

To Members of the Scrutiny of the Administration's Budget Proposals

Cllr. Geoff Welsh (Chairman)
Cllr. Roy Denney (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr. Sam Maxwell (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr. Shabbir Aslam
Cllr. Shane Blackwell
Cllr. Lee Breckon JP
Cllr. Nick Brown
Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore
Cllr. Nick Chapman
Cllr. Adrian Clifford
Cllr. Stuart Coar
Cllr. Alex DeWinter


Cllr. David Findlay
Cllr. Janet Forey
Cllr. David Freer
Cllr. Deanne Freer
Cllr. Chris Frost
Cllr. Paul Hartshorn
Cllr. Iain Hewson
Cllr. Mark Jackson
Cllr. Trevor Matthews
Cllr. Christine Merrill
Cllr. Phil Moitt

Cllr. Mat Mortel
Cllr. Antony Moseley
Cllr. Michael O'Hare
Cllr. Louise Richardson
Cllr. Tracey Shepherd
Cllr. Mike Shirley
Cllr. Kirsteen Thomson
Cllr. Bev Welsh
Cllr. Jane Wolfe

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **SCRUTINY OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S BUDGET PROPOSALS** will be held in the Council Chamber - Council Offices, Narborough on **WEDNESDAY, 11 JANUARY 2023 at 5.30 p.m.** for the transaction of the following business and your attendance is requested.

Yours faithfully



Louisa Horton
Corporate Services Group Manager & Monitoring Officer



AGENDA

2. Budget Context Setting and Overview (Pages 3 - 6)

To consider the report of the Executive Director (S.151 Officer) (enclosed).

3. 2023-2024 Draft Portfolio Budget Proposals (Pages 7 - 106)

a) To consider the proposed 2023-24 budget and spending plans for each Portfolio area.

b) Prepare lines of questioning for a written response from Portfolio Holders in advance of the next Scrutiny Budget meeting on Wednesday 18 January 2023.

- Cllr. Terry Richardson – Leader's Portfolio – Page 7
- Cllr. Maggie Wright - Finance, People And Performance Portfolio – Page 17
- Cllr. Nigel Grundy and Cllr. Ben Taylor - Health, Wellbeing, Community Engagement & Business Support Portfolio – Page 35
- Cllr. Nigel Grundy - Neighbourhood Services & Assets Portfolio – Page 55
- Cllr. Les Phillimore - Housing, Community And Environmental Services Portfolio – Page 69
- Cllr. Ben Taylor - Planning Delivery & Enforcement and Corporate Transformation Portfolio – Page 83
- ICT Briefing Note – Page 105

SCHEDULE OF EXTERNAL FUNDING**Current Position 2022/23**

Portfolio	Description	2022/23	Notes
<u>Health & Wellbeing, Community Engagement & Business Support</u>			
Leicestershire County Council	Hospital Housing Enabler Service	£114,000)	
Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust	Hospital Housing Enabler Service	£84,000)	- From Business Plan.
NHS Leicester City CCG	Hospital Housing Enabler Service	£169,000)	
Leicestershire County Council	Lightbulb DFG Admin contribution	£22,100	To compensate for the cost of an additional administrative post.
Leicestershire County Council	Contributions towards Lightbulb Central Hub	£115,335)	
District Councils	Contributions towards Lightbulb Central Hub	£116,437)	_ Based on budgeted establishment and subject to year end review.
Leicestershire County Council	Lightbulb Locality Contributions	£272,874)	
District Councils	Lightbulb Locality Contributions	£285,759)	
Leicestershire County Council	Housing Occupational Therapist project	£113,865	Top sliced funding from DFG allocations agreed by Better Care Fund.
Leicestershire County Council	Assisted Technology & Dementia Pilot	£89,500	Top sliced funding from DFG allocations agreed by Better Care Fund.
Leicestershire County Council	LRS Commissioning	£92,374	Confirmed funding.
Leicestershire County Council	Graduate Programme	£16,422	Confirmed funding.
Other Leicestershire District Councils	Building Control Partnership	£99,313	Based on business case for delegation model.
Leicestershire County Council	Active Families Year 5	£10,000	
<u>Housing, Community & Environmental Services</u>			
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council	Children's Support	£2,700	Shared post discontinued - residual funding.
DEFRA	Air Quality Grant	£155,121	Likely to be carried over into 2023/24 due to vacant post.
Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner	Blaby Partnership Locality Fund	£33,000	Confirmed funding used for youth provision.
Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner	Youth Prevention & Diversion	£9,574	Confirmed funding used for youth provision.
EMH Housing	Floating Support Contribution	£15,000	Quarterly contribution of £5,000. Final quarter to be claimed.
DLUHC	Homelessness funding	£136,961	Confirmed funding for 2022/23.
<u>Leader</u>			
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council	Contribution towards EIR costs	£22,314	Recovery of statutory costs associated with the provision of personal
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council	Contribution towards EIR costs	£8,347	search responses which are not permitted to be charged to customers.
<u>Neighbourhood Services & Assets</u>			
Various Developers	S106 Commuted Maintenance contributions	£20,114	To offset the annual cost of maintaining transferred open spaces.
<u>Planning Delivery & Enforcement & Corporate Transformation</u>			
Tritex Symmetry (Hinckley) Limited	Planning Performance Agreement	£26,000	Hinckley National Rail Freight Hub
Drummond Estate	Planning Performance Agreement - Lubbethorpe	£50,000	Lubbethorpe
		<u>£2,080,110</u>	

SCHEDULE OF EXTERNAL FUNDING**Current Position 2023/24**

Portfolio	Description	2023/24	Notes
<u>Health & Wellbeing, Community Engagement & Business Support</u>			
Leicestershire County Council	Hospital Housing Enabler Service	£114,000) These contributions are based on the current business plan. A new
Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust	Hospital Housing Enabler Service	£84,000) business case to consolidate the core funding and ad hoc projects has
NHS Leicester City CCG	Hospital Housing Enabler Service	£169,000) been submitted to partners but not yet agreed.
Leicestershire County Council	Lightbulb DFG Admin contribution	£25,000	To compensate for the cost of an additional administrative post.
Leicestershire County Council	Contributions towards Lightbulb Central Hub	£129,786)
District Councils	Contributions towards Lightbulb Central Hub	£131,028)_ Based on budgeted establishment and subject to year end review.
Leicestershire County Council	Lightbulb Locality Contributions	£275,165)
District Councils	Lightbulb Locality Contributions	£274,543)
Leicestershire County Council	Housing Occupational Therapist project	£5,303	Top sliced funding from DFG allocations agreed by Better Care Fund.
Leicestershire County Council	LRS Commissioning	£74,540	Indicative allocation subject to LCC budget approval. Not in budget yet.
LLEP	Walk & Ride Funding	£31,660	To cover staffing costs related to the development of a cycling route between Lubbethorpe and Leicester.
Leicestershire County Council	Graduate Programme	£0	Not yet confirmed.
Other Leicestershire District Councils	Building Control Partnership	£121,967	Share of non-fee earning cost of service.
<u>Housing, Community & Environmental Services</u>			
Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner	Blaby Partnership Locality Fund	£55,000)_ Funding allocation now confirmed, spending plans to be submitted.
Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner	Youth Prevention & Diversion	£0)
EMH Housing	Floating Support Contribution	£0	Unconfirmed although we have not received notice of withdrawal.
DLUHC	Homelessness funding	£142,707	Funding allocation received 23rd December.
<u>Leader</u>			
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council	Contribution towards EIR costs	£22,314	Recovery of statutory costs associated with the provision of personal
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council	Contribution towards EIR costs	£8,347	search responses which are not permitted to be charged to customers.
<u>Neighbourhood Services & Assets</u>			
Various Developers	S106 Commuted Maintenance contributions	£20,114	To offset the annual cost of maintaining transferred open spaces.
<u>Planning Delivery & Enforcement & Corporate Transformation</u>			
Tritex Symmetry (Hinckley) Limited	Contribution towards HNRFI costs	£130,000	To cover salary costs and other project related expenditure.
DLUHC	Contribution towards Garden Village Costs	£116,813	To cover salary costs and other project related expenditure.
Drummond Estate	Planning Performance Agreement - Lubbethorpe	£50,000	Under negotiation.
		<u>£1,981,287</u>	

