



Leicester
City Council

**MEETING OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES AND COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

DATE: MONDAY, 30 JUNE 2014

TIME: 4:00 pm

**PLACE: THE FOUNTAIN ROOM - GROUND FLOOR, TOWN HALL, TOWN
HALL SQUARE, LEICESTER**

Members of the Committee

Councillor Singh (Chair)

Councillor Bhatti (Vice Chair)

Councillors Dr Chowdhury, Corrall, Desai, Gugnani and Waddington

Members of the Committee are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed overleaf.

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

(Julie Harget Democratic Support Officer):

Tel: 0116 454 6357, e-mail: julie.harget@leicester.gov.uk

Jerry Connolly (Members Support Officer):

Tel: 0116 454 6343, e-mail: jerry.connolly@leicester.gov.uk

Leicester City Council, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

Information for members of the public

Attending meetings and access to information

You have the right to attend formal meetings such as full Council, committee meetings, City Mayor & Executive Public Briefing and Scrutiny Commissions and see copies of agendas and minutes. On occasion however, meetings may, for reasons set out in law, need to consider some items in private.

Dates of meetings and copies of public agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website at www.cabinet.leicester.gov.uk, from the Council's Customer Service Centre or by contacting us using the details below.

Making meetings accessible to all

Wheelchair access – Public meeting rooms at the Town Hall are accessible to wheelchair users. Wheelchair access to the Town Hall is from Horsefair Street (Press the buzzer on the left hand side of the door to be let in to the building, then take the lift to the ground floor and go straight ahead to the main reception).

Braille/audio tape/translation - If you require this please contact the Democratic Support Officer (production times will depend upon equipment/facility availability).

Induction loops - There are induction loop facilities in Town Hall meeting rooms. Please speak to reception staff at the Town Hall or the Democratic Support Officer at the meeting if you wish to use this facility or contact us using the details below.

Filming and social media

The Council is committed to transparency and supports efforts to record and share reports of proceedings of public meetings through a variety of means, including social media.

Please feel free to use social media during this meeting.

If you wish to film proceedings at a meeting please let us know as far in advance as you can so that it can be considered by the Chair of the meeting who has the responsibility to ensure that the key principles set out below are adhered to at the meeting.

Key Principles. In recording or reporting on proceedings you are asked:

- ✓ to respect the right of others to view and hear debates without interruption;
- ✓ to ensure that the sound on any device is fully muted;
- ✓ where filming, to only focus on those people actively participating in the meeting;
- ✓ where filming, to (via the Chair of the meeting) ensure that those present are aware that they may be filmed and respect any requests to not be filmed.

Further information

If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact Julie Harget, **Democratic Support on (0116) 454 6357 or email Julie.Harget@leicester.gov.uk** or call in at the Town Hall.

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

PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

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

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Committee held on 8 May 2014 have been circulated, and Members will be asked to confirm them as a correct record.

4. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer will 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. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE

Members will be asked to note the membership of the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission as follows:

Councillor Singh – Chair
Councillor Bhatti – Vice Chair

Councillors Dr Chowdhury, Corral, Desai, Gugnani and Waddington

1 Non – Grouped Member vacancy.

7. DATES OF MEETINGS OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SCRUTINY COMMISSION 2014-2015

Members will be asked to note the dates of meetings of the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission 2014 – 2015 as follows:

Monday 18 August 2014
Monday 13 October 2014
Monday 1 December 2014
Monday 26 January 2015
Monday 9 March 2015

All meetings to commence at 5.30 pm.

8. OVERVIEW OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES PORTFOLIO [**Appendix A**](#)

Members of the commission will receive an overview of the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement portfolio. The following reports are attached:

- 1) Neighbourhood Services Portfolio (Report of the Director, Culture and Neighbourhood Services). (Appendix A1)
- 2) Community Involvement Portfolio (Report of the Director, Delivery, Communications and Political Governance). (Appendix A2).

9. OVERVIEW OF THE TRANSFORMING NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES PROGRAMME

Members of the commission will receive a presentation which provides an overview of the Transforming Neighbourhood Services Programme.

10. LIBRARIES PRINTED MUSIC AND DRAMA SERVICE CONSULTATION [**Appendix B**](#)

The Director, Culture and Neighbourhood Services submits a report which outlines the results of the consultation on the Libraries Printed Music and Drama Services and which identifies the next steps. The commission is asked to note the results of the consultation and also note and comment on the proposed next steps.

11. COUNCIL TAX RECOVERY 2013/14 [**Appendix C**](#)

The Director of Finance submits a report that provides Members with key information relating to council tax recovery. The commission is recommended to note the supporting information and receive future updates of the

administration and policy intention as necessary.

12. COUNCIL POLICY AND FOWARD PLANNING PROGRAMME

The Chair will provide feedback from the meeting of the Overview Select Committee on the City Mayor's forward planning of Council policy and programme for future scrutiny.

13. WORK PROGRAMME

Appendix D

The commission will be asked to consider the items that have been carried forward from the work programme 2013 – 14 and schedule them into the new work programme.

14. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All wards

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission

30th June 2014

Neighbourhood Services Portfolio

Report of the Director of Culture and Neighbourhood Services

1. Purpose of Report

This report provides an overview of the key areas and services related to the Neighbourhoods element of this Scrutiny Commission.

2. Summary

The portfolio of the Assistant City Mayor for Neighbourhood Services is supported by a range of services which fall under the divisions of a number of Directors.

This report seeks to set out the scope of the Neighbourhood Services element of the Commission's portfolio and the relevant structures and services which support this.

3. Recommendations

The report is presented to the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission in order to help inform their work for the coming municipal year.

4. Report

Neighbourhood Services covers a wide range of services involving many different aspects of city life. The key areas of services are detailed in the section below.

Culture and Neighbourhood Services Division

Director: Liz Blyth
Tel: 454 3501

Divisional Priorities

- Taking forward the Transforming Neighbourhood Services programme to increase efficiency, bring council services together, improve customer access and make best use of buildings and staff resources
- Develop capacity within neighbourhoods by supporting and encouraging community groups and local residents to become more involved in the operation and shaping of local facilities and services
- Introduce new ways of working in our library service through better use of technology and collaborative working in order to ensure a high quality customer experience which promotes reading and learning

Community Services

Head of Service: Steve Goddard
Tel: 454 1831

The Community Services section consists of a network of community facilities and provides a range of quality driven services and activities to meet the needs of local residents and communities. The aim is to empower citizens, provide support and facilitate the development of local groups through the recently introduced role of Community Engagement Officer. Community Services attracts over a million usages year on year. The services also provide development support to Ward Community Meetings across the city.

Key priorities:

- To work with partners to provide learning, community development and cultural opportunities which contribute to the sustainable development of neighbourhoods in buildings offering joint services and activities
- To empower residents and local communities by encouraging greater participation and developing local capacity for people to get involved in shaping their neighbourhood services
- To increase the availability of small and medium sized community facilities to residents, local community groups and businesses, utilising key fob 'access control' to enable the community to use buildings throughout the week without the need for staff on site.
- To improve the visibility of Ward Community Meetings to local residents by actioning the local issues and concerns identified.

Libraries and Information Services

Head of Service: Adrian Wills

Tel: 37 3541

Libraries are a reading support and development service which provides access to a wide range of information and learning opportunities. Libraries are community hubs where people meet and a neighbourhood access route to many other council services. Services are delivered through 16 libraries and 2 Children's Bookbuses. In 2013/14, Libraries lent 1.3m items, had 1.8m visits and 470,000 ICT sessions were accessed on public computers.

Key Priorities:

- To promote reading and learning for pleasure
- To support mainstream learning provision for children and adults
- To use technology to improve services and reduce the digital divide

Customer Services

Director: Alison Greenhill

Tel: 37 4001

Customer Services includes the Granby Street Customer Service Centre (CSC), CSCs in New Parks, Saffron and Charnwood, along with the Council's telephone call centre, which also manages online and email contact. As far as possible Customer Services aim to resolve enquiries at the first point of contact i.e. without the customer needing to make further contact with the Council. The service handles approximately 60,000 calls per month, 10,000 face to face enquiries and 2500 e mails/eforms.

Key Priorities

- Working with the Transforming Neighbourhood Services review to design a customer service offering in multi service centres.
- Implementing the Digital Access Strategy across the Council
- Achieving efficiencies through service improvement

Local Services and Enforcement Division

Director of Local Services and Enforcement: John Leach (not yet started)

Divisional Priorities

- Organising and managing local services in a way that ensures that they work effectively and collaboratively in responding to local challenges, as part of a new approach to neighbourhood working.

- Ensuring that enforcement service maximise opportunities for collaborative working and improved on-street effectiveness.
- Improving service standards in the face of increasing demand and reducing resources.

Waste Management Services

Head of Waste Management: Steve Weston
Tel: 2161904

The Waste Management team manages a 25 year Public Finance Initiative (PFI) contract with Biffa Leicester, for the collection, treatment and disposal of all Leicester's household waste.

The main services provided to all residents is a weekly collection of both recycling (collected using orange bags or communal bins, in which residents can recycle a wide range of items including paper, cans, cardboard, plastic containers, foil etc.) and general (or residual) waste for which a black wheeled bin is provided. Other services available for residents include a bulky waste collection service, clinical and sharps collection service, two Household Waste Recycling Centres and over 60 recycling bring sites throughout Leicester.

As part of the contract Biffa Leicester operate a mechanical treatment plant at Bursom, known as the 'Ball Mill', and an anaerobic digestion facility at Wanlip. All of the waste collected from residents black general waste bins is processed by the 'Ball Mill'. This processing diverts three streams of waste away from landfill:

1. Metals are extracted and sent for recycling
2. Light materials such as plastics, paper and cardboard are extracted and are used to produce heat and energy.
3. Organic waste is extracted and sent to the anaerobic digestion facility where it is used to produce methane and a soil conditioner. The methane is then used to generate electricity which is sold to the National Grid.

The team is also responsible for the education and promotion of the services to encourage residents to recycle their waste and to engage in positive environmental behaviours. The team also works with all other Council services to provide advice and services to help each department reduce and recycle their waste.

Key priorities:

- Maintain the current weekly collection of both waste and recycling for the residents of Leicester, whilst minimising complaints and operation issues.
- Promote the recycling services available to encourage residents to use the services and increase Leicester's recycling rate.
- Promote and develop the recycling services available to Leicester City Council buildings and thus increase our recycling rate.

Cleansing Services

Head of Parks & Open Spaces: Stewart Doughty
Tel: 0116 233 3020

Cleansing Services Manager: Lin Smith
Tel: 0116 454 4991

The Cleansing Services section currently provides a street cleansing service across the whole of the city. The service is organised into local hand-sweeping teams supported by applied sweeper machines which have scheduled routes across the city. Each of these district teams is managed by an Area Services Manager who acts as the primary point of contact for local communities and ward councillors. Similar arrangements exist within the city centre though the staff wear distinctive orange and black uniforms and operate on a full seven day a week basis.

The service also has a number of specialist functions. The Graffiti Team is responsible for removing graffiti from all types of surfaces across the City, including private land with the agreement of the owner. The FIDO (Faeces Intake Disposal Operation) machine is used for the removal of dog fouling and emptying dog waste bins. The Housing Caretakers are Cleansing staff who work under the instruction of Housing Management to deal with waste & cleansing issues in and around communal properties in particular. There is also a litter bin maintenance team.

The service is also responsible for public conveniences in the city, with a Mobile Public Convenience Cleansing Team cleaning all unattended public conveniences across the City on a 6 days per week basis.

Key Priorities

- To continue to provide quality services and to ensure the highest possible standards of street cleanliness within the resources available.
- To improve responsiveness and reduce complaints through Area Service Managers working closely with local communities.

Regulatory Services and Community Safety

Community Safety Strategy Manager: Daxa Pancholi
Head of Regulatory Service: Malcolm Grange
Head of Regulatory Service: Mike Broster
Head of Regulatory Service: Roman Leszczyszn

City Warden Service

The City Wardens have a key role in helping to keep the city clean using education and enforcement to secure improvements in the local environment. They tackle issues such as accumulations of rubbish on private land, littering, fly posting, graffiti, dog fouling, bins left on

the street, small scale fly tipping, non-licensed skips, scaffolds and hoardings as well as patrolling their ward and providing a reassuringly friendly face to the public and point of contact to council services.

Parking Services and Civil Enforcement

This team processes and issues parking permits, including those for residents parking schemes, carries out enforcement to ensure that parking restrictions are complied with, issues and processes penalty charge notices for contraventions including follow-up work, and improves and maintains parking infrastructure such as parking meters.

