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Steve Atkinson MA(Oxon) MBA FIoD FRSA
Chief Executive

Date: 28 May 2013



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

A Borough to be proud of

To: **Members of the Executive**

Mr SL Bray (Chairman)
Mr DC Bill MBE (Vice-Chairman)
Mr DS Cope
Mr WJ Crooks

Mr DM Gould
Mr KWP Lynch
Mr MT Mullaney
Ms BM Witherford

Copy to all other Members of the Council

(other recipients for information)

Dear Councillor,

There will be a meeting of the **EXECUTIVE** in the Committee Room 2 on **WEDNESDAY, 5 JUNE 2013 at 5.30 pm** and your attendance is required.

The agenda for the meeting is set out overleaf.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'Helen Rishworth'.

Helen Rishworth
Communications & Democratic Accountability Officer

EXECUTIVE - 5 JUNE 2013

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES
2. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 2)
To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2013.
3. ADDITIONAL URGENT BUSINESS BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES
To be advised of any additional items of business which the Chairman decides by reason of special circumstances shall be taken as matters of urgency at this meeting.
4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
To receive verbally from Members any disclosures which they are required to make in accordance with the Council's code of conduct or in pursuance of Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. **This is in addition to the need for such disclosure to be also given when the relevant matter is reached on the agenda.**
5. QUESTIONS
To hear any questions in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.
6. AUTO-ENROLMENT - CHANGES TO THE PENSION SCHEME (Pages 3 - 10)
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Direction) attached.
7. AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY PLAN (Pages 11 - 16)
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Community Direction).
8. REVIEW OF THE HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY (Pages 17 - 28)
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Community Direction).
9. PRIVATE SECTOR LEASING SCHEME (Pages 29 - 36)
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Community Direction).
10. SUPERFAST BROADBAND INVESTMENT (Pages 37 - 38)
Report of the Chief Executive.
11. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (Pages 39 - 46)
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Community Direction).
12. TOURISM STRATEGY 2013-18 (Pages 47 - 64)
Report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Community Direction) attached.
13. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
(If any)
14. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH AS MATTERS OF URGENCY

Agenda Item 2

HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE

19 FEBRUARY 2013 AT 5.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr SL Bray - Chairman

Mr DS Cope, Mr DM Gould and Mr KWP Lynch

Officers in attendance: Steve Atkinson, Katherine Bennett, Sanjiv Kohli and Rob Parkinson

407 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Mr Bill, Mr Mullaney and Ms Witherford.

408 MINUTES

Members' attention was drawn to an inaccuracy to minute number 373 (ii) where, agreement be given... should read, agreement was not given...

On the motion of Mr Cope, seconded by Mr Lynch it was

RESOLVED - subject to the amendment referred to above the minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

409 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

410 REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES 2013/14

Members were presented with the proposed Fees and Charges for 2013/14.

It was highlighted that there was a small error in the booklet on page 17 where the Central Control Connection charge should read £1.90 not £1.72.

On the motion of Mr Lynch, seconded by Mr Cope it was

RESOLVED

(i) Executive approve the Fees and Charges book for 2013/14 with the amendment to page 17 as stated above; and

(ii) Executive note the Fees and Charges that are set externally by Council partners.

411 CLIMATE LOCAL

Members were advised of the Local Authority Climate Change declaration initiative, Climate Local, and informed of the implications of becoming a signatory.

On the motion of Mr Gould, seconded by Mr Lynch, it was

RESOLVED –

- (i) Executive agree that the Council sign up to Climate Local; and
- (ii) a Climate Local Action Plan be developed and brought to Executive for approval.

(The Meeting closed at 5.37 pm)

CHAIRMAN

EXECUTIVE – 5 JUNE 2013

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE DIRECTION)

AUTO ENROLMENT – CHANGES TO THE PENSION SCHEME

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report considers the impact of Auto Enrolment for the Council and to consider whether to elect for deferred auto enrolment until 1 April 2017 for non pension scheme members.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Council defer auto enrolment of staff that previously opted out of the pension scheme until April 2017.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 3.1 As part of the new pension reform, with effect from October 2012, all UK employers with more than 50 employees must automatically enroll all 'eligible jobholders' into a 'qualifying scheme' and invite most others to join the scheme. This affects all LGPS employers. The new duties for an employer will be phased in, using staging dates based upon the PAYE group, starting with the largest employers (employees in excess of 120,000) from October 2012.
- 3.2 As soon as employers hit their staging date they will be required to:
- provide a 'qualifying scheme' (of which the LGPS is a defined benefit scheme)
 - provide information to all staff, for example telling 'eligible employees' that they are being automatically enrolled and have the right to opt out. Employers cannot encourage staff to opt out. Other categories of staff must be told about the pension scheme and about their right to opt in.
 - automatically enrol all 'eligible jobholders' (employees who earn more than £8,105 pa, are aged 22 years or over and below the state pension age)
 - register with the Pensions Regulator and maintain adequate records, and
 - repeat this auto-enrolment process every three years, for employees who have opted out.
- 3.3 The staging date for HBBC is 1 November 2013. With effect from this date, existing workers already in the LGPS will remain in the scheme. For the remaining staff, the Council must carry out an assessment of its workforce to determine which employees are 'eligible jobholders' under the duty.
- 3.4 The Council already operates auto enrolment (with the right to opt out) for all employees in the LGPS. The LGPS is a qualifying scheme under the new regulations, as it is a defined benefit scheme. The introduction of auto enrolment for eligible jobholders means that an employee can still opt out but must do so directly with the LCC Pension Section; this will repeat every three years.
- 3.5 Until February 2012 the regulations stated that all eligible jobholders not members of the pension scheme at staging date must be auto enrolled. However the Government

introduced a late amendment to the regulations giving employers of Defined Benefit Pension schemes (including Local Authorities), the ability to defer auto enrolment of staff that previously opted out until April 2017. New employees at staging date will be automatically enrolled from 1 November 2013.

- 3.6 There may be justifiable reasons to defer, such as financial impact however consideration should be given to local authorities supporting the national agenda in regard to increasing pension provision. To draw a comparison at a local level, Leicestershire County Council has decided to defer until 2017 yet Leicestershire Fire and Rescue has embraced auto enrolment and plans to implement on the staging date.

4. EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1 Communication – The new regulations require individual and targeted communication for three types of worker at particular dates aligned to the staging date. General communication must take place 1 month prior to the staging date, i.e. on or before 1 October 2013. The impact of this is that the Council will continue to auto-enrol as now but with different forms. Different communication needs to be sent to the staff in the differing type 1, 2 and 3 bands. The format of the communication will be determined by the Pension Regulator.

If the employer opts to defer existing eligible staff at the staging date (Type 1), it must advise the employee that it is deferred until November 2017 however they can opt in voluntarily.

- 4.2 Record Keeping – all employers must set up and maintain detailed records of Type 1,2 and 3 employees whether scheme members or not and including details of communication issued to employees. These must be submitted to the regulator and the HR system will need to be upgraded to ensure that when employees pass age and income bands triggers it will highlight when employees are to be auto enrolled. If the Council decides to defer Type 1 employees until 2017 then individual details must be provided to the regulator. Whilst the system's upgrade will support trigger points, there will be an impact upon the level of administration within the HR team.

- 4.3 Managing Opt Outs – currently all staff are auto enrolled into the LGPS with the right to opt out. Therefore it is possible to opt out as an employee before becoming a member. Under the new regulations all jobholders have the right to opt out but the process is now managed by the pension administrator. For example, it is not permitted under the regulation for employers to advise relevant staff on or before the staging date that they will be auto enrolled but can opt out if they wish. Type 1 employees who are auto enrolled must become members of a scheme before they opt out, and even then, the opt out is managed by the administrator rather than the employer (i.e. previously HBBC would keep opt out forms and inform LCC). The Pensions Regulator has announced that there will be fines and penalties for employers attempting to induce staff to opt out as well as operating inadequate/incorrect communication or record keeping.

5. IMPACT OF AUTO ENROLMENT

- 5.1 Financial Impact – Employees need to be assessed to determine which category they fall under (Table 1) as this determines which employee must be auto enrolled (eligible job holder) or 'invited to join' (entitled worker).

Table 1

Age	16-21 years	22 years – State Pension Age	State Pension Age – 74 years
Earning under £5,564	Entitled Worker		
Earnings between £5,564 and £8,105	Non-Eligible Jobholder		
Earnings Above £8,105	Non-Eligible Jobholder	Eligible Jobholder	Non-Eligible Jobholder

- 5.2 Table 2 provides an analysis of employees within the service area who are not currently members of the pension scheme

Table 2

Type	Eligible Worker	Non Eligible Worker	Entitled Worker	Total
Number of staff	89	14	9	112

For illustration purposes, based on pay in 2012/13 for current non pensionable staff (Table 2) and if all staff auto enrolled/invited to join to become members, the maximum amount of additional pension contribution per annum is £327,224

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [KB]

- 4.1 Any additional pension contributions that are required as a result of these changes will be charged to the officers cost centre and the relevant “fund”. For 2013/14, the potential impact will be based on 5 months charges (i.e. November 2012 – March 2013). The impact of this and the full year impact are detailed below:

	5 month impact (£)	Full year impact (£)
General Fund (non depot staff)	41,468	99,523
General Fund (depot staff)	65,156	156,374
Housing Revenue Account	29,720	71,327
Total	136,343	327,224

- 4.2 From the above it is evident that the largest area of potential cost is for those officers currently employed at the depot.
- 4.3 These calculations are based on the assumption that all eligible individuals opt in at the set date and are therefore the maximum exposure that may occur. This calculation has been forecast based on the notified employer contributions for the scheme for 2013/14 however these may be subject to review in future years.
- 4.4 In addition to the cost of contributions, the Council is also forecasting additional development costs of £1,000 needed to prepare the payroll system for these changes. Additional consultancy days may also be required. The Council has a “Pensions Contributions” reserve in place which to fund additional contributions. The value of this reserve as at 1st April 2012 was £49,000.

4.5 Local Authorities are required to account for pension and retirement benefits as outlined by International Accounting Standard 19 (IAS19). Additional contributions and members will impact the Council's liability value which reflects the future costs of the scheme. This will be determined by the LGPS actuary "Hymans Robertson" at year end.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [LH]

Contained within the report.

6. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

This report is required due to changes in pension legislation.

7. CONSULTATION

Consultation has taken place with Unison both at regional and branch level and feedback was received on 22 February 2013 (letter of response attached). Unison does not support deferring until 2017 as it has campaigned for auto enrolment at national level and argues that by not auto enrolling, this has the potential to impact upon its most vulnerable members (Unison has not however consulted with their Members employed by this Council). Unison refers to the Equalities Impact assessment produced by the Department of Work and Pension which identifies positive beneficial impacts for women and lower paid workers should they be auto enrolled (link in background papers).

HBBC has also carried out a local assessment of those staff currently not in the LGPS and have previously opted out. In order to minimise any detrimental impact the Council, working in conjunction with the Unison branch, will encourage employees to opt in to the scheme on a voluntary basis. This will be through informal and formal briefings to educate staff on the benefits of joining the LGPS.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
If all of the staff (who are eligible), auto enrol and potentially stay in the LGPS this will have a significant impact upon budgets at a time when government funding is restricted.	By deferring until 2017 this will provide more lead time to establish adequate budget provision.	Sanjiv Kohli

9. **KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

All eligible employees have the opportunity to join the LGPS; this is irrespective should the Council opt to defer auto enrolment.

10. **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

None

Background papers: Impact Assessment DWP Workplace Pension Reforms
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/auto-enrol-european-employers-final-ia.pdf>

Contact Officer: Katherine Bennett, Accountancy Manager; Julie Stay, HR and Transformation Manager

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Response from Unison Hinckley & Bosworth Branch to the proposal from Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council to seek to defer Auto Enrolment to a pension scheme.

