

Public Document Pack

Governance

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The Chair and Members of Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Please ask for

Jackie Brobyn

Direct Line

01246 345228

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01246 345252

9 January 2014

Dear Councillor,

Please attend a meeting of the ENTERPRISE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE to be held on THURSDAY, 16 JANUARY 2014 at 5.00 pm in Committee Room 2, Town Hall, Chesterfield, the agenda for which is set out below.

AGENDA

Part 1(Public Information)

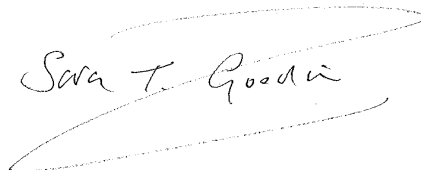
1. Declarations of Members' and Officers' Interests relating to items on the Agenda
2. Apologies for Absence.
3. Executive Member for Housing Report on Appointment of Green Deal ECO Partner (report attached) (Pages 1 - 4)
4. Executive Member for Environment Report on Streetscene Improvement Plan (report attached) (Pages 5 - 14)
5. Executive Member for Environment Report on Allotments Strategy (report attached) (Pages 15 - 18)
6. Executive Member for Environment Update on the Progress of plan to collect, for composting, Food Waste in the Green Bin (report attached) (Pages 19 - 20)

Chief Executive
Huw Bowen



7. Scrutiny Project Group Report on Hackney Cab Capping Review Process - Retrospective Approval (report attached) (Pages 21 - 26)
8. Scrutiny Project Group Report on Water Rates (Pages 27 - 110)
9. Forward Plan (attached) (Pages 111 - 126)
10. Scrutiny Monitoring (attached) (Pages 127 - 130)
11. Work Programme for the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee (attached) (Pages 131 - 132)
12. Scrutiny Projects Progress Updates
 - New Sport and Leisure Facilities
13. Overview and Scrutiny Developments
14. Minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2013 and Matters Arising (attached) (Pages 133 - 140)

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sara T. Goodwin". The signature is enclosed within a hand-drawn oval shape.

Head of Governance

Chesterfield Council: Enterprise & Wellbeing Committee ECO/Green Deal Progress Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation (ECO) schemes were launched by DECC in January 2013 and replace the nationwide CERT, CESP and Warm Front schemes.
- 1.2 The purpose of Green Deal and ECO funding is to achieve significant carbon saving reductions through the installation of a range of domestic energy efficiency measures which improve thermal efficiency and the efficiency of domestic heating systems.
- 1.3 Green Deal funding is in the form of a private loan, secured against the property and repaid as an additional charge on the electricity bill. If the homeowner moves, the debt remains with the house, unless paid off by agreement as part of the conveyancing process. The cost of Green Deal loan repayments should not exceed the savings made to energy bills by the measures installed. Alternatively the home owner may provide their own finance from savings or mortgage extension or unsecured loans from reputable high street lenders. This form of funding will not normally be appropriate for Social Housing tenants since the basic heating insulation measures will be provided by the social landlord who may appoint an ECO partner to assist with delivery of specific measures.
- 1.4 ECO funding is provided by an obligation placed on the 'big six' energy companies by central government and targeted at low income and vulnerable households. The funds are taken from Energy Company income from the sale of gas and electricity, not from Energy Company profits. The funding may delivered through schemes funded and managed by the energy supply companies or by ECO accredited manufactures and installers. A number of ECO accredited installers are known to be working in the Chesterfield area.
- 1.5 It is anticipated that ECO funding will help low income families obtain basic heating and insulation measures (loft and cavity wall) and subsidise the cost of solid wall insulation to Hard to Treat properties for both Social Landlords and private home owners. More detail on the different elements of ECO is provided in Appendix1.

Chesterfield Council has an opportunity to promote and secure the provision of domestic energy efficiency improvements, particularly solid wall insulation, across all tenures through ECO/Green Deal funding.

2.0 ECO Funding & Council Stock

- 2.1 The Council has an opportunity to tender for an ECO partner to carry out solid wall insulation to it's housing stock. Economies of scale and maximisation of ECO subsidy can be achieved by tendering for an ECO partner who is able to carry out work to both Council stock and the privately owned houses 'pepperpotted' throughout Council housing estates. This approach has already been used at Grangewood and Mastin

Moor. Where ECO subsidy does not meet the full cost of work to privately owned homes the house owner will have to make up the difference.

- 2.2 The Housing Business Planning & Strategy Manager is preparing a report to Cabinet seeking approval to tender for an ECO partner to carry out this work using the East Midlands Efficiency framework. The report is scheduled to go to Cabinet on the 11th February.

3.0 Private Sector Housing

- 3.1 The Council's Private Sector Housing Condition Survey 2009, NEA Fuel poverty projections and more recent health service figures regarding excess winter deaths show that low income home owners in privately owned homes are at greatest risk of harm from excess cold due to inadequate heating and insulation measures.
- 3.2 As a member of the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Local Authority Energy Partnership (LAEP) Chesterfield Council has supported the development of a funding bid to the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) Green Deal Communities Local Authority Fund. The purpose of the fund is to deliver external insulation measures for privately owned Hard to Treat Homes across Derbyshire. Derbyshire County Council will act as the accountable body. Delivery will be through tendered contracts working in partnership with the district councils.
- 3.3 The LAEP already has a good track record of securing funding and enabling delivery of basic insulation and heating measures across the county. Last year Chesterfield Home Improvement Agency delivered heating measures worth £184,500 to vulnerable low income home owners across the borough using DECC funded Affordable Warmth grants.
- 3.4 Areas will be targeted according to construction type and income profile, and identified using both local knowledge and provisional data analysis.
- 3.5 If they decide to proceed, Householders will be offered free Green Deal Assessments. Installation costs will attract 40% CERO (Carbon Saving ECO funding) and 40% DECC funding. Householders will be offered Green Deal finance at around 10% APR for the remaining 20%. Green Deal finance will not be actively promoted and householders will be able to use their own finance if they prefer. In some cases Chesterfield Home Improvement Agency may be able to help the householder access alternative grant or Home Repair Assistance funding. All households will be eligible for £650 government cash back which be equivalent to well over half of the interest payments.
- 3.6 On average each council will be able to insulate 50 solid wall homes at an average cost of £8,500 per property.
- 3.7 In addition the LAEP is also developing a separate 'warmth on prescription pilot project' to help identify vulnerable householders with health conditions exacerbated by cold homes who will benefit from energy efficiency measures and advice. The scheme particularly aims to reach homeowners who are difficult to reach by other means e.g. leaflets and mail shots. Some of these home owners would particularly benefit from the solid wall insulation measures proposed.

4.0 ECO Funding Strands

4.1 There are three strands to ECO funding.

- Carbon Saving Communities (CSCO)
- Carbon Saving Obligation (CSO)
- Affordable Warmth (HHCRO)

It is important to note that the only strand of ECO funding that is expected to fully fund the cost of measures is the Affordable Warmth ECO (HHCRO).

4.2 Carbon Saving Communities (CSCO)

4.2.1 Will deliver insulation measures across all tenures in targeted areas of low income defined using the bottom 15% of lower Super Output areas from the indices of Multiple Deprivation in England and Wales. (This follows on from the CESP schemes which were targeted at the bottom 10% of lower Super Output areas e.g. Grangewood)

4.2.2 Chesterfield has 9 CSCO areas located within the following wards

- 2 in Rother
- 2 in Middlecroft & Poolsbrook
- 1 in Barrow Hill & New Whittington,
- 1 in Hollingwood and Inkersall,
- 1 in Loundsley Green
- 1 in Old Whittington
- 1 in St Helen's

4.2.3 These areas contain a significant proportion of Council owned stock.

4.2.4 It is anticipated that the majority of stock in these areas are either 'system built' requiring external wall insulation or Hard to Treat cavities and the area includes a significant percentage of social housing stock. Where these insulation measures are required other carbon saving measures such as replacement boilers and heating system upgrades may also be eligible for ECO funding.

4.2.5 The amount of ECO funding available is based on the overall carbon savings that can be achieved. Homes relying on electric heating sources are likely to generate a higher carbon saving than those with gas powered heating. Usually the ECO funding generated by carbon savings will not be sufficient to fully fund the measures. Economies of scale can be achieved by a cross tenure area based approach and social housing providers seeking to improve their stock should be able to secure significant savings on the cost of solid wall insulation schemes.

4.2.6 ECO funders have also indicated that where the value of measures installed exceeds the value of the carbon savings achieved the excess may be 'banked' and used to help reduce the cost of measures elsewhere.

4.3 Carbon Saving Obligation (CSO) also known as CERO

4.3.1 Is available to fund energy efficiency measures across all tenures to Hard to Treat Homes outside the CSCO areas. The scheme provides a package of measures based

on solid wall or hard to treat cavity insulation. Again economies of scale can be achieved by an area based approach and the comments made above regarding the limitations on funding and 'banked carbon' also apply.

4.3.2 Chesterfield has a number of areas of totally private tenure Hard to Treat Homes which would benefit from solid wall insulation if a significant ECO funding subsidy could be combined with either Green Deal or other forms of private funding (e.g. mortgage extension). However a significant amount of preliminary work would be required to establish the feasibility

4.4 Affordable Warmth ECO

4.1 Will deliver basic heating and insulation measures to **private tenure homes**. Eligibility is determined by a matrix of criteria based on qualifying benefits, age of households members and household income (see Appendix 1 attached). The main measures to be delivered will be loft and cavity wall insulation and replacement gas central heating boilers. Affordable Warmth ECO will not fund external wall or expensive Hard to Treat cavity insulation. Nor will it fund 'enabling measures' e.g. loft access or clearance, changes to pipework or minor electrical work associated with a replacement boiler etc. However, Chesterfield Home Improvement Agency may be able to help low income households find the funding for these ancillary measures.

FOR PUBLICATION

AGENDA ITEM

Street Scene Performance

MEETING: **Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee**

DATE: 16th January 2014

REPORT BY Environmental Services Manager

WARD ALL

COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY: ALL

FOR PUBLICATION

BACKGROUNDS PAPERS FOR PUBLIC REPORTS

None

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To inform members of the progress in delivering the route optimisation project for street cleansing and to discuss the Council's performance in maintaining a high quality street scene.

2.0 Background

2.1 In March 2011 Cabinet approved a detailed improvement plan for Street Scene. During 2012-13 the delivery of the plan was a project on the corporate plan. Members received a closing report on that on 27th June 2013. It was agreed then this committee would continue to receive a bi-annual report and, in particular, monitor the corporate plan measures and projects relating to street scene performance.

2.2 Cabinet approved invest to save funding to procure route optimisation software to enable a review of cleansing rounds and ensure the most efficient integration between mechanical and manual cleaning across the borough.

2.3 Attached as **appendix A** is the cleansing review report which includes the details of the route optimisation.

3.0 Progress

3.1 Work on route optimisation is progressing well as shown within **appendix A**. This demonstrates that all targets are being met on all the major cleansing routes. All mechanical and manual routes have been imported on to the system and the rounds are currently being tested and refined.

3.2 Cashable savings of £95,700 were achieved together with efficiency gains of £7,500.

3.3 National Indicator 195 Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter, detritus, weed growth and dog fouling) has been adapted for the current corporate plan. The latter two were introduced in August 2011.

3.4 We assess quarterly in line with our own performance management system. Table 1 outlines the targets and results for all of our performance indicators.

3.5 Overall, performance has exceeded the original targets thus more stringent and demanding targets have been set this year, wherever possible. Whilst the issuing of fixed penalty notices should not be subject to a “target” for ethical reasons, for budget purposes we must establish a baseline.

3.6 A summary of key performance indicators is shown below

Table 1 2013-14 Performance Indicators

Indicator	Target (pro-rata)	Actual	Period	Comments
Litter	97%	97%	9 Month	Target met
Detritus	94%	89%	9 Month	Target not met
Weed growth	None	82%	9 Month	No target set.
Dog Fouling	None	94%	9 Month	No target set.
Litter Fixed Penalty Notice	150	106	9 Month	Target not met
Fouling Fixed Penalty Notice	30	21	9 Month	Target not met
Grass cutting	<49	41	Full Season	Target met

complaints			March-Sept	
Location full of litter	<36	12	9 Month	Target met
Area needs sweeping	<18	6	9 Month	Target met
Dog bin overflowing	<36	12	9 Month	Target met

- 3.7 The LEQS indicators on detritus are listed as below target. However, these results are drawn from surveys that have been undertaken for the first time by a newly trained member of staff so there may be some discrepancy between the perceptions of the current and previous officers. Additionally, there were no surveys undertaken in quarter two (July-September) due to the transfer of responsibilities under the restructure and arguably detritus is less evident during the summer months. Looking forward, the new sweeping routes applied following the recent route optimisation process allow for increased sweeping frequencies to be achieved in residential areas which will have a significant effect on the levels of detritus build up.
- 3.8 The number of fixed penalty notices issued has fallen over the last 12 months. Over the last four years cigarette litter formed a significant percentage of all littering that the Enforcement Officers observed. Recent Department of Health studies suggest that up to 18% of smokers now smoke electronic cigarettes, obviously these do not create the same litter as traditional cigarettes. This is reflected in the LEQ surveys which record that many locations are free of cigarette litter.
- 3.9 The Enforcement Officers are becoming more of a deterrent as we see much more compliance during our patrols; there is less cigarette litter, and dog fouling seems to be less common. During 2013 there was a 10% reduction in complaints about dog fouling (397 to 359). However this means that the EO's need to focus on more structured patrols, fitting around their numerous other functions. These officers have taken on some of the work of the Abandoned Vehicles/Clean Streets Officer who was made redundant as part of the service restructure. There has been an increase of 30% of reported vehicles so far this year, with a 200% increase in the number of notices served. We plan to have more enforcement action days when we bring the area officers together to target problem locations for an extended period of time.
- 3.10 We have achieved four Green Flag Awards. Of particular note is the success with Poolsbrook Country Park and Brimington Crematorium recently adding to those already achieved at Queen's Park and Holmebrook Valley Park. We will be applying for Green Flag status at Eastwood Park by the end of January 2014 following this park's recent refurbishment.

- 3.11 The restructure of the Environment Service was approved by Cabinet in March 2013 and the new Environmental Services Team, incorporating waste, building cleansing, bereavement services and green space management has been established. The Manager started in late November 2013.
- 3.12 The Neighbourhood Environment Action Team (NEAT) have been working on part of Barrow Hill housing area.
- 3.13 The HRA share of the NEAT team funding is still set at 80% as agreed with Housing. This position will be reviewed again at year end but at the moment it seems to accurately reflect the proportion of work completed.
- 3.14 During September 2013 the “Are You Being Served” postal questionnaire was sent to a random sample of 300 residents. 758 residents responded and the relevant results are shown in Table 2. Where possible, comparator data from the 2008 Place Survey is provided. Traditionally this “perception” survey was undertaken every three years. The Council has not yet determined if and when to repeat it. Where we have used the LGA questions, comparisons will be made with other participating authorities when the data becomes available in April.

Table 2 Satisfaction Survey Performance

Indicator	2008	2013	Comments
Borough free from litter and refuse	49.5%	60.5%	A marked improvement since the Citizen’s Panel assessment of 2008.
Parks and open spaces	65.5%	73.5%	Marked improvement
Working to make the area cleaner and greener (excluding don’t knows)		75.7%	

4.0 Matters arising from previous meetings

- 4.1 On 18th April 2013 this committee was consulted on proposals to deal with juvenile offenders of environmental crimes. Proposals to revise our

enforcement policy and develop a policy of restorative justice for damage to Council property are being prepared for Cabinet.

4.2 At Eastwood Park the signage and dog control order is now in place.

5.0 Next Steps

5.1 In the updated corporate plan for 2012-2015 it is proposed that we have set a target for the satisfaction with cleanliness which will replace the "NI 195" style observational surveys.

5.2 The corporate plan also sets a target of having four Green Flag awards; as per the comments at 3.9 this has been achieved. The prestigious award has been maintained at Queen's Park and Holmebrook Valley Park and gained for Poolsbrook Country Park and the Crematorium. Following the investment in Eastwood Park, it is anticipated that this will be the next park for which Green Flag status will be sought.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Committee receives and monitors the progress with ongoing actions and improvements in service delivery.

6.2 Committee considers future performance monitoring of local environmental quality

DARRAN WEST
HEAD OF ENVIRONMENT

For further information on this report, please contact Mel Henley on ext 5120 or Russell Sinclair on ext 5397.

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Appendix A

Cleansing Review Summary Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Following Cabinet approval of the proposal using the 'Invest to Save Fund'. 'Route Optimisation' software was purchased at a cost of £17.5k, with an annual licence fee of £4k pa after the first year. It was estimated that savings would be around £60 - 70k p.a.
- 1.2 The route optimisation was utilised as part of a more holistic review of the Service.

