

Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: WEDNESDAY, 4 MARCH 2020 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Thalukdar (Chair)

In Attendance:

Councillor Ali
Councillor Govind

Councillor Aqbany
Councillor Josh

Also Present:

Deputy City Mayor Councillor Singh Clair

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43. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

A minute silence was observed for the recent passing of the Chair of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission Councillor Jean Khote.

The Monitoring Officer reported that apologies for absence had been received for Councillor Solanki and Assistant City Mayor Councillor Master.

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

45. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes from the meeting held on 15 January 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

46. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

47. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that there were no questions, representations or statements of case received.

48. NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES DIGITAL OFFER HIGHLIGHTING PUBLIC ACCESS COMPUTERS AND THE REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Environmental Services delivered a presentation updating the Commission on the Service's digital offer at Neighbourhood Services buildings.

The presentation outlined the Council's Neighbourhood Service's community and library services to people that lived and worked in Leicester.

It was noted that different venues had different uses depending on the facilities available. Customer surveys carried out had helped build a rich database on the range of demographics that use the facilities.

During the discussions Members of the Commission raised their concerns with the reduction of opening hours at the newly refurbished Highfields Library. It was noted that there were no actual reduction in hours, rather the library opened an hour earlier as requested and closed an hour earlier at the end of the day. This was something that was being trialled and could be reversed. It was also noted that particular facilities around the city had remote access where ward councillors could benefit when a premises officer was not on duty.

Members of the Commission asked whether there were still printing cost to service users across the city's libraries. It was noted that the 20 pence printing cost was to recover the cost of print cartridges.

Members were concerned with the safety of the users at the libraries on computers, it was suggested that it would be useful if a pop-up message appeared when logging into the system to inform vulnerable users and to provide parents with information booklets, who have children that use the facilities. Officers noted that in terms of security, it was something that could be looked into to support campaigns. Although the service were unable to deliver a warning message it was something that could be developed. Filters were in place so that not all sites could be accessed, and parents had a level of responsibility as they were given a letter once a child had registered.

Members of the Commission were pleased with and congratulated the team for the range of facilities provided at St Barnabas Library in North Evington. Members requested that a poster or signage be used to keep people informed on what services are on offer at the library.

Following the recent passing of Councillor Jean Khote who was the Chair of the Commission and the local Ward Councillor for the North Evington area, Members of the Commission suggested that the carpets at the St Barnabas Library were in need of refurbishment. It was something that the former

Councillor had been campaigning for and would be a tribute to her efforts in the community that she will be missed in.

It was noted that the Digital Skills Enrolment was only available at locations where there was a demand for it and that courses did rotate from one location to another. The Life in Britain course was still available at Libraries for free and had been supported for over 10 years.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Commission supports and praises the investment into new computers and upgrading of digital services in libraries;
- 2) And that, the presentation be noted.

49. NOISE CONTROL - THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL'S NOISE CONTROL TEAM

The Director of Neighbourhoods and Environmental Services delivered a presentation on the City Councils Noise Control Team which provided an overview of the noise and Pollution Control monitoring Service, Enforcement Policies and statistics.

During the discussions Members of the Commission thanked the Noise Control Team for the presentation as it helped Members get a better understanding of the team's role.

Members were concerned whether the Noise Control Team came across issues with both mental and physical health, it was noted that the team were aware that residents may have underlying health issues that impact on behaviour and worked alongside Housing Officers and STAR workers also supported their work. Figures indicated that the number of reports differed to the different seasons with the reported figures peaking in the summer with outdoor parties/events and that the student numbers also effected the data.

Members raised their concerns with particular hotspots around the city in parks, car parks and residential areas where residents had raised complaints of groups of people congregating in cars causing a nuisance to locals. Officers noted that parks around the city had Park Wardens to monitor these concerns, it was difficult for the Noise Control Team to witness these but would pass these concerns onto other agencies such as CrASBU who deal with anti-social behaviour and the police were also a point of contact to resolve matters.

Members were concerned that the waiting time for the noise recording monitors were prolonged and this was letting residents down. It was noted that although there was a waiting time for the noise recording monitors, once a report had been made Officers were out and the service were still in a useful position to deliver swift service.

