. The remaining balance relates to elections and other projects within the department.
 - **Financial Services:** for expenditure on improving the Council's finance systems; spikes in benefit processing and overpayment recovery; and to mitigate budget pressures including reducing grant income to the Revenues & Benefits service. The balance is net of £1.2m which has been released from this reserve, which was

previously funding specific teams that have now been included as permanent growth to the budget as part of this report.

- **NHS joint working projects:** for joint projects with the NHS.
- **Housing:** predominantly held to meet spikes in bed & breakfast costs and government funding to support recent arrivals to the city.
- **Other** this includes a number of smaller departmental reserves. £0.3m has been transferred to the Managed Reserves Strategy as posts in Legal Services have now been included in the budget. In addition, a number of smaller reserves have been reviewed releasing £0.3m to the Managed Reserves Strategy.

5. Corporate reserves include:-

- **Managed Reserves Strategy:** a key element to delivering this budget strategy, as set out in paragraph 9 of the main report;
- **Capital Programme Reserve:** to support approved spending on the Council's capital programme;
- **Covid 19 Grants** are grants received from the Government to meet the costs of the pandemic. This is not the full amount of the grants – just the ones received in March which we are required to treat as earmarked reserves;
- **Insurance Fund:** to meet the cost of claims which are self-insured;
- **BSF Financing:** to manage costs over the remaining life of the BSF scheme and lifecycle maintenance costs of the redeveloped schools;
- **Welfare Reserve:** set aside to support welfare claimants who face crisis, following the withdrawal of government funding; together with providing welfare support more generally, which includes any long term implications of the Covid-19 pandemic;
- **Severance Fund:** to facilitate ongoing savings by meeting the redundancy and other costs arising from budget cuts;
- **Service Transformation Fund:** to fund projects which redesign services enabling them to function more effectively at reduced cost;
- **Other reserves:** includes monies for “spend to save” schemes that reduce energy consumption, the combined heat and power reserve, and the surplus property reserve which is used to prepare assets for disposal.

Medium Term Financial Outlook 2022/23 – 2023/24

1. A one-year budget has been presented for 2021/22. After March 2022, we have (at the time of writing) very little certainty about funding arrangements or the future economic outlook. As a result, medium-term planning is a somewhat precarious exercise.
2. Our central forecasts for the period up to 2023/24 are set out in the table below. The key assumptions (and the associated risks and uncertainties) are further explained below.

	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m
Net service budget (including inflation)	293.5	320.2	347.3
Corporate and other centrally held budgets	8.0	8.5	8.9
Contingency	2.0		
Planning provision		3.0	6.0
Expenditure total	303.5	331.7	362.2
Business rates income	62.2	63.7	64.3
Top-up payment	48.0	48.9	49.8
Revenue Support Grant	29.0	29.6	30.1
Less assumed future cuts		(5.0)	(10.0)
Council Tax	127.8	131.1	135.0
Collection Fund Deficit 2020/21 (phased)	(2.4)	(2.2)	(2.2)
Govt support toward deficit	1.8	1.7	1.7
Social care support	12.0	21.0	30.0
New Homes Bonus	4.9	3.9	2.9
Income Total	283.3	292.7	301.6
Budget gap	20.2	39.0	60.6

Expenditure

3. The expenditure budgets above include the unavoidable cost pressures, and achievable savings, set out in section 6 of the main budget report. No further savings are assumed, so any additional savings will help close the gap. The estimated cost of pay awards is included, as is non-pay inflation on unavoidable costs in social care and the waste management contract. A planning provision of £3m per year in each of 2022/23 and 2023/24 has been included towards any future unavoidable cost pressures.

4. There are several areas where expenditure pressures may exceed these forecasts. These include:
- The costs of care packages in Adult Social Care, if demand increases above our forecasts or there are unavoidable cost pressures such as unexpected further increases to the National Minimum Wage;
 - Further growth in demand-led Children’s Social Care costs;
 - Potential shortfalls in service income, if demand does not return to pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2022/23;
 - A prolonged economic downturn is likely to increase demand across a range of services.

Income

5. We assume that council tax increases will continue to be restricted by the referendum rules, although we do not yet know the rules after 2021/22. For planning purposes, the table above assumes council tax increases of 2% per year; and that council tax collection rates return to previous levels by 2023. If the economic downturn is longer, or more severe, than our projections this will have a further effect on income.
6. The rates forecasts presented above assume no substantial changes to the funding we receive. The government has proposed significant reforms to the funding system, although these have now been delayed several times. These include increasing the proportion of rates retained locally to 75%. In itself, the change should be financially neutral, as other funding elements will be reduced to offset the additional retained rates. There may also be reforms to the system to cushion the impact of appeals.
7. There is likely to be a more substantial effect on the Council’s finances from the “fair funding review” planned for the same date, which will redistribute resources between councils. At the time of writing, it is unclear what the impact will be on individual authorities. We should benefit from the new formula fully reflecting the differences in council taxbase between different areas of the country; however, there are other pressures on the funding available, including intensive lobbying from some authorities over perceived extra costs in rural areas.
8. For planning purposes, the budget figures for 2022/23 and 2023/24 assume additional real-terms cuts of £5 million per year each year. This represents a significantly slower rate of cuts than we have seen in the period from 2013 to 2020. If the fair funding review and overall funding position are less favourable, these cuts could be significantly higher.
9. A longer or more severe economic downturn will also pose a risk to income projections. This could result in new cuts to grant; falling business rate

income; and increased cost of council tax reductions for taxpayers on low incomes.

10. The assumed additional funding for social care (increasing by £9m per year from 2022/23) is also very uncertain. While the government has long acknowledged the need for further support to the social care sector, no detailed proposals have been published. (In practice, further support may come via a combination of direct grant, the ability to raise council tax further, and other mechanisms, but is shown here as grant for clarity).

Summary of medium-term projections

11. The projections above show a significant – and increasing – funding gap over the next three years. There are substantial risks to these projections, which are based on an assumption of a relatively quick economic recovery and limited additional cuts imposed by government. Even on the more optimistic projections, available reserves will no longer be able to meet this gap beyond 2021/22, and additional deep cuts will be required.
12. This emphasises the need to make a prompt start on the financial review required prior to 2022/23.

Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Committee

Library Bookbus Consultation

Lee Warner

Head of Neighbourhood Services

28th January 2021

Background

- Neighbourhood Services offer a wide range of programmes to engage Leicester children and families in reading activities
- The service is formally committed to the Universal Offers developed by Libraries Connected including:
- **The Reading Offer:** Libraries encourage individuals of all ages to read for pleasure and purpose to increase their understanding of the world, stretch their imaginations and think differently.
- **The Children's Promise:** Every child and young person in libraries is inspired to read for pleasure, has access to a diverse range of materials, can engage in a variety of digital activities and can take part in activities that improve their well-being.

The local context

Manifesto commitments 2019-23

Lifelong Learning:

- 75 • “Work to ensure that all children grow up in homes with books for them to read and enjoy, including multi lingual texts”
- “Expand our reading projects – Our Best Book, Reading Rampage and the summer reading challenge”

Sustainable Leicester:

- “Continue to convert council fleet vehicles to clean energy/low emissions”



Children's Reading Programmes

Leicester Libraries work with a range of partners to offer a wide range of reading programmes including:

- Summer Reading Challenge
- Our Best Book (Primary schools book awards)
- Bookstart programme (with BookTrust)
- Small Wonders project (with Spark Arts)
- Amongst Ideal Friends (Libraries East Midlands)
- Children's Centres book collections
- Children's Bookbuses



Bookbus Service

Neighbourhood Services currently operate 2 diesel mobile library vehicles:

Early Years Bookbus (0-5yrs)

- visits early years' settings such as children, young people and family centres, nurseries and playgroups by appointment

Children's Bookbus (0-11yrs)

- regular weekly routes and stops
- Afternoons/evenings: book loan service to areas around the city to give easy access to books and develop a passion for reading in children.
- Mornings: visits primary schools on ad hoc basis

Both Bookbuses attend festivals during spring/summer

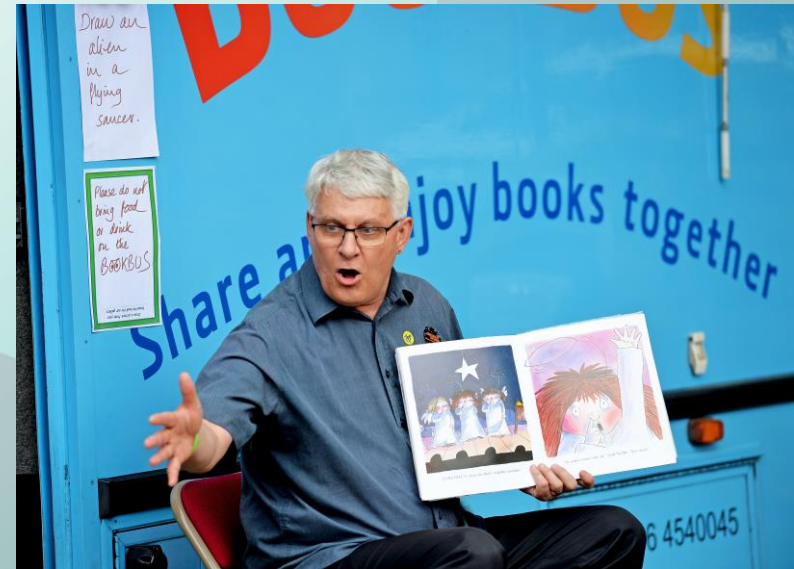
Why we are consulting

- Access to books and library services is vitally important for Leicester children to enjoy reading for pleasure and for learning
- BookBus vehicles are over 12 years old and we need to replace them and refresh the service we provide
- 78 • In view of the council's Climate Emergency Strategy and the Air Quality Action Plan, we plan to replace the two diesel vehicles with one ultra-low emissions vehicle (ULEV)
- We are asking for views on the proposed changes to the BookBus service, including accessibility, convenience and ease of use.
- We want to hear ideas for improvements to the layout, stock and services to be offered by the new vehicle

Children's Bookbus Service

- Investment to deliver improved service
- Bookbus service to neighbourhoods would continue to take place in the afternoon between 3pm to 7pm as now
- Opportunity to review the specific route stops to ensure best use of the bus
- Opportunity to improve vehicle design & access

79



Early Years Bookbus Service

- Visits to early years settings enhanced to deliver training in storytelling and early years' book use so the early years' staff can deliver their own sessions more regularly throughout the year.
- Visits would be longer, but would take place once a year instead of 3-4 times a year.
- Early years' groups will be supported to obtain extended loans and larger book collections from their local library or children, young people and family centres instead of through the BookBus.
- BookBus will continue to visit primary schools, festivals and community events to share stories and promote reading to children

Climate Change

- One environmentally friendly electric vehicle instead of two diesel ones significantly lowers carbon emissions
- Reduced replacement cost
- Lower maintenance and fuel costs in the future
- ∞₁ • Contributes to the council's action plan to improve air quality in the city as part of the drive to reduce transport emissions
- The electric Bookbus will have zero emissions and therefore will emit no Nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter
- A practical and visible commitment to combatting climate change in the heart of local neighbourhood delivery

Strategic context

The proposal contributes to:

- Leicester Climate Emergency Strategy: April 2020 – March 2023
- ∞• Leicester's Air Quality Action Plan 2015-2026

The early implementation of an electric mobile library vehicle would be a in the region and one of the first in the country

Consultation

- 18th November 2020 – 31 January 2021
- Open to all on consultation hub:
<https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/>
- Direct text messages to families using weekly stops
- Letters sent to all early years group leaders
- Schools and Children, Family & Young People Centres
- Young People's Council

Any Questions?



Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

Procurement of Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Services for Leicester

Date of Commission meeting: 28th January 2021

Lead Director: John Leach



Leicester
City Council

Useful Information:

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Daxa Pancholi, Head of Community Safety and Protection
- Author contact details: (37) 0203

1. Summary

- 1.1 Four city council domestic and sexual violence service contracts are scheduled to end 31st March 2022. Through a period of joint commissioning with the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire, Leicestershire County Council and Rutland County Council, these and other services and needs have been reviewed. As a consequence, a proposed service system has been developed which has been out to public consultation.
- 1.2 The proposed service system will involve some parties procuring services for all of Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and others procuring services which will be specific to their local area.
- 1.3 A joint working agreement has been drafted to cover the joint commissioning approach. This provides a framework for ongoing co-ordination and it supports understanding of the entire service system across Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland.
- 1.4 The proposal is to contract for 3years with the option to extend for a further two years. This will give stability to service providers operating in the sector and the vulnerable population they will work with. The tenders will be assessed weighted towards quality (80%), and the intention is to have an element of service user assessment, as applied in the 2015 procurement.
- 1.5 A series of consultation workshops were held in 2018 followed by a public consultation process and soft market test towards the end of 2019. The model was reviewed early in 2020 following the public consultation. March 2020-May 2020 commissioning work was paused due to the impact of COVID-19. Subsequently a further soft market test was developed and carried out in October 2020 for specific input into ITS co-ordination solutions and learning from COVID-19. At each point the model has been refined.
- 1.6 City council funding for this commissioning exercise is £769,000 per annum, which incorporates £75,000 public health funding¹. The intention is that council resource is spent on: three contracts for domestic abuse victim-survivor sole provision (£565,000), and one contract for interventions with domestic abuse perpetrators and their partners and ex-partners/victims (£164,000). Provisional amounts are currently allocated to each contract however the split between contracts may be subject to adjustment for reasons including the outcome of the procurement or government funding announcements. Around £40,000 will be needed for direct salary cost related

¹ See paper brought to Executive August 2019

to contract support.

