

Sherwood Lodge
Bolsover
Derbyshire
S44 6NF

Date: 4th January 2013

Dear Sir or Madam,

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Executive of Bolsover District Council to be held in **COMMITTEE ROOM ONE, SHERWOOD LODGE, BOLSOVER**, on Monday, 14th January 2013 at 1000 hours.

Register of Members' Interest - Members are reminded that a Member must within 28 days of becoming aware of any changes to their Disclosable Pecuniary Interests provide written notification to the Authority's Monitoring Officer.

You will find the contents of the agenda itemised on pages 2 and 3.


Yours faithfully,



Chief Executive Officer
To: Chairman & Members of the Executive

ACCESS FOR ALL

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Chief Executive Officer: Wes Lumley, B.Sc., F.C.C.A.
The Arc, High Street, Clowne, Derbyshire, S43 4JY



EXECUTIVE AGENDA

Monday 14th January 2013 at 1000 hours
Committee Room One, Sherwood Lodge, Bolsover

Item No.		Page No.(s)
	PART 1 – OPEN ITEMS	
1.	<u>Apologies for absence</u>	
2.	<u>Urgent Items of Business</u> To note any urgent items of business which the Chairman has consented to being considered under the provisions of Section 100(B) 4(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.	
3.	<u>Declarations of Interest</u> Members should declare the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and Non Statutory Interest as defined by the Members' Code of Conduct in respect of: a) any business on the agenda b) any urgent additional items to be considered c) any matters arising out of those items and if appropriate, withdraw from the meeting at the relevant time.	
4.	<u>Minutes</u> To approve the Minutes of a meeting of the Executive held on 10 th December 2012.	Previously circulated
5.*	Junction Arts Annual Report	To Follow
6.	Safe and Inclusive Scrutiny Committee Review of Community Houses	4 to 22
7.	Improvement Scrutiny Committee Review of Choice Based Lettings	23 to 40
8.*	Tenancy Strategy	41 to 53
9.*	Medium Term Financial Plan Update	To Follow
10.	Arrears Irrecoverable Items	54 to 61

PART 2 – EXEMPT ITEMS
The Local Government (Access to Information)
Act 1985, Local Government Act 1972, Part 1,
Schedule 12a.

Paragraph 3

11.	Arrears Irrecoverable Items	62 to 64
12.*	Vehicle Tracking Devices - Housing Fleet	65 to 72
13.*	Tender Evaluation Outcome – Legionella Monitoring Services	To Follow

* Denotes Key Decision

Committee:	Executive	Agenda Item No.:	6.
Date:	14 th January 2013	Category	2
Subject:	Scrutiny Review Report – Community Houses	Status	Open
Report by:	Councillor Mary Dooley, Chair of the Safe and Inclusive Scrutiny Committee		
Other Officers involved:	Scrutiny Officer		
Director	Director of Health and Wellbeing		
Relevant Portfolio Holders	Councillor B. R. Murray-Carr, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety Councillor A. Syrett, Portfolio Holder for Social Inclusion		

RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS

COMMUNITY SAFETY – Ensuring that communities are safe and secure. The original Community House was set up to tackle anti-social behaviour and other Community Safety issues.

SOCIAL INCLUSION – Promoting fairness, equality and lifelong learning. Neighbourhood Management was set up to provide services to vulnerable communities

VALUE FOR MONEY

It is anticipated that the recommendations set out in this report will assist the Authority in ensuring that it is providing the most effective service to meet the needs of all our communities across the District.

THE REPORT

The Safe and Inclusive Scrutiny Committee has completed its review on the Community Houses.

The aims and objectives of the review were to consider the reasons for setting up the Community Houses originally, how they were now used by residents and local people and the involvement of Community Safety in the Community Houses.

When making the recommendations, the Committee was mindful of the current demand for the Community Houses and the most effective way that Bolsover District Council can provide support and assistance to its more vulnerable communities across the District in light of the current financial climate, the pressures on budgets and the need to identify savings.

A review of the Community Houses was suggested at the 2012 Annual Scrutiny Conference.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

The Safe and Inclusive Scrutiny Committee has made five recommendations based on evidence gathered during the review. The comments of the relevant Portfolio Holders, Director of Health and Well Being and the Senior Environmental Health Officer (residential) were sought prior to the final report being approved by the Scrutiny Management Board.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial: None identified
Legal: None identified
Human Resources: None identified

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **That the Executive consider the Safe and Inclusive Scrutiny Committee recommendations set out in the report of the Community Houses Scrutiny Review.**
2. **That the Executive provide a response on the review recommendations within 6 weeks in accordance with the Scrutiny Procedure Rules in order that an action plan can be drawn up to monitor implementation.**

ATTACHMENT: **Y**
FILE REFERENCE:
SOURCE DOCUMENT: ***Community Houses Scrutiny Review Report***

**BOLSOVER DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

**SAFE AND INCLUSIVE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**SCRUTINY REVIEW OF
COMMUNITY HOUSES**

October 2012

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Chair's Foreword

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2. Recommendations
3. Scope of review
4. Method of review
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Appendix 1 – Stakeholders engaged during the review

Appendix 2 – Summary of usage of the Community Houses, January – June 2012

Appendix 3 – Neighbourhood Management Budget

Foreword of Councillor Mary Dooley Chair of the Safe and Inclusive Scrutiny Committee

The Safe and Inclusive Scrutiny Committee have carried out its review on the Community Houses and have made conclusions and recommendations based on the evidence received over the period of the review.

The Committee has considered Neighbourhood Management and its role across the District and concluded that what was required eleven years ago when first established has changed considerably to the needs of the people across the District today.

The recommendations set out in this report have not been taken lightly and Members have had to consider that the needs of the District have changed, and Neighbourhood Management needs to adapt in order to meet the current needs of our communities. We can now access services from many parts of the District using Contact Centres which provide a number of Council services under one roof.

The services provided to our communities by the Community Houses have been extremely valuable in the past and have successfully tackled major problems in these areas. The Committee feels that it is now time to move on and difficult decisions need to be made on the future of Neighbourhood Management and how this is best delivered in the future to support more of our communities than just those with a Community House.

I was pleased to see that we had two Members of the public attend one of our meetings and I hope that this gave them an insight into the work of Scrutiny and the challenges that the Council faces at present.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the hard work and effort that the two Project Workers have put into the service over the past few years, particularly recently when resources and staffing have been stretched, they have still continued to provide a service to some of our communities in a professional manner and they are a credit to the Authority. I would also like to thank these officers for their assistance and cooperation with our scrutiny review.

My thanks also go to the Members of the Safe and Inclusive Scrutiny Committee for their attendance and dedication to the review and to the Portfolio Holders, Directors and other officers involved for their advice and guidance throughout this review. Finally my thanks go to the Democratic Services Officer and Scrutiny Officer for supporting the Committee through the review process.

1. Introduction

Neighbourhood Management was first introduced to tackle the problems on the Castle Estate, Bolsover including poor housing, high unemployment and no sense of community. The Project Co-ordinator post was established with the transfer of an officer from CAN Rangers and the Community House on the Castle Estate, Bolsover was opened in 2001.

Other purposes of Neighbourhood Management included;

- To gather intelligence from the local residents to assist the Police and develop a multi agency approach to combat problems.
- Reduce anti-social behaviour with the provision of activities/events assisted by volunteers and partner agencies.
- Provide access to health care services by working in partnership with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) – promoting all health initiatives, assisting health visitors and promoting healthy eating, no smoking clinics and the provision of Health Trainers.

The Neighbourhood Management project aimed to help revitalise local communities by reducing social exclusion and bridging the gap between deprived areas and other parts of the district. The Council's involvement in tackling these issues led to many notable achievements.

Over the years, Neighbourhood Management has been the subject of a number of evaluations which have concluded that the focused work and intervention has made a huge impact on the residents and empowered them. The projects have also received numerous accolades.

The Community House at Castle Estate, Bolsover was initially provided rent free by Villagates, a private landlord in the area.

The Community House at South Normanton opened in February 2004 using a council property, 77 Eastfield Drive.

New Houghton Community House followed in April 2004, housed in the old Co-operative building on Rotherham Road, owned by Bolsover District Council.

Following the appointment of the Joint Directors and the restructure which moved Neighbourhood Management into Environmental Health, it was highlighted that no performance information was gathered for any of the Community Houses and information provided was purely anecdotal. A new system was put in place in January 2012 and the usage and reasons for contact have been recorded and monitored since this time.

The Community Houses are co-ordinated and run by a team of three comprising the Project Co-ordinator and two Project Workers. It should be noted that when commencing the review, members of the Committee were advised that the Project Co-ordinator had been on sick leave since May 2012 and at the time of writing this report, had not returned to work.

The role of the Project Workers has two parts;

1. Projects and outreach work which includes brunch clubs, stay and play and other activities. Some of these are delivered through the Community Houses and others are based at alternative community venues and;
2. Support, general advice and assistance through the Community Houses.

The Safe and Inclusive Scrutiny Committee's task was to consider the current demand for the Community Houses and the most effective way that Bolsover District Council could provide support and assistance to its more vulnerable communities across the District in light of the current financial climate, the pressures on budgets and the need to identify savings.

It is hoped that the recommendations set out in this report will assist the Authority in ensuring that it is providing the most effective service to meet the needs of all our communities across the District.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Community House at the Castle Estate, Bolsover be returned to the landlord, with any necessary works required by the Authority to return it to its former condition, suitable for rental accommodation.**
- 2.2 That the Community House at South Normanton be closed and returned to a suitable condition for rental as a council property, subject to any necessary planning permission.**
- 2.3 That the North East Derbyshire Women's Aid Domestic Violence Worker be offered alternative accommodation at The Hub, South Normanton.**
- 2.4 That the Community House at New Houghton be closed and consideration be given to the future use of the building and/or land.**
- 2.5 That the Joint Director of Health and Wellbeing together with the Senior Environmental Health Officer (Residential) and the Project Workers develop a plan for the future of Neighbourhood Management to cover areas across the District which will deliver services to more of our communities.**

3. Scope of the review

The aims and objectives of the review were to consider the reasons for setting up the Community Houses originally, how they were now used by residents and local people and the involvement of Community Safety in the Community Houses.

Members carried out the review with the following key issues in mind,

- Who is using the facilities?
- Are the houses accessible to members of the community?
- Performance and usage monitoring?
- What do the local agencies delivering services across the District think about these facilities?
- What is the cost to the Authority?
- What are the alternatives?

The Committee comprised the following Members,

Cllr Mary Dooley (Chair)
Chair)

Cllr Terry Connerton (Vice

Cllr Andrew Anderson

Cllr Paul Cooper

Cllr Eric Hall

Cllr Brian Hendry

Cllr Duncan Kerr

Cllr Sandra Peake

Cllr John Phelan

Cllr Ken Walker

Support to the Committee was provided by the Scrutiny Officer and the Democratic Services Officer.

It should be noted that Councillors Cooper and Kerr were involved in the review work of the Committee however were not in agreement with the recommendations set out in this report.

4. Method of review

The Committee met on six occasions to consider the scope of the review, key issues they wanted to discuss and the people they wished to interview.

The Committee sought written evidence by way of questionnaires to local people visiting the Community Houses and the agencies providing services to local communities from the Houses in New Houghton and South Normanton. As the Community House at the Castle Estate had been closed since May 2012, questionnaires could not be left for people to complete who came in to access services.

A list of agencies providing services to local people from the Castle Estate was provided by the Project Workers and the Scrutiny Officer contacted each of these agencies by telephone to find out how these services had been provided since the closure of the Community House at Castle Estate.

Attached at **Appendix 1** is a list of stakeholders involved in the review.

Equality and Diversity

Within the process of the review, the committee has taken into account the impact of equalities.

It will be necessary for an Equality Impact Assessment to be completed prior to any final decision being taken on the future of the Community Houses by Elected Members. Further public consultation, once a decision has been made may also be required.

5. Evidence

The following evidence was considered as part of the review:

- Neighbourhood Management Presentation
- Website information – Neighbourhood Management
- Developing and supporting community houses, a good practice guide – Shelter, December 2008
- Neighbourhood Management report, February – May 2012 (South Normanton and New Houghton only) prepared by the Project Officers.
- Neighbourhood Management summary – usage figures and statistics.
- Completed questionnaires from local agencies operating out of the Community Houses.
- Completed questionnaires from local people using the Community Houses. (New Houghton and South Normanton).
- Verbal evidence from relevant officers and the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety.

6. Key findings

General Findings

- The Mobile Safer Neighbourhoods Team has reduced the amount of contact at the Community Houses for crime and community safety related issues as the team has a high visibility presence in the areas it covers. For this reason, the Scrutiny Committee heard that Community Safety no longer require the provision of the Community Houses.
- There is value in the projects and outreach work that is carried out by the Project Officers and the numerous agencies including identifying and engaging with vulnerable people and families.
- Monitoring information was provided on the number of contacts in the New Houghton and South Normanton Community Houses between January and June 2012. This information shows the number of people accessing the Community Houses per month and on some months, the number of contacts does not equate to one contact per house per day. The reason for the highest number of contacts per month is people collecting dog waste bags. *(Please see appendix 2 for further information)*
- Other regular enquiries include photocopying, complaints and health referrals. These enquiries could all be dealt with by more effective methods e.g. through the Council's Contact Centres or Job Centre Plus, freeing up the Project Workers' time to focus on the outreach and project work covering a wider geographical area across the District.
- The questionnaires completed by local people, people using the Community Houses and the agencies delivering services undoubtedly show that people appreciate having this service on their doorstep and enjoy the fact that they can go and talk to the Project Workers and have their queries directed to the right place or receive assistance on a problem, considering them an essential part of the community. What the Committee have had to consider is the fairness in delivering these services to two areas of Bolsover District, when there are other areas, some equally isolated or deprived, and whether this is appropriate use of the Authority's resources if the majority of these services can either be delivered by other Council services such as the Contact Centres or other agencies working in these areas.
- The District Council cannot apply for funding to run community projects as a Local Authority and therefore most of the funding for community events and activities is done through the Residents or Community Associations with the Project Officers assisting these groups with applications, etc.
- £23,620.00 would be saved from the Neighbourhood Management budget with the decision to close the Community Houses based on the 2012/13 budget information provided by Financial Services. *(A copy of the*

Neighbourhood Management budget is attached at Appendix 3 for information)

Castle Estate Community House

- Due to long term sickness absence within the Team, the Community House at Castle Estate has been closed since May 2012. Prior to the closure, the service had been reduced as there was less demand for services from local people. For the past two years there has been skeleton cover but no dedicated officer to run the house.
- The property, initially provided rent free by the landlord now costs the authority £400.00 per month rent which has not been accounted for in the budget. This means that money from the budget is now being used to pay rent and rates on a property that the Council is not using at present.
- During the time that the Community House at Castle Estate has been closed, there has only been one enquiry from the Residents Association as to the reasons why the House is currently closed.
- The Committee was advised that agencies and service providers who used the Community House to provide services to local people are now providing these services from the local Methodist Church at Hilltop, Bolsover.
- When contacting agencies from a list of contacts provided by the Project Workers, many of the people spoken to were not aware of ever providing a service through the Community House and claimed that other local venues in the Bolsover area were used including, Sherwood Lodge, GP Surgeries and the Methodist Church, Hilltop, Bolsover.