Community Safety Team and Domestic Violence & Sexual Abuse

Community Safety Officers work with a range of partners (both internal and external to the council) such as the police, probation service and health to identify local problems and solutions in relation to community safety. The team is also responsible for ensuring the delivery of projects such as the establishment a city-wide street drinking order, ensuring council staff are aware and ready to work to the new ASB legislation, working with the two universities and private landlords to establish a scheme for “safe” accommodation for students. The Domestic Violence Co-ordinator is responsible for establishing and managing an inter-professional citywide strategy for domestic violence and sexual abuse; commissioning specialist services and facilitating the co-ordination and joint working between key professionals in the city.

Enviro-Crime Team

This team seeks to reduce environmental crime by principally tackling persistent fly tippers and those involved in trade waste.

Pest Control/Dog Wardens

Pest Control Officers work to eradicate and exclude a variety of common pests in homes and businesses throughout Leicester. These include rats, mice, bed bugs, cockroaches, fleas and wasps. The treatment of rats at domestic premises is free but all other pest treatments are chargeable except for mice treatments in Pest Action Zones. These are areas within deprived wards which have high rates of mice infestation and where residents are on low incomes and so cannot easily afford to pay pest control charges. The Dog Warden Service deals with stray and dangerous dogs and dog nuisance such as barking and fouling on premises.

Private Sector Housing Team

This team aims to ensure that private rented properties in the city are suitable for occupation. The team investigate complaints and inspect private rented properties for disrepair and freedom from unacceptable hazards and ensure standards in houses in multiple occupation and hostels are being met. Assessment of living accommodation for immigration purposes is also carried out as support to sponsors.

The team also investigate issues around filthy and verminous premises and faulty drainage, dangerous trees on private land and high hedges obstructing light. They will work with Pest Control to investigate various public health pests.

The Building Regulation Team

This team seeks to ensure that buildings in the City comply with statutory standards for quality, safety and sustainability by considering applications requiring building regulation approval.

Building Safety and Protection Team

This team seeks to protect the public from dangerous structures and demolitions and ensures that vacant and derelict properties are secured from unauthorised access

Licensing Team

The Licensing Team work in several key areas including taxis, alcohol and entertainment, sexual entertainment and on street activity such as street trading, distribution of flyers and charitable collections. A vehicle testing station carries out safety checks on all taxis and provides MOT's for the public. The overall role of the service is to make pre-licensing checks on suitability and ensure licensing requirements are complied with.

Leicester Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (LASBU)

LASBU are responsible for managing and dealing with complex and high risk anti-social behaviour cases in the City. The team works closely with Police, other Council Services and partners.

Noise Control Team

The Noise Control Team provide a call out service up until 2am on four nights each week to deal with disturbance from noise, as well providing advice on licensing and planning applications.

Pollution Control Team

The Pollution Control Team are responsible for monitoring and coordinating action on controlling emissions from industrial processes, petroleum licensing and dealing with contaminated land.

Food Safety Team

The Food Team are responsible for monitoring food hygiene standards in Leicester food businesses and the safety and nature of food products. There are around 3000 food establishments in the City.

Public Safety Team

The Public Safety Team work to protect those working, living or visiting Leicester from incidents that could cause death, injury or economic damage. The Team monitors safety arrangements in sports stadia and public events, working places and explosives/fireworks storage. The Team is also responsible for monitoring individuals conducting invasive treatments such as tattooing and compliance with smoke free requirements.

Business Regulation Advice Support and Training Team

The Business Regulation Support Team helps new and existing local businesses to comply with regulatory requirements relating to the running of the business and the delivery of goods and services. The team provides information, advice and staff training. Advice and training are delivered on a chargeable basis.

Trading Standards Team

The Trading Standards Team work to ensure that local citizens and businesses are not harmed by fraudulent and reckless trading practices. The remit of the team spans the full range of goods and services from food to cars to home maintenance. The team supports an intel and financial recovery function.

Key Priorities:

- To ensure an effective and joined up City Council approach to complex high risk ASB cases in the City
- To ensure an effective approach to ASB in the context of new legislation.
- To ensure statutorily compliant and effective public protection arrangements in food safety and standards
- Establish strategies for domestic violence and sexual abuse for 2015-2020.
- Plan and commission specialist domestic and sexual abuse services.
- Projects and initiatives to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour.
- To explore a shared services model for building control in Leicestershire in order to help maintain a robust high quality and cost effective service to local homeowners, builders and developers .
- To ensure that buildings on the “vacant historic buildings register” are monitored and remain secure from unauthorised access until brought back in to use.
- To improve the effectiveness of Building Control enforcement.
- To identify and improve substandard rented accommodation particularly used by vulnerable people.
- To promote environmental responsibility both at individual and community level as part of managing waste related problems in the City.
- To focus on the persistent fly tippers and those involved with trade waste offences and ensure compliance with requirements under the new Scrap Metal Dealers Act
- To address mice infestations in deprived wards through a rolling programme of Pest Action Zones on a prioritised basis.
- To ensure stray dogs are not allowed to roam freely in our city and cause a nuisance.
- To improve online access to parking permit applications.
- To ensure the recovery rate for penalty charge notices remains high.
- To replace parking meters across the city with more user friendly machines.

Key Priorities for Business Regulation and Licensing:

- To support the LLEP Business Growth Hub and devise products/services that help people establish and expand their businesses and create more jobs.
- To protect vulnerable adults from fraudulent traders.

- To continue reducing the risk of food poisoning in the City
- To ensure the food brought into the country by local importers complies with safety standards
- To reduce the risk of legionella outbreaks from poorly maintained cooling towers
- To reduce fire and gas risks to people living above fast food, restaurants and other similar establishments
- To reduce sheesha smoking by children

Revenues and Benefits Service

Head of Service: Caroline Jackson

Tel: 454 2501

The Revenues and Benefits Service is responsible for the billing and collection of Council Tax for approximately 131,000 households in the city and for the billing and collection of Business Rates. It is also responsible for the assessment and payment of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction, the detection and prevention of benefit fraud and the management of the corporate fraud team.

The service is located in Wellington House, Wellington Street and maintains a telephone enquiry line for Council Tax, business rates and Housing Benefits and Council Tax Reduction. Face to face enquiries are dealt with by the Customer Service Centre at York House.

Key Priorities:

- Maximise the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates to protect Council finances
- Support people to claim Housing and Council Tax Reduction
- Maximise the take up of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction and various Council Tax and business rates discounts and exemptions
- Minimise the opportunity for fraud and detect occurrences
- Operate a localised Council Tax Reduction scheme and review it in line with funding constraints
- Operate and manage Community Care Grants and the Crisis Fund (previously held by the Department for Works and Pensions) with a prescribed level of funding
- Support corporate objectives to address Child and Family Poverty
- Work with the Department for Work and Pensions and individuals as Universal Credit is introduced, gradually replacing Housing Benefit
- Manage the smooth transfer of the benefit investigation work to the DWP under its Single Fraud Investigation Service initiative

5. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, ext. 37 4081.

5.2 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications concerning the Recommendations in this Report. Project officers are working with Legal Services when legal advice is sought on projects that deliver the priorities that are described.

Greg Surtees, Legal Services, ext. 37 1421

5.3 Equality implications

This portfolio of services serves all protected characteristics across the city as a whole. The services within this portfolio contribute directly to a number of equality outcomes as set out in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's equality measurement framework: improved standard of living (by tackling/addressing issues that affect people's environmental, built environment and socio-economic circumstances); promotion of participation, influence and voice (through provision for community activities that individuals can engage in); promotion of identity, expression and self-respect (through provision of community activities and resources for individual use which support these outcomes); promotion of individual, family and social life (through provision of activities which support these outcomes); and improved physical security (by tackling/addressing issues that negatively affect individual safety). If these services were not provided by the council/local government/government, there would be adverse impacts preventing the achievement of the above equality outcomes, as well as other related equality outcomes: life, health, productive and valued activities (work), and education and learning. The portfolio is truly far reaching in its impact on supporting and promoting community and personal resiliency.

Irene Kszyk, Corporate Equalities Lead, ext. 374147

6. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

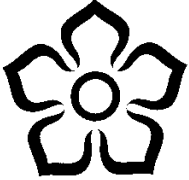
None.

7. Consultations

Contributions provided by the Directors/ Heads of Service named in this report.

8. Report Author

Liz Blyth, Director of Culture and Neighbourhood Services
Tel: 454 3501



Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED
All wards

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission

30th June 2014

Community Involvement Portfolio

Report of the Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance

1. Purpose of Report

This report provides an overview of the key areas and services related to the Community Involvement element of this scrutiny commission.

2. Summary

The portfolio of the Assistant City Mayor for Community Involvement, Partnerships and Equalities is supported by a range of services which primarily fall under the Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance. In addition the Assistant City Mayor for Neighbourhood's portfolio includes Customer Services, which is the remit of the Director of Information and Customer Access.

This report seeks to set out the scope of the Community Involvement element of the Commission's portfolio and the relevant structures and services which support this.

3. Recommendations

The report is presented to the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission in order to help inform their work for the coming municipal year.

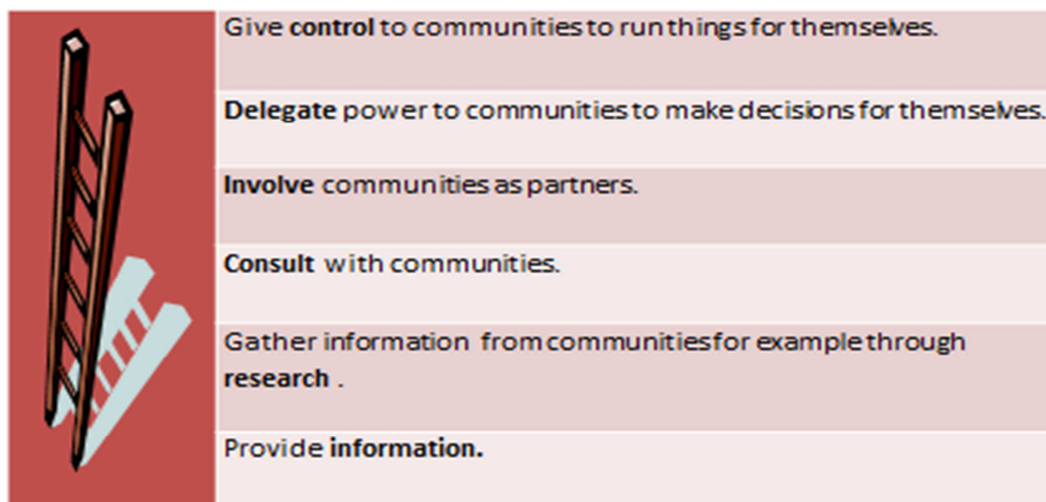
4. Report

Community involvement is seen as encompassing engagement through the voluntary and community sector and directly with residents and service users. Clearly community involvement is important in a democracy and many people want us to engage with them about local issues and services and want to influence the things that affect them in their daily lives. All front line services should engage communities as part of the planning, delivery and review of the services they provide.

There are several levels to community engagement. At a basic level communication is about giving information to the public and others about city council policies and services. As a city with a diverse population and significant levels of deprivation it's

really important that we provide information in a way that is accessible, plain English, easy to understand, and uses different media to suit people's preferences. We also need to gather information about the communities we serve. Our city is constantly changing and people's needs and aspirations change too. So we have to gather information, for example through surveys, to get a full picture of our communities, their needs, experiences and opinions. When there are important decisions to make, such as setting the budget, we will consult with people so that they have the opportunity to feedback on the options that are open to us and be informed about how their views have made a difference. Finally, we often need to work with communities as partners in making decisions, delegate some responsibilities to communities, and in some instances give them some control too. The levels can be summed up in the following diagram:

Ladder of community involvement



In terms of supporting this approach there are a range of services involved which span several Executive portfolios.

The portfolio of the Assistant City Mayor for Community Involvement, Partnerships and Equalities covers the following areas which relate to Community Involvement:

- Equalities including ensuring equalities is embedded in all the work of the Council and championing the work of employee equality groups
- Community involvement and community consultation in the design and deliver of local services
- Ward community meetings and the ward community budgets scheme
- Support to the Voluntary Sector
- Supporting partnership and partnership working

Communications is part of the portfolio of the Deputy City Mayor.

All these areas are supported by services which fall under the remit of the Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance.

In addition the Assistant City Mayor for Neighbourhoods' portfolio includes customer service and customer care which falls under the remit of the Director of Information and Customer Access.

The table on the following page sets out details of the relevant portfolio areas for Community Involvement and how these are supported in terms of Director leads and their related services and key officers.

