

Extract from the Minutes of Overview Select Committee 22nd June 2016

7. COLLECTION OF INCOME - LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL'S DEBT POLICY

The Director of Finance submitted a report which presented the Leicester City Council's new Debt Policy to the Committee. The Policy had already been considered by the Executive, but had not yet been adopted as the views of Scrutiny were sought. The Chair commended the policy and the steps that were taken prior to legal action. A Member expressed concerns that the policy might be too complicated. She suggested that telephoning the debtor might be more effective than communicating by letter. Officers explained that the primary means of debt recovery was by a telephone call, and options of telephoning people outside of office hours were being considered. However there may also be a need to write to the debtor and the letter would refer to the Council's Debt Policy.

Members commented that the policy was welcome, well written and offered support and guidance but also explained that the Council and service users had a mutual duty. The Policy contained strong messages written in a nonthreatening way and it was suggested that some key phrases should be displayed on posters in housing offices. The Director of Finance stated that she welcomed Councillors' views on the possibility of using of key phrases and running a debt campaign. Views were expressed that there was a need to avoid using threatening messages and a Member also commented that she hoped that officers would work with the Executive and the Press to remind people of their responsibilities and also of the need to communicate with the Council in the event of any difficulties.

AGREED: that the report be noted.