- 1.7 The Police and Crime Commissioner will commission sexual violence services for the region and a helpline and engagement service, which will be for sexual and domestic violence and abuse and the main access point to the entire service system. They will also continue to fund an out of court disposal project (CARA) for perpetrators.
- 1.8 Reports to police of domestic and sexual violence and abuse in Leicester have seen year on year increases over the last five years. Leicester's commissioned services are accessed by large numbers of people and the children and family service has seen yearly increases in referrals.
- 1.9 The Domestic Abuse Bill² is processing through parliament and anticipated to bring new duties from April 2021. This will bring new statutory duties for the city council around partnership work, housing and homelessness and the provision of accommodation related support services. There has been a consultation on the allocation of funding to local authorities to fulfil obligations of the Act but no final announcement to date.
- 1.10 The intention is that all of the joint commissioning parties mentioned in 1.1 will secure permission to procure before the end of February 2021 and go out to tender April 2021. This should allow 12-weeks for tender submissions to be developed by the market and four months for implementation of new service, ready for delivery on 1st April 2022.

2. Recommendation(s) to scrutiny

The scrutiny commission are recommended to consider the proposed procurement of domestic and sexual violence and abuse services for Leicester.

3. Supporting Information

- 3.1 A series of stakeholder engagement workshops were held autumn 2018 to identify good practice, needs and models which would address those needs. Following this an initial proposal was shaped.
- 3.2 Public consultation and a soft market test took place September to November 2019. There were 114 responses to the consultation survey. Additional views were given through various presentations and engagement sessions throughout the consultation period. 65 responses were completed for the Leicester survey with a further 16 people residing in Leicester completing the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland survey. Over 75% of comments about the range of proposals, from those completing the Leicester survey, were positive.

² This will be subject to a separate report to the Executive

Many respondents said that the proposed model was similar to existing provision, but a simpler pathway.

- 3.3 Revisions were made to the model to better manage the risks highlighted through the consultation process and a new draft service system issued October 2020 as part of a further soft market test.
- 3.4 Service users responded to the online public consultation and were also directly engaged.
- 3.5 The cost of domestic abuse in England and Wales was estimated to be approximately £66bn for victims of domestic abuse for the year ending March 2017.
- 3.6 In the year ending March 2019, across England and Wales, an estimated 2.4 million adults aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse (1.6 million women and 786,000 men).
- 3.7 Joint commissioning on domestic and sexual abuse services, across the sub-region, was first undertaken in 2015. The national statement of expectations explains the actions local areas should take to ensure victims of violence against women and girls³ get the help they need and formed part of the [strategy to end violence against women and girls 2016 to 2020](#).
- 3.8 Joint need assessments on domestic and sexual violence and abuse were completed by Leicester City Council for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland in 2017 and 2019. Under the new sub-regional governance structure for domestic and sexual violence and abuse there is now a data sub-group.
- 3.9 In March 2020 the government re-introduced the Domestic Abuse Bill into this Parliament. The Bill includes a new duty on Tier 1 local authorities in England to provide support for victims and their children within safe accommodation. Subject to the successful passage of the Bill, the new duty will commence in April 2021. The [government response to the consultation on future support in domestic abuse safe accommodation](#) sets out more details of how the proposed new duty will work and can help local authorities in early planning for implementation.
- 3.10 Leicester's commissioned services are subject to national quality standards including those of Respect, Women's Aid, Safe Lives, Lime Culture and the Helpline Partnership. This helps to ensure safe practice with this vulnerable population.
- 3.11 The MHCLG is expected to release funding specific to the new duties under the Domestic Abuse Act and has recently consulted on how these funds should be allocated. The MHCLG currently fund the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland 'Hope Project' which provides additional refuge provision in the city and county together with wraparound multi-disciplinary support, for victims of

³ As predominant victims, not exclusive

domestic abuse with one or more of the following needs: mental health support, substance use, immigration, being from a black or minority ethnic community and/or language.

- 3.12 A summary of need, evidenced through the 2017 and 2019 need assessments, was provided in the Executive briefing of August 2019. The current city council commissioned services are well established and have been delivering since December 2015. The helpline receives over 9500 calls each year, of which around 4000 are known to be from Leicester callers. Nearly 2000 contacts to victims take place 'out of hours'⁴. Around 500 families are referred annually to the 'children, young people and family' service for support. Approximately 800 referrals are received annually for safe accommodation (many from out of the city). Around 150 perpetrators are referred to the voluntary interventions service each year and through this their partners and ex partners receive a direct approach and offer of support: 60% of whom have not previously approached any services directly for support themselves.
- 3.13 The most common perpetrator risk, identified through the voluntary interventions service, is that of having witnessed domestic abuse as a child. This is followed by mental ill health and being an offender.
- 3.14 General support and information is the highest recorded need for victims, followed by housing and health (physical and mental). Just under 70% accessing current services are parents. Financial needs are also common and have risen in recent quarters.
- 3.15 Reported lengths of abuse indicate that those over 60 have waited longer before accessing help. The average length of time for domestic abuse victims in Leicester is just under 4 years. Those accessing support from our commissioned 'support and information' services are often experiencing abuse from an ex-intimate partner, and there are also those experiencing abuse from family members.
- 3.16 Higher levels of physical violence and jealous and controlling behaviours are reported by Leicester victims than in the national Insights dataset. Those with a known alcohol need, whilst a low proportion of all victims accessing support, tend to have lower positive outcomes across a range of indicators.
- 3.17 Research and engagement has shown the importance of having support accessible within a range of safe accommodation related support services. We also understand that stable funding and effective commissioning of support within safe accommodation is a vital accompaniment to successful delivery of these services⁵.

⁴ Defined as 9am-5pm

⁵

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/839171/Domestic_Abuse_Duty_Gov_Response_to_Consultation.pdf

3.18 During consultation, survivors reiterated the importance of have options for perpetrators, including the ability to remove perpetrators of abuse as well as options for victims to move to a place of safety.

3.19 The children, young people and family service recorded that concerns for children were most frequently identified around relationships with family members, mental health and coping strategies. The average time they were exposed to abuse was reported at over 5 years. 92% of the children were at home when the abuse took place.

3.20 An equality impact assessment began in 2018 and is being considered throughout the commissioning process. It is attached to this paper as appendix two.

3.21 Current commissioned services

3.21.1 Current service providers of city council contracts share a common case management system which allows them to provide co-ordinated care. There has been several occasions over the 5 years of contract that the providers have been concerned about their ability to meet demand, which fluctuates throughout the year (to no discernible pattern) and through the week, and can be impacted by national and local campaigns and changes in police or other partners process. Around 40 trained volunteers assist with service delivery across the largest contract, the support and information contract.

3.21.2 Cases are triaged according to risk of homicide or serious injury, in cases of domestic abuse, and impact including suicidal intent for cases of sexual abuse. New weekly check ins and befriending services have been developed to meet demand over the covid-19 period, which initially saw referrals drop significantly, whilst need for support of existing clients increased.

3.21.3 Timely and co-ordinated engagement and liaison with the referrer (if not self-referred) appear critical. Work is ongoing to identify other common attrition points and factors that impact on individual outcomes.

3.22 Proposed service system

3.22.1 The proposed service system model is attached at appendix one.

3.23 Proposed procurement approach

Provisional funding allocation across parties is outlined in the table below. This may be subject to change for reasons including the outcome of the procurement or government funding announcements.

Funding and service	PCC (£)	City Council (£)	County (£)	Rutland (£)	Totals (£)
Helpline & Engagement	435,455	0	0	0	435,455
DA City adults (16+)	0	225,000	0	0	225,000
DA County/Rutland	0	0	205,877	56,984	262,861
Sexual Violence	177,053	0	0	0	177,053
City accommodation related support	0	160,000	0	0	160,000
County refuge	0	0	115,000	0	115,000
CARA	30,000	0	0	0	30,000
Perpetrator Interventions	40,000	164,000	26123	2,016	232,139
City DA Children and Family	0	180,000	0	0	180,000
Totals	682,508	729,000	347,000	59,000	1,817,508

Provision type	Specs	No. Lots	No contracts	Lead
Accommodation related support	2	2	2	City Council and County leading separate lots and procurements
Domestic Abuse (16+)	1	2	2	City Council and county leading separate lots and procurements
Perpetrators	1	1	2	City Council (CARA separate PCC contract)
Helpline and Engagement	1	1	1	PCC
Sexual Violence	1	1	1	PCC
DA Children, Young People and Family	1	1	1	City Council

4. Financial, legal and other implications

4.1 Financial implications

The revenue budget for commissioning of domestic and sexual violence and abuse support service for 2020-21 is £694,800. With an additional £75,000 funding secured from Public Health monies, our current commitment through contracts of the services delivered in Leicester is going to be £769,800.

Colin Sharpe ext. 4081

4.2 Legal implications

Legal and procurement teams are engaged in the new procurement.

The consultation responses have been considered and these have fed into the decision-making process and recommendations outlined in this report.

Shireen Eliyas, Qualified Lawyer ext 4479

4.3. Climate Change implications

Following the council's declaration of a climate emergency in 2019 the council has an important role to play in addressing carbon emissions relating to the delivery of its services, and those of partners. As a result, where practical, commissioning and procurement should take the need to reduce carbon emissions into account. This could be done through, for example, requiring greater use of low carbon transport and efficient buildings, and following the council's Sustainable Procurement guidelines.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

4.4 Equality Impact Assessment

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have statutory duties, including the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, decision makers must pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act, to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

The recommendation of the report is to approve the procurement of DVSA services outlined within the report. The overall aim is to have a positive equality impact across all protected characteristics. The protected characteristics of sex, ethnicity, age, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity are all of specific relevance due to the data surrounding prevalence for certain groups, specific potential or actual barriers to accessing DVSA services, or specific needs which would need to be accounted for and met within a DVSA service related to their protected characteristics, although these barriers and

needs may differ for different people or groups. The Equality Impact Assessment explores any potential disproportionate negative impacts in greater detail and considers ways in which the accessibility of the services may be improved via the contract. Decision makers should refer to the EIA and the consultation and engagement findings in deciding on whether to approve the model and, consequently, approval of the procurement.

The Public Sector Equality Duty cannot be delegated and, therefore, remains with the commissioning authority. Therefore, decision makers must be assured that any disproportionate impacts in relation to a protected characteristic/s are identified in the EIA and consequently addressed via the service specification, and ultimately the service contract. This enables robust contract monitoring and provides a mechanism for both monitoring and also proactively addressing any issues that arise from an equalities perspective during the course of the contract, as the expectation of what will be delivered in terms of equalities outcomes will have been made clear from the outset. Decision makers must also take into account the evidence provided in the EIA, including issues raised in the consultation and engagement.

Hannah Watkins, Equalities Manager ext. 375811

4.5 Other Implications

Procurement

The report sets out that approximately 12 months has been allowed for procurement and implementation based on advertising tenders in Spring 2021. This should be sufficient time however the timeline does not allow for slippage. Anything that can be done to bring this forward should be done to ensure timely delivery as a collaborative procurement such as this is likely to be complex and time-consuming and there are likely to be TUPE implications which means an implementation of period of at least three months should be allowed for.

It would be important to commit to a detailed timeline once permission to procure has been secured by all partners to ensure timescales are met and delivery is not impacted.

It is positive to see that further market engagement with providers has been undertaken to inform future models and take into account learnings from COVID-19.

Hussain Dakri

5. Background information and other papers:

6. Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1: Draft Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse (DSVA) Service System Description⁶

Appendix 2: Working Copy Equality Impact Assessment DSVA Commissioning

7. **Is this a private report?** No

⁶ Dated 15/10/20

APPENDIX ONE

Draft Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse (DSVA) Service System Description⁷

Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council, Rutland County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire are jointly re-commissioning a series of sexual violence and domestic abuse (SVDA) services across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR). Our funding represents a significant proportion of the specialist services available in the area, but not all. To garner maximum impact, a co-ordinated response and value for money we have taken a joint commissioning approach to the next services we will collectively commission (called for the purposes of this document the 'service system'). This document sets out how we currently see the overall service system, the relationships between each element, flow within and how it is expected to interact across LLR and beyond.

Sexual and domestic violence and abuse are prevalent across LLR and our redesigned model of provision builds upon previous good work locally, relevant national and local policy drivers and a wide consultative and co-productive process over a period of months with service users, providers, the public and wider stakeholders.

LLR is not one homogenous whole, but it does make sense to commission a service system across the whole area. Naturally, some provision will be specific to particular local authority areas. Where services are delivering across the whole of LLR they will need to take account of the varying needs across the whole area. This will be ensured through multiple lots/contracts and a robust contract management approach.

The new model of provision is intended to reduce the prevalence, likelihood and harm of domestic and sexual violence and abuse on all and will do this through a co-ordinated approach to both provide help and support to victims/survivors (enabling them to live abuse free lives and to cope and recover) and challenge and change for perpetrators (especially as this relates to domestic abuse).

