

APOLOGIES Committee Services  
Email: Committee.clerk@maldon.gov.uk

DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND  
RESOURCES  
Paul Dodson

01 November 2023

Dear Councillor

You are summoned to attend the meeting of the;

**STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

on **THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2023 at 7.30 pm**

in the **Council Chamber, Maldon District Council Offices, Princes Road, Maldon.**

Please Note: All meetings will continue to be live streamed on the [Council's YouTube channel](#) for those wishing to observe remotely. Public participants wishing to speak remotely at a meeting can continue to do so via Microsoft Teams.

To register your request to speak / attend in person please complete a [Public Access form](#) (to be submitted by 12noon on the working day before the Committee meeting). All requests will be considered on a first-come, first-served basis.

A copy of the agenda is attached.

Yours faithfully



Director of Strategy and Resources

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP:

CHAIRPERSON	Councillor M F L Durham, CC
VICE-CHAIRPERSON	Councillor A Fittock
COUNCILLORS	D O Bown J Driver A S Fluker K Jennings A M Lay R H Siddall W Stamp, CC M E Thompson S White





**AGENDA  
STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

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**THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER 2023**

1. **Chairperson's Notices**

2. **Apologies for Absence**

3. **Minutes of the Last meeting** (Pages 5 - 16)

To consider the Minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 21 September 2023 (copy enclosed).

4. **Disclosure of Interest**

To disclose the existence and nature of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Registrable interests and Non-Registrable Interests relating to items of business on the agenda having regard to paragraph 9 and Appendix B of the Code of Conduct for Members.

(Members are reminded that they are also required to disclose any such interests as soon as they become aware should the need arise throughout the meeting).

5. **Public Participation**

To receive the views of members of the public, of which prior notification in writing has been received (no later than noon on the Tuesday prior to the day of the meeting).

Should you wish to submit a question please complete the online form at:  
[www.maldon.gov.uk/publicparticipation](http://www.maldon.gov.uk/publicparticipation).

6. **Half Yearly Treasury Management Update** (Pages 17 - 34)

To consider the report of the Interim Chief Finance Officer (copy enclosed).

7. **Rural Settlement List 2024 / 25** (Pages 35 - 38)

To consider the report of the Interim Chief Finance Officer (copy enclosed).

8. **Whistleblowing Policy** (Pages 39 - 48)

To consider the report of the Director of Strategy and Resources (copy enclosed).

9. **Any other items of business that the Chairperson of the Committee decides are urgent**

10. **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

To resolve that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that this satisfies the public interest test.

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For further information please see [the Council's website](#).

11. **Leisure Contract Update** (Pages 49 - 54)

To consider the report of the Director of Service Delivery (copy enclosed).

12. **Lease Extension** (Pages 55 - 60)

To consider the report of the Director of Service Delivery (copy enclosed).

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**NOTICES**

**Recording of Meeting**

Please note that the Council will be recording and publishing on the Council's website any part of this meeting held in open session.

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**Health and Safety**

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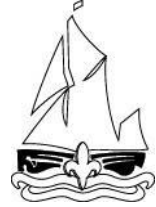
**Closed-Circuit Televisions (CCTV)**

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**Lift**

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**MINUTES of  
STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
21 SEPTEMBER 2023**

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**PRESENT**

Chairperson	Councillor M F L Durham, CC
Vice-Chairperson	Councillor A Fittock
Councillors	J Driver, A S Fluker, A M Lay, R H Siddall, W Stamp, CC, M E Thompson and S J N Morgan (Substitute for D O Bown)

**264. CHAIRPERSON'S NOTICES**

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and went through some general housekeeping arrangements for the meeting.

**265. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTION NOTICE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D O Bown and S White. In accordance with notice duly given Councillor S J N Morgan was attending as a substitute for Councillor Bown. It was noted that Councillor A M Lay would be arriving late.

**266. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 July 2023 be approved and confirmed.

**267. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**268. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No requests had been received.

At this point Councillor J Driver joined the meeting.

**269. DELIVERY OF SECTION 106 CAPITAL PROJECTS 2024 / 25**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Service Delivery updating Members on the current position with Section 106 (S106) contributions and seeking approval to recruit a new fixed term resource to deliver the Council's S106 programme of works.

It was noted that the Council received S106 contributions as part of the Planning Approval process for large applications. Table 1 in the report set out the S106 financial contributions held by the Council and potential projects to be delivered subject to community engagement.

The report advised that the South Essex Parking Partnership (SEPP) had recently confirmed the Council would receive £137,000 for 2023 / 24 to delivery capital projects within car parks. As the Council had already identified a capital sum to deliver such projects from existing budgets it was suggested that the surplus capital funding be used to fund a new fixed term Project Manager position to deliver the S106 Programme of Work. The report provided further information on this post and the proposed use of the capital monies.

In response to a lengthy debate that ensued, and questions raised by Members, further information was provided by Officers which included:

- Confirmation that the projects detailed were historic.
- Members were advised that the SEPP monies had been approved and received by the Council.
- In respect of the proposed timeline, Officers noted it was ambitious and subject to various dependencies but believed it was deliverable and confirmed that Members (both Ward and others) would be engaged with regarding the projects, as would other stakeholders.
- Officers confirmed that they had recently met with the Youth Strategy Group to discuss the work they had carried out in relation to skateparks. Some Member referred to the importance of involving potential users of skateparks etc. at the design stage, this was noted.
- It was explained when S106 contributions were due the Council worked out the indexation using the section industry figures and this was then added to invoices. The contributions in relation to the projects outlined in the report had been received and the date for the first pay back (should the monies not be used) was October 2026. It was noted that having received the monies the Council was now subject to inflationary pressure and hence the need to progress these projects.
- There were no restrictions on the use of the capital which became available through use of the SEPP funding to fund projects previously identified for capital spend.
- The priority of the proposed S106 Project Manager would be to deliver the S106 Programme of Work, and if they had capacity they would then support / help with the Council's capital projects.
- It was noted that there could be potential revenue savings once existing assets were replaced with new, however any additional new asset would require a revenue budget for ongoing maintenance.

Councillor A S Fluker raised concern regarding the proposed new S106 Officer post and the need for possible further consultation, the annual costs related to such projects, what other projects the post would be required to deliver and the importance of statutory play areas including the possibility of discussions with the Royal Horticultural Service and Writtle College in respect of these areas. He questioned if Officers had explored options for an external design delivery package which would deliver consultations and negate the need for a new in-house post. Councillor Fluker then proposed that either this report be deferred until more information was received,

or that the Council didn't appoint a person or take the monies related to the post from funds but explore the opportunity of going to a design and build company who would look at this as a whole project and potentially save the Council some money. This proposal was not seconded.

Councillor M F L Durham declared an interest that he was an Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Country Parks.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the Council had not consulted with a design and build company as the preference was to have a project manager within the team who knew the Council processes, area, priorities and could work with local people and Members to bring the scheme forward. Members were advised that if the Council went to a design and build company there would still be an internal resource requirement to manage the project.

The Chairperson commented that there had been a lot of previous work carried out in respect of the design for the skatepark in Maldon. This had involved consulting with the young users of the existing facility and also with some specialist design and built contractors. He stated that this preliminary work should not be discarded as some of the work envisaged for the new Officer has already been done and should not be duplicated.

Councillor M E Thompson clarified that her earlier reference to deferral was not a proposition.

The Interim Chief Finance Officer explained that the money proposed from the Capital Programme had come from capital reserves and if not spent would have to be returned to the capital programme for other projects. The monies could not be returned to the general fund.

At this point Councillor Fluker proposed that the report be deferred to allow the Head of Service – Assets, Coasts and Countryside to speak to Skateboard GB and Maverick Clark and Kent and come up with an alternative to the £140k spend. This proposal was duly seconded.

Councillor R S Siddall spoke in favour of the recommendations and commented that there was an immediate need for these projects to be delivered as soon as possible. He then made a political statement at which the Chairperson intervened and informed Councillor Siddall that this debate was not an opportunity to make party political comments.

In response to a question, the Officer advised that if Councillor Fluker's proposal was agreed he would need to speak to colleagues about the Council's capital programme but believed it would fall further behind.

Following further discussion, Councillor Fluker clarified his proposal was that the decision on this item of business be deferred for four weeks in order for the Head of Service – Assets, Coasts and Countryside to answer some of the questions raised so that the Council could either go down the turnkey solution or not, due to the sum of monies involved. He also requested that his vote be recorded. The proposal was seconded.

The Chairperson then put the proposal in the name of Councillor Fluker to the Committee. Upon a vote being taken this was declared lost. In response to his earlier request, it was noted that Councillor Fluker had voted in favor of the proposal.