The key service areas are as follows:

- The Marketing and Communications Team covers press and media relations, external communication campaigns, Link production, internal communications, use of the website and social media to support communications, service based marketing, elements of place marketing and public health marketing campaigns. There is no Head of Service role but there are 5 team leaders covering the different key areas of the team (Debra Reynolds – Press and Media Team, David Doherty – Digital Media Team, James Hickford – Marketing Team, Rebecca Oakley – Communications Team and Kevin Vernon – Graphics, Print and Design team) who all report directly to the Director.
- The Research and Intelligence Team managed by Jay Hardman set out the standards expected in relation to consultation activity, manage the corporate consultation platform on the Council's website, and provide support to services across the Council who are conducting consultation with the community. The team also undertakes quantitative and qualitative research to support analysis of need across communities, strategy and policy development, and service re-design. For example they are currently involved in supporting work to research the impact of welfare reform, have provided the data which informs and supports the primary capital programme, and are currently working to support the strategic housing market assessment. The team have also provided detailed analysis of the census 2011 data which has been previously circulated and is on the Council's website, and continue to undertake analysis as appropriate using the census data.
- The Equalities Team managed by Irene Kszyk supports the Council in meeting its statutory equality duties and in delivering its equalities strategy. The team support divisions and services to look at equality implications and impacts, and how negative impacts may be mitigated against, and also works with schools. Specifically the team have provided a lot of support in relation to the equality impacts of the budget proposals and related ongoing savings delivery and spending review programme. In addition they support the employee equality groups and equalities issues related to the Council's workforce, working closely with the HR Service.
- The Community Languages Service managed by Anwar Hoque provide comprehensive linguistic services to city residents whose first language is not English or who have a visual impairment or hearing difficulties, This includes

provision of translation, interpretation, Braille translation and sign language. The service is also used by external private and public sector organisations.

- The Partnerships, Planning and Performance function supports the service departments in relation to strategic planning and partnership working, service planning and performance management. The three lead officers each support one or more departments and are responsible for a small team of officers. A lot of activity includes the need to respond to external demands for information by Government Departments and Inspectorates including the compiling of statutory data returns.
- Within the Division there is a Voluntary and Community Sector Engagement Manager post held by George Ballentyne. This is a relatively new role responsible for supporting good strategic and day-to-day working relationships between Leicester City Council, the voluntary and community sector and key communities in the city.
- Democratic Services managed by John Thorpe provide the clerical and administration support to ward meetings working in conjunction with Community Services
- Customer services managed by Melinda Capewell is the main point of contact for many customers seeking information or a service from the Council. This includes via the Council's website, customer service centre, by phone or via post. The team oversees the Council's policy and standards related to customer service.

Outside of these services there are clearly a range of services across the Council who play a role in providing information and engaging with service users such as Libraries, Revenues and Benefits, Community Services and City Wardens. Many of these fall under the remit of the Neighbourhood Services element of the Commission's remit which is covered separately on the agenda and therefore details on the structures of those services are not included in this report.

Executive Lead	Deputy City Mayor	Assistant City Mayor Community Involvement, Partnerships and Equalities					Assistant City Mayor Neighbourhood Services
Portfolio responsibility	Communications	Equalities	Community Involvement and community consultation	Partnership and partnership working	Ward community meetings/ward budgets	Voluntary Sector	Customer services & customer care policies
Director lead	Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance – Miranda Cannon	Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance – Miranda Cannon					Director of Information and Customer Access – Jill Craig
Key services	Marketing and Communications	Equalities Community Languages	Research & Intelligence	Partnerships, Planning & Performance	Democratic Services Community Services	VCS Engagement	Customer Services
Lead officers	Media and PR Manager – Debra Reynolds David Doherty – Digital Media Manager, James Hickford – Marketing Manager (Acting) Rebecca Oakley Communications	Corporate Equalities lead – Irene Kszyk Head of Community Languages – Anwar Hoque	Research and Intelligence Manager - Jay Hardman	Partnership, Planning & Performance Lead Officers – Adam Archer, Daxa Patel, Bradley Illiffe	John Thorpe - Democratic Services Manager Head of Community Services – Steve Goddard	VCS Engagement Manager – George Ballentyne	Head of Customer Services – Melinda Capewell

	Manager Kevin Vernon – Graphics, Print and Design Manager						
--	---	--	--	--	--	--	--

5. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report, as it provides an overview of the community involvement aspect of this Commission's portfolio.

Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance

5.2 Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

Kamal Adatia, City Barrister & Head of Standards

5.3 Equality implications

One of the ten equality outcomes in the Equality and Human Rights Commission's equality measurement framework is 'participation, influence and voice'. The above service areas and their activities indicate how the council seeks to facilitate this outcome through its various levels of community engagement. Engaging with communities is a direct way of the council promoting good relations between different groups, one of our public sector equality duties. This in turn contributes to our working with communities to alleviate discrimination and promote equality of opportunity, the other elements of our public sector equality duty.

Irene Kszyk, Corporate Equalities Lead

5.4 Climate change implications

There are no climate change implications associated with this report.

Charlotte Wood, Senior Environmental Consultant

8. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

No specific papers.

9. Consultations

Director of Information and Customer Access
Deputy City Mayor

Assistant City Mayors for Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement, Partnerships and Equalities.

10. Report Author

Miranda Cannon
Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance

Report to Scrutiny Commission

Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission

Date of Commission meeting: 30th June 2014

Libraries Printed Music and Drama Service Consultation

Report of the Director of Culture and Neighbourhood Services

Useful Information:

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Adrian Wills Head of Libraries & Information Services
- Author contact details 37 3541

1. Summary**1.1 The Need for the Consultation**

- The City Council is required to make difficult decisions about its services as a result of significant cuts in government funding. The council's response to this challenge is to work with service users and local communities to develop proposals to make the required savings in ways that will provide a revised but sustainable service offer.
- The Printed Music and Drama Service provided by Leicester Libraries to music groups in both city and county requires a lot of resource to maintain and the subscriptions that are currently charged only cover a very small part of the cost of the service. The numbers of people using the service in the city are low as the majority of users are in the county and beyond.
- The priorities for the City Council library service are to support the development of reading and to provide and support public access to council, government and other essential services that are now only available on the internet. This means that with reduced levels of staffing and increased work in these priority areas, that the established ways of delivering some other parts of the library service can no longer be sustained. New affordable approaches need to be found if these services are to continue.

1.2 Current Use of the Service

- Around 90 groups currently subscribe to the service at an annual charge of £50 per year. Only 25% of the use of the service is by city groups. The groups have access to a collection of printed music and drama sets comprising 25,000 individual items. The subscription also provides access to an inter-library loan service to source additional copies and titles from other library authorities around the country.

1.3 What Sort of Revised Service?

- Some initial work has been carried out on looking at options for the future of the service, varying from ceasing the service to offering the collection to other organisations to run. The City Council would prefer to develop a revised, but less costly service that can be sustained. A cost effective but more limited service offer was identified with approval from Assistant Mayor to consult on this option. The consultation was run from 15th April to 18th May 2014. The details of the service offer and the full results of the consultation are laid out in Appendix 1.
- This paper outlines the results of the consultation and identifies next steps on the way to finding a solution to the challenge of there being fewer resources available in this area of work.

1.4 The Response to the Consultation

- The majority of groups responding to the consultation questionnaire have indicated that they would continue to use the proposed self-service model for the Printed Music and Drama Service.
- There is significant concern amongst most respondents with regard to the withdrawal of two elements of the current service:
 1. Inter Library loans service
 2. Advanced bookings (reservations) service
- A number of respondents put forward suggestions on how the service could be changed to accommodate the need for a reduction in resources which warrant further investigation
- The proposed relocation of the printed Music and Drama service is regarded by most as less of an issue so long as good parking and access are available.

1.5 Next Steps

- A further period of research is required in order to investigate the feasibility of the suggestions which have been made as a result of the initial consultation
- At the end of this period a further consultation will be held setting out realistic options for the future
- An alternative location for the printed music and drama collection will be considered as part of the ongoing Transforming Neighbourhood Services programme
- A decision will be taken by the Executive following the second phase of consultation.

2. Recommendation(s) to scrutiny

1. Note the results of the consultation.
2. Note the proposed next steps and provide any comment on this approach.

3. Supporting Information

4. Financial, legal and other implications

4.1 Financial implications

The service costs £23,000 p.a. in staffing, transport and other costs, towards which the charges currently generate £4,500 p.a. The options to be developed aim to provide a new solution to providing a viable service but at a much lower cost, allowing increasingly scarce resources to be directed towards essential front line service provision in city neighbourhoods.

Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance ext. 37 4081

4.2 Equality Implications

The report presents a variety of considerations as to how the council can make the financial savings required for the service and yet continue to be able to provide it to current users on a sustainable basis. Access to printed music and drama texts for current users would remain. The proposed model and additional suggestions to explore further have mitigated against most anticipated negative impacts for service users arising from the saving having to be made.

Irene Kszyk, Corporate Equalities Lead, ext. 374147

4.3 Legal Implications

Advice on consultation prior to decision making (including DCLG Statutory Guidance on Best Value and Cabinet Office Guidance) has been provided to Culture and Neighbourhood Services. They are now progressing that process by conscientiously taking into account the product of the consultation before finalising proposals, to be presented to the Executive for a decision.

Greg Surtees, Legal Services – 37 1421

6. Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1: Findings of the Closed Consultation

7. Is this a private report?

No.

Printed Music and Drama Service

Findings of the closed consultation As at 16 June 2014

Prepared by:

- *Leicester Libraries, Culture and Neighbourhood Services*
- *Research and Intelligence Team*

This report provides a summary of the findings of the closed consultation.

It includes information about:

- *The issues and options under consideration;*
- *The consultation method;*
- *The public response and views expressed;*
- *Proposed next steps in light of what was learnt..*

1. BACKGROUND

Printed Music and Drama Service

The City Council is required to make difficult decisions about its services as a result of significant cuts in government funding. The council's response to this challenge is to work with service users and local communities to develop proposals to make the required savings in ways that will provide a revised but sustainable service offer.

The Printed Music and Drama Service to groups in both city and county requires a lot of resource to maintain and the subscriptions that are currently charged only cover a very small part of the cost of the service.

Around 90 groups currently subscribe to the service at an annual charge of £50 per year. The groups have access to a collection of printed music and drama sets comprising around 25,000 individual copies. The subscription also provides access to an inter-library loan service to source additional copies and titles from other library authorities around the country.

Some initial work has been carried out on looking at options for the future of the service, varying from a complete ending of the service to offering the collection to other organisations to run. The City Council would prefer to develop a revised, but less costly service that can be sustained.

The following model was proposed through the consultation to provide a sustainable Printed Music and Drama Service which remains accessible to groups and individuals.

- The current subscription service will end. This will be replaced by free access to the existing Music and Drama sets collection.
- Although there will be no subscription charge to use the service daily overdue charges will apply to any items which are not renewed or returned on time. Email alerts will be sent two days before items become overdue.
- Access to the Music and Drama collection will be on a self-service basis. It will not be possible for staff to arrange for the loan or purchase of additional titles or copies from other library authorities, or to set aside sets for collection at a later date.
- The Music and Drama sets collection will be moved out of Southfields Library and relocated to an alternative library building. Adult Learning and Community activities will take place in the space which is freed up in Southfields Library.
- The full collection will be easily viewable online, together with copy availability.
- Music and Drama sets will be borrowed from and returned to the new collection location. It will not be possible to collect or return sets or copies to other libraries. Music sets would be borrowable through library self-service kiosks
- Each Music and Drama group will be given their one library card for the group as a whole. A named individual will take responsibility for all loans made on the card. The following borrowing rights will apply to each group:

Borrowing right	
Maximum number of loans per group (individual copies)	500
Standard loan period	6 months
Number of times each copy may be renewed	1 x 3 months
Total possible loan period including renewal	9 months
Reservations	No
Daily overcharge per copy	Yes

2. CONSULTATION METHOD

Objectives and techniques

Subscribers to the Printed Music and Drama Service were consulted over a four week period between 15th April and 18th May 2014.

All 97 subscribing groups and 4 subscribing schools were contacted by email or letter.

Library staff highlighted the consultation to all groups who visited Southfields Library during the consultation period, or who contacted the service by 'phone or email.

The consultation outlined the financial and staffing pressures upon the existing service and the need to change in order to provide a revised but sustainable service offer. There objectives of the consultation exercise were:

- to consult upon a proposed new model of service which would be sustainable in the future
- to consult on alternative suggestions for a sustainable model of service
- to consult on the relocation of the service with regard to access requirements for groups and individuals

Groups were invited to respond to an online consultation in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire included areas for respondents to write their own comments with regard to the proposed model, and to make alternative suggestions for running a sustainable service.