Service	No. of FTEs 2021/22 Budget	Movement in FTEs 2021/22 to 2022/23	No. of FTEs 2022/23 Budget	Movement in FTEs 2022/23 to 2023/24	No. of FTEs 2023/24 Budget	Notes
LEADER						
CHIEF EXECUTIVE & DIRECTORS	3.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	3.00	
PA TEAM	2.43	0.00	2.43	0.00	2.43	
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & GOVERNANCE	4.89	0.00	4.89	0.11	5.00	
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT	2.32	0.00	2.32	-0.32	2.00	
ELECTORAL SERVICES	2.67	0.00	2.67	0.00	2.67	
LAND CHARGES	5.81	0.00	5.81	-0.11	5.70	
CORPORATE HEALTH & SAFETY	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES & ASSETS						
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES GROUP MANAGER	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES MGMT & ADMIN	4.61	0.00	4.61	0.00	4.61	
CLEANSING	11.00	-0.20	10.80	-0.30	10.50	
REFUSE & RECYCLING	44.00	0.00	44.00	0.00	44.00	
VEHICLE MAINTENANCE	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	
OPEN SPACES & GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	11.00	0.00	11.00	0.00	11.00	
PROPERTY SERVICES	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	
COUNCIL OFFICES/CLEANERS/CARETAKERS	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	
FINANCE, PEOPLE & PERFORMANCE						
FINANCE	10.58	0.92	11.50	0.00	11.50	
INCOME & COLLECTIONS	6.00	0.00	6.00	0.00	6.00	
REVENUES & BENEFITS	24.10	0.46	24.56	-0.92	23.64	Changes to working hours.
CORPORATE PERFORMANCE	5.42	0.00	5.42	-2.38	3.04	Transferred to new Transformation team.
HR & TRAINING	6.16	0.11	6.27	1.21	7.48	Includes 1.61 FTE fixed term posts.
HOUSING, COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES						
COMMUNITY SERVICES GROUP MANAGER	1.50	0.00	1.50	0.00	1.50	
HOUSING SERVICES	12.00	1.00	13.00	3.00	16.00	3 x fixed term posts funded through Homelessness Grant.
COMMUNITY SERVICES	8.48	-1.00	7.48	-0.48	7.00	
CHILDRENS SERVICES	2.11	0.00	2.11	-0.61	1.50	Post deleted - previously shared with Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council.
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	9.47	0.73	10.20	0.41	10.61	Contaminated Land Officer 1 FTE added; temporary admin post 0.59 FTE removed.
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	10.56	0.00	10.56	0.00	10.56	
AIR QUALITY CONTROL	0.00	1.61	1.61	-0.61	1.00	Externally funded - new scheme.
PLANNING DELIVERY & ENFORCEMENT & CORPORATE TRANSFORMATION						
PLANNING GROUP MANAGER	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	
STRATEGIC GROWTH TEAM	3.86	-3.00	0.86	0.00	0.86	
PLANNING DELIVERY	13.61	-0.96	12.65	1.96	14.61	Additional posts approved November 2021 but not added until after April 2022.
PLANNING ENFORCEMENT	4.81	0.00	4.81	0.19	5.00	Changes to working hours.
PLANNING ADMINISTRATION	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	5.50	0.00	5.50	1.01	6.51	Additional post approved November 2021 but not added until after April 2022.
WHETSTONE GARDEN VILLAGE	2.00	1.00	3.00	-2.00	1.00	
RAIL FREIGHT HUB TEAM	0.00	0.50	0.50	0.50	1.00	
NEW LUBBESTHORPE	0.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	
CORPORATE SERVICES GROUP MANAGER	1.91	0.00	1.91	0.00	1.91	Including Corporate Services Administrator.
TRANSFORMATION	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.30	4.30	2 FTE added as part of management restructure; 2.3 FTE from Performance.
CUSTOMER SERVICES	14.89	0.00	14.89	-0.01	14.88	
COMMUNICATIONS	5.54	0.00	5.54	0.00	5.54	
HEALTH, WELLBEING, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & BUSINESS SUPPORT						
REGULATORY & LEISURE SERVICES GRP MGR	1.61	0.00	1.61	0.00	1.61	
LIGHTBULB CENTRAL HUB	5.82	-0.27	5.55	0.35	5.90	
LIGHTBULB LOCALITY TEAMS	16.96	0.10	17.06	-1.42	15.64	Technical Officer end of fixed term contract.
HOSPITAL HOUSING ENABLER TEAM	7.00	-1.00	6.00	0.00	6.00	
HOUSING OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST	0.00	0.81	0.81	0.00	0.81	
LCC OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST	0.00	1.00	1.00	-1.00	0.00	Fixed term contract ended.
BUILDING CONTROL	14.61	10.64	25.25	-0.24	25.01	
HEALTH & RECREATION	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	
SOCIAL PRESCRIBING	2.39	0.19	2.58	-2.58	0.00	Service discontinued.
LEISURE DEVELOPMENT - SPORTS	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	
A PLACE TO GROW	0.45	0.08	0.53	0.02	0.55	
COVID 19 CONTAIN FUNDING	0.00	1.54	1.54	-1.54	0.00	Assumes all external funding fully utilised in 2022/23.
CORPORATE HEALTH IMPROVEMENTS	0.81	0.00	0.81	0.00	0.81	
SPORT & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	
TOURISM	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	
COMMUNITY, BUSINESS, WORK & SKILLS	8.37	-0.64	7.73	-0.51	7.22	Restructure of service.
TOTALS	315.25	16.62	331.87	-1.97	329.90	

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LEADER'S PORTFOLIO**Councillor Terry Richardson****Appendix F**

The budget settlement we have received for the next financial year provides some positive news in that it is better than might have been expected.

However, the fact remains that we still face an uncertain future as we still await announcements on how Councils will be funded in future. We, like everyone else, are faced with increasing costs that negate the better than anticipated settlement especially when viewed against our MTFS. It will no doubt be the case that the new council to be elected in May will be faced with similar difficult decisions during the next four-years. Our policy during my time as Leader of the Council has always been to ensure the Council has a firm financial basis and that decisions that protect this will always be taken irrespective of the possible political fallout. This budget, like others, will seek to protect our core services but still provide the ability to support the most vulnerable, as has been demonstrated by the Cost-of-Living support package that has been put in place. We will continue to look for ways to increase our revenue income where appropriate, as we have shown by the policies we have put in place over the last 12 months. As always, I will continue to use all channels available to me to ensure that Central Government are aware of our needs and expectations highlighting the potential impact of Central Government decisions on our financial viability.

Our residents and businesses must always be at the heart of what we do, and we will focus not just on those statutory services we must deliver, but also those other services, which truly add the greatest value. Coupled with this we owe a duty of care to our employees to provide a stable platform on which to carry out their duties and develop their careers.

Clearly the Council's trajectory has been set by the updated Blaby District Plan which articulates those areas of greatest focus with need to meet our net carbon zero target by 2030 being paramount. In this respect the Blaby District Plan provides the roadmap, and in this respect the recent peer review feedback has clearly supported our direction of travel.

Whilst we continue to face challenges on many fronts, I remain both optimistic and confident that we can meet these, especially supported by our excellent team of officers and our willingness, as articulated earlier, to make difficult decisions. I retain the belief that few Councils are as open, effective and harmonious as Blaby and I am committed to making sure this does not change.

Within my own portfolio responsibilities, the notes attached to the budget below are self- explanatory.

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Terry Richardson

Senior Officers: Chief Executive, Executive Director (S151), Executive Director, Corporate Services Group Manager, Neighbourhood Services and Assets Group Manager.

Portfolio Total

	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
Leader - Total	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£1,159,407	£1,202,286	£1,212,565	£53,158 4.58%	£10,279 0.85%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£587,069	£816,824	£712,796	£125,727 21.42%	-£104,028 -12.74%
3. Direct Income	-£305,800	-£308,800	-£306,300	-£500 0.16%	£2,500 -0.81%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£1,440,676	£1,710,310	£1,619,061	£178,385 12.38%	-£91,249 -5.34%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	22.12	22.12	21.80	-0.32 -1.45%	-0.32 -1.45%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Leader's portfolio includes establishment and running costs in respect of the Chief Executive, Directors, Health and Safety, Elections, Democratic Services and Governance, and Emergency Planning/Business Continuity.

The establishment budget for 2022/23 has been adjusted to allow for the recently settled pay award and uplifted pension contribution rates. The base budget for 2023/24 allows for a 3% pay award effective from 1st April 2023. Contractual increments are incorporated where applicable as well as increases to national insurance and pension contributions. There is no increase in headcount built into the 2023/24 establishment budget.

The increase in other gross direct expenditure between approved and revised stage for 2022/23 is due to the following reasons:

- The carry forward of unspent budget provision from 2021/22.
- An increase in external legal fees in connection with various planning issues, including Lubbethorpe and the Hinckley National Rail Freight.

In 2023/24, provision of £100,000 has been made to cover the cost of the district election next May. This will be covered from the Elections Reserve. The reserve is maintained in order to smooth the impact of District elections so that the cost does not fall in one financial year.

Land Charges fees represent the largest contributor to direct income, and this accounts for £247,000 of the total in the table above. Income has held up well and is expected to perform to a similar level in the next financial year. A further £31,000 is receivable from Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council and Oadby & Wigston Borough Council as their contribution towards the Land Charges service provided to them by Blaby. There is a future risk of loss of income because of the forthcoming migration of part of the local land charges function to HM Land Registry. This process has been delayed and is expected to be phased over more than one financial year. Implications for 2023/24 will be factored into the budget once dates are confirmed.

Chief Executive, Directors and Health & Safety

Chief Executive, Directors and Health & Safety	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£561,057	£569,584	£585,388	£24,331 4.34%	£15,804 2.77%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£15,817	£86,801	£43,302	£27,485 173.77%	-£43,499 -50.11%
3. Direct Income	£0	-£2,500	£0	£0 0.00%	£2,500 -100.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£576,874	£653,885	£628,690	£51,816 8.98%	-£25,195 -3.85%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	6.43	6.43	6.43	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions.
2. Revised estimate includes one-off budget provision carried forward from 2021/22. Included in both financial years is the cost of commercial support from Charnwood Borough Council as approved as part of the management restructure in May 2022.
3. Non-recurring budget for shared cost of a study into the impact of the new prison at Glen Parva.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change to headcount.

Electoral Registration

Electoral Registration	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£87,207	£93,043	£96,686	£9,479 10.87%	£3,643 3.92%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£77,600	£108,690	£153,200	£75,600 97.42%	£44,510 40.95%
3. Direct Income	-£1,800	-£1,800	-£1,800	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£163,007	£199,933	£248,086	£85,079 52.19%	£48,153 24.08%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	2.67	2.67	2.67	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions.
2. The revised estimate includes budget a non-recurring carry forward from 2021/22 relating to IER Grant funding. Next financial year allows for the cost of the district election which will be funded from the Elections Reserve.
3. Income for sale of register of electors.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change in headcount.