For the purpose of brevity within this document:

- the term "victim" will be considered to mean both "victim" and "survivor"
- the term "violence" is interchangeable with "abuse" for the purposes of this document
- the term "service system" shall be considered to mean those services being re-commissioned (see figure 1 below)
- the term 'domestic abuse' will be considered to mean all behaviours currently classed as 'domestic violence and abuse' within the cross-governmental definition (2012) and with a view of the statutory definition currently in the Domestic Abuse Bill.

⁷ Dated 15/10/20

Figure 1. Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse Services comprising the Service System

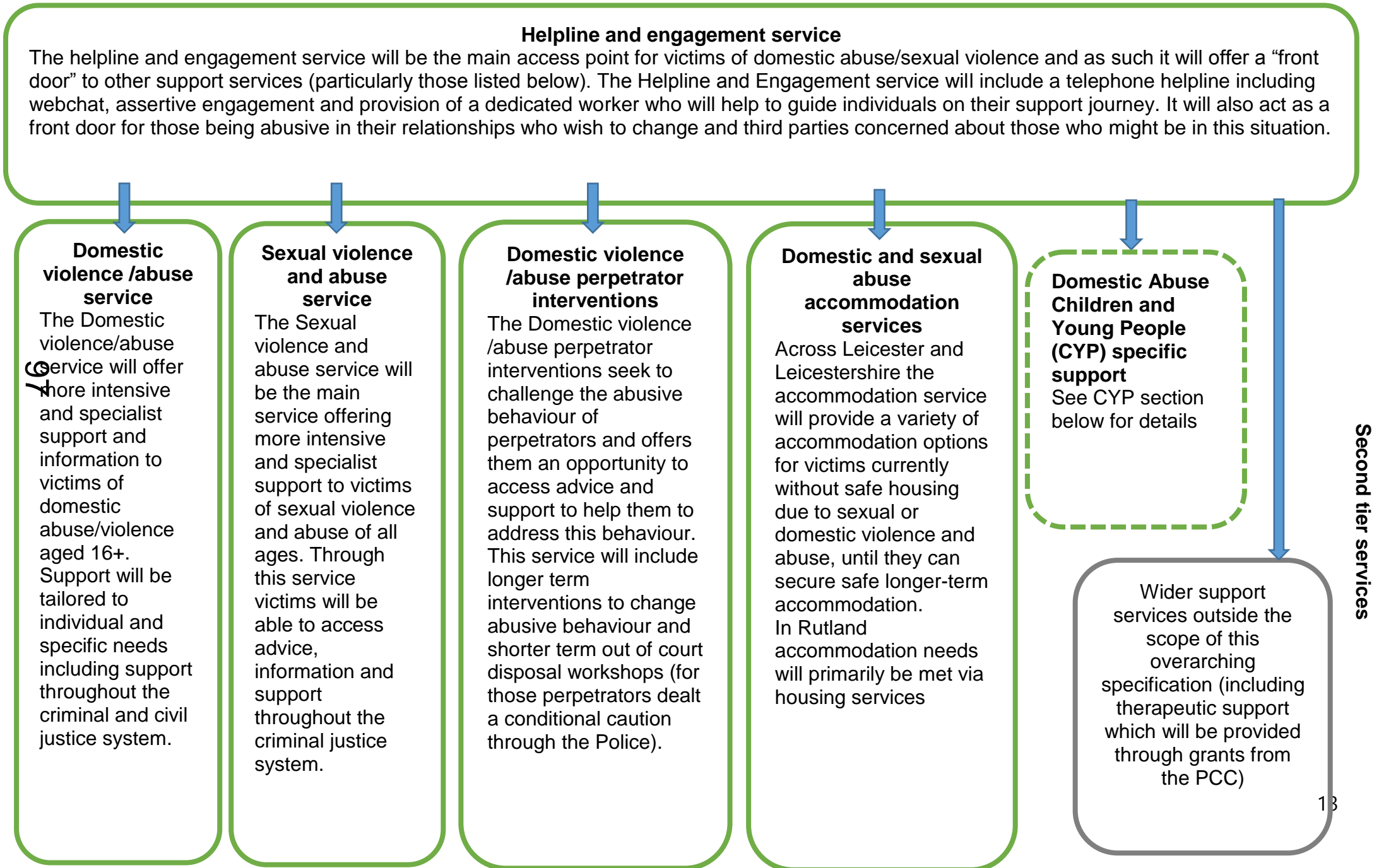


Figure 2. The place of the “Service System” within the wider overall DSVAs system

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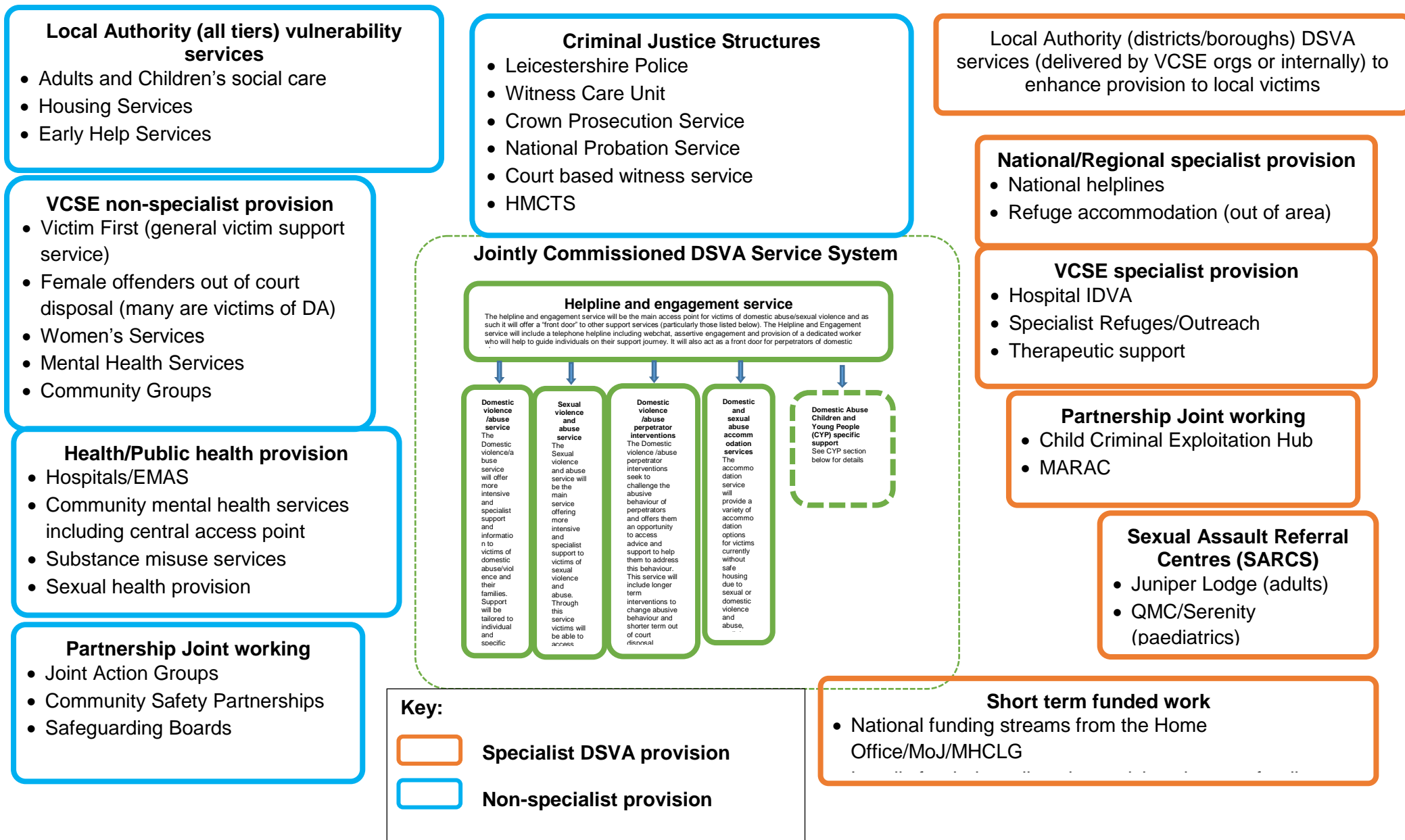
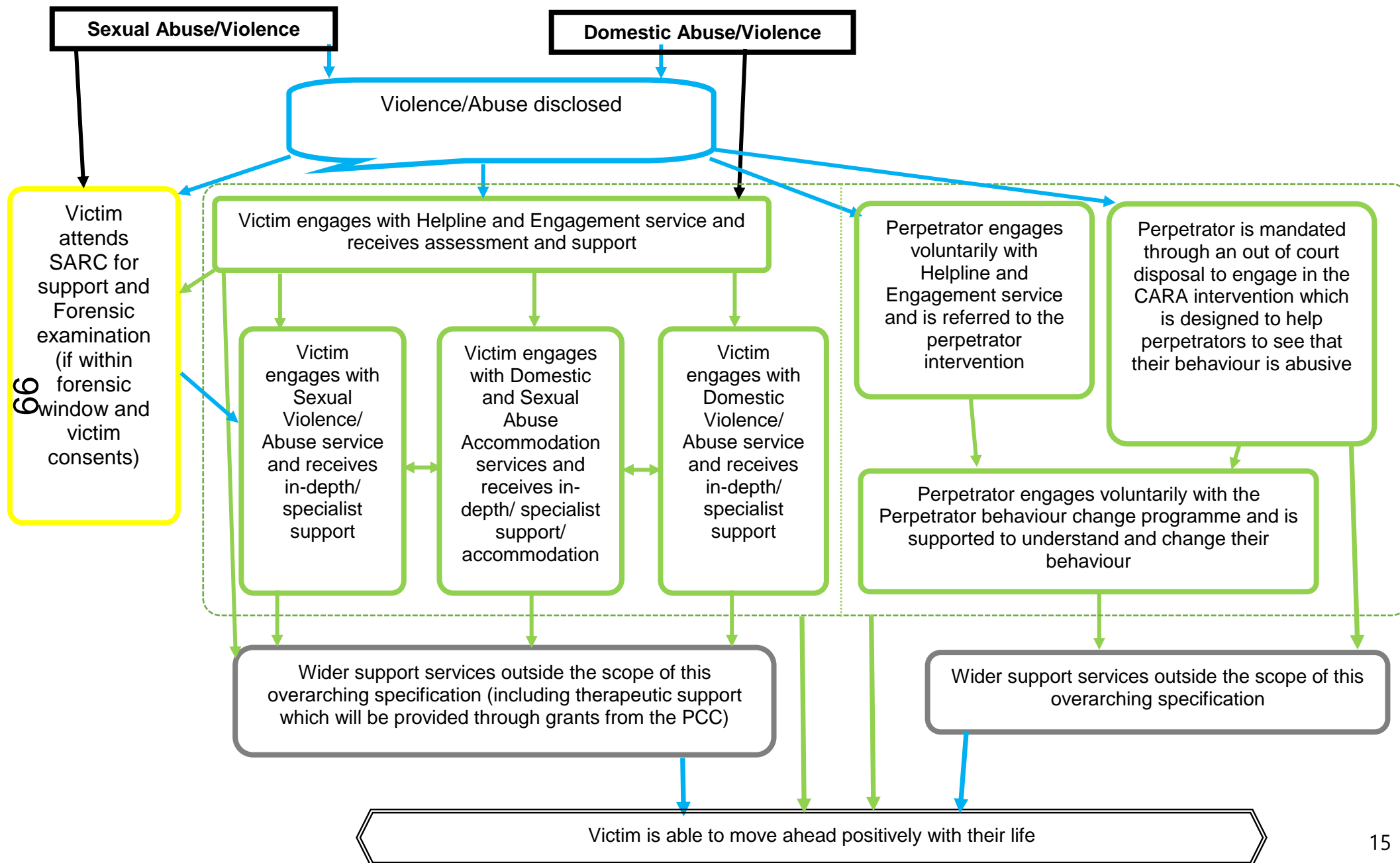


Figure 3. Victim and perpetrator flow through the Service System (see CYP section below which sets out which service elements are relevant to children)



The Helpline and Engagement service and how all other services will link in with this

The Helpline and Engagement service will act as a simple 'front door' to all of the service provision which sits underneath and will in and of itself provide support to victims. This does not mean that all second-tier services will receive 100% of their referrals from the Helpline and Engagement service but it would be expected that the majority would be. The Helpline and Engagement service will be staffed by skilled and trained individuals who are able to make the most of the initial engagement with the victim or perpetrator.

The Helpline and Engagement service is the only service that is expected to be immediately available to the public/professionals for initial referrals via a phone line/live webchat. Each second-tier service will have requirements as to how quickly referrals or other enquiries will be responded to and it is expected that service users will then be allocated a worker who they/linked professionals can contact going forwards.

The Helpline and Engagement service will work closely with second tier services and commissioners to ensure that second tier services do not become overwhelmed with demand. This will require the Helpline and Engagement service to have an up to date understanding of the capacity of each service and for all services to adjust their offer accordingly to keep the overall service system in balance.

Supporting accommodation needs

The Helpline and Engagement service will have the following responsibilities around helping victims to access accommodation:

- Checking refuge availability (local, regional and national) on the 1st day of referral/self-referral and making referrals where spaces are available/acceptable to the victim
- Advocating on behalf of the victim to housing solutions/services within the-- local authority either where they wish to or currently reside

Where a victim with accommodation needs is going to immediately access a second-tier service (other than accommodation) then it will be the responsibility of the second-tier service to provide that advocacy to housing solutions/services.