Some groups preferred not to use the questionnaire format, and submitted their responses by letter and email. These responses have also been included in the consultation results.

3. PUBLIC RESPONSE AND VIEWS EXPRESSED

Respondents

There was a high response rate with 91 individuals responding to the questionnaire. This represented 51 organisations in total. In some cases several members of the same group completed the questionnaire.

In addition to the completed questionnaires 15 individuals contacted the Council by email or letter to register their comments outside of the questionnaire format.

Several groups contacted the "Making Music" association of amateur and semi-professional musicians including choirs and orchestra. A written response was submitted by Making Music and this response was also adopted by some of the subscribing groups. The comments made by Making Music are also included in the consultation summary.

Responses were received from groups of all sizes, as shown in the chart below.

Members	Respondents		Groups*	
	91 respondents		51 organisations	
	N	%	N	%
Up to 20	2	2.2	5	9.8
21 – 40	1	1.1	12	23.5
41 – 60	3	3.3	8	15.7
61 – 80	4	4.4	8	15.7
81 – 100	35	38.5	7	13.7
Over 100	29	31.9	11	21.6

*Please note that in cases where a different answer was given by responses from the same group, the key points in common have been recorded

4. VIEWS AND COMMENTS

4.1 Inter Library Loans Service

The most commonly cited issue relating to the proposed self-service model was the loss of the Inter-Library Loan facility which enables groups to source additional copies of music scores from other library authorities. In the question asking about the proposed borrowing rights, representatives from 51% of the groups making a response identified the loss of the service as a significant problem. The majority were concerned that the variety of titles available to their group would be too limited.

The Making Music association commented: “The repertoire you hold in Leicester Libraries is, by necessity, limited both in range and in numbers. Removing the Inter Library loan facility will reduce amateur groups’ access to a wide repertoire. This necessarily has repercussions on their viability: audiences don’t always want to hear the same pieces, nor do players or singers want to perform the same pieces over and over again; thus a reduction in repertoire leads directly to making groups less sustainable”

Members of 29.4% of all groups making a response to the question asking for alternative solutions suggested that Inter Library Loan charges be passed on to the requesting group. The Making Music organisation also acknowledged that there is cost in staff time with regard to Inter Library Loan requests and suggested that dedicated administrative staff take on this role.

4.2 Booking facility

The second most commonly cited issue relating to the self-service model was the loss of a booking or reservation facility. Representatives from 41% of the groups making a response to the question regarding borrowing rights identified the loss of the advanced reservation service as a significant limitation. The Making Music organisation commented “78% of our groups plan their concerts 6-18 months in advance. They cannot commit to expenditure, such as on venue

booking, tickets and promotional materials, musicians etc. unless they know they will have access to the required printed music at the right time.”

Members of 23.5% of all groups making a response to the question concerning making requests for items suggested that groups be charged for advanced bookings.

Members of 19.6% of all groups making a response to the question on requests for items suggested using an automated online bookings system.

4.3 Proposed borrowing rights

Although the suggested borrowing rights proposed for a self-service model are broadly acceptable, nearly 30% groups responding to the question on borrowing rights think that a loan period of 9 months is too long. The concern is that this could further reduce the number of titles and copies available due to stockpiling for future performances.

90.2% of groups responding to the question about loans indicated that a maximum loan limit of 500 copies at any one time was adequate for their needs. However some of the largest groups indicated that they would require an increased loan limit due to the number of copies required by their membership.

4.4 Change of location

With regard to the change of location by far the most important access consideration was nearby car parking (78.4% of all responding societies).

The next most important consideration was the availability of evening or weekend opening hours to enable group members to collect the sets outside of working hours (35% of all responding groups).

A further three considerations were also highlighted by 19% of responding groups who are happy with the existing location:

- The current location at Southfields Library works well
- Ground level access to bulky collections of sets is important
- An out of city centre location is preferable

4.5 Intention to use service

Despite concerns, respondents from 78% of the societies said they would continue to use the service. Many acknowledged they had few affordable alternative options but were concerned the quality and variety of performances they would be able to offer would be significantly reduced.

Alternative suggestions for a sustainable service

Of the many alternative suggestions offered in the question concerning requests, the most popular was a proposed increase in the annual subscription fee (55% of all responding groups). Where a figure was suggested this was generally between £100 - £150 per year, and in some cases up to £200 per year. The Making Music organisation suggested an annual subscription fee of £150 per year. 29.4% of groups also suggested charging for Inter Library loans or forward bookings. A further suggestion with regard to fees was to charge for advanced reservations (23.5%).

A number of efficiency savings were suggested. 19.6% of groups suggested the use of an (unspecified) online reservation system. 13.7% of groups suggested utilising existing (non-specialist) staff to administer reservation and Inter Library loans services. 11.8% suggested reducing the opening hours for the service.

11.8% of groups represented suggested transferring the collection to another organisation with the expertise and funding to run it. A further 5.9% of respondents suggested investigating the option for a larger scale service on a national or regional level.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The majority of groups responding to the consultation questionnaire have indicated that they would continue to use the proposed self-service model for the Printed Music and Drama Service.

However there is significant concern amongst most respondents with regard to the withdrawal of two elements of the current service:

- Inter Library Loans service
- Advanced bookings (reservations) service

The proposed relocation of the Printed Music and Drama service is regarded by most as less of an issue as long as good parking and access are available.

Next Steps

A further period of research is required in order to investigate the feasibility of the suggestions which have been made.

At the end of this period a full public consultation will be held setting out realistic options.

An alternative location for the printed music and drama collection will be considered as part of the ongoing Transforming Neighbourhood Services programme.

Executive Decision Report

Date: 30th June 2014

Council Tax Recovery 2013/14

Lead director: Alison Greenhill



City Mayor

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
- Report author: Caroline Jackson
- Author contact details: Caroline.Jackson@leicester.gov.uk
- Report version number: V.2

1. Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the committee with key information relating to council tax recovery.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the supporting information below and receive future updates of the administration and policy intention as necessary.

3. Supporting information including options considered:

- 3.1 The Authority has a statutory duty to collect council tax under the requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. For those council tax payers experiencing difficulty with their payments, assistance is provided via the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and the Council Tax Discretionary Relief Scheme.

3.2 Recovery of council tax – the billing and collection process

Billing, collection and recovery of council tax is governed by the Administration and Enforcement Act 1992, statutory instrument 613 (1992) and associated regulations. The recovery process is explained in more detail under Appendix A. This section of the report outlines our recovery activity, who we collect from and how. The number of properties in the city, the level of debt to collect and recovery statistics are shown in the tables below.

1. Who do we collect from?

As at 1 st April	No. of Properties in the city.	Number of CTB/CTR ¹ claims	Percentage of households receiving support
2011	127,055	39,573	31.15%
2012	128,494	40,275	31.34%
2013	129,875	37,970	29.24%
2014	130,992	35,841	27.36%

¹ Council Tax Benefit up to 31st March 2013. Leicester City Councils Council tax Reduction Scheme from 1st April 2013

2. What in-year collection rate did we achieve?

Collection statistics					
Year of charge	Gross (£m)	CTB/CTR awarded (£m)	Net collectable debt (£m)	Amount collected (£m)	% collected
2011/12	113.870	30.247	83.623	80.586	96.37%
2012/13	118.767	31.154	87.613	84.079	95.97%
2013/14	124.256	25.886	98.370	93.264	94.81%

3. Why did the collectable debt increase from April 2013?

From 1st April 2013, Central Government abolished Council Tax Benefit and replaced this with legislation for Council Tax Reduction. This legislation permitted Councils to design a Council Tax Reduction scheme in accordance with local requirements. The Government cut overall funding by 10% estimated to be £3m however Leicester's cut was significantly higher £5.268m.

4. How did people pay last year?

Collection statistics by method of payment for 2013/14	
Direct debit	61.52%
PayPoint / Post Office	19.39%
Debit / credit cards via internet or telephone	11.28%
Bank payments	5.97%
Cash /cheque	1.84%

5. If they did not pay, how did we collect the monies owed?

Recovery activity undertaken to collect the charges (for the whole year)				
Year of charge	Summonses issued ²	Attachment of Earnings referrals	Attachment of Benefits referrals	Enforcement (bailiff) referrals
2011/12	19,982	3,475	3,009	9,291
2012/13	18,390	4,379	3,783	9,631
2013/14	28,516	4,976	9,262	11,260

² The number of summonses issued is across all collectable debt across for all years where there is an outstanding debt.

6. Why the increase in the number of documents issued and recovery activity?

Our collectable debt increased by £10.757m (12.28%) due to the reduced funding for Council Tax Reduction and other changes to empty property discounts and exemptions. There were 16,000+ more new payers who no longer received 100% Council Tax Benefit and were required to pay at least 20%, and others whose entitlement was reduced to a lower rate.

Issuing summons encourages charge payers to contact us. In 2013/14 nearly 13% of the 149,277³ accounts where further recovery action was sought were issued summons. This year, following the summons issued in May 2014, nearly a third contacted us and either paid in full or made arrangements to pay. Where a liability order was obtained last year in 27 percent of the accounts we sought to recover the debt through attachments to earnings or attachments to benefits.

7. How many Council Tax payers have received additional help and have been awarded Council Tax Discretionary Relief?

Year	Number of Council Tax payers supported	Total relief awarded
2013/14	1,946	£263,267.71

8. How did our collection we compare to other similar authorities?

Leicester's collection performance compared to similar authorities					
Year of charge	Leicester	Nottingham	Derby	Hull	Wolverhampton
2011/12	96.37%	94.0%	94.95%	96.28%	95.8%
2012/13	95.97%	93.49%	95.17%	95.75%	96.49%
2013/14	94.81%	93.17%	93.30%	94.21%	95.62%

3.3 Billing and collection process for those who find it difficult to pay

In addition to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme offering up to 80% off the amount to pay on the bill the Council operates the Council Tax Discretionary Discount relief scheme which could financially support a household and reduce the bill to NIL.

Where the charge payer is struggling to pay we operate a fair debt collection policy. This policy supports Council Tax payers (or any debtor owing monies to

³ 149,277 accounts – this is the total number of accounts where a debt was payable. These may include multiple accounts for example where a charge payer may have move within the city boundaries and owes council tax at both accounts.

the council) facing financial difficulty agree affordable payment arrangements together with balancing the council's requirement to collect the monies owed.

At every stage of the billing and recovery process council tax payers are encouraged to "talk to us" for advice, before the recovery action and any associated costs escalate.

The council's main customer service centre hosts a number of debt advice providers including the Government backed Money Advice Service and the MoneyWise debt advice offer. Where it becomes apparent that a Council Tax payer requires help to negotiate other debts, officers in the service will make an appointment on behalf of the charge payer. Charge payers may also seek support from CAB Leicestershire through their website or offices located on Charles Street.

The service has also been tracking the recovery profile of the 16,000 'new' charge payers. The collectable debt for this group is £3.5m and represented 3.59% of the total collectable council tax debt as at 1st April 2013. Additional prompts and non-statutory reminders have been included in the recovery process to encourage payment and engagement where there is difficulty.

The billing and recovery process is outlined in appendix B with process maps comparing the 'business as usual' recovery detail alongside the additional communication activity for our welfare recovery accounts. Together with this is a pictorial display of the collection data by ward which can be found in appendix C.

4. Details of Scrutiny

None

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

This is an information report, and there are therefore no direct financial implications.

Council tax income features in the Council's budget each year, and the impact of the new council tax reduction scheme was built into the budget for 2013/14. Funds for discretionary relief were separately budgeted.

Good collection performance results in "collection fund surpluses" in future budgets, which offset the cost of services in those years.

The budget for 2013/14 anticipated that collection would be harder than previously due to the changes to benefit, and consequently a bigger provision than previously was made for non-collection. This did indeed prove to be the case, but collection performance did not deteriorate as much as we had feared.

5.2 Legal implications

There are no specific legal implications in relation to this report.

Jeremy Rainbow – Supervisory Legal Executive (371435)

5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

Duncan Bell, Senior Environmental Consultant, Environment Team. Ext. 37 2249.

5.4 Equalities Implications

As indicated in paragraph 3.3, the council does track the experience of those who find it difficult to pay. It is also in the process of revisiting its equality impact analysis of the council tax reduction scheme. The main protected characteristics of those benefiting from the council tax reduction scheme and likely to be adversely affected by council tax recovery are: gender, pregnancy and maternity, age, disability and race. Paragraph 3.3 sets out the mitigating actions being taken by the council in its tax recovery process to address related needs of those who find it difficult to pay their council tax.