The Chairperson then put the recommendations as set out in the report and upon a vote being taken this was agreed. In response to his earlier request, it was noted that Councillor Fluker had voted against the recommendations.

At this point Councillor R H Siddall withdrew some of his earlier comments and apologised for any offence caused.

## **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the list of Section 106 contributions and potential youth projects, the 'Programme of Works' (as of June 2023) as set out in Table 1 within the report be noted;
- (ii) That a Project Manager post be recruited (fixed term) to deliver the Section 106 Programme of Works, funded from capital reserves utilising an identified surplus;
- (iii) That subject to (i) and (ii) above that project progress be reported to the Strategy and Resources Committee a quarterly basis.

## **270. SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, VIREMENTS, PROCUREMENT EXEMPTIONS AND USE OF RESERVES - QUARTER ONE: 1 APRIL - 30 JUNE 2023**

The Committee considered the report of the Interim Chief Finance Officer reporting Virements, Supplementary Estimates and Procurement Exemptions agreed under delegated powers where they were below the levels requiring approval by the Committee.

It was noted that there were no supplementary estimates agreed during this period. Sections 3.3.1 and 3.5.1 set out the virements and procurement exemption agreed during this period. The report also advised that there was one drawdown from Reserves proposed during this period.

In response to questions raised, Officers provided Members with the following additional information:

- There had been pressure across both the cemeteries and parks teams and as an interim measure salary savings had been used to bring in some agency support. The Head of Service was working with the teams to bring forward a service review which would be reported to a future meeting of this Committee.
- In relation the requested drawn down from the Community Housing Reserve this related to a gap in funding for an employment support coach position where there was delayed receipt of funding from the Department for Work and Pensions. Members were advised that Officer would look to claw the monies back through potential housing service underspend at the end of the year.

The Chairperson put the recommendations as set out the report and these were duly agreed.

## **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the virements as detailed in paragraph 3.3.1 of the report be noted;
- (ii) That the procurement exemptions as detailed in paragraph 3.5.1 of the report be noted;



(iii) That the following drawdown from Reserves be agreed:

<b>Reserve</b>	<b>Drawdown amount</b>	<b>Reason for Drawdown</b>
Community Housing Reserve	£12,500	To cover a three month contract extension for an employment support coach

Councillor A M Lay joined the meeting during this item of business.

## **271. BUDGETARY CONTROL (AS AT 30 JUNE 2023)**

The Committee considered the report of the Interim Chief Finance Officer providing financial performance information for the period 1 April – 30 June 2023. The report provided an update on a number of areas including the following:

- Gross Service Income and Expenditure;
- Top Expenditure Areas and Variance Analysis;
- Top Income Areas and Variance Analysis;
- Salary Monitoring as at 30 September 2023;
- Inflationary impact;
- Impact on the General Fund Balance;
- Capital Projects Monitor as at 30 September 2020 (Appendix 1)

It was noted that budgets had improved since the pandemic, but the enduring cost-of-living crisis could yet create pressure on local tax collection rates. In addition, it was noted that National pay awards were yet to be agreed and salary inflation could also place a pressure on the Council's budgets if higher than estimated.

During his presentation of the report the Lead Specialist Finance advised that the largest individual variance being forecast was an underspend in household waste due to reductions in waste collected following the pandemic ending.

During the debate that ensued Member raised a number of questions regarding car parking income and the following information was provided:

- The variation was due to an additional £130k added to the projected income for car parking as part of the Council restructure in 2019. Overall the income was not significantly different to pre-covid but was showing an underspend because of the addition of £130k added into the budget. It was noted that there was no policy behind this additional income, how it would be generated or assumption that car parking charges would be significantly increased.
- One of the pressures around car parking income related to the number of people now paying by card and the increased transaction fees in relation to that. Although an element of this had been built into the budget the volume was higher than expected. A budget adjustment would be made to ensure that going forward it reflected the transactions the Council was experiencing. It was reported that going forward the majority of additional fees for payment by phone were included within the transaction fee paid by the customer. Following further discussion and in response to questions raised, the Chairperson advised the Committee that a response regarding costs relating to the collection of car parking revenue, including car payments would be provided.

The Chairperson put the recommendation as set out in the report and this was duly agreed.

**RESOLVED** that the forecasted 2023 / 24 financial position as at 30 June 2023 be noted.

## **272. FEES AND CHARGES POLICY 2024 / 25**

The Committee considered the report of the Interim Chief Finance Officer presenting the 2024 / 25 Fees and Charges Policy and updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for approval.

Appendix 1 to the report set out the current position for each fees and charges policy including any concessions being given, further financial information and comments. The report summarised proposed changes to the Fees and Charges Policy and it was noted that one new Fees and Charges policy had been added – Non-Statutory Enquiries.

It was noted that the detailed schedule of Fees and Charges would be reviewed based on policy decisions and this Committee would recommend to the Council the 2024 / 25 Fees and Charges during the next cycle of meetings. The 2024 / 25 income budget would be based on the recommended policy.

The Chairperson reminded the Committee that it was not debating the individual fees and charges, just the policy.

Members raised a number of questions and in response Officers provided the following information:

- Reference to a non-statutory enquiry related to land charges fees and were not general customer enquiries.
- Appendix 1 to the report referred to Section 106 (S106) payments and the monitoring fee that the Council charged based on S106 cases. There were no changes proposed to this existing policy. It was agreed that Officers would provide a breakdown of monies collected through this policy and also a benchmark of the monitoring fees charged against neighbouring authorities.
- A Member provided the Committee with details of the current arrangements in place for the collection of clinical waste and queried the efficiency of these. Officers understood that the changes made to clinical waste collection (a number of years ago) were implemented as a result of cost savings. Officers agreed to review these costs in order to identify if there was a more efficient way of delivering that service.
- In response to a query regarding whether the Council had implemented the recently agreed policy to increase wharfage by inflation the Chairperson confirmed that this information would be provided outside of the meeting.
- Where refuse bins were reported as stolen, it was noted for green waste bins full cost recovery was sought from the customer. However, if a bin was damaged each case and the replacement costs were considered on an individual basis, along with any evidence of damage caused by the refuse crews.

The Chairperson put the recommendation as set out in the report and this was duly agreed. It was noted that this would be a recommendation to the Council.

**RECOMMENDED** that the 2024 / 25 Fees and Charges Policies at **APPENDIX 1** be approved.

There being no other items of business the Chairperson closed the meeting at 9.02 pm.

M F L DURHAM, CC  
CHAIRPERSON

Directorate	Policy Area	Current Policy	Existing Concessions	Review of Current Policy	Proposed Policy for 2024/25	Proposed Concessions for 2024/25
Service Delivery	River Moorings	Charge for moorings (not aligned with any other clubs)	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	River Wharfage	Set fees to compete with alternative berthing facilities on the east coast	Quarterly charges discount daily fee by 50%. Discounts available to charitable trusts. Discount phased out over 3 years. 40% 2023/24, 20% 2024/25.	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No Change
Service Delivery	Off Street Car Parking (Maldon Town)	Maximise income, but take into account the need to support local businesses. No free school drop off permits.	Disabled Badge holders - Free parking. Season Ticket discounts for Public Sector Partners, Residents and Bulk Purchases.	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	Disabled Badge holders - Free parking. Discount for Season Tickets and bulk purchases
Service Delivery	Off Street Car Parking (Outside Maldon Town)	Free entry	Not Applicable	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	Charges approved by Members	None
Service Delivery	Car Parking/Events	Suspend car parking and introduce a set fee for specific events. Charges will be dependent on the event size and entrance fee. To be determined by the Director of Service Delivery.	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Maldon Promenade - Car Parking	Aim for overall maximum cost recovery for Promenade Park - with Car Parking being the key contributor	Maldon District Residents Season Tickets at reduced price. Disabled Badge Holders	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Maldon Promenade - Splash Park	Charge to as far as possible to recover all costs of operation and in line with comparable facilities	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Use of Council Land for events	All Council Land. Use of a minimum events day rate charge on council owned land determined by the scale of event size to maximise income for all events.	Charity Organisations with under 100 people in attendance receive a concession ensuring full cost recovery.	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Council owned Land (inc Prom)	Charges to be for all council owned land as well as Prom Park to maximise income	Prices to be agreed by the Director of Service Delivery	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Maldon Promenade - Beach Huts	Charges based on competitive Market rates, and should aim as a minimum to recover all costs of operation	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change