South Normanton Community House

- There is no set weekly itinerary for events at the South Normanton Community House. The Residents Association use the building one or two times per week to deal with correspondence, hold meetings and to plan and prepare community activities/events.
- The Community House currently provides a base for both the North Derbyshire Women's Aid Domestic Violence Worker and the Police. The Police also have a base at The Hub however continue to use the Community House as there is no computer at The Hub due to funding. Other agencies completing the questionnaire advised that they use the Community House on an ad-hoc basis or as an 'overspill' if the GP surgery, which is now located in The Hub, is busy.
- The general consensus was that the Community House has been a valuable resource for the community and instrumental in local people being able to access services and agencies. However, with a number of services

provided in South Normanton transferring to The Hub, it is likely that demand for the Community House will only continue to reduce. It is not considered that there is sufficient demand for the Authority to provide two buildings, particularly when a large proportion of the 'drop in' queries at the Community House are regarding the collection of dog waste bags or referrals/complaints to various Council departments and this should be done through the contact centres in any case.

- Neither the Police nor North Derbyshire Women's Aid are charged rent or make any contribution towards the upkeep and utilities of the Community House. The questionnaire completed by the Police Community Safety Officer stated that the Community House was not the most appropriate place to provide services and The Hub was more appropriate.
- The Postmill Centre in South Normanton also provides a larger venue for events such as brunch clubs, etc. Alternative venues are already sought by the Project Officers as the Community House is not big enough to stage such events.
- There may be some planning implications in respect of 77 Eastfield Drive. The advice received from the Development Control Manager was that temporary planning permission was granted for the property which expired in September 2005. Further permission should have been obtained however, as in many cases, it was not. The use as a community house has not exceeded 10 years and therefore the property could revert back to a single dwelling without planning permission. As the property is on a residential estate there are no problems in principle with the change of use back to a dwelling. If external alterations are needed to turn it back into a house it is likely that planning permission would be required.

New Houghton Community House

- New Houghton Community House does operate to a weekly timetable which is regularly subject to change according to events and programmes starting or finishing. The current programme for September 2012 provided to members of the Committee shows that on four out of the five days (Monday – Friday) the Community House is used for a period of time by agencies to provide groups and hold meetings or courses. Most of the groups are run by Derbyshire County Council services, e.g. Children's Centre, Connexions, Adult Education and the Multi Agency Teams (MAT). Everyday that the house is open, there is a drop in facility for residents with problems, concerns or seeking advice (as referred to previously and shown in Appendix 2).
- The Police, CAN Rangers and Social Services regularly visit the house to pick up on any community issues. The Police and CAN Rangers also have a set of keys to the property which allows them to use the kitchen facilities when they are working outside the opening hours.

- None of the agencies providing services from the Community House make any contribution to the utilities or upkeep of the building.
- The Committee was advised that there were no other venues available to provide these services in New Houghton. Over the course of the review, Members have discovered that the Stay and Play groups used to operate from the school before moving to the Community House and the New Houghton Community Centre, which is located across the road from the Community House is available for hire at a cost of £8 per hour including use of the kitchen. (*Information from Pleasley Parish Council website*). There is also a hall in the local church which could be considered by some of the agencies requiring facilities.
- Whilst it is accepted that New Houghton is an isolated community with limited transport and therefore local people are reluctant to travel out of the village to access services, it is not Bolsover District Council that is providing the majority of these services to local people at the moment, it is simply providing a venue free of charge for other agencies to use.
- It was proposed to Members of the Committee that the land on which the Community House stands could be included in a future regeneration project with the Tarran Bungalows behind it in order to provide much needed housing within the District.

7. Conclusions

The Community Houses have been a victim of their own success and as a result, the demand for this type of service is no longer what it once was. The Authority now needs to look to the future and consider what service is required by our communities and how this can be delivered in the most appropriate and effective way.

On numerous occasions the Committee received comments that when first set up the Community Houses were excellent; however, the needs and demands of these communities were no longer the same.

The project work is providing so much more to our communities and it should be this work that forms the basis of the Neighbourhood Management team without the ties of a Community House base.

Without the Community Houses, the Project Workers would be free to work with more vulnerable people across the District and would be able to deliver more for local communities, across a wider geographical area, utilising other community assets. As the winter months approach, examples of the programmes that the Project Workers could roll out across the District are Affordable Warmth and working into 2013, the impacts of Welfare Reform.

In making their recommendations, members of the Safe and Inclusive Scrutiny Committee have had to make some difficult decisions. Whilst

considering the evidence presented to them, the aim of the review has always been to consider what the Authority is responsible for providing and how this service can be provided fairly to all residents across the district.

The Committee suggests that an exit strategy is considered for the three properties recommended to be closed.

APPENDIX 1

Stakeholders

Councillor Brian Murray-Carr	Portfolio Holder for Community Safety
Councillor Ann Syrett	Portfolio Holder for Social Inclusion
Councillor Pauline Bowmer	Ward Member for Pleasley
Paul Hackett	Joint Director of Health & Wellbeing
Samantha Bentley	Senior Environmental Health Officer (Residential)
Emma Kendall	Project Worker
Kerry Oscroft	Project Worker
Chris Doy Manager	Development Control
Action Housing, Chesterfield	
CAN Rangers	
Citizens Advice Bureau, Clay Cross	
Community Voluntary Partnership	
Derbyshire Alcohol Advice Service	
Derbyshire County Council - Children's Centre	
Derbyshire County Council – Multi Agency Teams (careers advice, youth services and education support workers)	
Family Intervention Project	
North Derbyshire Women's Aid	
PCSO David Hancock (covering New Houghton)	
Police (based in South Normanton Community House)	
SNAP Development Project	

Welfare Benefits Service – Derbyshire County Council

16 Questionnaire responses from local people in New Houghton

14 Questionnaire responses from local people in South Normanton

5 letters from local residents and 'Our House' Residents Association, South Normanton

APPENDIX 2

Neighbourhood Management Summary 2012

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total	% of jobs
Total amount of people using the service (including people using the service more than once	17	49	46	44	35	31	222	
No. of households visiting Community Houses		45	36	37	30	24		
Amount of people/or jobs being referred to other Council Departments	6	9	3	2	2	0	22	10%
Amount of people receiving poop bags	2	12	14	12	12	12	64	28.80%
Referral for Handyman Scheme	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0.90%
People reporting Anti-Social Behaviour and crime	2	5	3	2	2	2	16	7.20%
Booking events, using the facilities and events	1	6	6	13	9	8	43	19.30%
Help with applications and paperwork	2	2	8	1	4	4	21	9.40%
Photocopying or use of Computer	2	3	3	5	2	1	16	7.2%
Housing complaints	0	1	1	2	0	2	6	2.70%
Issues with waste i.e. fly tipping, bins not collected and bulky waste	1	3	7	3	2	1	17	7.60%
Dog warden related issues	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	0.90%
Enquiries about Credit Unions advice and grants	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	0.90%
Any other queries, etc.....	0	5	0	3	1	1	10	4.50%

Event	No. of events	Amount of people attended (total)	Average attendance
2012 Olympics Party	1	18	18
Adult education course	9	76	8.4
AGM	1	7	7
Brunch club	37	708	19
Caf meeting	4	19	4.75
Committee meeting	1	7	7
Core Group Meeting	1	2	2
Dog chipping	1	2	2
Family night	1	32	32
Food Co-Op	1	3	3
Healing rooms	1	7	7
Home visit	1	2	2
Information session	2	35	17.5
Librarian reading session	1	16	16
Listening to children course	4	16	4
Mini disco	2	52	26
Monthly meeting	1	7	7
NH street surgery	1	No record	Nil
One to one	2	1 (client didn't turn up)	Nil
Outreach appointment	35	72	2
PEEPS	6	57	9.5
Safeguarding meeting	1	8	8
St George's day celebrations	1	114	114
Stay and Play	18	245	13.6
Trip to Bolsover Torch Relay	1	20	20
Weighing clinic	1	4	4

APPENDIX 3

	Budget 2012/13 £	Forecast 2013/14 £	Forecast 2014/15 £
NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT (G010)			
Salaries	95,960	75,850	75,850
National Insurance	6,570	5,320	5,320
Superannuation	11,420	9,030	9,030
Employees Insurance	880	880	880
Health & Safety	280	280	280
Electricity	1,410	1,410	1,410
Gas	3,130	3,130	3,130
Rates	6,890	6,890	6,890
Water Charges	450	450	450
Insurance – Premises	280	280	280
Gas/Plant Facilities Management	500	500	500
Casual User Mileage	2,000	2,000	2,000
Stores Issues	340	340	340
Stationery	190	190	190
Telephones	3,470	3,470	3,470
Hired/Contract Services	7,240	7,240	7,240
Charges/Info & Comms Technology	6,370	6,290	6,330
Charges/Neighbourhoods Admin	12,530	12,610	12,710
Depreciation	9,020	9,020	9,020
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	168,930	145,180	145,320
Miscellaneous Income	(23,760)	0	0
TOTAL INCOME	(23,760)	0	0
NET CHARGE TO SUMMARY	145,170	145,180	145,320

¹Savings if the Community Houses are closed: -

Property related costs - £15,850

Non property related costs - £7,770

Total - £23,620

¹ Information provided by the Chief Accountant

Committee:	Executive	Agenda Item No.:	7.
Date:	14 th January 2013	Category	2
Subject:	Improvement Scrutiny Committee Review of Choice Based Lettings	Status	Open
Report by:	Councillor Hilary Gilmour, Chair of the Improvement Scrutiny Committee		
Other Officers involved:	Scrutiny Officer		
Director	Director of Neighbourhoods		
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor K. Bowman, Portfolio Holder for Housing Management		

RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS

CUSTOMER FOCUSED SERVICES – Providing excellent customer focused services. The relevant Corporate Plan Target relating to Choice Based Letting sits under this Corporate Aim

TARGETS

Complete Choice Based Letting to allow people to bid for properties in ways that suit them by December 2011.

VALUE FOR MONEY

The report has made recommendations which will contribute to ensuring that the Choice Based Lettings Scheme runs as efficiently and effectively as possible whilst ensuring that voids are kept to a minimum.

THE REPORT

The Improvement Scrutiny Committee has completed its review of the Choice Based lettings scheme which has been in place since January 2012.

The aims and objectives of the review were to carry out a review on the Choice Based Letting scheme, six months after implementation, to

understand how the service was delivered and to consider how this scheme was perceived by tenants and elected Members.

Choice Based Lettings was identified as a priority for review at the Annual Scrutiny Conference and the review commenced in July 2012.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

The Improvement Scrutiny Committee has made eight recommendations based on evidence gathered during the review. The comments of the Head of Housing, Housing Officers and the Director of Neighbourhoods were sought prior to the final report being approved by the Scrutiny Management Board.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Any proposed changes to the Allocations Policy and housing application form, etc have been proposed once the documents are ready for revision or reprinting in order to save costs.

Legal: None identified

Human Resources: None identified

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That the Executive consider the Improvement Scrutiny Committee recommendations set out in the report of the Choice Based Lettings Scrutiny Review.**
- 2. That the Executive provide a response on the review recommendations within 6 weeks in accordance with the Scrutiny Procedure Rules in order that an action plan can be drawn up to monitor implementation.**

ATTACHMENT: Y

FILE REFERENCE:

SOURCE DOCUMENT: Choice Based Lettings Scrutiny Review Report

**BOLSOVER DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

**IMPROVEMENT
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**SCRUTINY REVIEW
OF
CHOICE BASED LETTINGS**

November 2012

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Appendix 1 – Stakeholders engaged during the review

Appendix 2 – Rural Community Lettings Plan (North East Derbyshire District Council)

Foreword of Councillor Hilary Gilmour Chair of the Improvement Scrutiny Committee

On behalf of the Improvement Scrutiny Committee I am pleased to present a report on Choice Based Lettings.

The Improvement Committee is undertaking a review of Housing Services.

The Choice Based Lettings review is a priority as it was introduced to Bolsover District residents in January 2012. It has always been the intention to review the system after six months of operation and the Improvement Scrutiny Committee has welcomed the opportunity to assist in this review.

The recommendations, findings and conclusions have been based on evidence gathered during the review from a number of Housing Officers and the portfolio holder for Housing.

May I take this opportunity to thank Abby Brownsword, Democratic Services Officer for all her support and Claire Millington, Scrutiny Officer for her hard work and commitment to this review.

Finally I would like to thank the members of Improvement Scrutiny Committee for their commitment with extraordinary meetings to complete the review.

1. Introduction

Choice Based Lettings is a way of allocating properties that is more transparent and alters the emphasis on the tenant to choose a property rather than to be allocated one. It is a government requirement for Local Authorities to demonstrate in their allocations policy how they will offer choice to tenants and it is believed that if people are given a choice of where they live, they will make more of a commitment to that neighborhood or district.

'Bolsover Lettings', the Choice Based Lettings scheme for Bolsover District Council was introduced on 19th January 2012 following development with Elected Members and tenants.

As well as bidding for Bolsover District Council properties, applicants can also bid on properties in Chesterfield, North East Derbyshire and Bassetlaw through a sub-regional Choice Based Lettings scheme, called LINK.

Using the information given on the application form, the applicant is awarded a number of points and these points determine which band (A – D) the applicant will be placed in. Band A contains applicants who are homeless or have an urgent medical need. Band B includes applicants with some medical need or current tenants wishing to downsize. Band C includes existing tenants and people living within the District and Band D includes applicants living outside the District and owner occupiers.

Properties are advertised weekly on the Bolsover Lettings website and displayed in the Contact Centres. Bidding starts on a Thursday and ends at midnight on the following Tuesday. For those using bid cards, bidding ends at midday on the Tuesday.

The Committee felt that it was timely to review Choice Based Lettings to see whether the new system was working effectively and to consider how Officers, Elected Members and applicants on the housing waiting list perceived the system to be working. Housing Services were due to carry out a review after six months of implementation; however, it was incorporated into this Scrutiny Review taking place.

There are a number of challenges coming up for the Authority surrounding welfare reform which the Committee has taken into consideration as part of the review.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** That a review of all applicants on the housing waiting list who are not currently bidding on properties (non-bidders) be undertaken to identify reasons why these people are not bidding and to consider those who would benefit from the autobid system. *(Please refer to section 6.12)*
- 2.2** That a project to understand and address the issues of properties at New Bolsover be carried out which should include consideration of any grant funding available to undertake improvements to the properties resulting in the area being more attractive to prospective tenants.
- 2.3** That the Allocations Policy be amended so that properties are offered to other applicants on the housing waiting list in other bands, rather than be re-advertised should there be no bidders from the relevant band. The priority should be to reduce void times and bring in rental income to the authority.
- 2.4** That performance monitoring of the Choice Based Lettings scheme be developed to include information on successful allocations, which is already available to tenants through the Bolsover Lettings System be supplied to Elected Members on a quarterly basis.
- 2.5** That a Community Rural Lettings Plan be considered and if appropriate, developed to assist those applicants who are already living in a Parish and want to be housed in a property in that same Parish within Bolsover District. *(An example of this plan is attached as **Appendix 2** to the report – North East Derbyshire District Council, Community Rural Lettings Plan.)*
- 2.6** That the Allocations Policy be amended so that all references to 'bidding' or 'bids' are replaced with 'expression of interest'. Following

advice from the Head of Housing, the Committee accepts that it would be better value for money to make any changes necessary when the current stock of documents is approaching re-printing to avoid considerable wasted expense and additional printing costs.

- 2.7 That the Allocations Policy be amended immediately to reflect the changes relating to 'size criteria' in the Welfare Reform Act 2012 which will come into force in April 2013.
- 2.8 That the Head of Housing develop a disclaimer for new tenants to declare that they are aware of the potential consequences to their benefit payments from April 2013 if they 'under occupy' a property.

3. Scope of the review

The aims and objectives of the review were to carry out a review on the Choice Based Letting scheme, six months after implementation, to understand how the service was delivered and to consider how this scheme was perceived by tenants and elected Members.

Choice Based Lettings has also been considered by Internal Audit who made a number of recommendations for improvements which have been noted by the Committee as part of the review process.

Members carried out the review with the following key issues in mind,

- Customer satisfaction
- Comparison to the previous allocations system
- Any restrictions or issues faced by the Housing Service when delivering the Choice Based Lettings scheme.