Children and Young People

There is specific provision in the model for children, young people and families affected by domestic abuse in Leicester. There is specific consideration of the support of children and young people around sexual abuse across Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland in that service element.

Support and protection for children, young people (CYP) and families is covered by a variety of statutory and non-statutory services and each of the three upper tier or unitary authorities will have different provision and arrangements to enable CYP to be appropriately supported.

Table 2. Support for child victims, witnesses and perpetrators within the service system

Service	Child victims	Child exhibiting abusive behaviour
Helpline and engagement service	Yes	Yes
Domestic abuse service	16+ year olds	16+ year olds
Sexual abuse service	Yes	N/A
Domestic abuse perpetrator interventions	No	No
Domestic and sexual abuse accommodation services	Yes	N/A

Table 3. How CYP victims, witnesses and those using abusive behaviours will be supported within each area through the wider local system.

CYP group	City	County	Rutland
Child SV victims	LLR SV service		
Child DA victims	Specific commissioned service for children, young people and families jointly working with local authority (LA) staff, including referral as appropriate [full detail in the specification	LA Children+Family Services Early Help targeted and specialist support	Targeted/ specialist support services Family Therapy, (CAMHS) self-referral route, 1:1 sessions with Early Help
16/17 yr old DA perpetrators	Specific intervention offer within the domestic abuse perpetrators commission, jointly working with local authority staff where the individual is known to them/ where referral is appropriate [detail to be in the specification	LA Children+Family Services Early Help targeted and specialist support	Targeted/ specialist support services, Family Therapy, 1:1 sessions with Early Help
Children using sexually abusive behaviours	Local authority Children's Social Care and Early Help offer including onward referral to specialist Voluntary & Community Services as appropriate	LA Children+Family Services Early Help targeted and specialist support	Specialist support/ assessment

Further specialist support on a smaller scale may also be made available via second tier authority funding or wider grant funding.

Case management and handover between services

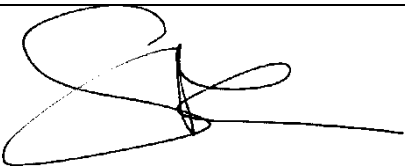
We are aware, through our previous soft market testing and public consultation, that good co-ordination between different parts of the Service System is imperative. It is also important to have an understanding of need both for individual services and the Services System as a whole. This element of service design is subject to further soft market testing.

APPENDIX TWO

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Template: Service Reviews/Service Changes

Title of spending review/service change/proposal	Domestic and sexual violence and abuse service redesign
Name of division/service	Neighbourhood and Environmental Services Domestic and Sexual Violence Team Commissioning
Name of lead officer completing this assessment	Stephanie McBurney
Date EIA assessment completed	<i>Commenced July 2019 – completed 21/12/2020</i>
Decision maker	Cllr Sarah Russell
Date decision taken	

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EIA sign off on completion:	Signature	Date
Lead officer		17/12/2020
Equalities officer		
Divisional director		

Please ensure the following:

- (a) That the document is understandable to a reader who has not read any other documents and explains (on its own) how the Public Sector Equality Duty is met. This does not need to be lengthy but must be complete.

- (b) That available support information and data is identified and where it can be found. Also be clear about highlighting gaps in existing data or evidence that you hold, and how you have sought to address these knowledge gaps.
- (c) That the equality impacts are capable of aggregation with those of other EIAs to identify the cumulative impact of all service changes made by the council on different groups of people.

1. Setting the context

Describe the proposal, the reasons it is being made, and the intended change or outcome. Will current service users' needs continue to be met?

In Leicester, the current range of specialist domestic and sexual violence service provision is broad, and in line with government expectations. There is high demand for services, and the level of police reports for both sexual and domestic abuse related incidents and crimes has increased over recent years. There is evidence of positive impact across each specialist service, but there is also some evidence of difficulty and delay in accessing support. There is some joint commissioning but there is willingness to consider more if this improves the existing pathway. Current contracts are due to end on 31st March 2022, and by that point will have been in place 6 years and four months.

When reviewing what specialist services should be commissioned for the future, Leicester City Council revisited national guidance, research findings, best practice, local data and the available budget.

Leicester City Council has protected the base budget for sexual and domestic abuse services over several years, despite facing acute financial pressure. Additional funding previously used to support the Council's sexual and domestic abuse service budget, is no longer secure.

Prosecutions for sexual offences are reported to be taking longer to get to court and providers are reporting more complex cases throughout their services. Ongoing work to reassure and encourage people to access specialist support at the earliest opportunity is likely to further increase demand for specialist services over time. Referrals into the family service have grown considerably over time.

The coronavirus pandemic has had an impact on domestic and sexual abuse in Leicester, and it is possible this might extend into 2022. Research from other countries and some national helplines would indicate a rise in demand, particularly for those currently in an abusive relationship.

Several local organisations currently fund local specialist domestic and sexual violence and abuse provision, collectively in one

joint commission and independently in line with their own specific priorities and duties.

Leicester City Council considered that it was important to explore if pathways could be simpler, more efficient and resilient to increasing demand, through reviewing resources and need collectively across Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland.

The following agencies currently jointly commission a single support and information service across Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland:

- Leicestershire Police and Crime Commissioner
- Leicestershire County Council
- Rutland County Council
- Leicester City Council

In 2018 these four organisations agreed to collectively review current provision and need across Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland.

Budget limitations might reduce the amount of improvements that can be expected, but it is hoped that having a clear focus on early intervention, broadening the sub-regional, jointly commissioned provision and implementing learning from the current commissions, Leicester residents can benefit more from the proposed model.

The model maintains the main foundations of service that have been available in Leicester since at least 2012:

- Specialist interventions for those using abusive behaviour (not court related)
- Specialist sexual violence and abuse support
- Specialist domestic abuse support at all levels of need and risk
- Specialist helpline and engagement support
- Specialist children, young people and family support
- Specialist refuge accommodation and safe housing solutions

Counselling, and child on parent abuse (outside of the definition of domestic abuse), support is not protected in the proposed

model.

The rationale for the decision to leave this out of the preferred model includes:

- 1) It is not feasible within the available budget; the providers of the current model allocate £30,000pa of the joint commissioning budget for counselling and have struggled to meet demand due to both finances and the volunteer counsellor recruitment challenges currently faced by the specialist counselling sector.
- 2) including counselling within the specification has prevented the provider trying to secure further grant funding to expand provision
- 3) it is more effective to focus local authority resources on early intervention, information and support, and the potentially soon to be statutory accommodation related support options.
- 4) It being important to prompt health commissioners to consider their duty to ensure that mental health support pathways meet the needs of those who have been subjected to sexual or domestic violence or abuse.
- 5) That child on parent abuse is a broad issue that takes place both connected to and outside of domestic abuse contexts. Domestic abuse is nationally defined as between those both aged 16 years old and over. Experience from funding additional projects in this area, to complement the small resource allocated across the existing perpetrator interventions, children young people and family service and the sub regional support and information service is that the cases are small in number and very complex; that intervention is more effective the earlier it takes place. It is not considered feasible to include the work in the new commissions and the proposal is that the focus on early intervention and support of families reduces the likelihood of longer-term child on parent abuse that might require a dedicated resource.

Sometimes acronyms will be used in this template, for brevity. Domestic and sexual violence and abuse is referred to collectively as DSVVA. Domestic violence is interchangeable with the term domestic abuse and both apply the current cross government definition of 'domestic violence and abuse' (2012). Sexual violence and sexual abuse are also used interchangeably and reflect a very broad range of behaviours (we often refer to the World Health Organisation definition of sexual violence).

Black and minoritized ethnic communities (BME), or black, minority ethnic and refugee communities (BMER) are sometimes referred to in this document. Another acronym some research uses around this area is BAME (to stand for Black and Minority Ethnic). The intention is to only use these terms when quoting from literature, appreciating the growing discussion of the limitations rather than positive aspects of such grouping. Where possible and relevant, specific data will be used, for example to

add understanding on the experience of black African or south Asian service users. The same approach will be taken with the acronym LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender), which sometimes appears in literature in different formats (for example LGBTQ+).

2. Equality implications/obligations

Which aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) are likely be relevant to the proposal? In this question, consider both the current service and the proposed changes.

	Is this a relevant consideration? What issues could arise?
<p>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation</p> <p>How does the proposal/service ensure that there is no barrier or disproportionate impact for anyone with a particular protected characteristic</p>	<p>It is a relevant consideration for current and proposed service across all protected characteristics due to the exploitation of inequality that features in domestic and sexual violence and abuse. However, the service changes have been designed to positively benefit and improve the situation of those affected and have been considered carefully against any known or potential disproportionate impact. Equality issues are central in the terms and conditions of service and contract management.</p> <p>Due to the nature of the population more likely to experience, and be harmed by, domestic and sexual violence and abuse, there could be a disproportionate impact from any change, as whilst domestic and sexual violence and abuse effects all communities, there are some indications of disproportionalities in terms of access, risk or outcomes which co-exist to increase risk of harm .</p> <p>This includes, but is not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women, who are more likely to be victim and experienced greater physical harm (see ONS data below for example) • Black, Minority Ethnic and Refugee men and women are more likely to have multiple perpetrators, language needs and immigration issues (see local and national data below for example) • Those with disabilities are more likely to experience DSVAs and might be more likely to

experience barriers to getting support (see national and local data below)

- Those with children/children (two thirds of victim cohort and 80% of domestic abuse perpetrator service cohort) might experience more ongoing abuse (due to continued child contact) and additional barriers to accessing support (fear of separation from children for example), see national data below.
- Men are more likely to be perpetrators of domestic and sexual abuse and want/need to access services to help them change. They might experience more barriers to accessing support as a victim of DSVVA due to standard societal perceptions of heteronormative male perpetrator and female victim, the over focus on physical violence and 'strength' rather than power. See local and national data below.

There are also groups currently less likely to access specialist services, or report to the police:

- Male victim-survivors (slightly lower than expected level of access in local specialist services)
- LGBT victim-survivors (lower end of expected level of access in local specialist services)
- Asian/Asian British Indian victims - sexual violence (bigger gap) and domestic abuse lower than expected levels of access
- Those aged over 55 (biggest population gap locally).

There are groups appearing over-represented in local police and specialist services data, which might imply heightened risk. These groups include younger populations.

Examples of consideration within the proposals:

- Proposing a better resourced first point of contact and broader engagement resource,

	<p>so that a full assessment of need can inform understanding of risk at the earliest point and offer more proactive support and information; reducing missed calls, disengagement and 'could not establish contact' outcomes. This is relevant against protected characteristics as average length of abuse differs greatly across groups (see average length of abuse at intake table below).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodation jointly commissioned across Leicester and Leicestershire to allow for a greater range of accommodation options, including those suitable for victims with older male children, those not safe in Leicester, those with a higher level of need, or other specialist 'by and for' provision.
<p>Advance equality of opportunity between different groups</p> <p>How does the proposal/service ensure that its intended outcomes promote equality of opportunity for users? Identify inequalities faced by those with specific protected characteristic(s).</p>	<p>This is a relevant consideration.</p> <p>Quality standards, contract monitoring and recording requirements and service reviews will protect equality of opportunity and give tools to routinely assess changes in service reach, analysis of different variables that might impact on outcomes (including all protected characteristics).</p> <p>There can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poorer access as people (i) do not know of the service, (ii) physical, cultural and past (individual and collective) experience barriers in accessing the service, (iii) do not consider that the service can help them; is for them; will understand them, (iv) fear the impact of accessing help. • Poorer outcomes can include (i) less engagement, (ii) less contact, (iii) greater drop out, (iv) less positive impact from interventions.

<p>Foster good relations between different groups</p> <p>Does the service contribute to good relations or to broader community cohesion objectives? How does it achieve this aim?</p>	<p>This is a relevant consideration.</p> <p>A co-ordinated community response to the issues is the aim with the service redesign and in current service; seeking to harness the positive influence of as many people as possible and using the concept of community champions.</p> <p>The focus remains on early engagement, awareness raising and skilled community members and practitioners. These issues are based on the abuse of power and control perpetrators use isolation and shame.</p> <p>By undertaking the following these commissions seek to improve community cohesion and good relations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing the prevalence of domestic and sexual violence and abuse; • challenging the attitudes and beliefs which support them and • giving people the tools to respond appropriately to domestic and sexual violence and abuse. <p>.</p> <p>The service model has an offer for everyone affected by domestic abuse and sexual violence in the area. There is a requirement to work collaboratively across the individual services to broaden understanding and maximise community impact. The issues affect all communities; none is immune, and awareness materials and the training elements embedded into the service reflect this.</p>
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3. Who is affected?

Outline who could be affected, and how they could be affected by the proposal/service change. Include current service users and those *who could benefit from but do not currently access the service*.

Affected population

Domestic and sexual violence and abuse affects communities across the world. As domestic abuse and sexual violence are inherently linked to power and control, across all protected characteristics there can be additional impact of any change to specialist services:

1. Disparity in likelihood of experiencing abuse and form of abuse and collusion with abuse from community
2. Disparity in barriers to accessing services
3. Disparity in barriers to achieving positive outcomes once in receipt of service.

Sex

29% of women and 13% of men have experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16 years (CSEW 2018). Based on these percentages and the population of Leicester, it could be that 40,462 women and 17,973 men are affected locally. Due to the diversity of the community in Leicester there might be higher likelihood (for men and women) of domestic abuse including so called 'honour based' abuse and forced marriage risk.