Unison supported the Government in consultations to bring forward the legislative provision for auto enrolment. Unison considers such provision as necessary and desirable and therefore does not support the proposal to defer auto enrolment as it is at odds with the desirability and need for everyone to have adequate provision for retirement.

Unison is disappointed at this proposal to cut costs at the expense of lower paid employees and is concerned that the only financial figures in the paper appear to be projections of expenditure based on a worse case scenario without any discussion on probability of further enrolment and therefore does not reflect reality.

There is no discussion on the ability of the Council to finance the legislative requirement but merely the proposal to avoid the payments.

The Local Government Pension Scheme is being subjected to revision, for which Unison was a key consultee, and it is understood the Auto Enrolment provisions are proposed for change in 2014 and yet there is no reference to this in the paper.

Unison is concerned that no Equalities Impact assessment has been undertaken and the matter is referenced in the paper as “none” The DWP produced an EIA for the Auto Enrolment Regulations which identifies positive beneficial impacts for women and lower paid workers. Unison therefore requests that the paper must at least reflect the view of the DWP EIA cross-referenced to the information held on the employees identified as affected by these proposals.

Unison notes that the draft paper makes no reference to consultations and requests that this response is appended.

Robert Vaughan
Health & Safety Officer
Unison Hinckley & Bosworth Branch

22nd February 2013

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EXECUTIVE – 5 JUNE 2013

**REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE
(COMMUNITY DIRECTION)**

RE: AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY PLAN

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS



1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of the options available to progress the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan and agree preferred options for further discussion at the HRA Investment Plan workshop.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Members :

- a) Note the range of options available to members to increase the supply of affordable housing in the Borough;
- b) Approve the progressing of preferred options a, c, g and h as mechanisms to contribute to the affordable housing development in the Borough, whilst being open to other opportunities for delivery should they prove viable.
- c) Pursue the use of a Local Delivery Vehicle to work in partnership with a Registered Provider to deliver new housing under option a.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

The Affordable Housing Delivery Plan was presented to Council on 19th June 2012. The Plan considered increasing the supply of affordable housing in the Borough by:

- Building new affordable housing;
- Setting up a private sector leasing scheme;
- Use of Council owned sites to develop affordable homes through nil land value;
- Working with development partners to acquire stock on section 106 sites.

Funding for the delivery of new affordable homes can be achieved through:

- Borrowing within the headroom arrangements on the HRA
- Use of the dedicated HRA regeneration reserves;
- Use of commuted sums, particularly the significant contribution from Barwell Sustainable Urban Extension;
- Right to Buy retained receipts;
- Other grants as opportunities arise.

4. THE CURRENT POSITION

Since the approval of the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan, work has progressed on options for the delivery mechanisms for new affordable housing. The Council is not committed to following just one of these mechanisms; however, it may be advantageous to attracting delivery partners to offer fewer groupings of projects to allow them to achieve economies of scale and to make it easier to attract investors.

The opportunities open to the Authority comprise:

- a) Partnership with a developer Register Provider
The Registered Provider (RP) would develop the properties on the Council's behalf. The properties would then be owned and managed by the Council. The Council would need to offer incentives in the way of free Council owned land in the first instance to make an attractive proposition to RPs. In the medium term, the Council would have to source suitable land for development once Local Authority owned land is exhausted. On smaller sites, such as garage sites, a number of sites would need to be grouped together to make it worthwhile for the development partner, and would need to include a mix of desirable and less desirable plots to attract interest. A suggested minimum would be 6 to 8 sites grouped as one package. There would also need to be flexibility on the tenure types and build standards to help make smaller sites viable. In the medium term, the Council could use its own funding streams set out in paragraph 3.2 to enable new affordable housing to come forward, and this could be offered to RPs as a form of grant to assist funding of the schemes.
- b) Partnership with a Registered Provider to purchase extra units
This option would be to purchase extra affordable housing above the policy target on section 106 sites. Again, the Council would have to inject funds into the purchase to make it worthwhile for the Registered Provider, and the properties would be owned and managed by the Registered Provider partner. Historically, many Local Authorities have used this route to utilise any commuted sums taken from other schemes to increase supply in high demand areas. Whilst it increases the amount of affordable housing in the Borough, it does not increase the Council's stock holding and control of the properties would be with the Registered provider.
- c) The Council buys properties on section 106 sites
The Council could increase its stock by acquiring the affordable housing quota on section 106 sites. This would involve the Council being involved in competitive bidding with other Registered Providers as developers are free to approach any Registered Provider for interest in the affordable housing, and accept the highest offer. The Council is a Development Partner with the Homes and Communities Agency and therefore have the opportunity to bid for Grant to deliver a package of properties in the bid round from 2015. The Council could prepare for this eventuality although as yet there is no certainty what form bidding would take. Alternatively, the Council can use its own receipts to fund purchase of new homes on developments.
- d) Partnership with a private company for new stock
The Council could engage with a private company, who will arrange capital borrowing for delivery of new affordable housing, either to build or purchase properties on the Council's behalf. The Council will make an agreement to manage and maintain the properties and agree to buy them in a trickle transfer arrangement in tranches of 15% over a number of years until all the properties become part of Council stock.
- e) Partnership with a private company who develop properties
This would, as with the RP option, involve development of new build on Council owned land. An investment company will hold the assets until any borrowing to develop is paid off, (usually around 20 years), after which they revert to the Council for a notional fee. During the initial period, the Council manages and maintains the properties for an agreed fee with the private company.

- f) The Council develops new affordable housing itself.
This would initially utilise Council owned land to be financially viable. The Council could use its' own funds, from Right to Buy receipts, use of commuted sums, or money released from the HRA reform. As a development partner, the Council could bid for grant from the Homes and Communities Agency in future bid rounds from 2015 onwards. However it would involve the Council growing its own expertise in this area since it is many years since the Council has delivered a programme of house building. This would include not just development skills, but land identification and negotiations for purchase of land in the longer term. There are therefore resource implications greater than any of the other options as capacity and skills within the current workforce are limited. It may not therefore be viable if development is to take place on a relatively small scale.
- g) Private Sector Leasing
Work has already commence on the delivery of a Private Sector Leasing scheme. This does not involve the Council in new build properties, but increases the supply of affordable housing by using privately owned housing for an agreed period to meet the needs of households on the Housing Register.
- h) Buy Back
The Council could increase its stock through buying back Council properties lost through the Right to Buy. There are financial incentives for this, as the Government allows Councils to fund up to 50% of the cost of repurchasing these properties up to a maximum of 6.5% of any additional net receipts from the new Right to Buy scheme. This could be particularly significant in rural areas where land for new development may be scarce.

Delivery of the options in partnership with another organisation (either private or Registered Provider), can be arranged in several ways:

Local Delivery Vehicle

Owned by the Local Authority, it allows the council to build new properties as well as contracting with another organisation to deliver new build. The structure varies, from being run by a board or by shareholders. The income stream is derived from the rents charged, and the capital to build is raised through a private funder.

Local Housing Company.

This uses surplus land owned by the local authority for development. Any development must be for at least 50% affordable housing. The capital is raised though the private sector, and also draws on private sector expertise to develop the new homes. The Company is joint owned by the local authority and the private sector partner, and the risk shared either 50/50 or 49/51. The big disadvantage to this mechanism is that it is unable to draw down HCA grant for development.

Special Purpose Vehicle.

This is a new company set up to achieve a specific end (i.e. the delivery of new affordable housing). It limits the risk to organisations by being separate from the companies which have set it up as assets not transferred to the Special Purpose Vehicle can not be touched. A shareholders agreement sets out the obligations of each party. Whilst these vehicles have been used in the past, since the financial crisis they are rarely viable and therefore have gone out of use. A further disadvantage is that the Council does not control the Special Purpose Vehicle once it is in operation.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (KB)

- 5.1 The main sources of funding for the Affordable Housing Delivery Plan include:
- Borrowing – based on the self financing settlement, the Council has approximately £4.281million of “headroom” for borrowing within the HRA. This headroom will increase as the debt is repaid. Approximately £0.113k of this headroom has been utilised to fund housing repairs overspends in 2012/2013
 - HRA Regeneration Reserve- as at 31st March 2013, the Regeneration Reserve was £2.834million. The HRA Business Plan forecasts that a balance in excess of £10.00million will be achieved by 2018
 - Commuted sums, particularly the significant contribution from Barwell SUE – at the present time, the timing and level of these receipts are currently under review
 - Right to Buy receipts retained for affordable housing – the Council has signed up to revised right to buy guidance, which allows certain receipts to be retained on the condition that they are spent within a set period for the purpose of Affordable Housing. As at 31st March 2013, the Council held £0.131million of these receipts which, in line with the guidance should fund £0.518million of spend by 31st March 2016
 - Empty Homes Grant (Private Sector Leasing) funding received from the HCA – the Council is due to receive £522,120 of funding through this mechanism in 2013/2014. This will be split between HRA and non HRA property.
- 5.2 The provision of additional affordable housing will also increase rental income to the HRA and therefore balances on this fund. Any new affordable housing will additionally contribute towards New Homes Bonus which equates to 6 years of Council Tax for each property, with an additional £300 for affordable homes.
- 5.3 Any additional affordable houses will require ongoing repairs commitments in line with stock condition data collated.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (AB)

Any of the mechanisms which require the disposal of Council Land held for housing will require the consent of the Secretary of State. The current general consent for 2013 states that the Council may dispose of any vacant land.

7. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Contributes to Decent, Well managed and Affordable Homes.

8. CONSULTATION

None required at present.

9. RISK IMPLICATIONS

10. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

An increase in the supply of affordable housing improves the opportunities for people in the Borough who cannot meet their own needs through the open market. This is

especially important in the rural areas of the Borough where high prices and low turnover of properties make it harder for households to meet their own needs.

11. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications – None identified
- Environmental implications – None identified
- ICT implications – None identified
- Asset Management implications – Contained within the body of the report.
- Human Resources implications – None identified
- Planning Implications – None identified
- Voluntary Sector – None identified.

Background papers: None

Contact Officer: Valerie Bunting.
Executive Member: Michael Mullaney

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EXECUTIVE – 5 JUNE 2013

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (COMMUNITY DIRECTION)

REVIEW OF THE HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

A Borough to be proud of

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To propose an updated Housing Allocations policy in the light of changes introduced by the Localism Bill 2011 and the 'Allocation of accommodation: guidance for the local housing authorities in England, June 2012'. This includes guidance to ensure that members of the Armed forces and their families are given additional preference for social housing as pledged by the Government through the Military Covenant.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 The Executive:
- 2.2 Note the changes and approve the proposed changes to the Allocations Policy as detailed in Appendix A to this report.
- 2.3 Note and agree the changes in property eligibility type for various households sizes.
- 2.4 Agree to the Chief Housing Officer (Housing, Community Safety and Partnerships) and Executive Member for Housing to have delegated authority to make any amendments to the policy as appropriate and to determine the implementation date of the revised policy.

3. **BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT**

- 3.1 Since 2011, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council has worked in partnership with the 6 other Councils in Leicestershire to provide a joint choice based lettings scheme across Leicestershire. We have an agreed statement of shared policy and common elements in our procedures, including the assessment banding criteria, to ensure we all have a consistent approach. This amended policy has been reviewed in conjunction with these partner Councils.
- 3.2 The Localism Act 2011, which came into effect in June 2012, gave local authorities the freedom to make changes to their housing allocation policies in order to manage their waiting lists more effectively and to address local needs and circumstances, as well as incorporate statutory requirements. The emphasis of this guidance was that social homes should go to people who genuinely need them. There are currently 2051 households on our housing register.
- 3.3 In order to inform this review, we have held joint consultation events with Registered Providers (Housing Associations) and with statutory and voluntary support agencies to ensure that the proposed changes do not have a negative impact on any specific group of people. It also incorporates recommended changes following an operational review of the Choice Based Lettings scheme in mid 2012.
- 3.4 Key areas of change are;
- Amendments to the eligibility and exclusion rules

- Changes to housing need bands
- Changes to property type and size eligibility
- Changes to number of bids and refusals

Please see Appendix A for a summary of proposed changes.