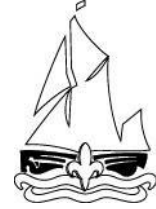
Directorate	Policy Area	Current Policy	Existing Concessions	Review of Current Policy	Proposed Policy for 2024/25	Proposed Concessions for 2024/25
Service Delivery	Cemeteries	Charges at levels comparable to facilities provided by other local authorities	Local Residents receive discounted rates. Under 18's Free	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Green Waste Bin Service	Charge for Service	Minimum of full cost recovery, and in line with other authorities. Charge for bin for new subscribers and replacement bins	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	Minimum of full cost recovery, and in line with other authorities. Charge for bin for new subscribers and replacement bins	None
Service Delivery	Chargeable Household Waste Collection	Charges made for residential homes, with limited collections from villages halls equivalent to domestic property. Charges based on cost recovery for additional collections	Free Clinical waste collection	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Chargeable Bulky Household Waste Collection	Charge subject to annual adjustment to reflect contract costs. Fee is collected by Maldon District Council (MDC) and an agreed sum paid to the contractor for each collection	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	Minimum of full cost recovery	None
Service Delivery	Chargeable Street Cleaning	Charges based on competitive Market rates, and should aim as a minimum to recover all costs of operation.	Concession at discretion of Director of service delivery for charitable/ community events.	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Maldon Promenade - Pop Up Trading	Charges based on competitive Market rates, and should aim as a minimum to recover all costs of operation	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Parks & Open Spaces - Advertising	charges based on competitive Market rates, and should aim as a minimum to recover all costs of operation	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Court Costs - Council Tax and Business Rates	Full cost recovery up to maximum level agreed by Essex Magistrates Courts	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	CCTV footage requested by individuals, insurance companies or any organisations other than the Police (subject to data protection)	Chargeable services	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	Minimum of Full cost recovery	No Change
Service Delivery	Refuse and recycling containers for new build properties	Developers to fund the cost of provision of containers for new properties if the development is more than five properties.	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Parking Permits for Schools	Chargeable Services	Charges made to Schools for parking in MDC owned car parks	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change

Directorate	Policy Area	Current Policy	Existing Concessions	Review of Current Policy	Proposed Policy for 2024/25	Proposed Concessions for 2024/25
Service Delivery	Road Closures	To reclaim costs plus statutory administration charge.	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	Minimum of Full cost recovery plus statutory administration charges	None
Service Delivery	Promenade Park Concessions	To Charge for concessions on the Prom. Prices set on negotiation with the Director of Service Delivery.	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Grounds Maintenance Contracts	Charges for contracts based on competitive market rates ensuring full cost recovery.	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	no change
Service Delivery	Commercial team – Commercial Services - Box Office	Box office services commission rate set by officers – Standard 10% commission for all events. Concession Director of Service Delivery in conjunction with the Chairman of Strategy & Resources Committee be granted discretion to vary this rate to support the corporate goals of the Council.	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Commercial team – Commercial Services - Marketing	Commercial team to charge a competitive hourly rate for its marketing and promotional services ensuring full cost recovery	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	Commercial team to charge a competitive hourly rate for its marketing and promotional services ensuring minimum of full cost recovery	no change
Service Delivery	Commercial team – Commercial Services - Sponsorship	charges based on competitive Market rates, and should aim as a minimum to recover all costs of operation	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Land Charges	Self Financing Service subject to regulations	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Enquiries (Non Statutory)	NEW FOR 2024/25	None	New	New - Minimum of full cost recovery	None
Service Delivery	Public Hire Vehicle & Hackney Carriage Licensing	Self financing service	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Building Control - Chargeable Services	Self financing service (by regulation) Break even over a five year period	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Development Control and Conservation - Pre Application Advice	Charge for advice	Not Applicable	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	Minimum of Full cost recovery	No change
Service Delivery	Development Control - Planning Performance Agreements (PPA)	Charge based on generic officer cost rates to complete the tasks in the PPA.	Not Applicable	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	Minimum of full cost recovery	No change
Service Delivery	Planning Fees (Development control fees)	No Policy - no powers at present	Not Applicable	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Licensing Act 2003	Set fees in line with the costs incurred in providing the service	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Gambling Act 2005	Set fees in line with the costs incurred in providing the service	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013	Recover reasonable costs of administration in accordance with statutory guidance	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Animal Licensing	Set fees in line with the costs incurred in providing the service	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change

Directorate	Policy Area	Current Policy	Existing Concessions	Review of Current Policy	Proposed Policy for 2024/25	Proposed Concessions for 2024/25
Service Delivery	Mobile Homes Act 2013	Set fees in line with the costs incurred in providing the service	Exempt those sites that have 8 or less units (Band 1)	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Pre Application for Tree Preservation Order advise	Charge to be based full recovery of Officer time	Not Applicable	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Street Naming and numbering	Charges to developers and property owners based on cost recovery	Not Applicable	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Revisit to rescore food hygiene ratings	Set fees in line with the costs incurred in providing the service.	Not Applicable	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	no change
Resources	External Printing	To be charged per copy.	Not Applicable	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	To be charged per copy. Full cost recovery	No change
Resources	Administration of Parish Elections & Neighbourhood Referendums	Levy an administration charge based on recovery of Officer time	Not Applicable	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
Service Delivery	Markets	charges based on competitive Market rates, and should aim as a minimum to recover all costs of operation	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
SPG	RAMS	To charge a monitoring fee alongside all Essex Coastal Recreational Avoidance Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) payments	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change
SPG	S106	To charge a monitoring fee based on individual cases	None	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	no Change	No Change
Service Delivery	Hythe Quay Parking	None	To charge for parking on Hythe Quay	Retain/Amend Existing Policy/Concessions	No Change	No change

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**REPORT of  
INTERIM CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

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**to  
STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
9 NOVEMBER 2023**

**HALF YEARLY TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To report on the Council's investment activity for the first half of 2023 / 24 in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Treasury Management Code (CIPFA's TM Code) and the Council's Treasury Management Policy and Treasury Management Practices (TMPs).

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

That Members note the Treasury Management report for compliance purposes.

**3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES**

**3.1 Overview**

- 3.1.1 The Council has adopted the CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (the CIPFA Code) which requires that authorities report on the performance of the treasury management function at least twice yearly (mid-year and at year end).
- 3.1.2 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2023 / 24 was presented to the Strategy and Resources Committee on 26 January 2023 and subsequently approved by the Council on 22 February 2023.
- 3.1.3 During 2023 / 24, the Council has had an average of £32.3m invested and is therefore exposed to financial risks, including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. This report covers treasury activity and the associated monitoring and control of risk.
- 3.1.4 The 2017 Prudential Code includes a requirement for local authorities to provide a Capital Strategy, a summary document approved by the Council covering capital expenditure and financing, treasury management and non-treasury investments. The Council's Capital Strategy, complying with CIPFA's requirement, was approved by the Council on 22 February 2023.

**3.2 External Context**

- 3.2.1 The Council currently engages LINK group to provide treasury management consultancy and advice services. Attached at **APPENDIX 1** is information prepared by LINK group providing an overview of the external economic environment.

### 3.3 Local context

3.3.1 The Council is currently debt free, although its capital expenditure plans do include the need to acquire new vehicles as part of the new Waste contract via internal borrowing in 2023 / 24, as approved by the Council on 30 March 2023. Investments are forecast to fall as capital receipts are used to finance capital expenditure and reserves are required to finance any gap in the future revenue budget.

### 3.4 Investment Activity (April 2023 – September 2023)

3.4.1 Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Council to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment returns.

3.4.2 The Council holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. Over the period from April to September 2023, the level of investments held by the Council has seen an increase of £4.8m due to the timing of receiving Grants, Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) ahead of paying these out to beneficiaries and preceptors. Therefore, the total of investments held on 30 September 2023 is £37.0m. These are comprised as follows:

**Table 1 – Invested Funds**

	Balance on 01/04/2023 £000s	Movement £000s	Balance on 30/09/2023 £000s	Average Credit Risk Score	Counter-party limit	Sector limit
<b>Short term Investments:</b>						
Banks and Building societies	5,270	(2,205)	3,065	5.0	Operational £3m, Investing £2m	Unlimited (Banks) / £5m (Building Societies)
Money Market Funds	8,000	0	8,000	1.0	£5m	£20m
Debt Management Account Deposit Facility	0	13,000	13,000	4.0	Unlimited	Not applicable (N/A)
Fixed Term Deposits (LA's)	14,000	(6,000)	8,000	4.0	£2m	Unlimited
<b>Long Term Investments</b>	5,000	0	5,000	N/A	£5m	£12m
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>32,270</b>	<b>4,795</b>	<b>37,065</b>	<b>Ave. 3.3</b>		

3.4.3 The Council's £5m of externally managed pooled and property funds have generated a total return of £203k in 2023 / 24 to date. As these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Council's investment objectives are regularly reviewed. Strategic fund investments are made in the knowledge that capital values will move both up and down on months, quarters and even years; but with the confidence that over a three to five year period total returns will exceed cash interest rates. In the light of their performance over the medium / long-term and the Council's latest cash flow forecasts, investment in these funds has been maintained.