Women are more likely to be victim-survivors as adults and men are more likely to be perpetrators as adults. Women are more likely than men to be victim of domestic homicide than men (Domestic Abuse Victim Characteristics, England and Wales: year ending March 2019). Women and girls are more likely to experience fear and serious injury from abuse.

In 2014/15 there were 157 domestic homicides; 68% of these were females. The majority were killed by a partner/ex-partner. (Home Office: Domestic Homicide Reviews 2016). Therefore, any change in services might impact more on women and with more risk of homicide.

Domestic abuse-related crimes by sex of victims have been analysed using data from the Home Office Data Hub²⁷. There were 29 forces that supplied data for sex in the year ending March 2019. In three-quarters of domestic abuse-related crimes the victim was female (75%). This proportion was similar for most offence categories, but for domestic abuse-related sexual offences the proportion of victims that were female was higher, at 96%.

Whilst the proportions are smaller, there remains a significant number of men who are victim of sexual and/or domestic violence and abuse.

Male victims of domestic abuse face barriers to getting help and accessing support services (*University of Bristol – Gender and Violence Research, June 2019*). The research found that male victims may fear not being believed or being accused as the

perpetrator; they may be concerned about the welfare of their partner and children; they may not be aware of specialist support services or feel that they were not appropriate for male victims of abuse – the research states that when men did seek help, it was usually when their situation had reached a crisis point

In March 2019, the government published its Male Victims Position Statement setting out 12 specific commitments to better enable male victims and survivors of domestic abuse to come forward and receive the support they need and bring perpetrators to justice.

The Office for National Statistics data (2014/15), shows that male victims (39%) are over three times as likely as women (12%) to not tell anyone about the partner abuse they are suffering from. Only 10% of male victims will tell the police (26% for women), only 23% will tell a person in an official position (43% for women) and only 11% (23% for women) will tell a health professional.

Age

Children are affected in large numbers. Over two thirds of those who have experienced domestic abuse accessing police or current independent commissioned services are parents. The draft domestic abuse bill now recognises the position of children as victims in such circumstances.

In April 2020, the Children's Commissioner for England published analysis of the extent of child vulnerability for England. The report provides local area profiles for each local authority in England. Leicester was highlighted as a higher-ranking area for some of the measures.

Areas of concern for Leicester are around those aged between 0-17yrs – there are higher rates of children within this age group that have issues of domestic abuse, mental health and substance misuse (toxic trio).

For those known to services, there were higher CIN (Children In Need) episodes for unborn children with domestic abuse identified as a factor, mental health of parent or someone else in the household identified as a factor, and substance misuse by a parent or someone else in the household identified as a factor.



The number of children involved/referred into local services shows the impact of domestic abuse on families and the need to increase visibility of children and young people. SafeLives Insights national briefing on Children, young people, and the involvement of Children's services highlighted the impact domestic abuse has on children – for instance, sleep difficulties and feelings of blame. During the covid-19 pandemic, March-July figures from children's social care and early help 'front door' showed an increasing proportion of contacts regarding domestic abuse.

Children and young people are likely to face barriers to accessing support. The Action for Children report state that barriers can include where the child might be living, whether their family is known to children's social services, the engagement of their non-abusive parent with support services, and if they have any additional support needs.

Research has also found that BAME children, LGBT+ children, disabled children, and those from migrant families, are often more likely to have limited access to domestic abuse services (Refuge, NSPCC and City Bridge Trust, Meeting the needs of children, Nov 2011).

Young people aged 16 and over facing intimate partner abuse are entitled to access specialist domestic abuse services. However, their needs can differ from those of adult victims, so the services that are set up for adults cannot always meet the needs for younger people (SafeLives 2018; Safe Young Lives: Young people and domestic abuse).

Those aged between 16 and 18 years reported greater lengths of abuse compared to the 19-24-year-old in local UAVA data ([Needs Assessment Refresh 2019](#)). It is estimated that 6% of males and 8% of females aged 16-19 years experienced domestic abuse in March 2018 (ONS, Domestic Abuse in England and Wales). SafeLives Spotlight Report on Young People and Domestic Abuse highlighted that young people experience the highest rates of domestic violence of any age group, however they are not visible to services.

Many children are not known to social care or early help services, despite being within families where there is domestic violence – 20% of children identified through Operation Encompass are not known to Early Help or Children's Social Care. (Operation Encompass Leicester Data between Apr18 and Feb19).

Local data in 2018 showed that those aged 41-50 years old were less likely to feel safer after support (65%) compared to all UAVA clients (79%) in UAVA Insights data for 2018.

Older women are over-represented in domestic homicides and under-represented in access to local specialist services. Those

over the age of 60 account for 18% of the UK population but 25% of all domestic homicide cases, and 67% of these are females (Dr Hannah Bows; research from 2010-2015; November 2018). This means that again there could be a greater risk of harm if there is any negative impact from changing these services as this older population are both less likely to access specialist services and more likely to be reflected in homicide statistics.

The most significant gap across those accessing local services is with those aged 55 and over (UAVA data and police data).

The data collected from Insights locally (by UAVA) suggests that older victim-survivors are more likely to suffer from longer terms of abuse. The average length of abuse suffered by victims under 45 in the last year was approximately 4.1 years compared with 10.4 years for victims 45 and over.

Disability

Women with disabilities are thought to be more likely to experience DSAV (almost twice as likely) (Public health England 2015 and CSEW 2019), Disability and domestic abuse, risk, impacts and response) and appear more likely locally to need/use refuge accommodation/ have housing issues, but also potentially most likely to not be successfully safely housed. (Safelives Insights Report for UAVA for 12 months to January 2019), so changes in relation to how specialist housing support is delivered is likely to impact them more.

Having a disability recorded can also, at times, appear to adversely impact the likelihood of reporting positive outcomes (UAVA Insights data over different years but not noted in quarter 3 2019-2020). National data (SafeLives Spotlight March 2017: Disabled People and Domestic Abuse) states that disabled victims typically experience abuse for a longer period before accessing support (3.3 years' average length of abuse vs 2.3 years). Data for Leicester shows that the average length of abuse for those with a disability is higher compared with the national average – 6.8yrs vs 5.5yrs.

For the year ending March 2019, CSEW showed that adults aged 16-74 years with a disability were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year than those without. This was true for both men (7.1% compared with 3.3%, respectively) and women (13.8% compared with 6.4%, respectively).

A Public Health England report published in 2015 found that people with disabilities who experience domestic abuse may face broader risk factors than other domestic abuse victims. Vulnerability resulting from a disability may make a disabled person less able to recognise, report or escape domestic abuse. Disabled people experience higher rates of domestic abuse and they also experience more barriers to accessing support, such as health and social care services and domestic abuse services. See also research from McCarthy, M (2018, 2019).

Sexual Orientation

Societal perception of domestic abuse and sexual abuse is by men against women related to heterosexual relationships. Familial abuse relating to homophobia or 'outing' is often not considered. Same sex domestic and sexual abuse is also not considered. There can be silence and silencing of the issues and Lesbians and Gay men can feel that services will not understand and will not be able to meet their needs. Single sex spaces cannot offer the same protection where the abuser is also from the same sex. Lesbians and Gay men can fear homophobia, judgement and exposure where part of a small potentially close-knit LGBT 'community'. SafeLives' Spotlight Report on LGBT+ highlights that this group may face a range of barriers to accessing support.

The Government provided Galop (national organisation) with £500,000 to build capacity and deliver support to LGBT victims of domestic abuse. The project will facilitate better knowledge and understanding on LGBT domestic violence through the development and use of technology. Galop will deliver a campaign to raise awareness within LGBT communities with the aim of increasing the number of LGBT people actually reporting domestic violence and seeking out the help that they need. The project will also provide training and consultancy to deliver the knowledge and understanding of the needs and experiences of LGBT victims of domestic violence and abuse in statutory, voluntary and LGBT organisations that work with victims of domestic abuse.

The CSEW for the year ending March 2018 shows the percentage of men and women aged 16-59 who had been victims of domestic abuse in the last year by sexual orientation: • 4.0% of men and 7.2% of women who identified as heterosexual or straight; • 8.2% of men and 10.0% of women who identified as gay or lesbian; • 5.7% of men and 25.3% of women who identified as bisexual.

Stonewall research found that one in four lesbian and bisexual women have experienced domestic abuse in a relationship. Two thirds of those say the perpetrator was a woman, a third said the perpetrator was a man. Almost half (49%) of all gay and bisexual men reported having experienced at least one incident of domestic abuse from a family member or partner since the age of 16.

Evidence suggests that LGBT communities face complex barriers to seeking support for domestic abuse, with a reported 60-80% of LGBT+ victims have never reported incidents to the police or attempted to find protection from services. It is estimated that 2.5% of all survivors accessing domestic abuse services in England and Wales are LGBT+. This is the experience of the current local specialist DSVAs provider.

Gender reassignment

There is limited research on how many transgender people experience domestic abuse in the UK. A report commissioned by the Scottish Trans Alliance and published in 2010 indicates that 80% of trans people had experienced emotional, sexual, or physical abuse from a partner or ex-partner; only 60% recognised the behaviour as domestic abuse. https://www.scottishtrans.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/trans_domestic_abuse.pdf

The National LGBT survey (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-lgbt-survey-summary-report>) conducted in July 2017 found that trans respondents had much higher declared rates of most incident types involving people they lived with (48%) than cisgender respondents (26%). This was particularly true for verbal harassment (27%), coercive or controlling behaviour (19%), physical harassment or violence (5%), and sexual harassment or violence (2%). Trans men were notably more likely to have experienced an incident (58%) than trans women (40%) and non-binary respondents (47%). 94% of respondents said that the most serious incident they had experienced had not been reported. Incidents involving people the respondent lived with were therefore slightly more likely to go unreported than incidents involving people they did not live with (91%). Notably, for all respondents, physical harassment and violence, sexual harassment and violence, and threats thereof, were generally more likely to have gone unreported than other incident types for reasons reflecting feelings of shame or embarrassment, being upset, not thinking that reporting would be taken seriously, or for fear of retaliation.

Marriage and Civil Partnerships

For the year ending March 2019, CSEW showed that adults aged 16 to 74 years who were separated or divorced were more likely to have experienced domestic abuse than those who were married or civil partnered, cohabiting, single or widowed. Both men and women who were married or civil partnered were less likely to be victims of domestic abuse in the last year than those who were single, cohabiting, separated or divorced. This is reflected in locally available data from domestic and sexual abuse specialist services.

Over 3% of married or civil partnered women were victims of domestic abuse, compared with 2.1% of married or civil partnered men. In contrast 11.6% of single women were victims compared with 5.3% of men.

There were 90,871 divorces of opposite-sex couples and 428 divorces of same-sex couples in 2018/19. Of the same sex couples, three-quarters (75%) were among female couples. Unreasonable behaviour was the most common reason for divorce among same-sex couples. Most divorces of opposite-sex couples were petitioned by the wife (62%). Unreasonable behaviour has consistently been the most common reason for wives petitioning for divorce. Examples of unreasonable behaviour could include physical violence, verbal abuse, drunkenness or drug-taking or refusing to pay towards shared living expenses.

Ethnicity

Considering police and UAVA data against the 2011 census, there is under reporting and access of sexual and domestic violence services for those of Asian/ Asian British Indian descent (but not Asian British Pakistani or Asian British Bangladeshi) in Leicester.

Language barriers – the 2017/18 Needs Assessment refresh highlighted that there had been an increase for an interpreter need in Leicester compared with the previous year from 43 service users to 59 service users (14% from 8%).

Clients supported by UAVA (2018) identifying as Asian/Asian British were more likely to report feeling safer after support than White British client (88% compared to 75%).

Information collected by UAVA through Insights (DV only) shows that female victims from BME backgrounds were more likely to be affected by multiple perpetrators – 17% of all cases involving females from BME backgrounds had multiple perpetrators compared with 5% of cases where the victim was from White British/Other White backgrounds (Needs Assessment Refresh 2019). Sisters for Change (2017) report states that 50% of BME women victims of violence experience abuse from multiple perpetrators.

Sisters for Change report (2017) on Unequal Regard, Unequal Protection states that BME and migrant women experience higher rates of domestic homicide and are three times more likely to commit suicide than other women in the UK. This report states that 50% of BME women victims experience abuse from multiple perpetrators. Only 37% of these women make a formal report to the police, on average only 9% make an application for a non-molestation order despite 56% suffering from post-separation

harassment, and one in four have insecure immigration status, giving them limited access to welfare and housing benefits.

For those experiencing sexual violence, it has been found that some groups of sexual violence survivors, such as BME women and those that are refugees, face additional risks (Love et al. 2017; Refuge Council, 2009).

Dr. Ravi Thiara and Sumanta Roy (Imkaan) published research “Reclaiming Voice: Minoritised Women and Sexual Violence (March 2020) explores the barriers to accessing support and ascertains the kinds of support required by BME survivors of sexual violence.