The Committee comprised the following Members,

Cllr Hilary Gilmour (Chair)	Cllr Jim Smith (Vice Chair)
Cllr Pauline Bowmer	Cllr Ray Brooks
Cllr Jim Clifton	Cllr Terry Cook
Cllr Malcolm Crane	Cllr Ray Heffer
Cllr Tom Rodda	Cllr Rita Turner

Support to the Committee was provided by the Scrutiny Officer and the Democratic Services Officer.

4. Method of review

The Committee met on six occasions to consider the scope of the review, key issues they wanted to discuss, the people they wished to interview and to carry out their investigations.

A presentation, written and verbal evidence was received from Housing Officers. Elected Members were asked to complete a questionnaire based on comments received from their constituents and their perceptions of how the new scheme was working. One member of the Committee attended a meeting of the Tenant Participation and Development Group to discuss tenant's priorities.

The Committee was asked to suggest two questions for inclusion in the Tenant Survey which is due to be circulated to all tenants towards the end of 2012. Members proposed two questions relating to Choice Based Lettings and for this reason, did not undertake any further consultation with tenants regarding Choice Based Lettings.

Members considered the Allocations Policies of the three other Authorities within the Sub-Regional Lettings Scheme, Bassetlaw District, Chesterfield Borough and North East Derbyshire District Councils and have referred to North East Derbyshire's Community Rural Lettings Plan within the report as an example of good practice.

Attached at **Appendix 1** is a list of stakeholders involved in the review.

Equality and Diversity

Within the process of the review, the committee has taken into account the impact of equalities.

Members questioned whether the scheme discriminated against any person or group. Housing Needs Officers advised that the system did not discriminate, but there were occasionally problems with language barriers and these were dealt with appropriately.

Housing Needs Officers advised that there were people who were not bidding for properties and work to identify the reasons for this should be carried out.

The Equality Impact Assessment was considered as part of the review.

5. Evidence

The following evidence was considered as part of the review:

- Choice Based Letting PowerPoint presentation
- Extracts from the Allocations Policy –
 - Table of eligibility for different types of properties
 - Appendix A – Points Awarded
 - Appendix B – Medical Points
 - Appendix C – Social and Financial Needs Points

- Relet Standard document
- Voids Inspection form Bolsover District Council Housing Application Form
- Information and Guidance on accessing and using Bolsover Lettings
- Members responses to the Choice Based Lettings questionnaire (15)
- National Housing Federation Briefing - Welfare Reform Act 2012 – Size Criteria
- National Housing Federation leaflet – What you need to know about changes to housing benefit.
- Report and recommendations from the Internal Audit Consortium's Internal Audit Report on Choice Based Lettings, dated 1st October 2012.
- Verbal evidence received from all stakeholders listed in *appendix 1*
- North East Derbyshire District Council – Allocations Policy (Community Rural Lettings Plan) attached as *appendix 2*.

6. Key findings

Areas of good practice

6.1 Mutual exchanges can still take place, this is currently dealt with under a separate policy however it is anticipated that mutual exchange properties will be advertised on Bolsover Lettings from January 2013.

6.2 An annual review of applicants is carried out which includes a short form requesting confirmation that the applicant wishes to remain on the waiting list and notes any change in circumstances. If any changes are made, a new application form is completed however the application date remains the date of first application for bidding purposes.

6.3 Points are awarded based on the information given on the application form. Several checks are made to ensure the information is correct. References from existing or previous landlords are requested; however this often caused a delay in the applicant moving in to the property, which in turn reflects in the void figures. The Improvement Scrutiny Committee was advised that a declaration of truth had been developed which the applicant signed to confirm that the information given on the application form was correct. If the information provided by the applicant was later found to be false or inaccurate, possession proceedings could be issued against the tenant depending on the nature of the inaccuracy.

6.4 Properties are apportioned into the different bands to ensure best use of the stock, e.g. three bedroom properties are not usually included in Band B

as this group is pre-dominantly made up of applicants wishing to downsize or with high medical need where three bedroom properties would not often be appropriate. During team meetings, Housing Officers can raise issues to management, for example, where more properties are required for a particular band, depending on the case load at the time.

6.5 Members heard that as at August 2012, the relet figures were slightly worse than under the previous system. Advertising the properties as soon as possible and accepting tenants with a signed declaration of truth whilst waiting for the reference from the applicant's current landlord would assist in improving the relet figures. Properties would also be advertised before the existing tenant had vacated in order to reduce void time.

6.6 When landlord references are returned the landlords are contacted by telephone to verify the information and to ensure that they are not trying to off-load problematic tenants.

6.7 When visiting applicants to check the information on the application form, Housing Needs Officers discuss the costs of moving house including, rent and removals, in order to ensure that the applicant understands all costs involved.

6.8 Housing Needs Officers were of the opinion that the new service was working well and tenants appreciated receiving more information, more choice and appreciated that the process was open for them to see.

6.9 When the Housing Officers escorted a successful applicant to view a property, any required works were recorded and passed to the voids team to be carried out as soon as possible.

6.10 There were some concerns about tenants and residents understanding the new scheme and the Committee were pleased to note that during Customer Services Week the Housing Needs Manager presented some Choice Based Lettings sessions to applicants and prospective tenants at the Contact Centres, explaining the various ways to submit a bid.

Areas for Improvement

6.11 Automatic bids or 'auto bids' were set up for vulnerable people who are unable to submit a bid themselves. Applicants have expressed concerns to Elected Members that they feel disadvantaged by not having access to a computer in order to bid on properties. The Housing Team advised that they were promoting the use of autobids where applicants could express a preference for a particular area or property. Members of the Committee were of the opinion that the use of auto bids could be increased with further promotion and some work to identify the reasons why some applicants on the waiting list were not bidding, e.g. contacting people by telephone or by a visit which would need to be done sensitively.

6.12 There are still some concerns that computer access is an issue for some of the applicants on the waiting list and not everyone can get to a Contact Centre to view the properties available. These concerns have been raised through Members and some work to identify those applicants who would benefit from using auto-bids would help to alleviate some of these problems and concerns.

6.13 The Committee discussed at length problems with hard to let and unpopular properties, in particular properties at New Bolsover. There had been a lack of demand for properties in New Bolsover and it was suggested that reasons for this may include the appearance of the area, the houses were unattractive and they were not well situated with few local amenities. The Housing Team has been limited as to what it can do in the area due to it being a conservation area.

6.14 Attempts have been made for external funding to make work more affordable as the conservation order means that it is more difficult and more expensive to improve the properties. Members concluded that a separate project addressing the issues on New Bolsover should be undertaken outside of this scrutiny review.

6.15 Once a property had been advertised without successfully being allocated it was advertised wider to include applicants in other bands which made the property available to a greater number of applicants. Eventually, Band D applicants and sub-regional applicants would be able to bid on these properties. As reducing the number of voids and turn around times for properties as well as bringing in rental income to the Authority were priorities, the Committee recommends that people from all bands are encouraged to bid in the first place with priority going to an applicant in the suggested band. This may result in the need for more publicity about bidding for properties in other bands.

6.16 The reasons for successful allocations including the length of time on the waiting list or number of points the successful applicant held are published after each property has been let and are listed in the 'Recent Lets' section of the Bolsover Lettings website to assist applicants waiting for a property to understand the process of the Choice Based Lettings System. Members expressed concerns that they did not have access to this information and often received queries from constituents as to why their bid had not been successful. The information only being available electronically also proves difficult for those who do not have access to a computer. It was suggested that some information could be made available in Homing-In or In-Touch publications or could be included within the weekly information on properties that is sent to those applicants who pay to receive information by post.

6.17 The development of performance measures and performance indicators was also raised in the Internal Audit Consortium report.

6.18 Members considered the points awarded (Appendix A of the Allocations Policy) and noted that no points are awarded to an applicant who

wished to remain in the village of birth but were not currently a tenant themselves, (e.g. a person living at home with parents who wished to live on their own). Points were awarded to an applicant currently who wished to be rehoused within the Bolsover District Council area when currently living outside the district, when the village of birth was within the district and also to an applicant who wished to be rehoused in the village of birth when living outside that village. Although Members of the Committee were advised by the Head of Housing that the Authority could not have a policy that gave someone locally an ultimate priority over any other applicant, Members wished to include this as a recommendation for consideration. The Allocations Policies of the Sub-Regional (LINK) authorities were considered and the example of North East Derbyshire District Council's Community Rural Lettings Plan was considered as best practice. A copy of this policy is attached as Appendix 2 to the report. Neither Chesterfield Borough nor Bassetlaw District Councils had a process to deal with rural properties but that was down to the nature of those particular areas where they did not experience the same problems. Bassetlaw did make reference to the policy of North East Derbyshire stating that it was not appropriate for Bassetlaw District Council.

6.19 From the questionnaire completed by elected Members, it became apparent that the word 'bid' causes confusion to both applicants and Members. Comments received during the evidence gathering included, it gives the wrong impression, people consider that money is involved and some applicants perceive that this means they must bid against another applicant for a given property which discourages them. It was suggested that an expression of interest may be a more appropriate term to use.

6.20 Research confirmed that all other Local Authorities and Social Housing Providers considered for this purpose use the term 'bid' in their Choice Based Lettings Scheme. There is a statement on Bolsover Lettings website,

'Don't worry about the word 'bid', this does not involve money it just means you are telling us that you are interested in a particular property and want to be considered for it.'

Consideration should be given to publishing this statement in guidance and with the property adverts in order to lessen some of the concerns.

6.21 The Welfare Reform Act will see the introduction of new size criteria (also known as bedroom tax) for housing benefit claims in the social rented sector. The criteria will mean that any working-age household deemed to be under-occupying their home will lose part of their housing benefit from April 2013. The size criteria will restrict housing benefit to allow for one bedroom for each person or couple living as part of the household, with the following exceptions:

- Children under 16 of same gender expected to share
- Children under 10 expected to share regardless of gender
- Disabled tenant or partner who needs non resident overnight carer will be allowed an extra room.

Any household deemed to have more bedrooms than they require, as defined by the criteria, will lose a proportion of their housing benefit. This cut will be initially set at 14% for one extra bedroom and 25% for two or more extra bedrooms.

Members considered the impact on tenants of Bolsover District Council and agreed that it is appropriate that the Allocations Policy be changed immediately to ensure that as many families and couples as possible can be protected from reductions to housing benefits by being placed in suitable accommodation according to the size criteria in the Welfare Reform Act 2012.

Members also discussed the situation where a new tenant may insist on a property where they will have more bedrooms than they require in April 2013 when the new Act comes into force and the Head of Housing suggested that a disclaimer be developed for tenants to declare that they are aware of the potential consequences on their benefit payments if they 'under occupy'.

7. Conclusions

Choice Based Lettings is complex with the potential for many issues to arise. Members realise that not everyone would be satisfied whatever system was in place.

The new Choice Based Lettings scheme has received a number of positive comments from Members with most saying that it has worked better than they expected it to, there aren't the problems that were perceived to be and most importantly, it benefits local people.

The Committee was pleased to note that Housing Officers are positive about the new system and are dedicated to providing a more efficient service to applicants and tenants.

The Committee has made seven recommendations to improve the process and service received by applicants.

Appendix 1

Stakeholders

Cllr Keith Bowman	Portfolio Holder for Housing
Peter Campbell	Head of Housing
Di Bonsor	Housing Needs Manager
Pam Coogan	Housing Innovation Officer
Angela Smith	Housing Needs Officer
Rob Farnsworth	Housing Needs Officer
Amanda Baddams	Housing Assistant (Choice Based Lettings)
Tenant Participation & Development Group	

15 elected members completed a questionnaire on Choice Based Lettings anonymously.

Appendix 2

North East Derbyshire District Council

Rural Community Lettings Plan

The previous Rural Lettings Plan has been reviewed, and replaced with the Rural Community Lettings Plan.

Background

The previous Rural Lettings Scheme was reviewed to ensure that it met government guidelines, was fair to residents, was easy for applicants to understand, and staff to administer. The review looked at the demand for properties in our rural villages, the availability of homes and the cost of homes to see whether villages needed to be included in the scheme. This review showed that only the villages listed below needed to be included in the new Rural Community Lettings Plan.

The council and Rykneld Homes are working with Parish Councils and other partners to develop a better understanding of the housing needs within the district's rural villages, to facilitate new affordable housing developments, and make best use of existing housing stock. This will help to ensure that our rural communities are sustainable in the long term.

All property types in the following villages are covered by this Rural Community Lettings Plan;

Village	Parish
Ashover	Ashover
Kelstedge	Ashover
Littlemoor	Ashover

Properties located in the settlements previously included in the Rural Lettings Scheme and not covered by this plan, will now be allocated using the approach set out within the Allocation Policy, which is based on banding and waiting time. Applicants should indicate if they wish to select a particular settlement as their 'local connection'. This will enable them to claim additional waiting time for bids made to properties within the area they have selected.

Aims & Objectives of the Rural Community Lettings Plan

This Rural Community Lettings Plan (Rural CLP) has been prepared to help local people who have a strong connection to the villages identified by this plan to access housing within these areas.

The objectives of the Rural Community Lettings Plan are:

- to create and maintain sustainable communities;
- to ensure that the needs of local communities are reflected within the allocation and lettings policy; and
- to give people a better chance of living in areas to which they have a local connection to, where cost and supply of affordable homes are a particular problem.

Plan Operation

The Rural Community Lettings Plan and Choice-Based Lettings

The Rural Community Lettings Plan is a local lettings plan; an agreement between the council and local tenants and residents, which prioritises lettings of all dwelling types in the agreed area to certain households.

The process of determining the allocation of homes has the following stages:

Stages 1 to 4 relate to the CBL process of marketing and bidding

Stage 1: Advertising

On availability, each property will be advertised via the CBL system. The normal bid cycle of one week will be applied, unless otherwise agreed.

Stage 2: Labelling

Within the advert the property will be labelled “rural community lettings plan criteria applies” as the key criteria, with a brief explanation of eligibility & procedures. Any additional home or applicant criteria and preference will then be detailed.

Stage 3: Bidding

Applicants who are on the housing register can bid for the house in the normal ways. To be considered for lets under the Rural CLP, applicants will have to complete a Rural Allocation Form which details residency/local connection. This form can be found on Rykneld Homes’ website (www.rykneld.org.uk), or by contacting the Choice Move Team on 01246 217650.

Stage 4: Short listing

Following the end of the advert cycle, a short-list will be generated, which will list applicants based on allocated banding and waiting time.

The following stages, 5 to 7, relate to sorting the bids and determining the offer/nomination

Stage 5: Defining the eligibility criteria for local connection

Applicants must have a strong local connection to be considered under this scheme. In line with the Local Plan Rural Exception Sites Policy this is defined as follows.

1. The applicant lives in the parish and has lived there for at least 5 out of the previous 10 years, and is in housing need. For example, the applicant is living in overcrowded or otherwise unsatisfactory conditions, or is forming a new household.

2. The applicant is related to a resident of the parish. This must be a close family member, i.e. father, mother, child, son, daughter, who has lived there for 5 out of the last 10 years.

3. The applicant, although not living in the parish, has lived there previously for a continuous period of more than 10 out of the past 20 years.

4. The applicant has an essential need to live in the parish to either give or receive long term care to or from someone who has been resident in the parish for more than 5 out of the previous 10 years. They must, however, be the main provider of the support and must support such a claim by producing documentation such as carers' allowance. The applicant must be the named person either giving or receiving care.

5. The applicant has an essential need to live close to their work in the parish. This is intended to mean the need to live close to one's work for management reasons. It would not be justified where a person can carry out his or her work whilst living in an existing property in a nearby settlement. Confirmation of full-time employment must be given by the employer and provided by the applicant to support their application.

For full details of the above criteria, see page 16 of Affordable Housing SPD.