### 3.5 Performance – Budgeted Income and Outturn

3.5.1 Below are the average rates of returns obtained on the Authority’s investments:

- Short Term investments (including Local Authorities) – 2.3%;
- Investments in the Ninety One (Investec) Diversified Income Fund – 4.6%;
- Investment in the CCLA (Churches, Charities and Local Authorities) – Lamit Property Fund– 4.2%.

3.5.2 The above returns average 2.6%, which is slightly lower than the 3% assumed within the 2023 / 24 Budget Setting Report; however interest rates have been increasing over this period and it is forecast that average interest rates will be higher than 3% over the full financial year.

3.5.3 The Authority’s budgeted investment income for the year was set at £750,000. Projected income for the year is currently £1,250,000. This increase is due to the rise in interest rates this year and the increase in average cash balances held.

### 3.6 Outlook for the remainder of 2023 / 24

3.6.1 Interest rate forecasts provided by Link Group are detailed at **APPENDIX 2**.

### 3.7 Compliance with Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Strategy

3.7.1 The Prudential Indicators for 2023 / 24, which were set on 22 February 2023 as part of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement shown at **Table 1** above have been complied with to date, except for some brief breached bank limits that occurred on the Council’s current account, disclosed below.

**Table 2 – Counterparty Limit Breaches**

Date in Excess	Amount in Excess £000	Reason	Date Resolved	How Resolved
12/04/2023	£601	Net balance exceeded the £3m bank counterparty when £2m investment to Nationwide took 24hrs to clear.	13/04/2023	£2m investment in Nationwide Building Society cleared
14/04/2023	£47	Unexpected income received towards the end of the day.	15/04/2023	£1m invested in Federated Money Market Fund.
19/07/23	£3,692	Net balance exceeded the £3m bank counterparty limit when £5m repaid by Federated a day before monthly NNDR precept payment.	20/07/2023	£3m reinvested in Federated, £524k paid in NNDR precepts, £166k paid to Essex Pensions and £471k repaid to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

Date in Excess	Amount in Excess £000	Reason	Date Resolved	How Resolved
14/08/23	£3,550	Net balance exceeded the £3m bank counterparty limit when £5m repaid by Federated a day before monthly NNDR precept payment.	15/08/23	£5m reinvested in Federated Money Market Fund
01/09/23	£3,014	Net balance exceeded the £3m bank counterparty limit when monthly council tax payment came in and £4m investment to Debt Management Organisation (DMO) took 24hrs to clear.	04/09/23	£4m investment to Government DMO.

3.7.2 The Section 151 Officer reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the half year in review complied fully with the CIPFA Code of Practice and the Authority's approved Treasury Management Strategy, the above items excepted. The Council's Treasury Management Prudential Indicators are detailed at **APPENDIX 3**.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

4.1 In compliance with the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice this report provides Members with a summary of the treasury management activity during the first half of 2023 / 24. As indicated in this report, only one of the prudential indicators has been breached on brief occasions and a prudent approach has been taken in relation to investment activity with priority being given to security and liquidity over yield.

#### 5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2023 - 2027

##### 5.1 Smarter finances

5.1.1 The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return (yield) on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity and with the Council's risk appetite. In the current economic climate, it is considered appropriate to keep investments short term to cover cash flow needs, but also to seek out value available in periods up to 12 months with high credit quality financial institutions, referring to the Link suggested creditworthiness approach, including a minimum sovereign credit rating.

#### 6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – None identified.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None identified.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – None identified.

- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – Income is projected to exceed the Council's budgeted figure (£750,000) by £500,000 in 2023 / 24.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – None identified.

Background Papers: None.

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## 2023 / 24 HALF YEARLY TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

### External Context (Prepared by Link Group)

#### 1. Economics and Interest Rates

##### 1.1 Economics Update


- The first half of 2023/24 saw:
  - Interest rates rise by a further 100bps, taking Bank Rate from 4.25% to 5.25% and, possibly, the peak in the tightening cycle.
  - Short, medium and long-dated gilts remain elevated as inflation continually surprised to the upside.
  - A 0.5% m/m decline in real GDP in July, mainly due to more strikes.
  - CPI inflation falling from 8.7% in April to 6.7% in August, its lowest rate since February 2022, but still the highest in the G7.
  - Core CPI inflation declining to 6.2% in August from 7.1% in April and May, a then 31 years high.
  - A cooling in labour market conditions, but no evidence yet that it has led to an easing in wage growth (as the 3myy growth of average earnings rose to 7.8% in August, excluding bonuses).
- The 0.5% m/m fall in GDP in July suggests that underlying growth has lost momentum since earlier in the year. Some of the weakness in July was due to there being almost twice as many working days lost to strikes in July (281,000) than in June (160,000). But with output falling in 10 out of the 17 sectors, there is an air of underlying weakness.
- The fall in the composite Purchasing Managers Index from 48.6 in August to 46.8 in September left it at its lowest level since COVID-19 lockdowns reduced activity in January 2021. At face value, it is consistent with the 0.2% q/q rise in real GDP in the period April to June, being followed by a contraction of up to 1% in the second half of 2023.
- The 0.4% m/m rebound in retail sales volumes in August is not as good as it looks as it partly reflected a pickup in sales after the unusually wet weather in July. Sales volumes in August were 0.2% below their level in May, suggesting much of the resilience in retail activity in the first half of the year has faded.
- The tightness of the labour market continued to ease, with employment in the three months to July falling by 207,000. The further decline in the number of job vacancies from 1.017m in July to 0.989m in August suggests that the labour market has loosened a bit further since July. That is the first time it has fallen below 1m since July 2021. At 3.0% in July, and likely to have fallen to 2.9% in August, the job vacancy rate is getting closer to 2.5%, which would be consistent with slower wage growth. Meanwhile, the 48,000 decline in the supply of workers in the three months to July offset some of the loosening in the tightness of the labour market. That was due to a 63,000 increase in inactivity in the three months to July as more people left the labour market due to long term sickness or to enter education. The supply of labour is still 0.3% below its pre-pandemic February 2020 level.

- But the cooling in labour market conditions still has not fed through to an easing in wage growth. While the monthly rate of earnings growth eased sharply from an upwardly revised +2.2% in June to -0.9% in July, a lot of that was due to the one-off bonus payments for NHS staff in June not being repeated in July. The headline 3myy rate rose from 8.4% (revised up from 8.2%) to 8.5%, which meant UK wage growth remains much faster than in the US and in the Euro-zone. Moreover, while the Bank of England's closely watched measure of regular private sector wage growth eased a touch in July, from 8.2% 3myy in June to 8.1% 3myy, it is still well above the Bank of England's prediction for it to fall to 6.9% in September.
- CPI inflation declined from 6.8% in July to 6.7% in August, the lowest rate since February 2022. The biggest positive surprise was the drop in core CPI inflation, which declined from 6.9% to 6.2%. That reverses all the rise since March and means the gap between the UK and elsewhere has shrunk (US core inflation is 4.4% and in the Euro-zone it is 5.3%). Core goods inflation fell from 5.9% to 5.2% and the further easing in core goods producer price inflation, from 2.2% in July to a 29-month low of 1.5% in August, suggests it will eventually fall close to zero. But the really positive development was the fall in services inflation from 7.4% to 6.8%. That also reverses most of the rise since March and takes it below the forecast of 7.2% the Bank of England published in early August.
- In its latest monetary policy meeting on 20 September, the Bank of England left interest rates unchanged at 5.25%. The weak August CPI inflation release, the recent loosening in the labour market and the downbeat activity surveys appear to have convinced the Bank of England that it has already raised rates far enough. The minutes show the decision was "finely balanced". Five MPC members (Bailey, Broadbent, Dhingra, Pill and Ramsden) voted for no change and the other four (Cunliffe, Greene, Haskel and Mann) voted for a 25bps hike.
- Like the US Fed, the Bank of England wants the markets to believe in the higher for longer narrative. The statement did not say that rates have peaked and once again said if there was evidence of more persistent inflation pressures "further tightening in policy would be required". Governor Bailey stated, "we'll be watching closely to see if further increases are needed". The Bank also retained the hawkish guidance that rates will stay "sufficiently restrictive for sufficiently long".
- This narrative makes sense as the Bank of England does not want the markets to decide that a peak in rates will be soon followed by rate cuts, which would loosen financial conditions and undermine its attempts to quash inflation. The language also gives the Bank of England the flexibility to respond to new developments. A rebound in services inflation, another surge in wage growth and/or a further leap in oil prices could conceivably force it to raise rates at the next meeting on 2nd November, or even pause in November and raise rates in December.
- The yield on 10-year Gilts fell from a peak of 4.74% on 17th August to 4.44% on 29th September, mainly on the back of investors revising down their interest rate expectations. But even after their recent pullback, the rise in Gilt yields has exceeded the rise in most other Developed Market government yields since the start of the year. Looking forward, once inflation falls back, Gilt yields are set to reduce further. A (mild) recession over the next couple of quarters will support this outlook if it helps to loosen the labour market (higher unemployment/lower wage increases).