A study of service responses to BME women and girls experiencing sexual violence (Thiara, Roy and Ng, 2015) found that existing services were viewed as inaccessible and under-utilised by BME women even in areas that have higher BME populations. Rape, sexual assault, sexual violence in marriage/relationship, and adult survivors of child sexual abuse (CSA) were the three issues which BME women most commonly accessed services. 36 in-depth interviews were conducted with women across diverse ethnicities and ages – the majority of women had been subjected to sexual violence in intimate relationships with higher levels of coercive control. Sexual violence lasted for several years (two to fifteen years) and frequently involved multiple people, including partners and also male members of the family such as fathers-in law and brothers-in law. Disabled women were vulnerable to repeated/daily rape from non- disabled partners. A large number of women were without any social networks and family support and lived isolated lives.

Other barriers to accessing appropriate support included racism and a lack of knowledge about support services; inadequate responses from support providers marked by assumptions about ‘culture’ (Ahmed et al, 2009; Burman et al, 2004), the reluctance among BME women to involve criminal justice agencies and the difficulty of discussing sexual violence in particular communities (Gill and Harrison, 2016). Victims of domestic abuse from BME communities may experience barriers to disclosing abuse and accessing services. Research by the NSPCC, June 2008 (Domestic Abuse within South Asian Communities) suggests that victims from BME communities continue to live in abusive situations for longer. BME victims may be reluctant to seek help for many reasons, including language barriers, fear they will not be believed, fear they will become isolated from family and community, lack of awareness of laws etc.

According to Walby and Allen 2004, there is little variation in the prevalence of domestic violence by ethnicity. Batsleer, et al 2002; and Rai and Thiara, 1997 found that Black and other minority ethnic communities are less likely to access statutory services.

Shah-Kazemi, 2001; Rai and Thiara, 1997 findings that Asian women may find it more difficult to seek help for domestic abuse. The research suggested when Asian women marry, they implicitly represent their family. Therefore, if a marriage fails it is often

seen as being the woman's fault and she is also blamed for letting down the family's honour.

For the year ending March 2019, the CSEW showed that those in the Mixed ethnic group were more likely than those in the White or Asian ethnic groups to experience domestic abuse within the last year. In the White, Mixed and Black ethnic groups, women were significantly more likely than men to have experienced domestic abuse in the last year. This difference was greatest for the Mixed ethnic group (20.0% of women, compared with 3.5% of men).

Day, A.S and Gill, A.K (2020) paper on Intersectionality and provision of services connected to criminal justice system parties encouraged reflection on the accessibility of such services due to the history and nature of the relationship some men and women will have with the criminal justice system connected to their ethnicity or other factors of their experience.

Olumide, A and Allen, K (2020) reflected on the lack of research into those using abusive behaviours in a domestic abuse context from black and minority ethnic communities in the UK and how use of language might be a barrier (in their paper on family and intimate relationship harm within black and minority ethnic communities).

Religion & Belief

Hindu or Christian faith are the religions where there appears to be a gap in local 2011 census data and UAVA data on access. There is a limitation in that information on religion and belief is not as robustly reported and recorded as other protected characteristic categories. That said, there is no clear reason why data from those two religions would be more adversely affected by a recording issue. Research and activity is growing in this area nationally <https://www.restored-uk.org/resources/in-churches-too-church-responses-to-domestic-abuse/> . <https://www.standingtogether.org.uk/faith-vawg> state that many survivors with a faith feel that some specialist services and society, in general, are unable to understand their experiences of abuse, and their barriers to accessing support due to their religious identity, their faith community and any spiritual abuse that they may experience at the hands of their perpetrator⁸.

Pregnancy

⁸ Accessed 17/12/2020

The profile and length of abuse were different for clients who were pregnant at intake (33 clients). Pregnant clients were more likely to experience high severity physical abuse than non-pregnant clients (53% compared to 43%). The length of time clients had experienced abuse before accessing support was shorter for pregnant clients; 24% pregnant clients had experienced abuse for less than a year compared to 9% clients who were not pregnant. This indicates that pregnancy was likely to be a triggering factor for the abuse in these cases. (SafeLives report for UAVA – 12 months to January 2019)

The Confidential Enquiry into Maternal and Child Health (CEMCH) identified domestic abuse as one of eight key risk factors for maternal death. The study, which looked at all maternal deaths in England and Wales in the period 2000-2002, found that 14% of all women who died (55 out of a total of 391) had self-declared that they were subject to violence in the home. The report also notes that none of these women had been routinely asked about violence as part of their social history, so states the actual figure is likely to be higher. Other studies have also found evidence that there is a proven link between abuse during pregnancy and the mother's chance of being killed by the perpetrator.

As domestic abuse is an underreported crime, it is difficult to accurately assess prevalence, but one study has found that around 30% of domestic abuse starts during pregnancy.

One study found that first-time mothers experiencing physical and emotional intimate partner violence (IPV) were more likely to experience mental health issues as well as physical issues, including poor general physical health. These findings highlight the need for greater awareness of the diversity in women's experiences of IPV among health care providers. This includes the prevalence of emotional IPV among new mothers, and the range of health problems that are common for women experiencing IPV (Physical and Emotional Intimate Partner Violence and Women's Health in the First Year After Childbirth: An Australian Pregnancy Cohort Study – July 2020).

Other considerations – Armed Forces

Women service personnel make up approximately 11% of the British Armed Forces (iNews 2019). They can be considered a hidden population. A research study by Forward Assist (*No Man's Land - Research study to explore the experience & needs of women veterans in the UK Jan18-Mar19*) interviewed 100 veteran women and found that 20% of them had been in local authority care as children. Over half of the women stated the main reason they had joined the Armed Forces was to escape an

abusive home environment. Of the women interviewed, 26% reported being physically assaulted whilst serving. A further 52% reported they had been sexually assaulted whilst serving.

For those leaving the Armed Forces, women found that they received little support or preparation for life as a civilian. 58% of respondents reported that they would have benefited from accessing mental health support during service.

Many of the women veterans interviewed acknowledged that they have continued to suffer from poor mental health after leaving the services and direct experience of abuse and neglect in their childhood. Many reported being re-traumatised as a direct result of their experiences during military service and the lack of recognition of their service and sacrifice.

In the USA, research into both male and females with prior history of 'unwanted sexual contact' (Sexual Assault) prior to entering the military, revealed that they were 3-5 times more likely to be sexual assault victims when serving. Approximately 85% of sexual assaults in the US among female service members occur in the first two years of military service. It is no surprise therefore; that the trauma of sexual assaults that occurred while the service member was in the military interferes with a successful transition back to civilian life (Castro 2018).

Men and women currently serving in the armed forces, veterans of or reservists for the armed forces may face particular challenges to accessing services for factors which can include repeatedly changing locations and limited ability to build trusted relationships, sense of loyalty, fear of disbelief, exposure, perceived judgement of weakness; there is an emerging body of research in this area which, whilst it currently shows as a population they are no more or less likely to experience domestic abuse or sexual violence, indicates that specific consideration of their needs is required.

Other considerations - geography

Safe Lives data for UAVA (2018) found that for all client reported outcomes the proportions of Leicester residents with positive outcomes were slightly lower than in the Insights national dataset: 78% felt safer (national 85%), 73% felt that their wellbeing had improved (national 80%), 68% felt their quality of life had improved (national 76%), 71% felt they were more optimistic about the future (national 75%) and 72% felt more confident in themselves (national 74%). A total of 622 clients completed an exit form. This might mean that there are factors specifically connected to Leicester that result in positive outcomes of specialist service being slightly less likely, however this has fluctuated over time. There are areas within the City which show repeatedly lower than average reporting per 10,000 population and also higher than average areas. Both require attention.

Other considerations – immigration

Between 4,000 and 10,000 migrant women and girls are sexually exploited in the UK. However, women fear institutional encounters and are reluctant to go to authorities for help for fear of deportation (Refugee Council, 2009). A significant issue for local services is victims having no recourse to public funds due to their immigration status, which can create barriers to their safety.

Other considerations – poverty

There has been growing awareness of economic abuse and growing reported financial need, with an increase noted during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Summary

There have been several research studies exploring impact and needs of specific populations in relation to sexual abuse and domestic violence. The reasons for disparate access and outcomes are broad but can include:

- Structural inequalities
- Victim blaming attitudes, cultural concepts of shame and honour
- Fear
- Lack of secure finances or immigration status
- Not identifying with the services offered
- Successful isolation and undermining by the perpetrator(s) of the victim; coercive control.

The proposals have taken this into consideration and have sought specific input as part of the public consultation.

Potential positive impact from proposals:

- Commissioning accommodation related services with Leicestershire allows for a larger contract which could allow for greater diversity of provision, including for larger families, those with higher levels of need (specific accommodation types or staffing levels), services for male victims and families with older male children.
- Enhancing resource at the first point of contact will help with the engagement of all, and as targeted should disproportionately benefit those most vulnerable to both sexual and domestic violence and also those less likely to have engaged with a 'standard' service; there will be additional language support and specialist workers; including a triage system which can offer quick, proactive and creative engagement
- Having clear locality domestic abuse provision with individual area contracts allows for more direct accountability to the needs of the local population
- Having a sexual abuse service mainly located in the sexual abuse referral centre might allow for more resources to be spent on skilled staff rather than office costs, and faster access to forensic medical examination and options for giving evidence in court (alternative to physical attendance)
- Having a sub-regional non-court mandated offer of interventions for perpetrators of domestic abuse allows for some capacity to work on motivation and taking responsibility, which can be barriers to people being suitable for service.
- Separating out adult and child provision, and maintaining specific staff and offer for young people, should give greater clarity of services according to need and better engagement.

Potential negative impact from the proposals:

- Those groups more likely to be affected by mental ill health impact from domestic and sexual abuse might be more likely to need counselling, but this is not clear in currently available data. During 2018/19 there were UAVA records relating to 45 referrals made to domestic abuse counselling and 23 referrals to sexual violence counselling. Of the 166 cases opened by the Support and Information Service between Oct-Dec19, 57 service users were identified as having a mental health need. The majority were female (96%) between the ages of 25-44years. 40% were from a BME background (in line with total service population and just under local population). Whilst still less likely to be in service overall, a higher number of males

(22%) accessed *sexual violence counselling* compared with domestic violence counselling (3%). A smaller BME population has accessed sexual violence counselling (17%) compared with domestic violence counselling (36%). This is reflected across many agencies and is thought to relate to the issue outlined above regarding barriers to accessing services around sexual abuse and around accessing counselling services in general. There will be emotional support offers within the proposed service and this will be at individual and group level. It will also be flexible to need and be able to be more intensive should someone require that.

- With the proposed sexual violence and abuse service located mainly within the SARC, which is delivered by Leicestershire police, some people might not wish to engage if they see the service as connected to the Police.

1. Information used to inform the equality impact assessment

What data, research, or trend analysis have you used? Describe how you have got your information and what it tells you. Are there any gaps or limitations in the information you currently hold, and how you have sought to address this, e.g. proxy data, national trends, etc.

We have considered national, international and local information. We have considered sector expert reports and policy briefings and undertaken a local needs assessment and consultation activity. We have looked at how different data sources compare and where they differ, either consistently or inconsistently. We have looked specifically at what we know about people who might be more at risk.

There is a good amount of detailed contract data available, which can be analysed further to assess trends over time for specific populations, and outcomes across different variables.

There is less data held locally on perpetrators of domestic abuse or sexual violence, but local contract data has in-depth data on needs and, through their equality impact assessment reports, have noticed impact (positive and negative) on specific groups. For example, they noticed that young men were struggling with certain aspects of the course and might benefit from additional support or a tailored programme.

The data highlights a need to understand intersectionality and that it can be a complex picture in terms of needs and protected

characteristics. At times the data has shown a disparity of outcomes for a characteristic, but then no disparity at another time.

The Insights data set is the most comprehensive data that can be analysed by any number of variables. This is very useful but is also only a part of the picture as not every service user will need a service to this level or consent to this level of (anonymous) data being collated. We have demographic data on all of the UAVA client population, and it is similar to the Insights data set.

2. Consultation

What consultation have you undertaken about the proposal with current service users, potential users and other stakeholders?

What did they say about:

- What is important to them regarding the current service?
- How does (or could) the service meet their needs?
- How will they be affected by the proposal? What potential impacts did they identify because of their protected characteristic(s)?
- Did they identify any potential barriers they may face in accessing services/other opportunities that meet their needs?

A series of stakeholder events were held in 2018. Outside of the specific consultation process for this commissioning exercise, there is routine engagement with service users and members of the public through the following mediums:

- Feedback survey on web page
- Service user engagement through monitoring and contract management cycle
- Service user accountability measures for the provider, discussed quarterly in contract management
- Service user scrutiny and reference panel.

Information through these routes has informed what is important to them regarding current services and where risk points are. Some specific actions and developments came through this:

- Value of befriending and mentor services
- Orientation support

- What an ideal keyworker does/ looks like
- Importance of communication
- Risks and frustrations around delay
- Frustrations of not being able to get support when you need it (not getting through on the helpline for example; not seeing refuge staff)
- How hard it is to have to repeat personal and sensitive material.
- Essential for staff to understand the impact of trauma and provide services that show that understanding and do not have systems which risk retraumatising victim-survivors.
- Value of advocacy and accompaniment in helping people access the services and protections they might need.

Members of the service user scrutiny and reference group have been aware throughout of the commissioning exercise and had a separate presentation on the findings and developing models. The service user scrutiny and reference group meet monthly (was quarterly for some of this period). They receive performance information from the commissioned service providers and also invite key service providers in for question and answer sessions.

A public consultation on the model was launched on 11th September 2019 and closed on 24th November 2019. This was promoted online and with paper flyers. Specific attempts were made to engage several of the groups highlighted in this assessment.