2.0 Procurement of Software

- 2.1 The software was procured with the help of the shared Procurement Section with the contract awarded to WebAspx.
- 2.3 The initial set up and training cost £13,950 (less than expected) although the annual licence fee will be slightly higher than estimated at £6,050.

3.0 Cleansing Review

- 3.1 The following summarises the changes made as a result of the review:
 - More frequent cleansing of high speed roads to improve cleanliness and to reduce the cost of weekend lane closures was implemented.
 - A small sweeping machine was replaced with an additional medium size sweeping machine in late 2011. This enabled efficiency savings to improve the service in residential areas.
- 3.2 Further improvements were made by liaising with pubs and clubs to reduce littering at source.
- 3.3 The number of complaints and compliments are shared with staff at every Service Briefing and over the last two years the number of complaints has consistently reduced and is now the lowest since records began.
- 3.4 The review of routes and production of new rounds has been carried out by Keith Thurman, assisted by a representative of WebAspx. The Council's ICT service were involved at the outset and provided the

necessary GIS data (Integrated Transport Network layer and Local Street Gazetteer). Keith has consulted with all drivers to ensure that any local knowledge is captured and that the staff have “buy in” so that the new rounds are effective.

- 3.5 A review of the location and use of litter bins has been commenced and is ongoing. Some new larger bins have been installed with less litter being dropped on the ground.
- 3.6 The review and use of route optimisation has also reduced the need to employ an Agency worker on a programmed basis. Agency staff are now only employed if there is a special need e.g. extreme weather event, excessive sickness.

4.0 Route Optimisation

- 4.1 The WebAspx software has been used to record the locations of litter and dog waste bins and implement efficiencies in their emptying.
- 4.2 New rounds have been produced and implemented also gaining further efficiencies
- 4.3 The routes of the town centre barrow operatives have still to be produced and these should be in place during early 2014. Any change would be minor as these were found to be working efficiently.
- 4.4 The routes of the Gully Cleansing vehicle will be produced after Derbyshire County Council (DCC) have reviewed the CONFIRM software information following the first year of use. The routes will be produced in 2014 once the DCC review is finalised and future frequencies for gully cleansing are known.

5.0 Summary of benefits

- 5.1 Better use of the Council's resources.
- 5.2 Improved customer satisfaction ratings
- 5.3 Improved communication and customer service.
- 5.4 Improved asset management of our bin stock.
- 5.5 Improved cleansing standards on the main roads and residential areas.

5.6 Some reduction in fuel cost and CO2 emissions (not quantified but WebAspx have undertaken to provide this in due course).

5.7 Review has resulted in savings and efficiency savings as shown below:

		Cash Saving	Efficiency Gain
		Annual saving £	Annual £
1	Vacant post (previously filled by Ian Merrick) not to be filled	25,000	
2	Post previously filled by Bill Wilkinson (who has been redeployed to Green Spaces within existing budget provision) not to be filled	22,000	
3	Removal of Agency worker post	14,500	
4	Removal of agency workers for leaf clearing as Green Spaces staff are assisting	5,000	
5	Reduction in lane closure costs and overtime on high speed roads now carried out during weekday	24,000	
6	Reduction of overtime as central refuge islands now swept in weekday rather than weekend	5,200	
7	Transfer of Play Area Cleansing work		7,500
	TOTAL	95,700	7,500

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Enterprise and Wellbeing Committee

16 January 2014

Briefing paper on progress with Allotment Strategy 2012-2016

Peter Corke - Sustainability Officer

1. Introduction

Since its adoption in 2012 the Allotment Strategy and respective Action Plan has been managed by the Council's Sustainability Officer, Peter Corke. However, as a result of the restructuring of Environmental Services in 2013 the direct management of allotment sites is undertaken by the Green Spaces Officer, Andy Pashley. The administration of rental agreements and legal aspects attaining to the Tenancy Agreement continues to be undertaken by Kier (Facilities Management) and Governance respectively.

The main reason for developing an Allotment Strategy, in partnership with the Chesterfield Allotment Network (CAN), was to provide strategic guidelines for the provision and management of allotments in Chesterfield by the Council. The strategy placing emphasis on the importance of allotments as a leisure and recreational facility and for the benefits to communities, health and well-being and wildlife, as well as in producing low cost locally produced food in a sustainable way.

The strategy directly supports the achievement of the Council's Corporate Plan objectives:

A clean, green, and attractive Borough, where our open spaces and built heritage are valued.

Is linked directly to the following Corporate Programmes, service plans and documents:

- Sustainable Community Strategy
- Asset Management Plan
- Equality, Diversity and Fairness Strategy
- Parks and Open Spaces Strategy
- Greenprint Document
- Replacement Chesterfield Borough Local Plan (2006)

The Aims of the strategy are delivered via an Action Plan containing 5 objectives, monitored by the Sustainability Officer, with progress on each as follows.

2. Progress on Action Plan

Objective 1: To cultivate the improved management of our allotment sites.

	ACTION	TARGET	PROGRESS
1.1	Provide an improved set of rules and suggested constitution to allotment societies.	New set of rules and constitution provided to all allotment associations.	Target achieved September 2012.
1.2	Identify and audit vacant statutory allotment sites and survey/photograph currently occupied sites.	Status of vacant statutory sites and clear record of current provision.	Work to commence April 2014 due to service priorities.
1.3	Review allotment tenancy agreements.	New tenancy agreement.	Target achieved November 2013.
1.4	Assess rents.	Improved rental structure for allotment sites and clarity on charging.	Target achieved June 2013. New and improved rent structure now implemented.
1.5	Infrastructure improvements.	Undertake infrastructure improvements to ensure disabled have access.	This action will be reviewed on the commencement of Action 1.2, above.
1.6	Review the Council's arrangements for the management of allotments.	Clarity on the different departmental responsibilities of allotments in the borough.	Target achieved in part but still some outstanding administrative issues e.g. budgetary responsibility.

Objective 2: To promote allotments as a benefit for the whole community.

2.1	Provide an improved mechanism for vacant allotments to be acquired by the public.	Central data base/website to publicise allotment sites and vacant plots.	Target not achieved as of January 2014 but due for completion by 2016. Enquiries are presently directed to individual Allotment Association secretaries.
2.2	Produce guide for tenants in partnership with Chesterfield Allotment Network.	Guide for allotment holders.	Action to be completed by June 2014 subject to consultation with CAN.

Objective 3: To highlight the role that allotments play in developing a more sustainable environment, encouraging biodiversity and conservation.

3.1	Seek to improve the biodiversity of allotment sites through habitat improvements.	Create wildlife areas where appropriate.	This is an ongoing action that has had real success with the creation of ponds, wildflower areas and bird habitats on allotment sites.
3.2	Engage with allotment associations to map species diversity on allotment sites.	Map wildlife habitats on and adjacent to all allotment sites.	This will commence at the time Action 1.2 begins although some associations, namely Goldwell No.2, have already begun mapping species diversity.

Objective 4: To develop a health agenda for allotments, focusing on benefits, in terms of improving health in the borough.

4.1	Promote the health benefits of allotment gardening.	Produce guide in partnership with health colleagues on the many health benefits of allotment gardening.	Target not achieved due to budgetary but under review.
4.2	Develop local produce network through and with allotment societies.	Promote sales of allotment produce at monthly Farmers' Market.	Target to be developed alongside 4.1, above, when funding becomes available.

Objective 5: To review existing provision of allotments in Chesterfield and to seek to identify area of potential future allotment provision.

5.1	Assess current allotment provision.	Explore opportunities to provide additional allotments as per current deficiency in some wards.	Ongoing and to become targeted action in revised Green Spaces Strategy.
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3. Conclusion

The Allotment Strategy has aided the delivery of a more unified approach to managing allotments in the borough. The continued involvement of the Chesterfield Allotment Network through bi-annual meetings helps to maintain good relationships and improvements on all of the sites. This is especially true with the changes made recently to the Tenancy Agreement and annual rents.

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**UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF PLAN TO COLLECT, FOR
COMPOSTING, FOOD WASTE IN THE GREEN BIN**

MEETING: ENTERPRISE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE

CONSULTEE

DATE: 16TH JANUARY 2014

REPORT BY:

WARD: ALL

KEY DECISION N/A
REFERENCE (IF
APPLICABLE):

1.0 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide up to date information about the agreement with Derbyshire County Council (DCC) regarding the provision of a composting facility that will allow Chesterfield Borough Council to collect food waste for composting.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the information is noted.

3.0 **BACKGROUND**

3.1 In December 2012 cabinet agreed that the Council should enter into a legal agreement with DCC to enable the Council to deliver Green Waste and Food Waste to an In Vessel Composting Plant (IVCP). At the time there had been a challenge to the planning process for the site at Deepsick Lane Arkwright. This challenge was overturned but as work was about to start it was identified that there was potential presence of Great Crested Newts, so a survey had to be carried out in conjunction with an independent Ecologist. The survey concluded that the presence of newts on the site could be measured in the "lower" category so work could start subject to certain mitigation measures being put in place.

- 3.2 Before work could commence the Environment Agency received a last minute threat of Judicial Review of the Environmental Permit for the site. A robust reply was sent and after the challenge period had expired no actual challenge was received.
- 3.3 Work started in November 2013 and the build is currently in line with the project plan which gives a completion date of 5th May, 2014. The plant will need a commissioning period and DCC and the three Waste Collection Authorities have agreed that deliveries of mixed food and garden waste will start from 19th May 2014. This is subject to a review date in March 2014 which will give DCC an opportunity to delay this start if the project has suffered delays due to bad weather. There is an agreement that this start date will not be further delayed beyond the end of June 2014 and if the plant is not complete and ready to receive loads by then DCC will, at their expense, find alternative sites to deliver the mixed waste for composting.
- 3.4 The facility will allow CBC to collect food waste with garden waste in the green bin which the majority of residents already have. The inclusion of food waste could increase the tonnage of materials collected for recycling by 1000 tonnes assuming every household puts approximately 0.5kg of food waste in the green bin per fortnight. This would increase the recycling rate by 3%.
- 3.5 The list of acceptable items for the IVCP has been issued and does not allow the use of any type of compostable bag, other than paper bags which meet the European Standard EN 13432. These bags can be bought at most of the major supermarkets and DIY stores in and around Chesterfield.
- 3.6 There is still some discussion regarding providing all residents with a kitchen caddy to use to collect their food waste prior to putting it into the bin. A survey is currently being run among staff to see if the provision of a caddy would encourage householders to use the scheme.
- 3.7 It is planned for all three councils to issue a consistent message by delivering the same publicity material at the same time to eliminate the confusion that can occur when one Council carries out a different scheme. The CBC Communications and Marketing Manager will be working with the publicity officer for Bolsover and North East Derbyshire to formulate the publicity plan and material.

For further information on this report please contact Carole Grew, Senior Waste Management Officer x5797



Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Project Group Report on Hackney Cab Capping Review Process

Date : 13th December 2013

PROJECT GROUP MEMBERS:

Councillors:

Lead Member	Vicki Lang
Group Members	Tom Murphy Gordon Simmons

1. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW AIMS

The Council is currently undertaking its first review of the cap on the number of hackney cab licences, since the cap was introduced 3 years ago.

1.2 This scrutiny review aims to ensure:

- a) That the review process has the confidence of both members and the taxi trade within the borough.
- b) That the review is robust enough to aid the Council with its aim of reducing the number of Hackney cabs to an acceptable level that allow the Hackney trade within the borough to thrive.

2. REASONS FOR THE REVIEW AND LINK TO PRIORITIES

2.1 The main objectives of this review are:

- a) The council needs to have a good working relationship with the Taxi companies in the town, the capping review needs to be an open and clear process that all parties have confidence in.
- b) A sustainable and reliable Taxi service within the town is essential to meet the Councils priorities of:
 1. A Sustainable Community
 2. An Accessible Community

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Scrutiny Project Group recommends :

- a) A clear comparison of the survey is produced and broken down into each rank to aid members of the Appeals and Regulatory Committee at the decision making stage.
- b) That a clear written process is put together including the reviews inclusion in the Council's Forward Plan in future.
- c) That the Appeals and Regulatory Committee consider taking action to resolve the number of Hackney plates within the Borough such as removing the option to transfer the plate.

4. REVIEW APPROACH

- 4.1 Meetings with Chesterfield Borough Council Officers
- 4.2 Meetings with Hackney Cab Drivers

5. EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH

5.1 Evidence gathered to support the review work includes:

- 2013 Survey process
- Comparison with 2010 survey process
- Capping effectiveness and effect on the trade so far

6. REVIEW FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

- 6.1 The project group found that drivers believe that the survey this year did not include the same observation time at the Railway Station rank and that this was cut by 6 days. The time at the Railway Station rank this year was actually 12 hours in comparison to 17 hours in 2010. However, overall across the town observation time was 1 hour less than that undertaken in 2010.

The observation process needs to be reported clearly to aid both members and the trade to see a true comparison, this will also stop any false belief to spread among the trade and undermining the process.

Recommendation(s) : A clear comparison is produced and broken down into each rank to aid members of the Appeals and Regulatory Committee at the decision making stage.

- 6.2 The scrutiny project group found that we do not have a clear internal process for the capping review to follow and this is essential for both members and the trade to have confidence in the process.

Recommendation(s): That a clear written process is put together to include the review's inclusion in the Forward Plan.

- 6.3 The project group found that although the number of Hackney plates in the borough had fallen it was at a very slow pace, this was undermining the aim of the cap and any benefit from it was slow to take effect making the process feel like a waste of time and effort.

To keep the process robust the capping number needs to be achievable rather than a distant figure that no one believes will be achieved. It feels like we are doing the survey research but not helping the outcome to be achieved, by allowing it to take so long.

Recommendation(s) : That the Appeals and Regulatory Committee consider taking action to resolve the number of Hackney Plates within the Borough such as removing the option to transfer the plate.

7. REVIEW CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The project group feels that the recommendations will help to build a good working relationship with the trade within the Borough and to improve the service for the residents and visitors to the town.

Contacts: Project Group Lead – Councillor Vicki Lang

Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Project Group (Scope / Brief)

Group Members :	Vicki Lang, Tom Murphy and Gordon Simmons
Subject to be reviewed:	Hackney Cab Capping Review Process
Reason for the Review / Terms of Reference:	To ensure we have a robust review process that is clear and has the confidence of all parties involved.
How the review aligns with the Council's priorities and vision:	<p>A sustainable and reliable Taxi service within the town is essential to meet the councils aims and objectives of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Sustainable Community • An Accessible Community <p>To achieve this the council needs to have a good working relationship with the Taxi companies in the town, the capping review needs to be an open process that all parties have confidence in.</p>
Aims and Objectives of the Review:	To ensure we have a robust review process that is clear and has the confidence of all parties involved.
Method of Review:	Meetings
Research & Evidence:	Discussion with all parties involved
Witnesses : (who to invite, information and answers needed)	<p>Hackney Cab Drivers to discuss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How they found the process • How they feel about the process <p>Officers to discuss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How they found the process • How they feel about the process

Review Group Process:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekend 30th November Agree Scoping Document • Monday 2nd December –Inform Lead Member and Officers involved • Tuesday 3rd December - Submit scoping document to Scrutiny Business meeting. • Friday 6th December – Meeting with Hackney drivers and Officers. • Monday 9th December, Thursday 12th December and Friday 13th December other meeting dates as required. • Monday 16th December Submit review group report to Scrutiny officer for Enterprise and Wellbeing Committee meeting on 16th January 2014.
Resource Requirements: (what resources will be used)	Member and officer time. Travel costs.
Project Start Date:	3 rd December 2013
Scrutiny Project / Report Completion Date	Monday 16 th December 2013
Scrutiny Report to Scrutiny Committee on:	16 th January 2014
Reporting Deadlines Decision Making Body <i>(allow for WBR / Executive Member)</i>	
Scrutiny Report to Decision Making Body : <i>(allow for Public notice period)</i>	



Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Project Group

report on Water Rates

Date : January 2014

PROJECT GROUP MEMBERS:

Councillors:

Lead	Councillor Simmons
Group Members	Councillor Elliott Councillor Flood Councillor Hawksworth Councillor Hill Councillor Miles Councillor David Stone

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW AIMS

1.1 This review aims to focus on policy on evictions for non-payment of water rates.

1.2 The main objectives of this review are:

- a) To review the operation of the Housing policy on water rate arrears evictions, which had been agreed in May 2011. The policy had been put in place in June 2011 to deal with the collection of water rates and with arrears, and it would be reviewed with an understanding that we would avoid evictions for non-payment of water rates only. It was agreed that the request to review was timely, the policy having been used for two years. **(Appendix 3 Water Rates Arrears Policy)**
- b) To find out more about the water rates collection contract with the Severn Trent Water Company, and the annual sum of money received by the Housing Revenue account for collection of water rates.
- c) To review any appropriate related matters.