Democratic Services, Governance, Information Management and Legal Services

Democratic Services, Governance, Information Management & Legal Services	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£511,143	£539,659	£530,491	£19,348 3.79%	-£9,168 -1.70%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£454,900	£582,581	£468,302	£13,402 2.95%	-£114,279 -19.62%
3. Direct Income	-£304,000	-£304,500	-£304,500	-£500 0.16%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£662,043	£817,740	£694,293	£32,250 4.87%	-£123,447 -15.10%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	13.02	13.02	12.70	-0.32 -2.46%	-0.32 -2.46%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account the pay award, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions.
2. The increase in the revised budget mainly relates to additional legal costs in relation to Lubbethorpe and the Hinckley National Rail Freight.
3. Mainly income from land charges.
4. Net impact of the variances listed above.
5. Minor change in FTE.

Emergency Planning & Business Continuity

Emergency Planning & Business Continuity	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1.Establishment Costs	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
2.Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£38,752	£38,752	£47,992	£9,240 23.84%	£9,240 23.84%
3.Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4.Net Direct Expenditure	£38,752	£38,752	£47,992	£9,240 23.84%	£9,240 23.84%
5.Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. No establishment costs associated with this service.
2. Proposed budget includes increase in contribution for Business Continuity Resilience Partnership.
3. Not applicable.
4. Net impact.
5. Not applicable.

Portfolio Priorities

- To Lead the Council through a period of Recovery
- To oversee the delivery the Blaby District Plan
- To ensure the Council has robust arrangements in place for responding to emergencies and can fulfil its statutory obligations
- To ensure the Council has robust Health and Safety advisory capacity and arrangements in place for fulfilling its statutory obligations.
- To continue to work on the recommendations from the LGA Peer Review.

Services

Chief Executive & Directors

Includes costs for the Chief Executive and Directors' budgets and in addition the costs for the PA team and Health and Safety Officer budgets.

Electoral Services

Includes costs for electoral registration and elections, note that the 2023 District Elections are paid for by the district (national election/referenda, County and parish election expenses are recoverable).

Democratic Services, Governance, Information Management & Legal

Includes costs for the Legal, Democratic Services and Information Management budgets.

Emergency Planning

Includes the costs associated with the provision for Emergency Planning within the Authority, which is delivered across the Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland area.

Key Points

<p>Doing things differently – plans for the coming year</p>	<p><u>Leader, Directors & SLT</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Senior Leadership Team will work with Members to develop the New Blaby District Plan following the election in May. • All members of the Senior Leadership Team will be supporting the Transformation agenda and to work towards to the Council becoming financially sustainable. <p><u>Electoral Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elections 2023 • Parliamentary Boundary Review • Neighbourhood plans <p><u>Land Charges and Legal Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic signature/sealing • Migration to HM Land Registry <p><u>Emergency Planning/Business Continuity arrangements</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to develop tactical and strategic awareness across the Senior Leadership Team to continue to develop expertise in our collective emergency response to immediate and enduring events. • Complete review of Blaby DC incident management plan to incorporate incident specific action cards. • Focus on development of robust power outage plan and participation in national exercise to ensure LLR and Blaby are prepared for power outages. • Participation in exercises to develop resilience and business continuity arising from risks to cyber security. • Continue to manage the safety of the Huncote Leisure centre campus. <p><u>Corporate Health & Safety</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The safety of our staff will continue to be a key focus and our organisational Blueprint, and all Health & Safety policies will continue to be reviewed with particular reference to staff working in a more agile manner and consideration of mental health and the support available to staff.
<p>Income generation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Legal Service Team and Information Governance continue to offer services for other authorities. Land Charges income may be impacted in future by the transfer to HM Land Charges, however it is felt that the budget included is realistic and achievable Land Charges undertake work for OWBC and HBBC.

Capital plans for the portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No capital plans specific to this portfolio
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Key Performance Indicators

Land Charges

Turnaround time (smaller is better)

	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
2021/22	9.67	8	9.33	11	11.67	7.67	4.67	4	3.67	4.33	3	3.33
2022/23	5	5	4.67	5.67	4.67	4	4	4				

Customers

The Council will continue with its focus on delivering services that our customers need. This is going to be a particular focus as we transform and ensure that our customers remain at the heart of what we do.

Risks

A full risk register is maintained in relation to the teams within this portfolio and is regularly reviewed to ensure its accuracy. However, significant potential risks include the following issues:

- **Impact of Cost of Living on Residents** – It is vital that our Council is prepared to support our residents and local economy as they continue to cope with the Cost-of-Living Crisis. There is reputational risk to the Council if we are not in a position to assist our locality and along with partners, we will develop strategies to support both residents and business.
- **Emergency Planning** – reputational risk with partners and customers if appropriate response not available or given. Lessons learnt from both flooding incidents and the pandemic situation has helped us to review our plans and add to them to support our residents specifically in relation to recovery following an incident.
- **Health and Safety** - financial, legal, moral, reputational risk - negligence. Control measures managed through advisory service and internal policies, procedures and departmental audits.
- **Carbon Zero Target** – the Council is committed to meeting its net zero ambition by 2030 but the potential future financial gap represents a risk to that aim.
- **Delivery of the 2023 Elections** – all risks associated with staffing of the Election are being considered and mitigated.

FINANCE, PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO
Cllr Maggie Wright

The Autumn Statement issued in November suggested that local government would receive a two-year settlement covering both 2023/24 and 2024/25. However, there is still uncertainty for 2024/25 so to all intents and purposes we have been given a single year settlement for 2023/24. The long-awaited changes to the business rates baseline and Fair Funding are not now expected to be implemented before 2025/26. This means that our updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) still contains several high-level assumptions, although the underlying message of significant future funding gaps is unchanged from last year.

The financial outlook for local government remains uncertain. This year we also have the added pressure of the cost-of-living crisis to bring into account whilst still meeting the need to set a balanced budget. That said, the settlement that we received on 20th December is the best in cash terms for local government for many years, but in real terms we are still left with a budget gap. New Homes Bonus continues for another year, and potentially two, but with no legacy payments. A new grant has been introduced to ensure that local authorities' core spending power is increased by at least 3%. This guarantee is funded from the Lower Tier Services Grant and the reduction in New Homes Bonus. The settlement also gives local authorities the ability to increase council tax by the greater of £5 or 2.99% at band D level.

The ever-complicated picture surrounding business rates is even more difficult to predict this year, due to the 2023 revaluation exercise and the government's announcement that it is freezing the rate multiplier. Local authorities will be compensated by a mix of S31 grant and an uplift to the Baseline Funding Level. The precise position will not be known until the NNDR1 return has been completed.

Once again, we will have to look closely at our 5-year capital programme to ensure that it remains affordable. The change to our Minimum Revenue Provision policy, approved by Council in September, will help to reduce borrowing costs in the shorter-term but we are still at risk from rising inflation.

The Performance team has worked hard with all services to reintroduce a performance management framework, which will be key to the delivery of the Council's priorities within the limited resources we have. In addition to this, we have recently procured a new performance management system which is planned to be implemented in time for the new financial year.

Following the HR Review this year will see the continuation of the improvements being made to the HR Service. This will include ensuring consistency of advice; working with the Transformation team to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of HR processes with the upgrade of the I-Trent system; reviewing policies and supporting staff as they embrace the hybrid way of working and reviewing our recruitment process. This will

go hand in hand with a leadership development programme designed to support our people managers to lead and develop our staff ensuring Blaby continues to be a great place to work.

Council Tax and Benefits now falls within my portfolio and, although business grants and the council tax energy rebate scheme have now ended, government has recently announced an extension to its Energy Bill Support Scheme which, once again, local authorities will have a hand in delivering. At the same time, the team will also be looking to implement a new document management system, followed later in the year by a suite of new online forms to help drive transformation of the service.

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Maggie Wright

Senior Officers: Executive Director (S151), Executive Director, Corporate Services Group Manager, Finance Group Manager, and Strategic HR Manager

Portfolio Total

Finance, People and Performance - Total	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£2,145,934	£2,255,697	£2,241,734	£95,800 4.46%	-£13,963 -0.62%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£11,892,369	£10,481,884	£10,266,020	-£1,626,349 -13.68%	-£215,864 -2.06%
3. Direct Income	-£11,111,000	-£9,680,723	-£9,335,650	£1,775,350 -15.98%	£345,073 -3.56%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£2,927,303	£3,056,858	£3,172,104	£244,801 8.36%	£115,246 3.77%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	53.75	54.96	51.66	-2.09 -3.89%	-3.30 -6.00%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This portfolio incorporates the establishment costs relating to the Finance, Council Tax and Benefits, Income and Collection, HR and Performance teams. The Council Tax and Benefits budget was formerly included in the Housing, Community and Environmental Services portfolio but was transferred following the management restructure approved in May 2022. The establishment budget for 2022/23 has been adjusted to allow for the recently settled pay award and uplifted pension contribution rates. The establishment budget for 2023/24 allows for a 3% estimated pay award, contractual increments where appropriate, and employer's national insurance and pension contributions. The establishment budget for this portfolio also includes central provisions for statutory sick pay, maternity pay, the apprenticeship levy, and a vacancy savings provision. The vacancy savings provision of £200,000 recognises that the Council is unlikely to be fully staffed throughout the financial year.