Leicester City Council staff undertook a series of engagement sessions and presentations to promote the consultation opportunity. All communication included an open offer to go out and support engagement wherever possible, and each request received was met. The consultation was also promoted through contract management meetings, and partnership meetings. Individual meetings were also held, for example with the parents' community development worker, and survey links were distributed through email and promotion in local newsletters.

The total number of respondents to the consultation (for Leicester and LLR) was 114. Of these, 81 responses were completed by Leicester residents. 48 of the 81 (59%) responses to the Leicester survey were from those responding as being affected by sexual or domestic abuse or a member of the public (rather than as a practitioner in the area).

There was broad representation in terms of age (slightly older than the current service user demographic), sexual orientation and ethnicity. The male/female ratio was in line with expectations, and 20% (13) identified as disabled, which is slightly under the

current access rates for the specialist domestic and sexual abuse services.

77-88% of responses about the proposals were positive (good or very good idea). Many commented that the basic offer of services was similar to that currently in place; but that the changes should result in greater simplicity and ease of access.

The need for specialist support is mentioned in several responses, mostly in terms of culture, ethnicity, age and sex.

The following information has been summarised from the equalities section of the survey and highlights for each proposed service and proposed benefits, concerns and suggestions that have been made by respondents.

Helpline

- Not all ages would be able to access the internet
- Children may not have access to a phone
- Difficulty for those that are disabled to access the phone
- A text messaging service would be beneficial for those that find it difficult to speak on the phone
- A need to staff to understand the cultural beliefs and needs for those from a BME background
- Beneficial if staff were available that can speak different languages
- Access needing to be promoted to male victims and children

Sexual Violence and Abuse Service

- Concern around how mental health needs would be addressed
- Understanding of people from different backgrounds and their cultures, and support needs to be provided in a wide range of areas, especially immigration.

Domestic Abuse Service

- Language barriers and cultural differences need to be understood by the service provider

- Requirement of more facilities for older women and men
- Suggestion that there is more one-to-one time for those that have a disability
- Provide the right support for women that are pregnant or have young children as they are likely to find it more difficult to leave

Perpetrator Interventions Service

- Concerns around different cultural beliefs supporting abuse

Accommodation Related Service

- Having a variety of options for specialist accommodation would be a positive, particularly for adults with care and support needs, accommodation needs to be adapted.
- Suggestion that there is accommodation that is specifically BAMER led
- Concerns around accommodation for younger populations – below 16yrs
- There is a comment around a need for more family refuges, possibly specialist mother and baby units.
- Support for those that have no recourse to public funds and asylum seekers

Counselling

- Suggestion that there is a need for a specific service for Asian women.

UAVA – Client reported outcomes (Safe Lives Insights Qualitative Data Report 2018)

Clients, whose cases were submitted to the Insights portal, are asked to answer two questions as they exit from UAVA services. One related to their experience of gaining support and accessing UAVA services and another broader question that asked service users to reflect on what they would want for others in a similar situation. Question two was 'From your experience, what do you feel could improve the safety and wellbeing of other people at risk of domestic abuse? There were 105 valid responses to

this in 2018.

Responses to question two were focussed around two key themes. Firstly, encouraging victims and survivors to take the steps to access support as soon as possible, and the positive outcomes that come from that. Secondly, a desire for services to respond better, specifically the police, and for perpetrators to be held accountable for their actions.

Almost half of all responses (44%) mentioned seeking help and support as soon as possible (accounting for 34% of primary themes), with several service users specifically referencing UAVA. A theme within this seemed to reflect service users' feelings of relief after they had accessed services. Respondents encouraged others not to 'suffer in silence', to seek help as soon as possible, and to 'not be afraid as there is help available'.

"Encourage people to get help as soon as possible and to get out of a bad situation. Learning about and understanding domestic violence."

The above responses overlapped with another key theme, mentioned by one in five respondents, (22%) focussing on awareness. These responses then fell into two distinct categories. Firstly, a desire for victims and survivors to have a better understanding of domestic abuse and where to get help and support.

Secondly, several respondents felt that services and agencies, including the police, should have a greater awareness of domestic abuse. Linked to this was a desire for victims and survivors to be kept better informed by social services, local authority agencies, and the police.

"More communication from social services. Also more communication from Leicester city council housing."

Police were specifically mentioned in around one in five responses (17%), and the criminal and civil justice system more broadly in one-third (35%). The key theme within this was police doing more and holding perpetrators to account. Several respondents said they would like the police to respond 'more appropriately', act on harassment and breaches of civil orders, and to arrest and

charge perpetrators.

“People being listened to and being believed. If perps keep breaching orders they should be held accountable and be punished so they do not do it again.”

The other major theme within the responses related to housing and living arrangements. Broadly, this was a request for greater levels of support, both from housing and social services, not just with moving in a general way, but specifically moving quickly and efficiently. Other less frequent responses related to safety and security, consistency of response, funding for services, and support around finances and immigration.

“More protection through the CJS - feels let down by CJS. No protection even though NMO in place. Police failed to bring charges for breaches on NMO stating this was because it was not an order from the criminal court.”

Respondents reflected upon support and assistance received by UAVA very positively. In answering the questions, the most dominant theme was that support had had a large impact on service users’ safety and wellbeing. Respondents recommended that those in a similar position should access support as soon as possible.

Service users were grateful to their caseworkers for helping them access agency support and navigate the criminal justice system. However, they also felt that these agencies, specifically the police, would benefit from greater knowledge and some changes in approach. Accountability for perpetrators was a prominent theme, as was the need for a prompt response from housing to ensure safety and security for service users and their children.

3. Potential equality Impact

Based on your understanding of the service area, any specific evidence you may have on service users and potential service users, and the findings of any consultation you have undertaken, use the table below to explain which individuals or community groups are likely to be affected by the proposal because of their protected characteristic(s). Describe what the impact is likely to be, how significant that impact is for individual or group well-being, and what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove negative impacts.

Looking at potential impacts from a different perspective, this section also asks you to consider whether any other particular groups, especially vulnerable groups, are likely to be affected by the proposal. List the relevant that may be affected, along with their likely impact, potential risks and mitigating actions that would reduce or remove any negative impacts. These groups do not have to be defined by their protected characteristic(s).

Protected characteristics	Impact of proposal:	Risk of negative impact: How likely is it that people with this protected characteristic will be negatively affected? How great will that impact be on their well-being? What will determine who will be negatively affected?	Mitigating actions: For negative impacts, what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove this impact? These should be included in the action plan at the end of this EIA.
Age ⁹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect continuation of specific post(s) for young people based on learning from existing services and research – positive impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility, breadth, location and medium of promotion of services will be integral to success across the age range. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preventative action through the procurement phase; developing very clear expectations and quality

⁹ Age: Indicate which age group is most affected, either specify general age group - children, young people working age people or older people or specific age bands

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision across the age range but age specific; clear distinctions between CYP and adult domestic abuse service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is unlikely that the proposal will have a negative impact as the focus is on improving accessibility, bringing greater clarity to provision and protects what has been found to work well (YP specific posts) • Younger age ranges are reflected more in sexual violence service users; and in counselling need for this area. The potential reduction of protected budget for specialist counselling could have a significant impact on this age group (19-34 years). 	<p>standards for the service specifications across protected characteristics, including workforce training and supervision. Also highlighting the benefit of working with other specialist organisations, establishing reciprocal arrangements regarding training and referrals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of young people and children specific posts for domestic abuse and sexual violence services. • Ensure that commissioned services have clear policies in place that take into account the Equality Act
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Disability ¹⁰	<p>No impact of this <u>specific proposal</u> has been identified. Those who are disabled are more likely to be in need of these specialist services, but no specific element of the proposed changes is considered to have a potentially negative impact on those who are disabled. If the breadth of accommodation provision is broadened, this will improve access.</p> <p>Earlier and improved engagement should also have a positive impact on those with a disability, which might previously have not engaged, for several reasons.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessibility and promotion continue to be the areas for ongoing impact (not specific to this proposal) 	<p>appropriately and do not withdraw single sex spaces/provision where it is appropriate (but have an alternative, proportionate and equal offer that meets requirements)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During procurement (assessment) phase to ensure appropriate weighting in assessment of provider understanding of risks regarding impact against specific protected characteristics and mitigating actions, and in particular sex, age and disability (largest disproportionality for need and harm).
Gender Reassignment ¹¹	No potentially negative impact of this specific proposal has been identified		
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No potentially negative impact of the specific proposal has been identified		

¹⁰ Disability: if specific impairments are affected by the proposal, specify which these are. Our standard categories are on our equality monitoring form – physical impairment, sensory impairment, mental health condition, learning disability, long standing illness or health condition.

¹¹ Gender reassignment: indicate whether the proposal has potential impact on trans men or trans women, and if so, which group is affected.

Pregnancy and Maternity	No potentially negative impact of the specific proposal has been identified and locality approach might improve identification of domestic abuse at time of pregnancy or post-natal.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor access, risk and outcome by every protected characteristic on a regular basis as part of the future contract(s). To include preferred language and how often this could/could not be met. • Contract management phase: to ensure that quality assurance frameworks are in place inclusive of need of providers to demonstrate an understanding of equality issues and of emerging research on domestic abuse (including homicides)
Race ¹²	No potentially negative impact of the specific proposal has been identified		
Religion or Belief ¹³	No potentially negative impact of the specific proposal has been identified		
Sex ¹⁴	No specific potentially negative impact of the proposal has been identified <i>but women are the largest group in need of all domestic and sexual abuse services and are more likely to suffer serious harm or death (homicide or suicide due to domestic abuse). Women are also accessing counselling services in higher</i>		

¹² Race: given the city's racial diversity it is useful that we collect information on which racial groups are affected by the proposal. Our equalities monitoring form follows ONS general census categories and uses broad categories in the first instance with the opportunity to identify more specific racial groups such as Gypsies/Travellers. Use the most relevant classification for the proposal.

¹³ Religion or Belief: If specific religious or faith groups are affected by the proposal, our equalities monitoring form sets out categories reflective of the city's population. Given the diversity of the city there is always scope to include any group that is not listed.

¹⁴ Sex: Indicate whether this has potential impact on either males or females

	numbers, and this is a service not included in the proposed model.		and suicides) and can evidence a tailored approach to those individuals and communities and are engaging in work to build trust.
Sexual Orientation ¹⁵	No potentially negative impact of the specific proposal has been identified.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check with public health colleagues around plans regarding counselling provision. • Check with CSC&EH colleagues around provision and support for parents experiencing abuse from their child (under 16). • Ensure that the ongoing training programme for local practitioners includes intersectionality and increased awareness on older

¹⁵ Sexual Orientation: It is important to remember when considering the potential impact of the proposal on LGBT communities, that they are each separate communities with differing needs. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people should be considered separately and not as one group. The gender reassignment category above considers the needs of trans men and trans women.

			<p>people and domestic abuse, the impact on children, the impact of and on mental health and substance use and general domestic abuse awareness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritise counselling and BME specific provision in any opportunities to apply for additional funding. <p>The Government provides funding for the provision of services or has developed strategies for marginalised groups who also experience domestic abuse. Examples of this include £300k funding in 2018/19 to Imkaan to build capacity in the specialist BME women's sector to reduce the impact of violence on the lives of BME women and girls. The funding will support dedicated, specialist BME organisations which provide essential crisis</p>
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			<p>interventions, safety, and ongoing 'recovery', resilience and empowerment support. This is also to build the capacity and improve the sustainability of essential, specialist, independent BME/VAWG organisations and small community organisations working to address VAWG</p> <p>Disabled victims: The government have provided over £200,000 for Victim Support and Stay Safe East. The joint project aims to link the skills and knowledge of Stay Safe East, a specialist disability and domestic violence agency, with that of Victim Support, the largest national employers of Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs). This partnership aims to encourage disabled survivors of domestic abuse to come forward and ensure that their needs are recognised and effectively supported.</p>
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<p>Summarise why the protected characteristics you have commented on, are relevant to the proposal?</p> <p>See above, whereby nature of the client group they are thought to be disproportionately affected by any change, even if the specific changes in the proposal are not by themselves likely to lead to a direct impact.</p> <p>Summarise why the protected characteristics you have not commented on, are not relevant to the proposal?</p> <p>See above; where there are no changes in delivery model that have been identified as having a specific impact on a protected characteristic population</p>			