It was noted that after a spending review in 2016 the service lost £1 million but had still retained the service. Neighbouring cities didn't have the service available and Leicester City Council were in a unique position where all reports

of nuisance were responded to accordingly.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Director of Neighbourhoods and Environmental Services be commended for the excellent work delivered by the Noise Control Team;
- 2) That the Noise Control Team be encouraged to raise awareness of their work through youth groups and schools;
- 3) And that the presentation be noted.

50. WORK PROGRAMME AND TASK GROUP UPDATE

The Scrutiny Policy Officer updated Members of the Commission on the continuing work on the task group. Members were informed that the Scrutiny Policy Officer would be sending out a progress on updates to Members of the Commission in the near future.

51. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no items of urgent business, the meeting closed at 7:13pm.

Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Committee



Minute Item 4.8

Library services provision – Supporting access to digital services

Neighbourhood Services Overview

The Council's Neighbourhood Services section delivers community and library services to people who live and work in Leicester City.

- A network of 28 facilities, including 9 Multi-Service centres:
- 16 library service points
- 16 community centres offering room hire
- Ward & Community Engagement Team



Library Digital Offer: national and local strategic context

Neighbourhood Services are committed to the Universal Offers developed by Libraries Connected and supported by Arts Council England:

- **Digital** – Goal: “To ensure local communities have access to quality information and digital services, to learn new skills and to feel safe online”

Other Universal Offers are linked:

- **Health**
- **Culture**
- **Reading**

Digital Offer: The National Context

“Libraries support lifelong learning, self improvement and social mobility. They are places where communities and individuals can share ideas and learn, offering facilities and practical support to help people get online and develop their digital skills.

Libraries provide digital access and support the improvement of digital literacy, which is critical to central and local government strategies around economic development, channel-shift, reducing social isolation and creating community cohesion.”

Leicester City context

Manifesto commitment May 2019

“Leicester recognises, values and prioritises the need for people to learn throughout their lives and outside of formal education settings.

We will:

- Protect our library services and roll out a full digital online offer for our library service, including e-books and e-audio books
- Provide free wifi in all council-owned public buildings”

Library Services

Delivery team and network:

- 16 library service points
- Supported by Service Delivery Managers and Neighbourhood Services Assistants
- Online Library Catalogue “Bookfinder”
- eBooks platform
- **2.3million visits** to Neighbourhood Services 2018/19
- **180,000 hours** public computer access 2018/19
- **100,000 Wi-Fi** accesses 2018/19



Libraries: Digital and Learning Offer

Libraries Connected, 2019



Access to Computers & the Internet

- Trained staff to support general IT use
- Provision of 166 public access computers in 16 libraries (bookable, free of charge)
- Public access Wi-Fi in all 16 libraries (free)
- Dedicated Council self-service kiosks at multi-service centres
- High quality printing
- Wi-Fi printing
- IT training suites at 5 neighbourhood centres
- Implementation of library solution at youth centres



Investment in public computer network

- Full replacement of public access computers at libraries and adult learning IT suites
- Rollout to libraries February – March 2020
- A new solution in place for the Libraries - part of the updated infrastructure for all public facing devices with investment of £416k



New public access model

- Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI)
- Improved security
- Easier and quicker to update systems and fix issues
- **Significantly updated systems for library customers**
- Windows 10 operating system
- MS Office 2016
- Google Chrome browser (popular demand)
- Canon flatbed scanners