2.0 REASONS FOR THE REVIEW AND LINK TO PRIORITIES

2.1 The contract with Severn Trent Water had not been reviewed in any detail by Scrutiny before the Scrutiny Project Group was set up on 27th June, 2013.

The contract had been in place for some years, and we were aware that the Housing Revenue Account received an annual sum of money for the collection of water rates.

Councillor Simmons had become aware that the contract was being reviewed by Business Transformation staff on behalf of Councillor McManus, Executive Member for Housing.

2.2 There was a lack of information about Housing policy towards tenants with water rates arrears, and related matters including:

- costs for collection
- payment for debt
- effect of current economic situation on arrears
- effect of arrears on homeless budget
- cost of collection to General Fund
- increased need for Tenant Support
- provision of advice and help available to Tenants.

2.3 The review aligned with Corporate Plan Aim 3:

“A place where everyone has fair access to a decent and affordable home.”

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Project Group recommends :

- a) that Officers to report Scrutiny in six months time, as to the outcome/progress on the water rate collection process and technology review;
- b) (i) that an update be made to Scrutiny when the Contract with Severn Trent Water is formally signed, as it is only a ‘heads of terms’ agreement currently;

(ii) that an update on the Contract be given to Scrutiny after one year;
- c) that Scrutiny discuss at a business meeting the operation of the ‘write-off’ policy to confirm with Revenues and Housing that they either remove the sentence about ‘write-offs’ from the policy, or

insert " 'write-offs' to be Officer recommendations carried out by Executive Members";

- d) that Scrutiny be asked to support a request to review the Tenant's information to include:
 - (i) more robust and prominent information on support available and advice regarding water rates and water meters;
 - (ii) re-emphasis to all tenants of the importance of communication with Revenues and Tenancy Support, if it is likely that the tenant may be approaching financial difficulties that may lead to arrears.
- e) that Scrutiny be given a progress report in six months time, monitoring the number of evictions for water rates arrears.

4.0 REVIEW APPROACH

- 4.1 The Project Group met on 5 occasions. The terms of reference were agreed at the first meeting held on 4th September, 2013, along with the membership of the Group, all of whom were self-nominated. Councillor Hill later left, when he became a member of Cabinet.

The methodology used to gather information was through interviews, meetings, desk top research and we have examined the previous contract through direct interviews, gathered statistics which were available about arrears/ and or evictions for water rates alone.

There has also been a web search and anecdotal evidence from Councillor Members.

See "The Scoping Document" – Appendix 1

4.2 Desk top research

We reviewed the web information of a number of water and sewage companies.

All provided a package of both reduced tariffs and support including advice about water meters.

We also examined web sites of various councils and found some do not include water rates and a few do have contracts with water companies.

It was impossible for us to find out the contract details but we are aware of how another council had renegotiated an increase in their contract this year. Some local councils have moved away from collecting water rates.

It was difficult as a lot of councils no longer have their own Housing stock and there is no clear information about other Social Housing providers and their position with regards water rates.

We believe that there has been a move away generally from central collection.

4.3 Interviews

A list of the witnesses interviewed is to be found at - **Appendix 1 “The Scoping Document “on page 2.** Law Centre and Citizens’ Advice representatives were not interviewed, but information was obtained from the Citizens’ Advice Bureau (**Appendix 11**).

Issues identified in interviews

- The current CBC response to water rates arrears
- Differences between CBC policy and water companies’ policy on arrears
- CBC advice to tenants on installing water meters
- CBC advice and support to tenants, especially new tenants and those in changing circumstances, and need to encourage tenants to take up offer of Tenancy Support
- Advice given to Members of Council on CBC water rates policy
- Reasons why CBC collects water rates – costs and benefits
- Information on services delivered in Chesterfield by Severn Trent and Yorkshire Water, and how this was reflected in water bills
- Details of ‘other charges’ in Revenues documentation, and the need to list water rates as a separate charge
- Statistics on how many tenants asked that water rates be listed separately from rent and other charges
- Wording of tenancy agreements and communication with tenants on water rate payment
- Details of recent evictions for non-payment of water rates and other charges
- Role of Customer Services Centre staff in water rate collection

- Comparisons with other local authorities' policies on water rate collection, and with the policies of housing associations and other social housing providers
- impact of changing payment methods on tenants and arrears
- Details of water company response to non-payment of water rates
- Continuing impact of Welfare Reform and future impact of Universal Credit on water rate payment
- Identifying links with the Corporate Plan.

4.4 Calculation of arrears

We interviewed:

- Scott Webster (Project Officer)
- Cllr Jim McManus (Executive Member for Housing)
- Cllr Martin Stone (Assistant Executive Member for Housing)
- Barry Dawson (Head of Finance)
- Fran Rodway (Customer Centric Services Manager)

We had mixed responses and it became clear that Members of Council had different understandings of how much went towards payment for Water Rates and how much for rent.

Fran Rodway made it clear it was not pro rata and she clarified at the Debt Recovery briefing that it was 1 payment!

We identified that it only became transparent when someone was on full Housing Benefit and only in arrears on water rates.

4.5 How revenues deal with arrears

See information in **Appendix 3 and Appendix 9**.

4.6 Evictions

We reviewed Councillor David Stone's emails, along with evidence from Fran Rodway, Julie McGrogan (Housing Service Manager), Cllr Jim McManus and Cllr Martin Stone and Tenancy Support Workers as well as considering the Policy (**Appendix 6**).

Issues – some people we interviewed had not seen the policy.

The emails from Fran Rodway clearly state there was an agreement not to evict for water rates (**Appendix 5**).

The policy is confusing as it implies we do not evict for arrears and then states we can/do.

It also comments on being able to write them off. We have received no evidence that Appeals have ever recommended a 'write-off'.

This Policy was put in place in June 2011; it is the same policy that has been agreed by Cabinet as part of the new contract.

4.6 **Contract**

We reviewed the proposed Contract and interviewed Scott Webster about the details and the consequences. It was clear that the renegotiation was long overdue and the new deal was better for CBC. And evidence was that if we got people paying regularly it was better than expecting them to pay separately to us for Rent and to Severn Trent for Water rates.

We also were supportive of the transfer from Housing Revenue Account of the Contract monies to the General Fund as the costs are incurred for recovery and collection by Revenues and it is difficult to quantify how much dealing with water rates, in addition to other charges, is costing.

Severn Trent collect for the sewage and surface water drainage services, so C.B.C collects that money on behalf of Severn Trent.

4.7 **Tenant Support**

We were impressed by the work the Tenant Support officers carry out and recognise that it is a finite service that cannot provide support to every tenant.

We were provided with information about what support there is for tenants in financial difficulties, and a summary is attached at **Appendix 10**.

The Tenants' Pack included some advice about water meters and assistance but it is on a sheet with information about gas services. A checklist used with new tenants was also supplied (**Appendix 7**)

We were satisfied that Tenancy Support provide those who are referred to them or ask for help with the necessary help, and that they use a variety of charities to assist them.

5.0 EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH

5.1 Evidence gathered to support the review work includes:

Appendix 1	Water Rates Scrutiny Project Group Scoping Document
Appendix 2	Extract from Corporate Plan
Appendix 3	Water Rates Arrears Debt Recovery Policy
Appendix 4	Extract from Cabinet Report on Severn Trent Water Rate Collection Contract 6.11.13
Appendix 5	Housing Officers' comments
Appendix 6	Summary of emails on water rate arrears policy and practice from Customer Centric Manager
Appendix 7	Statements from Tenants' Pack
Appendix 8	Reports and minutes relating to water rates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Efficiency and Best Value Scrutiny Panel report on Collection of Water Rates 16.11.06• Report to Scrutiny Board on Collection of Water Rates 17.2.11• Report to Scrutiny Board on Evictions for Water Rates only 17.3.11• Report to Scrutiny Board on Collection of Arrears of Water Rates 16.6.11• Minute from Enterprise and Well-being Scrutiny Committee 18.10.12• Minute from Enterprise and Well-being Scrutiny Committee 27.6.13
Appendix 9	Checklist from Customer Centric Services Manager on debt recovery presentation
Appendix 10	List of charitable sources of support for tenants in arrears
Appendix 11	Information about support for customers in arrears from Severn Trent Water Trust
Appendix 12	New information issued to tenants on water rates and water meters.

6.0 REVIEW FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

6.1 The new contract will provide a proper framework which can be monitored and provides a more realistic level of reimbursement for the

level of debt and costs to collect. The Group were concerned that the terms had not been renegotiated at an earlier date, however we were pleased to note that this matter has been addressed through the new contract outline terms (**Appendix 4 – Cabinet report 19.11.13; page 6 item 14**).

6.2 It also allows flexibility to terminate/ renegotiate the contract should either party find it is not of mutual benefit, without incurring a cost; which at this time of massive Welfare Reform and in particular the proposed introduction of Universal Credit, along with the cuts to the Local Government finances, is of vital importance both to tenants and the Council.

6.3 Having explored the issues about the calculation and identification of arrears we concur with Cabinet recommendation: P6 item 14 (4) that,

“The rent collection process and technology (which includes water rates), be reviewed to enable effective monitoring and management of the actual costs of collecting the water rates.”

6.4 We identified that the costs of work to collect the Water Rates and to deal with any recovery matters, including any consequential funding of homelessness is the financial responsibility of the General Fund.

We therefore agree with the Cabinet Report decision that the payment of the Severn Trent Water bill be transferred to the General fund from the Housing Revenue Account (**Appendix 4 - Cabinet Report - 19.11.13, P6, 14 (2)**).

6.5 We also agree that in light of future unknown effects of both Welfare Reform and costs of supplying clean drinking water, including dealing with sewage and surface water that we should ensure some funds are made available to allow for consultation with Tenants.

As the cost of this process would be a Housing responsibility, we agree that (**Appendix 4, P6, 14 (3)**):

“£30,000 of the estimated 2013/14 surplus from the contract be transferred to the Housing Revenue Account.”

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

At the meeting of the Scrutiny Project Group on 10th December, 2013, it was agreed to make the following recommendations:

- 7.1 That Officers to report Scrutiny in six months time, as to the outcome/progress on the water rate collection process and technology review.
- 7.2 That an update be made to Scrutiny when the Contract with Severn Trent Water is formally signed, as it is only a 'heads of terms' agreement currently.
- 7.3 That an update on the Contract be given to Scrutiny after one year.
- 7.4 That Scrutiny discuss at a business meeting the operation of the 'write-off' policy to confirm with Revenues and Housing that they either remove the sentence about 'write-offs' from the policy, or insert " 'write-offs' to be Officer recommendations carried out by Executive Members".
- 7.5 That consideration be given to:
 - (i) more robust and prominent information on support available and advice regarding water rates and water meters;
 - (ii) re-emphasis to all tenants of the importance of communication with Revenues and Tenancy Support, if it is likely that the tenant may be approaching financial difficulties that may lead to arrears.
- 7.6 That Scrutiny be asked to support a request to review the Tenant's information to include clearer and more explicit information on the payment of water rates.
- 7.7 That Scrutiny be given a progress report in six months time, monitoring the number of evictions for water rates arrears.
- 7.8 That at the Scrutiny business meetings the list of Scrutiny Projects and their expected timetable is made available, and any impact on the Executive's decisions or expected Cabinet meetings is identified at the earliest opportunity, to enable Scrutiny Project Groups to

amend their timetable for submitting reports to enable Cabinet to consider their findings in their decision-making processes.

8.0 REVIEW CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The Scrutiny Project Group wish to thank all the officers and Democratic Services staff, in particular Mary Stead, who provided administrative support, along with the Executive Members and Assistant Members for their time and input into this issue. They are also grateful for the advice from the Scrutiny Officer Anita Cunningham, and for support from Councillor Vicki Lang, Chair of Scrutiny.
- 8.2 The Scrutiny Project Group were pleased to note that when Cabinet considered the matter of the Contract with Severn Trent Water on 19th November, 2013, a number of its findings had also been identified and had been addressed. A number of additional recommendations have been made which they hope will assist in identifying the amounts owed, and help with recovery and reduce the number of evictions. They have suggested that Scrutiny Monitor the progress with regards software and technology; monitor evictions and policy, and the completion of the Contract process.
- 8.3 The Scrutiny Project Group were pleased to note that Housing Support Staff were very responsive, which will help new tenants to focus on the need to pay their water rates, but if in difficulty, to contact the council for help and advice (**Appendix 12**).
- 8.4 The Scrutiny Project Group wish to reiterate that currently they support retaining the contract with Severn Trent Water for collection of water rates, as they believe that regular payments along with their rent helps prevent arrears in both rent and water rates. The support and expertise of the Revenues Recovery Section and Housing staff will help a number of tenants facing financial problems at this difficult time, and will ensure that they prioritise their expenditure.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Water Rates Scrutiny Project Group Scoping Document
Appendix 2	Extract from Corporate Plan
Appendix 3	Water Rates Arrears Debt Recovery Policy
Appendix 4	Extract from Cabinet Report on Severn Trent Water Rate Collection Contract 6.11.13
Appendix 5	Summary of emails on water rate arrears policy and practice from Customer Centric Manager
Appendix 6	Housing Officers' comments
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Appendix 8	Reports and minutes relating to water rates: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Efficiency and Best Value Scrutiny Panel report on Collection of Water Rates 16.11.06• Report to Scrutiny Board on Collection of Water Rates 17.2.11• Report to Scrutiny Board on Evictions for Water Rates only 17.3.11• Report to Scrutiny Board on Collection of Arrears of Water Rates 16.6.11• Minute from Enterprise and Well-being Scrutiny Committee 18.10.12• Minute from Enterprise and Well-being Scrutiny Committee 27.6.13
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Appendix 10	List of charitable sources of support for tenants in arrears
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Appendix 12	New information issued to tenants on water rates and water meters.

Contacts:

Mary Stead, Democratic Services Officer

Project Group Lead – Councillor Gordon Simmons

APPENDIX 1

Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Project Group on Water Rates Arrears Evictions

Group Members :	Councillors Gordon Simmons (Lead Member), Helen Elliott, Anthony Hill, Jenny Flood, Keith Miles, David Stone, Denise Hawksworth
Subject to be reviewed: (the issue)	How Chesterfield Borough Council deals with Tenants Water Rates charges and any arrears
Reason for the Review / Terms of Reference: (why are we doing this)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To review the Council’s contract with the Water Authority, which has not been revised for some time to see if it adequately compensates the Council for any arrears; the costs of collecting the water rates and the arrears. 2. To review the process for collecting the water rates payments from housing tenants, and related matters. 3. To review the Policy for dealing with arrears and its impact on evictions
How the review aligns with the Council’s priorities and vision:	<p>Corporate Plan Aim 3:</p> <p>A place where everyone has fair access to a decent and affordable home.</p>
Aims and Objectives of the Review: (what do we want to achieve / what will success look like) - consider Equalities issues)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To help provide affordable homes. - To avoid unnecessary evictions for the non-payment of water rates. - To review the contract with Severn Trent Water Authority to establish whether it is financially viable to continue collecting payments on its behalf, and to identify costs incurred for collecting. - Identify what support the Council has for people in difficulty. - Consider whether water meters should be advised for any properties. - Consider issues around charging for sewage and surface water.

	- To re-examine some decisions made by Scrutiny on this issue
Method of Review: (how the work will be undertaken)	Interviews Meetings Desk top research Housing Officers/Tenant support Executive Member for Housing interview Representative from Severn-Trent Water interview
Research & Evidence: (information that needs to be gathered)	- Existing contract agreement with Severn Trent Water - Statistics/figures regarding cost and benefit of contract / service received. - Statistics regarding the number of evictions due to water rates only - Web research - Appeals and Regulatory Committee documents including the policy dated June 2011 - information from Law Centre and Citizens Advice Bureau
Witnesses : (who to invite, information and answers needed)	Executive Member for Housing Executive Member for Customers and Communities Housing Service Managers / Officers Revenues Service Head of Finance Head of Business Transformation Interim Business Transformation Manager, Scott Webster Housing Tenant support staff
Group Meetings & Site Visits:	Not applicable
Resource Requirements: (what resources will be used)	Councillor and officer time
Project Start Date:	27th June, 2013
Scrutiny Project / Report Completion Date (Group to agree final report)	Spring 2014 – Original date Revised date – 10th December 2013
Scrutiny Report to Scrutiny Committee on : (<i>allow for public notice period</i>)	1. Progress update to Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 7th November, 2013 2. Report to Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee 16th January, 2014 and to Overview and Policy Scrutiny Forum on 30th January, 2014

Cabinet Reporting Deadlines <i>(allow for WBR / Executive Member)</i>	Cabinet considered the new contract on 19th November 2013
Scrutiny Report to Cabinet on : <i>(allow for Public notice period)</i>	

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Chesterfield Borough Council Corporate Plan 2012-15

Aim A Living Community

“A place where everyone has fair access to a decent and affordable home.”