Stage 6: Determining the allocation:

A shortlist is produced in accordance with the allocations policy. If, following the initial sorts above there is more than one applicable applicant(s) with rural local connection, applicants will be placed in order based on their waiting time, with the applicant with the longest waiting time being offered the property (as per section 9 of the general policy).

If no applicant meets the Rural CLP criteria, the property will be let in accordance with the usual district wide allocations and letting policy.

Allocation of adapted properties in the Rural CLP area

When properties are advertised, any installed adaptations will be listed on the advert. Where a property has been adapted, applicants with a local

connection, as set out in the Rural CLP criteria (stage 5), will be shortlisted based on whether they need that adaptation. If none of the applicants with a local connection require the adaptation, it will be opened up to applicants without a local connection and who have bid for the property. If there is no suitable applicant requiring the adaptation, the property will be then offered under the Rural CLP criteria and the adaptation removed if appropriate.

Allocation of properties in a Rural Exception Site

Rural Exception Sites have a specific allocations scheme agreed under planning conditions. Properties in these schemes will continue to be allocated in accordance with these conditions. This is set out in the council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning document.

Mechanism for reviewing the Rural Community Lettings Plan

The Rural Communities Lettings Plan will be reviewed every 2 years, based on the first letting cycle in October of each year. Using a matrix, agreed by Strategic Liaison and Monitoring Group, the review will use statistics to assess and review the settlements covered by the plan.

Committee:	Executive	Agenda Item No.:	8.
Date:	14 th January 2013	Status	Open
Category	Key Decision		
Subject:	Tenancy Strategy		
Report by:	Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager		
Other Officers Involved	Head of Housing Housing Needs Manager		
Director	Director of Development		
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor A. Tomlinson, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration Councillor K. Bowman, Portfolio Holder for Housing Management		

RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS

REGENERATION – Developing healthy, prosperous and sustainable communities
SOCIAL INCLUSION – Promoting fairness, equality and lifelong learning.

The Tenancy Strategy has been written to support the District's neighbourhoods to be sustainable, and to provide residents with settled and stable homes. In addition to basic housing requirements, other factors that help to improve well-being include the neighbourhood and security of tenure, and the Strategy therefore supports the Council's corporate aim of contributing towards the improving health of the District. The policy also sets out the factors which the Council expects its registered provider partners to have regard when formulating their own Tenancy Policies. By doing this, the Council hopes to encourage a uniform approach across the District and ensure that services are delivered in a fair and equitable way, whilst maximising access to affordable housing.

TARGETS

Corporate target SI 04 – Produce Tenancy Strategy in line with new statutory requirements.

VALUE FOR MONEY

The production of a Tenancy Strategy is a statutory requirement under the Localism Act 2011. Through the Strategy, the Council hopes to influence the way that our registered provider partners let their homes, by informing their policies and ensuring that affordable housing meets the needs of our communities.

THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new duty on local housing authorities to produce and publish a Tenancy Strategy for their area. The Act requires that a strategy must be adopted within a year of the relevant sections of the Act coming into force, making the statutory deadline for Tenancy Strategies *Tuesday 15th January 2013*. The development of the Tenancy Strategy is a target within Bolsover's corporate plan.
- 1.2 There is no prescription on content or format, but Tenancy Strategies must set out the matters to which Registered Providers are to have regard when formulating their own Tenancy Policies. Tenancy Strategies will therefore influence the way that all social housing in an area is allocated and let, not just that belonging to the local council.
- 1.3 The Localism Act stipulates that local authorities must consult with Registered Providers on the development of their tenancy strategy. Following approval by SAMT and Cabinet, the draft strategy was circulated to Registered Providers with stock in Bolsover District, and the draft was presented to partners at the bi-annual Registered Provider Forum, held on the 12th November. No comments were received.
- 1.4 The draft strategy has been approved by managers within Housing Services, who were given the opportunity to comment on and contribute to the draft document.
- 1.5 The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, and the Portfolio Holder for Housing Management were briefed on the draft strategy, and Cabinet members were given the opportunity to contribute to the draft prior to it being circulated to Registered Providers for consultation. The draft strategy was also presented to the Safe and Inclusive Scrutiny Committee on the 27th November.

ISSUES/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 2.1 Registered providers (RPs) were required to have their Tenancy Policies in place by April 2012. As Bolsover did not have a Tenancy Strategy at this time, RPs did not have to ensure that their policy reflected the Council's strategy. RPs will have already made decisions about the approach that they will take in relation to fixed term tenancies and how they will let their homes, and many are tied into commitments with the Homes and Communities Agency, meaning that they will be expected to offer fixed term tenancies.
- 2.2 There is therefore some uncertainty about how much influence Tenancy Strategies will have on the way that RP partners allocate and

let their homes. Many local authorities are therefore using their strategies to set out the guidelines that they expect their RP partners to have regard to when offering fixed term tenancies themselves, even though they do not support them politically.

- 2.3 The Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager post was vacant for a period of 6 months, and as such little progress was made in the development of the Council's Tenancy Strategy prior to the replacement officer starting in post at the beginning of October. The timescale for producing the Council's Tenancy Strategy has therefore been very tight, and there is little flexibility if the statutory deadline is to be met. To meet the deadline, the draft Tenancy Strategy must gain Executive approval at January's Executive meeting.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial: There are no financial costs anticipated in relation to the Tenancy Strategy.

Legal: Bolsover District Council's Tenancy Strategy does not change the existing position of the Council in terms of its policies and it does not propose a shift in policy position. As such there are considered to be no legal implications.

Human Resources: The Strategy will need to be monitored and reviewed on an ongoing basis. Anticipated work demands in relation to this can be met by existing staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS that

- 1. Executive approve the attached draft Tenancy Strategy.**
- 2. It be noted that the Chairman of the Council has agreed that the call-in procedure as set out in 4.5.16 of the Council's Constitution shall not apply.**

REASON FOR DECISION TO BE GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION

The Localism Act 2011 introduced a new duty on local housing authorities to produce and publish a Tenancy Strategy for their area. The Act requires that a strategy must be adopted within a year of the relevant sections of the Act coming into force, making the statutory deadline for Tenancy Strategies *Tuesday 15th January 2013*. The development of the Tenancy Strategy is a target within Bolsover's corporate plan.

ATTACHMENTS: **Y**
FILE REFERENCE:
SOURCE DOCUMENT:

DRAFT

Tenancy Strategy
**(Bolsover District Council's Strategic
Tenancy Policy)**

January 2013

DRAFT



CONTROL SHEET FOR TENANCY STRATEGY

Policy Details	Comments / Confirmation (To be updated as the document progresses)
Policy title	Tenancy Strategy
Current status – i.e. first draft, version 2 or final version	First draft
Policy author	Sarah Clow
Location of policy – i.e. L-drive, shared drive	L drive
Member route for approval	
Cabinet Member (if applicable)	Cllr Alan Tomlinson
Equality Impact Assessment approval date	
Partnership involvement (if applicable)	North East Derbyshire DC and Chesterfield BC
Final policy approval route i.e. Executive/ Council /Planning Committee	Executive
Date policy approved	
Date policy due for review (maximum three years)	January 2018
Date policy forwarded to Strategy and Performance (to include on Intranet and Internet if applicable to the public)	

1. Introduction

The Localism Act 2011 places a new duty on local housing authorities to prepare and publish a tenancy strategy for their area. The strategy must set out the matters to which Registered Providers (RPs) of social housing are to have regard in formulating their own tenancy policies. These tenancy policies will explain how Registered Providers intend to implement the range of new flexibilities introduced through the recent social housing reforms.

2. Scope

Registered Providers of social housing should have due regard to the framework provided by this strategy when formulating their own tenancy policies. This is necessary to ensure that we provide the best housing options and outcomes for the residents of Bolsover.

3. Principles

Although the production of a tenancy strategy is a legal requirement placed on local housing authorities by the Localism Act, the tenancy strategy will support the delivery of several of the Council's corporate priorities:

- ensure all our services are provided in a fair and equitable manner;
- endeavour to secure adequate affordable housing; and
- develop flourishing rural communities.

This strategy is being developed through consultation with Registered Providers and partner local authorities. This has included a scoping questionnaire to all RPs, face to face consultation at the bi-annual sub-regional Registered Provider Forum, and through circulation of the strategy for comment.

4. Statement

4.1 Objective

The overall objective of this tenancy strategy is to ensure that our Registered Provider (RP) partners work with us to deliver neighbourhoods that are sustainable and provide our residents with settled and stable homes.

4.2 Local Context

According to official statistics there were 6,293 homes within the social housing stock of Bolsover, with 18 per cent of these being owned and managed by Registered Provider partners.

	Number
Total dwellings (April 2012) Source: BDC records	34,493
Local Authority social housing stock (April 2011) Source: BDC records	5339
Register Provider Social Housing stock (April 2011) Source: Department for Communities and Local Government	949

A snapshot of the housing register taken on the 15th October 2012 showed that there were 2176 applicants registered for social housing in Bolsover. During the period 2010/11 544 local authority dwellings were let. Social housing is not evenly spread across the district area, with the housing stock in some parts of the district containing a proportion of social housing which is amongst the highest levels in England.

	Number
Number of applicants on the housing register (Oct 2012) Source: BDC records	2176
Number of local authority lets (2010/11) Source: BDC records	544

Bolsover District Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment was published in September 2007, and was reviewed in 2012 by David Couttie Associates. The assessment found there to be a substantial need for affordable homes in Bolsover. This need arises not so much as a result of the level of house prices in the district, which are generally much lower than in the region and nationally, but as a result of low income levels. However, lettings information suggests that the existing social stock is not under pressure. The vast majority of the waiting list consists of households who are not in priority need, nor within a reasonable preference category.

Average House Prices by Type, Q1 2012

	Bolsover District	East Midlands	England & Wales
Detached	£165,209	£222,618	£317,794
Semi-detached	£92,455	£133,373	£199,016
Terraced	£66,434	£114,910	£188,906
Flat / Maisonette	£0	£101,645	£222,123
Overall	£106,510	£157,891	£226,887

Source: Land Registry Property Price Report, Q1 2012

The following table shows the difference in rental costs between the different forms of tenure. The difference between social rents and

affordable and private rents increases with the size of the property, so that a three bedroom house let at a market rent is 53 per cent more than one let at a social rent, and a three bedroom affordable rent is 22 per cent more.

Monthly Rental Prices in Bolsover District

	Average LA Rent	Average RP Rent	Average Private Rent	Affordable Rent (80%)	Average LHA Rate (Apr 2012)
1-bed	£269.00	£273.00	£359.00	£288.00	£337.50
2-bed	£295.00	£329.00	£421.00	£337.00	£410.00
3-bed	£315.00	£343.00	£482.00	£386.00	£463.34

Source: SHMA & Economic Viability Study Review 2012, DCA

4.3 Social Housing Reforms and Guidance for Registered Providers

The Government has introduced a number of reforms to allocations and social housing tenure that offer new flexibilities to social landlords. The following sections provide guidance to Registered Providers with stock within Bolsover District, and set out the Council's position in relation to the reforms.

Affordable Rent

Since April 2012 local authorities and RPs have been able to let properties on an affordable rent basis. Affordable Rent was introduced as the model for financing new social homes in the Homes and Community Agency's Affordable Homes Programme 2011-2015. Affordable Rents can be set at up to 80 per cent of market rates and are included in the revised PPS3 definition of affordable housing. All new grant-funded homes should be let at an Affordable Rent, and RPs are also able to convert a proportion of their existing stock from social to affordable rent when they are re-let. The additional income generated by affordable rent is to be used for reinvestment in new affordable housing. Existing tenants who remain in their existing homes will not be affected by affordable rents unless they transfer to another property which is let at an affordable rent.

Affordability must be considered when setting affordable rents and RPs should be mindful of the low income levels within Bolsover District. For example, 80 per cent of market rent in the more expensive parts of the district, such as Bolsover, could make affordable rents too expensive for those on a low income. Evidence shows that the larger the property, the wider the gap between social and private rents, and this should also be borne in mind when setting the rent level. Reference should always be made to income levels within the District.

Conversions of social rented properties to affordable rent by RPs should be carried out with care, taking into account the above points and also the tenure mix within the area concerned.

Flexible Tenancies

Under the revised Tenancy Standard, Registered Providers have the option of offering tenancies for a fixed period of time instead of the traditional lifetime tenancies. These new fixed term tenancies are known as flexible tenancies. Registered Providers will be able to determine the length of tenancy that they offer to new tenants, however the Government has specified that the minimum period of a fixed term tenancy should be at least five years, except in exceptional circumstances. Details of a Registered Provider's position in relation to fixed term tenancies must be set out in their tenancy policy. Existing tenants will not be affected by this change, unless they move to a property let on a flexible tenancy.

The aim of this reform is to ensure that those in greatest housing need can access social housing, and that if a tenant's circumstances change and they become able to access private housing, they can move on and free up a social rented property for others.

The Council will not be using fixed term tenancies for their own housing stock due to concerns that the sustainability of communities will be adversely affected, and that tenants will not have the opportunity of a settled and secure home.

If Registered Providers decide to use fixed term tenancies they should have regard to the following points.

- Tenancies of five years should be the minimum length of a fixed term. Shorter tenancies must be restricted to exceptional circumstances only.
- Vulnerable people in need of settled or stable accommodation, where their situation is unlikely to change, should be granted life time tenancies. As a minimum this would include households containing someone over 60 years of age, or people with a long-term medical or welfare need for secure accommodation, adapted or specialist.
- In order to provide a settled and stable home it is expected that households with dependent children will be granted fixed term tenancies which are longer than the minimum 5 year period and which last at least until the youngest child leaves full time education. This includes households which contain children over the age of 16 who remain in full time education.
- Fixed term tenancies should not generally be used to control rent arrears or anti-social behaviour; the normal possession grounds should be used to tackle these issues.

Review and Renewal of Fixed Term Tenancies

Any Registered Provider introducing fixed term tenancies must have published review criteria and procedure. Registered Providers are asked to have regard to the following points.

- When carrying out a tenancy review there should be a presumption of renewal of the tenancy on terms at least equivalent to that which are currently held, unless the specified reasons for not granting another tenancy are met. RPs should show good reason for not renewing a fixed term tenancy, and these reasons should be clearly explained to the tenant.
- At least six months notice must be given to the tenant before the tenancy is due to end. The tenant should be advised of their right to request a review of the proposal and of the time within which this request needs to be made.
- During the review, consideration should be given to the availability of other suitable and affordable housing in the area.
- During the review, consideration should be given to the employment of the tenant or members of the household, especially if they are employed locally. If a member of the household is responsible for the care of a family member, this should also be borne in mind.
- Where a new tenancy is not being offered, advice and assistance should be given to the tenant at the earliest opportunity to help them to find suitable alternative accommodation. This includes the landlord assisting the tenant to explore their housing options, including home ownership, private rented housing, or a more suitable social rented home. The local authority should be notified as soon as possible if homelessness could potentially arise, but it is expected that the Registered Provider will take all steps necessary to avoid this outcome.

Bolsover District Council recognises that there are certain circumstances in which it would be unreasonable to expect a household to move. The Council therefore expects our Registered Provider partners to allow a tenancy to continue if any of the following apply, irrespective of whether this was the case when the previous tenancy was issued.

- The tenant or a member of their household is suffering from a terminal illness.

- The tenant or a member of their household has a disability, verified by occupational therapy or community care assessments.
- The tenant has children attending a local school or college.
- The tenant is a foster carer and the tenancy needs to continue to enable them to fulfil this role.
- The tenant is a care leaver and is still receiving support from social care, or a form of tenancy support.
- The tenant is otherwise vulnerable (within the definition of vulnerable as used in homelessness legislation).