- 3.5 The Localism Act also allowed us to consider `local community contribution` as part of our eligibility criteria. Having considered how this could be defined, evidenced and monitored we decided not to include this as a separate criterion for inclusion on the housing register. The changes made to the local connection criteria reflect that the majority of home seekers are making a contribution to the local economy and therefore it is not necessary to take account of community contribution in the assessment of housing need.
- 3.6 Due to Welfare reform, the housing benefit changes which came into force in April 2013, will affect the potential maximum amount of housing benefit some of our tenants and potential tenants will receive. With this in mind, the current eligibility criteria would mean some households who are on benefits would only be eligible for properties, where housing benefit would not fully cover the rent. Also we have properties which are being under occupied and have ever increasing numbers on the housing register. To allow for greater flexibility, choice and better use of our housing stock we are proposing the following changes to the eligibility criteria;
- 2 bed houses - change the maximum age of a household with single child from 13 yrs to 16yrs and change to allow households with 2 children both under 10 yrs to also be eligible.
 - 2 bed flats - To allow children of any age to be eligible to live in flats, currently it is only children over 13 yrs or where a household has access to a child. Also change to allow household with 2 children both under 10 yrs to be eligible.
- 3.7 The proposed changes will require every housing register application to be reassessed in accordance with the new policy. Alongside this, the IT system, Arbritras, will require development to incorporate the changes. The development, testing and delivery of the IT system will inform the implementation of the new policy and as such it is requested in recommendation 2.4 that the implementation date is delegated to the Chief Officer (Housing, Community Safety and Partnerships) and Executive Member for Housing to determine.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (KB)

- 4.1 The Abritas computer operating system which holds the housing register and runs the choice based lettings scheme will need to be reconfigured with the new policy changes. The cost will be split between the 7 partner Councils. An amount has already been put into the 2013/4 budget to account for this upgrade.
- 4.2 Additional staff costs will be incurred as all households currently on the HBBC housing register will need to have their circumstances reassessed against the new policy.
- 4.3 New leaflets and scheme guides will need to be designed and printed.
- 4.4 In all cases, the cost of these changes will be funded by the Choice Based Lettings budget. A request for a carry forward for the relevant amount was made as part of the 2012/2013 outturn process

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (AB)

5.1 Contained in the body of the report

6. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The amended policy will fall within the aims of decent, well managed and affordable housing and strong and distinctive communities.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 The review of the policy involved;
The 7 Leicestershire District Councils,
The Registered Social Landlords which use the Leicestershire CBL system
Voluntary and Support agencies
Customer feedback from a questionnaire in July 2012
Formal consultation for this policy took place between 20th March 2013 and 19th April 2013. A summary is provided in Appendix B. No comments were made which would alter the proposed policy as it stands.

7. RISK IMPLICATIONS

8.

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Non compliance with recent legislation and risk of legal challenge	Adoption of amended policy.	Patricia Lavender
Increased rent loss due to affordability issues for some tenants if the household eligibility criteria is not amended to take account of housing benefit changes due in Apr 2013	Adoption of amended policy	Patricia Lavender
Reputational damage and potential for RSL's to leave the Leicestershire CBL scheme if improvements not made to Policy and operation of CBL scheme	Adoption of amended policy	Patricia Lavender

9. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

In creating the proposed policy, we invited voluntary and support agencies that support tenants and households seeking housing, to be included in its development, to contribute ideas and challenge any proposals. Their comments informed this policy and the future operation of the CBL system. An equalities impact assessment was undertaken by Blaby District Council on behalf of the CBL partnership group which this covers this policy.

The proposed eligibility changes should be of benefit in all areas, as the proposed changes could lead to better use of stock, especially in those areas of high demand but limited supply, such as some rural areas. This should help to improve village continuity and lead to thriving local communities.

10. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset Management implications
- Human Resources implications
- Planning Implications
- Voluntary Sector

Background papers: Part VI Housing Act 1996
Localism Bill 2011
DCLG Allocation of Accommodation: guidance for local housing
authorities in England 2012

Contact Officer: Tricia Lavender x5638

Executive Member: Councillor Micheal Mullaney

Appendix A- Proposed Policy Changes

	Proposed Policy Changes	Reason for change/Impact
<p>Page 21</p>	<p>Definition of Local Connection</p> <p>Sub-Regional Connection We are proposing to restrict entry onto the housing register to only those people who have a defined local connection with one or more of the authorities in the scheme (except in exceptional circumstances). Examples of exceptions might be households fleeing the threat of violence or Armed Forces and former service personnel or bereaved spouse and civil partners of members of the Armed forces who are leaving service accommodation.</p>	<p>Collectively there are 11790 home seekers on the Leicestershire housing register. 494 of them have no local connection to the Leicestershire districts. Those with no 'local connection' are currently placed in the Low housing need band.</p> <p>Managing applications on the register is a cost to the authorities in the scheme and by restricting applications in this way we will reduce costs, reduce the time spent managing unrealistic housing expectations, and ensure that we are addressing local housing need.</p> <p>The Allocation of accommodation Guidance issued by CLG stipulates that Members of the Armed Forces and the Reserve Forces should not be disqualified from entry to the housing register on the grounds that they do not have a local connection with the authority's district where the application is made within five years of discharge.</p>
<p>District Connection</p>	<p>Definition of District Level Connection Add to 'Currently reside on a permanent basis in the district' with, 'Currently reside on a permanent basis in the district and have lived in the district for at least the last six months'.</p>	<p>There are currently six rules used to define a district connection and anyone establishing one or more of these criteria is considered to have a valid 'local connection' with the district. The first of these is 'They currently reside on a permanent basis within the district'. This means that someone who has just moved to our district can claim a 'local connection' if they do not meet any of the remaining five criteria. By introducing a qualifying period of six months we will reduce the numbers of applicants to join the register who are not employed in the district, or have parents, guardians or siblings living in the district for</p>

		<p>at least 5 years</p>
<p>Eligibility and Exclusion Rules</p>	<p>Who is not eligible to join the housing register:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants with no local connection to any of the seven districts within the scheme • Home seekers who have the financial means to meet their own housing needs. This would be determined by assessing whether the joint home seekers' income, joint savings or equity exceed the threshold set for the relevant district. The exception to this would be those who demonstrate a support need for supported, sheltered, or extra care housing, which they cannot purchase/rent on the open market • Applicant considered to be unsuitable to be a tenant (although such exclusions will be justified by the authority and proportionate to the reason for exclusion) 	<p>Restricting applications to join the housing register to only those home seekers who can demonstrate a 'local connection' with one of the seven district authorities will impact on approximately 500 home seekers currently on the housing register. However, this will reduce administration of those applications when there is little prospect of being re-housed.</p> <p>We have been more explicit about excluding home seekers who we assess to have the means to address their own housing needs and have refreshed the figures used for Affordability calculation purposes.</p> <p>We have also been explicit about applicants considered to be unsuitable to be a tenant or lack the capacity to sustain a tenancy (although such exclusion must be justified and proportionate taking into account their housing need). Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • behaviour likely to result in granting an outright possession order • Owing a housing related debt greater than £300 and there is no evidence of willingness to reduce/repay the debt • Having been convicted of violence toward a partner or members of family • Obtaining a tenancy by deception or subletting without permission of the Landlord

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committing certain criminal offences in or near the home, for example drug dealing and/or posing a threat to neighbours, the community staff from the Council, the Council's contractors or Registered Providers and their Contractors. • Where the applicant is not considered to have the mental capacity to enter into a tenancy agreement <p>This demonstrates to applicants that they must address debt and behaviour issues which assists landlords in the management of their properties and protects staff.</p>
<p>Changes to housing need bands</p> <p>Page 23</p>	<p>Low Band Private tenants, tied tenants and social tenants (in assured or secure tenancies), who are adequately housed with no medical/welfare or exceptional need to move will be assessed in low housing need in addition to those already specified</p> <p>Note: Social tenants with Introductory Tenancies will normally not be eligible to register for a transfer through the scheme until their tenancy becomes an assured tenancy</p>	<p>Renting affordable accommodation in the private sector provides adequate settled accommodation and if there are no other housing need factors present requiring urgent housing they are considered to be in Low housing need.</p> <p>Part 7 of the Localism Act presents new powers for local authorities to choose whether to adopt the power to discharge their homeless duty into the private rented sector. This indicates that the Government considers this tenure to be an adequate housing option even for those who present as homeless.</p>
	<p>Medium housing need band We have re-defined 'Poor housing conditions' and overcrowding.</p> <p>We propose including home seekers in this band who have permanent employment within the Leicestershire scheme area, and they need to move closer to work to prevent financial hardship.</p> <p>We also propose including home seekers in</p>	<p>The new proposed wording follows the HHSR guidance for clarity and consistency across all tenures.</p> <p>We recognise rising fuel costs and the impact of the Welfare Reform may cause financial hardship for some households which could be eased or resolved by a move to alternative accommodation. This aspect of Welfare need has not previously been defined in the current policy and we recognise the need to do so in order to alleviate hardship.</p>

	<p>this band who are suffering financial hardship and having difficulty in meeting their housing costs.</p>	
	<p>High housing need band We propose to include Transfer home seekers who are under-occupying a home and are affected by Welfare Reform in this band</p> <p>It is proposed to reduce the length of time home seekers are placed in High housing need band from 24 weeks to 16 weeks.</p>	<p>This amendment will release units of social housing that are in high demand for use by other home seekers on the housing register and will reduce the transferring tenant's financial hardship.</p> <p>Currently those home seekers assessed with High housing need are able to bid on up to three properties in each fortnightly cycle for a period up to 24 weeks. It is hoped that by reducing the time in High housing need band will focus the home seeker on choosing a property more quickly. In some areas, suitable properties may not have been advertised during this period but the facility to review the housing need band at the end of the proposed 16 week period remains as there could be justification to extend for example where suitable properties were not available.</p>
	<p>Priority housing need band We propose to reduce the length of time home seekers are placed in Priority housing need band from 12 weeks to 8 weeks.</p> <p>We propose to include provision for the host authority to reserve the right to place bids for home seekers on suitable properties to meet their needs where they have failed to bid in any advert cycle. In addition we will make specific reference in the policy to the host district, retaining the right to discharge the authority's statutory homeless duty by one suitable offer of accommodation in week 7/8 of the priority period.</p>	<p>Currently those home seekers assessed with Priority housing need are able to bid on up to three properties in each fortnightly cycle for a period of up to 12 weeks. It is hoped that by reducing the time in Priority housing need band, home seekers will be more focused on choosing a property to address their emergency need for housing.</p> <p>Some authorities may not have sufficient vacancies of a suitable size or type during this period, the facility to review the application is in place the length of any extended Priority will be determined by the host district's Housing Manager.</p> <p>Some home seekers will be assessed in Priority band because they are homeless and the authority has a statutory duty to assist with re-housing. Reducing the time in priority will reduce uncertainty</p>