- The pound weakened from its cycle high of \$1.30 in the middle of July to \$1.21 in late September. In the first half of the year, the pound bounced back strongly from the Truss debacle last autumn. That rebound was in large part driven by the substantial shift up in UK interest rate expectations. However, over the past couple of months, interest rate expectations have dropped sharply as inflation started to come down, growth faltered, and the Bank of England called an end to its hiking cycle.
- The FTSE 100 has gained more than 2% since the end of August, from around 7,440 on 31st August to 7,608 on 29th September. The rebound has been primarily driven by higher energy prices which boosted the valuations of energy companies. The FTSE 100's relatively high concentration of energy companies helps to explain why UK equities outperformed both US and Euro-zone equities in September. Nonetheless, as recently as 21<sup>st</sup> April the FTSE 100 stood at 7,914.

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Updated Interest  
Rate Forecast  
25 September 2023

## LINK GROUP UPDATED INTEREST RATE FORECAST

### Updating of our forecasts 25 September 2023

Comparison of forecasts for Bank Rate today v. previous forecast													
Bank Rate	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26
25.09.23	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75
26.06.23	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.25	4.75	4.25	3.75	3.25	2.75	2.75	2.50	2.50	2.50
Change	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.25	0.25

- At its meeting that concluded last week, the Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept rates on hold for the first time in 15 meetings. It was certainly a close decision, with Governor Bailey’s vote being the determining factor in a 5-4 split vote.
- In the days leading up to the vote, the MPC would have noted that average earnings (excluding bonuses) are rising by 7.8%, whilst the private sector gauge stood at 8.5%. [Remember that some of the upside shift in wages was caused by the NHS bonus payment...they account for a lot of the UK workforce...so maybe seen as a temporary lift, especially given that the minutes stated that the figures did not tally with other wage releases] Neither of these numbers are commensurate with a low level of inflation, so it was somewhat surprising to see not only the annual CPI measure of inflation drop from 6.8% to 6.7% (for August), but also for core inflation to fall substantially from 6.9% to 6.2%, whilst services inflation came in at sub-7%.
- Moreover, the composite Purchasing Manager Index data was available to the MPC ahead of its release on Friday. Dropping from 48.6 to 46.8 for August (50 is the dividing line between expansion and contraction in activity), this probably suggested to some of the MPC members that the monetary policy tightening undertaken to date is beginning to have a more material impact on the economy than has been suggested to date. But, having said that, although rates are on hold for now, there is still a risk that data releases between now and the next vote (2<sup>nd</sup> November) point to further tightening being required before the “terminal rate” is reached. Indeed, the policy guidance is for rates to be “sufficiently restrictive for sufficiently long” and that if inflation starts to push upwards, or even remains overly-sticky, then “further tightening in policy would be required”.
- November will see the publication of the quarterly monetary policy report from the Bank of England, so we will then be a lot wiser as to what the inflation outlook looks like according to the Bank’s analysts and researchers. We have seen in recent publications the Bank is not averse to making sweeping changes to its forecasts, and with oil prices buoyant at \$90 per barrel at present, and the ONS due to publish revised GDP data for the period starting Q1 2022, there is always the possibility of sizeable revisions to the assumptions underpinning the Bank’s policy decisions.
- In the immediate aftermath of the decision, markets have concluded that rates have more than likely peaked at 5.25% although there remains an outside chance of one more increase to come before the tightening cycle is concluded. Interestingly, the markets are also pricing in a rate cut before the end of 2024. That is to be expected in so far as typically the “terminal rate” remains in situ for some ten months or so before an easing in rates is undertaken.
- As noted in the table above, we have fine-tuned our own expectations, and while we do not now foresee Bank Rate hitting 5.5%, we do see Bank Rate staying on hold for the best part of a year at 5.25%. However, the pace of any future decreases will very much be determined by the wage and inflation data.
- Regarding PwLB rates, movement in the short part of the curve is expected to be driven by Bank Rate expectations to a large degree, whilst medium to longer-dated PwLB rates will remain influenced not only by the outlook for inflation, but also by the market’s appetite for significant gilt issuance, as commented upon by RLAM’s Craig Inches at our recent Strategic Issues Webinars.
- In addition, we will also keep an eye on what is happening in the housing market. Whilst household rents continue to increase apace, it is estimated that less than half of households with a mortgage have been subject to a new higher fixed rate. Many households locked into cheap five-year mortgages before the current up-cycle in interest rates and have, therefore, been protected from that significant



element of increase in household outgoings. The latest estimates suggest that there are another 500k households whose current fixed term deal are due to expire this year, and a further 1.6m coming to an end by the close of 2024. Thus, the impact of past decisions could have a more sizeable impact on activity as more households face up to an increasingly limited number of (re)mortgage options at likely far greater cost than they have been paying under their current deals.

- Furthermore, there is the small matter of a General Election coming into sight on the far horizon (late next year), so Government fiscal policy may potentially loosen at the same time as the Bank’s monetary policy is still trying to take momentum out of the economy.
- Of course, what happens outside of the UK remains critical to movement in gilt yields as well. The European Central Bank has made it clear that policy tightening is at, or close to, the terminal rate (currently 4%), whilst the US FOMC has held its Bank Rate equivalent in the range of 5.25% - 5.5%.
- From a practical standpoint those clients looking to borrow will, most probably, need to continue to focus on optimising their cashflow forecasts, and given the elevated level of rates right across the curve at present, seek to fund either temporarily from local authorities or with short-dated loans from the PWLB. You will see from our forecast that we still expect both short and longer-term rates to be somewhat lower over the duration of the forecast. Nonetheless, if certainty is paramount within your debt management strategy, we will help you to optimise any longer dated borrowing requirements you may have.
- On the flipside, if you are an authority that is fully funded or wishes to reduce its exposure to long-dated debt, the more recent increase in yields could provide further scope to repay loans prematurely (both market and PWLB) whilst the high discount rates prevail. Your Client Relationship Manager should be contacted if this is something you wish to look at.
- In terms of our forecast, our money market yield forecasts are based on expected average earnings by local authorities for 3 to 12 months. Our forecasts for average earnings are averages i.e., rates offered by individual banks may differ significantly from these averages, reflecting their different needs for borrowing short-term cash at any one point in time.

Our current and previous PWLB rate forecasts below are based on the Certainty Rate (the standard rate minus 20 bps) which has been accessible to most authorities since 1 November 2012. Please note, the lower Housing Revenue Account (HRA) PWLB rate started on the 15 June 2023 for those authorities with an HRA (standard rate minus 60 bps).