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FOR PUBLICATION

**POLICY AND PROCEDURE -
(A): RENT COLLECTION AND (B): WATER RATE COLLECTION (H000)**

AGENDA ITEM

MEETING: 1. CABINET
 2. EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING

DATE: 1. 31ST JANUARY 2012
 2. 13TH JANUARY 2012

REPORT BY: HEAD OF HOUSING

WARD: ALL

COMMUNITY FORUM: ALL

KEY DECISION ITEM NO. 39 ON FORWARD PLAN
REFERENCE
(IF APPLICABLE):

FOR PUBLICATION

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR PUBLIC REPORTS:
 LOCATION:

TITLE:

1.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 That the policy and procedures for the collection of rent and of water rates be approved for implementation.

2.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To seek approval of formal policy documents in respect of the collection of rent and of water rates.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 It has been recognised by colleagues in Arvato (those formerly in Revenues and Benefits) that there is not in existence a formal document reflecting the Council's Policy in respect of rent collection and for the collection of water rates.
- 3.2 The policy and procedures relating to rent collection (**Appendix 1**) simply confirm existing practice unless Members wish to consider any changes.
- 3.3 However, linked to the collection of water rates is the long standing debate about the dis-proportionate impact on tenants for non-payment of water rates i.e. potentially eviction, when no such sanction could be applied by the water authorities.
- 3.4 The subject of water rate collection has been reviewed periodically, for example in Best Value Scrutiny Panel (September 2001), Efficiency and Best Value Scrutiny Panel (November 2006) and was reported to Cabinet at similar times.
- 3.5 In 2011 the Scrutiny Board agreed to investigate and finalise the matter being aware of an ongoing concern regarding the disproportionate impact on tenants, namely that a Council tenant would be at threat of eviction for non payment of water rates whereas a private sector tenant would not. The Scrutiny Board considered the evidence gathered and requested officers propose possible policy improvement options.
- 3.6 Following the Scrutiny Board's request, amended draft policies were presented to and supported by the Scrutiny Board at its meeting on 16 June 2011 attended by the Executive Member for Housing. The Scrutiny Board then recommended that the amended proposed policies be referred to the Executive Member for Housing for formal consideration. Those proposed policies are now attached to this report to Cabinet.
- 3.7 The Council resolved to collect water rates from tenants on behalf of Severn Trent Water many years ago (certainly pre 1990s).

The original intention would have been to:

- (a) Collect all charges from tenants holistically
- (b) Prevent tenants being cut off for non-payment
- (c) Provide an easy payment facility spread over 48 weeks
- (d) Avoid secondary health risks associated with cut off water supplies

The threat to water supply was removed in the 1990s when Water Authorities were prevented from cutting off water supplies for non-payment.

Courts have made it clear that local authorities are entitled to seek possession where the arrears amount to water rates only, provided it can be shown in the tenancy agreement that the tenant is obliged to pay the charges. However, if tenants were billed directly the maximum penalty for non payment is a County Court Judgement with appropriate enforcement action, including bailiff action.

3.8 The consequences of the Council collecting water rates as part of “the Housing debt” are as follows:

3.9 **Advantages:**

3.9.1 Income received from Severn Trent covers cost overheads/administration, voids losses for water rates and generates a surplus (eroded over time by inflation etc). (Current commission £179,638 plus £100,000 voids allowance plus £65,000 bad debt provision).

3.9.2 Tenants enjoy a 48-week payment system.

3.9.3 Encourages a payment culture, particularly important amongst younger introductory tenants, who will have a better understanding of what they need to do when they get work and housing benefit stops.

3.9.4 Allows tenants to spread their water rates over a full year and pay manageable weekly sums.

3.9.5 Reduces the number of agencies a tenant has to deal with. A tenant with financial problems can come to the Revenues Hall, and with one visit sort out their rent, water rates, council tax and associated benefits.

3.9.6 Properties, abandoned by tenants on full Housing Benefit, come to light earlier than they otherwise might.

3.10 **Disadvantages:**

3.10.1 Since Housing Benefit is not payable for water rates we have to collect from and chase arrears from tenants who would otherwise be “rent free”.

3.10.2 Staff spend time recovering relatively small debts.

- 3.10.3 Rent arrears are higher because water rates are included.
- 3.10.4 Tenants can be and have been evicted for non-payment of water rates (because it is a Housing debt the way it is collected) even though the Water Authority cannot even turn off the supply. Although numbers evicted are low, only 2 in the last financial year, the impact is still disproportionately severe on the individual.

4.0 TENANT OPINION

- 4.1 As a result of previous discussions on the merits or otherwise of continuing to collect Water Rates as a Housing debt, a full consultation with all tenants was carried out in 2000 to determine whether tenants wished to continue with current arrangements or to be separately charged.
- 4.2 There was a reasonable, but minority, response rate of which 94.4% were in favour of maintaining the status quo even if it meant some tenants being evicted.
- 4.3 It is unlikely that a further survey would produce different results as the current system is of benefit to the majority of tenants (simple - pay with your rent and costs spread over 48 weeks) even though in default of payment the sanction is comparatively severe.
- 4.4 Any material change in collection method would be subject to an all tenant consultation and will require an Equality Impact Assessment.

5.0 WATER METERS

- 5.1 Tenants are completely free to opt for a water meter but few have done so to date, possibly as they are perceived to be a more costly option and there is no access to a 48 week payment system.
- 5.2 Tenants are no longer required to seek permission from Councils before fitting water meters, indeed it is illegal for a Council to ask a tenant to seek permission (Water Industry Act).
- 5.3 Water meters are normally fitted free of charge at the customer's request. There are charges if the stop tap needs re-locating and some properties have joint supplies which cannot be metered.
- 5.4 Once fitted the Water Authority will not remove the meter for a subsequent tenant or owner of a property for whom it may be a more expensive option and for this reason the Council has not advertised or promoted the availability of water meters to date.

6.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS

- 6.1 As referred to above, income received from Severn Trent covers cost of overheads and administration, void losses for water rates and generates a surplus (eroded over time by inflation etc).
- 6.2 Current commission (2010/11) is £179,638 plus £100,000 voids allowance plus £65,000 bad debt provision.
- 6.3 The actual cost of collection can only be estimated as some of the work would take place anyway. Administrative costs are insignificant. Direct costs are more significant but are covered by the allowances from Severn Trent.

7.0 OTHER OPTIONS FOR TENANTS IN ARREARS OF WATER RATES

- 7.1 Customer services staff are aware, and refer tenants to, a number of charities who offer relief in cases of hardship, as follows:

Provider	Details
Severn Trent Trust Fund	Provides grants to clear or reduce water and sewerage debt. Will also help with money advice, rent counselling and financial literacy. Can take a while to come through and unlikely to be for the full amount. Vulnerable tenants more successful.
St Martins in the Field	Provides grants to clear or reduce water and sewerage debt. Quick response. May pay full amount.
British Legion and SSAFA	Charitable awards for ex-service personnel

- 7.2 Within the attached policy document (**Appendix 2**) a revised policy and procedure is proposed that tenants with water rate only arrears (because they only have a liability for water rates due to being in receipt of full Housing Benefit) are given the opportunity to obtain a water meter from the water authority rather than continue to increase arrears and ultimately face eviction.
- 7.3 This policy revision will limit but not remove the likely financial losses through non-payment but a reasonable level of bad debt is covered by the agreement with Severn Trent.
- 7.4 As referred to in the policy, tenants with water rates only arrears could expect to be served notice and given the above option at a debt level of approximately £100 (or 13 weeks arrears), although advice about the

options will be made available at first contact following non-payment.

8.0 SCRUTINY BOARD

8.1 As detailed at paragraph 3.5, this matter has been considered by Scrutiny Board at a series of meetings earlier this year and the Board was happy to recommend that the draft policies on the collection of rent and on the collection of arrears for water rates only, including the option to fit water meters, be referred to the appropriate portfolio holder(s).

9.0 EQUALITIES

9.1 To be completed - no specific problem area. Policy offsets all equally. (Preliminary Assessment attached at Appendix 3).

10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 That the policy and procedures for the collection of rent and of water rates be approved for implementation.

11.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 (i) To ensure proper documentation exists.
(ii) To minimise risk of eviction for water rates non-payment.

**A. J. SIMPSON
HEAD OF HOUSING**

Further information on this matter can be obtained from Andy Simpson (Extension 5140).

Officer recommendation supported/not supported/modified as below or Lead Members' recommendation/comments if no Officer recommendation.

Signed

Executive Member

Date

Consultee Executive Member/Support Member comments (if applicable)

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Chesterfield Borough Council

Rent income collection policy and procedure document

Policy statement

Chesterfield Borough Council (the Council) aims to promote a culture of stay and pay amongst its tenants.

We will maximise rent income, minimise rent arrears and enable tenants to maintain and sustain their tenancies.

Effective and efficient debt control is critical to:

- Ensure that quality services can be provided to all tenants
- Allow the Council to meet its objectives and financial commitments
- Assist tenants to manage their debts
- Prevent social and financial exclusion for tenants with debt

It is in the interests of the Council and tenants to ensure that rent is paid promptly and that difficulties are resolved wherever possible without court proceedings.

Pre-action contact with tenants, or their representatives, is actively encouraged and proactively undertaken to avoid the effects and added costs of court proceedings, in line with the requirements of the Pre-action Protocol for Possession Claims based on rent arrears, introduced in 2006.

We will:

- offer early, appropriate and accessible professional support and guidance to tenants to reduce rent arrears, including any entitlement to benefits;
- monitor levels of rent arrears and have early intervention mechanisms in place, which prevent rent arrears arising;
- take appropriate action in accordance with the level of rent arrears and the type of tenancy;
- aim to prevent homelessness arising and assist in the Council's wider strategic aims;

- avoid unnecessary court action;
- use eviction, as a last resort, where repayment arrangements have not been made, or are being repeatedly broken;
- provide a wide range of payment options;
- document all actions and conversations.

Diversity

Our approach to recovering rent arrears will be robust, fair and sensitive to the personal circumstances of individuals. We will take account of the Council's aim to promote equality of access to services for customers.

Administrative procedures

The first arrears contact will take place if an account is 2 weeks in arrears and £20 or more is owing.

The second arrears contact arises if the account is 3 weeks in arrears and £35 or more is owing.

The third arrears contact arises if the account is 4 weeks in arrears and £50 or more is owing.

Contact is critical to successful arrears management. Tenants will be encouraged to 'get in touch' at every opportunity. We will attempt to contact tenants in arrears by all available means including outside of normal office hours.

Housing Benefit entitlement will be investigated in all cases where the tenant has not already claimed. Tenants will be referred to the Council's Benefits Adviser for a Benefits health check, as appropriate.

Payment arrangements will reflect the ability of the debtor to pay and have regard to other debts such as fines, Council Tax, fuel bills and, in the case of former tenants, rent or mortgage repayments. The minimum will be weekly rent payable plus the prevailing acceptable sum towards arrears (£3.40 in 2011/12)

Unrealistic promises of payment will be challenged. Tenants will be warned against borrowing inappropriately to clear or consolidate debts.

Tenants experiencing multiple debt problems will be referred to advice agencies within the community.

Advice will be given about appropriate charitable offerings.

The Council will request an award of costs at Court. These will be added to the debt owed by the tenant.

Secure tenancies

A Notice Seeking Possession will not be served if a tenant has demonstrated a consistent, proportionate and regular willingness to pay the arrears.

For those paying full rent there will be £300 or more owing before a Notice is served. The arrears will be £100 and more than 13 weeks arrears before a Notice is served for those on full Housing Benefit.

Every effort will be made to see a tenant prior to any Court hearing.

It will be usual to apply to the County Court for an Order for Possession suspended on terms. However, the presenting officer may ask for an order on any other terms, appropriate to the circumstances.

A suspended possession order will be communicated to the tenant, along with the terms of the Court Order, and details of any further consequences arising from breach of the order.

Further action arising from breach of a Court Order will require prior consideration of any homelessness implications and any other information held about the tenant by the Housing Authority.

Arrears cases will be 'fast tracked' to the issue of a Warrant of Possession in the following circumstances:-

- it appears that the tenant has abandoned the property but it is deemed prudent to obtain an eviction warrant, or
- the tenant has paid no rent, has not responded to any contacts, is not known to be vulnerable, in priority need or on low income.

Appropriate authority will be sought prior to any eviction proceedings.

Deferring or stopping an eviction will only follow:

- payment of arrears in full, or

- new information coming to light, which, had it been available earlier, would have meant that proceedings would not have been authorised, or
- action suspended at Court on appeal.

Any tenant clearing arrears in full following an eviction date being set will be flagged. Subsequent non payment of rent will trigger early referral to Court, after only one letter of warning.

Temporary Licence Holders

Special authority will be obtained prior to service of a notice to quit for any tenant housed under the Homelessness provisions of the Housing Act 1996.

No further arrangement for payment will be entered into after a notice to quit has been served. This will be made plain to the tenant before the notice is served.

Introductory tenancies

Appropriate authority will be obtained prior to service of a Notice of Proceedings.

Consideration will be given to offering a 6 month extension.

No arrangement for payment will be entered into by officers after service of a Notice of Proceedings.

After the serving of a Notice of Proceedings, the tenant has the right to apply for a Review. The Review will consider if the tenancy is to continue on terms.

If no Review is requested or the decision to serve the Notice is upheld at Review, Court action will be taken for possession of the property.

If the arrears are paid in full and there are no other tenancy issues, the tenancy may continue.

Water rates

Special provisions apply to arrears attributable to water rates only.

Former tenant arrears

Tenants who end a tenancy are known as former tenants. If they leave any rent outstanding, these are known as former tenant arrears.

Former tenants are contacted and given an opportunity to clear their arrears in full or by instalments. If we know the whereabouts of a tenant but have been unable to make contact or reach agreement, the debt can be secured using Money Claims through the County Court. As with current tenants, taking legal action is the final sanction.

Debts may be written off in prescribed circumstances, once appropriate authorisations have been obtained. A written off debt may be resurrected should circumstances make it possible to charge the former tenant e.g. whereabouts become known.

Complaints

The Council operates a complaints procedure available to any tenant dissatisfied with the way their case has been handled.

A tenant can also dispute the amount of rent arrears or any repayment arrangement and receive a response from a senior officer, after a review of facts.

References

Pre-action Protocol for Possession Claims based on rent arrears
Prevailing Housing legislation
Equalities legislation

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Chesterfield Borough Council Policy and procedure document in respect of evictions for arrears of water rates only

1. Policy statement

The objectives of this policy are to:

- prevent the eviction of a tenant who only owes water rates;
- support a tenant with arrears to pay their water rate liability;
- offer advice and guidance to minimise the impact of arrears of water rates for tenants.

The procedures that are to be followed in the administration of this scheme are outlined later in this document.

Chesterfield Borough Council (the Council) collects water rates on behalf of the local water authority. The annual charge is based on the rateable value of a dwelling and the current rate in the £ as notified by the water authority each year.

The annual charge is divided by the number of rent weeks in the year and added to the weekly rent liability as a service charge. Water rate is not a service charge which qualifies for housing benefit.

Different arrangements apply to some blocks of flats and a total charge for the block is divided by the number of dwellings to derive a weekly charge.

The primary aim of the Council in relation to rent arrears recovery is to maximise its collection of rent income and other charges from its tenants.

However, the Council recognises that in recovering arrears of water rates only, the ultimate penalty of eviction is not proportionate when compared to the ultimate recovery action of a County Council Judgement and possible bailiff action, available to the water authority.

This policy will apply to secure tenants and introductory tenants.

2. Administrative procedures

Usual rent arrears recovery procedures will be followed.

In cases of water rates only arrears, a Notice Seeking Possession is likely to be triggered by £100 and more than 13 weeks owing. At this point, for introductory tenancies, consideration will be given to a 6 month extension.

Tenants will be advised about the charitable reliefs available.

Should no acceptable payment arrangement be agreed and sustained, a water meter will be installed, subject to the agreement of the tenant who may have to personally apply to the water authority.

Consideration may be given to writing off any balances in cases of particular hardship in line with normal Council write-off procedures.

Where it has not been possible to install a water meter, and arrears are accumulating usual rent arrears recovery procedures will be followed, including court action.