	<p>Where the home seeker or their district authority has bid and the home seeker has been offered a property (at any time throughout the Priority period) that offer will constitute a suitable offer of accommodation in discharge of the authority's duty under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 as amended.</p> <p>We propose to insert the following wording into the policy '<i>Offers of accommodation to discharge the authority's homeless duty can also be made in the private rented sector where the host authority has a private rented sector offer policy</i>'</p>	<p>for the family and will reduce the cost of providing temporary accommodation (if they are living in Bed and Breakfast accommodation).</p> <p>Part 7 of the Localism Act brings new powers to local authorities in discharging their duties to homeless households. Individual local authorities can choose whether or not to adopt the power to discharge duty into the private rented sector which is something the districts in Leicestershire will be considering in the future. Inclusion of this wording in the policy now will avoid the need for amendment if in the future the authority develops and agrees a Private Rented Sector Offer Policy.</p>
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 25</p>	<p>Minimum Bedroom Standard We propose to mirror the bedroom standards set out by Housing Benefit regulations: A separate bedroom is normally needed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every adult couple, or single parent • Person aged 16 years or more • Two adolescents aged 10-15 years of the same sex • Two of children aged under 10 years regardless of sex <p>We are proposing to change the time at which an unborn child counts for housing purposes as a child from within six months of expected date of delivery to within three months</p>	<p>Aligning the bedroom need calculation will reduce the opportunity to occupy properties larger than needed and reduce associated affordability issues</p> <p>The housing benefit regulations do not recognise an unborn child for a bedroom need until it is born. It is not practical for the household to be housed in a property that would be too small for the family once the baby is born. Providing the property is affordable at the time of the tenancy being signed, the Registered Providers are agreeable to this.</p>
	<p>Refusals Currently applicants who fail to respond to seven suitable offers of accommodation or fail to attend seven arranged viewings or</p>	<p>Our policy will reflect that home seekers who are assessed in housing need will continue to have the opportunity and choice to bid on suitable properties to meet their needs. However, we recognise that</p>

	<p>refuse seven offers of tenancy will have their application suspended for up to six months. We propose to reduce this from seven to three.</p>	<p>Landlords have experienced difficulties in contacting applicants who have bid and/or experienced applicants arranging viewings that they do not attend and making offers of tenancies which are then not accepted. This results in abortive administration time as well as having the potential to increase void periods which has a financial impact for the Landlord.</p>
<p>Page 26</p>	<p>Bids Changing the number of bids a home seeker is able to make each advertising cycle from three to two.</p>	<p>When the Leicestershire cbl scheme was introduced it was agreed to enable home seekers to bid on up to three properties in each advertising cycle.</p> <p>Recent consultation with Landlords suggests they would welcome the reduction as they are experiencing difficulties where the same home seeker is matching first on several properties and it can cause delays in the lettings process as they are only able to move on and offer other shortlisted home seekers the tenancy once the home seeker who has matched first has either accepted or rejected an offer.</p>
<p>Community Contribution</p>	<p>We have considered how this could be defined, evidenced and monitored and the difficulties this would pose. This is an aspect that can be taken into account when assessing housing need but is not mandatory. Currently we feel the changes made to the local connection criteria reflect that the majority of home seekers are making a contribution to the local economy and therefore it is not necessary to take account of community contribution in the assessment of housing need.</p>	
<p>HBBC Eligibility criteria</p>	<p>Currently we limit households eligible to bid for a 2 bed houses to those where a single child is under 13 yrs. Households with a single child over 13 are</p>	<p>Due to HB changes and pressures on our stock, we are proposing to amend these criteria to allow for greater flexibility in use. 2 bed houses- for one child households, to increase</p>

	eligible for a 2 bed flat. 2 bed flats are also used for single/couple who have access to children	the maximum age to 16 yrs AND to also allow families with 2 children both under 10 yrs to be eligible 2 bed flats- to allow all households with one child of any age to be eligible for 2 bed flats, to allow households with 2 children both under 10 yrs to be eligible.
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Appendix B

Consultation feedback- Allocations Policy 2013

The Consultation period ran between 20March and 19th April 2013.

The proposed policy and consultation questionnaire was emailed to Registered social housing providers, supported housing providers, voluntary agencies. It was also linked to the Choice based lettings website and the Hinckley & Bosworth Council website.

Total responses to the Consultation=4

1 responded by email

3 respondents replied to the CBL questionnaire

Comments:

1. High housing need band -Any tenant that is considering relocating due to underoccupancy should be able to apply for as many properties as they are able, should not be restricted to 3 in a fortnight. Also will a 16week cut off prevent such moves occurring?

2. Priority band- raises issues with accessibility to resources eg Shops for some given how rural the county is.

3. Priority band- I think you need to make the amendments highlighted for greater clarity(the fact that time in the priority band can be reviewed if not sufficient vacancies arisen within the priority time period)

4. Medium band- to need to move to prevent financial hardship -think this is a very good idea

Changes	Agree	Disagree
Redefine local connection	3	
redefine district connection	2	
Change eligibility rules	2	1
Change to low band	2	1
Change to Medium Band	3	
Change to High band	2	1
Change to Priority band	1	2
change to minimum bed standard	3	
Change to number of refusals	2	
Change to number of bids	3	
Community contribution	1	1

EXECUTIVE – 5 JUNE 2013

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (COMMUNITY DIRECTION)

RE: PRIVATE SECTOR LEASING SCHEME



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

A Borough to be proud of

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To update Members on the progress that has been made exploring the feasibility of a Private Sector Leasing scheme further to the last report of 19 June 2012 and to seek Members approval to:
- Formally adopt a Private Sector Leasing scheme as a method of bringing empty properties back into use.
 - Make use of £522,120 of funding already approved by the Homes and Communities Agency to run and sustain the scheme.
 - Use flexible, short-term tenancies for properties which form part of the Private Sector Leasing scheme and agree to the amendment of the Tenancy Policy to include this provision.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That Members:
- 2.2 Note the objectives of the Private Sector Leasing scheme and formally approve the use of a Private Sector Leasing scheme across the borough.
- 2.3 Approve the use of flexible, fixed term tenancies for properties that form part of the Council's Private Sector Leasing Scheme.
- 2.4 Agree the addition of a clause to the Tenancy Policy to state that where a property forms part of the Private Sector Leasing scheme, lifetime tenancies cannot be granted but a tenancy will be granted for the longest term possible within the time frame of the leasing term.
- 2.5 On the basis that works will be funded by the HCA, agree delegated authority for the Deputy Chief Executive Corporate Direction to create appropriate capital and revenue budget once the nature of individual works are known up to the value of £468,900.
- 2.6 Agree a supplementary budget of £6,000 to fund the administration cost and £20,610, annually, for two years for modern apprentices. These are to be funded from either the HCA funding or rental income.
- 2.7 Agree delegated authority for the Deputy Chief Executive to create rental income budgets once the properties have been bought back into use.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Council were informed in June 2012 that we had been successful in a bid for £522,120 from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) under their Affordable Housing Programme 2011-15. The funding was awarded to assist the council in bringing 40 empty properties back into use by June 2015 through a 'lease and repair scheme', commonly referred to as a 'Private Sector Leasing scheme' (PSL). Officers have considered the use of a PSL scheme for some years. In the past, the lack of pump-prime funding prevented such a scheme progressing any further. With this successful bid, now seems an appropriate time to formally consider the approval of such a scheme.
- 3.2 The contract approval with the HCA was agreed on 25 October 2012. Since this time much work has been done developing a proposed PSL. This is now ready to commence upon approval of this report.
A second bid was also recently submitted to the HCA (March 2013) to convert empty space above shops into affordable housing. If successful, it is proposed that properties let under this scheme will be managed by the council in a similar 'lease and repair scheme'.
- 3.3 In order to introduce a PSL scheme a clause will need to be added to the Tenancy Policy which was approved by Council in January 2013. This is because under the approved Tenancy Policy the Council made a commitment to retain lifetime tenancies for its properties. As the Council would only have use of properties let under the PSL scheme for the duration of the lease, it will not be possible to offer residents of those properties a lifetime tenancy.

4 PRINCIPLES OF HOW THE PRIVATE SECTOR LEASING SCHEME WILL WORK

- 4.1 The scheme would allow owners of private empty properties to lease their properties to the local authority for an agreed period (from 5 years to a maximum of 10 years). During this period the owners of the empty properties will receive a guaranteed set rent from the Council for the duration of the agreed lease period.
- 4.2 The Council will let the property at an affordable rent (80% of the market rent value) to an individual who is on the housing register (including persons at risk of homelessness where the property and tenant is suitable).
- 4.3 The guaranteed rent payable to the owner of the property will be calculated according to the 80% market rent received by the Council (from the tenant) less the following costs:
- 4.4 The cost of any of the works that have been carried out in bringing the property up to the Decent Homes Standard – these costs will be recycled back into the sustention of the scheme.
- 4.5 A management fee of 7% which will cover the cost of insuring the property and any on-going maintenance costs during the term of the lease.
- 4.6 The golden rule of the scheme is that the rent paid by the tenant will pay for the works and management fees that are incurred over the duration of the lease period. What is left will make up the guaranteed rent that the owner of the empty property will receive. This will vary depending upon how much it costs to bring the property back into use and how long the property is leased to the Council for.
- 4.7 The £522,120 funding from the HCA is non-repayable. Therefore it is proposed that the money that the Council recoups through the rental income (i.e. reimbursement of the works to bring the property up to the Decent Homes Standard) will be ring-fenced

to come back into the scheme. This will ensure that the scheme is self-financing and sufficient funding is available to sustain the scheme throughout the duration of the leases which are agreed.

5 PRIVATE SECTOR LEASING SCHEME PROGRESS AND OBJECTIVES

5.1 Since funding was secured on 25 October 2012 the development of the scheme has progressed well. We have:

- Conducted market research which has helped identify the type, size and location of properties that are in demand and will be ideal to let under PSL.
- Sounded out various owners of empty properties to help determine what would particularly attract them to lease their properties to the Council and for how long. This has resulted in us looking at branding the scheme 'Bespoke Property Solutions' to the public. 'Bespoke' being the key characteristic of the scheme to attract owners with empty properties because each empty property:
 - Comes with its own story as to why it has become empty
 - Varies in terms of state of repair and money needed to be invested into it
 - Can be tailored best to provide HBBC with either accommodation for families, individuals or homeless accommodation
 - Owner wants flexibility in terms of the length of lease that is to be agreed
- Worked with the Housing Options Team to investigate the possibility of making use of some properties let under PSL for temporary homelessness accommodation thus reducing HBBCs reliance on hostel and bed and breakfast accommodation.
- Already gained commitment and very active interest from a number of owners of long-term empty properties who want to lease their properties to the Council through PSL.
- Researched other available grant-funding streams to un-lock savings to the owners of empty properties.
- Promoted to each owner of an empty property (through the recent letters sent by Council Tax announcing changes affecting empty properties) that help including financial assistance with repairs is available from the Private Sector Housing Team to bring empty properties back into use.
- Established support from a number of other Local Authorities who have successfully developed and implemented 'Private Sector Leasing schemes'.
- Increased capacity within the Private Sector Housing Team to accommodate the increased workload so far created.

5.2 With these developments we are confident that if all elements of this report are approved by Members we will be able to commence the process of signing lease agreements on 40 empty properties. This will achieve the following objectives:

- Make safe, decent and affordable accommodation available for an estimated 50-60 household.
- Reduce the Council's re-housing and homelessness waiting lists.
- Reduce reliance on hostel and B&B accommodation.

- Bring 40 empty properties back into use and thereby also address any visual and physical detrimental impacts that these properties have on the surrounding neighbourhood.
- Bring New Homes Bonus funding to the Council for the 40 properties brought back into use.
- Make use of the money recovered through the rental income to ensure the sustainability of the scheme.
- Create two modern apprentice positions within the Council to help administer and deliver the scheme.

6 AMENDMENT TO THE TENANCY POLICY

- 6.1 To facilitate a PSL scheme and unlock the £522,120 of HCA funding to meet the objectives set out above, it is recommended that the Tenancy Policy is amended. It is proposed that lifetime tenancies will continue to be offered to tenants in Council owned properties however where properties are not in the Council's ownership but are utilised on a lease and repair basis, a flexible, fixed term tenancy will be granted. The proposed clause to be included in the Tenancy Policy reads:

“Where the Council is leasing properties for an agreed period, a flexible tenancy will be offered to the tenant on the longest term possible commensurate with the length of lease outstanding with the property owner. Such a tenant will be explicitly informed of this prior to the commencement of their tenancy with the Council.”