In terms of other gross direct expenditure, one of the most significant movements relates to the long-term lease of the Enderby Road Industrial Estate in Whetstone. The lease agreement allows for a rent review every five years, with the last review applicable from June 2019. The 2022/23 budget allows for a backdated rent increase of approximately £30,000 per annum. The new annual rent of £230,000 per annum has been recognised in the 2023/24 budget. External interest payable is lower than originally budgeted in 2022/23 due to slippage in the planned Capital Programme and because no external borrowing has been undertaken to date this financial year. This is a conscious decision due to the ongoing trend of investment rates being lower than borrowing rates. The Council is effectively borrowing internally to save on interest costs but also reducing the counterparty risk associated with investment.

Also included within other gross direct expenditure is the cost paying housing benefit to residents on low income. This shows a significant reduction in 2023/24, compared with 2022/23, based on a falling caseload due to the transfer of claimants to Universal Credit.

The reduction in direct income in 2023/24 is largely reflective of the reduction in housing benefit payable which causes a corresponding fall in the subsidy claim. In the main, the Council can claim 100% subsidy on rent allowance and rent rebates payable, although where some payments are made in error, they attract a lower rate of subsidy. The increase in homelessness is also causing a disparity between housing benefit payable and the amount of subsidy that can be reclaimed, because there is a cap on the rent amount which can be subsidised.

Investment income in both 2022/23 and 2023/24 is rising considerably in line with the Bank of England base rate which has been increased by the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to bring inflation under control.

Financial Services

Financial Services	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£547,775	£572,433	£633,936	£86,161 15.73%	£61,503 10.74%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£959,727	£1,076,297	£1,058,896	£99,169 10.33%	-£17,401 -1.62%
3. Direct Income	-£145,500	-£445,500	-£405,500	-£260,000 178.69%	£40,000 -8.98%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£1,362,002	£1,203,230	£1,287,332	-£74,670 -5.48%	£84,102 6.99%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	11.50	11.50	11.50	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. Includes provision for maternity cover for Accountancy Services Manager.
2. The loan interest payable estimates have been reviewed based upon the draft 5-year Capital Programme; this has resulted in a reduction for the current financial year as no loans have been raised to date, but an increase for 2023/24. Interest payable on the industrial estate lease has increased by approximately £30,000 following a back-dated rent increase. The impact of the backdating is particularly noticeable in 2022/23 where the

additional cost is a one-off £100,000. Inflationary increases have been allowed for where appropriate.

3. Investment interest rates have increased considerably in recent months and investment income budgets have increased accordingly.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change other than maternity cover (not included in the post numbers above).

Council Tax & Benefits

Revenues and Benefits	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£832,327	£884,383	£890,631	£58,304 7.00%	£6,248 0.71%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£10,585,416	£9,040,377	£8,733,254	-£1,852,162 -17.50%	-£307,123 -3.40%
3. Direct Income	-£10,798,500	-£9,069,023	-£8,751,700	£2,046,800 -18.95%	£317,323 -3.50%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£619,243	£855,737	£872,185	£252,942 40.85%	£16,448 1.92%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	24.56	24.56	23.64	-0.92 -3.75%	-0.92 -3.75%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions.
2. Gross Direct Expenditure mainly comprises the amount of estimated housing benefit that is due to be paid out by the authority to assist residents in staying in their homes because they are on a low income, or in receipt of certain benefits. The caseload is reducing as new claimants are transferred to Universal Credit, administered by the Department for Works and Pensions. The revised estimate includes one-off costs in relation to the Energy Support Scheme, for which funding has been received, as well as budget carried forward from 2021/22 to fund specific projects.
3. The Direct Income figures include all government grants, one off costs, new burdens, rewards, and subsidy. Housing Benefit Subsidy no longer completely offsets benefit payable as the amount that can be claimed in relation to bed and breakfast accommodation is capped.
4. This represents the net impact of the variances listed above.

5. Service Manager has reduced working hours.

Income & Collections Team

Income and Collections	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£225,738	£238,729	£243,896	£18,158 8.04%	£5,167 2.16%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£21,625	£20,615	£19,979	-£1,646 -7.61%	-£636 -3.09%
3. Direct Income	-£166,000	-£166,000	-£178,450	-£12,450 7.50%	-£12,450 7.50%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£81,363	£93,344	£85,425	£4,062 4.99%	-£7,919 -8.48%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	6.00	6.00	6.00	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions.
2. Budget revised in line with expenditure to date and expected expenditure.
3. The budget relates to income for the recovery of summons and liability costs.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change.

Audit & Fraud

Audit & Fraud	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£127,811	£116,816	£246,167	£118,356 92.60%	£129,351 110.73%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£127,811	£116,816	£246,167	£118,356 92.60%	£129,351 110.73%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. No establishment costs are applicable to this service.
2. The external audit fee payable is expected to increase by 150% on average, following the recent national procurement process for audit appointments.
3. Not applicable.
4. See note 2 above.
5. Not applicable.

Performance

Performance	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£261,723	£272,633	£156,930	-£104,793 -40.04%	-£115,703 -42.44%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£29,070	£52,855	£32,150	£3,080 10.60%	-£20,705 -39.17%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£290,793	£325,488	£189,080	-£101,713 -34.98%	-£136,408 -41.91%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	5.42	5.42	3.04	-2.38 -43.91%	-2.38 -43.91%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account pay award, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. Two posts have been transferred to the new Transformation team.
2. The increase in the 2022/23 revised budget includes one-off provision brought forward from 2021/22. Inflationary increases have been included where appropriate.
3. Not applicable.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Reduction in headcount due to management restructure and movement of staff to Transformation.

Human Resources

Human Resources	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£278,371	£287,519	£316,341	£37,970 13.64%	£28,822 10.02%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£168,720	£174,924	£175,574	£6,854 4.06%	£650 0.37%
3. Direct Income	-£1,000	-£200	£0	£1,000 -100.00%	£200 -100.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£446,091	£462,243	£491,915	£45,824 10.27%	£29,672 6.42%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	6.27	7.48	7.48	1.21 19.30%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. Both revised budget and 2023/24 include the cost of temporary administrative support.
2. Various small-scale savings identified as part of the budget review process.
3. No longer providing a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for other organisations.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Includes temporary administrative support.

Portfolio Priorities

Financial Services

- To lead the Council through the significant financial challenges in 2022/23 and beyond, in the face of expected cuts to local government funding, and the cost-of-living crisis.
- Understand costs and deliver a responsive, cost effective and high-quality financial service.
- To formalise the contractual arrangements for the joint HR and Payroll system.
- Upgrade to the latest version of the Income Management System and begin preparations for procurement of a new contract upon expiry of the existing arrangements in May 2024.

Council Tax & Benefits

- To implement a new Document Management System and Workflow system within the team.
- To introduce new on-line forms, as part of the new Council Tax and Benefits software contract, with the aim of driving more efficient working practices and widen the availability of digital services for our customers.

Income & Collections

- To maximise income collection and recovery of outstanding debt.

Audit & Fraud

- Continue a culture of transparency with emphasis on financial control, audit, and having due regard for the prevention of fraud and management of risk.

Performance

- To ensure that effective performance and fair practices are in place across the Council, including the embedding of the new performance framework and implementation of Pentana.

Human Resources

- To deliver the improvements identified in the HR review:
 - Ensure consistency of HR advice
 - Carry out a review and update of policies
 - Work with the Transformation Team to improve HR processes to drive effectiveness and efficiency
 - Upgrade the I-Trent HR system taking advantage of the automation of processes
 - To design and deliver a management development programme based on developing skills in managing teams at Blaby.

Services

Financial Services

The Finance team is responsible for the provision and monitoring of financial information to maintain control of the Council's finances. The team also prepares the annual accounts, and looks after various other functions including treasury management, taxation, insurance, payroll, procurement, and payment of supplier invoices.

Council Tax & Benefits

This team is responsible for the billing and collection of council tax and business rates, and processing and payment of housing benefit and council tax support claims. The team also provides additional help to customers via the provision of discretionary or government funding.

Income & Collection

The Income & Collection team is responsible for maximising income generation in respect of council tax, business rates, and overpayment of housing benefits, in terms of the collection of unpaid debt. The Council Tax Income and Debt Manager also ensures that all guidance in relation to fraud and risk management are up to date and procedures are in place to prevent fraud and manage risk.

Audit

Internal Audit Services is provided by North West Leicestershire as part of a shared service arrangement which includes Blaby and Charnwood.

Performance

This includes staffing and operational costs for the Performance and Systems team, including licences costs for corporate systems such as Pentana and Idox. The Performance and Systems team also help other services succeed by ensuring that our systems work effectively, projects are managed successfully, providing advice on measuring, monitoring and improvement of processes and performance.

Human Resources

The HR Team is responsible for the provision of transactional services, operational advice and strategic development for the Council's staff. HR ensures that services are appropriately resourced with skilled people and that staff are safe, managed effectively and have high levels of satisfaction in their work.