LibrariesWeek

7-12 OCTOBER 2019

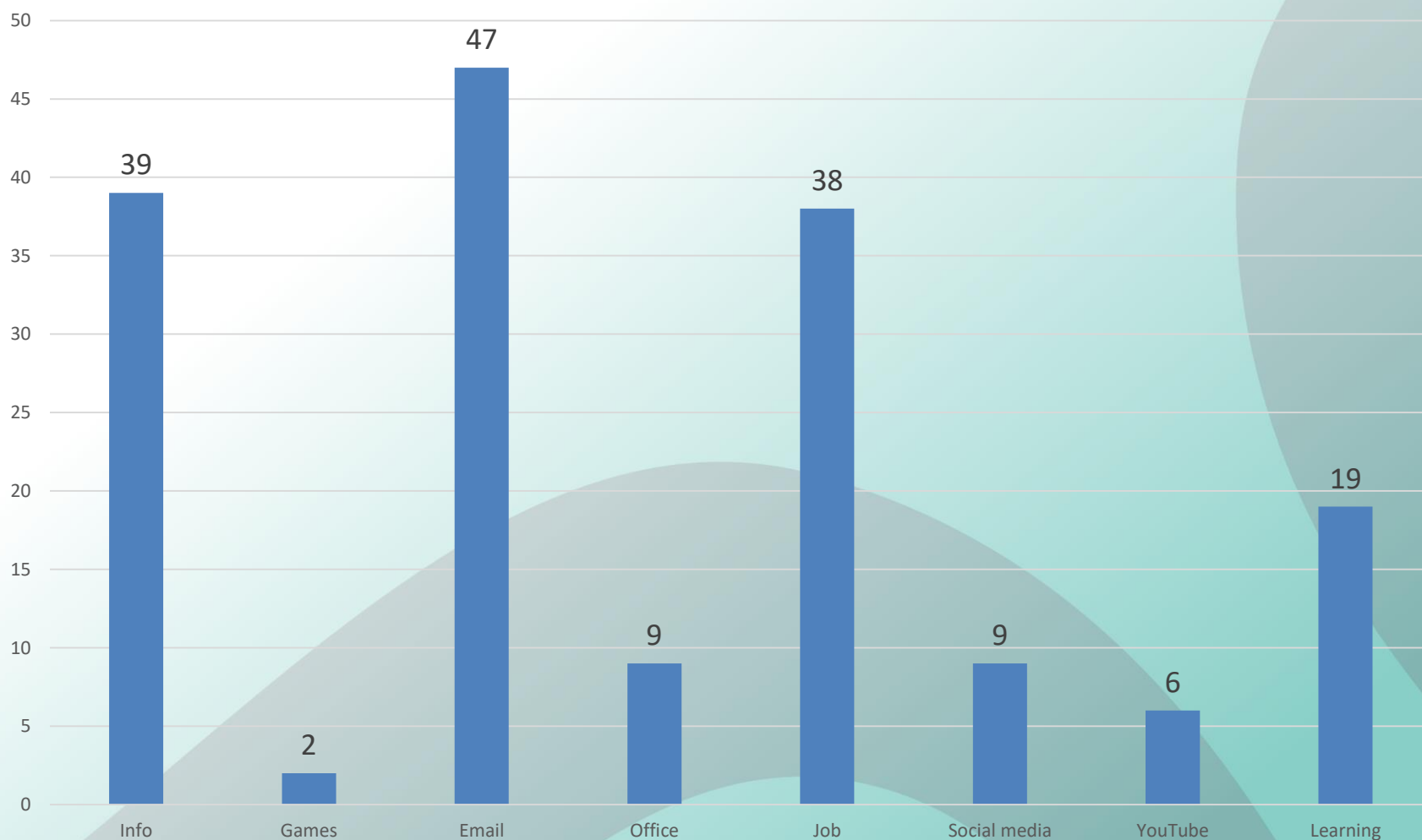
#librariesweek

CELEBRATING LIBRARIES
IN A DIGITAL WORLD



What are people coming to do?

Survey: Beaumont Leys Library 3rd - 16th December 2019



Learning: Beginners IT sessions

- “UK Online” sessions running for over 10 years
- Funding from Good Things Foundation
- For complete beginners
- Learn at your own pace
- Self-led courses with staff to support for confidence
- Topics covered include:
 - Mouse/keyboard
 - Internet safety
 - Filling forms
 - Universal Credit
 - Health online
- Offered at Central Library Mon – Fri, Belgrave, Rushey Mead, Hamilton & Beaumont Leys Libraries
- 164 registrations since April 2019

**Are you taking part in
Get Online Week?**
We are.



 brought to you by


Computer Skills for Beginners

- Are you a complete beginner with computers?
- Are you worried about using them?
- Have you heard scary things about the internet?

Don't worry we are here to help!

We have sessions at libraries across Leicester
so there is one near you.