Discharge of the homelessness duty through the private rented sector

Where an applicant is homeless through no fault of their own, eligible for assistance and in priority need, local housing authorities have a legal duty to secure suitable accommodation for the applicant. This is known as the main homelessness duty. The Localism Act amends previous rules by allowing local authorities to discharge its homelessness duty by making an offer of accommodation in the private rented sector without the applicant's agreement; the applicant must accept this if it is an offer of suitable accommodation. Previously a household could refuse to accept a tenancy in the private rented sector and the local authority would continue to have a duty to re-house.

The government requires that local authorities ensure that properties meet minimum standards and are suitable for the applicant, as set out in the *Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) (England) Order 2012*. The Order covers aspects of suitability including the physical condition of the property, health and safety matters, landlord behaviour, and management. Local authorities must also ensure that the location of the property is suitable in terms of its distance from the applicant's previous home, employment, education and caring responsibilities, established links with service providers, and access to amenities. To provide stability the tenancy should be for a minimum of 12 months.

Bolsover District Council welcomes the flexibility to make better use of good quality private rented sector accommodation, and will consider this new power on a case by case basis, using only when appropriate for the applicant. The Council has a history of successfully using private rented accommodation to prevent homelessness and re-house homeless households, and through the Landlord Accreditation Scheme it has good relationships with private sector landlords within the district. We will continue to work with landlords in the private rented sector to

provide accommodation for applicants who are homeless, encouraging landlords to become accredited, ensuring properties are suitable, and rent payments are affordable.

Housing Register and Allocations

The Localism Act introduced new freedoms for local authorities to determine how they allocate social housing. Local authorities can now set their own priorities for allocations taking into account local needs and objectives, whilst continuing to give priority to those households in the reasonable preference categories.

When reviewing its allocations and lettings policy, Bolsover District Council will consider the new freedoms provided by the Act and their suitability for meeting the housing needs of the district's residents.

Succession

Changes have been made to the succession rights on new tenancies. Under the legislation only the spouse or civil partner who occupies the property as their only or principal home at the time of the tenant's death can automatically succeed to the tenancy, and the tenancy can only be passed on once. Local authorities and Registered Providers are able to include additional contractual succession rights within their tenancy terms if they wish to do so.

All successions to a fixed term tenancy will only be for the remainder of the life of that tenancy, and will be subject to a full review when the end of the tenancy is due.

4.4 Monitoring and Reviewing the Tenancy Strategy

Monitoring the Tenancy Strategy

We will consider the content of the Tenancy Strategy and the effect on tenants in the district by collecting data on:

- the number of fixed term tenancies issued, their duration and type of household;
- the number of affordable rent properties in the district, and the level of rent charged;
- homelessness offers in the private rented sector;
- housing market changes and affordability;
- rent levels across different tenures; and
- the impact of welfare reforms.

Reviewing of the Tenancy Strategy

The Tenancy Strategy will be reviewed at least every five years in line with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011. The Strategy may be reviewed more frequently than this as a result of monitoring and further consultation.

4.5 Registered Provider Tenancy Policies

The tenancy policies produced by Registered Providers will be found on their website, or on application.

Please contact Strategic Housing at Bolsover District Council for contact details of Registered Providers with stock in the district.

5. Responsibility for Implementation

Lead officer	Sarah Clow - Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager Email: sarah.clow@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk Tel: 01246 242581
Others with responsibility	Peter Campbell - Head of Housing Diane Bonsor - Housing Needs Manager Deborah Whallett - Housing Enforcement Manager Registered Provider partners

Committee:	Executive	Agenda Item No.:	10.
Date:	14 th January 2013	Status	Open
Category	3. Part of the Budget and Policy Framework		
Subject:	Arrears – Irrecoverable Items over £1000		
Report by:	Billing and Recovery Manager		
Other Officers Involved			
Director	Director of Corporate Resources		
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor E. Watts, Leader of the Council		

RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS

STRATEGIC ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – Continually improving our organisation.

To maintain sound Financial Management and continue to seek efficiency savings. As part of sound financial management it is necessary to recognise and deal with money owed where no further effective steps can be taken for recovery. This supports the provision of efficient Council services as it enables a focus to be maintained on those accounts which are collectable.

TARGETS

Does not apply to this report.

VALUE FOR MONEY

Ensuring that the limited resources are concentrated on recovery of debt that is collectable. Under current Council guidance, it has been considered not cost-effective to spend more money on outside agencies to take further action.

THE REPORT

IRRECOVERABLE ITEMS

Executive is requested to approve the write off of the under-mentioned irrecoverable items including costs amounting to £23,410.84 as itemised on the attached schedules.

Bankruptcy/ Liquidation		
No of Accounts	Type of Account	
1	Council Tax	£1,431.47
5	Business Rates	£8,581.07
2	Sundry Debtors	£5,177.36
	Total	£15,189.90

No Trace		
No of Accounts	Type of Account	
1	Council Tax	£1,715.85
1	Business Rates	£4,303.35
2	Sundry Debtors	£2,201.74
	Total	£8,220.94

Where debtors leave the properties without forwarding addresses extensive efforts are made to trace them. In addition to departmental checks, statutory undertakers and other agencies are contacted, enquiries are made of neighbours and family or employers where known. Where it is known that a person has moved to another area contact is made with the relevant local authority to alert them and request reciprocal information.

ISSUES/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Writing off the outstanding debts in respect of persons who are bankrupt or companies in liquidation or unable to trace.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The costs will be met from a provision for doubtful debts which has been agreed as part of the Council's budget.

Legal: None

Human Resources: None

RECOMMENDATION

That approval is given to write off the irrecoverable items including costs amounting to £23,410.84 with the proviso that should any of the debts become collectable the amounts be re-debited.

**REASON FOR DECISION TO BE GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE
CONSTITUTION**

In order that outstanding debts can be written off.

ATTACHMENTS: **Y**

SOURCE DOCUMENT: Official Receiver/ Internal records.

COUNCIL TAX: AMOUNTS FOR WRITE OFF - BANKRUPTCY

	<u>Account Reference</u>	<u>Lead Liabie Name</u>	<u>Address</u>		<u>Account Balance</u>	<u>Liabie From</u>	<u>Liabie To</u>	<u>Bill Balance</u>
1	901470911	FREEMAN,MRS ASHLEY	5 BELFMOOR CLOSE WHITWELL	£	1,431.47	01/04/2012 30/10/2011	01/04/2013 01/04/2012	£1,052.74 £ 378.73

£ 1,431.47

BUSINESS RATES: AMOUNTS FOR WRITE OFF: BANKRUPTCY/ LIQUIDATION

<u>Account Reference</u>	<u>Lead Liabile Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Account Balance</u>	<u>Liabile From</u>	<u>Liabile To</u>	<u>Bill Balance</u>
1 800152683	S & H RECOVERY SERVICE	MORGANS GARAGE NEWBOUNDMILL LANE PLEASLEY	£ 108.12	01/04/2012	14/08/2012	£ 108.12
2 800152709	S & H RECOVERY SERVICE	THE GARAGE ROTHERHAM ROAD NEW HOUGHTON	£ 1,068.66	01/04/2012	14/08/2012	£ 1,068.66
3 800158621	BANNER MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS	5 MIDLAND WAY BARLBOROUGH	£ 3,169.73	04/06/2010	20/07/2010	£ 3,169.73
4 800166252	MRS JOANNE FLETCHER	CASTLE ARMS STATION ROAD BOLSOVER	£ 1,916.50	01/04/2011 03/02/2011	17/07/2011 01/04/2011	£ 1,259.12 £ 657.38
5 800166593	LEON MCBAIN	UNIT 13 PIT HILL LANGWITH	£ 2,318.06	01/04/2010 01/04/2009	01/04/2011 01/04/2010	£ 392.81 £ 1,925.25
			<u>£ 8,581.07</u>			

PROPOSED WRITE OFF OF SUNDRY DEBTORS - BANKRUPTCY /LIQUIDATION

<u>ACCOUNT NUMBER</u>	<u>INVOICE NUMBER</u>	<u>INVOICE DATE</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u> £	<u>DEBTOR</u>	<u>REASON FOR INVOICE</u>	<u>WRITE-OFF AMOUNT</u>	<u>REASON FOR WRITE-OFF</u>
28008	30165601 30170816	10.11.2011 07.02.12	1039.97 297.96	A FREEMAN 5 BELFMOOR CLOSE WHITWELL	OVER ALLOWED HOUSING BENEFIT	1,014.16 297.96	CLAIMANT DECLARED BANKRUPT ON 05.07.12 CASE NO 405/2012
15264	81716	17.02.11	3865.24	CAVAN PROPERTIES LTD 4 LAWRENCE PARK UNDERWOOD	GROUP REPAIR WORKS AT 107 VERNEY STREET NEW HOUGHTON	3,865.24	COMPANY WENT INTO LIQUIDATION ON 02.11.12
						<u>£ 5,177.36</u>	

COUNCIL TAX: AMOUNTS FOR WRITE OFF - NO TRACE

<u>Account Reference</u>	<u>Lead Liable Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Account Balance</u>	<u>Liabile From</u>	<u>Liabile To</u>	<u>Bill Balance</u>
1 901396066	SZMAJLO,MISS DOROTA	31 CHESTNUT DRIVE SHIREBROOK	£ 1,715.85	01/04/2012 01/04/2011 13/08/2010	15/04/2012 01/04/2012 01/04/2011	£ 42.89 £1,094.96 £ 578.00
			<u>£ 1,715.85</u>			

BUSINESS RATES: AMOUNTS FOR WRITE OFF: NO TRACE

<u>Account Reference</u>	<u>Lead Liable Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Account Balance</u>	<u>Liabile From</u>	<u>Liabile To</u>	<u>Bill Balance</u>
1 800160581	MR KARL W NORRIS	7 EREWASH ROAD BROOKHILL INDUSTRIAL EST PINXTON	£4,303.35	01/04/2011 16/03/2011	01/03/2012 01/04/2011	£4,062.33 £ 241.02
			<u>£4,303.35</u>			

PROPOSED WRITE OFF OF SUNDRY-DEBTORS OVER £1000.00 - NO TRACE

<u>ACCOUNT I NO.</u>	<u>INVOICE NO.</u>	<u>INVOICE DATE</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>DEBTOR</u>	<u>REASON FOR INVOICE</u>	<u>WRITE OFF AMOUNT</u>	<u>REASON FOR WRITE OFF</u>
<u>63432</u>	3013903 5	21.12.10	156.00	J DRYSDALE	OVER ALLOWED	57.00	
	3013904 8	21.12.10	520.00	C/O 23 SPRINGFIELD AVENUE	HOUSING BENEFIT	520.00	CASE RETURNED FROM COLLECTING AGENT - NO TRACE OF DEBTOR
	3014627 7	09.04.11	430.86	SHIREBROOK		430.86	ALL AVENUES TRIED
57480	3012058 1	26.05.10	544.18	J A MARTIN	OVER ALLOWED	544.18	CASE RETURNED FROM COLLECTING AGENT - NO TRACE OF DEBTOR
		29.05.10	3.92	13 KIRKOSWALD ROAD	HOUSING BENEFIT	3.92	ALL AVENUES TRIED
		02.11.10	645.78	MOTHERWELL SCOTLAND		645.78	
						<u>£2,201.74</u>	

Committee:	Executive	Agenda Item No.:	5.
Date:	14 th January 2013	Status	Open
Category	Part of the Budget and Policy Framework		
Subject:	Junction Arts Community Arts Programme – 2nd Stage Payment 2012/3, and 2013/14 proposed programme plan		
Report by:	Arts Development Officer		
Other Officers Involved	Assistant Director Leisure		
Director	Director of Health & Wellbeing		
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor A. M. Syrett, Portfolio Holder for Social Inclusion		

RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS

REGENERATION – Developing healthy, prosperous and sustainable communities

Contribute to bringing awareness to issues regarding health within the District.

Help develop flourishing rural communities.

Help develop vibrant projects through creative work.

SOCIAL INCLUSION – Promoting fairness, equality and lifelong learning

Ensure quality in the delivery of services.

Promote the development of skill and learning in the community.

ENVIRONMENT – Promoting and enhancing a clean and sustainable environment

Protect, enhance and improve the natural environment in a sustainable way through the development of the arts

Bring awareness to the environment through creativity

CUSTOMER FOCUSED SERVICES

Strengthen community consultation.

Design and deliver services to meet the needs of participants.

Improve quality of services delivered.

TARGETS

The work of Junction Arts directly impacts on the Corporate Plan target relating to increasing the number of annual recorded attendances at participatory arts programmes each year.

VALUE FOR MONEY

The Council's core funding of £16,000 helps to lever in £128,000 which represents a ratio 1 to 7.

THE REPORT

The Council has approved annual core funding offered in two stage payments. Fifty percent (50%) of the funding released in April each financial year on receipt of a proper invoice and the balance released in December or upon submission of the Junction Arts Annual Report, subject to a satisfactory activity report being received.

(Minute No. 826/03 refers). The 2nd stage payment is now due for the current financial year and the report from Junction Arts for the period April to November 2012 is attached at Appendix 1, page 79.

The target set for 20012/13 was to work in 70% of the parishes throughout all the projects (some may be the same parish dependent on the project) with 52 sessions to take place. Achieved between April 2011 and end October 2011 is that Junction Arts has worked in 68% of the Parishes. Currently Junction Arts projects are:-

Planned:

Bright Winter Nights.
Combine-Farming Heritage;
Create, Creative Rural Workshops;
Drawing the Way;
Draw your own Dinner;
Old School;
Strands;
Strategic Organisational Development.
Traces;
Whispering Gallery;
Custodians;
Triple Echo;
Beneath the Surface;
The Listening,
Cave to Castle;
Make it, Mend It;
First Light;
Youth Film Project.

Summary of Main Achievements and Successes

Junction Arts have had a very successful year of delivery so far with an increase of projects delivered within Bolsover District. Throughout 2012/13 they have been successful in building and maintaining new strategic delivery partnerships and responding to requests from organisations within the District to deliver projects addressing specific community needs. They have developed these new partnerships and local projects whilst also ensuring the delivery of our agreed programme plan.

The main achievements and successes are:

- Limestone Journeys: They have delivered 11 projects in year 2 with communities in Bolsover District, highlights include:
 - Beneath the Surface: Award-winning filmmaker Ian Nesbit was commissioned to make a documentary film focusing on the ex-mining community surrounding the former Creswell Colliery and the Creswell Colliery Band. The film was called 'Underground Music' and was launched at Creswell Old Miners Welfare on the 28th November. The launch included a performance by the band.
 - The Listening: As part of this project they set up the 'Whitwell Community Folk Choir'. The choir included 20 participants with ages ranging from 11 to 70. They commissioned the Derbyshire based BBC Young Folk Musician of the Year runner up (2011) David Gibb to work with the choir to write a new song entitled "A Walk Through Time". The choir performed this song at the Festival of the Outdoors at Hardwick Hall on the 28th October.
 - Triple Echo: Artist Graeme Mitcheson was commissioned to produce a sculpture at Hardwick Hall. Graeme carved a rare block of Magnesian Limestone (Mansfield White) from a now closed local quarry to produce the site-specific stone carving. The sculpture was unveiled at the Festival of the Outdoors on October 28th.
- Response: They have delivered additional projects through the 'Response' section of their programme. These include:
 - 'Youth Film project' – They have continued the partnership with Raising Aspirations working with disadvantaged young people from Bolsover, New Houghton, Shirebrook, Pinxton and South Normanton. The final part of this project is to make a short film as an evaluation of the Raising Aspirations programme.
 - Stubbin Wood Lantern Making – Over 11 weeks they worked with a group of sixth-formers with learning disabilities to design and develop individual lanterns to take to the Bright Winter Nights Festival in Bolsover.
 - They are currently involved in talks with Clowne Community Care Farm and the Just Good Friends project (an organisation that works with adults with learning difficulties in Whitwell, Bolsover and Pinxton) about potential projects and partnership

working.