Chesterfield Borough Council

Equality Impact Assessment - Preliminary Assessment Form

The preliminary impact assessment is a quick and easy screening process. It should identify those policies, projects, services, functions or strategies which require a full EIA by looking at negative, positive or no impact on any of the equality groups.

Service Area: Housing Services

Section:

Lead Officer: Andy Simpson

Title of the policy, project, service, function or strategy the preliminary EIA is being produced for: **Policy and Procedure – Rent Collection and Water Rate Collection**

Is the policy, project, service, function or strategy:

Existing

Changed

New/Proposed

Q1 - What is the aim of your policy or new service?

To formalise the Council's policy for the collection of rent and the collection of water rates on behalf of Severn Trent. The policy just the formalising of current procedures agreed at Scrutiny Panel June 2011.

Q2 - Who is the policy or service going to benefit?

The policy benefits both the tenants and the council officers administering rent collection. It sets out clearly in what circumstances action will be taken and the advice and assistance on offer for tenants who get into difficulty in paying their rent.

Q3 - Thinking about each group below, does, or could the policy, project, service, function or strategy have an impact on protected characteristics below? You may also need to think about sub groups within each characteristic e.g. older women, younger men, disabled women etc.

Please tick the appropriate columns for each group.

Group or Protected Characteristics	Potentially positive impact	Potentially negative impact	No impact
Age – including older people and younger people.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disabled people – physical, mental and sensory including learning disabled people and people living with HIV/Aids and cancer.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gender – men, women and transgender.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marital status including civil partnership.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Pregnant women and people on maternity/paternity. Also consider breastfeeding mothers.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation – Heterosexual, Lesbian, gay men and bi-sexual people.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ethnic Groups			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Religions and Beliefs including those with no religion and/or beliefs.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other groups e.g. those experiencing deprivation and/or health inequalities.			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

If you have answered that the policy, project, service, function or strategy could potentially have a negative impact on any of the above characteristics then a full EIA will be required.

Q4 - Should a full EIA be completed for this policy, project, service, function or strategy?

Yes

No

Q5 - Reasons for this decision:

There are no adverse impacts on any groups covered by the protected characteristics from the adoption of the policies.

Please e-mail this form to the Policy Service before moving this work forward so that we can confirm that either a full EIA is not needed or offer you further advice and support should a full EIA be necessary.

CABINET MEETING

Tuesday, 31st January, 2012

0162 POLICY AND PROCEDURE - (A) RENT COLLECTION (B) WATER RATE COLLECTION (H000)

The Head of Housing submitted a report seeking approval for the adoption of formal policy documents in respect of the collection of rent and of water rates.

***RESOLVED** - That the proposed policy and procedures for the collection of rent and water rates be approved for implementation.

REASONS FOR DECISION

1. To ensure that proper documentation exists.
2. To minimise the risk of eviction for water rates non-payment.

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APPENDIX 4

EXTRACTS FROM WATER RATES CONTRACT WITH SEVERN TRENT WATER (H000) – REPORT TO CABINET 19 NOVEMBER 2013

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 CBC has been collecting water rate payments from tenants on behalf of STW since 1979 as part of a rolling contract. No written contract was ever put in place.
- 3.2 The water rate payments are collected from council tenants as part of the housing rent bill and are itemised as a service charge. The housing rent is collected this way so that tenants only need to pay one housing bill to CBC.
- 3.5 The contract has been historically beneficial for both parties. CBC has legal powers to act upon non payment of water via the tenancy agreements that enable a high rate of collection for STW. In return the Housing Revenues Account (HRA) has historically gained a net surplus from the contract subject to CBC maintaining collection rate levels.

5.0 TENANCY AGREEMENT

- 5.1 It is a matter of settled case law that local authorities may seek possession where the arrears amount to water rates only and it can be shown in the tenancy agreement that the tenant is obliged to pay the charges. In the case of secure tenancies, the Court has a discretion and may make a possession order only if it is reasonable to do so; the Courts have decided that where the arrears are not minimal and there has been a persistent failure to pay the charges it is open to the Court to make a possession order which may be a suspended order in the first instance. In the case of introductory tenancies, the Court has no discretion and must make a possession order unless there is a successful public law or human rights defence. However, if tenants were billed directly (rather than through the tenancy agreement) the maximum penalty for non payment is a County Court Judgement with appropriate enforcement action, including bailiff action.

- 5.2 In January 2012 Cabinet approved a Policy in relation to the collection of arrears which are wholly water rates related, and this is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 5.3 This policy provides that all reasonable measures are explored with the tenant in arrears; for example, extending introductory tenancies and the fitting of water meters before enforcement action is commenced.
- 5.4 To the knowledge of officers only 2 tenants have been evicted for purely water rates arrears.

9.0 REVIEW OF COLLECTION PROCESS & TECHNOLOGY

- 9.1 As identified within paragraph 3.2, tenants pay one bill to CBC that includes rent, water and other service charges. Such an arrangement is in place to ease the payment process for tenants.
- 9.2 The issue of collecting rent this way, is that the current processes and technology utilised by the Revenues and Benefits service does not enable the breakdown of the bad debt provision. Therefore the actual bad debt for rent, water, and other service charges can not be identified accurately.
- 9.3 By not knowing the actual bad debt for water rates, it has proven difficult for Officers to identify the costs for collection and recovery costs relating to water rates.
- 9.4 To enable CBC to solve the issue identified in 9.2 the current collection processes and technology need to be reviewed to enable the effective monitoring and management of the actual costs relating to the collection of water rates.

Water Rates Contract with Severn Trent Water (H000)

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the continuation of the water rate collection contract with Severn Trent Water (STW) be approved, on the basis of the revised terms and conditions outlined in the report.
- (2) That responsibility for the payment of the STW bill be transferred from the Housing Revenue Account to the General Fund.
- (3) That £30,000 of the estimated 2013/14 surplus from the contract be transferred into a provision for future tenant consultation.
- (4) That the current rent collection process and technology be reviewed, to enable the effective monitoring and management of the actual costs relating to the collection of water rates.

Minutes from Cabinet Meeting 19 November, 2013

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APPENDIX 5

SUMMARY OF EMAILS ON WATER RATE ARREARS POLICY AND PRACTICE FROM THE CUSTOMER CENTRIC SERVICES MANAGER (AUGUST 2013)

The policy is to prevent a tenant being evicted for water rates only, and to provide support. In the cases that go before Appeals and Regulatory Committee we have undertaken additional steps to prevent eviction.

Rather than serve a Notice, we extend the introductory tenancy for a fixed period, and we inform the tenant as such and warn them that if they do not pay, the tenancy will be terminated.

If payment is not forthcoming, consideration is given to installation of a water meter; however the tenant has to agree with this.

If they do not respond after the extension of the tenancy, we will serve notice to end the tenancy.

The tenant has the right of appeal, and they are the cases that appear before the Appeals and Regulatory Committee. Strictly speaking, when the committee review the appeal, they are deciding whether the tenancy should continue, because notice has already been served to end the tenancy.

An introductory tenancy gives the tenant the chance to show that they are a good payment-making tenant, and introductory tenancies are in place to prevent secure tenancies being handed to potentially bad payers. Once a tenancy becomes secure, it is more time consuming to end the tenancy.

Further details are available from Councillor David Stone.

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APPENDIX 6

HOUSING OFFICERS' COMMENTS

When interviewed by the Scrutiny Project Group on Water Rates, Julie McGrogan, Housing Service Manager, Elaine Watson, Tenancy Support Worker, and Mike Moore Neighbourhoods Manager, provided the following information:

Some properties were unsuitable for water meters, for example where there are access issues, in blocks of flats.

It would be difficult to identify water rate charges since they are added to rent, as are other charges, for other services. When rent cards were used, the charges were listed separately, but this is not done with current payment methods.

Tenants were informed in writing, when beginning their tenancy, that payment of water rates was their responsibility, even if they were eligible for Housing Benefit. If they requested Tenancy Support this message was also passed on verbally to them, and efforts were made to assist them with avoiding getting into arrears.

One measure suggested to tenants was to go onto a water meter, which would result in payments being made directly to Severn Trent, but once a meter was installed, it could not be removed for that tenant or subsequent tenants renting the property. Subsequent tenants were advised that there was a water meter before they began the tenancy.

Not all households benefited from having water meters, because it depended on their water usage. The Borough Council could not insist that the tenant had a meter fitted, but the tenant had to inform the Borough Council if they opted for a meter.

Tenants with disabled household members or large families were likely to use more water than average, and were signposted by tenancy support workers to a scheme run by Severn Trent Water to cap metered bills in these circumstances.

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APPENDIX 7

INFORMATION ISSUED TO TENANTS ABOUT WATER RATE PAYMENTS

- **Extract from Tenants' Handbook**
- **New Tenants' checklist**
- **Recommissioning of Gas and Watersure information**

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Connecting gas, water and electricity

Contact gas, electricity and water suppliers at least one week before you move to arrange for your meter to be read at your old home and your supply to be put on at your new home.

Remember to have the postcodes for your old and new home handy.



Gas

Before you move in we have to check that the gas supply is safe. This means that the supply pipe will have been sealed off at the meter.

You need to:

- Contact us on ☎ **(01246) 345048** or on the Repairs Hotline ☎ Freephone **0800 5875659** to arrange for our gas engineers to visit your home to unseal the supply pipe and carry out the relevant safety checks. A copy of the 'gas certificate' will be left with you to say the gas system is safe to use.
- Decide which gas supplier you are going use. Should you wish to change supplier you can contact Consumer Direct on ☎ **0845 4040506** or  www.consumerdirect.gov.uk who can give you a list of alternative suppliers.

We need at least 24 hours notice to arrange the visit so please contact us as soon as you sign for your tenancy. Please help us to provide a good service to you by giving us as much notice as possible.



Electricity

You need to decide who you are going to buy your supply from and contact them with a meter

reading. They will take details of your name, address and how you are going to pay.

If you do not know who the current supplier is contact Central Network on ☎ **0845 603 0618**. You can then choose to have this company as your supplier or change it by calling Energy Watch on ☎ **0845 906 0708** who can give you a list of suppliers.



Water

The water supply should be connected when you move in. Unless you choose to have a water meter fitted to your property, your water rates are included as a service charge as part of your rent. If your property already has a water meter fitted, you will not be able to have this removed. Please contact Severn Trent Water on ☎ **08457 500500** with a water meter reading so they can sort out your account.

Contact Severn Trent Water for more information including the benefits of a water meter.

Water Meters

If you would like to have a water meter installed at your property by the water supply company (normally Severn Trent) you do not have to ask for permission from Housing Services. However, we do request that you inform us when the water meter has been installed to enable our Technical Officer to check the installation and for the water charges to be deducted from your rent account as soon as possible.

Lettable Standard

Chesterfield's Lettable Standard sets out the standards that you can expect in your new home. An experienced technician has checked your new home to ensure that it meets our Lettable Standard. The Standard is explained fully in a separate leaflet. Please ask us about this if you have not already received it.

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HOUSING SERVICES NEW TENANTS' CHECKLIST



NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS: _____

TENANCY START DATE: _____ RENT REF: _____

1. I have been advised of the type and implications of my tenancy:
 Interim Introductory Secure
2. I have received _____ keys and **RENT CARD** to the property.
3. I have received my copy of the **TENANCY AGREEMENT**, and I understand and agree to the conditions stated. I have also been informed that the Council will act against tenants who cause anti-social behaviour.
4. I have received my **INFORMATION PACK** and **TENANTS' HANDBOOK**
5. I have been advised about the gas and electricity **METERS** and that I am responsible for the charges from the date I received the keys and that I am also responsible for the meter readings. I have also received a copy of the last Gas Safety Record Sheet.
6. I have been given a **HOUSING BENEFIT CHECKLIST** and advised that to qualify for Housing Benefit I must be occupying the property
7. I have been informed that the **WATER/SEWAGE CHARGES** included in my rent are **NOT** covered by Housing Benefit and must be paid to the Council.
8. I have completed and signed a **SUPPORTING PEOPLE USER OPTION FORM**
9. I have been informed of the Council's Tenancy Support Service. I do/do not require this service.
10. I have received £ _____ in decoration vouchers.
11. I understand that my Housing Officer will arrange a 'New Tenants' Visit' within six weeks of the tenancy start date.
12. **GAS** - I have been advised to contact Building Services Division. Order No. _____ to arrange for gas check to be carried out.
13. **DRAINED DOWN** - YES/NO **REFILL** - ORDER NO. _____

Signed _____ Tenant (1) Date: _____

Signed _____ Tenant (2) Date: _____

Signed _____ Housing Officer _____

ETHNIC ORIGIN _____ (Sole Tenants Only)

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Housing Services

Change of Tenancy

Re-commission of Services and Gas Safety Check

Health and safety regulations require that a landlord's gas check is carried out on the appliances at your property. In order for this work to be completed, you will need to arrange for a gas supply and an electricity supply to your property.

For safety Reasons:

- Do not use the water systems at the property until the systems have been re-commissioned
- Do not use any gas appliance until the safety check is complete

Gas supplier enquiry

Tel: 0870 6081524

Electric supplier enquiry

Tel: 0845 6030618

Please have your postcode ready

Once the gas and electricity supply are established, please contact our Gas Section on the number below to arrange for the system to be filled up and re-commissioned and for a Safety Test to take place.

Telephone: (01246) 345048

Please allow 24 hours notice for an appointment to be made.

Severn Trent Water

Watersure

If you are on a water meter and are in receipt of means tested benefits, have a medical condition and use large amounts of water, you may be eligible for a capped charge on your bill. Request more information by calling 08457 500 500

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APPENDIX 8

REPORTS AND MINUTES RELATING TO WATER RATES (2006-2013)

- Efficiency and Best Value Scrutiny Panel report on Collection of Water Rates 16.11.06
- Report to Scrutiny Board on Collection of Water Rates 17.2.11
- Report to Scrutiny Board on Evictions for Water Rates only 17.3.11
- Report to Scrutiny Board on Collection of Arrears of Water Rates 16.6.11
- Minute from Enterprise and Well-being Scrutiny Committee 18.10.12
- Minute from Enterprise and Well-being Scrutiny Committee 27.6.13

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0016 COLLECTION OF WATER RATES

The Head of Revenues and the Head of Housing submitted a report informing Members of current arrangements for collecting water services' charges as part of the rent for Council-owned dwellings.

The issue of collecting water and sewage charges as part of the rent from Council tenants had been considered by the Best Value Scrutiny Panel and the Cabinet on 23rd October, 2001. It had been decided, at this time, that collection of these charges should continue for the following reasons:

- The Housing Revenue Account would continue to make a profit from Severn-Trent Water for collecting the charges.
- In a survey of tenants in 2000, 94.4% of tenants were in favour of retaining the service.
- Discontinuing with the collection of these charges would not significantly improve the performance indicator for collection.

The commission rate paid to the Council by Severn-Trent Water had been increased from 4% to 5.5% in 2003 as collection of the charges had become more time consuming.

Tenants had not been consulted on this matter since 2000 but officers had no reason to believe that opinions would have changed. Those tenants most likely to respond to any survey were elderly, with stable tenancies, who paid their rent on time and regarded the collection of the charges as a valuable Council service. Discontinuing with the collection of water charges would be unlikely to result in an improvement in the performance indicator as the Government measured the percentage of rent collected rather than the amount of arrears accrued.

The net benefit to the Housing Revenue Account arising from water and sewage charges for 2005/06 was £75,185.

The report concluded that the new commission rate negotiated by the Council had resulted in a higher level of profit for the Housing Revenue Account, and that the collection of water and sewage charges was seen as a valuable service by many tenants.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

MINUTE OF THE EFFICIENCY AND BEST VALUE SCRUTINY PANEL
16.11.10

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SCRUTINY BOARD 17.2.11

0080 EVICTION FOR NON-PAYMENT OF WATER RATES

In response to Scrutiny Board's concerns that tenants were being evicted solely for non-payment of water rates rather than rent arrears, the Lead Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods and the Head of Housing reported as follows:

- Scrutiny of water rates collection had previously taken place in September 2001 and November 2006.

The Council's original intention in resolving to collect water rates from tenants would have been to:

- collect all charges from tenants;
- prevent tenants being cut off for non-payment of water rates;
- provide an easy payment facility spread over 48 weeks;
- Avoid secondary health risks associated with cut off water supplies.

It was noted that the threat of water supply being cut off had been removed in the 1990s when Water Authorities were prevented from doing so.