• Beaumont Leys Library	• New Parks Library
• Belgrave Library	• Highfields Library
• Leicester Central Library	• Rushey Mead Library

Session days and times vary, please contact
the individual library for further information.

www.leicester.gov.uk/libraries
Tel: 0116 454 3540

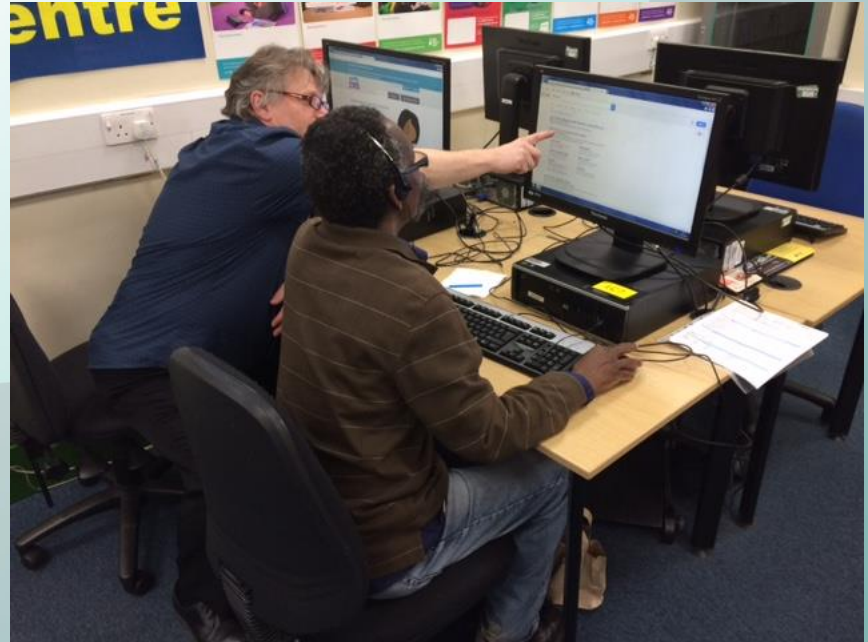


Learning: support from library staff

Library staff routinely provide basic signposting and support to computer users

Most common customer support request areas*:

1. Printing
2. Scanning documents
3. Email (including set up)
4. Search engines
5. Browsing the Internet
6. Microsoft Word
7. Online forms
8. Accessibility
9. Job search
10. Privacy settings



*Source: "Capture IT" survey in Leicester City 2019/20

Adult Learning in Neighbourhoods

- IT suites developed at 5 neighbourhood centres to support the LASALS programme at accessible community venues
- Basic Digital Skills Courses offered at a range of venues between 2017 – 2020
- 400+ customers have accessed drop-in Assisted Digital Support in Libraries
- Sessions include introduction to basic computer – keyboards mouse etc, personal use (eg personal banking) and work (formal email, contacts etc)
- More advanced courses available, but are chargeable

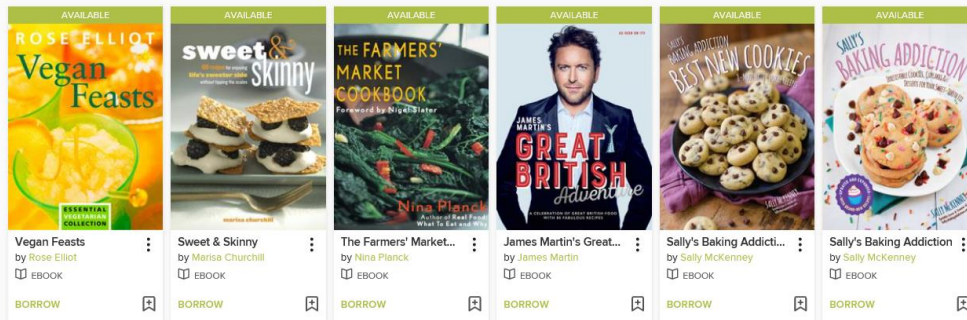
Basic Digital Skills Enrollments	2017-2020
Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre	114
Bishopdale	5
Brite	101
Central Library	38
Highfields Library	6
New Parks Library	30
Pork Pie Library	62
St Mathews NC	34
Tudor Centre	36
Adult Ed College	1428
Total	1867

eBooks and eAudio

- Leicester Libraries “Overdrive” eBooks offer:
- eBooks and eAudio available
- Borrow for three weeks, request on loan titles
- Thousands of titles available, environmentally friendly reading!
- Increasing usage – over 16,600 issues 2018/19