- Rural Living Programme: They have delivered one-day art workshops as part of the Rural Living Programme at local celebrations/events. These include Langwith Community Show, Hardwick Hall Food & Drink Fair and the Olympic Torch Relay event at Bolsover Castle
- Bright Winter Nights: As part of this years festival they re-energised the Bolsover Lantern Parade by re-convening the Bolsover Christmas Festival Committee with members of the community and OBTC. A day of events took place on Saturday 1st December with a Christmas market, street entertainment, art exhibition and fairground rides etc taking place between 12:00 and 4pm in Bolsover town centre. The parade itself started from Bolsover Castle at 5:00pm and included a 15-piece samba band, a fire juggler and a fire sculpture at the castle. This year they went back on to the streets and well over a thousand people took part in the parade with hundreds more watching at the side of the streets. The parade finished at the Cenotaph with Whitwell Brass Band providing the music for a carol service.
- Old School: The Old School project was exhibited at Sherwood Lodge and Shirebrook Academy and Stubbin Wood School
- Successful delivery of the remainder of the main programme of activity (individual profiles attached):
 - Combine
 - Rural Creative Workshops
 - Youth Reach Media Project

New or emerging areas of work or funding opportunities

Throughout the year Junction Arts has responded to requests from organisations to deliver projects that support their strategic delivery such as Raising Aspirations, Action for Children, Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. These projects fall within the Response Programme.

Arts Council (ACE) - Creative People & Places Fund

The Creative People and Places fund will focus ACE investment in parts of the country where people's involvement in the arts is significantly below the national average, with the aim of increasing the likelihood of participation.

Junction Arts is one of six core consortium members bidding into the fund. If this bid is successful it will bring a significant arts and festivals investment into Bolsover District. Since local authorities cannot apply themselves, the role of Junction Arts in this consortium is pivotal as an ACE National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) considering the criteria must include and NPO within any consortium.

The bid is called '**First Art**' - Art thriving where it started

First Art is a 10-year vision to change the face of arts engagement across the former north Nottinghamshire and north Derbyshire coalfield area.

Working across Ashfield, Mansfield, Bolsover and North East Derbyshire, First Art will create art hubs and networks that link together people and places with different identities but a common bond, the landscape. First Art will value and build on the talent and heritage that already exists and give local communities the trust, skills and means to make their own artistic decisions. The consortium vision is to bring about a step change in arts involvement that lasts because communities are inspired, engaged and empowered.

The amount that the consortium is bidding for is **£2,190,484** over 3 years.

Partnerships

Junction Arts continues to be actively involved in the Bolsover Cultural and Tourism Forum and they are also members of the Bolsover Festival Marketing sub-committee. They are also members of the Arts Derbyshire Communications Group and the Arts Derbyshire Year of Culture 2015 Planning Group.

See Appendix 2 for detailed Programme for 2012/13, pages 80 and 81.

The Council's core funding helps to lever £128,000 of investment in Community Arts provision. This figure does not include the considerable amount of volunteer time that Junction Arts, as a charity, utilises throughout the year.

Junction Arts proposed plan for 2013/14 is attached at Appendix 3, 82 and 83 for your information.

Councillor Ann Syrett is the Council's nominated representative at Junction Arts but has no voting rights or managerial responsibility. The Board is also attended by the Arts Development Officer, Carole Hirst.

ISSUES/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Junction Arts, between April 2012 and end November 2012 undertook 180 sessions working in 68% of Parishes. They had 3644 participants and 9611 audiences during that period.

The Council's funding of £16,000 is offered in two stage payments. Fifty percent (50%) of the funding will be released in April each financial year on receipt of a proper invoice and the balance released in December or upon receipt of and subject to a satisfactory activity report being received. It is for Members to decide whether or not Junction Arts has performed satisfactorily for the 2nd stage payment to be released.

For the £16,000 that Bolsover invests in Junction Arts towards arts provision a total return of £128,000 is levered in funding from various other sources including the Arts Council England and Derbyshire County Council which is a ratio of 7 to 1. Members might consider that sufficient value has been achieved to satisfy our investment which is a small proportion of the total invested in arts provision within Bolsover District.

IMPLICATONS

Financial: Core funding of £16,000 has been allocated to Junction Arts as part of the 2012/13 budget. There are no additional financial implications. £8,000 has been paid earlier in the financial year 2012/13 as per the Service Level Agreement. The balance of £8,000 is scheduled for payment subject to Members of Executive determining whether or not the report received by Junction Arts is satisfactory.

A core budget has **not** yet been agreed for financial year 2013/14.

Legal: The grant is subject to Junction Arts complying with the conditions outlined in the Council's Service Level Agreement. This complies with Section 137A of the Local Government Act which requires the body in receipt of the grant to provide the Authority with a report as to how the money has been spent

Human Resources: The Arts Development Officer attends Junction Arts Board Meetings in a non voting capacity and has ongoing regular contact with Junction Arts staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Members approve the 2nd stage payment for 2012/13 totalling £8,000 to Junction Arts;**
- 2. That Members consider approval of the proposed annual plan for 2013/14 subject to the Council approving on-going core-funding.**

REASON FOR DECISION

To release the 2nd stage payment to Junction Arts.

ATTACHMENTS: **Y**
FILE REFERENCE: Junction Arts File (11.1.1)
Junction Arts Recorded Attendance Statistics
April 2012 to November 2012
SOURCE DOCUMENT: Junction Arts Programme Report
April to December 2012
Junction Arts proposed Plan 2013/14.

JUNCTION ARTS COMMUNITY ARTS PROGRAMME 2012/13
Performance Targets Summary Sheet

MONTH	NUMBER OF SESSIONS DELIVERED	RECORDED ATTENDANCES	PARTICIPANTS	AUDIENCE	ADULTS	JUNIORS (under 18s)	No. OF ACTIVITY HOURS DELIVERED	NO.OF COMMUNITY /VOLUNTARY GROUP	
APRIL	11	166	134	32	62	104	27.5	1	
MAY	25	531	393	138	184	347	62.5	1	
JUNE	30	1267	581	686	666	601	75	1	
JULY	37	950	647	303	347	603	95	1	Web 217
AUGUST	1	261	11	250	136	125	2	1	
SEPTEMBER	12	495	175	320	227	268	32	2	
OCTOBER	28	3096	352	2744	1874	1222	69	3	
NOVEMBER	34	2845	831	2014	1374	1471	83	3	Web 400
DECEMBER	2	3137	540	2596	1407	1711	4	3	
JANUARY									
FEBRUARY									
MARCH									
<u>TOTAL TO DATE</u>	180	9611	3664	9038	6277	6452	405	16	

Summary of Main Achievements and Successes

Junction Arts have had a very successful year of delivery so far with an increase of projects delivered within Bolsover district. Throughout 2012/13 we have been successful in building and maintaining new strategic delivery partnerships and responding to requests from organisations within the district to deliver projects addressing specific community needs. We have developed these new partnerships and local projects whilst also ensuring the delivery of our agreed programme plan.

The main achievements and successes are:

- **Limestone Journeys:** We have delivered 11 projects in year 2 with communities in Bolsover District, highlights include:
 - **Beneath the Surface:** Award-winning filmmaker Ian Nesbit was commissioned to make a documentary film focusing on the ex-mining community surrounding the former Creswell Colliery and the Creswell Colliery Band. The film was called 'Underground Music' and was launched at Creswell Old Miners Welfare on the 28th November. The launch included a performance by the band.
 - **The Listening:** As part of this project we set up the 'Whitwell Community Folk Choir'. The choir included 20 participants with ages ranging from 11 to 70. We commissioned the Derbyshire based BBC Young Folk Musician of the Year runner up (2011) David Gibb to work with the choir to write a new song entitled "A Walk Through Time". The choir performed this song at the Festival of the Outdoors at Hardwick Hall on the 28th October.
 - **Triple Echo:** Artist Graeme Mitcheson was commissioned to produce a sculpture at Hardwick Hall. We worked with pupils from Pilsley Primary and Heath and Holmewood Art Group to come up with ideas for the sculpture. Graeme carved a rare block of Magnesian Limestone (Mansfield White) from a now closed local quarry to produce the site-specific stone carving. The sculpture was unveiled at the Festival of the Outdoors on October 28th.
- **Response:** We have delivered additional projects through the 'Response' section of our programme. These include:
 - 'Youth Film project' – We have continued the partnership with Raising Aspirations working with disadvantaged young people from Bolsover, New Haughton, Shirebrook, Pinxton and South Normanton. The final part of this project is to make a short film as an evaluation of the Raising Aspirations programme.
 - Stubbin Wood Lantern Making – Over 11 weeks we worked with a group of sixth-formers with learning disabilities to design and develop individual lanterns to take to the Bright Winter Nights Festival in Bolsover.
 - We are currently involved in talks with Clowne Community Care Farm and the Just Good Friends project (an organisation that works with adults with learning difficulties in Whitwell, Bolsover and pinxton) about potential projects and partnership working.
- **Rural Living Programme:** We have delivered one-day art workshops as part of the Rural Living Programme at local celebrations/events. These include Langwith Community Show, Hardwick Hall Food & Drink Fair and the Olympic

Torch Relay event at Bolsover Castle

- **Bright Winter Nights:** As part of this years festival we re-energised the Bolsover Lantern Parade by re-convening the Bolsover Christmas Festival Committee with members of the community and OBTC. A day of events took place on Saturday 1st December with a Christmas market, street entertainment, art exhibition and fairground rides etc taking place between 12:00 and 4pm in Bolsover town centre. The parade itself started from Bolsover Castle at 5:00pm and included a 15-piece samba band, a fire juggler and a fire sculpture at the castle. This year we went back on to the streets and well over a thousand people took part in the parade with hundreds more watching at the side of the streets. The parade finished at the Cenotaph with Whitwell Brass Band providing the music for a carol service.
- **Old School:** The Old School project was exhibited at Sherwood Lodge and Shirebrook Academy and Stubbin Wood School
- **Successful delivery of the remainder of our main programme of activity (individual profiles attached):**
 - Combine
 - Rural Creative Workshops
 - Youth Reach Media Project

New or emerging areas of work or funding opportunities

Throughout the year Junction Arts has responded to requests from organisations to deliver projects that support their strategic delivery such as Raising Aspirations, Action for Children, Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. These projects fall within the Response Programme.

Junction Arts is one of six core consortium members bidding into the Arts Council Creative People & Places fund. If this bid is successful it will bring a significant arts and festivals investment into Bolsover district. A decision will be announced in Spring 2013.

Partnerships

Junction Arts continues to be actively involved in the Bolsover Cultural and Tourism Forum and we were also members of the Bolsover Festival Marketing sub-committee. We are also members of the Arts Derbyshire Communications Group and the Arts Derbyshire Year of Culture 2015 Planning Group.

Monitoring Statistics Year to date April- Dec 2012

Participants 3644

Attendance 9611

Sessions 180

Delivery: 88% in the Bolsover District.

Leverage generated by Council contribution £16,000: £128,000 Ratio:(1 & 7):

2013/14 Programme Plan		Year 2013-14																
		Progression	District Connection	Regional Connection	National Connection	International Connection	Participants informal	Participants formal	Exhibition	Performance	Event	Digital activity	DVD production	Publication	Film Screening	Artist residency	Artist commission	Public Art
BRIGHT WINTER NIGHTS	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	
Estimated sessions min																		
Estimated sessions max																		
Estimated minimum participants																		
Estimated maximum participants																		
Estimated audience																		
FARMING 'COMBINE'	x	x	x	x	x		x			x		x	x	x				
Estimated sessions min																		
Estimated sessions max																		
Estimated minimum participants																		
Estimated maximum participants																		
Estimated audience																		
RURAL LIVING	x	x	x	x			x					x						
Estimated sessions min																		
Estimated sessions max																		
Estimated minimum participants																		
Estimated maximum participants																		
Estimated audience																		
LIMESTONE JOURNEYS	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	
Estimated sessions min																		
Estimated sessions max																		
Estimated minimum participants																		
Estimated maximum participants																		
Estimated audience																		
RURAL ROUTES	x		x	x			x	x		x		x						
Estimated sessions min																		
Estimated sessions max																		
Estimated minimum participants																		
Estimated maximum participants																		
Estimated audience																		
TRANSITION (volunteers)	x	x	x	x			x		x									
Estimated sessions min																		
Estimated sessions max																		
Estimated minimum participants																		
Estimated maximum participants																		
Estimated audience																		
RURAL CREATIVE WORKSHOPS	x		x				x		x		x							
Estimated sessions min																		
Estimated sessions max																		
Estimated minimum participants																		
Estimated maximum participants																		
Estimated audience																		

2013/14 Programme Plan		Year 2013-14	Progression	District Connection	Regional Connection	National Connection	International Connection	Participants Informal	Participants formal	Training	Exhibition	Performance	Event	Digital activity	DVD production	Publication	Film Screening	Artist residency	Artist commission	Public Art
OLD SCHOOL	X		X	X				X		X		X								
Estimated sessions min																				
Estimated sessions max																				
Estimated minimum participants																				
Estimated maximum participants																				
Estimated audience																				
PUBLIC ART	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X		X			X	X	X	
Estimated sessions min																				
Estimated sessions max																				
Estimated minimum participants																				
Estimated maximum participants																				
Estimated audience																				
COMMUNITY MEDIA	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X							
Estimated sessions min																				
Estimated sessions max																				
Estimated minimum participants																				
Estimated maximum participants																				
Estimated audience																				
DIGITAL PARTICIPATION	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X				X	X	
Estimated sessions min																				
Estimated sessions max																				
Estimated minimum participants																				
Estimated maximum participants																				
Estimated audience																				
ARTS AND GAMING	X			X			X	X		X										
Estimated sessions min																				
Estimated sessions max																				
Estimated minimum participants																				
Estimated maximum participants																				
Estimated audience																				
RESPONSE																				
Estimated sessions min																				
Estimated sessions max																				
Estimated minimum participants																				
Estimated maximum participants																				
Estimated audience																				

Committee:	Executive	Agenda Item No.:	9.
Date:	14 th January 2013	Status	Open
Subject:	Medium Term Financial Plan Update		
Report by:	Director of Corporate Resources		
Other Officers Involved	Assistant Director – Accountancy and IT. Chief Accountant		
Director	Director of Resources		
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor E. Watts, Leader of the Council.		

RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS

STRATEGIC ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – to continually improve the efficiency and effectiveness of all Council Services by maximising the potential use of Council resources.

TARGETS

All.

VALUE FOR MONEY

This report is intended to ensure that the Council has in place a robust budget in respect of 2013/14 and future years. A robust budget is an essential foundation for securing Value for Money in that it helps ensure that the Council's service plans are in line with its underlying level of financial resources.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Officers have completed the work necessary to prepare a roll forward budget in respect of both next year (2013/14) and the following two financial years. The Council has now received details of the level of government funding that will be available for the two earlier years (although there remain some uncertainties regarding 2014/15). This report in effect brings together the details of the Council's projected income and expenditure to provide Members with an overview of the Council's financial position in respect of 2013/14 and the following two financial years. With regard to the General Fund the report indicates

that some £0.305m of savings will need to be achieved in 2013/14 and a sum of £1.030m to be achieved in 2014/15. On the basis of a series of Government announcements it is clear that the current period of reductions in public expenditure will continue at least until 2018, and Members need to take this ongoing financial pressure into account in their approach to the shortfalls which have been identified in respect of the next three financial years.