Irene Kszyk, Corporate Equalities Lead, ext. 374147

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

6. Background information and other papers:

- Local Government Finance Act 1992:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/14/contents>

- The Welfare Reform Act 2012; <http://www.Department for Work and Pension.gov.uk/policy/welfare-reform/legislation-and-key-documents/welfare-reform-act-2012/>
- The Localism Act 2011; https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5959/1896534.pdf
- The Equality Act 2010; <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/notes/contents>
- The Local Government Finance Bill;
- http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/local-government-finance-bill/-/journal_content/56/10171/3752842/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE
and
- other legislation in relation to Vulnerable Groups including but not limited to the Child Poverty Act 2010;
- <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/9/notes/contents>
and
- Social Security Act 1986.
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1986/50/contents>

7. Summary of appendices:

1. Appendix A – Council Tax recovery process.
2. Appendix B – Process maps showing the billing and recovery process comparing the ‘business as usual’ recovery detail alongside the additional communication activity for our welfare recovery accounts. (to be added)
3. Appendix C – Collection data by ward.

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

No

9. Is this a “key decision”?

Yes/No

10. If a key decision please explain reason

In determining whether it is a key decision you will need consider if it is likely:

- to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the Council’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates.

- to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working *in two or more wards in the City*.

Expenditure or savings will be regarded as significant if:

- (a) In the case of additional recurrent revenue expenditure, it is not included in the approved revenue budget, and would cost in excess of £0.5m p.a.;
- (b) In the case of reductions in recurrent revenue expenditure, the provision is not included in the approved revenue budget, and savings of over £0.5m p.a. would be achieved;
- (c) In the case of one off or capital expenditure, spending of over £1m is to be committed on a scheme that has not been specifically authorised by Council.

In deciding whether a decision is significant you need to take into account:

- Whether the decision may incur a significant social, economic or environmental risk.
- The likely extent of the impact of the decision both within and outside of the City.
- The extent to which the decision is likely to result in substantial public interest
- The existence of significant communities of interest that cannot be defined spatially.

Council Tax Recovery Process

Background

Council Tax is billed, collected and recovered under the statutory requirements of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Administration and Enforcement Regulations 1992, statutory instrument (613) 1992 and associated regulations.

Recovery process

At the start of the financial year, all Council tax payers are given at least ten monthly instalments to pay their charges. Legislation was changed from 1st April 2013, which allows up to twelve instalments to be offered to those who request this for payment within the financial year.

If an instalment is not received by the payment due date, a statutory reminder notice is issued, requesting payment of the instalment within seven days. Only a maximum of two instalments can be issued, however if the account has been brought up to date and subsequently payment is not made, a final notice will also be issued.

At each stage of the recovery process, the Council Tax payer is asked to contact the Council if there is difficulty in making payments.

If an account remains in arrears after the issue of at least four documents, recovery action is taken under the legislation, resulting in the service of a summons and additional costs being added to the debt. Bearing in mind the maximum charge is below £250.00 for around 94% of the group of payers previously receiving maximum Council Tax Benefit (Council Tax Welfare recovery group), summons costs were agreed by the Magistrates Court as follows:

£40.00 for balances between £40.00 and £249.99
£70.00 for balances of £250.00 and above.

Following the issue of a summons an application is made at the Magistrates Court for a liability order. This allows the Council to collect monies owed to it by other means, if the charge payer continues to fail to pay. These are as follows:

- Deductions from benefits
- Attachment to earnings
- Referral to enforcement agents (bailiffs)

Assistance for new Council Tax payers previously receiving 100% Council Tax Benefit

Leicester City Council has approximately 130,000 domestic properties. Of these, 16,654 cases were identified as receiving 100% Council Tax Benefit during a snapshot period in February 2013 and tracked to monitor recovery activity during 2013/14.

In order to provide further assistance to these payers, additional non statutory reminders have been issued before taking formal recovery action. These have been termed Welfare Recovery cases.

Where a liability order has been obtained from the Magistrates Court, in the majority of instances it is possible to apply to the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) for deductions from benefits. If the charge payer's circumstances have changed and they are now working, the Council may also apply for an attachment of earnings.

However there are instances where neither type of attachment is possible and the only option available is enforcement action. Whilst it is accepted that the Council Tax Welfare recovery group require additional assistance, this must be balanced with the council's obligation to collect the charges under Council Tax legislation.

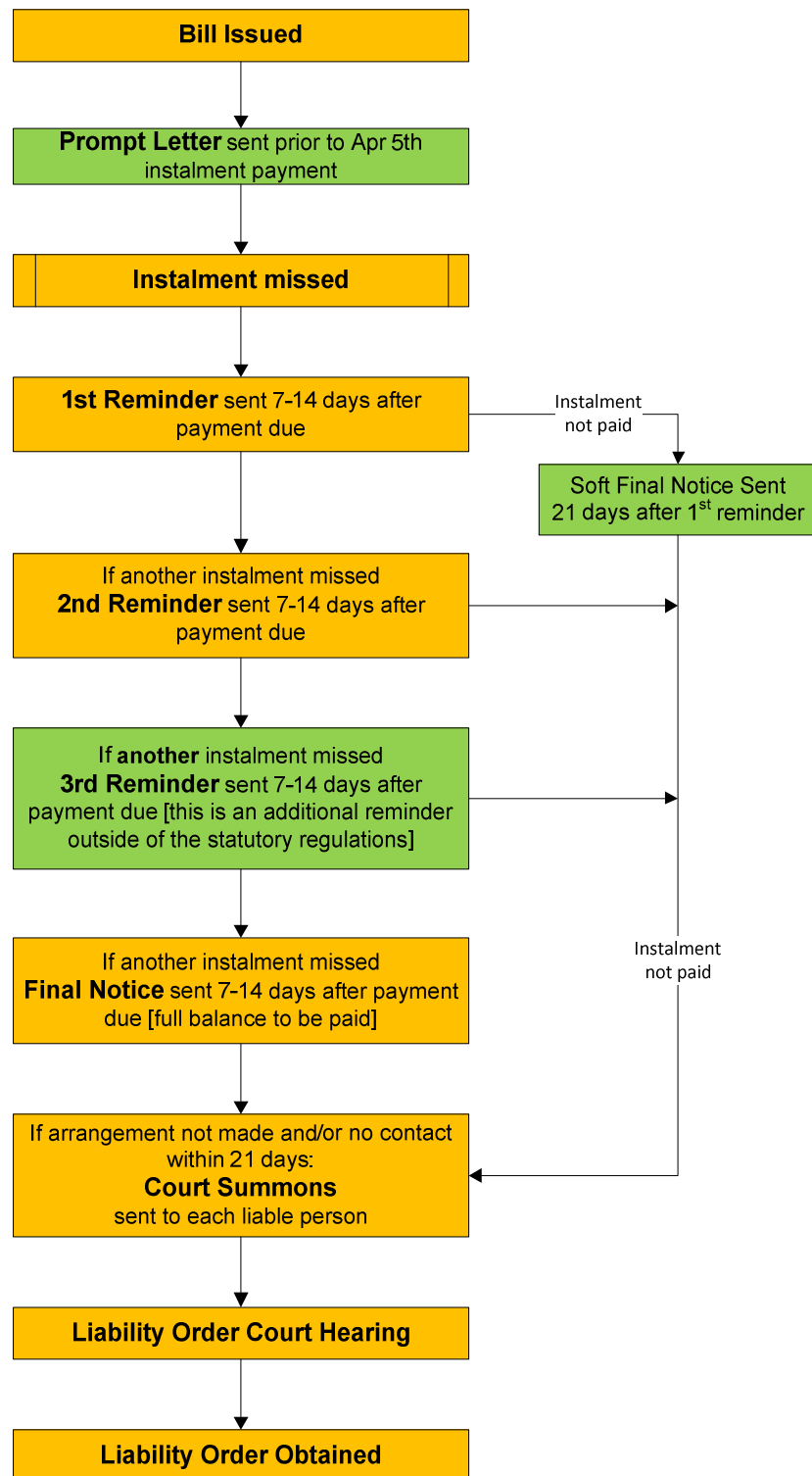
Leicester City Council currently uses two firms of enforcement agents; Rossendales and Bristow and Sutor. However, rather than the standard process followed by enforcement agents for any other Council Tax and business rates debts, less robust action was agreed, with more emphasis on trying to engage with the charge payer by letter, telephone and where necessary visit. In addition, consideration is given to capping enforcement fees, to ensure hardship to the Council Tax payer is minimised, whilst safeguarding the Council's interest.

Cases are carefully filtered by the council's recovery team before referral.

New enforcement legislation came into effect from 6th April 2014 which standardises the approach by enforcement companies, whilst also setting a set level of fee for each action to minimise disputes.

Appendix B

Recovery actions for someone who has made a payment but not enough or missed a payment



Key:



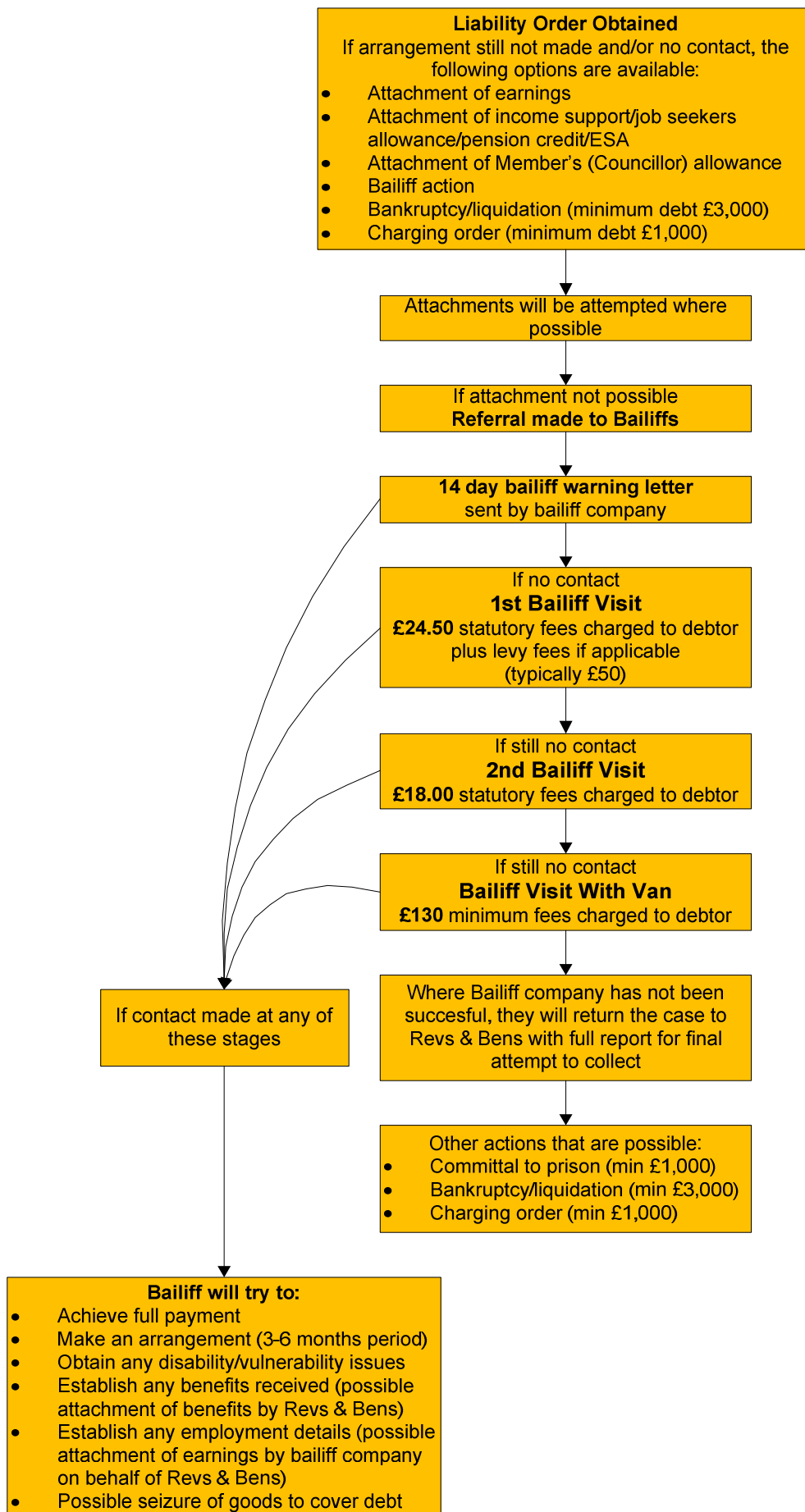
= Normal recovery action



= Additional recovery action for previously maximum Council Tax Benefit accounts

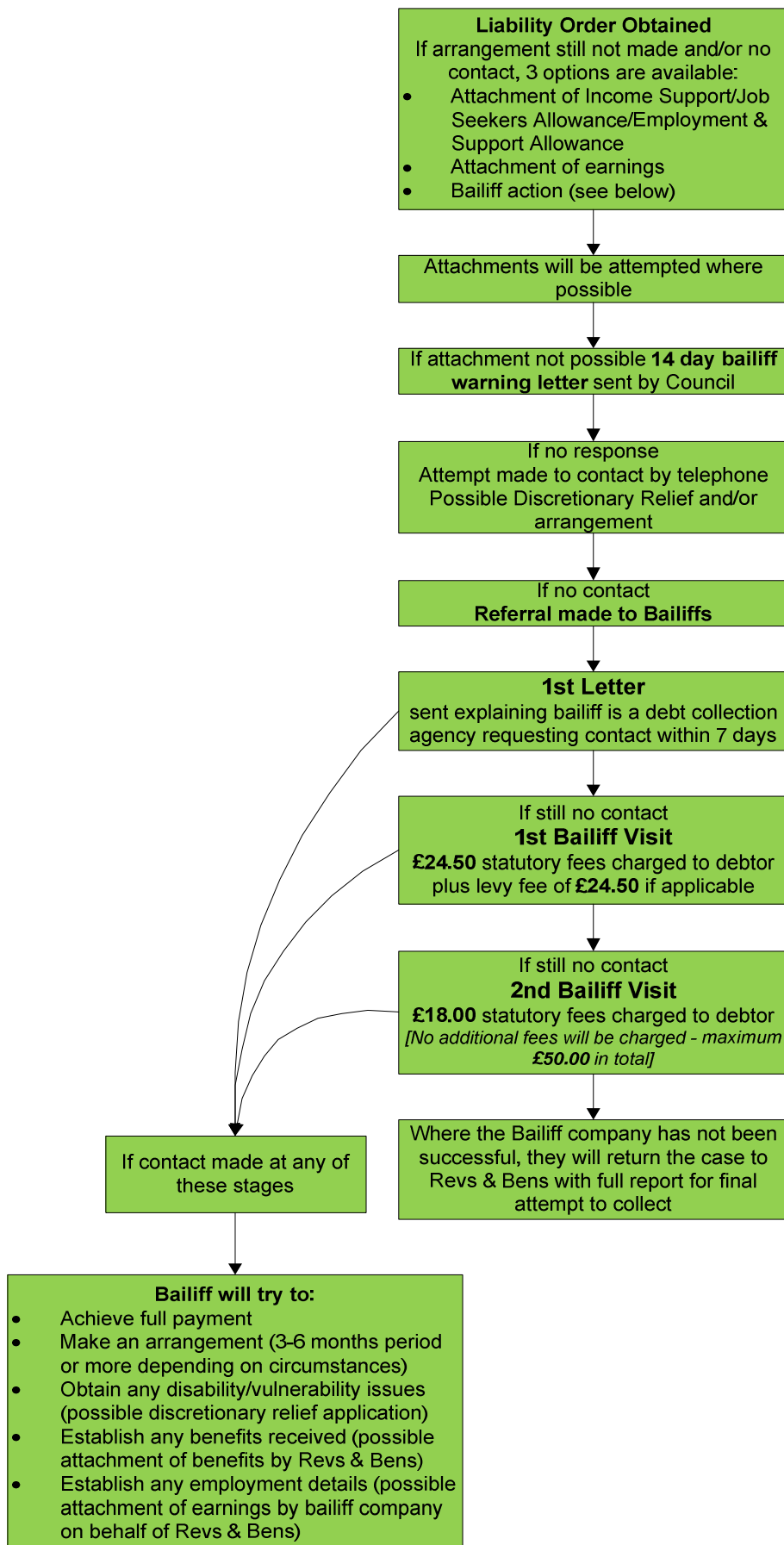
Appendix B

Normal recovery actions after a Liability Order has been obtained

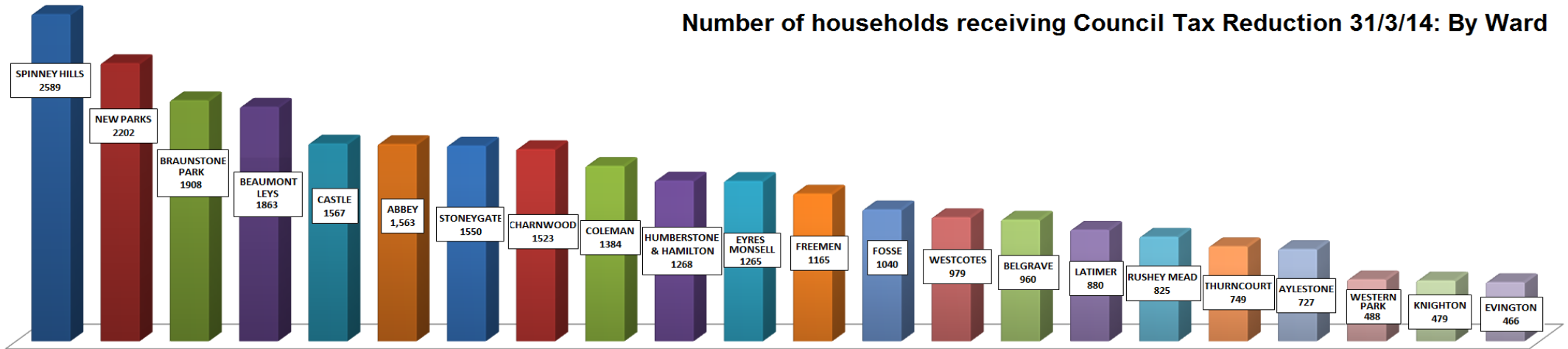


Appendix B

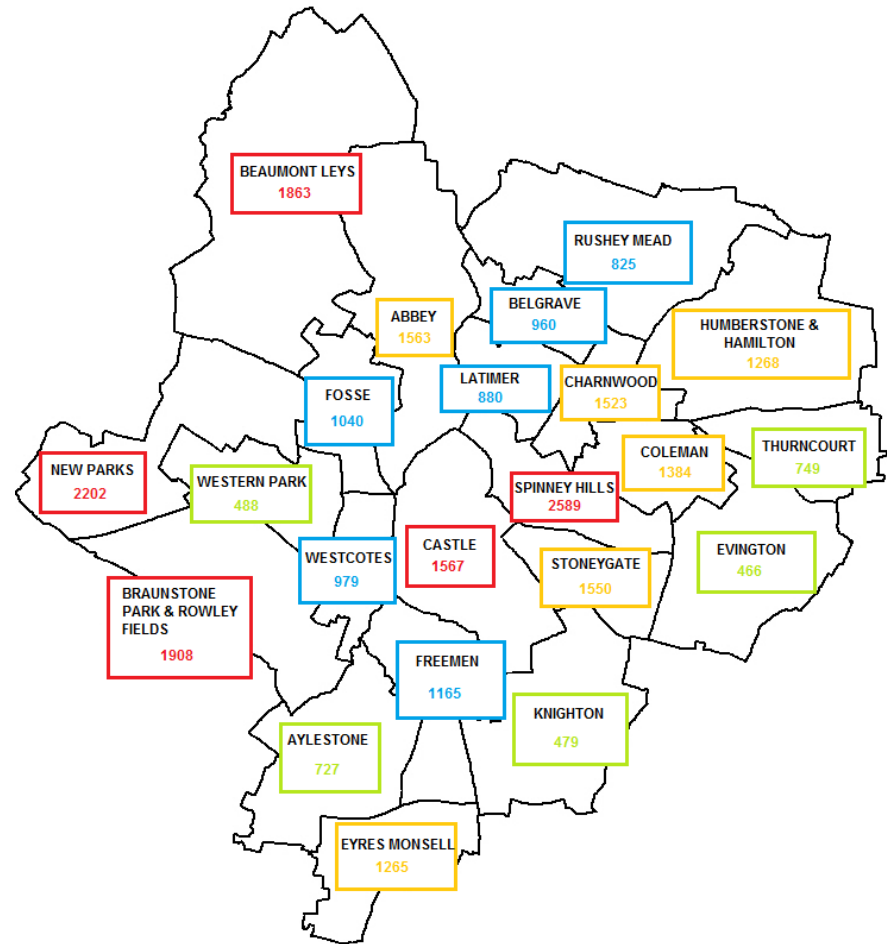
Recovery actions after a Liability Order has been obtained (previously maximum Council Tax Benefit)



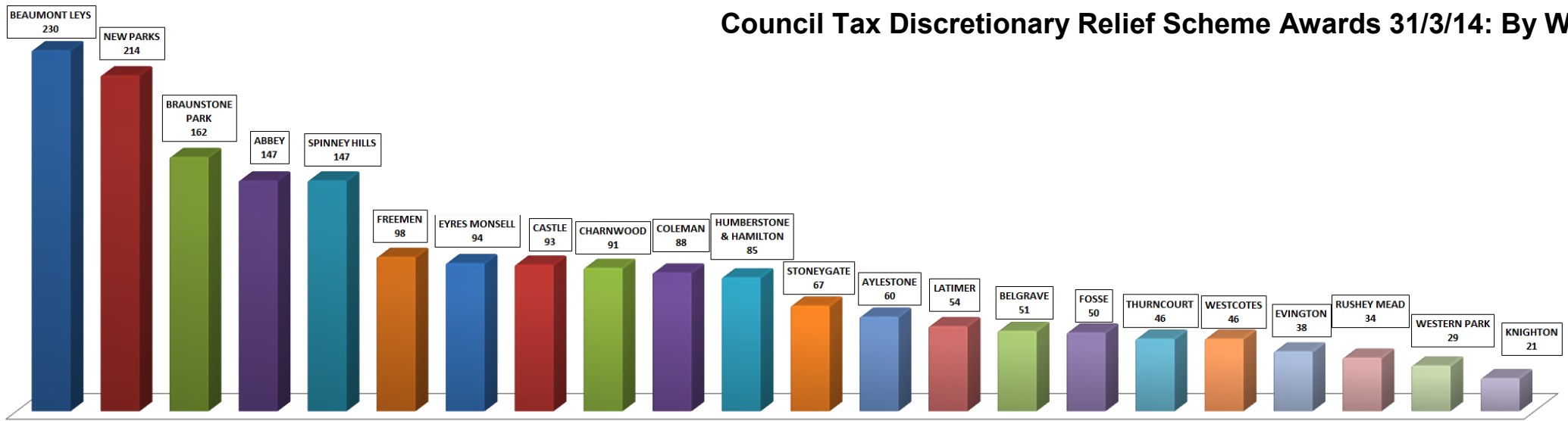
Number of households receiving Council Tax Reduction 31/3/14: By Ward



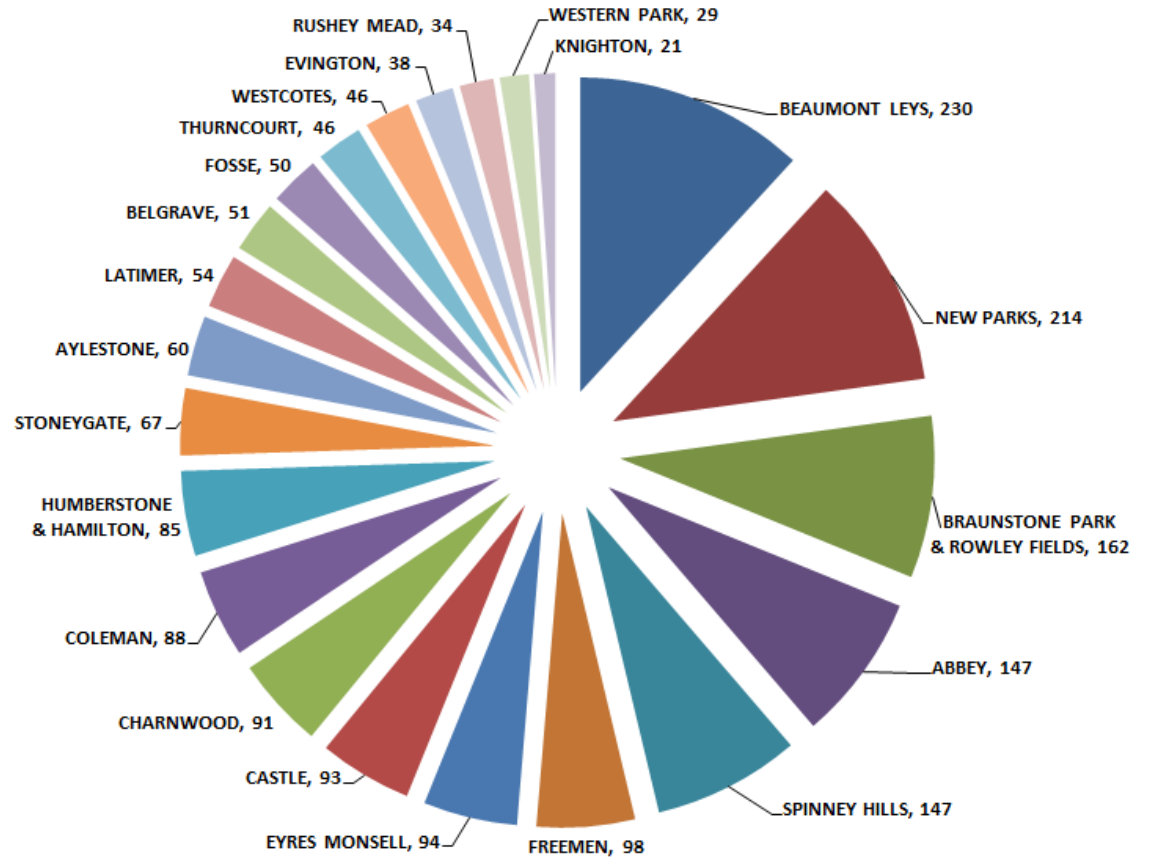
Ward	Number of Households
ABBEY	1,563
AYLESTONE	727
BEAUMONT LEYS	1863
BELGRAVE	960
BRAUNSTONE PARK & ROWLEY FIELDS	1908
CASTLE	1567
CHARNWOOD	1523
COLEMAN	1384
EVINGTON	466
EYRES MONSELL	1265
FOSSE	1040
FREEMEN	1165
HUMBERSTONE & HAMILTON	1268
KNIGHTON	479
LATIMER	880
NEW PARKS	2202
RUSHEY MEAD	825
SPINNEY HILLS	2589
STONEYGATE	1550
THURNCOURT	749
WESTCOTES	979
WESTERN PARK	488
TOTAL	27,440