The consequences of the Council collecting water rates as part of "a housing debt" were as follows:

- Income received from Severn Trent covered costs, overheads/administration, voids, losses for water rates and generated a surplus, eroded over time by inflation, etc.
- Since housing benefit was not payable for water rates, the Council had to collect from, and pursue arrears from, tenants who would otherwise be "rent free".
- Tenants could be evicted for non-payment of water rates, even though the Water Authority could not turn off the supply, because the collection method had meant that the debt had become a housing debt.
- Tenants enjoyed a 48 week payment system rather than a yearly, half yearly or monthly system which would be the case if they paid water rates directly to the Water Authority.

Tenants had been consulted on the collection method and had indicated a preference for the Council to continue to collect water rates.

Although tenants were free to opt for a water meter, few had done so.

The Scrutiny Board requested that the following information be provided:

- The average annual number of evictions solely for non-payment of water rates and the average amount involved.
- The average total amount of arrears of water rates resulting in evictions per annum.
- Social and demographic patterns of tenants evicted for non-payment of water rates.

RESOLVED - (1) That the following information be supplied to the Scrutiny Board:

- The average annual number of evictions solely for non-payment of water rates and the average amount involved.
 - The average total amount of arrears of water rates resulting in evictions per annum.
 - Social and demographic patterns of tenants evicted for non-payment of water rates.
- (2) That the Customer Services and Revenue Manager and the Council's Solicitor be invited to attend a meeting of the Scrutiny Board to provide additional information on evictions for non-payment of water rates.

0092 EVICTION OF TENANTS REGARDING WATER RATES PAYMENTS

Further to Minute No 0083 the Acting Customer Centric Services Manager submitted a report on evictions of council tenants since April 2010 for non-payment of water rates.

It was reported that housing benefit did not cover water charges. All tenants had to pay this element of their rent. The Borough Council collected the water charges on behalf of Severn Trent Water, and received a commission for doing so, to cover the cost of collection.

Customer Services staff worked with tenants to facilitate their payments and to develop a payment culture, from the beginning of the tenancy. Previous consultation with tenants had shown that this was the preferred method of paying for water, although the installation of water meters was also an option.

Evictions for non-payment of water rates were infrequent, and only two had occurred since April 2010. Further information was provided about both cases. The Appeals and Regulatory Committee considered each possible eviction case before action was taken to end the tenancy.

It was agreed that further information on water payment rates and options for redefining water rates arrears, so that they were not classed as arrears in the rent charge, would be provided for the Scrutiny Board so that the matter could be given further consideration at the April Scrutiny Board meeting.

RESOLVED - That following receipt of the requested information, further consideration be given to this matter at the April Scrutiny Board.

SCRUTINY BOARD 17.3.11

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0001 COLLECTION OF ARREARS OF WATER RATES

The Executive Member for Housing, the Head of Housing, Acting Customer Centric Manager and Solicitor attended to provide an update on the policy and procedure for the collection of arrears of water rates.

Information was provided on:

- evictions for water rates only
- a proposed policy document on the collection of rent
- a proposed policy document on the collection of arrears for water rates only.
- options for tenants with arrears of water rates only, as an alternative to eviction.

RESOLVED - That the Scrutiny Board recommend that the draft policies on the collection of rent, and on the collection of arrears for water rates only, be referred to the appropriate portfolio holder(s) by the Chief Executive.

SCRUTINY BOARD 16.6.11

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ENTERPRISE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 18th October, 2012

Fair and Equal Pricing for Sewage Services and Water Rates

A request was made for a review of the pricing for sewage services and water rates as there were some major discrepancies in charges being made to the residents of Chesterfield in comparison to neighbouring areas.

A discussion ensued as to whether this was something which scrutiny would be in a position to have an impact on, and it was agreed that it would not be a good use of the resources available. It was suggested that the regulator be approached to look into this and give an explanation for the difference in pricing.

RESOLVED - (2) That the request relating to fair and equal pricing for sewerage services and water rates be declined.

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**0001 EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING UPDATE REPORT ON WATER RATES
PAYMENT POLICY**

Andy Simpson, the Head of Housing gave an update on the Council's policy relating to payment of water rates. He reported that in 2012/13 18 tenants had their introductory tenancy extended as a result of being in arrears with their water rates. 15 of those tenants were served a notice and 3 had cleared their arrears. So far during 2013/14, 3 tenants have had their introductory tenancies extended but none have been served with a notice.

It was noted that the Revenues Service had gone beyond the Policy and had offered to arrange for water meters to be installed for any tenant who was in arrears and to date 108 meters had been fitted.

Concerns were raised that this step had been taken and it had been noted that several tenants had moved in to properties where water meters had been installed and were unable to have them removed. It was suggested that tenants be made aware that a property has a water meter prior to them signing the lease. The Head of Housing confirmed that this was included in the information given when a property was advertised but agreed that it should also be discussed with the tenant at the time of signing.

The Executive Member for Housing confirmed that a piece of work was being undertaken by the Interim Business Transformation Manager in respect of Water Rates and as soon as this information was available it would be shared with the Committee.

Members of the Committee felt that this was an issue which should be reviewed by Scrutiny and it was agreed that a review group be set up in readiness for this information becoming available.

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) That the Head of Housing be thanked for the update.
 - (2) That a review group be set up to look into the Water Rates Policy.

ENTERPRISE AND WELL-BEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 27.6.13

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APPENDIX 9

CHECKLIST FROM CUSTOMER CENTRIC SERVICES MANAGER, FROM POWERPOINT PRESENTATION ON DEBT RECOVERY

Note – the full presentation is available at

P:/Members Shared/Debt Recovery Slides

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WORKING WITH PEOPLE TO MAXIMISE RECOVERY

prevention better than cure

Maximise time for customers to pay

- ▣ Bill early and accurately
- ▣ **Promote reliefs, discounts, benefits**
- ▣ Ensure benefits processing is up to date
- ▣ **Try to keep 'can't pays' out of the recovery process**

Make it easy to pay

- ▣ Promote direct debit – cheap and reliable
- ▣ Promote a payment culture – good habits
- ▣ Internet – 24/7 payments
- ▣ Touch tone – 24/7 payments
- ▣ Take payments whilst talking to a customer
- ▣ Offer alternative payment dates
- ▣ Withdraw actions for transfer to DD
- ▣ Offer incentives, spread arrears for DD

Timely reminders

- ▣ Catch late payers early
- ▣ Text message reminders
- ▣ Regular courts
- ▣ Use publicity
- ▣ Alert customers to court costs
- ▣ Work with benefits to get claims sorted

APPENDIX 10

SUPPORT PROVIDED BY TENANCY SUPPORT WORKERS

LIST OF CHARITABLE SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR TENANTS IN ARREARS

Tenancy Support Workers use a list of charities when advising tenants in financial difficulties.

The list includes charities dealing with the prevention of homelessness, and providing support for people who are vulnerable because of sickness, disability or other problems. The list includes food banks in Chesterfield.

Different charities support different groups of people, for example ex-service men, children, disabled people, families in poverty. The Tenancy Support Worker would work with the tenant to identify the most appropriate source of support.

The charities may be able to assist with cash donations, items of furniture or payment of arrears.

Referral to the charities is done through the Tenancy Support Worker, not directly by the tenant.

OTHER ASSISTANCE FROM TENANCY SUPPORT WORKERS

- Verbal and written information about payment of rents, including water rates, as stated in the Tenants' Handbook
- Explanation of the different methods of paying rent
- Advice on applying for Housing Benefit, and a Housing Benefit claim form
- Explanation about the Introductory Tenancy and the possibility of eviction for rent arrears.

Tenancy Support Workers also provide information on practical issues, including getting gas and electricity connected, and registering for water rates.

Tenants are also advised on how to contact Council services, and are given contact numbers on what to do when they move in, and how to report any problems.

SCRUTINY COMMENT

The Scrutiny Project Group was satisfied that Tenancy Support provide those who are referred to them, or ask for help, with the necessary help, and use a variety of charities to assist them.

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APPENDIX 11

INFORMATION ABOUT SUPPORT FOR CUSTOMERS IN ARREARS

Information was provided by the Citizen's Advice Bureau, and is summarised below.

WATERSURE SCHEME

Watersure is a scheme which helps some people with their water bills. To apply for the scheme you must be on benefits and need to use a lot of water either for medical reasons or because your household has a certain number of school-age children. You also need to be on a water meter or be waiting to have another one installed.

Information is available on the Water UK website www.water.org.uk

If you get help through the Watersure scheme, your water bill will be capped. This means you will not pay any more than the average metered bill for the area our water company deals with.

In some cases your normal metered water bill could be less than your company's Watersure cap. If this applies to you, you will not qualify for the scheme. You can ask your water company what their cap is, if you want to check this before applying.

To qualify for Watersure you need to:

- be on a water meter or have applied for one, and be waiting for it to be installed
- be on certain benefits
- have a high essential use of water.

There is a list of qualifying benefits, and more detailed definitions of people with a high essential use of water.

You can apply for Watersure by filling out a form from your water company. You will need to supply evidence that you qualify, such as a copy of your awards notice for a benefit. You will not need to supply medical evidence if your medical condition is on the list of conditions which automatically qualify. However, if you have another condition which is not on the list, you will need to provide evidence from your doctor, including how the condition is treated and the effect it has on how much water you use. You will also need a doctor's certificate, which you will have to pay for.

If you qualify for Watersure, you will start getting help from the start of the billing period during which you first applied. If you are successful, you will need to reapply every year to carry on getting help. Your water company should let you know when it is time to reapply, and allow you a reasonable amount of time to do this before your entitlement ends.

Further information is available on:
The Consumer Council for Water www.ccwater.org.uk

SEVERN TRENT WATER

Severn Trent Water provides advice to customers on 02477 715 000 and on line at www.stwater.co.uk.

Severn Trent Trust Fund

The company runs a charitable trust Severn Trent Trust Fund providing grants at the discretion of trustees.

Severn Trent Trust Fund is an independent grant-making trust set up in 1997. It is a registered charity, helping people out of poverty and debt thanks to donations from Severn Trent Water Limited. The policy and grant making is overseen by independent trustees who ensure that the money goes where it is most needed.

People unable to meet the cost of water charges and who live in the Severn Trent Area can apply for help.

Note: This grant is only available to people who pay their own water charges directly to Severn Trent Water, and could not be accessed by Council tenants paying water charges with their rent.

Criteria for applying for a grant toward water/sewerage charges

A grant would only be given where it is considered that the applicant would be able, in the future, to manage a sustainable budget for essential expenditure without getting into further debt. Applications are by application form, available on the website.

Watersure

The company also supports Watersure, providing special tariffs for those on water meters who qualify, because of being on certain income-related benefits, having three children under the age of 19 in full-time education and living in the property, or using a lot of water due to a medical condition.

APPENDIX 12

CURRENT INFORMATION TO TENANTS ON WATER METERS AND THE WATER SURE SCHEME

Information given to tenants has been updated, and the current leaflet about water meters, and about the Water Sure Scheme, is attached.

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Council Contacts

Customer Service Contact Centre
01246 345345

Reporting Repairs during office hours
FREEPHONE 0800 5875659
Repair.Requests@Chesterfield.gov.uk

Repairs - Emergency Only (out of hours)
01246 345041

Neighbourhoods Team
01246 345071
Neighbourhoods.Team@Chesterfield.gov.uk

Housing Solutions Team
01246 345700
onthemove@Chesterfield.gov.uk

Homelessness Prevention Team
01246 345825
homelessness.prevention@Chesterfield.gov.uk

Homelessness (out of hours)
08456 058058 or 01629 532600

Housing Services Fax
01246 345162

Rents and Rent Recovery
01246 345345

Environmental Services (Bins & Recycling)
01246 345345

Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support
01246 345484

Text/Voice Messages
07960 910264

Minicom
01246 345285

**North Derbyshire Home Improvement
Agency (Minor Improvements)**
01246 345748/345701

Careline (Including Support Service)
0300 323 0076

ARE WE ACCESSIBLE TO YOU?

IF NOT - ASK US!

- We want everyone to be able to understand us.
- We want everyone to be able to read our written materials.
- We aim to provide what you need for you to read, talk, and write to us.

On request we will provide free

- Language interpreters, including for sign language.
- Translations of written materials into other languages.
- Materials in Braille, large print, on tape or Easy Read.

Please contact us:

Voice Telephone:
01246 345345

Fax:
01246 345252

Mobile Text Phone SMS:
07960 910264

Email:
eoinfo@chesterfield.gov.uk

Water Meters



Housing Services • www.chesterfield.gov.uk

Are you paying too much for your water?

Water Meters

If you don't already have a water meter fitted, your current bills are based on the rateable value of your property, not on the amount of water you use – so how much you pay won't relate to how much water you use.

If you live on your own, if you have a small family or if you live in a house with a high rateable value, it may be more cost effective to have a water meter fitted at your property.

If you feel you may benefit from further advice or if you wish to have a water meter installed then please contact **Severn Trent Water** on:

Telephone: 08457 090 646

Email: customer.relations@severntrent.co.uk

Once you have had a water meter installation, please contact Chesterfield Borough Council **Housing Services** on **01246 345031** so arrangements can be made for the water charges to be removed from your rent account.

Water Sure Scheme

If you are on a water meter and are in receipt of means tested benefits and have either

- someone living in the property with a medical condition that requires you use large amounts of water, or
- are responsible for three children under the age of nineteen in full time education and living in the property

you may be eligible for a capped charge on your bill. Request more information by calling **Severn Trent Water** on **08457 500 500**

Single Occupier Assessed Charge

If you live alone and have requested a water meter before and one could not be installed, you may be eligible for a reduced tariff. Request more information by calling **Severn Trent Water** on **08457 500 500**

ARE YOU PAYING TOO MUCH FOR YOUR WATER?

In certain circumstances it may be more cost effective to have a water meter fitted at your property.

If you feel you may benefit from further advice or if you wish to have water meter installed, please contact **SEVERN TRENT WATER** direct:

Telephone: 08457 090646 – Water Meter
Telephone: 08457 500500 – WaterSure Scheme
E-Mail: customer.relations@severntrent.co.uk

On **completion** of a water meter installation, please advise Mr Chambers at CBC Housing Services on 01246 345031 so arrangements can be made for the water charges to be removed from your rent account.

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CHESTERFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN
FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 FEBRUARY 2014 TO 31 MAY 2014

This is formal notice under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 of key decisions to be made on behalf of the Council. As far as possible and in the interests of transparency, the Council will seek to provide at least 28 clear days notice of new key decisions (and many new non-key decisions) that are listed on this document. Where this is not practicable, such key decisions will be taken under urgency procedures. Decisions which are expected to be taken in private (at a meeting of the Cabinet or by an individual Cabinet Member) are marked "private".

This Forward Plan sets out the details of the 'key' and other major decisions which the Council expects to take during the next four month period. The Plan is rolled forward every month and is available to the public 28 days before the beginning of each month.

A 'Key' Decision is defined as:

Any executive decision which is likely to result in the Council incurring significant expenditure or the making of savings where there is:

- a decision to spend £50,000 or more from an approved budget, or
- a decision to vire more than £10,000 from one budget to another, or
- a decision which would result in a saving of £10,000 or more to any budget head, or
- a decision to dispose or acquire any interest in land or buildings with a value of £50,000 or more, or
- a decision to propose the closure of, or reduction by more than ten (10) percent in the level of service (for example in terms of funding, staffing or hours of operation) provided from any facility from which Council services are supplied.

Any executive decision which will have a significant impact in environmental, physical, social or economic terms on communities living or working in one or more electoral wards. This includes any plans or strategies which are not within the meaning of the Council's Policy Framework set out in Article 4 of the Council's Constitution.

The law and the Council's Constitution provide for urgent key decisions to be made, even though they have not been included in the Forward Plan in accordance with Rule 15 (General Exception) and Rule 16 (Special Urgency) of the Access to information Procedure Rules.

The Forward Plan has been extended to now include details of any significant issues to be considered by the Executive Cabinet, full Council and Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It is hoped that this will better meet the needs of elected Members, Officers and the public. They are called "non key decisions". In addition the plan contains details of any reports which are to be taken in the private section of an Executive meeting.

Anyone wishing to make representations about any of the matters in the schedule below may do so by contacting the officer listed. Copies of the Council's Constitution and agenda and minutes for all meeting of the Council may be accessed on the Council's website: www.chesterfield.gov.uk.

Notice of Intention to Conduct Business in Private

Whilst the majority of the business at Cabinet meetings will be open to the public and media to attend, there will inevitably be some business to be considered that contains, for example, confidential, commercially sensitive or personal information. This is formal notice under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 that the Cabinet meetings shown on this Forward Plan will be held partly in private because some of the reports for the meeting will contain either confidential information or exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

A list of the reports which are expected to be considered at this meeting in private are set out in a list on this Forward Plan. They are marked "private", including a number indicating the reason why the decision will be taken in private under the categories set out below:

- (1) information relating to any individual
- (2) information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
- (3) information relating the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
- (4) information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
- (5) Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
- (6) Information which reveals that the authority proposes (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
- (7) Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

If you would like to make representations about any particular decision to be conducted in private at this meeting then please email: democratic.services@chesterfield.gov.uk. Such representations must be received in advance of 5 clear working days before the date Cabinet meeting itself, normally by the preceding Monday. The Council is required to consider any representations received as to why an item should not be taken in private and to publish its decision.