- 1.2. The report also provides a summary in respect of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the Capital Programme. These are in effect now locally resourced activities and as such are less directly affected by the annual announcement concerning government funding. Accordingly they are not covered in the same level of detail within this report which updates Members concerning the Government's financial settlement, although full details of these latter two accounts will be included as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan report which will be provided to Members over the next few weeks.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1. This report updates Council concerning the current position with regard to the Council's budget over the current and next two financial years, giving particular emphasis to next financial year (2013/14). The report is written in the light of the details provided in the Government's grant settlement in respect of 2013/14 and 2014/15 which was announced on 19th December 2012. This report is based upon the details given in that settlement in conjunction with the work that has been undertaken in order to develop a roll forward expenditure budget in respect of 2013/14 and future financial years. The work being undertaken on the roll forward budget was reported to Council at its meeting of 12th December 2012.
- 2.2. Given that both draft expenditure budgets and details of the level of resources are now available the Council is in a position to consider the actual – as opposed to the projected - financial shortfall in respect of future years. With regard to agreeing the budget for 2013/14, detailed budgets will be approved by Executive at its meeting on 6th February 2013 and will then be taken forward for consideration by Budget Scrutiny Committee before being considered at the budget setting meeting of Council on the 13th February and the Council Tax setting meeting on 1st March 2013. Given the amount of work that needs to be undertaken prior to agreeing a budget on 1st March it is anticipated that the budget in respect of 2013/14 will initially need to be balanced by way of a "savings to be identified" line within the budget. Officers will be working with the Executive in order to identify the measures that are

necessary in order to offset the reductions in the level of Government grant, and regular reports will be brought back to both Executive and to Council to report on progress in achieving the necessary level of savings.

2.3. The full details of the Government grant settlement are set out in the table below.

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Revenue Support Grant (2015/16 is estimated)	(5,531)	(3,142)	(2,233)	(1,933)
Retained Non Domestic Rates (2015/16 is estimated)	0	(2,090)	(2,167)	(2,247)
Council Tax Support Funding (2014/15 and 2015/16 is estimated)	0	(1,026)	(1,026)	(1,026)
New Homes Bonus – 1 (2011/12)	(125)	(125)	(125)	(125)
New Homes Bonus – 2 (2012/13)	(186)	(186)	(186)	(186)
New Homes Bonus – 3 (2013/14)	0	(170)	(170)	(170)
New Homes Bonus – 4 (2014/15) (Estimated)	0	0	(150)	(150)
New Homes Bonus – 5 (2015/16) (Estimated)	0	0	0	(150)
Transition Grant / Efficiency Grant	(1,930)	(996)	0	0
Council Tax Freeze Grant (2011/12)	(90)	(90)	(90)	0
Homelessness Prevention	(50)	(50)	(50)	(50)
Community Right to Bid and Challenge Grants (2015/16 is estimated)	(13)	(16)	(16)	(16)
Housing Benefit Admin Grants (2014/15 and 2015/16 is estimated)	(623)	(550)	(500)	(450)
Total Government Funding	(8,548)	(8,441)	(6,713)	(6,503)

2.4. In headline terms the 2013/14 Settlement is some £22,000 below the position currently assumed within the Medium Term Financial Plan. This reflects the fact that the Council was assuming a loss of some 5% of general Government grant (£0.277m), whereas in reality the general grant loss was one of 5.4% (£0.299m). The details of the grant as outlined in the above table have been incorporated within the outline budgets provided as Appendix 1 to this report. With regard to 2015/16 while it is clear that further reductions in the level of public expenditure are planned at this stage no departmental spending plans have been released by the Government. Accordingly in the above table we have assumed a further 5% loss in funding which translates into a £0.300m reduction in Revenue Support Grant.

- 2.5. In 2012/13 the Council received an allocation of £1.930m in Transition Grant. In 2013/14 the Council will receive an Efficiency Grant of £0.996m which is £0.934m lower than the Transition Grant received in 2012/13. The reduction between the two grants means that the overall grant loss to the Council increases to a figure of £1.233m (£0.299 plus £0.934m). The overall grant loss could have been higher but a control mechanism in the grant calculations restricted this by providing an efficiency grant to Bolsover in respect of 2013/14. Without the payment of the efficiency grant the grant loss would have amounted to a figure of some £2.229m which illustrates the scale of the transition which is being required of Bolsover as a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review of Autumn 2010. The details of the grant as outlined in the above table have been incorporated within the outline budgets detailed on the table shown in section 3.2 of the report.
- 2.6. The key elements of the settlement are, however, the growing role of Non Domestic Rates and New Homes Bonus within the total level of government support. The figures for 2013/14 shows that RSG is now 37% of government support, Non Domestic Rates is 25% and New Homes Bonus is 6%. On current trends when New Homes Bonus benefits from its full 6 year cycle it is anticipated that it would constitute £0.930m or approximately 14% of the overall government support.
- 2.7. As outlined in the above table the Council will benefit during 2013/14 from the award of some £996,471 of Efficiency Grant. This is in effect the replacement for Transitional Grant and reflects the fact that Bolsover is one of the seven Councils across England most adversely affected by grant reductions which restricts the grant loss to 8.8% of "spending power". The main change between Transition Grant and Efficiency Grant is that the latter is viewed by the Government as having a reward element. It is anticipated that the reward level will become more pronounced in the 2014/15 settlement. The reward is based upon the fact that the Councils in question have adopted a strategic approach to efficiency savings by adopting measures such as shared services, outsourcing, a shared Chief Executive and shared procurement. Bolsover District Council has in effect already complied with all the requirements to receive the grant which demonstrates that it is adopting best practice in the pursuit of efficiency measures to protect services to local residents at a time when Government funding to local authorities is being significantly reduced. Given that this grant is effectively a one off it is recommended that Council uses it in the same fashion as transition grant namely to fund the restructuring costs and efficiency measures that are necessary to bring expenditure into line with the underlying level of resources in the post Autumn 2010 CSR

period. Given that it is currently anticipated that some £2.0m of Transition Grant will be carried forward into 2013/14 the Council currently has a significant level of resources with which to fund measures designed to increase the income base or to reduce its cost base, although it needs to be recognised that the requirement to restructure an organisation is often associated with significant costs.

- 2.8. In terms of the amount of financial support provided by Central Government National Non Domestic rates is becoming more significant than Revenue Support Grant. Council will be aware that the nature of Non Domestic Rates is also changing in that the Government is now offering local authorities an incentive to grow NNDR locally in that they will now be able to keep at least 25% of the growth in NNDR levels against the current baseline figure (although the reward will be split between the two authorities which operate in the two tier County areas). Whilst all local authorities are provided with an incentive in that they will retain a proportion of any in growth in Business Rates there is a safety net which will protect those local authorities which suffer from a reduction in their local Non Domestic Rating Base. There is therefore now a clear direct financial incentive for local authorities to promote economic growth in their area, although local authorities would take the view that they have already been active in promoting such growth in order to protect and enhance local employment levels. For Bolsover there are a number of schemes currently in the pipeline which should enhance the Non Domestic Rate Base over the next two to three years. There is, however, the clear risk that these may be offset by decline in other sectors of the economy. Council should also note that the ability to attract companies into the District may be adversely affected by the close proximity of the Enterprise Zone at Junction 29A. More generally whilst local authorities can facilitate and promote growth it does need to be recognised that there are other factors outside of the influence of local authorities which are arguably of greater significance in promoting economic growth (the national economic position, geographical location, land availability). The localisation of business rates is, however, clearly intended to provide local authorities with an incentive to promote local economic development.
- 2.9. With regard to the New Homes Bonus this is likely to account for approaching £0.9m of annual revenue by the end of the 2016/17 financial year. Every new home built, or empty property brought back into use (offset by demolitions and those properties falling out of use) will provide the local authority with an increased income of £1,000 p.a. for 6 years for a Band A property. This reward – which is funded from

recycling existing revenue grants – is intended to reward those authorities who allow and facilitate additional housing in their areas.

3. Bolsover District Council Budget

- 3.1. The report taken to Council in December 2012 reported that on the basis of ongoing work officers were anticipating that the budget in respect of the current financial year (2012/13) will be balanced with no call on General Fund Balances. Given that the Council commenced the financial year with a shortfall of some £0.925m this represents strong progress. Equally important to the balancing of the 2012/13 position is the fact that the majority of savings achieved in 2012/13 have served to reduce the Council's underlying level of expenditure. If Members had not acted decisively to address the financial position arising out of the CSR during the current financial year then the financial shortfall that the Council faces in respect of 2013/14 would be in excess of £1m rather than the £0.3m outlined below. Given this success it is crucial that Members maintain their support for an ongoing process of budget measures in order to avoid drifting into a position where the Council would have little option other than the introduction of crisis measures which would have an unplanned impact upon our local communities.
- 3.2. Moving onto the position in respect of next year the roll forward budget shows the following position:

	2013/14 £000's	2014/15 £000's	2015/16 £000's
Roll Forward Budget	10,436	10,420	10,398
Resources Available:			
RSG / NNDR	(5,232)	(4,400)	(4,180)
New Homes Bonus	(480)	(631)	(781)
Council Tax Freeze Grant re 2011/12	(90)	(90)	0
Council Tax (1% increase 2014/15 & 15/16)	(3,065)	(3,096)	(3,127)
Council Tax Support Grant	(619)	(603)	(603)
Council Tax Freeze Grant re 13/14	(30)	(30)	
Sub Total 1 - Budget Shortfall	920	1,570	1,707

Less Savings Currently Being Implemented			
Vacancy Management	(100)	(75)	(75)
Leisure Services	(60)	(60)	(60)
Street Scene (Green Bins and Garage)	(75)	(75)	(75)
BDC / NEDDC Secondments	(100)	(150)	(200)
Clowne Relocation	(100)	(100)	(80)
One Off Director Secondment Income	(100)	(0)	(0)
Fees and Charges Review	(80)	(80)	(80)
Sub Total 2 - Budget Shortfall	305	1,030	1,137
Less Items to Be Considered by Elected Members			
Increase Council Tax by 2%	(30)	(30)	(30)
Agree Scrutiny Proposals re Community Houses	(55)	(55)	(55)
Sub Total 3 - Budget Shortfall	220	945	1,052
Savings to be Identified	(220)	(945)	(1,052)
Call on General Fund Balances	0	0	0

3.3. The above table shows that on the basis of a roll forward budget the Council would be facing a financial shortfall of some £0.920m in the next financial year (see Sub Total 1). Fortunately the Council has already agreed a range of measures which provided they are successfully implemented will reduce that shortfall to one of £0.305m (see Sub Total 2). The Council has further options which it may wish to consider which include increasing council tax by 2% - rather than accepting a Government Grant of 1% - which would financially be more sustainable as the Government Grant would be withdrawn after a period of 2 years. Members could also decide to adopt the Scrutiny Option of closing the Community Houses at a saving of some £0.055m p.a. If neither of those options is agreed then the Council faces securing currently unidentified savings of £0.305m. If both are adopted then the Council would be required to identify savings amounting to some £0.220m.

3.4. Given the Council's projected financial position as set out within this report the Council needs to consider the position in respect of Council Tax. The above table is based upon the assumption that the Council accepts the Government Grant that is available on the basis that Council Tax is not increased. The grant for 2013/14 is available for a two year period at a level of 1%, but the short term nature of these Government Grants does serve to undermine the Council's longer term financial stability as both this and previous years Council Tax grants are lost at the end of a fixed time period. The manner in which Council Tax grant operates is set out in the table below where it is compared to the option of increasing Council Tax.

	13/14	14/15	15/16	Total over 3 year period
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Council Tax Grant				
2013/14 Council Tax Grant (1%)	30	30	0	60
2014/15 Council Tax Grant (Assumed on same basis as 2013/14 scheme)	0	30	30	60
2015/16 Council Tax Grant (Assumed on same basis as 2013/14 scheme)	0	0	30	30
Total Funding from Council Tax Grant	30	60	60	150
Increase Council Tax Option by 2% per annum	60	120	180	360
Band A Council Tax (£'s p.a.) at 2% - currently £105.43	£107.54	£109.68	£111.88	

3.5. It is clear from the above table that an ongoing increase in the level of Council Tax does provide a significant financial benefit to the District Council. On the basis of the above table the Council would have additional income of some £0.120m for the 2015/16 financial year (£0.180m less £0.060m) if it adopts a policy to increase Council Tax by 2% per year. Also, the Council Tax income will continue to be received in subsequent years whereas the Council Tax Grant drops out after a fixed time period. Given the extent of the ongoing reductions in the level of government grant, uncertainties over the level of Non Domestic

Rates income, the New Homes Bonus and the localisation of Council Tax benefit then this option of raising more income locally clearly needs to be considered.

- 3.6. While there are, significant arguments for opting for an increase in the level of Council Tax in 2012/13 in order to strengthen the Council's underlying financial position and to reduce the reliance on expenditure reductions as a means of balancing the budget in future financial years, this needs to be balanced against the detrimental impact which the current economic situation and general inflation are having on local taxpayers. For a Band A Council Tax payer the Council Tax bill under the scenario outlined in the above table would be some 6% higher with an actual bill for District Council services of some £112 rather than the current £105. For a Band D Council Tax payer the bill would rise from one of £150 to one of £158
- 3.7. In arriving at a decision concerning an appropriate strategy in respect of Council Tax, Members need to take into account the impact of higher tax levels on local residents, against the benefits that local residents derive from protecting the quality of services that residents receive from the Council.

4. Strategy for Balancing the Budget

- 4.1. Clearly the timing of the Government's financial settlement has left the Council with no realistic option in the time available other than to balance the budget on the basis of a target of unidentified savings to be achieved, as was the case in the current financial year. It is, however, important that the Council arrives at a range of agreed measures for achieving the necessary level of savings at the earliest opportunity. It is recommended that Officers are requested to report progress in identifying the necessary level of savings to all future meetings of Council until the required level of savings is achieved.
- 4.2. As part of this process consideration will be given to ensuring that the measures agreed in respect of 2013/14 provide a suitable platform for agreeing the measures that are necessary to address the 2014/15 position. One option for the Council would be to focus its attention on resolving the position in respect of next year (2013/14) and only after next year's issues are resolved moving onto looking at the greater level of cuts which will need to be achieved in respect of 2014/15. While this approach would have the advantage of enabling a better focus on the 2013/14 position, it does need to be recognised that it is important that the Council avoids having to revisit services to introduce further

reorganisation within a relatively short period of time in order for the Council to continue to operate within its funding constraints.

- 4.3 Secondly, the level of service reorganisation which is necessary to achieve savings against the background of a local authority which has been delivering savings ever since the Gershon Efficiency drive is now significant as the easy options have long since been taken. That means that detailed planning of change is essential if the level of savings required for 2014/15 is to be delivered. Accordingly it is recommended that the Council adopts a longer term perspective in terms of its approach to achieving savings and looks to implement a package which will deliver the overall level of savings of £1.030m which are necessary to address the identified shortfall in respect of 2014/15.

5. Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

- 5.1 While the majority of this report is concerned with the position on the Council's General Fund Council should note that a parallel piece of work is being undertaken in respect of the Council's Housing Revenue Account. The management of that account has been fundamentally changed by the introduction of the localised HRA with effect from April 2012. Effectively the financial arrangements with respect to the HRA are now entirely managed on a local basis and there is accordingly a greater element of stability in the financial position of the HRA. With the reduction in the level of intervention by national government local authorities will now be dependent upon the development of a robust 30 Year Business Plan in order to inform strategic and operational decision making.
- 5.2. The Council developed a 30 Year Business Plan in conjunction with external consultants as part of the process of implementing the localisation of the HRA in April 2012. That Plan has now been brought up to date to reflect the final details of the HRA settlement and some key factors such as the actual interest rates at which the PWLB loan to buy the Council out of the national HRA pool were secured. While the Council has entered into the localised HRA with all its stock at the Decent Homes standard it now needs to develop detailed plans for ensuring that this standard is maintained. At the previous meeting of Council on December 2012 it was agreed that the Council would commission work to develop a detailed stock condition survey down to individual house level which will inform the Council's future Asset Management arrangements.
- 5.3. The key decision that will need to be made in respect of the HRA with regard to the 2013/14 financial year concerns the setting of the rent

level. Under the convergence framework established by Central Government it is anticipated that an average rent increase of some 5.62% will be required in respect of the 2013/14 financial year. This rent increase is necessary in order to comply with national government policy which requires that Council House rents will both increase with inflation (2.6% in September 2012) and that Council House rents should be increased until they are in line with those of other social housing providers (Housing Associations). While this policy will mean a period of above inflation increases for Council House Tenants it should be noted that Council House rents will remain below those charged in the private sector. Clearly given the present economic background an increase in rent levels of 5.62% may result in financial difficulties for the Council's tenants. If, however, the Council is to provide decent quality housing and service the debt taken on from the HRA settlement then the financial regime under which it operates effectively requires that rents need to be increased in line with Government targets. The Council will, however, continue to support a range of policies which are intended to address the problems of financial exclusion given that such exclusion is likely to increase as a result of the wider economy and welfare reform.