Key Points

<p>Doing things differently – plans for the coming year</p>	<p><u>Financial Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The financial settlement for 2023/24 is better than previously expected and, along with a further year of New Homes Bonus and a reduced level of Service Grant, includes an element of funding guarantee that means the 2023/24 settlement is broadly similar to 2022/23. The business rates tariff payable has been reduced to reflect the reduction in the overall rateable value for businesses in the district. However, whilst this means that the funding gap for 2023/24 is manageable, the medium to longer term position remains the same, i.e., a considerable shortfall is forecast from 2025/26 onwards. This coincides with the likelihood of a business rate baseline reset taking effect from 1st April 2025. The Finance team will, therefore, continue to work with services to identify opportunities to reduce costs and generate additional income.• Continue to review fees and charges to ensure that, as a minimum, the Council recovers its full costs of service delivery.• In line with the recommendations of the peer review, we will produce an overall financial plan which sets out how the Council will meet existing and future funding gaps.• The Finance team will continue to challenge budgets and support services to ensure full cost recovery in relation to shared services.• The procurement of the joint HR/Payroll System is nearing completion and is expected to be implemented in 2023/24.• Introduce lower-level efficiencies, including the reduction of paper payslips produced and driving a move towards digital purchase orders. <p><u>Council Tax & Benefits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to revise the service to take account of any legislative changes or phasing of Universal Credit.• To encourage residents and customers towards self-serve options and exploration of other digital options. Current processes will still be available to those customers that are unable to use online services.• To replace the document management storage and retrieval system along with options for workflow. <p><u>Income & Collections</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Income & Collections team is working with external agencies, including bailiffs and legal experts, to implement additional debt recovery measures in line with the Corporate Debt Policy.• Procurement of a new enforcement agent contract in collaboration with other Leicestershire districts. <p><u>Audit</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Internal Audit Shared Service will continue to comply with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). The annual audit plan and individual audit programmes will be developed using a risk-based approach.
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	<p>This will ensure that our resources are focused on the areas of highest risk across the council so that our assurance work adds value. The Internal Audit Shared Service had an external inspection in early December 2020 (the PSIAS require this every 5 years). The assessor's opinion was that internal audit at Blaby, Charnwood and North West Leicestershire Councils conforms to the PSIAS. The assessor identified no areas of non-compliance with the standards that would affect the overall scope or operation of the internal audit activity and the team takes a flexible, structured, and focussed approach to their audit assignments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The audit plan will include planned and ad-hoc advisory work, in addition to the continued support for assurance on grants, to ensure that the Internal Audit team can provide relevant support for both changes that are occurring due to external forces and new developments across the Council and try to ensure that appropriate controls are built into new systems and ways of working. • The shared service continues well, providing further business continuity and sharing knowledge across the authorities. <p><u>Performance</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement and embed the new Performance Framework across the Council. • Deliver an integrated IT system as part of the LBCP delegated service project. • Support the Council in delivering the actions identified by the Peer Review. <p><u>Human Resources</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to support managers and staff in the new Blaby "Way We Work" (agile/hybrid working model). • Continue to deliver a health and wellbeing offer to improve the health of employees including mental wellbeing. • Development of the HR Service and the People Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Carry out a review and update of policies ○ Work with the Transformation Team to improve HR processes to drive effectiveness and efficiency ○ Upgrade the I-Trent HR system taking advantage of the automation of processes ○ To design and deliver a management development programme based developing skills in managing teams at Blaby. • Review the Council's recruitment process and continue to look at how the Council attracts and recruits staff.
Income generation	Income from the Council's central treasury function is included in this portfolio. Returns for 2022/23 and 2023/24 are expected to improve considerably in the wake of recent base rate rises.
Capital plans for the portfolio	The Finance team monitors and maintains oversight of the overall Capital Programme. None of the services within this portfolio have a significant call upon capital resources in 2023/24, although various new system implementations are likely to occur mostly in the new year, namely the Council Tax and Benefits system, HR and Payroll system, and income management upgrade. Most expenditure is likely to fall in the final quarter of 2022/23.

Key Performance Indicators

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR – FINANCE	2022/23 Apr – Dec	2021/22 Full Year	2020/21 Full Year	2019/20 Full Year
Invoices Paid within 10 days	87.34%	86.30%	87.99%	91.03%

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 YEAR TO DATE	COMMENTS
Percentage of benefit claims which were paid correctly	87.72%	88.06%	94.40%	In 2020 and 2021 there were reduced levels of monitoring due to the additional demands related to the pandemic. This included Test and Trace and other relief associated with this period. Monitoring has now returned to usual levels. Both external and internal audit have continued to observe good practise and levels of accuracy including the most recent current year audit reports.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2021/22 RESULTS	2022/23 YEAR TO DATE	COMMENTS
% total working days lost to sickness absence	3.37%	3.24 %	As at 30 November
The % of staff from ethnic minorities	9.35%	9.86%	As at 30 November
The % of staff who are disabled	6.43%	6.38%	As at 30 November

Customers

The Finance team's external customers include suppliers who invoice the Council for goods and services, and companies and individuals who owe the Council money. Otherwise, the team's customers are largely internal, i.e., colleagues from other service areas, and Members.

Customers of the Council Tax and Benefits team include council taxpayers, business ratepayers, and claimants in receipt of housing benefit and/or council tax support. Changes or phasing for the DWP Universal Credit process will receive careful and considered preparation. The team is also responsible for the service level agreement with South Leicestershire Citizens Advice Bureau.

The Income and Collection team has a variety of customers, mainly residents of the district and business rate payers who have incurred debts by not paying Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates or Housing Benefit overpayments. These range from customers that owe small to very large amounts of money to the Council. Some customers have other debts too, so the teamwork at collecting payments from them in a manageable way and signpost them to other agencies that can assist them. Often customers will have vulnerability issues that need addressing in other ways so key skills must be used when dealing with the debt collection.

Maintaining awareness of Equalities and Human Rights across the Council by staff and members to ensure fair access to services by customers remains a focus. Training, information articles and advice are provided by the Performance and Systems team supported by HR.

Risks

Corporate and service risks are regularly reviewed to ensure that they are up to date, still valid, and accurately rated. Significant risks attached to this portfolio include the following issues:

- **Overall Financial Risk** – The financial risks facing the Council are not necessarily specific to this portfolio but the Finance team's input into financial issues across all aspects of the Council's services will continue. Officers work closely with the various services to monitor budgets but also to provide sound financial input into all decisions that have financial implications.
- **Local Government Funding** – the Government has stated its intention to undertake two major reviews of the Business Rates Retention Scheme, and the wider Fairer Funding mechanism. The results of both reviews pose a significant risk to the Council's future financial position although they are now unlikely to take effect until 2025/26. New Homes Bonus is being phased out, and as yet it is unclear as to whether it will be replaced with a different funding stream.
- **The cost-of-living crisis** is having a significant impact on the Council's financial position, in the form of high inflation and utility prices.
- **Business Rates Appeals** – the Council still faces a risk in terms of businesses registering appeals against their rateable value. Where these are successful the Council loses 40% of any reduction in rates payable, and the extent to which these appeals are submitted and upheld is outside of the Council's control.

- **Council Tax and Benefits** - errors made by less experienced staff that may then impact on residents. The cost-of-living crisis is also likely to result in an increase in the number of residents experiencing financial difficulties.
- **Audit** – insufficient resources to complete the audit plan due to unplanned corporate investigations, being unable to recruit to vacant positions, or long-term staff absences. As the service is provided through a shared service arrangement there is a risk that any party may want to withdraw from the arrangement which would impact all three partners.
- **Human Resources** - The non-delivery of the People Strategy may have an impact on staff absence, morale, and overall performance.
- **Performance** - lack of engagement in the performance framework may impact on rate of service improvement
- **Idox Database and associated systems** – if the system is not maintained and working effectively, a number of statutory services and duties may not be able to be delivered.

Appendix H
HEALTH, WELLBEING, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & BUSINESS SUPPORT
PORTFOLIO
Councillor Nigel Grundy & Councillor Ben Taylor

The areas covered in our portfolio are both wide ranging and complex, with four of the main partnerships; Lightbulb, Housing Enabler Team, Building Control and Tourism sitting in this group.

We have had some real success this year including the launch of the new delegated service for Building Control comprising 6 local authorities. In terms of Tourism, we have undertaken an accommodation study which has identified fourteen potential companies who would be willing to invest in the district. In Lightbulb we have gained agreement from partners to fund an interim Service Manager post for a nine-month period to allow the current manager to focus on developing the visioning document for the service from 2024 to 2029. The Lightbulb offer will potentially include the continuation of the pilots to provide support re hoarding (SafeSpaces) and providing assisted technology (Home Gadgets) to help people remain independent in their own homes. The plan is that going forward these both become part of business as usual. The Housing Enablement Team secured additional external funding to offer the service to both Community Hospitals and to those wards that provide Mental Health Support for Older people. We successfully launched our 'Active Blaby' system and website which helps get our residents to be more active and we've supported hundreds of our more vulnerable residents through our Exercise Referral and Falls Prevention (Steady Steps) programmes.

Alongside the above we have worked closely to support the delivery of a new prison HMP Fosseway including setting up a series of partnership meetings focusing on key subject matters such as Housing, Health/Social Care and Work & Skills.

Our young people have continued to take forward projects through our Youth Council around Night Safety, Hate and vaping. We will continue our support for the youth council, ensuring their voice is heard. They will always have an open invitation to our Full Council to raise issues that matter to them. Our Youth Green Forum includes both members from our youth council and students from our local schools they have developed a logo for the forum and drafted an action plan.

We have completed the public realm work in Blaby, delivered several jobs fairs and business breakfasts and established a Work & Skills forum. We have amended the criteria for the community grants scheme to support our community and voluntary groups through the cost-of-living crisis and helped 18 venues establish warm spaces.