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [IB]

- 7.1 Overall it is expected that the scheme will be cost neutral and have no overall impact on HBBC balances. However, funding arrangements for the two modern apprentices still has to be clarified.

HCA Funding

The HCA funding is £522,120 for 40 properties. The HCA will release the same amount of funding per property claimed for. Fifty per cent of the funds would be released up front and fifty per cent once the property has been renovated. The profiling across financial years is currently not known. The actual cost per property will vary depending on the amount of work needed.

Rental Implications

As the agent for the property the Council will charge will charge a 7 percent management fee, which will include the cost of buildings insurance. Additionally, the original cost of the work which is funded by the HCA to bring the property back into use will also be recovered over the tenancy term.

Worked example

If cost of works to bring the property to a decent homes standard was £10,000 and the market rental was £100 per week the financial implications would be:-

Cost of works	£10,000
<u>HCA funding</u>	<u>(£10,000)</u>
HBBC impact	£0

Weekly Rental Impact

Rental Receivable @ 80% of Market rent:	£80.00
<u>Less – amount retained by HBBC</u>	
Management charge kept by HBBC	£5.60
<u>Cost of works kept by HBBC (£10,000 over 5 years)</u>	<u>£38.46</u>
Amount retained by HBBC	£44.06
Amount repaid to Homeowner	£35.94

7.2 Budgetary and Cashflow Implications

- The nature or the work for each property is unknown. Therefore Council will be asked to agree delegated authority for the Deputy Chief Executive Corporate Direction to set appropriate revenue or capital budgets.
- The properties that are bought back into use will attract new homes bonus.
- If the property is empty after it has been bought back into use HBBC will incur council tax costs.
- The estimated cost for running the scheme up is expected to be £6,000.
- The creation of two modern apprentices will require a supplementary budget approval. Funding arrangements for these posts need to be clarified but it is envisaged that they will be funded from either the initial grant made for the property or from the rental income. The estimated cost at £5 per hour plus on cost is £20,610 per annum plus £1,000 training costs.
- The amount of received per property will not change, however the amount of works needed per property will vary. So properties that can be bought back into use with minimal repairs will be renovated first.

8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [PB]

Under the Housing Act 1985 all tenancies granted by a local authority will be secure tenancies. In order to avoid granting secure tenancies to all properties in the context of the grant of short term leases, the Council must change its policy to provide for fixed term tenancies as permitted by the Localism Act 2011 in specified circumstances. This will not change the Council's overall policy of issuing secure tenancies where possible.

9 CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Cleaner and greener: This scheme will reduced CO₂ emissions and enable tenants to save energy costs, through the installation of energy efficiency measures in the properties renovated.

Thriving economy: The PSL scheme will create jobs in the construction industry, as renovation works will be required to bring the properties up to standard. Two modern apprentices will also be trained by the Council as part of the project.

Safer and healthier: Empty properties attract attention for all the wrong reasons, usually with over grown gardens, building deficiencies and associated anti social behaviour. This scheme will turn empty properties into much needed affordable homes.

Decent, well managed affordable housing: This scheme will provide 40 properties available to tenants at an affordable rent (80% of the market value). They will be renovated to the decent homes standard and will be managed by the Council.

10 CONSULTATION

No consultation is required.

11 RISK IMPLICATIONS

It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Members do not approve Private Sector Leasing scheme as a method of bringing empty properties back into use.	None. - Unable to proceed with Scheme and Council will lose £522,120 in HCA funding.	Members
Executive Members do not approve use of flexible tenancies for Private Sector Leasing Scheme.	Council is only able to use properties under PSL for temporary homelessness purposes. Alternatively the Council may have to appoint a third party managing agent	Members / Private Sector Housing Team
Use of flexible, fixed term tenancies could lead to increased demands on the Housing Options team.	Use of flexible, fixed term tenancies will be for Private Sector Leasing properties only	Valerie Bunting
Failure to meet the required number of empty homes back into use may result in partial withdrawal of funding	Careful targeting of suitable properties to bring back into use as well as ongoing monitoring progress and reporting through IMS to HCA	Private Sector Housing Team
Not enough private landlords come forward to use the PSL scheme	Appointment of two dedicated modern apprentices and increased capacity of experienced Officer already within the Private Sector Housing Team to liaise with private landlords	Private Sector Housing Team.
Manage the cashflow of the capital funds to ensuring funds are available for new works before	Monthly cashflow monitoring and appropriate profiling of works	Private Sector Housing Team/Finance

HCA has reimbursed the 50% from previous renovations		
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12 **KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Private Sector Leasing scheme widens the choices and opportunities not only for people on the housing register but also those owners within the borough who have an empty property but do not have the ability to effectively bring it back into use. For those on the housing register PSL will provide a safe, decent and alternative housing option. As empty homes can exist in all areas of the Borough homes in rural areas will also be considered under the scheme.

13 **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset Management implications
- Human Resources implications
- Planning Implications
- Voluntary Sector

Background papers: None

Contact Officer: Steven Connor x 5876
Executive Member: Councillor Michael Mullaney

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EXECUTIVE– 5 JUNE 2013

REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE RE: SUPER FAST BROADBAND INVESTMENT

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL RURAL WARDS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek Members' approval to the under spend from this year's Parish and Community Initiative Fund (PCIF) towards investment in super fast broadband (SFBB).

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Executive:-

- i) approve the allocation of £18,820 under spend from the 2013/14 PCIF as an additional contribution to funding from this Council to support the delivery of super fast broadband in rural areas.
- (ii) note Scrutiny Commission's comments regarding SFBB funding.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 3.1 The proposal from Executive briefing that any under spend on the PCIF be allocated towards additional improvements in SFBB was presented to Scrutiny Commission for comment, along with the PCIF grant allocations, on 8 May 2013.
- 3.2 Due to the withdrawal of one application, the under spend for 2013/14 will be £18,820.
- 3.3 Scrutiny Commission was supportive of the use of the under spend for 2013/14 but were not supportive of any reduction in the PCIF budget in future years.
- 3.4 Scrutiny Commission also requested a further report detailing how SFBB was being progressed, what benefits the additional funding would bring to the rural areas of the Borough, and how value for money would be determined.
- 3.5 Further work will be undertaken by officers to assess the value to be derived from additional investment in SFBB and the governance arrangements with LCC for this funding.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (TO)

Further work is required in order to establish the capital and revenue implications of this report. Depending upon the final outcome, any expenditure will need to be authorised in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

Additional funding may be available towards this project.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (AB)

None raised directly by this report.

6. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

SFBB contributes to the aim of increasing access to services in rural areas.

7. CONSULTATION

In early 2012 the County Council conducted a countywide survey to help identify problem areas and demand for SFBB. The online survey, which was promoted through a range of media including for Hinckley and Bosworth the Parish Councils directly, Parishes Forum and Community Forums, received 4622 responses, of which 402 were from the Hinckley and Bosworth locality. The County Council webpage provides ongoing information on broadband provision and plans in the County. The webpage is available at www.leics.gov.uk/broadband

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

The risks of this additional funding proposal will be fully considered by officers working when working with LCC to agree the governance arrangements for SFBB.

9. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

SFBB will bring benefits to the rural economy and residents living in these areas.

10. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset Management implications
- Human Resources implications
- Planning Implications
- Voluntary Sector

Background papers: None

Contact Officer: Steve Atkinson (ext 5606)

Executive Member: Cllr Bill Crooks

EXECUTIVE – 05 JUNE 2013

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (COMMUNITY DIRECTION) RE: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME FOR 2013/14

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report outlines the Environmental Improvement Programme for 2013/14.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That Executive agree the enhancement schemes (Appendix 1) to be implemented in the financial year 2013/14 as the Environmental Improvement Programme.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

3.1 For 2013/14 Council agreed in February capital expenditure of £50,000 of which £15,000 was funded from contributions. If the Borough Council's applications for grant aid are successful and landowners agree to make financial contributions towards projects, as anticipated, it will be possible to finance the 15 schemes identified in Appendix 1 which will result in projects costing £53,374 being implemented at a net cost to this Authority of £34,941.

3.2 This year's programme aims to continue the practise to implement schemes identified in the Authority's Conservation Area Management Plan Reviews and provides a good distribution of projects throughout the borough both in the urban and rural areas. All of the conservation areas have now been reviewed and plaques have been displayed throughout the conservation areas. Several enhancement schemes are the continuation of projects undertaken in last years programme at Desford, Markfield and on the Ashby Canal.

3.3 Appendix 2 outlines the progress made on the projects included in the 2012/13 programme and the net cost to HBBC of the programme is outlined below:

	Budget	Actual
Approved Base Budget	£66,900	£40,084
External contributions	(£20,000)	(£10,225)
C/fwd request		15,177
NET HBBC BUDGET	£46,900	£45,036

GUIDELINES FOR PRIORITISING SCHEMES

3.4 The agreed guidelines approved by members for prioritising schemes are set out below:

- (a) Implement schemes identified in the Authority's Conservation Area Management Plan Reviews,

- (b) Schemes that generate significant amounts of external funding, or be supported by partnerships involving private sector funding,
- (c) Complete or complement schemes undertaken in previous years' programmes
- (d) Contribute to the Strategic objectives of the Local Authority to provide an attractive environment.
- (e) Be implemented on public owned or private accessible land
- (f) Be in areas which have not yet benefited significantly in previous years' programmes
- (g) Voluntary organisations are given priority for undertaking appropriate projects providing the work meets the selection guidelines outlined in sub paragraphs (a) to (f).

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (Dme)

The council approved a net budget of £35,000 for 2013/2014 (Expenditure of £50,000 of which £15,000 is to be externally funded). However, the attached appendix 1 outlines the cost of the implementation of the schemes at £53,374 and £18,433 to be externally funded. The net cost to HBBC is £34,941 which is within the approved budget of £35,000. The additional £3,374 expenditure budget and £3,433 income budget will need to be approved in accordance with the council financial procedure rules.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (AB)

None raised directly by this report.

6. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

6.1 This report contributes to the following Strategic Aims and Objectives of the Council

Strategic Aim – Proud of our achievements for the Community

Strategic Objective – Secure a healthy, safe, respectful and attractive environment

6.2 The report also contributes towards the Community Plan Objective of:

'Protecting our environment, relevant aims, heritage - protecting and enhancing the Borough's heritage'.

7. CONSULTATION

Consultations will take place on each project on an individual officer basis with parish councils and other interested parties.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
None identified		

9. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

Projects put forward in the Environmental Improvement Programme are generally spread over the whole of the Borough and includes the rural area.

10. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset Management implications
- Human Resources implications
- Planning Implications
- Voluntary Sector

Background papers:

Appendix
SCHEMES PROGRAMMED FOR IMPLEMENTATION 2013/14

1:

Appendix 2:
END OF YEAR PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT
PROGRAMME 2012-13

Contact Officer: Alan Davies, Project Manager – 5916

Executive Member: Councillor S Bray

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APPENDIX 1 : SCHEMES PROGRAMMED FOR IMPLEMENTATION 2013/14

Ref No	Location Ward/Parish	Member/ Parish Council Suggestion	Scheme identified in Conservation Area Management Plan	Scheme	Remarks	Estimated Cost of Project	Gross Cost to HBBC	Anticipated External Contributions	Net Cost to HBBC
0/1	Boroughwide Project			Financial contributions for the Borough's conservation areas towards the rebuilding/provision of new stone walls/iron railings, the re-roofing of properties with traditional materials and the reinstatement of chimney stacks and pots.	This project is proving very successful in helping to retain / provide traditional features in the Borough's conservation areas.	£5,000	£5,000	£2,500	£2,500
0/2	Bridge 53, Ashby Canal		Yes	Restoration of towpath steps.	There have been complaints that the access steps from the highway to the towpath at Bridge 53 are in poor condition due to rainwater running off the highway and down the steps. To date, the first stage of the project, the installation of kerbing & road drainage has been carried out in partnership with Leicestershire County Council. It is now proposed to complete the project with the restoration of the steps to be carried out by the Conservation Volunteers.	£900	£900		£900
0/3	Gopsall Wharf, Ashby Canal			This project is a partnership scheme with the Canal & River Trust, Ashby Canal Association, Crown Estates & the Borough Council	It is proposed to dredge the canal near the moorings, place signs along the adjacent wood to restrict entry, resurface the car park with gravel and provide seating.	£1,300	£1,300		£1,300
0/4	Bridge 57, Ashby Canal			Repairs to the Bridge 57	Part of the bridge's buttress & parapet wall have been vandalised. It is proposed to provide the materials, the Canal & River Trust will undertake the re-construction work.	£308	£308		£308
4/1	Horsepool, Church Street, Burbage		Yes	Installation of 3 heritage street lights at the Horsepool	The installation of the 3 lights will complete heritage lighting on the Horsepool.	£7,600	£7,600	£4,200	£3,400
4/2	St Catherines Churchyard, Burbage		Yes	Restoration of chest tomb	Part of an ongoing programme to restore important tombs sited in churchyards. The work involves the taking up and relaying the tomb stones and replacing ferrous fixings that are damaging the stonework, with stainless steel dowels and cramps.	£2,260	£2,260		£2,260
4/3	Burbage Conservation Area		Yes	Installation of heritage street nameplates throughout the Burbage Conservation Area.	This is a continuation of last years project to install heritage street nameplates over the whole of the conservation area.	£4,470	£4,470	£2,235	£2,235
9/1	Groby Conservation Area		Yes	Installation of 10 heritage street nameplates throughout the Groby Conservation Area.	The Parish Council is designing its own crest to be used on the nameplates.	£1,596	£1,596	£798	£798
11/1	Queens Park , Hinckley	Yes		Installation of heritage street light	Proposed to replace the last remaining light along the path fronting Queen's Park Terrace with a heritage light.	£2,800	£2,800	£600	£2,200
11/2	Old Plough Inn, Hinckley			Installation of information board	Contribution towards the installation of an information board that will commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Concordia Theatre.	£300	£300		£300
11/3	Wykin Gate	Yes		Restoration of iron gate that was gifted to the Borough Council. The gate was made by the local artist, Arthur Tomlin, to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee and was originally sited at Corner House Farm, Wykin.	The gate has now had minor repairs carried out and been shot blasted and primed. The pupils at Redmoor High School have repainted the gate as a school project and discussions are now taking place as to where the gate should be sited.	£240	£240		£240
11/4	Hollycroft Conservation Area, Hinckley		Yes	Installation of two heritage street lights.	It is proposed to replace two existing street lights on Shakespeare Drive fronting Hollycroft Park with heritage lights.	£5,600	£5,600	£1,200	£4,400

15/1	Newbold Verdon Conservation Area			Installation of heritage street nameplates throughout the Newbold Verdon Conservation Area.	It is proposed to install 8 heritage street nameplates in the Conservation Area. Newbold Verdon will need to decide on the crest to be used on the nameplates.	£1,000	£1,000	£500	£500
18/1	Ratby			Installation of heritage nameplates along footpaths	The Ratby Local History Group has suggested a couple more footpaths for signing.	£800	£800		£800
19/1	Bilstone Conservation Area		Yes	Installation of two heritage street lights.	It is proposed to replace the two existing street lights in the conservation area with heritage lights.	£5,600	£5,600	£3,200	£2,400
20/1	Sheepy Road, Sibson		Yes	Installation of two heritage street lights.	It is proposed to replace two existing street lights in the conservation area with heritage lights.	£5,600	£5,600	£3,200	£2,400
				Project Manager's costs		£8,000	£8,000		£8,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE						£53,374	£53,374	£18,433	£34,941

APPENDIX 2

END OF YEAR PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME 2012-13

Ref No	Location	Scheme	Remarks	Status
0/1	Bridge 53 Ashby Canal	Refurbishment work to canal towpath steps	The 1st phase of this project has now been completed. The Borough Council together with Leicestershire County Council installed kerbing and a road gully to prevent storm water washing away the towpath steps. Repairs to the steps have been placed in the 2013/14 Programme.	1st Phase Completed
0/2	Ashby Canal	Installation of conservation area plaques	Plaques have been installed along the canal.	Project Completed
4/1	Coronation Gardens, Church Street, Burbage	Re-kerbing of open space with traditional granite kerbing	Scheme to replace crazy paving with granite kebing and re-surface a section of the footpath.	Project Completed
4/2	Church Street, Burbage	Two projects to relay pavers around a tree and kebing on a small traffic island	The pavers around a tree were being lifted and becoming a trip hazard. The kerbing on a small traffic island was being moved by tree roots.	Project Completed
4/3	Horsepool, Burbage	Installation of a heritage street lighting column	The heritage light has now been installed inside the Horsepool Open Space.	Project Completed
4/4	Burbage Conservation Area	Installation of 2 heritage street nameplates	These have been installed at the Grove Road/Hinckley Road/Church Street junction.	Project Completed
4/5	St Catherine's Church, Burbage	Rebuilding of damaged churchyard wall	The stone churchyard wall was damaged recently by a cedar and yew tree. The repair work has been ordered and work can proceed when faculty approval has been given.	Project Ongoing
5/1	Rectory Lane, Cadeby	Removal of ivy from boundary wall and clearing of highway verge	The Ivy has been removed and the highway verge cleared. However, a section of the wall has been found to be in a dangerous condtion and talks are in hand with the owners' agent to address the problem.	Project ongoing
7/1	Baptist Burial Ground, Desford	Improvements to entrance into burial ground	Concrete slabs have been replaced with traditional brick retaining walls.	Project Completed
11/1	Queen's Park Hinckley	Installation of 2 heritage street lighting columns	The heritage lights have been installed, however, the old street lights are still awaiting removal.	Project Ongoing
11/2	Village Green, Wykin	Restoration and relocation of an iron gate that was made by the local artist, Arthur Tomlin, to commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee	The gate has been restored as a school project by pupils of Redmoor High School. A decision now needs to be taken as to where the restored gate is to be sited. This has been placed in 2013/14 Programme.	1st Phase Completed.
11/3	Gladstone/Davenport Terrace, Hinckley	Improvements to the carriageways	Numerous potholes on the two roads that were an eyesore and danger to pedestrians and road users have been filled.	Project Completed
11/4	Castle Street, Hinckley	Re-placement tree in the Hinckley Town Centre Conservation Area	This project was to re-place a dead tree close to the junction of Castle Street & New Buildings	Project Completed

Ref No	Location	Scheme	Remarks	Status
13/1	The Nook, Markfield	Installation of 2 heritage street lighting columns	The heritage lights have been installed.	Project Completed
13/2	Markfield Conservation Area	Display of 2 information boards and publishing of historical leaflet.	Historical information from the Markfield Local History Group has recently been received and will be the subject of the information board & leaflet.	Project Ongoing
13/3	The Green, Markfield	The siting of a traditional water pump	The water pump has now been installed	Project Completed
16/1	Osbaston Conservation Area	Installation of conservation area plaques	Plaques have now been installed throughout the Conservation Area.	Project Completed
18/1	St. Philip & St. James Church, Ratby	Re-building of granite churchyard wall within the Ratby Conservation Area.	The section granite retaining wall that was starting to bulge dangerously has been re-built	Project Completed
18/2	Fronting the Chemist Shop, Main Street, Ratby	Re-building of stone wall	Work on re-building the stone wall has started.	Project Ongoing
18/3	Berry's Lane, Ratby	Construction of new face to wall	The wall was an eyesore on Berry's Lane. Damaged bricks have been replaced in one of its piers and the wall rendered.	Project Completed
20/1	St Peter's Churchyard, Shackerstone	Restoration of churchyard chest tomb	Faculty approval has recently been given. Work on the tomb to commence when the weather improves.	Project Ongoing
20/2	Bilstone Conservation Area	Installation of conservation area plaques	Plaques have now been installed throughout the Conservation Area.	Project Completed
24/1	Orton on the Hill Conservation Area	Installation of conservation area plaques	Plaques have now been installed throughout the Conservation Area.	Project Completed

EXECUTIVE – 5 JUNE 2013

REPORT TITLE: TOURISM STRATEGY 2013- 2018

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE – COMMUNITY DIRECTION

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

A Borough to be proud of

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To seek Members' endorsement of the Hinckley & Bosworth Tourism Partnership's Tourism Strategy and Blueprint for Action for 2013 to 2018.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

That, Executive endorses the Hinckley & Bosworth Tourism Partnership's Tourism Strategy and Blueprint for Action for 2013 to 2018.

3. **BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT**

Operational from late 2004 and becoming an independent not-for-profit company in 2009, the H&B Tourism Partnership is well placed to make a valuable economic impact at the local level. There is a commitment to a practical remit for tourism covering product development, visitor information and services, industry services including local assessment schemes, skill development, and advice about grants and support to improve business performance.

Key achievements from the previous Tourism Strategy include:

- A successful membership scheme of the Partnership which currently has 60 active members supported by a board of unremunerated directors from the premier attractions, accommodation providers and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
- The introduction of the new and improved Visitor Guide, of which two editions have been produced. 20,000 copies are distributed throughout the region and it is available on the website
- The introduction of an industry newsletter which is distributed to members throughout the year featuring valuable, up to date information about publicity campaigns, members' news and useful statistics
- Several leaflet swap and seminar events to encourage local business and tourism attractions to work together for mutual benefit. This also attracts national Government Ministers and our MP with the remit for tourism
- The introduction of the Local Accommodation Assessment Scheme enables businesses currently not accredited to become so at a reasonable cost. This was introduced to drive up the quality of our local accommodation stock and enable wider publicity

This new Strategy identifies the Hinckley and Bosworth Tourism Partnership's key strategic priorities for developing tourism in Hinckley and Bosworth and outlines an action plan for marketing development over the next five years. It is intended to assist in the targeting of resources and aims to maximise the potential benefits for Hinckley and Bosworth from the growth of tourism.

The 4 **key priorities** for H&B are:

Destination: promoting the wide range of quality attractions and accommodation highlighting the borough's diverse offer.

Positioning: working with a wide range of partners to ensure the area competes efficiently to enhance the visitor experience and ensure overnight stays and repeat visits.

People: ensuring a warm welcome in quality assessed accommodation and attractions; advocating for employment and skills development within the industry.

Intelligence: ensuring our local businesses are connected and have access to reliable sources of data.

Impact - Figures have shown that the visitor economy in Leicester and Leicestershire has continued to grow and reached £1.402 billion in 2011. This research also shows that the value of overnight stay visitors to Leicester and Leicestershire – the economic impact of the serviced and non-serviced accommodation sector – rose by 20 per cent over the last five years (from 2007 - 2011).

- The economic value for tourism in H&B (2011) = £155.75m *
 - Number of people employed in the industry in H&B = approx 2,200 jobs *
- * source STEAM data 2011

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (DMe)

To support the tourism strategy any costs arising can be funded from existing budgets available of £3,360 within Tourism Promotion.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (AB)

None arising directly from this report.

6. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

This Strategy relates to the Corporate priority of 'A vibrant place to live and work', focusing on sustaining economic growth, as it aims to maximise the benefits of promoting the area to day visitors and to encourage greater impact from overnight stays. This will add to the retail economy of the area and also create employment in the catering and hospitality industry.

7. CONSULTATION

Consultation has been made with the H&B Tourism Partnership members and Leicestershire Promotions.