Link Group Interest Rate View		25.09.23											
	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26
<b>BANK RATE</b>	5.25	5.25	5.25	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75
3 month ave earnings	5.30	5.30	5.30	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80	2.80
6 month ave earnings	5.60	5.50	5.40	5.10	4.60	4.10	3.60	3.10	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.90
12 month ave earnings	5.80	5.70	5.50	5.20	4.70	4.20	3.70	3.20	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
5 yr PWLB	5.10	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.40	4.20	4.00	3.90	3.70	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.50
10 yr PWLB	5.00	4.90	4.80	4.60	4.40	4.20	4.00	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.50	3.50
25 yr PWLB	5.40	5.20	5.10	4.90	4.70	4.40	4.30	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.80	3.80
50 yr PWLB	5.20	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.50	4.20	4.10	3.90	3.80	3.70	3.60	3.60	3.60

Link Group Interest Rate View		26.06.23											
	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26
<b>BANK RATE</b>	5.00	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.25	4.75	4.25	3.75	3.25	2.75	2.75	2.50	2.50
3 month ave earnings	5.30	5.60	5.50	5.30	5.00	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.70	2.60	2.50	2.50
6 month ave earnings	5.80	5.90	5.70	5.50	5.10	4.60	4.00	3.50	3.00	2.70	2.60	2.60	2.60
12 month ave earnings	6.30	6.20	6.00	5.70	5.30	4.80	4.10	3.60	3.10	2.80	2.70	2.70	2.70
5 yr PWLB	5.50	5.60	5.30	5.10	4.80	4.50	4.20	3.90	3.60	3.40	3.30	3.30	3.20
10 yr PWLB	5.10	5.20	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.40	4.20	3.90	3.70	3.50	3.50	3.50	3.40
25 yr PWLB	5.30	5.40	5.20	5.10	4.90	4.70	4.50	4.20	4.00	3.90	3.80	3.80	3.70
50 yr PWLB	5.00	5.10	5.00	4.90	4.70	4.50	4.30	4.00	3.80	3.60	3.60	3.50	3.50

## A SUMMARY OVERVIEW OF THE FUTURE PATH OF BANK RATE

- Our central forecast for interest rates was previously updated on 26 June and reflected a view that the MPC would be keen to further demonstrate its anti-inflation credentials by delivering a succession of rate increases. Since then, rates have indeed increased to 5.25% but with data suggesting inflation is dipping, albeit slowly, and that the economy is heading for a shallow recession, further monetary policy tightening above 5.25% is not required, at least for now.
- Accordingly, although we anticipate rates staying on hold for the best part of a year, we also still anticipate the Bank of England will be keen to loosen monetary policy when the worst of the inflationary pressures are behind us – but timing on this will remain one of fine judgment: cut too soon, and inflationary pressures may well build up further; cut too late and any downturn or recession may be prolonged.
- In the upcoming months, our forecasts will be guided not only by economic data releases and clarifications from the MPC over its monetary policies and the Government over its fiscal policies, but also international factors such as policy development in the US and Europe, the provision of fresh support packages to support the faltering recovery in China as well as the on-going conflict between Russia and Ukraine.
- On the positive side, consumers are still estimated to be sitting on some excess savings left over from the pandemic, which could cushion some of the impact of the above challenges and may be the reason why the economy is performing somewhat better at this stage of the economic cycle than may have been expected. However, most of those excess savings are held by more affluent people whereas lower income families already spend nearly all their income on essentials such as food, energy and rent/mortgage payments.

## PWLB RATES

- Gilt yield curve movements have narrowed, with the short part of the curve seeing yields fall through recent weeks whilst the longer-end continues to reflect inflation concerns. At the time of writing there is <30 basis points difference between the 5 and 50 year parts of the curve.

### The balance of risks to the UK economy: -

- The overall balance of risks to economic growth in the UK is to the downside.

### Downside risks to current forecasts for UK gilt yields and PWLB rates include: -

- **Labour and supply shortages** prove more enduring and disruptive and depress economic activity (accepting that in the near-term this is also an upside risk to inflation and, thus, could keep gilt yields high for longer).
- **The Bank of England** has increased Bank Rate too fast and too far over recent months, and subsequently brings about a deeper and longer UK recession than we currently anticipate.
- **UK / EU trade arrangements** – if there was a major impact on trade flows and financial services due to complications or lack of co-operation in sorting out significant remaining issues.
- **Geopolitical risks**, for example in Ukraine/Russia, China/Taiwan/US, Iran, North Korea and Middle Eastern countries, which could lead to increasing safe-haven flows.
- **A re-emergence of banking sector fragilities**, which have been successfully addressed in the near-term by central banks and the market generally, but which may require further intervention if short-term interest rates stay elevated for longer than is anticipated.

### Upside risks to current forecasts for UK gilt yields and PWLB rates: -

- Despite the recent tightening to 5.25%, the **Bank of England proves too timid** in its pace and strength of increases in Bank Rate and, therefore, allows inflationary pressures to remain elevated for a longer period within the UK economy, which then necessitates Bank Rate staying higher for longer than we currently project.

- **The pound weakens** because of a lack of confidence in the UK Government's pre-election fiscal policies, resulting in investors pricing in a risk premium for holding UK sovereign debt.
- Longer-term **US treasury yields** rise strongly if inflation remains more stubborn there than the market currently anticipates, consequently pulling gilt yields up higher.
- Projected **gilt issuance, inclusive of natural maturities and QT**, could be too much for the markets to comfortably digest without higher yields compensating.

## LINK GROUP FORECASTS

We now expect the MPC will keep Bank Rate at 5.25% during the second half of 2023 and the first half of 2024 to combat on-going inflationary and wage pressures. We do not think that the MPC will increase Bank Rate above 5.25%, but it is possible.

### Gilt yields and PWLB rates

The overall longer-run trend is for gilt yields and PWLB rates to fall back over the timeline of our forecasts, as inflation starts to fall through the remainder of 2023 and into 2024.

Our target borrowing rates are set **two years forward** (as we expect rates to fall back) and the current PWLB (certainty) borrowing rates are set out below: -

PWLB debt	Current borrowing rate as at 25.09.23 p.m.	Target borrowing rate now (end of Q3 2025)	Target borrowing rate previous (end of Q2 2025)
5 years	5.05%	3.90%	3.60%
10 years	5.10%	3.80%	3.70%
25 years	5.54%	4.10%	4.00%
50 years	5.30%	3.90%	3.80%

**Borrowing advice:** Our long-term (beyond 10 years) forecast for Bank Rate stands at 2.75%. As all PWLB certainty rates are currently significantly above this level, borrowing strategies will need to be reviewed in that context. Overall, better value can generally be obtained at the shorter end of the curve and short-dated fixed LA to LA monies should be considered. Temporary borrowing rates will remain elevated for some time to come but may prove the best option whilst the market continues to wait for inflation, and therein gilt yields, to drop back later in 2023 and then in 2024.

Our suggested budgeted earnings rates for investments up to about three months' duration in each financial year are rounded to the nearest 10bps and set out below. You will note that investment earnings have been revised somewhat higher for both 2023/24 and 2024/25 as Bank Rate remains higher for longer.

Average earnings in each year	Now	Previously
2023/24	5.30%	5.40%
2024/25	4.70%	4.30%
2025/26	3.00%	2.70%
2026/27	2.80%	2.50%
2027/28	3.05%	2.50%
Years 6 to 10	3.05%	2.80%
Years 10+	3.05%	2.80%

As there are so many variables at this time, caution must be exercised in respect of all interest rate forecasts.

Our interest rate forecast for Bank Rate is in steps of 25 bps, whereas PWLB forecasts have been rounded to the nearest 10 bps and are central forecasts within bands of + / - 25 bps. Naturally, we continue to monitor events and will update our forecasts as and when appropriate.

### Interest Rate Strategy Group

This report is intended for the use and assistance of customers of Link Group. It should not be regarded as a substitute for the exercise by the recipient of its own judgement. Link Group exists to provide its clients with advice primarily on borrowing and investment. We are not legal experts and we have not obtained legal advice in giving our opinions and interpretations in this paper. Clients are advised to seek expert legal advice before taking action as a result of any advice given in this paper. Whilst Link Group makes every effort to ensure that all information provided by it is accurate and complete, it does not guarantee the correctness or the due receipt of such information and will not be held responsible for any errors therein or omissions arising there from. Furthermore, Link Group shall not be held liable in contract, tort or otherwise for any loss or damage (whether direct, or indirect or consequential) resulting from negligence, delay or failure on the part of Link Group or its officers, employees or agents in procuring, presenting, communicating or otherwise providing information or advice whether sustained by Link Group customer or any third party directly or indirectly making use of such information or advice, including but not limited to any loss or damage resulting as a consequence of inaccuracy or errors in such information or advice. All information supplied by Link Group should only be used as a factor to assist in the making of a business decision and should not be used as a sole basis for any decision. Treasury services are provided by Link Treasury Services Limited (registered in England and Wales No. 2652033).

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## 2023 / 24 HALF YEARLY TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE

## Compliance with Prudential Indicators

## (a) Estimates of Capital Expenditure

The Council's planned capital expenditure and financing may be summarised as follows.

Capital Expenditure and Financing	2023 / 24 Estimate £000	2024 / 25 Estimate £000	2025 / 26 Estimate £000	2026 / 27 Estimate £000
<b>Total Expenditure*</b>	<b>5,153</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>489</b>
Capital Receipts	355	149	69	69
Government Grants	539	420	420	420
Contributions	292	0	0	0
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>1,186</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>489</b>
Internal Borrowing	3,967	0	0	0
Supported borrowing	0	0	0	0
Unsupported borrowing	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Financing</b>	<b>3,967</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Financing and Funding</b>	<b>5,153</b>	<b>569</b>	<b>489</b>	<b>489</b>

\*The table has changed from the capital budget approved 22 February 2023 in that on 30 March 2023 the Council approved the acquisition of waste vehicles as part of the new waste contract with Suez from January 2024. This is to be funded from Internal Borrowing. i.e. temporarily utilising £4.0m of the Council's treasury investments. The resulting loss of investment income is estimated at £198kpa based on current returns of c.5%.