Alongside the above our funding officer has continued to successfully secure external funding. In July 2022 we were awarded £67k from the Safer Streets Fund to enable the Joint Community Safety Partnership to deliver bystander training for Nighttime

Economy workers, CCTV in Blaby, a youth ASB campaign and diversionary activities. In December 2022 we were awarded £61.5k from the LCC Neighbourhood Mental Health Prevention Fund to establish three mental health cafes in the district. We have also secured funding for a Mental Health Co-ordinator post, confirmed in November 2022 £69,417.

We are amazed at both the wealth and range of projects and services the officers have delivered in the last year.

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Nigel Grundy & Councillor Ben Taylor

**Senior Officer: Business, Partnerships & Health Improvement
Group Manager**

Portfolio Total

Health, Wellbeing, Community Engagement and Business Support - Total	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£3,226,977	£3,577,905	£3,145,194	-£81,783 -2.53%	-£432,711 -12.09%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£566,210	£1,859,509	£636,530	£70,320 12.42%	-£1,222,979 -65.77%
3. Direct Income	-£3,493,532	-£3,503,242	-£3,378,865	£114,667 -3.28%	£124,377 -3.55%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£299,655	£1,934,172	£402,859	£103,204 34.44%	-£1,531,313 -79.17%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	75.47	82.47	67.55	-7.92 -10.49%	-14.92 -18.09%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This portfolio incorporates the establishment costs for Health & Leisure Services, Lightbulb, the Housing Enablement Team, Building Control, and Economic & Community Development, Work & Skills. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The establishment budget for 2023/24 allows for a 3% estimated pay award, contractual increments where appropriate, and employer's national insurance and pension contributions.

Many of the posts within Health & Leisure Services are externally funded and as such they are not included within the budget until that funding has been confirmed. This is the reason why the revised estimate is significantly higher than both the 2022/23 approved budget and the proposed budget for 2023/24, since the external funding was only secured after the budget was approved last February.

Other direct expenditure in the 2022/23 revised estimate is inflated by several factors. These include external funding (mainly for Health & Leisure Services) which is unconfirmed for 2023/24, one-off Contain funding received from the County Council, and unspent budget provision carried forward from 2021/22 (non-recurring).

In terms of income for this portfolio, the same principles apply to 2022/23 revised as described above, i.e., since the original budget was approved in February 2022, we have secured additional external funding in respect of Health & Leisure Services, and Housing Enablement. These income streams have not been recognised in the 2023/24 budget except where there is certainty over the availability of external funding.

The key income streams for this portfolio are Building Control and the leisure centre management fee. Under the delegated model for Building Control, Blaby retains all of the income generated, no matter to which district it relates. Current fees and charges have been increased by 4% but the increase in market share, that was anticipated in the business case, is unlikely to materialise next financial year because of the current state of the economy. Negotiations over a return to the management fee for our leisure centres were completed in the Summer of 2022, and the income budgets now reflect the revised contract.

Leisure Centres

Enderby Leisure Centre	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£0	£41,854	£0	£0 0.00%	-£41,854 -100.00%
3. Direct Income	-£670,061	-£338,804	-£544,268	£125,793 -18.77%	-£205,464 60.64%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	-£670,061	-£296,950	-£544,268	£125,793 -18.77%	-£247,318 83.29%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00 0.00%	£0 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. Not applicable.
2. Revised estimate expenditure relates to financial support prior to the agreement of the revised leisure management contract.
3. This is income to be received through the leisure management contract. The approved budget was offset by a centrally held income loss provision in recognition of the ongoing implications of the pandemic. The revised estimate shows the forecast income for the year, including the open book accounting arrangements up to August, and then the revised contractual position agreed by Council.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Not applicable.

Health, Leisure & Tourism

Health & Leisure	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£375,034	£500,711	£267,836	-£107,198 -28.58%	-£232,875 -46.51%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£97,347	£308,029	£92,334	-£5,013 -5.15%	-£215,695 -70.02%
3. Direct Income	-£107,314	-£224,317	-£6,100	£101,214 -94.32%	£218,217 -97.28%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£365,067	£584,423	£354,070	-£10,997 -3.01%	-£230,353 -39.42%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	8.92	12.92	5.36	-3.56 -39.91%	-7.56 -58.51%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. Revised budget includes externally funded posts that hadn't been confirmed at the time of budget setting. 2023/24 also reflects the removal of the Social Prescribing budget which will, in future, be run by the Primary Care Networks.
2. Revised budget includes externally funded project expenditure (level currently unknown for 2023/24) as well as various non-recurring expenditure carried forward from 2021/22.
3. Awaiting level of external funding to be confirmed for 2023/24.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Externally funded posts have been removed from the budget where this funding has not yet been confirmed for 2023/24.

Building Control

Building Control	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£1,211,300	£1,226,319	£1,262,485	£51,185 4.23%	£36,166 2.95%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£97,600	£106,962	£125,533	£27,933 28.62%	£18,571 17.36%
3. Direct Income	-£1,336,313	-£1,336,313	-£1,407,467	-£71,154 5.32%	-£71,154 5.32%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	-£27,413	-£3,032	-£19,449	£7,964 -29.05%	-£16,417 541.46%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	25.25	25.25	25.01	-0.24 -0.95%	-0.24 -0.95%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions.
2. Revised estimate includes one-off budget provision carried forward from 2021/22 relating to marketing. In line with the original business case, this sum is continued in 2023/24.
3. The income budget allows for a 4% increase in fees and charges but not an increase in market share which was intended in the business case. This is reflective of the current cost of living situation.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. See 1 above.

Community, Business, Work & Skills

Community, Business, Work & Skills	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£312,907	£327,896	£322,944	£10,037 3.21%	-£4,952 -1.51%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£141,154	£249,629	£142,254	£1,100 0.78%	-£107,375 -43.01%
3. Direct Income	-£47,759	-£39,738	-£50,259	-£2,500 5.23%	-£10,521 26.48%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£406,302	£537,787	£414,939	£8,637 2.13%	-£122,848 -22.84%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	7.73	7.73	7.22	-0.51 -6.60%	-0.51 -6.60%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions.
2. The revised estimate includes several one-off budgets that were carried forward from 2021/22. Some of these have been removed following the annual budget review.
3. Lottery income down in 2022/23 but expected to return to normal levels next year.
4. Minor changes in working hours.

Lightbulb

Light Bulb, Housing Enablement, DFGs and Home Gadgets.	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£1,187,755	£1,379,634	£1,163,254	-£24,501 -2.06%	-£216,380 -15.68%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£227,749	£844,759	£274,049	£46,300 20.33%	-£570,710 -67.56%
3. Direct Income	-£1,315,385	-£1,547,370	-£1,370,771	-£55,386 4.21%	£176,599 -11.41%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£100,119	£677,023	£66,532	-£33,587 -33.55%	-£610,491 -90.17%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	30.42	33.42	28.35	-2.07 -6.80%	-5.07 -15.17%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. The revised estimate includes project-related salaries that are funded through the Better Care Fund.
2. The revised includes one off budget provision for projects approved by the Better Care Fund. These are funded by top-slicing the Disabled Facilities Grant allocation before distribution to districts. Includes underspent budget provision brought forward from 2021/22.
3. Income from the districts and County Council for the Lightbulb project, funding for the HET team, and as per the above, DFG funding for projects agreed by the BCF.
4. This represents the net impact of the variances listed above.
5. As per note 1, plus end of fixed term posts – Technical Officer and Assisted Technology Project Manager.

Management and Admin

Management and Admin	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£139,981	£143,345	£128,675	-£11,306 -8.08%	-£14,670 -10.23%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£2,360	£308,276	£2,360	£0 0.00%	-£305,916 -99.23%
3. Direct Income	-£16,700	-£16,700	£0	£16,700 -100.00%	£16,700 -100.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£125,641	£434,921	£131,035	£5,394 4.29%	-£303,886 -69.87%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	3.15	3.15	1.61	-1.54 -48.89%	-1.54 -48.89%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. The 2022/23 budgets also include fixed term posts in relation to Covid-19 Contain Management Funding which are no longer funded in 2023/24.
2. The revised estimate includes Contain Management Funding brought forward from 2021/22, which is likely to be spent this financial year.
3. A small amount of non-recurring Contain funding.
4. This represents the net impact of the variances listed above.
5. No change.

Movement in budget and staff from last year

Leisure Centres

Both Covid 19 and the landfill gas incident at Huncote have had a major impact on the financial return from SLM in operating both Enderby and Huncote Leisure Centres. Regular updates have been provided to the portfolio holder and cabinet members. A new management fee has been agreed and a deed of variation signed.

Health & Leisure Services

The reduction in income and expenditure in relation to Health & Leisure Services is in recognition of the fact that no confirmation has yet been received of external funding. External funding currently supports services such as exercise referral, positive activities for young people, heartsmart and 'falls prevention' programmes.

The service provides a range of outreach services across the district engaging over 5,000 residents and continues to be successful in securing significant levels of external funding from various sources.

Tourism

Members of the tourism partnership remain committed to delivering the tourism action plan. Feedback from the businesses has been very positive in terms of visitor numbers. Work continues on taking forward the actions in the tourism plan. The budget provided to support the plan will be reduced for 2023/24.

Lightbulb

The funding for staffing comes from Leicestershire County Council and all those district and borough councils for which we are running Lightbulb. In terms of the central hub team this is a shared cost with all 8 partners making contributions based upon an assumed caseload. A small contingency budget remains out of the Transformational Challenge Award Grant, and this will be used to fund an interim manager for a nine-month period in order that the current manager of the service can work on the development of the visioning document for delivery of the service from 2024 to 2029. All districts have supported the establishment of a Housing Occupational Therapist, SafeSpaces and assisted technology projects funded from their Disabled Facilities Grant allocation.