8. RISK IMPLICATIONS

None relating to this Strategy.

9. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no implications for equality

10. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Planning Implications
- Voluntary Sector

Background papers: Refer to the full Strategy online

Contact Officer: Lindsay Orton

Executive Member: Cllr David Cope

Hinckley & Bosworth Tourism Partnership

Our Tourism Strategy 2013 - 2018



Incorporating our Blueprint for Action



CONTENTS

Foreword	3
Introduction	3
Borough Profile and Products	4
National and Local Context	5
•National Context – National Tourism Policy	6
•Local Context – Tourism Strategy for Leicester and Leicestershire	7
•Local Context – Hinckley and Bosworth	8
Hinckley and Bosworth Tourism Partnership	9
Local Strategic Priorities	9
• Hinckley and Bosworth Distinctiveness	10
• Town Twinning	11
Action Plan	12
Monitoring and Review	14
Contact Details	16

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FOREWORD



Steve Wegerif

Steve Wegerif, Chair of Hinckley and Bosworth Tourism Partnership said: “By continuing to bring together the local attractions and accommodation providers – indeed, all businesses involved in the tourism services sector - Hinckley and Bosworth Tourism Partnership continues to deliver a forward thinking and cohesive approach to raising the profile of the area as a major tourism destination. By sharing skills and experiences, operators are able to achieve continual improvements to the already high standards of quality and customer service. This approach, coupled with the positive promotion of the very many tourism attractions located in our area, will help to attract more visitors and encourage them to actually stay in the area for longer periods.”

Introduction

This Strategy identifies the Hinckley and Bosworth Tourism Partnership’s key strategic priorities for developing tourism in Hinckley and Bosworth and outlines an action plan for marketing development over the next five years. It has been developed in consultation with partners and their endorsement for the vision and actions have been agreed. It is intended to assist in the targeting of resources and aims to maximise the potential benefits for Hinckley and Bosworth from the growth of tourism.

Successful tourism marketing is dependent not only on effective marketing but also on the quality and equality of the ‘product’. This Strategy sets out the profile of the Borough and highlights the very best of the destination’s product and what it has to offer. It is also important that we set our aims and objectives in line with the national and local context in which we will operate. It then sets out our vision statement before examining the priorities and actions to be undertaken as part of the Strategy. Monitoring and reviewing is part of our process to ensure that we are successful in the tasks we have set ourselves.

This Strategy is the result of the initial work undertaken in association with members of the Hinckley & Bosworth Tourism Partnership and builds upon the considerable knowledge, experience and lessons learned from the previous Strategy that has developed further and built into this latest version for the period 2013 to 2018.

Borough Profile and Products

- The Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth covers 297 square kilometres (115 square miles) of rolling English countryside boasting the two market towns of Hinckley and Market Bosworth and 56 rural villages.

We believe that the business of tourism in the area comprises:

- Around 48 accommodation providers offering between them over 1,730 bed spaces, as well as over 200 pubs, restaurants and bars, tea rooms, coffee houses and farm shops, and a wide range of supporting facilities and services
- Over 20 specified visitor attractions offering nature and wildlife, historic sites, antiques centre, water attractions and parklands, a hugely successful voluntary run theatre at the Concordia (celebrated 40 years in 2012) and a celebration of local history at the voluntary run independent Hinckley and District Museum

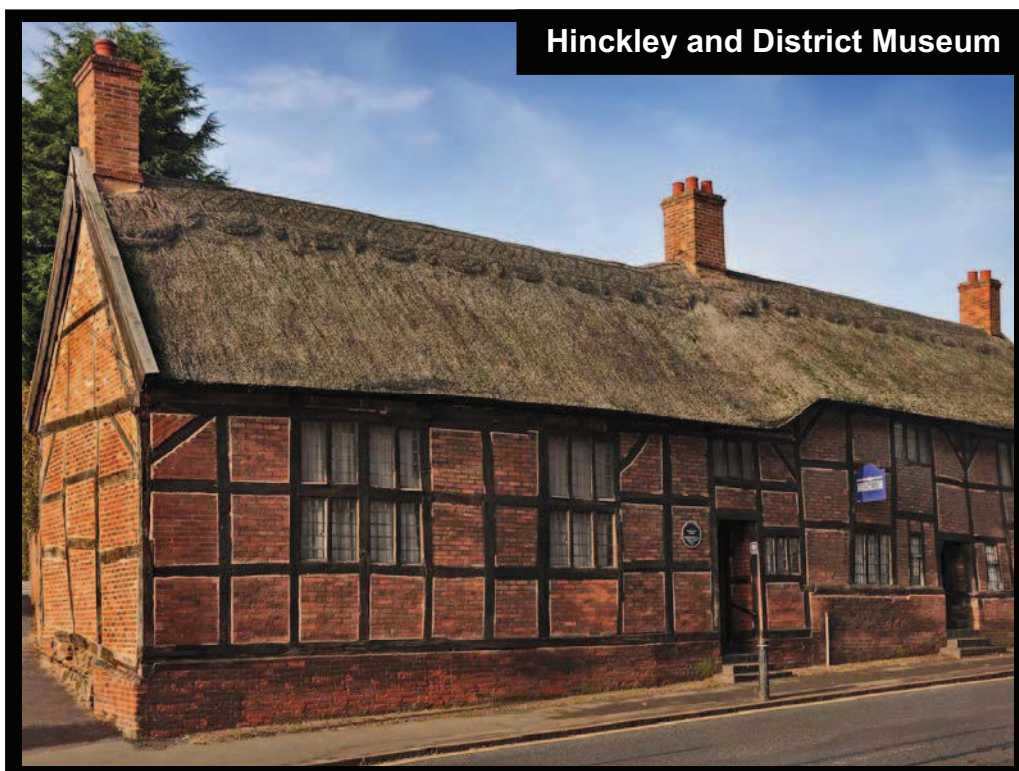


- Outdoors – walking, cycling and riding together with the heritage transport offers of the Ashby Canal and Battlefield Line railway
- Twycross Zoo – The World Primate Centre. More than just a zoo, Twycross is dedicated to preserving threatened species whilst providing education, study and wonder for visitors. Increasingly, Twycross is developing and evolving as a tourism hub for the region and sub-region. They are also a popular conference, events and wedding venue.
- Bosworth Battlefield Visitor Centre, an important landmark which commemorates a major change in England's history as the birthplace of the Tudor Dynasty. This has been given further prominence by the discovery of the skeleton of King Richard III in Leicester.

- A vibrant programme of events ranging from the Soap Box Derby to Farmers' Markets, marathon races to lunchtime concerts, art and craft exhibitions in the Atkins Building to guided walks
- Proximity to various attractors within the adjacent 'National Forest and Beyond' area offering significant partnership working and joint promotional opportunities
- Related 'business tourism opportunities' with major economic developments at Mira and Triumph, both internationally renowned companies resident in the borough
- Leisure offers at major hotel operations such as the Hinckley Island Hotel and Sketchley Grange which offer comprehensive accommodation, conference and banqueting services just off the A5 and M69 motorway

National and Local Context

The concept of tourism now embraces all manner of business activities, leisure and recreational pursuits, from business meetings, conferences and corporate events, to undertaking activities, visiting attractions, attending events and staying overnight. It includes the economic activity of local residents and their visiting friends and relations, as well as the traditional visitor from outside of the area including overseas. There is currently a significant trend towards attracting domestic tourism and towards attracting greater 'consumption' of tourism by ever more focused consumer segments based upon lifestyle characteristics. Underlying all this is a continuing growth in leisure, in experiencing a 'sense of place', and in the wider aspects of improving one's quality of life.



National Context

National Tourism Policy March 2011

Tourism is an important sector of the UK economy. It is one of the sixth biggest industries. It accounts for almost £90bn direct spend each year, contains over 200,000 businesses and provides 4.4% of the nation's jobs.

The Government aims to

- Fund the most ambitious marketing campaign ever to attract visitors to the UK in the years following 2012. The £100m campaign, co-funded by the government and the private sector, aims to attract 4 million extra visitors to Britain over the next 4 years
- Increase the proportion of UK residents who holiday in the UK to match those who holiday abroad each year
- Improve the sector's productivity to become one of the top 5 most efficient and competitive visitor economies in the world.

The full National Tourism Policy can be accessed at www.culture.gov.uk/government2_Tourism_Policy_2011.pdf



Visit England is the national tourist board for England, responsible for marketing England to domestic and established overseas markets and for improving England's tourism product. It provides leadership, knowledge and marketing services in order to support government achieve its policy aspirations.

Its vision is to maximise tourism's contribution to the economy, employment and quality of life in England.

The Strategic Framework aims to achieve four interdependent objectives which are designed to address the opportunities and challenges for England's visitor economy;

Objective 1 - To increase England's share of global visitor markets.

Objective 2 - To offer visitors compelling destinations of distinction.

Objective 3 - To champion a successful, thriving tourism industry.

Objective 4 - To facilitate greater engagement between the visitor and the experience.

Local Context - Leicestershire

Tourism Strategy for Leicester and Leicestershire (2011-2016)

The Tourism Strategy identifies four strategic priorities that express the local tourism industry's ambitions in a practical way. These cover –

- Expanding the quality of Leicestershire as a destination
- The positioning of Leicestershire to distinguish it from its competitors
- Improving customer service through training and improved skills
- Ensuring up to date intelligence and data

Finally it outlines a delivery framework and range of organisations and businesses which need to be involved and committed in delivering its priorities.

Strategic Themes

There are four key themes which address our ambitions in a practical way. They establish also the rationale in linking with the wider ambitions and longer-term direction being set by the Leicestershire Strategy for Economic Growth through to 2020. The themes are:

1. **Destination:** offering people a wide range of quality attractions, accommodation and experiences with growing local distinctiveness and a warm and genuine welcome
2. **Positioning:** developing and promoting the county's assets while differentiating between the business and leisure markets in a way which offers a unique and quality product
3. **People:** ensuring visitors enjoy a world class experience and have their expectations surpassed, promoting tourism as a 'first choice' career by investing in skills and training and creating a workforce capable of delivering high standards of customer service
4. **Intelligence:** providing a robust evidence base enabling tourism businesses and the public sector to make informed and more co-ordinated investment decisions

Leicester Shire Promotions is the Destination Management Organisation for Leicester and Leicestershire.

Figures have shown that the visitor economy in Leicester and Leicestershire has continued to grow and reached £1.402 billion in 2011. In 2010, the economic impact of tourism was £1.321 billion. This research also shows that the value of overnight stay visitors to Leicester and Leicestershire – the economic impact of the serviced and non-serviced accommodation sector – rose by 20 per cent over the last five years (from 2007 - 2011).

Tourists visiting the county rose from 20.763 million in 2010 to 20.886 million last year. The economic impact value was £928.82 million in 2011, up from £916.37 million in 2010.

Tourism contribution of over £147.9 million per year to the local economy.

Key findings for Leicester and Leicestershire: 2011

- Economic impact of tourism: £1.402 billion
- Tourist numbers: 30.710 million
- Tourist days: 36.436 million
- Jobs supported by tourism activity: 20,012
- Economic impact of accommodation sector (serviced and non-serviced): £302 million

The research was conducted by Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor (STEAM). STEAM data can be explored to understand the economic contribution of different sectors. It is the eighth major consecutive study into the economic impact of tourism at a destination level.



Local Context – Hinckley and Bosworth

There are area-specific tourism partnerships, each focusing on one of Leicestershire's distinctive tourism areas. The key function is to provide local support, assistance and representation for tourism businesses and operators. Hinckley & Bosworth Tourism Partnership (HBTP) is one of these tourism partnerships, and it works alongside the other area partnerships both in Leicestershire and Warwickshire

Employment within the Tourism industry provides 2,200 jobs (full time equivalents) employed in around 600 businesses.