6. Capital Programme

- 6.1 In the same way as the Council's Revenue Budgets the capital programme is divided into two individual elements. The first of these elements is the General Fund Programme. There is no central government funding provided to District Councils in order to promote their capital expenditure priorities and therefore they are dependent upon generating capital receipts or securing external grant funding from such sources as the Lottery or Europe to promote their objectives. In respect of the current financial year Bolsover District Council is currently operating a substantial capital programme which is effectively funded by the sale of the Sherwood Lodge site and one other major disposal. These schemes are included within the current capital programme. It is anticipated that these schemes will be concluded in the early part of the next financial year (2013/14) and that at that stage a further report will be brought forward to Council setting out the position in respect of the Council's Capital Programme. Whilst officers are of the view that all of the conditions necessary to secure these capital receipts are in place until the actual cash is received there is an element of financial exposure which is best managed by minimising any further expenditure commitments until these resources are secured.
- 6.2 With regard to the HRA capital programme this remains an area with a significant level of ongoing capital expenditure. On the basis of current

information as set out within the HRA Business Plan it will be possible to fund an ongoing programme of some £3.3m from resources generated within the HRA, while in addition the Council can utilise its headroom of some £11.4m in order to fund further capital expenditure. While this is a significant capital programme Council needs to recognise that it is essential that this funding is utilised to retain the Council's housing stock at a 'Decent Homes' standard. In order to fund the Council's Capital Programme on an ongoing basis it is necessary that the Council remains committed to operating within the context of the Government's Rent Convergence Strategy. While the Government has less influence to ensure that Council's continue to comply with this policy since the introduction of the localisation of the HRA reform, Council needs to recognise that the Settlement figures of the spring of 2012 were based upon the fact that local authorities would continue with a rent convergence policy. Where local authorities do not continue to operate within those guidelines then the financial sustainability of the local HRA will be undermined. The major impact of undermining the financial position is that the local authority landlord will no longer be able to fund the renovation and renewal of its property so that it continues to meet the 'Decent Homes' standard.

Equality issues will be considered as part of future reports bringing forward proposals to achieve the necessary level of savings.

7. Risk

- 7.1 One of the key issues of the budget in respect of 2013/14 is that local authorities are operating in an environment characterised by increasing levels of financial and operational risk. Under the Government localism agenda two of the key changes are the localisation of both Council Tax benefit and Non Domestic rates. While local authorities benefit from an increased level of discretion the reforms bring with them a significant increase in the level of financial risk, most of which are linked to the position in respect of the local and the wider national economy. Although local authorities will be exposed to some significant risks they have a limited ability to manage the underlying risk.
- 7.2 In addition to the wider issues arising from the localism agenda there are operational risks which will arise from issues such as the administration and management of the new schemes including the collection rates. While these operational risks are unlikely to have a significant impact during 2013/14 itself it will be necessary to review performance in respect of 2013/14 when establishing budgets for next year 2014/15, with operational issues experienced during 2013/14 potentially resulting

in a financial deficit which will need to be addressed when setting the 2014/15 budgets.

- 7.3 Finally, in order to continue to operate within the context of our underlying level of resources Bolsover District Council needs to identify and achieve some £0.305m of savings in the 2013/14 financial year and a sum of £1.030m needing to be identified in order to balance the budget in respect of 2014/15. To achieve this level of savings against a background in which significant savings have been delivered over the current and previous financial year will invariably involve some risks of disruption to performance levels and services. While the Council will set out to minimise the impact of the expenditure reductions on the services provided to local residents it does need to be recognised that the scale and ongoing nature of the expenditure reductions will inevitably have a detrimental impact on services. The issue of the impact upon local residents will be considered as part of the process of giving consideration to the proposed budget reductions which will be necessary in order to balance the budget for 2013/14.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Outlined in the report

Legal: This report is part of a process intended to ensure that the Council sets a balanced budget in respect of each financial year. The Council is legally obliged to set a balanced budget and this report will assist Elected Members in agreeing an appropriate budget in respect of 2013/14.

Human Resources: None

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. That Executive notes the report in respect of the Council's budget 2013/14 and Medium Term Financial Plan projections in respect of 2014/15 and 2015/16.**
- 2. That Executive request that the report be considered by both the Budget Scrutiny Committee at its meeting of 16th January and by the Council meeting on 23rd January 2013.**

3. That Executive notes that further reports will be brought back to Executive on the 6th February 2013, to Budget Scrutiny Committee on a date to be arranged and to Council on both the 13th February and the 1st March 2013.

REASON FOR DECISION

To update Members on the work that is currently taking place in order to develop a revised Medium Term Financial Plan 2013 to 2016, and in particular a budget in respect of 2013/14.

ATTACHMENTS: N

FILE REFERENCE: N

SOURCE DOCUMENT :

EXECUTIVE

Minutes of a meeting of the Executive of Bolsover District Council held in Committee Room One, Sherwood Lodge, Bolsover, on Monday 10th December 2012 at 1000 hours.

PRESENT:-

Members:-

Councillor E. Watts - Chair

Councillors K. Bowman, D. Kelly, D. McGregor, B.R. Murray-Carr, A.M. Syrett and A.F. Tomlinson.

Officers:-

W. Lumley (Chief Executive Officer), B. Mason (Director of Corporate Resources), S. Tomlinson (Director of Neighbourhoods), S.E.A. Sternberg (Solicitor to the Council), S. Clow (Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager) (to minute no. 696), S. Chambers (Communications Officer), and R. Leadbeater (Democratic Services Officer).

688. APOLOGY

An apology for absence was received on behalf of the Head of Shared Procurement.

689. URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

There were no urgent items of business.

690. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

691. MINUTES – 19TH NOVEMBER 2012

Moved by Councillor D. Kelly, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor
RESOLVED that the minutes of a meeting of the Executive held on 19th November 2012 be approved as a true record.

EXECUTIVE

692. WORKING NEIGHBOURHOODS FUND AND WORK AND SKILLS PLAN UPDATE – APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2012

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration presented the report to update Members on the spending and allocation of Working Neighbourhoods Funding (WNF) for the period April to September 2012.

Members' attention was drawn to the appendix to the report which;

- Provided an updated spend/financial position for WNF monies allocated to the Council and Bolsover Partnerships,
- Reported on activity taking place in relation to WNF planning, commissioning and future activity in relation to securing additional funding;
- Reported on unemployment statistics for the district and
- Provided an updated work and skills plan for activity in the first half of 2012/13.

Members were advised of the progress on a number of projects such as the Core Worklessness Group, Help to Work Directory, Sheffield City Region Apprenticeships and National Offender Management Service. These projects had delivered some significant successes.

Members raised questions with regard to how funding was targeted to District wards in respect of addressing unemployment. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration advised that smaller specific areas were targeted where need was greatest rather than at whole wards. There were currently three key projects which focussed on helping people back into employment. The Chief Executive Officer added that the majority of the WNF had been allocated which had produced some significant outcomes. Some schemes would continue to be funded until March 2014 with the resources being targeted to areas where the greatest benefit would be seen. Discussions with the private sector were also taking place with a view to sustaining the long term future of some projects.

Moved by Councillor A. Tomlinson, seconded by Councillor E. Watts
RESOLVED that the report be received.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure that WNF is targeted to best effect.

EXECUTIVE

693. LOCALISATION OF COUNCIL TAX AND WELFARE BENEFIT REFORM

The Director of Corporate Resources presented the report to advise Members of the requirement to introduce a localised Council Tax benefit system from 1st April 2013 and to seek agreement to recommend implementation of the preferred scheme to Council. The scheme would be required to be subject to review annually.

Members' attention was drawn to a table summarising the options that had been considered.

A local scheme had been consulted upon following agreement by the Executive in August 2012, of which the main proposals had been:

- to cover a maximum of 85% of Council Tax benefit,
- charge 100% Council Tax on holiday homes and empty properties rather than the 50% currently charged and
- reduce the Council Tax exemption period on empty properties from 6 to 3 months.
- continued local funding of War Pensions disregard.

The consultation period had closed on 29th October and the results were provided in a separate report for Members' information. On 16th October, the Government had announced that for the 2013/14 financial year, a grant would be made available to those local authorities who adopted a scheme in accordance with the Government's view of a well designed scheme which maintained positive incentives to work. The main variance to the Council's proposed local scheme was that Council Tax Benefit would be funded at a level 91.5% rather than 85%. This amendment would secure additional Government Grant and would minimise the impact of the proposals on those local residents of working age who were in receipt of benefits. Members were advised that the figures stated in the report were estimated and would be finalised upon confirmation of the government grant which would be received on 19th December.

The Director of Corporate Resources advised that the Government's reform would impact on the level of income Parish Councils would receive by way of precept and they would share in the financial losses and gains associated with the introduction of the localisation of Council Tax Benefit. It was not however anticipated that the impact would be significant on the majority of Parish Councils, although a limited number with for instance, a large number of benefit recipients, might be adversely impacted.

The scheme would be recommended to Council for final approval. Members asked questions to which the Director of Corporate Resources responded.

EXECUTIVE

Moved by Councillor A.F. Tomlinson, seconded by Councillor E. Watts

RESOLVED that the Executive notes the requirement to operate a localised Council Tax benefit system with effect from 1 April 2013, and considers whether to accept the recommended option as outlined within this report as the preferred scheme to propose for adoption by the Council at its meeting of 23 January 2013. The recommended option is based on a local scheme which complies with the Government's proposals and thus would be eligible for Government Grant in respect of the 2013/14 financial year.

RECOMMENDED that (1) Council agree to the adoption of a local scheme based upon the following principles:

- Those of working age in receipt of Council Tax Support be required to pay a minimum of 8.5% of the Council Tax Bill (approx £85 for a Band A property).
- The Council ensures that it is in a position to meet the requirements to secure the £163k of Government Grant which will benefit the precepting authorities operating in the area of Bolsover District Council.
- Bolsover District Council continues its policy of disregarding war pensions for the purposes of calculating income in respect of Council Tax Support at a total cost of £14k.

(2) Council agrees to make use of the change in Government legislation to charge 100% of Council Tax (rather than the current 50%) in respect of both Empty Properties and Holiday Homes.

(3) the charge with respect to empty and unfurnished properties is made after a three month period rather than the current six month period.

(4) officers prepare a scheme for passing on relevant funding to the Parish Councils operating within the District boundaries in order to mitigate the impact of the changes associated with the introduction of the Localisation of Council Tax Benefit reform upon Parish Councils.

REASON FOR DECISION:

To ensure that the Council is able to implement and finance a localised scheme providing council tax support for vulnerable groups from April 2013.

(Director of Resources/Council)

EXECUTIVE

694. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

The Director of Corporate Resources presented the report to update Members on the revised Strategic Risk Register. A summary was detailed in Appendix 1 to the report for Members' information. A more detailed report would be provided to Cabinet in due course.

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by Councillor A. Tomlinson

RESOLVED that (1) the report be noted and the Council's Strategic Risk Register as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be approved;

(2) an update of the Strategic Risk Register as at 30 December 2012 be brought back to Executive for approval.

REASON FOR DECISION: **To provide Members with an update on the Strategic Risk Register.**

(Director of Corporate Resources)

695. STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT AND HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE

The Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager presented the report to seek the Executive's agreement to commission a Strategic Housing Market Assessment using £25,000 of Planning Delivery Grant funding.

Members were advised that the last Housing Market Assessment had been carried out in 2007 and this was now at the end of its useful life. A revised Housing Market Assessment was required which would provide evidence to inform and support strategic housing and planning decisions and provide a robust evidence base for ascertaining housing need across the district.

The Assessment would be carried out in conjunction with the Housing Market Area and would gather information direct from householders across the District. This would enable housing and planning officers to determine the type of housing that was in greatest demand.

The Executive Sounding Board of the HMA had agreed that £8,000 would be provided to the four authorities to support the work to produce the Housing Market Assessment and Strategy.

Members raised questions in respect of the cost implications of the project to which the Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration responded.

EXECUTIVE

Moved by Councillor A. F. Tomlinson, seconded by Councillor D. McGregor

RESOLVED that (1) the commissioning of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment, in partnership with HMA partners, to support housing strategy and planning delivery be agreed;

(2) the use of circa £25,000 of Planning Delivery Grant to fund the assessment be agreed

(3) it be noted that production of the local housing strategy will be aligned to allow the strategy to reflect the findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

REASON FOR DECISION:

The joint North Derbyshire and Bassetlaw Housing Strategy expires in 2012 and it is important that the Council has in place a Strategy which provides the framework for delivering housing and housing related services in the District. In order that this strategy is robust and can stand up to scrutiny, it needs to be based on robust housing market and needs information, which is also required to support planning decisions.

(Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager)

The Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager left the meeting.

696. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Moved by Councillor E. Watts, seconded by Councillor A. F. Tomlinson

RESOLVED that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the stated Paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and it is not in the public interest for that to be revealed.

EXECUTIVE

697. TENDER EVALUATION OUTCOME – TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION ALTERATION WORKS, SHERWOOD LODGE EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 3

This item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration advised Members that following discussion between Regeneration, Procurement and Legal Services, it had been agreed that the item did not require a report to Executive. This was as a result of the value being significantly below the £50,000 threshold and being a Request for a Quotation rather than a Formal Invitation to Tender which needed to be accepted.

698. TENDER EVALUATION OUCOME – DEPOT WORKFORCE TRAINING EXEMPT – PARAGRAPH 3

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Efficiencies advised Members of the outcome of a tender opening for the provision of health and safety training for matters such as scaffolding awareness and working at heights.

The invitation to tender had been sent out to over twenty training providers, however only one had been returned by the deadline. Following an evaluation this had been considered not fit for purpose.

Moved by Councillor D. McGregor, seconded by Councillor D. Kelly
RESOLVED that (1) the tender process should be terminated and no bids
accepted;

(2) the Council returns to market for a similar solution following
market engagement.

REASON FOR DECISION: To secure best value for the Council.

(Head of Shared Procurement)

The meeting concluded at 1045 hours.

Sherwood Lodge
Bolsover
Derbyshire
S44 6NF

EXECUTIVE

14th January 2013

The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Notice of Intention to Conduct Business in Private

Notice is hereby given in accordance with Regulation 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 that the following items are likely to be considered in private:

IRRECOVERABLE ARREARS OVER £1,000

The reason that the above item is likely to be considered in private is that it may involve the disclosure of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

TRACKERS HOUSING REPAIRS VEHICLES

The reason that the above item is likely to be considered in private is that it may involve the disclosure of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

TENDER EVALUATION OUTCOME – LEGIONELLA MONITORING SERVICES

The reason that the above item is likely to be considered in private is that it may involve the disclosure of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The Council has received no representations requesting that these items be considered in public.



W. Lumley BSc, FCCA,
Chief Executive Officer
4th January 2013