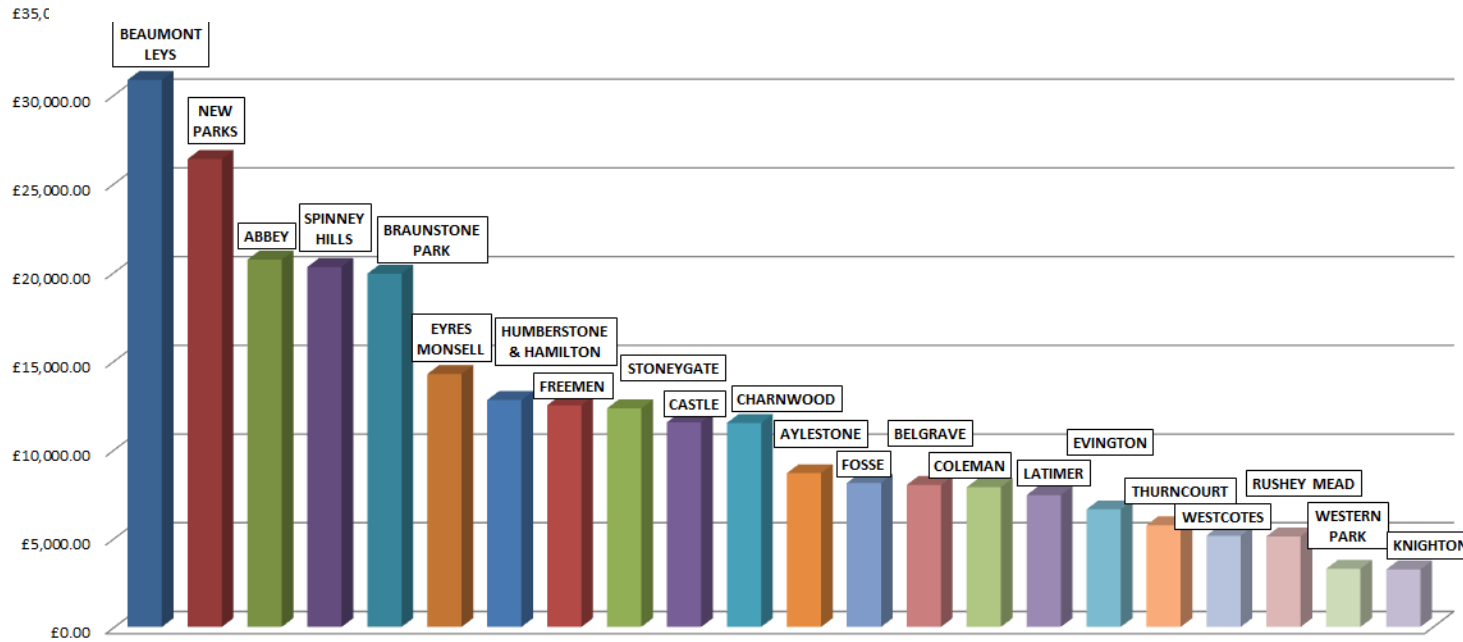
Council Tax Discretionary Relief Scheme Awards 31/3/14: By Ward



Ward	Number of Cases
ABBEY	147
AYLESTONE	60
BEAUMONT LEYS	230
BELGRAVE	51
BRAUNSTONE PARK & ROWLEY FIELDS	162
CASTLE	93
CHARNWOOD	91
COLEMAN	88
EVINGTON	38
EYRES MONSELL	94
FOSSE	50
FREEMEN	98
HUMBERSTONE & HAMILTON	85
KNIGHTON	21
LATIMER	54
NEW PARKS	214
RUSHEY MEAD	34
SPINNEY HILLS	147
STONEYGATE	67
THURNCOURT	46
WESTCOTES	46
WESTERN PARK	29
TOTAL	1945



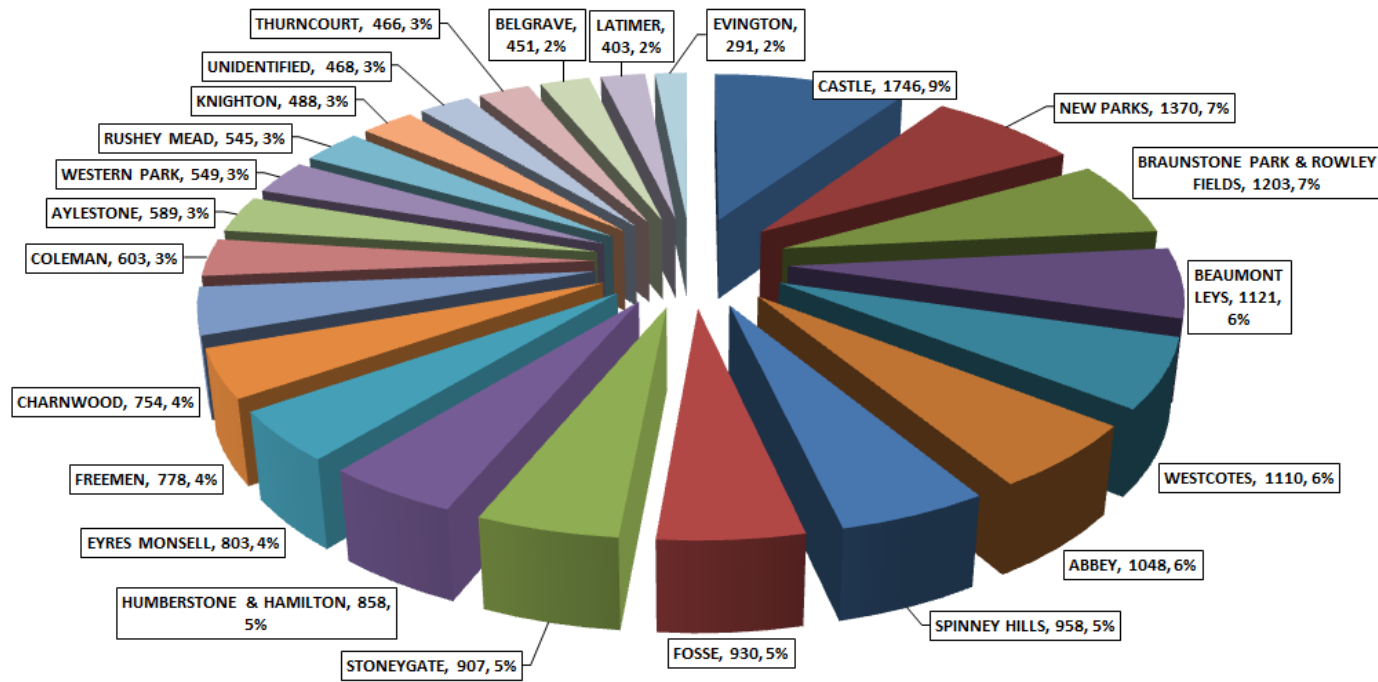
Council Tax Discretionary Relief Scheme Total Amount Awarded 31/3/14: By Ward



Ward	Amount Awarded	Average Award
BEAUMONT LEYS	£30,830.92	£134.05
NEW PARKS	£26,372.63	£123.24
ABBAY	£20,699.57	£140.81
SPINNEY HILLS	£20,290.83	£138.03
BRAUNSTONE PARK	£19,912.12	£122.31
EYRES MONSELL	£14,256.95	£151.67
HUMBERSTONE & HAMILTON	£12,792.28	£150.50
STONEYGATE	£12,493.78	£186.47
FREEMEN	£12,325.12	£125.77
CASTLE	£11,537.80	£124.06
CHARNWOOD	£11,498.99	£126.36
AYLESTONE	£8,669.23	£144.49
FOSSE	£8,113.12	£162.26
BELGRAVE	£8,005.64	£156.97
COLEMAN	£7,878.65	£89.53
LATIMER	£7,431.11	£137.61
EVINGTON	£6,628.36	£174.43
THURNCOURT	£5,734.30	£124.66
WESTCOTES	£5,144.29	£111.83
RUSHEY MEAD	£5,103.61	£150.11
WESTERN PARK	£3,279.68	£113.09
KNIGHTON	£3,237.19	£154.15
TOTAL / MEAN AVERAGE:	£262,236.17	£138.32

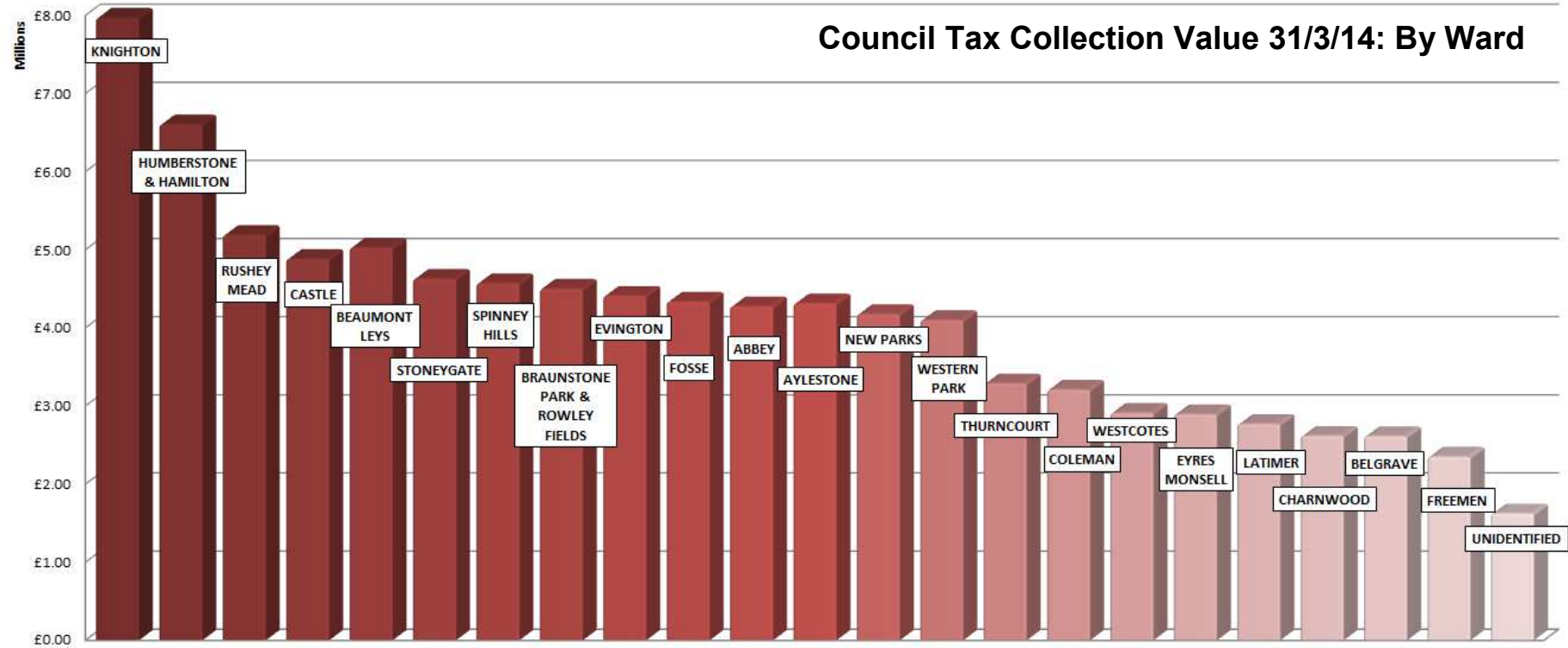


Council Tax Summons Issued 31/3/14: By Ward



Ward	Summons Issued	Ward	Summons Issued
CASTLE	1746	CHARNWOOD	754
NEW PARKS	1370	COLEMAN	603
BRAUNSTONE PARK & ROWLEY FIELDS	1203	AYLESTONE	589
BEAUMONT LEYS	1121	WESTERN PARK	549
WESTCOTES	1110	RUSHEY MEAD	545
ABBAY	1048	KNIGHTON	488
SPINNEY HILLS	958	UNIDENTIFIED	468
FOSSE	930	THURNCOURT	466
STONEYGATE	907	BELGRAVE	451
HUMBERSTONE & HAMILTON	858	LATIMER	403
EYRES MONSELL	803	EVINGTON	291
FREEMEN	778	TOTAL	3112