It is possible that other private reports may be added at shorter notice to the agenda for the Cabinet meeting or for a Cabinet Member decision.

Cabinet meetings are held at the Town Hall, Chesterfield, S40 1LP, usually starting at 10.30 am on Tuesdays, but subject to change in accordance with legal notice periods.

Huw Bowen
Chief Executive



Decision No	Details of the Decision to be Taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Earliest Date Decision can be Taken	Proposed Consultees	Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated	Private
Key Decisions									
Key Decision 213	List of Buildings of Local Interest - to agree a local list of buildings of historic, architectural or townscape importance.	Cabinet	Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Planning	28 Jan 2014	Planning Committee	Public Consultation already taken place with the local community.	Report of Head of Regeneration	Paul Staniforth Tel: 01246 345781 paul.staniforth@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 255	Appointment of Green Deal/ECO Partner	Joint Cabinet and Employment & General Committee	Executive Member - Housing	11 Feb 2014	Assistant Executive Member Support Members	Meetings.	Business Planning and Strategy Manager - Housing Services	Jane Thomas Tel: 01246 345708 jane.thomas@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 267	Restructure of Homelessness Service	Joint Cabinet and Employment & General Committee	Executive Member - Housing	11 Mar 2014	Assistant Executive Member Support Members	Meeting.	Service Manager - Housing Services	Julie McGrogan Tel: 01246 345135 julie.mcgrogan@chesterfield.gov.uk	Exempt 1 Information relating to individuals

Key Decision No	Details of the Decision to be Taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Earliest Date Decision can be Taken	Proposed Consultees	Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated	Private
Key Decision 285	New Beetwell Street MSCP Improvement Scheme - to agree a scheme of capital improvements for the car parks in line with the Parking Strategy.	Council	Executive Member - Environment	27 Feb 2014	Assistant Executive Member	Meeting.	Head of Regeneration	Bernadette Wainwright Tel: 01246 345779 bernadette.wainwright@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 286	CCTV Control Centre Improvement Works - to agree capital improvements to the control centre in line with the Parking Strategy.	Council	Executive Member - Customers and Communities	27 Feb 2014	Assistant Executive Member Support Members	Meeting.	Head of Regeneration	Bernadette Wainwright Tel: 01246 345779 bernadette.wainwright@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 296	Careline Consortium - Update on the current position regarding potential partnership arrangements with DCC.	Cabinet	Executive Member - Housing	25 Feb 2014	Assistant Executive Member Support Members	Meeting.	Service Manager - Housing Services	Julie McGrogan Tel: 01246 345135 julie.mcrogan@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public

Key Decision No	Details of the Decision to be Taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Earliest Date Decision can be Taken	Proposed Consultees	Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated	Private
Key Decision 317	Renewal of Cleaning Contract for Communal Areas	Cabinet	Executive Member - Housing	11 Feb 2014	Assistant Executive Member Support Members	Meeting	Service Manager - Housing Services	Julie McGrogan Tel: 01246 345135 julie.mcgrogan@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 318	Proposals in respect of Grange Court - Change of Use/Conversion	Cabinet	Executive Member - Housing	11 Feb 2014	Assistant Executive Member Support Members	Meeting	Service Manager - Housing Services	Julie McGrogan Tel: 01246 345135 julie.mcgrogan@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 319	Review of Allocations Policy - Welfare Reform	Joint Cabinet and Employment & General Committee	Executive Member - Housing	25 Feb 2014	Assistant Executive Member Support Members	Meetings	Service Manager - Housing Services	Julie McGrogan Tel: 01246 345135 julie.mcgrogan@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 326	Festivals Review - review the Council's programme of cultural festivals in 2013 and agree future events.	Cabinet	Executive Member - Leisure, Culture and Tourism	25 Feb 2014	Assistant Executive Member Support Members	Meetings	Head of Regeneration	Bernadette Wainwright Tel: 01246 345779 bernadette.wainwright@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public

Key Decision No	Details of the Decision to be Taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Earliest Date Decision can be Taken	Proposed Consultees	Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated	Private
Key Decision 327	Rest Rooms - explain how the rest rooms are managed and financed and review the future of the unused facilities.	Cabinet	Executive Member - Leisure, Culture and Tourism	25 Feb 2014	Assistant Executive Member Support Members	Meetings	Head of Regeneration	Bernadette Wainwright Tel: 01246 345779 bernadette.wainwright@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 329	Local Plan: Sites and Boundaries Development Plan document - to agree preferred options for public consultation.	Cabinet	Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Planning	11 Feb 2014		Meetings	Head of Regeneration	Alan Siviter Tel: 01246 345954 alan.siviter@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 331	HS2 - response to consultation from government on proposed route for HS2.	Cabinet	Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Planning	28 Jan 2014		Meetings.	Head of Regeneration	Alan Morey Tel: 01246 345371 alan.morey@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 337	THI Scheme Project Evaluation - to receive a final evaluation of the THI project for Chesterfield Town Centre.	Cabinet	Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Planning	25 Mar 2014		Meetings	Head of Regeneration	Paul Staniforth Tel: 01246 345781 paul.staniforth@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public

Key Decision No	Details of the Decision to be Taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Earliest Date Decision can be Taken	Proposed Consultees	Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated	Private
Key Decision 339	Proposals for future use of the former garage site of Hady Lane	Cabinet	Executive Member - Housing	11 Mar 2014	Assistant Executive Member Support Members	Meetings.	Business Planning & Strategy Manager	Alison Craig Housing Tel: 01246 345156 alison.craig@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 340	Caravan and Mobile Home Park Licensing	Cabinet	Executive Member - Housing	11 Mar 2014	Assistant Executive Member Support Members	Meetings.	Business Planning and Strategy Manager - Housing Services	Jane Thomas Tel: 01246 345708 jane.thomas@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 345	Waste Services Fees and Charges	Cabinet	Executive Member - Environment	28 Jan 2014	Assistant Executive Member Support Members	Meetings.	Head of Environment	Dave Bennett Tel: 01246 345122 dave.bennett@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 347	Anti-Social Behaviour Review	Cabinet	Executive Member - Customers and Communities	25 Feb 2014	Assistant Executive Member	Meetings	Head of Business Transformation	Joe Tomlinson Tel: 01246 345093 joe.tomlinson@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 348	Strategic Housing Marketing Assessment	Cabinet	Executive Member - Housing	25 Feb 2014	Assistant Executive Member Support Members.	Meeting.	Business Planning and Strategy Manager - Housing Services	James Crouch Tel: 01246 345150 james.crouch@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public

Key Decision No	Details of the Decision to be Taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Earliest Date Decision can be Taken	Proposed Consultees	Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated	Private
Key Decision 350	HRA Business Plan/Capital Programme/Rents	Cabinet	Executive Member - Housing	28 Jan 2014	Assistant Executive Member Support Member	Meeting	Business Planning and Strategy Manager - Housing Services	Alison Craig Housing Tel: 01246 345156 alison.craig@chesterfield.gov.uk	Exempt 3 Refers to financial affairs
Key Decision 351	Review of Cemeteries Fees and Charges - 2014/15 To set the cemeteries fees and charges for 2014/15.	Cabinet	Executive Member - Environment	28 Jan 2014	Assistant Executive Member Support Members Joint Crematorium Committee	Meeting	Head of Environment	Angela Dunn Bereavement Services Officer Tel: 01246 345881 angela.dunn@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 352	Fees and Charges for Leisure Centres and Outdoor Recreation Provision 2014 To set the Council's fees and charges for Indoor and Outdoor Sport and Leisure facilities with effect from 1 April 2014	Cabinet	Executive Member - Leisure, Culture and Tourism	28 Jan 2014	Assistant Executive Member Support Members	Meeting	Head of Environment	Darran West Tel: 01246 345751 darran.west@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public

Key Decision No	Details of the Decision to be Taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Earliest Date Decision can be Taken	Proposed Consultees	Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated	Private
Key Decision 353	Barrow Hill Environmental Improvements	Cabinet	Executive Member - Housing	28 Jan 2014	Assistant Executive Member	Meeting	Business Planning and Strategy Manager - Housing Services	James Crouch Tel: 01246 345150 james.crouch@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 355	Proposed Sports Pavilion for Eastwood Park	Cabinet	Executive Member - Environment	25 Feb 2014	Assistant Executive Member	Meeting	Head of Environment	John Ramsey Tel: 01246 345097 john.ramsey@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 358	Updated General Fund Capital Programme	Cabinet	Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Planning	28 Jan 2014		Meeting	Head of Finance	Barry Dawson Tel: 01246 345451 barry.dawson@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 358(1)	Land at Thompson Street Chesterfield	Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Planning	Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Planning	20 Jan 2014		Meeting	Head of Regeneration	Matthew Sorby Tel: 01246 345800 matthew.sorby@chesterfield.gov.uk	Exempt 3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of a person or company.

Key Decision No	Details of the Decision to be Taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Earliest Date Decision can be Taken	Proposed Consultees	Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated	Private
Key Decision 358(2)	Sale of Units at Foxwood Road, Chesterfield	Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Planning	Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Planning	7 Feb 2014		Meetings.	Head of Kier Contracts	Matthew Sorby Tel: 01246 345800 matthew.sorby@chesterfield.gov.uk	Exempt 3 Contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
Key Decision 359	Collection Fund Revised Estimates 2013/14	Cabinet	Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Planning	14 Jan 2014		Meeting	Head of Finance	Helen Fox Tel: 01246 345452 helen.fox@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public

Key Decision No	Details of the Decision to be Taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Earliest Date Decision can be Taken	Proposed Consultees	Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated	Private
Key Decision 360	Risk Management - mid year review and Strategy for 2014/15	Council	Executive Member - Governance and Organisational Development	27 Feb 2014	Assistant Executive Member Cabinet Standards and Audit Committee	Meeting	Head of Finance	Barry Dawson Tel: 01246 345451 barry.dawson@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 362	General Fund Revenue Budget 2014/15 and Medium Term Strategy	Council	Leader & Executive Member for Regeneration	27 Feb 2014	Cabinet	Meeting	Head of Finance	Barry Dawson Tel: 01246 345451 barry.dawson@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 363	Capital Strategy and General Fund Capital Programme	Council	Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Planning	27 Feb 2014		Meeting	Head of Finance	Barry Dawson Tel: 01246 345451 barry.dawson@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 364	Housing Capital Programme	Council	Executive Member - Housing	27 Feb 2014	Assistant Executive Member	Meeting	Head of Finance and Business Planning and Strategy Manager - Housing Services	Alison Craig Housing Tel: 01246 345156 alison.craig@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public

Key Decision No	Details of the Decision to be Taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Earliest Date Decision can be Taken	Proposed Consultees	Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated	Private
Key Decision 365	Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators	Council	Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Planning	27 Feb 2014	Cabinet Standards and Audit Committee	Meetings	Head of Finance	Helen Fox Tel: 01246 345452 helen.fox@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 366	Council Tax Levels for 2014/15	Council		27 Feb 2014		Meeting	Head of Finance	Barry Dawson Tel: 01246 345451 barry.dawson@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 367	Approval of the Council Tax and Business Rates Bases for 2014/15	Employment and General Committee		13 Jan 2014		Meeting		Barry Dawson Tel: 01246 345451 barry.dawson@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 368	Open Market Fees and Charges 2014/15	Cabinet	Executive Member - Leisure, Culture and Tourism	11 Feb 2014	Assistant Executive Member	Meeting	Head of Regeneration	Mike Hayden Head of Regeneration Tel: 01246 345789 mike.hayden@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public

Key Decision No	Details of the Decision to be Taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Earliest Date Decision can be Taken	Proposed Consultees	Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated	Private
Key Decision 369	Consideration of Tenders for the Construction of the New Sports Centre (L000)	Cabinet	Executive Member - Leisure, Culture and Tourism	28 Jan 2014	Assistant Executive Member	Meeting	Head of Environment	Darran West Tel: 01246 345751 darran.west@chesterfield.gov.uk	Exempt 3 Contains financial information
Key Decision 370	Appropriation of Land at Queen's Park Annexe for the Construction of the New Sports Centre (R320)	Cabinet	Executive Member - Leisure, Culture and Tourism	11 Feb 2014	Assistant Executive Member	Meeting	Head of Environment	Darran West Tel: 01246 345751 darran.west@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 371	2014 Car Parking Charges - to review the timing of the introduction of the agreed price increase	Cabinet	Executive Member - Environment	14 Jan 2014	Assistant Executive Member	Meeting	Cultural and Visitor Services Manager	Bernadette Wainwright Tel: 01246 345779 bernadette.wainwright@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 373	Restructure of the Procurement Unit	Joint Cabinet and Employment & General Committee	Executive Member - Governance and Organisational Development	28 Jan 2014	Assistant Executive Member	Meetings	Head of Business Transformation/ Head of Governance	Mark Evans Head of Business Transformation Tel: 01246 345732 mark.evans@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public

Key Decision No	Details of the Decision to be Taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Earliest Date Decision can be Taken	Proposed Consultees	Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated	Private
Key Decision 374	Review of Fleet Facilities Manager	Joint Cabinet and Employment & General Committee	Executive Member - Housing	11 Feb 2014	Assistant Executive Member	Meeting	Report of Operational Services Manager	Martyn Bollands Tel: 01246 345020 martyn.bollands@chesterfield.gov.uk	Exempt 3 Contains financial information
Key Decision 375	Depot Rationalisation - Procurement	Cabinet	Executive Member - Housing	11 Feb 2014	Assistant Executive Member	Meeting	Report of Operational Services Manager	Martyn Bollands Tel: 01246 345020 martyn.bollands@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 376	Council Tax Support Scheme	Council	Executive Member - Customers and Communities	22 Jan 2014	Assistant Executive Member	Meetings	Report of the Head of Finance	Barry Dawson, Fran Rodway Tel: 01246 345451 barry.dawson@chesterfield.gov.uk, Tel: 01246 345475 fran.rodway@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Key Decision 377	Repairs Budget 2014/15	Cabinet	Executive Member - Housing	11 Feb 2014	Assistant Executive Member	Meetings	Report of Business Planning and Strategy Manager	Alison Craig Housing Tel: 01246 345156 alison.craig@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public

Key Decision No	Details of the Decision to be Taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Earliest Date Decision can be Taken	Proposed Consultees	Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated	Private
Key Decision 378	LAMS Update Report	Cabinet	Executive Member - Housing	25 Feb 2014	Assistant Executive Member	Meetings	Report of Business Planning and Strategy Manager	James Crouch Tel: 01246 345150 james.crouch@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public
Non-Key Decisions									
Key Decision Non-Key Page 4 Page 125	List of Buildings of Local Interest - to consider the list of nominated buildings and agree an assessment panel and process.	Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Planning	Deputy Leader & Executive Member for Planning	27 Jan 2014		Meeting. Consultation with property owners.	Head of Regeneration	Paul Staniforth Tel: 01246 345781 paul.staniforth@chesterfield.gov.uk	Public

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SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS - IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING FORM

Ref No	Item (Scrutiny Issue or Topic. SPG = Scrutiny Project Group work)	Minute Ref. / Date (Scrutiny Committee & Cabinet, Council & its Committees)	Scrutiny Committee Recommendations or <i>Decision making body resolution</i> (<i>italics = Agreed by Scrutiny Committee but not yet considered by decision making body</i>)	Completion Date for Actions	Action / Response Completed	Further Action Required by Scrutiny (6 monthly progress reports)
EW3	Parking Policy (SPG)	14.02.13 (No 0027) Approved at Cabinet on 05.03.13	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The barrier system of parking control which gives change, be extended to other car parks. 2. Improvements be implemented for the New Beetwell Street MSCP to bring the facility up to a standard equivalent to that at Vicar Lane. 3. Improvements to signage across the town centre and at the entry points to off-street car parks be undertaken. 	Progress update 6 months from 05.03.13	Head of Regeneration provided progress update to EW on 05.09.13.	
OP3	Anti Social Behaviour (SPG)	17.01.13 (No 0064) Considered by Cabinet 10.09.13.	See report and minute.			Exec Report considered 12.12.13 before Cabinet decision.