Food, Glorious Food >

SEE ALL

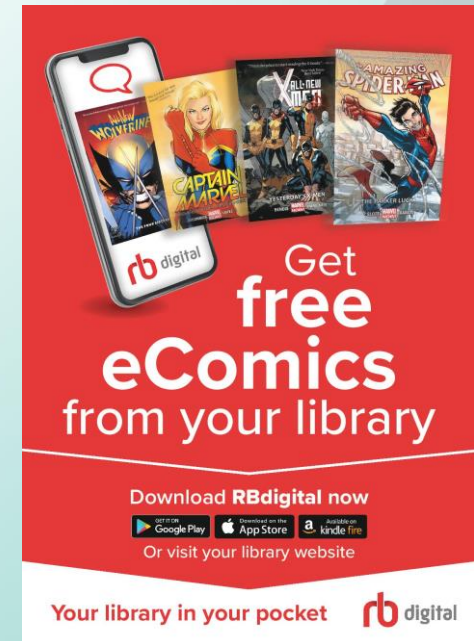
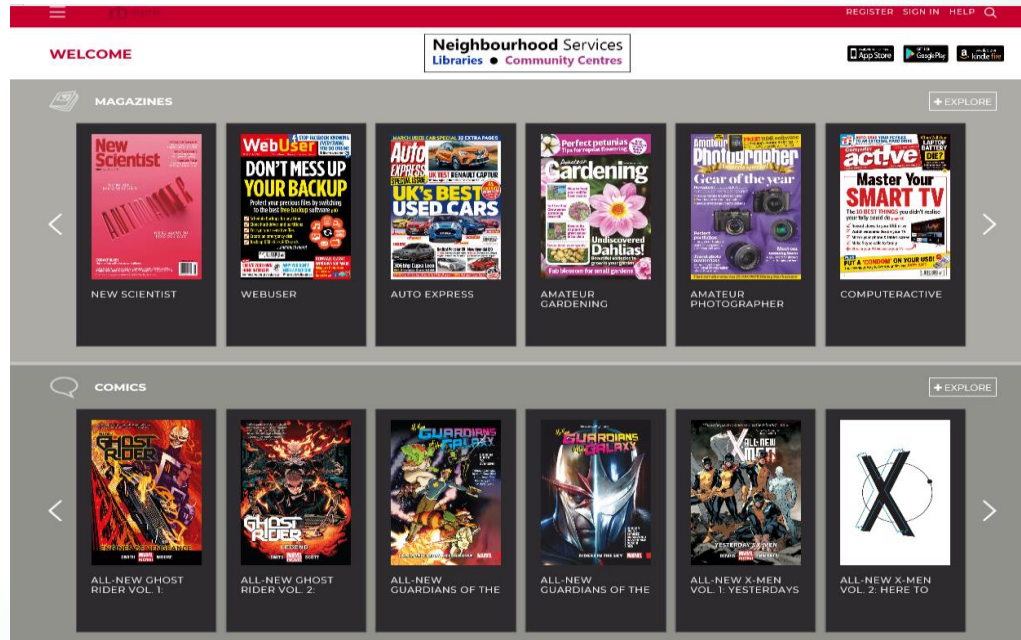


Reading Well for Children >

SEE ALL



Leicester Libraries Online resources



eMagazines & eComics

- Download your favourite titles free of charge every month
- Hundreds of titles available
- Includes Marvel super-hero titles, popular news and lifestyle magazines

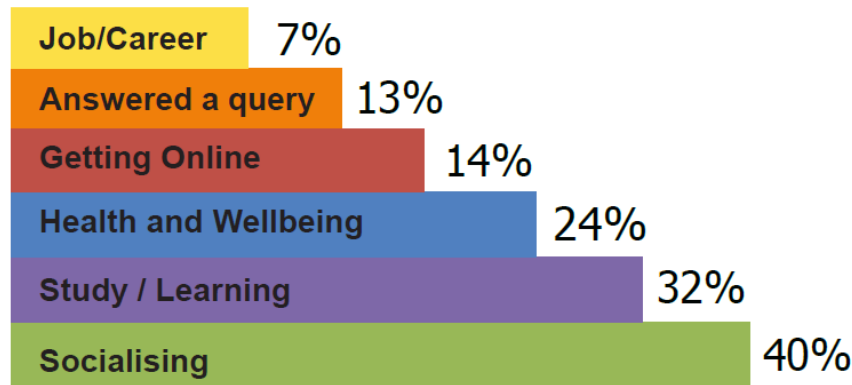
Impact

Customer Survey 2018/19

Of all customer visits to Neighbourhood Services facilities over one week:

- 22% visited to use a computer
- 11% visited to find information

How your visit helped you



Any Questions?