The above table also shows that the capital expenditure plans of the council can be funded entirely from sources other than external borrowing.

## (b) Operational Boundary for External Debt and Authorised Limit for External Debt

The Council currently has no need of external borrowing.

## (c) Incremental Impact of Capital Investment Decisions

This is an indicator of affordability that shows the impact of capital investment decisions on Council Tax. The incremental impact is calculated by comparing the total revenue budget requirement of the current approved capital programme with an equivalent calculation of the revenue budget requirement arising from the proposed capital programme.

Incremental Impact of	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
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<b>Capital Investment Decisions</b>	<b>Estimate £</b>	<b>Estimate £</b>	<b>Estimate £</b>
Increase in Band D Council Tax per dwelling	7.66	7.51	7.34

The impact on Band D Council Tax is shown above as the Capital Programme is now not fully financed by Capital Receipts and Government Grants but also from internal borrowing. However, it must be noted that the above figures are offset by reduced waste contract revenue costs as the service provider (Suez) did not have vehicle capital costs to pass onto the Council.

(d) **Treasury Management Indicators**

The Council measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

Security

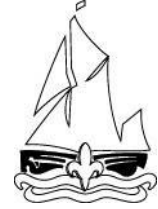
The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit score of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment.

	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Portfolio average credit score	6.0	3.3 (AA)

Liquidity

The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three-month period, without additional borrowing.

	<b>Target,</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Total cash available within 3 months	£3m	£25.0m



**REPORT of  
INTERIM CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER**

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**to  
STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
9 NOVEMBER 2023**

**RURAL SETTLEMENT LIST 2024 / 25**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To propose a Rural Settlement List for the financial year 2024 / 25, to determine and award Rural Rate Relief to eligible businesses.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

That the Rural Settlement list attached as **APPENDIX A**, be approved.

**3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 Section 42 of the Local Government Act 1988, as amended by the Local Government Finance and Ratings Act 1997, places an obligation on local authorities to publish a Rural Settlement List each financial year for the purpose of determining the eligibility for Mandatory Rural Rate Relief for businesses in the District.
- 3.2 Rural rate relief can be claimed by eligible businesses (e.g. where it is the only post office or pub in a rural settlement), provided the population of the rural settlement is below 3,000 residents.
- 3.3 It is necessary to refresh this policy annually.
- 3.4 No changes are proposed.

**4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 Members are asked to approve the Rural Settlement List for 2024 / 25 set out in **APPENDIX A**.

**5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2023 - 2027**

**5.1 Helping the economy to thrive**

- 5.1.1 The granting of Rural Rate Relief to eligible businesses within the Rural Settlements enhances the work of the Council and ties in with Corporate objectives.

## 5.2 Smarter finances

5.2.1 Without a valid Rural Settlement List the cost of any Rural Rate Relief granted could fall on the Council.

## 6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – The publication of the Rural Settlement List will enable the Council to award mandatory relief from 1 April 2024.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – Failure to approve a Rural Settlement List could impact the Councils ability to award relief.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – None.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – None.

Background Papers: None.

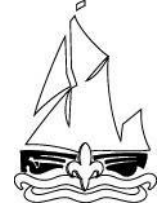
Enquiries to: Michelle La Marre, Head of Service – Revenue and Benefits.

**Maldon District Council**  
**Rural Settlement List 2024**

The following have been designated as Rural Settlement Areas under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988:

ALTHORNE – NORTH  
ALTHORNE \_ SOUTH  
ASHELDHAM  
BRADWELL-ON-SEA  
BRADWELL WATERSIDE  
COLD NORTON  
DENGIE  
GOLDHANGER  
GREAT BRAXTED  
GREAT TOTHAM – NORTH  
GREAT TOTHAM -SOUTH  
HAZELEIGH  
HEYBRIDGE BASIN  
LANGFORD  
LATCHINGDON  
LITTLE BRAXTED  
LITTLE TOTHAM  
MUNDON  
NORTH FAMBRIDGE -NORTH  
NORTH FAMBRIDGE -SOUTH  
PURLEIGH  
ST. LAWRENCE  
STEEPLE  
STOW MARIES  
TILLINGHAM  
TOLLESBURY  
TOLLESHUNT D'ARCY  
TOLLESHUNT KNIGHTS  
TOLLESHUNT MAJOR  
ULTING  
WICKHAM BISHOPS  
WOODHAM MORTIMER  
WOODHAM WALTER

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**REPORT of  
DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AND RESOURCES**

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to  
**STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
9 NOVEMBER 2023**

## **WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**

### **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To review the Council's Whistleblowing Policy (the Policy).

### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

That the draft Whistleblowing Policy attached at **APPENDIX 1** to this report be agreed.

### **3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 The Whistleblowing Policy should be reviewed every three years or if legislation changes significantly to ensure this meets the requirements of the Council.
- 3.2 The Policy in place, although working adequately, had last been reviewed more than three years ago. Therefore, an exercise was undertaken to review this.
- 3.3 This Policy works alongside the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy, Anti Money Laundering Policy and Bribery Act Policy.
- 3.4 This review was completed by the Assistant Directors – Resources and was reviewed by the Section 151 Officer and Director of Strategy and Resources, with advice from auditors and details of policies from other similar Councils. This ensured that the policy was up to date and covered all the key areas of how to report any suspected risk.
- 3.5 Following Council approval, this policy will be adopted, provided to staff and Members and set for review in 2026 or earlier if legislation changes significantly.

### **4. CONCLUSION**

4.1 To ensure that the Whistleblowing Policy is appropriately reviewed and approved for use the Committee is asked to approve the attached Policy (**APPENDIX 1**) to be but in place until the next three year review or earlier if legislation changes.

## 5. IMPACT ON PRIORITIES AS SET OUT IN THE CORPORATE PLAN 2023 - 2027

5.1 The adoption of up to date fraud policies protects the Council, staff and residents and meets with the Corporate Plan priorities as below.

### 5.2 Smarter finances

5.2.1 Ensuring that the public purse is protected from Fraud.

### 5.3 Provide good quality services.

5.3.1 Ensuring that the systems and processes are in place to prevent and combat fraud to enable the effective delivery of services.

## 6. IMPLICATIONS

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – Safeguarding Council finances, identifying and dealing with any fraudulent activities.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – None.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – Reducing risk of fraud.
- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – Required to monitor and address any issues with fraud as required by the policies.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – Required to support if any fraudulent issues identified.

Background Papers: None.

Enquiries to: Annette Cardy, Resources Specialist Services Manager.



# Whistleblowing policy and procedure



## Document Control Sheet

<b>Document title</b>	<b>Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure</b>
<b>Summary of purpose</b>	The purpose of this policy and procedure is to provide information and guidance for employees and workers on how to disclose malpractice. The policy and procedure provides a guide for employees on all aspects of the process.
<b>Prepared by</b>	Annette Cardy
<b>Status</b>	Draft
<b>Version number</b>	5
<b>Approved by</b>	The Strategy and Resources Committee
<b>Approval date</b>	
<b>Date of implementation</b>	Immediate
<b>Review frequency</b>	As required by legislative changes
<b>Review date</b>	
<b>Circulation</b>	All staff and Members

## MALDON DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Final revised Whistle blowing policy and procedure

#### Policy statement and organisational aim

- ✓ Maldon District Council is committed to the provision of the highest quality services for the benefit of the local community and to full accountability for those services.
- ✓ The Council has set in place rules, regulations, quality standards and procedures to ensure that the highest standards of conduct and commitment to service are observed. While the Council expects all staff to maintain the highest possible standard of conduct it recognises that any organisation faces the risk of unknowingly harbouring unethical, illegal or bad practice.
- ✓ The Council is not prepared to tolerate any malpractice in the performance and delivery of its services and will treat any complaints very seriously.
- ✓ The Council encourages and will be supportive of all individuals to raise concerns and disclose information about the conduct of others in the business or the way in which the business is run.
- ✓ The whistle-blower's identity will, so far as is possible, be kept confidential.
- ✓ No individual should fear any form of reprisal from disclosing wrongdoing within the organisation whether proved founded or unfounded. Any employee who, in good faith, makes allegations that turn out to be unfounded will not be penalised for being genuinely mistaken.
- ✓ The Council believes that the greatest deterrent to wrong doing is the belief that complaints and disclosures will be investigated vigorously, the person(s) responsible dealt with, and the matter promptly remedied.