Ref No	Item (Scrutiny Issue or Topic. SPG = Scrutiny Project Group work)	Minute Ref. / Date (Scrutiny Committee & Cabinet, Council & its Committees)	Scrutiny Committee Recommendations or <i>Decision making body resolution</i> (<i>italics = Agreed by Scrutiny Committee but not yet considered by decision making body</i>)	Completion Date for Actions	Action / Response Completed	Further Action Required by Scrutiny (6 monthly progress reports)
CCO1	Statutory Crime & Disorder Scrutiny	29/09/11 (No 0044) (No 0045)	1. Progress report on sharing information re alcohol related health problems and hospital admissions. 2. Consult Committee on internal Review of Community Safety before submission to Cabinet.	6 months from 29/09/11.	1. Update provided 30.05.13. Statistics awaited. 2. Awaiting.	Report received 05.12.13. Next report due 10.04.14.
		04/10/12	3. Consult Committee on Redeeming our Communities Proposals when completed.		3. Awaiting.	
		30/05/13 (No 0003)	4. Recommendation to Community Safety Partnership regarding introduction of Shopwatch scheme.	Letter sent 25.07.13	4. Awaiting response to letter.	
CCO3	Cumulative Impact Policy	SB 14/07/11 (No 0015) Licensing Ctte	1. Supports consultation on introduction of CIP. 2. A further report on consultation outcome be reported to Licensing Ctte and Cabinet before Council.		1. Completed. 2. Completed.	

Ref No	Item (Scrutiny Issue or Topic. SPG = Scrutiny Project Group work)	Minute Ref. / Date (Scrutiny Committee & Cabinet, Council & its Committees)	Scrutiny Committee Recommendations or <i>Decision making body resolution</i> (<i>italics = Agreed by Scrutiny Committee but not yet considered by decision making body</i>)	Completion Date for Actions	Action / Response Completed	Further Action Required by Scrutiny (6 monthly progress reports)
			3. Scrutiny Board /Ctte to be involved with monitor and review of CIP after 12 months in operation. 4. Impact of alcohol consumption on health service to be brought to attention of Licensing Committee.	3. Following 12 months in operation.	3. Completed. Report received 31.01.13. 4. Update received 01.08.13. Hospital statistics not yet available.	
Page 129	W2 Review of Water Rates Payment Policy	SB 16/06/11 (No 0004) Cabinet 31/1/12 (No 0164)	1. Refer proposed amended Water Rates Payment policies to Executive Member / Cabinet for adoption.		Last progress report received 27.06.13	Set up Scrutiny Project Group to undertake further review.

Abbreviations Key : OP = Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum. CCO = Community, Customer and Organisational Development Scrutiny Committee. EW = Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee).

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CHESTERFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

WORK PROGRAMME : ENTERPRISE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE on 16 JANUARY 2014

	Scrutiny Committee Date:	Business Item :	Status :	Raised by :	Executive Responsibility
1	16.01.14	Rationalisation of Play Areas	Report due following executive consultation on proposals. Report first received 19.04.12.	<i>Head of Environment E&W (19.04.12)</i>	<i>Environment</i>
2	16.01.14	Allotments Strategy	Annual progress report. Last received 18.10.12.	<i>Head of Environment E&W (19.04.12)</i>	<i>Environment</i>
3	16.01.14	Street Scene Improvement Plan	6 monthly progress report – last received 27.06.13.	<i>E&W</i>	<i>Environment</i>
4	16.01.14	DCC Composting Proposals (re food waste into green bin)	Possible introduction April 2014 earliest.	<i>Head of Environ – ment (10.12.12)</i>	<i>Environment</i>
5	16.01.14	Appointment of Green Deal ECO Partner	Forward Plan scheduled for decision not before 17.12.13.	<i>Executive Member Housing</i>	<i>Housing</i>
6	20.03.14	Chesterfield Sport and Active Recreation Strategy	Initial report received 07.11.13. Draft strategy being developed.	<i>Head of Environment E&W (21.06/12)</i>	<i>Leisure, Culture & Tourism</i>
7	22.05.14	Housing Allocations Policy	Received 14.02.13 and 07.11.13. 6 months progress report requested.	<i>Link Officer (Housing) 12.11.12</i>	<i>Housing</i>
8	TBC	Parks and Open Spaces Strategy	Members workshop to take place.	<i>Head Environment – Link Officer meeting 10.06.13</i>	<i>Environment</i>

CHESTERFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

	Scrutiny Committee Date:	Business Item :	Status :	Raised by :	Executive Responsibility
9	TBC	Housing Self Financing (Decent Homes Standards and Rents)	TBC	<i>Executive Member Housing</i>	<i>Housing</i>
Scrutiny Project Groups :					
10	Every meeting.	New Sport and Leisure Facilities	First agreed 16.02.12. Membership and scope refreshed. New scope agreed 05.09.13.	<i>CCO / E&W / Officers via annual consultation</i>	<i>Leisure, Culture & Tourism</i>
11	Every meeting	Water Rates Policy Review	Agreed 27.06.13 to set up a Project Group.	<i>E&W (27.06.13)</i>	<i>Housing</i>
New Business Items Proposed :					
		Homeless Prevention Service Restructure	Currently scheduled for Cabinet 03.12.13	<i>Executive Member Housing</i>	<i>Housing</i>

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Note: Items for monitoring (from scrutiny reviews and/or recommendations) are not included above but are listed in the Scrutiny Monitoring Form a separate item on the agenda. Items from the Forward Plan and Scrutiny Monitoring Form can be included in the work programme.

[KEY to abbreviations : O&P = Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum. CCO = Community, Customer and Organisational Development Scrutiny Committee. E&W = Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee. TBC = to be confirmed.] (Next meeting date is 20 March 2014).

ENTERPRISE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 7th November, 2013

Present:-

Councillor Hawksworth (Chair)

Councillors	Blank+	Councillors	Gibson
	Bradford		Huckle++++
	Brown+		McManus++
	Callan		Simmons
	Flood		Martin Stone++

Jackie Brobyn – Democratic Services Officer
 Anita Cunningham – Scrutiny Officer
 Yvonne Fox – Housing Solutions Manager+++
 Julie McGrogan – Housing Services Manager++
 Fran Rodway – Customer Services and Revenues Manager+
 Darran West – Head of Environment++++

+ Attended for Minute No. 24
 ++ Attended for Minute Nos. 25 & 26
 +++ Attended for Minute No. 25
 ++++ Attended for Minute No. 27

22 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS' INTERESTS RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

No declarations were made.

23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.

Apologies were received from Councillor Lang.

24 EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CUSTOMERS AND COMMUNITIES REPORT ON DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS

Councillor Blank, Executive Member for Customers and Communities, Councillor Brown, Assistant Executive Member for Customers and Communities and Fran Rodway, Customer Services and Revenues Manager attended the meeting to report on Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP).

It was noted that Council Tax Benefit had been replaced by a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme which meant that DHP could no longer be used to top up Council Tax Benefit to assist with Council Tax liabilities.

Changes were needed to allow for a DHP award when Universal Credit, including a Housing Allowance, was in payment.

The refreshed document included provisions for alleviating hardship arising from the implementation of the Welfare Reform changes, including the withdrawal of Housing Benefit for tenants of social landlords who had spare bedrooms.

It also allowed for a customer to request the review of a DHP decision to be considered by a panel of senior managers of Customer Services and Community Housing, instead of the Appeals and Regulatory Committee. This had been suggested because of the significant increase in available funds and the uplift in applications.

More requests for decisions to be reviewed were anticipated due there being more applications and the increased likelihood of hardship due to the Welfare Reform.

Senior Managers of Customer Services and Community Housing were working closely with residents, including tenants of social landlords, to give the best possible advice to resolve their housing difficulties.

The Customer Services and Revenues Manager circulated a document which gave an analysis of the DHP decisions which stated that there had been 349 decisions made, 244 of which had been allowed and 105 had been disallowed.

She confirmed that there was a budget of £170k to spend and that so far £75k had been committed. Most people were awarded a grant for 13 weeks which would allow them to find alternative accommodation. However if they failed to meet this timescale they were able to reapply for further assistance.

Members expressed an interest in monitoring this and it was suggested and agreed that this could be incorporated within the Welfare Reform Scrutiny Group. The Chair proposed that the scoping document be prepared by the end of the year and that DHP be at the top of the timetable.

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) That the report be noted.
 - (2) That the monitoring of DHP be included in the scoping document for the Welfare Reform Scrutiny Group.

25 **EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING REPORT ON HOUSING/CREDIT UNION SERVICE - VERBAL UPDATE**

Councillor McManus, Executive Member for Housing, Councillor Martin Stone, Assistant Executive Member for Housing, Julie McGrogan, Housing Service Manager – Customer Division and Yvonne Fox, Housing Solutions Manager attended the meeting to give an update in respect of Housing and the Credit Union Service.

It was reported that work had been ongoing for the past 12 months with the Credit Union looking at Jam Jar accounts and potential homeless people were being

encouraged to approach the Credit Union with a view to opening up an account. People with families were being encouraged to take child benefit loans to access safe borrowing and the prepaid card was launched the previous month which allowed for a person's wages/benefits to be loaded on as a safe way to manage money.

The Housing Service Manager – Customer Division reported that the Chief Executive had been in discussion with the Credit Union to see how the Council could assist with funding and it had been agreed that support would be given in the shortfalls in their business plan to enable them to become self sufficient by year 3.

The Assistant Executive Member advised that Derbyshire County Council had made a significant investment of £200k. The Credit Union were now looking for new premises on the High Street to make them more visible and accessible.

A discussion took place about ways of advertising the services of the Credit Union and it was suggested that posters could be placed in all the Council's notice boards and also that leaflets be made available at the next round of Community Assemblies.

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) That the update be noted.
 - (2) That contributors be thanked for support provided to the Credit Union and greater promotion of the Credit Union services be supported.

26 EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE ALLOCATIONS POLICY

Councillor McManus, Executive Member for Housing, Councillor Martin Stone, Assistant Executive Member for Housing, and Julie McGrogan, Housing Service Manager, attended the meeting to report on the Review of the Allocations Policy.

It was noted that changes had been made to the Allocations Policy in order to meet the needs of tenants affected by the benefit changes and also to reflect the changes brought in under the Localism Act 2011. These included:

- Reference to pensionable age in the policy referred to and were consistent with the DWP's pensionable age at the point in time of allocation.
- Under-occupation
- Quota for Transfers
- Changes to Bands
- Armed Forces
- Age on Entry onto the Housing Waiting List
- Sub-Regional Scheme
- Families with Adult Children
- Termination by a Joint Tenant
- Mutual Exchanges
- Transfer Incentive Scheme

A review of the impact of the changes had been carried out and the following had been found:

- 153 (66%) of all households in the transfer band who had been allocated properties since April 2013 had moved because they were either under-occupying properties or were overcrowded.
- There had been a 45% increase in the number of transfers compared with the same period last year.
- By stimulating transfers more two bedroom properties had been released which had resulted in an increase in availability of properties across most areas of the Borough.

It was noted that the following changes were being considered:

- It was proposed that direct matches be carried out for all homeless applicants where they had accepted a statutory duty to re-house
- It was proposed that the Council reintroduce points for households with children who live in flats
- A proposal currently being consulted on by the DCLG on the adoption of a two year residency criteria for admission onto the housing waiting list. The Council were considering the implications of this before responding.

The Housing Services Manager agreed to provide a written report in respect of the Council's response.

It was suggested and agreed that an update be provided to the Committee 6 months after the policy was approved.

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) That the update be noted and proposals supported.
 - (2) That an update be provided to the Committee 6 months after the policy was approved.

COUNCILLOR HAWKSWORTH LEFT THE MEETING AND COUNCILLOR FLOOD TOOK THE CHAIR

27 **EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR LEISURE, CULTURE AND TOURISM REPORT ON SPORT AND ACTIVE RECREATION STRATEGY**

Councillor Huckle, Assistant Executive Member for Leisure, Culture and Tourism and Darran West, Head of Environment attended the meeting to report on the preparation of a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy.

It was noted that the outcome of the strategy was to ensure that facilities, parks, greenspaces and associated services were provided with suitable accessibility and

quality so as to maximise community participation in regular and sustainable Sport and Physical activity on both a formal and informal basis.

The statutory requirement for needs and evidence relating to the Council's Core Strategy and responses to consultation by Sport England had necessitated the development of a robust Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and further evidence of the need for a Swimming Pool, Sports Hall and Artificial Grass Pitch provision using the Sport England Facility Planning Model (FPM).

The overall methodology for the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy development was appended to the report and it was noted that the FPM work was being completed by Sport England and therefore only the PPS element was being co-ordinated locally.

The range of outdoor sports activities to be included and developed in the PPS was:

- Football
- Rugby
- Hockey
- Netball
- Tennis
- Bowls
- Cricket

Consideration would also be given to multi use or expanded use for other seasonal activities such as rounders, grass track circuit cycling, archery and athletics development.

There were only two organisations currently approved by Sport England to use the new PPS methodology which had meant a delay due to capacity for specialist support. CBC was the first authority in Derbyshire to use the new methodology and the second nationally.

The FPM assessment being prepared by Sport England was expected in November 2013 and the FPM methodology examined:

- Swimming Pool provision
- Sports Hall provision
- Artificial Grass Pitch provision

The draft FPM data had been used to support the planning application for the new Queen's Park Sports Centre and the final report would be fundamental to the indoor sports facility needs.

It was expected that the draft strategy would be completed by April/May 2014.

Members asked whether it would be of benefit to include this within the Sports and Leisure Scrutiny Review. The Head of Environment felt that it might not be appropriate but suggested that it might be useful to have them as a sounding board when fleshing out the Strategy.

He agreed that once the Strategy was in a draft form he would be putting it out for consultation.

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) That the best practice approach to establishing a needs and evidence base for a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and Outdoor Sport and Leisure in the Borough, be noted.
 - (2) That the Sport England Facility Planning Model (FPM) 2013 report findings be noted as key drivers for planning future Facilities within the borough.
 - (3) That the Committee note that the collective needs and evidence identified in the PPS and FPM reports, forms the basis of the overarching Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for the Borough being developed and delivered.

28 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the Forward Plan for the period 1st November, 2013 to 28th February, 2014.

Reference was made to the Careline Consortium and it was suggested that an update be requested on the current position. It was agreed that a request be made for an update to be provided by email.

Reference was made to the HRA Business Plan/Capital Programme/Rents and clarification requested as to whether rents would be agreed before setting the Council Tax.

- RESOLVED -** That the Forward Plan be noted and information raised be requested.

29 SCRUTINY MONITORING

The Committee considered an update on the implementation of approved Scrutiny recommendations.

- RESOLVED -** That the update be noted.

30 WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE ENTERPRISE AND WELLBEING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee considered a list of items raised to date for its Work Programme.

- RESOLVED -** (1) That the Work Programme be agreed.

(2) That an update on the following items be considered at the meeting in January 2014:

- Rationalisation of Play Areas
- Allotments Strategy
- Streetscene Improvement Plan
- DCC Composting proposals
- Appointment of Green Deal ECO Partner

(3) That the reappointed Parking Policy Scrutiny Project Group be removed from the Work Programme.

31 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DEVELOPMENTS**

The Scrutiny Officer reminded Members of the Committee that a training session had been arranged at 4.00 pm on Thursday 28th November, 2013 on the budget.

She also reported that a proposal had been made to arrange some training for all Members of the Committee on Chairing skills to assist with the running of Scrutiny Groups. Members were in support of this and it was agreed that this be arranged.

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) That the reminder relating to the Budget training be noted.
- (2) That the Chairing skills training be arranged for Members.

32 **SCRUTINY PROJECTS PROGRESS UPDATES**

(a) Sports and Leisure Review

Councillor Flood gave an update in respect of the Sports and Leisure Review.

She reported that information had been received in respect of the second consultation exercise and that this had been analysed. They had interviewed Deloitte and the Council's Procurement Officer.

Visits had been undertaken to 4 Leisure Centres where scoring had been undertaken on a variety of facilities, and the outcome was similar to that of the Council, with the preferred option being the Arc.

With regard to the financing of other Leisure Centres, reports were being obtained from Dronfield and Buxton, who had both undertaken refurbishments.

The next stage related to the planning application which was to be considered at the Planning Committee on 9th December, 2013.

Consultation would also be undertaken with staff of the Leisure Centres via a survey which was being produced with the assistance of Donna Reddish, Policy Manager for the Council.

(b) Water Rates Policy Review

Councillor Simmons gave an update on the work of the project group on the Water Rates Policy Review.

A copy of the Scoping document for the review was circulated and Members were asked to adopt it.

- RESOLVED -**
- (1) That the updates be noted.
 - (2) That the Scoping document in respect of the Water Rates Policy Review be adopted.

33 MINUTES ON THE MEETING HELD ON 5TH SEPTEMBER, 2013 AND MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 5th September, 2013 were presented.

- RESOLVED -** That the Minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.