Noise & Pollution Control Team

Nicola Preston, Head of Regulatory Services
Annette Bryan & Robin Marston, NPC team managers

Minute Item 49

Objectives

- To provide an overview of the Noise & Pollution Control monitoring service
- Consider best evidence
- Enforcement policy
- Provide statistics
- Answer any questions

Overview

- Leicester City Council's (NPC) Team operate a monitoring service to deal with noise, odour, smoke etc. from residential and commercial premises
- The team have additional workloads i.e. Petroleum, contaminated land
- 2 Team Managers job share, 8 FTE PCO/EHOs
2 Night Noise Support Officers (1 FTE)

Evidence

- Witness from the complainants property
- During service hours officers will visit
- Noise diary to be kept
- Noise monitoring recorders can be installed
- Best evidence is an officer to witness
- NMRs –complainant to provide statement
- The team have 6 NMRs

Enforcement

- Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- **1st noise nuisance** – informal warning letter and a request for the perpetrator to attend an informal interview. For commercial premises, officers will arrange a site visit.
- **2nd noise nuisance** – statutory abatement notice served
- **3rd noise nuisance** – invite the perpetrator in for a recorded interview under caution
- **4th noise nuisance** – application to court to obtain a warrant to gain access to a property to seize noise equipment or commence a prosecution (where equipment cannot be seized e.g. dog barking)
- **Subsequent noise nuisance** – further seizures, legal proceedings, review of premises licence, request action by the Criminal Anti-social Behaviour Unit (CrASBU)/Housing Management

-
- **Pollution nuisances-** similar enforcement policy, but we would not seize equipment
 - **Landlords** – contacted for problem tenants
 - **LCC Tenants** – Joint Housing approach

Case study

- The NPCT received a complaint regarding loud music played in a flat in Highfields in August 2018. Further complaints were received from 2 other addresses about this LCC Housing tenant in November 2018 and January 2019.
- The first noise nuisance was witnessed on 14 Feb 2019. Loud music with intrusive bass beat was witnessed in a complainant's living room. An informal warning letter was delivered and the tenant was requested to attend an interview.
- A second noise nuisance was witnessed on 6 March 2019. The music was again intrusive in a complainant's home and could clearly be heard in the street. A statutory abatement notice was served on the tenant. A further noise nuisance was witnessed on 14 March 2019
- As this was the third noise nuisance a letter was sent inviting him to attend a formal interview under caution. This letter also advised that any further noise nuisances would result in a warrant being sought from Leicester Magistrates Court in order to gain entry to his home and seize noise equipment.
- On 9 April 2019, a fourth noise nuisance was witnessed. A warrant was obtained from Leicester Magistrates Court on 10 April 2019. A hi-fi and 4 speakers were removed from the flat
- No further noise nuisances were witnessed after equipment was seized in April 2019

2019 Statistics

- Received **2627** initial complaints about residential and commercial noise and pollution.
- Received **3996** calls to the service when the noise/pollution was occurring
- Witnessed **325** statutory noise/pollution nuisances.
- Served **210** informal warning letters
- Served **65** abatement notices/notice reminder letters
- Served **27** requests to attend Interview under caution
- Seized noise equipment from **9** properties
- Started legal proceedings against **2** properties for dog barking offences.

Data comparison

	2017	2018	2019
Initial noise and pollution complaints (domestic and commercial)	2834	2854	2627
Calls to the Monitoring Service when the noise was occurring (within and outside service hours)	4478	3461	3996
Number of statutory noise and pollution nuisances witnessed	376	307	325
Number of informal warning letters served	221	208	210
Number of abatement notices / notice reminder letters served	98	54	65
Number of Requests to attend formal interview under caution served	34	20	27
Number of seizures of noise equipment	7	7	9
Number of Legal Proceedings commenced	2	1	2

Any Questions?