	Impact of proposal:	Risk of negative impact:	Mitigating actions:
Other groups	Describe the likely impact of the proposal on children in poverty or any other people who we consider to be vulnerable. List any vulnerable groups likely to be affected. Will their needs continue to be met? What issues will affect their take up of services/other opportunities that meet their needs/address inequalities they face?	How likely is it that this group of people will be negatively affected? How great will that impact be on their well-being? What will determine who will be negatively affected?	For negative impacts, what mitigating actions can be taken to reduce or remove this impact for this vulnerable group of people? These should be included in the action plan at the end of this EIA.
Children in poverty	Domestic abuse services will be specific to Leicester and it is hoped that this will improve the service that can be offered to	Likelihood is perceived as low however there can be direct barriers to attending appointments and in accessing	Monitor accessibility, disengagement and factors influencing poorer outcomes. Enquire about barriers and lived

	families and children living in poverty. There will be an online and physical face to face service offer.	services which might primarily be delivered over the telephone and online. There can also be barriers for parents such as fear of judgement and surveillance.	experience during service user engagement activity. Ensure specifications include level of community level provision of physical face to face services alongside online service.
Other vulnerable groups High financial need/poverty	Needs will continue to be met.	Transport barriers and fears of judgement.	Links to welfare rights and benefits services are sustained and included in the specifications and local partnership work. Local workforce to be skilled in economic abuse.
Other (describe) Co-occurrence of multiple barriers to service	The separate helpline and engagement service should allow faster and easier access to immediate support and co-ordinated navigation of the wider service system, particularly where multiple services might be required.	Disjointed provision; not knowing the full service offer from the wider service systems; higher levels of disengagement and more exits from service without achieving good outcomes (including notices to quit; warnings, suicide attempts, deterioration in mental health).	It will be important to have a clear picture of need and pathways taken across the service system to ensure people do not fall between services or receive a fragmented experience of support/information.
Armed Forces individuals or families (currently serving, reservist or veteran)	The new service system model is an opportunity to include specific monitoring and recording requirements so more can be known about this population, which are likely to experience domestic abuse and sexual abuse at similar levels, if not	Lack of awareness or trust in the specialist services commissioned. Compelled to keep silent about the abuse. Possibly transient so limited access to ongoing supportive relationships.	Providers to be encouraged to sign up to the armed forces covenant. Monitoring and recording processes identify links and outcomes.

	higher, than the wider population, and might experience specific barriers or risks related to their individual circumstance.		Tailored promotion of support services to this cohort.
<p>4. Other sources of potential negative impacts</p> <p>Are there any other potential negative impacts external to the service that could further disadvantage service users over the next three years that should be considered? For example, these could include: other proposed changes to council services that would affect the same group of service users; Government policies or proposed changes to current provision by public agencies (such as new benefit arrangements) that would negatively affect residents; external economic impacts such as an economic downturn.</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other divisions or joint commissioning/external agencies (e.g. CCG) might reduce budgets/grant systems for counselling • Brexit could impact negatively in any way on immigration status/ finances/housing in a way that could be used to control/enhance vulnerability in situations of domestic abuse • Reduction in neighbourhood/ locality level provision; such as Early Help Centres and libraries – places people might approach for help and disclose abuse. • Changes in mental health provision (positive or negative), including pathways. • Education – schools outside of local authority provision; prevention work, including Relationship and Sex Education work, might be harder to influence • Legal Aid restrictions • Pandemics, such as the coronavirus situation from March 2020, and associated lockdown measures limiting access to support and reduced visibility. Also increased potential for control by abusers. • Delays in court processes • Increase in modern day slavery • Domestic Abuse Bill progression through parliament is expected to include level of statutory responsibility on local authorities to provide a minimum level of refuge accommodation, and possibly other types of domestic abuse service. 			

5. Human Rights Implications

Are there any human rights implications which need to be considered (please see the list at the end of the template), if so please complete the Human Rights Template and list the main implications below:

Articles 2,3,4 in particular

Article 2: Right to Life – due to level of homicide and suicide related to domestic abuse and sexual abuse

Article 3: Right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman or degrading way – due to intrinsic nature of abuse and violence, particularly economic abuse, coercive and controlling behaviour

Article 4: Right not to be subjected to slavery/forced labour – due again to use of these elements within domestic abuse and sexual abuse and crossover of perpetrators and victims.

6. Monitoring Impact

You will need to ensure that monitoring systems are established to check for impact on the protected characteristics and human rights after the decision has been implemented. Describe the systems which are set up to:

- monitor impact (positive and negative, intended and unintended) for different groups
- monitor barriers for different groups
- enable open feedback and suggestions from different communities
- ensure that the EIA action plan (below) is delivered.

- Specification requirements detail monitoring and recording requirements
- We also undertake needs assessments across the wider sexual and domestic abuse partnership
- Contract recording and monitoring systems – including 360 surveys, EIA reporting template, case file audits
- Commissioning board with providers – regular meetings
- Service user scrutiny and reference group
- Internal contract management processes

7. EIA action plan

Please list all the equality objectives, actions and targets that result from this Assessment (continue on separate sheets as necessary). These now need to be included in the relevant service plan for mainstreaming and performance management purposes.

Equality Outcome	Action	Officer Responsible	Completion date
Informed potential providers/market	Hyperlinks in tender documents to key local data across protected characteristics.	SMcB	31/3/2021
Specifications reflect equality knowledge and areas requiring specific attention	Revise draft specifications accordingly.	SMcB	31/3/2021
Procurement process reflects weighting on	Method statement questions provide additional opportunity to assess bidders understanding and commitment to	SMcB	31/3/2021

equality	equality.		
Emerging negative and positive impacts are picked up in a timeline manner and responded to appropriately	Contract monitoring and management takes account of equality actions and can quantify and qualitatively identify progress made.	SMcB	Review annually
Strategic commitment continues to drive improvements	Joint commissioning and assurance board holds a clear strategic commitment and accountability for improved equality, providing a critical role regarding improving understanding and removing barriers to safety and wellbeing.	DP	Review annually

Human Rights Articles:

- Part 1: The Convention Rights and Freedoms
- Article 2: Right to Life
- Article 3: Right not to be tortured or treated in an inhuman or degrading way
- Article 4: Right not to be subjected to slavery/forced labour
- Article 5: Right to liberty and security
- Article 6: Right to a fair trial
- Article 7: No punishment without law
- Article 8: Right to respect for private and family life
- Article 9: Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- Article 10: Right to freedom of expression
- Article 11: Right to freedom of assembly and association
- Article 12: Right to marry
- Article 14: Right not to be discriminated against

Part 2: First Protocol

- Article 1: Protection of property/peaceful enjoyment
- Article 2: Right to education
- Article 3: Right to free elections

Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

Procurement of Domestic and Sexual Violence & Abuse Services for Leicester

January 2021



Reminder – City Council Resources

DSVA Corporate Group

UAVA

helpline; textphone; email

0808 80 200 28

Core
Council
services

Hope
Project

Safe
Home

Children
& Family

13+ Victim-
Survivor
Service

Perpetrator Service
Email; website; call

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LLR Joint Commissioning Approach

- Review together
- Consult together
- Plan together
- Deliver separately but in a co-ordinated manner
- Monitor the whole Service System collectively

Context

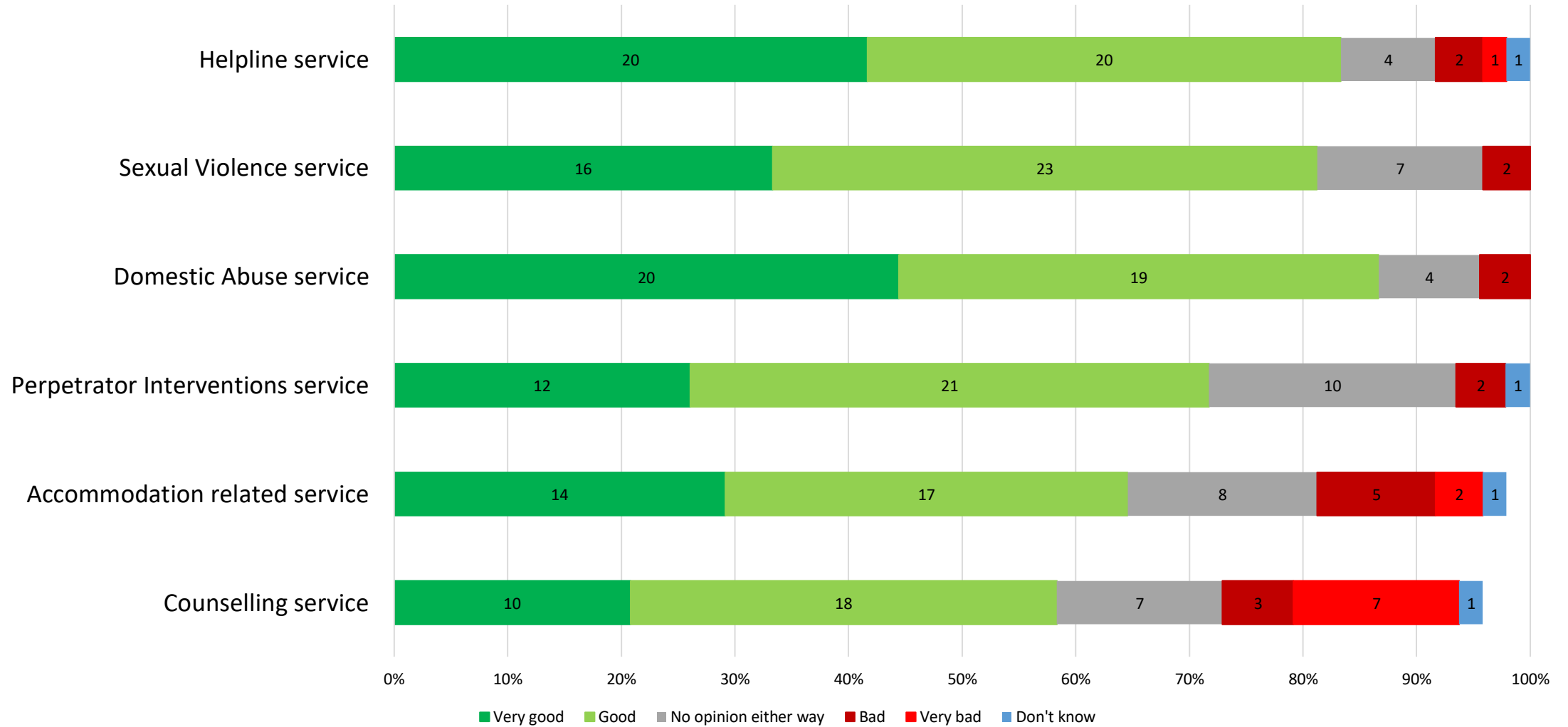
- Rising reporting to police
- Rising complexity
- High demand:
 - Over 9500 local helpline calls
 - 2000 out of hours contacts
 - 500 family referrals
 - 800 safe accommodation requests
 - 150 *voluntary* referrals for perpetrator interventions
- Cost of domestic abuse in England and Wales calculated as at over £66bn (for victims) each year (back in 2017)
- All communities
- Domestic Abuse Bill

Public Consultation

- 114 individual responses
- 65 responses to the Leicester survey
- 46 respondents identified as either a service user (current or previous), member of the public or family member/carer of someone affected
- 16 Leicester residents completed the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland survey
- Over 75% agreed to each proposal in the draft service model stating that the proposed model would be simpler and more efficient

Support for the proposals – 'service users'

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- *"It appears to have a wide array of services provided over the majority of the week for people of all walks of life. It is also accessible in different ways which is positive for people who are uncomfortable in certain situations such as the phone or face to face" (service user)*

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- *"more focused, flexible, can support with court, assessment of risk etc."*
- *"It sounds like this will simplify the existing process, which is good" (professional)*

- *“Provision of a named worker is key to gaining engagement for people using services. It is particularly good to see that more resources are being targeted at the first point of contact which is in my experience invaluable in engaging victims in accepting support” (Professional).*
- *“Not changing someone’s main worker is brilliant. It’s hard to trust after domestic violence so building that trust with one person is hard enough without them being torn away from you as soon as you feel progress has been made” (Someone who has previously used DSVA services)*
- *“Interventions with perpetrators are needed to prevent risk.”*

Procurement Plan

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Sexual Violence
Services
£177,000 pa
provisional

Helpline & Engagement Service
£435,000pa provisional

Domestic Abuse
Locality Service(s)
£225,000 pa
provisional

Children, Young People
& Family Service
£180,000 pa
provisional

Accommodation
Related Support
Services
£160,000 provisional
+ MHCLG potentially

Domestic Abuse
Perpetrator Service(s)
£184,000 pa
provisional

Timeline

- Publish tenders April 2021
- Assess responses August 2021
- Contract award November 2021
- Start date 1st April 2022

Questions?

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Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission - Work Programme 2021

Meeting date	Meeting items	Actions Arising	Progress
<p>28 January 2021 (agenda meeting 7th Jan)</p>	<p>Suggested items (tbc)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Covid-19 Recovery Plans for 2021 – update 2. Council Annual Revenue Fund Budget and Capital Budget 2021/22 reports – members to consider aspects relating to N/hoods Services portfolio 3. Libraries Bookbus consultation – report (Lee Warner – lead) 4. DVSA services commissioning plans update 5. Draft Work programme 2021 work in progress – members to consider and suggest items. 		
<p>11 March 2021 (agenda meeting tbc)</p>	<p>Suggested items (tbc)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community Safety Plan update on actions – progress report 		

Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission - Work Programme 2021

29 April 2021 (agenda meeting tbc)			

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FORWARD PLAN / SUGGESTED ITEMS		
Topic	Detail	Proposed Date
KEY DECISIONS & NON-KEY DECISIONS	WATCHING BRIEF – members to consider relevant items to this commission, from the councils Corporate Plan of Key & Non-Key Decisions	Ongoing / watching brief
CONSULTATIONS	WATCHING BRIEF – members to consider relevant items to this commission from planned or live consultations to provide scrutiny comments and views	Ongoing / watching brief
COUNCIL BUDGET	WATCHING BRIEF – members to consider any budget impacts relevant to this commission, as necessary.	Ongoing / watching brief
Domestic Violence Strategy update		
Public Safety Team update		
Waste & Recycling services		