Housing Enablement Team

The Housing Enablement team is funded through Leicestershire and Leicester City Better Care Fund and with a contribution from Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT). Going forward the funding will come from the LPT and the amalgamated Clinical Commissioners Group. Currently, HET are operating several pilots in terms of offering the service to our community hospitals and MHOSP wards. The new business case being developed recommends that all the pilots should become part of business as usual from April 2023.

Building Control Services

The Service continues to operate as a lean self-financing business unit, competing for work against the private sector. All fees across the six partners are now aligned and the plan is to increase partnership fees by 4% from 1st April 2023.

Portfolio Priorities

The priorities for our portfolio are: -

- To ensure that our Leisure Contract delivers financially
- Produce an Economic Development Strategy and action plan
- Support the opening of Fosse Way Prison acting as community, business and council liaison
- Deliver UKSPF Projects
- To develop a visioning document for Lightbulb which sets out how the service will operate from 2024 to 2029
- To evaluate the Home Gadgets & Safespaces projects to inform whether they become business as usual.
- Influence local plan (Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan/Built Facilities strategy/Tourism Policy)
- Deliver the financial business plan for the Leicestershire Building Control Partnership.
- Ensuring that BDC can benefit from Tourism, including delivering the tourism growth plan. We will continue to work with partners on the tourism partnership board, ensuring we bring them with us as the district's tourism offer grows and evolves.
- To work with all our businesses to ensure the growth of the economy across Blaby District
- To work with partners to deliver the Community Health & Wellbeing Plan
- To develop a business plan for the Housing Enabler Team which secures funding for the team for the next three years.

Services

Leisure Centres

Huncote provides a range of leisure services including a fitness suite (gym), exercise classes, all weather pitches, squash courts, sports hall, café, dance studio, Virtual Spinning Studio, and meeting room. This service is delivered through a leisure contract with SLM (expires 2029).

Enderby Leisure Centre provides a range of leisure services including a swimming pool, swimming lessons, fitness suite, health suite, indoor bowls, golf course, fitness studios, all weather pitches, café and meeting room. This service is delivered through a leisure contract with SLM (expires 2029).

Health & Leisure

- Health Improvement– services include A Place to Grow, Dementia Action Alliance, Health Promotion, delivering the Blaby District Staying Healthy Partnership. This area of work also includes delivery of the Community Health & Wellbeing Plan and links with our Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Public Health, Primary Care Networks and other partners around health.
- Tourism & Heritage – services include the delivery of the Blaby District Tourism Growth Plan, a range of projects such as Walk & Ride, Heritage and Tourism Map and the VisitBlaby digital offer.
- Sport & Physical Activity – these services complement the universal offer in our Leisure Centres by providing outreach programmes throughout our District to residents who may not be able to access our centres. They also provide support to help develop our network of community sports clubs. The services include exercise referral, outreach physical activity sessions, cardiac rehabilitation scheme, falls prevention, older people activities, weight management, inclusive activities, sports development, events, the Positive Activities Referral Scheme (PARS), JUST (women's activity programme) as well as national and local awareness campaigns. This service secures a significant amount of external funding from Public Health (this amount is still to be confirmed for 2023/24).

Building Control

A statutory service that safeguards public health and safety within the built environment in addition to controlling accessibility and improving energy efficiency of buildings by ensuring the requirements of the Building Regulations and associated legislation are complied with.

This service competes with other private sector building control providers. Additional services are provided to deal with dangerous structures, safe demolition of buildings and street naming and numbering, in addition to providing support and added resilience to the Council's Property Services team and other services as and when required. It is important to note that some elements of this service are not fee earning.

Blaby Building Control currently delivers building control services for Harborough District Council, Oadby & Wigston Borough Council, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, Melton Borough Council and Rutland County Council under a delegated service agreement.

Community, Business, Work and Skills

This team offers a whole range of support to our businesses including financial, training, access to specialist support and advice, skills including digital skills to enhance how businesses operate. The team have commissioned a consultant to develop our Economic Development Strategy and an action plan to underpin this. This will be delivered from April 2023.

Alongside the above the team delivers a series of jobs fairs and business breakfasts to help our residents gain employment and our businesses to fill vacancies.

This service has established a Work and Skills Forum which is well attended by both our SME's and our larger businesses. Together they are working on producing a recruitment and retention pathway.

The Community Grants scheme supports the voluntary and community sector to develop and strengthen facilities and activities. The health checks that are offered to community group's support them to have the correct governance structure and documentation in place. Over the last twelve months our focus has been helping these groups to continue to operate whilst going through a cost-of-living crisis.

The Love Blaby Lottery is a weekly online lottery created to support local good causes within the district. The lottery mission is to raise money in the community for the community and has an annual income of around £30,000.

Our funding officer continues to identify opportunities to secure external funding such as bids to DEFRA and Leicestershire County Council.

Lightbulb

Lightbulb is about helping people to remain independent in their home for longer. It provides a range of practical housing support into a single service. It is delivered through a hub and spoke model with Lightbulb Team's in every district across the county.

The team offer: -

- Minor adaptations
- Disabled facilities grants
- Range of other grants to support both hospital discharge and people remaining independent in their own home.
- Wider Housing Support
- Assisted technology, falls prevention
- Housing options (planning for the future)
- Advice & signposting

Lightbulb’s approach is to deliver benefits to customers and partners. Improving the customer journey, making services easier to access and navigate. Delivering the right support at the right time while delivering savings in service delivery. It is part of the unified prevention offer within the Better Care Fund.

Housing Enablement Team

The Housing Enablement Team (HET) places specialist housing professionals into inpatient settings, with the goal of assisting patients with housing issues so that they can be safely discharged, reducing or preventing discharge delays and improving patient outcomes. HET is a Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland service, also covering patients from out-of-area and those with no recourse to public funds, where they are occupying an inpatient bed and have a housing related barrier.

Key Points

<p>Doing things differently – plans for the coming year</p>	<p><u>Leisure Contract:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase usage of facilities across both sites <p><u>Health & Leisure:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop our walk and ride offer including the development of our LCWIP strategy and Action Plan. • Promote “Go Jauntly” app to ensure maximum numbers of walks are on the system <p><u>Tourism:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take forward the recommendations from the Accommodation Study • To deliver an LCWIP strategy and action plan. • To deliver UKSPF projects supporting our tourism agenda. <p><u>Businesses, Work & Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver our Economic Development Strategy & Action Plan to support our businesses. • To deliver our work & skills pathway to support our businesses with recruitment and retention. • To deliver our UKSPF projects which will support our residents in securing employment and our businesses to grow and increase their economic viability. • To support the delivery of HMP Fosseway to maximise opportunities for residents to secure employment and businesses to secure contracts. <p><u>Lightbulb</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To evaluate the pilots and make recommendations to Executive Board as to whether these become part of business as usual. • To continue to review how the service is delivered and what can do done virtually and via self-assessments • To produce the visioning document for Lightbulb post March 2024.
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	<u>Housing Enablement Team</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that the service is a key part of the Integrated Discharge Team and the Home First Collaborative work. • To secure commitment from key partners for the service to be funded through to March 2026. • To look at restructuring the service so that HET offers the best value for money at every level.
Income generation	<u>Health & Leisure</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure income from the Leisure Contract. • Continue to secure external funding to support front line delivery. • Continue to secure external funding to support our Health & wellbeing agenda e.g., mental health coordinator & mental health cafes. <u>Building Control</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market share and income levels are closely monitored. Fees will be increased from April 2023 by 4% across all partners. • To undertake a marketing campaign to ensure income levels in the face of an economic downturn. • To continue to look at opportunities for Lightbulb to commission Building Control to support the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants.
Capital plans for the portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the capital projects in relation to Enderby Leisure Centre.

Key Performance Indicators

- Health, Leisure & Tourism Services:
- Active Lives Survey (measures levels of physical activity).
- STEAM Data (provides local Tourism statistics).
- Health Profile & Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (provides local Health statistics).
- Leisure Contract (Enderby & The Pavilion Leisure Centres):
- Usage levels
- Income levels
- Number of complaints
- QUEST score (independent inspection)

Community, Business, Work & Skills

- Number of people supported to take up a work placement, trial and or a job.
- Number of businesses supported.
- Number of VCS groups supported via the Community Grants Programme and Health checks
- Number of community development projects completed
- Number of new Good Neighbour Schemes

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2021/22 RESULTS	2022/2023 YEAR TO DATE (NOVEMBER)	COMMENTS
Building Control inspections carried out on the same day as requested	3247 Blaby 11308 for LBCP	1879 Blaby 7759 LBCP	Building Control has continued to maintain its policy of undertaking all inspections on the same day as requested, including those inspections requested prior to 10.00am of/on the date of the inspection.
Total number of people supported through our work and skills programme	945 1905 work placement days at Fosseway for ex-offenders and those on ROTL	651 236 for HMP Fosseway.	21/23(November) Majority of curriculum support activities cancelled due to external staffing issues. Job Fairs have been a success – residents receiving help with training, employability support, getting into work or going back into education. Local businesses are repeatedly attending job fairs to employ local people and have found it to be worthwhile to take part. Figures include work experience, training, sector-based work academies, school visits - secondary and primary, jobs, job fairs, Kickstart, apprenticeships. DWP are now based at the council offices and these

			figures will be included from the January 2023.
End to end times for completion of DFGs (time taken from receipt of a completed application to approval of grant – average days)	16 Weeks	18 Weeks	Below the KPI of 20 weeks overall
Time taken to complete DFGs (from initial enquiry by customer to completion of work, broken down by stages)	41 Weeks	46 Weeks	Increased overall wait times for Occupational Therapist assessments and builders to get quotes / materials etc – being monitored locally – knock on effects from pandemic and Brexit
Demand for DFGs (number of recommendations received)	156	107	The is a waiting list of over 400 cases with Adult Social Care (adults and children) that are being processed. We expect to get an increase in referrals as new processes embed for ASC.
Number of holistic housing needs assessment carried out (through Lightbulb Programme) and outcome	6967	4368	Demand this year is in line with pre covid years, last year there were exceptional numbers of referrals.
Number of patients supported to be able to leave Hospital through intervention by The Housing enabler team and referral to resolution time in UHL and BMHU	902 patients seen.	641 patients seen. Referral to resolution times	Increase in sites covered (Community Hospitals and MHSOP) as well as increased demand in acute hospitals have lead to higher number of referrals