Council Tax Collection Value 31/3/14: By Ward



Ward	Council Tax Collected	Ward	Council Tax Collected
KNIGHTON	£7,969,858.23	NEW PARKS	£4,177,438.56
HUMBERSTONE & HAMILTON	£6,604,834.58	WESTERN PARK	£4,098,981.82
RUSHEY MEAD	£5,188,846.03	THURNCOURT	£3,289,708.89
CASTLE	£4,882,470.39	COLEMAN	£3,208,862.43
BEAUMONT LEYS	£5,027,008.20	WESTCOTES	£2,913,716.25
STONEYGATE	£4,627,327.43	EYRES MONSELL	£2,894,273.76
SPINNEY HILLS	£4,572,038.88	LATIMER	£2,769,757.42
BRAUNSTONE PARK & ROWLEY FIELDS	£4,501,425.88	CHARNWOOD	£2,618,280.61
EVINGTON	£4,409,838.11	BELGRAVE	£2,613,499.53
FOSSE	£4,335,517.66	FREEMEN	£2,349,555.02
ABBEEY	£4,274,156.70	UNIDENTIFIED	£1,623,889.90
AYLESTONE	£4,313,002.62	TOTAL	£93,264,288.90

**NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SCRUTINY COMMISSION
DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14**

Meeting	Meeting Items	Lead Officer	Actions Agreed
Agenda Meeting – Thursday 16th May 2013 at 4.30pm			
Tues 4th June 2013 at 5.30pm	- Community Involvement Portfolio	- Miranda Cannon	
	- Neighbourhood Services Portfolio	- Liz Blyth	
	- City Mayor's Delivery Plan	- Miranda Cannon	Agreed to add certain targets identified to the commission's work programme. The work programme to be updated accordingly.
	- Community Services Fees & Charges Scheme	- Steve Goddard	Agreed the amendments to simplify the scheme in principle but requested that the consultation findings and the EIA come to a special meeting in August.
Agenda Meeting – Tuesday 18th June 2013 at 10.00am			
Thurs 4th July 2013 at 5.30pm	- Household Waste and Recycling Centre	- Adrian Russell	Agreed the location of the new centre. Requested for the result of re-use pilot to come back in November or December.
	- Ward Community Meetings Pilot Scheme	- Miranda Cannon/ Grace Smith	Recommended that greater engagement is done with Members for the 2 nd phase of the pilot including formal feedback from pilot ward councillors. Commission members will agree what else to consider for future meetings.
	- Transforming Neighbourhood Services	- Liz Blyth	Agreed that scrutiny should be included in the timeline before the 3 month consultation and after.
	- Access Control	- Liz Blyth/ Steve Goddard	Agreed the roll out of the scheme and to continue to monitor its progress.
Agenda Meeting – Tuesday 6th August 2013 at 10.30am			
Special Mtg – Tues 20th August at 5.30pm	- Community Centres Charging Scheme	- Liz Blyth/ Steve Goddard	Several recommendations were made by the commission to the Executive with agreement of a response to be received at the next meeting. It was also agreed to have an update and impact assessment of the changes in six months' time.
	- Move of Customer Service Centre	- Jill Craig	Agreed to arrange a visit for commission member to the new centre once it opens.
	- City Warden Service	- Adrian Russell	An update on progress to come to the commission in six months.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SCRUTINY COMMISSION
DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14**

Meeting	Meeting Items	Lead Officer	Actions Agreed
Agenda Meeting – Tuesday 20th August 2013 at 10.30am			
Tues 3rd Sept 2013 at 5.30pm	- Police & Crime Plan	- Frank Jordan	
	- Neighbourhood Policing	- Bill Knopp	An update on progress to come to the commission in six months.
	- Citizens Advice Bureau	- Nicola Hobbs/ Helen Child	A report to come back to the Scrutiny Commission in six months on progress with the provision of advice in Year 1 of the contract and an outline of the Year 2 proposals.
	- Community Services Review	- Steve Goddard	The commission requested that discussions are held with councillors from wards lacking Council operated facilities.
	- Transforming Neighbourhood Services	- Liz Blyth	The commission requested to be kept involved of the consultation progress, possibly by way of a Task Group and that an Impact Assessment is reported back around usage of Aylestone Library.
	- Ward Community Meetings Pilot Scheme	- Miranda Cannon	The commission to consider a way forward with the project team around the involvement of YP in ward meetings. Officers were asked to consider suggestions put forward by the commission around social media and were asked to report back on their communications matrix.
Agenda Meeting – Tuesday 1st October 2013 at 10.30am			
Thurs 17th Oct 2013 at 5.30pm	- Noise Control Services	- Adrian Russell	
	- Anti-Social Behaviour Team	- Daxa Pancholi	
	- Domestic Violence Service	- Daxa Pancholi	Risk factors leading to someone becoming a perpetrator of domestic violence and ward statistics to be circulated to commission members after the meeting.
	- Census data analysis	- Miranda Cannon/ Jay Hardman	The second phase of the data collection to be brought back to a future meeting.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SCRUTINY COMMISSION
DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14**

Meeting	Meeting Items	Lead Officer	Actions Agreed
Agenda Meeting – Monday 18th November 2013 at 4.00pm			
Wed 4th Dec 2013 at 5.30pm	- Community Centres Charging Scheme	- Steve Goddard	
	- Transforming Neighbourhood Services	- Liz Blyth	Briefing sessions to be held for ward councillors in future when the Transforming Neighbourhood Services Programme is rolled out into their area.
	- Garden Waste Collection Service	- Adrian Russell	Recommendation to roll the scheme out was endorsed by commission members.
	- Ward Community Meetings Pilot Scheme	- Miranda Cannon/ Grace Williams	Further information was requested around the aims and objectives of the scheme, evaluation of work done to date and detail of the transitional arrangements for the next meeting.
	- Voluntary and Community Sector	- Miranda Cannon	Consultation findings to come back to the commission.
Agenda Meeting – Tuesday 17th December 2013 at 10.30am			
Tues 7th Jan 2014 at 5.30pm	- “Pass it on” Re-use Trial	- Adrian Russell	A report to come back to the commission when the pilot is complete. Currently scheduled for 4 months’ time.
	- Community Governance	- Steve Goddard/ Liz Blyth	The commission members will make visits to those groups that have entered into partnership agreements with a view to how they are progressing.
	- Ward Community Meetings Pilot Scheme	- Miranda Cannon/ Grace Williams	The commission recommended that all councillors are informed of progress asap, that best practice is sought, that there is clarity of transitional arrangements and it is rebranded not to be called an improvement project. Feedback and suggestions were also given on the Councillor Guide.
Agenda Meeting – Tuesday 21st January 2014 at 10.30am			
Thurs 6th Feb 2014 at 5.30pm	- General Fund Revenue Budget 2014/15 to 2015/16	- Lead Directors	It was requested that future reports to the commission also capture the Community Involvement element of spend, particularly around Ward Funding and VCS.
	- Welfare Reform	- Caroline Jackson	The commission noted that the sanction of people on Job Seekers Allowance was higher than the national average. It was suggested to have someone from Jobcentre Plus to come and speak to the commission about it.
	- Census data analysis	- Miranda Cannon/ Jay Hardman	It was suggested that each councillor is sent a copy of the statistics relating to their ward, neighbourhood and the city.
	- Update on Equalities	- Irene Kszyk	Officers to clarify details of employees groups on the website to commission members.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SCRUTINY COMMISSION
DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14**

Meeting	Meeting Items	Lead Officer	Actions Agreed
Agenda Meeting – Tuesday 25th February 2014 at 10.30am			
Thurs 13th Mar 2014 at 5.30pm	- Update on Citizens Advice Bureau	- Akbar Sameja/ Helen Child	
	- Community Centres	- Liz Blyth/ Steve Goddard	The commission asked for clearer and more consistent data collection in future. It was requested an updated version of the report goes to OSC and an update is brought back in 6 months.
	- Transforming Neighbourhood Services	- Liz Blyth	The proposals were supported by the commission but asked for greater clarity and transparency during consultation phases for future areas. A further visit is made to Linwood Centre by the Executive and the consultation document be revised.
	- Ward Community Meetings	- Miranda Cannon/ Grace Williams	It was agreed to have a report back in 6 months updating on the progress of the transition and a separate update on the draft funding guidance to come back in the next couple of months.
Thurs 27th Mar 2014	- Site visit to the New Customer Service Centre	- Mary Spencer	Commission members visited the centre and were reassured the move has been successful with vast improvements made from the old centre.
Agenda Meeting – Wednesday 26th March at 11.45am			
Wed 9th Apr 2014 at 5.30pm	- Update on Neighbourhood Policing	- Rob Nixon/Bill Knopp (Police)	A further update on the findings of the consultants KPMG on the Change Programme to come to a future meeting.
	- Welfare Reform – Food Banks	- Caroline Jackson	The commission asked that LCC encourage the providers to keep accurate usage figures and that the relationships and communication with them be maintained.
	- City Warden Service	- Malcolm Grange	It was agreed that final annual figures for fixed penalty notices be brought back to the commission when available.
Agenda Meeting – Tuesday 22nd April at 10.30am			
Thurs 8th May 2014 at 5.30pm	- Voluntary and Community Sector Review	- Miranda Cannon	The commission agreed the proposals but stated their concern over the length of 2 year proposals for asylum seekers and refugees. It was requested that groups could send a written submission to exec and for them to respond, also to ensure groups are supported to find other funding opportunities.
	- Update on Libraries	- Adrian Wills	The commission requested that measures of success other than numbers of books issued are considered in future reports.
	- Partnering Agreements in Community Centres	- Chair	Add to work programme for the commission to consider as part of their work next year.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SCRUTINY COMMISSION
DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2013/14**

Future Items	Lead Officer	Items to be considered
Department of Work and Pensions (Job Centre Plus) – Separate Briefing for all Members	Caroline Jackson/ Kelvin Irons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on JCP policy delivery for sanctions relating to people Job Seekers Allowance
Ward Community Meetings Spending Guidance (June 2014)	Steve Goddard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Guidance
Pass it on Re-use Trial (June 2014)	Steve Weston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation and findings from the trial after 6 months
Council Tax Collection Figures (June 2014)	Caroline Jackson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on current figures/trends • What are the changes and how has the service coped with them?
Welfare Reform – Support Services (June 2014)	Caroline Jackson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What support services are available? • Locations of the services
City Mayor’s Delivery Plan (July 2014)	Miranda Cannon/ Liz Blyth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress of targets in relation neighbourhood services and community involvement
Council’s Website Review (July 2014)	Miranda Cannon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope/objectives of the review • Improvement of the Council website
City Warden Service (July 2014)	Malcolm Grange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final annual figures for fixed penalty notices
Partnering Agreements in Community Centres (Aug 2014)	Steve Goddard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the agreements, do they work well?
Ward Community Meetings Update (Sept 2014)	Steve Goddard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress of transition to Community Services • Update on changes/planned changes
Community Centres Update (Sept/Oct 2014)	Steve Goddard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update of impact of changes affecting community centres • Usage figures
KPMG’s findings on the Police’s Change Programme (Sept/Oct 2014)	Insp Bill Knopp	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings and implications from the review
Transforming Neighbourhood Services (TBC)	Liz Blyth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress in relation to other areas of the project