#### 1 What is whistle blowing?

Whistle blowing is a name used to describe the disclosure of information that has a tendency to show that wrongdoing or malpractice is taking place.

There is UK legislation (The Public Interest Disclosures Act 1998) that protects workers from experiencing victimisation when they make these types of disclosures; this is provided that the disclosure made falls within the legal definition of a 'protected disclosures'.

#### 2 What does this policy/procedure apply to and who can use it?

This policy applies to anything illegal, improper, unethical or wrong that is done by:

- officers
- Councillors
- co-opted Committee members

- anyone representing the Council
- partner organisations
- contractors, consultants or other suppliers.

Examples would include a criminal offence, fraud or corruption, damage to the environment, safeguarding concerns, negligence, theft or misuse of public money or failure to follow the Council's finance, contract or other rules.

In practice this will cover matters such as unauthorised use of public funds; unauthorised disclosure of confidential information; physical and sexual abuse; health and safety risks to both staff and members of the public; and the acceptance of bribes. However, these are only examples of the types of conduct that are likely to fall within the relevant types of wrong doing, and this is not an exhaustive list.

Whilst it is important that all members of staff are aware of the scope of the whistleblowing legislation, and the protection it provides, the aim of this policy is to address wrongdoing and malpractice of any kind within the Council but should not be used to raise standard employment or line management matters by way of grievance.

The Council has other policies and procedures, for example on recruitment and selection, discipline, grievances, bullying and harassment and diversity. In addition, reference should be made to the Council's Member / Officer Relations Protocol to discuss areas of concern, differences or complaints with regard to Member and Officer relationships. The whistleblowing policy should only be used when other policies are inappropriate.

This policy / procedure is essentially for Council officers whether they be full or part-time employees, secondees, casual workers or volunteers, or contractors. Whilst the legislation only offers protection for workers, the Council will ensure that anyone who discloses potential malpractice by the Council is not victimised and can make their concerns known anonymously if they wish. This protection is therefore extended to:

- Councillors;
- Those working for a person, firm or organisation supplying goods or services to the Council;
- Those working for organisations with which we have partnered; and
- Members of the public.

Members of the public can use the Council's complaints procedure or complain to the local government ombudsman having exhausted the Council's internal complaints procedure.

### **3 Purpose of whistle blowing policy**

Officers with serious concerns about any of the Council's work or activities are expected to blow the whistle. This policy:

- encourages officers to blow the whistle within the Council rather than say nothing or take their concerns elsewhere
- protects whistle blowers from reprisals as long as they have acted honestly and in the public interest

- provides a procedure for whistle blowing
- ensures whistle blowers get a response
- gives advice on what to do if the response is not good enough.

#### 4 **Protecting the identity of whistle blowers**

The Council cannot guarantee to protect the identity of whistle blowers as it may, during an investigation, have to say where it got its information from and disclose the original complaint. The whistle blower may also have to act as a witness in any subsequent hearing.

#### 5 **How will the Council protect whistle blowers?**

The Council will protect whistle blowers from reprisals as long as they had a reasonable belief that the allegations were true and made them in good faith. Reprisals will be treated seriously as a disciplinary offence and dealt with through the disciplinary procedure. Where workers blow the whistle but do not cite the policy they will still be protected under it.

The Council will try to minimise any difficulties resulting from whistle blowing. For example, it will advise whistle blowers about the procedure if they have to act as witnesses.

#### 6 **Anonymous allegations**

This policy encourages workers to put their names to allegations but the Council may investigate allegations made anonymously. In deciding whether to investigate an anonymous allegation, the Council will consider how serious it is, whether it is believable and whether evidence can be obtained from a non-anonymous source.

#### 7 **Untrue allegations**

Workers will not suffer reprisals for making allegations that turn out to be untrue, as long as they had a reasonable belief that the allegations were true and made them in the public interest. Allegations that are made without a reasonable belief as to their truth or not made in the public interest are likely to be treated as a disciplinary offence and dealt with through the disciplinary procedure.

#### 8 **Role of trade unions and professional associations**

Workers can raise concerns themselves or ask their trade union or professional association to act on their behalf. Whistle blowers can bring a trade union or professional association representative or a friend with them to meetings.

#### 9 **How do workers blow the whistle?**

- (a) Saying that the whistle blowing procedure is being used  
The whistle blower should wherever possible make it clear from the start that they want to use the whistle blowing procedure.
- (b) Putting concerns in writing  
Whistle blowers should wherever possible put their concerns in writing, giving as much detail and including relevant dates. Whistle blowers are not expected to prove that their allegations are true but they need to show that there are reasons for raising their concern and it was made in the public interest. If a whistle blower does not feel they can put their concerns in writing, they can be interviewed instead – see 10(c).

(c) Who should whistle blowers go to with their allegations?

Whistle blowers may wish to discuss their concerns with their line manager or head of service but there is no obligation to do so. The preferred option is for all whistleblowing reports to be made directly to Legal Services who are responsible for this process. If the whistle blower is uncomfortable with this, then a report can be made to a Director or Assistant Director.

If the whistle blower suspects fraud or corruption and has a concern that raising this with a member of staff may 'tip-off' relevant individuals, they can also go direct to the Council's internal auditors (currently BDO) or to the Council's appointed external auditors (currently Deloitte).

10 **How will the Council respond to whistle blowing?**(a) Notification of allegation

Upon receipt of an allegation under this policy the person receiving the allegation must immediately notify the Legal Services.

Once received an initial assessment will be undertaken to determine what action needs to be taken. This may involve either an internal inquiry, or a more formal investigation. The whistle blower will be advised of who will be handling the matter, how they can be contacted, and whether any further assistance may be needed. If requested, a summary of the concerns raised and how the matter is proposed to be handled will be provided. The aim will be to do this within 5 working days.

A whistle blower may be asked how they think the matter might best be resolved. Whistle blowers are urged to make clear any personal interest they have in the matter.

(b) Appointment of an officer to investigate

The person receiving the complaint will decide, in consultation with any of the Officers referred to in paragraph 9(c) above as required how (unless the allegation relates to one or more of them) the allegation will be investigated and write to the whistle blower within ten working days. The letter should:

- acknowledge that the whistle blower has used the whistle blowing policy
- say how their concern will be dealt with and how long they think this will take
- tell them whether any initial enquiries have been made
- say what further action will be taken (or say why no further action will be taken)
- tell them they have the right to bring someone with them to any meetings they have to attend about the allegation.

(c) Interviews

If the whistle blower has not put their concerns in writing, they may be interviewed. A summary of the interview will be made which should be signed by the person conducting the interview and the whistle blower.

(d) Further action

After preliminary investigation the Council will take further action if the investigation officer decides that it would be in the public interest to do so. Further action may include:

- Arranging an investigation by management or internal auditors
- Arranging a disciplinary process
- Referring allegations to the police

- Referring allegations to the external auditor
  - Arranging an independent inquiry if the allegations are very serious or complicated
- (e) Response to whistle blowers at the end of the investigation  
If the law allows, the Council will tell the whistle blower the outcome of any investigation within 10 working days of it ending.
- (f) Support  
Whistle blowers are encouraged to obtain support and advice that may include their trade union representative or HR team contact, any designated representatives for bullying and harassment or the charity Public Concern at Work, the whistleblowing charity, which provides a confidential independent [helpline](#) for whistle blowers –
- Public Concern at Work (Independent whistleblowing charity)  
Helpline: (020) 7404 6609  
E-mail: [whistle@pcaw.co.uk](mailto:whistle@pcaw.co.uk) Website: [www.pcaw.co.uk](http://www.pcaw.co.uk)

## 11 Taking concerns further

If a worker has sought advice and feels it is right to raise their concerns outside the Council, people they could approach include their local Council, their local Councillor, the external auditor, the health and safety executive, a government department, a solicitor, the police, an MP or a relevant professional body or regulatory organisation or by contacting one of the nationally prescribed persons. A list is available in this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2>

If a worker does raise their concerns outside the Council, they must do it without passing on confidential information. The Specialist or Lead Specialist for Legal Services can give advice on this.

## 12 Monitoring and reporting

A Director will report to the Performance, Governance and Audit (PGA) Committee on the number (if any) of whistle blowing complaints made as part of the Council's anti-fraud and corruption awareness framework.

## 13 Responsibility for this policy

Legal Services has overall responsibility for this policy and how it is used and how the policy is working.

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