In excess of 3.7 million 'visitors' come to the borough every year, with over 91% visiting for the day, amounting to an estimated 4.1 million visits.

Tourism contributes over £155.75 million per year to the local economy.

Hinckley & Bosworth Tourism Partnership

'Hinckley & Bosworth Tourism Partnership will clearly and firmly establish the Hinckley & Bosworth area, together with its distinctive mix of market towns, rural tourism product and major conferencing and corporate entertainment venues within the broader context of the Leicestershire tourism 'destination' attracting leisure and business visitors from across the UK and beyond'

Hinckley & Bosworth Tourism Partnership (HBTP) is a partnership of like-minded people and organisations with a shared ambition to improve the business of tourism in our area. The Board comprises a mix of local public, private and voluntary sector representatives that meets three times a year. The Partnership is a membership organisation that is relevant to attractions, accommodation providers, town centre management, night time economy and heritage providers, creating individual opportunities through a variety of networking, relationship building and partnership working opportunities.

HBTP remains the single focus for all aspects of tourism at a local level. Operational from late 2004 and becoming an independent not-for-profit company in 2009 the Partnership is well placed to make a valuable economic impact at the local level. There is a commitment to a practical remit for tourism covering product development, visitor information and services, industry services including local assessment schemes, skill development, and advice about grants and support to improve business performance.

The main key achievements have been:

- A successful **membership scheme** of the Partnership which currently has 60 active members supported by a board of unremunerated directors from the premier attractions, accommodation providers and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
- The introduction of the new and improved **Visitor Guide** of which two editions have been produced. 20,000 copies are distributed throughout the region and it is available on the website.
- The introduction of a dedicated **tourism website** for the area at www.visithinckleyandbosworth.co.uk currently getting 3,500 hits per year and increasing
- The introduction of an **industry newsletter** which is distributed to members throughout the year featuring valuable, up to date information about publicity campaigns, members' news and useful statistics
- Several **leaflet swap and seminar events** to encourage local business and tourism attractions to work together for mutual benefit. This also attracts national Government Ministers and our MP with the remit for tourism
- The introduction of the **Local Accommodation Assessment Scheme** enables businesses currently not accredited to become so at a reasonable cost. This was introduced to drive up the quality of our local accommodation stock and enable wider publicity

The sustainable Partnership is kindly support funded via Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. Additional income streams allowing operational delivery is via membership subscriptions. In kind support is welcomed via Leicestershire Promotions and the many volunteer hours.

Local Strategic Priorities

Hinckley & Bosworth offers themes that enhance the main distinctive tourism offer. These supporting themes can be used to demonstrate the variety and range of the visitor experience available within the area, whilst still enabling the main distinctiveness 'hook' to be prioritised, marketed and promoted accordingly. It is important that this relative positioning is maintained to maximise all potential messages and communications about Hinckley & Bosworth.

Triumph Motorcycles



These themes act in a complementary manner and enable the length and the nature of the visitor experience locally to be extended thereby 'dispersing' the visitor throughout the area to stay longer and hopefully spend more. This can also have a beneficial impact upon and positive implications for transport. A proportion of the overall visitor audience may well have a distinct and specific interest in one or more of these themes.

Destination: promoting the wide range of quality attractions and accommodation highlighting the borough's diverse offer

Positioning: working with a wide range of partners to ensure the area competes efficiently to enhance the visitor experience and ensure overnight stays and repeat visits; enhancing opportunities for business tourism and supporting opportunities in major economic developments

People: ensuring a warm welcome in quality assessed accommodation and attractions; advocating for employment and skills development within the industry

Intelligence: ensuring our local businesses are connected and have access to reliable sources of data

The Strategy will continue to implement and effect positive change to bring about beneficial tourism development and activity in a consistent and coherent manner.

Hinckley and Bosworth Distinctiveness

We have agreed there are benefits arising from more cohesively and single-mindedly presenting the area's tourism product. We refer to this as creating the Hinckley and Bosworth '*distinctiveness*'. It requires that we focus on just a few aspects around which we can position all the other facets of

tourism and deliver the cross-selling opportunities. It is the central story that all partners can translate to fit their own needs.

In identifying this single-minded focus we flag up the possible 'iconic' attractors of Bosworth Battlefield and Twycross Zoo, the growing appeal of Hinckley for shopping, the diversity of accommodation options and attractions, the miles of pure English countryside, and also consider the potential of the 'gateway' position between Warwickshire and the West Midlands conurbation and the National Forest and the East Midlands conurbations. The area has a particular advantage in a growing portfolio of high-quality conference and business tourism locations including the Hinckley Island Hotel and the new developments at MIRA and Triumph. These can all be placed within a context of quiet by-waters and the offer of a hidden corner of Middle England – located literally in the centre of the country.

The Strategy recommends the positioning of three themes

Family Fun - ***the perfect location for families of all ages to enjoy time together***

History and Heritage - ***discover what has made us who we are***

Business Tourism - ***unique quality venues in a perfect location***

These are the propositions behind the marketing and communications activity that will be developed and implemented. The core proposition will be used as the platform for building area distinctiveness, and as the basis of the wider sales appeal. In this way Hinckley and Bosworth will build a more distinctive profile and will succeed through offering a genuinely unique tourism story within the Leicestershire destination supported solidly by the strength of the links with associated tourism themes.

These themes are not exclusive, there are many others including the outdoors, walking etc that will be used where appropriate. However, these are the themes that are most distinctive to the borough and therefore offer the greatest opportunity to develop a competitive edge.

Town Twinning

There are numerous advantages to the future development of the borough by celebrating and encouraging cultural links with our neighbours. Twinning brings people together, allowing citizens of the



twinned towns to experience and explore other cultures. It encourages economic development and trade opportunities:

- To promote economic and trade opportunities
- To improve tourism links and visits
- To celebrate and improve trade links

A good twinning partnership can benefit many sections of the community. On a practical level twinned towns can encourage their Chambers of Trade to link, as well as encouraging youth exchange visits. Twin towns' websites can be linked, and art or cultural exhibits can be arranged. It can also enable young people to get involved with their counterparts from a different country, helping to overcome stereotypes and encourage tolerance and understanding. There are opportunities for young people:

- To promote intercultural learning
- To develop skills
- To encourage participation

Hinckley is currently twinned with Grand Quevilly in France and Herford in Germany. There also links with Laatzen in Germany and Gubin in Poland, both of which are twinned with Grand Quevilly. [More information is available on our website.](#)



Action Plan

The main aims of the Strategy are to bring about greater cohesion, consistency and focus, to enable us to work closer together and to reduce duplication – in order to attract greater tourism business. The Strategy identifies and prioritises the actions that will make most difference to the business of tourism.

It is a practical and considered plan for the whole tourism sector and embraces our collective ambitions. It will make a difference where difference is most needed. As well as stakeholder partners, the Strategy also identifies our tourism neighbours and the basis of working with them. It should also be regarded as the catalyst for identifying, developing and funding new tourism initiatives.

The Partnership aims to deliver in 2013 to 2018:

- 1** Distinctive tourism story for the Hinckley and Bosworth area promoted through
- 10%** Growth in economic activity over the first 3 years through greater visitor spend
- 12%** Growth in visitor numbers over the first 3 years
- 75%** Sector inclusion in the district pages of goleicestershire.com
- 80%** Of tourism businesses using proactively online marketing
- 85%** Visitor satisfaction

Members of the Partnership and its key partners will receive quarterly updates on performance at board meetings and our specially organised seminar events. The Partnership will also conduct its own survey amongst the tourism trade to add to our knowledge of the area and how we can measure the impact of the Partnership's activities.



Ref	Activity	Yr1 to 3 2013-16	Yr 4/5 2016-18	Lead	Resources	Anticipated Outcomes
	Objective 1 – Destination					
1.1	Support and develop key marketing campaigns around the themes of Family Fun, History and Heritage and Business Tourism	✓	✓	LPL HBTP	Existing activity	Increased visitor numbers especially overnight stays
1.2	Produce a bi-annual Visitor Guide reflecting useful information and promoting members	✓		LPL HBTP	Existing budgets	Increased visitor numbers Increased revenue for HBTP
1.3	Continue to develop and improve the tourism website through targeted online activity, suggest itineraries to encourage movement around the borough	✓	✓	LPL	Existing activity	Increased visitor numbers Increased membership of HBTP
1.4	Promote cycling and walking within the borough to day visitors and residents via Local Transport Plan 3.	✓	✓	HBTP	Existing activity	New markets attracted to visit the area
1.5	Work collaboratively with Planning Authority to maximise development of new tourism activities/businesses	✓	✓	HBTP	n/a	Enhance the Tourism offer Create new employment opportunities
1.6	Devise a programme of town and country trails to include a Children's trail to encourage travel around the area	✓		Hinckley Bid	Existing budgets	New family markets attracted to the area
1.7	Promote the vast range of events that are delivered by key partners	✓	✓	HBBC HBTP	Existing budgets	Increased visitor numbers Increased footfall in the town
1.8	Support the expansion plans at Hinckley and District Museum		✓	HBTP	External funding	Enhance the Tourism offer
	Objective 2 – Positioning					
2.1	Encourage support from the local tourism industry at local events in the borough to promote the attractions to day visitors and residents	✓	✓	HBTP	Officer time	Increased promotion and membership
2.2	Investigate the smart phone technology to create Apps and DVD to promote tourism in the area		✓	Hinckley Bid	Existing activity	Wider access by the public to the area
2.3	Support the opportunities in tourism and economic development being developed by large international companies in the borough	✓		Mira Triumph	Existing activity	Promote the area to a national and international visitor Enhance the tourism offer

2.4	Enhance opportunities for the borough following the discovery of Richard III in Leicester	✓				Promote the area to a national and international visitor
2.5	Review and evaluate appropriate marketing material, to support the visitor with key what's on information.	✓	✓	HBTP	Officer time	Efficient use of budgets
2.6	Promote tourism to the new housing developments planned across the borough		✓	HBTP	Officer time	Increase visitor numbers
2.7	Work to develop event bidding to encourage the events and conference market to the area	✓	✓	LPL	Officer time	Promote the area to a national and international visitor
	Objective 3 – People					
3.1	Increase the awareness of Hinckley & Bosworth Tourism Partnership within the tourism industry and increase membership	✓	✓	HBTP	Officer time	Increased membership Partnership working with other areas
3.2	Circulate the list of members to each other to maximise connectivity and to encourage B2B opportunities	✓	✓	HBTP	Officer time	Increase in buying services locally Increased partnership working
3.3	Develop and promote a Local Accommodation Assessment Scheme	✓	✓	LPL	Officer time	Marketing material accepted in more places Quality standards increased
3.4	Actively support initiatives such as Britain in Bloom and Leicestershire Food Fortnight to enhance the appeal of the area	✓	✓	LPL	Officer time	Increase visitor numbers Enhance the tourism offer
	Objective 4 - Intelligence					
4.1	Hold an annual tourism industry networking event to connect with local business	✓	✓	LPL	Existing budgets	Increased membership Increased partnership working
4.2	Promote Tourism Awards and support applications in all categories	✓	✓	HBTP	Officer time	Enhance the tourism offer
4.2	Conduct a survey amongst members to gather information about visitor numbers and economic impact	✓		HBTP	Officer time	Increase intelligence of the area

Monitoring and Review

This Action Plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis, commencing April 2014.

Contact Details

Steve Wegerif
Chair of the HBTP
Hinckley Business Centre
Castle Street
Leicestershire
LE10 1DD
t: 01455 698494
e: steve@visithinckleyandbosworth.co.uk
w: www.visithinckleyandbosworth.co.uk

Lindsay Orton
Creative Communities & Tourism Officer
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
Hinckley Hub, Rugby Road
Hinckley
LE10 0FR
t: 01455 255833
e: lindsay@visithinckleyandbosworth.co.uk
w: www.visithinckleyandbosworth.co.uk



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