	Referral to resolution times of 2.61 days (UHL) and 15.21 days (BMHU)	of 3.31 days (UHL) and 19.84 days (BMHU)	at this point in the year and slightly longer resolution times but still less than target of less than 5 days in UHL. Currently advertising a vacancy to increase capacity of team.
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Customers

- Use data to understand our customers and local trends, such as the Joint Strategy Needs Assessment, Community Health & Wellbeing Plan, Sport England data, Lightbulb data and Mosaic.
- Conduct evaluations and seek customer feedback to improve services.
- Collection of positive comments and compliments from our customers and partners.
- SLM – monthly joint working meetings and quarterly contract monitoring

Risks

- External funding supports 5 posts (Physical Activity Development Officers – PADOs) across the Health and Leisure Services Team. These posts currently deliver our Active Blaby initiative which includes a wide range of Physical Activity and Active Referral services that support the inactive, vulnerable, elderly, people with dementia and disability, residents at risk of developing health conditions including mental health and vulnerable young people. Securing external funding is, therefore, essential to continue these services. A significant amount of this is received from Sport and Physical Activity Strategic Commissioning funded by Leicestershire County Council Public Health (PH). Informal indications for 2023/24 suggest we will receive a reduced level of funding compared to 2022/23, although this has not been confirmed. The team are continually seeking and applying for external funds.
- Commitment from partners to deliver joint services for example, health, construction, retail, tourism, other local authority partners
- Performance of Leisure Contractor (SLM) and the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on the leisure industry
- Reducing Council budgets
- Recruitment and retention of qualified staff.

- Forecasted economic downturn and the impact of this on all our businesses, on unemployment rates and on income in terms of building control.
- Market share for Building Control who are in competition with many private sector Building Control providers.
- Changes to the Building Control Regulations, brought about by the Grenfell incident, mean that from April 2024 all building inspectors will need to be registered with the Health and Safety Executive. To achieve this they will need to demonstrate competency via examination. There is a risk that these new demands will lead to the loss of experienced building inspectors, in particular those that are nearing retirement age.
- Demand for Lightbulb preventative work has increased because of Lightbulb Programme's proactive/early identification of need. The flexibility in the DFG legislation has not, which could hinder new initiatives.

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NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES & ASSETS PORTFOLIO
Councillor Nigel Grundy**My Key focus for Neighbourhood Services and Assets in 2023/24**

I promised that 2022 was going to be another challenging year as we emerged from the pandemic and so it has proved to be. Again, our Neighbourhood Services and Assets teams have excelled; delivering business as usual in a much-changed world where increasing prices, long lead times, and low stocks from external providers has seemingly worsened throughout the year which impact greatly behind the scenes.

The refuse and recycling team have consistently delivered to a high standard and absorbed another year of growth in housing supply despite pressures of the shortage of HGV drivers in year. The trade waste service continues to be in a healthier position following the review of the disposal charges introduced earlier this year whilst further development of online forms for bulky waste collections and reporting non-collections has made it easier for customers and more efficient for the back office. We await central government's full response to the national waste consultation however Blaby's waste team have contributed significantly to the development of the Leicestershire Resources and Waste Strategy this year.

The Parks and Open Spaces team have continued to deliver improvements to strategic sites such as Crow Mills, The Osiers, Fosse Meadows to make sites safe and more accessible to visitors. The improvements have also gone some way to make good the significant wear and tear issues from unprecedented usage during the pandemic. The team have also been working on preparing the new Parks and Open Spaces Strategy to be launched by the end of the year. Numerous ecological surveys and a public consultation has already taken place and puts the team in a good position to help deliver a strategy that will help meet our ecological obligations by creating diverse habitats as well as being places visitors want to come to spend time and relax.

The District Cleansing team have been continuing the good progress of moving to dual waste litter bins and replacing tired old litter bins with new ones. Whilst fly-tipping, particularly of construction and DIY waste, remains challenging the team have continued to meet its response times and have a great relationship with the South Leicestershire Wombles who have helped keep litter levels to incredibly low levels across the district.

The Asset team have had another busy year which started off delivering the LED replacement programme throughout the staff side accommodation. This was followed by the office refurbishment project which is now in its final stages; internally the Council offices look transformed and with the support of the working party the whole process has gone through smoothly with minimal disruption to staff and visitors. More has been done to understand how we can 'green' our buildings and depot and several projects are in the pipeline for next year including solar panels and Air Source Heat Pump installation at the depot. In addition, a number of opportunities for affordable housing continue to be looked at in terms of potential viability.

The Council's heavy vehicle fleet has moved away from diesel and fully transitioned to using hydro treated vegetable oil. The transition has again been smooth and green ambitions continue following a number of demonstrations of electric powered refuse collection vehicles which are the long-term future for the heavy waste collection fleet. In addition, the Transport Services team have implemented taxi vehicle testing and MOT's which has helped drive up the standards of taxis operating in the district as well as generating an income for the Council.

My thanks go to Paul Coates and his team who have shown again a great commitment and team effort to deliver what's important to Blaby.

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Nigel Grundy

Senior Officer: Neighbourhood Services & Assets Group Manager

Portfolio Total

Neighbourhood Services & Assets - Total	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£3,014,638	£3,161,349	£3,236,288	£221,650 7.35%	£74,939 2.37%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£1,825,381	£2,218,288	£2,307,938	£482,557 26.44%	£89,650 4.04%
3. Direct Income	-£2,285,423	-£2,272,423	-£2,368,278	-£82,855	-£95,855
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£2,554,596	£3,107,214	£3,175,948	£621,352 24.32%	£68,734 2.21%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	80.41	80.41	80.11	-0.30 -0.37%	-0.30 -0.37%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This portfolio includes the establishment and running costs in relation to the teams based at the Whetstone Depot, as well as Property Services. The establishment budget for 2022/23 has been adjusted to allow for the recently settled pay award and uplifted pension contribution rates. As with other portfolios, allowance has been made for a 3% pay award in 2023/24, and contractual increments and on costs for national insurance and pensions. Other than this there have been no significant movements between 2022/23 and 2023/24, and the headcount for this portfolio remains substantially unchanged.

There have been several significant changes to other gross direct expenditure budgets in both 2022/23 and 2023/24. Some of these are one-off in the current year only, mainly for unspent budget provision brought forward from 2021/22. Other changes are expected to be ongoing. The tree maintenance budget was increased by £50,000 in 2022/23 to allow urgent works to be undertaken following a survey of trees for which the Council is responsible. Whilst some costs will be ongoing, the increase in 2023/24 has been scaled back to £20,000. In April 2022, the Cabinet gave its approval to convert most of the Council's fleet vehicles from diesel to Hydrogenated Vegetable Oil (HVO). The additional cost in 2022/23 was estimated at £70,000, and a similar increase has been applied for 2023/24 to reflect the increasing price and demand for HVO. The cost of vehicle repairs has also seen a notable increase in 2022/23 and the ongoing budget has been increased from £74,500 to £145,000. This is based on the current level of commitments in addition to vehicles requiring significant improvements.

Fees and charges have been increased where necessary to ensure that full cost recovery is achieved. However, income from garden bins has been reduced by £50,000 to reflect the lower take-up of bins in 2022/23. It is not clear whether the reduced take-up was in response to the 10% price increase last April, or because of the end of the pandemic and furlough.

Parks & Open Spaces

Parks and Open Spaces	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£400,339	£424,551	£438,751	£38,412 9.59%	£14,200 3.34%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£190,604	£256,749	£211,584	£20,980 11.01%	-£45,165 -17.59%
3. Direct Income	-£46,614	-£46,614	-£45,969	£645	£645
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£544,329	£634,686	£604,366	£60,037 11.03%	-£30,320 -4.78%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	11.00	11.00	11.00	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions.
2. The revised estimate includes unspent budget provision carried forward from 2021/22. £50,000 has been added to the 2022/23 revised budget to allow for urgent works arising from a tree survey. Ongoing provision of an additional £20,000 for tree maintenance is included in the 2023/24 proposals.
3. Budget in line with income received to date, and income expected by year end.
4. The net impact of changes referred to above.
5. No change.

District Cleansing

District Cleansing	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£378,102	£388,271	£375,937	-£2,165 -0.57%	-£12,334 -3.18%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£64,200	£64,650	£68,550	£4,350 6.78%	£3,900 6.03%
3. Direct Income	-£90,000	-£100,000	-£109,000	-£19,000	-£9,000
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£352,302	£352,921	£335,487	-£16,815 -4.77%	-£17,434 -4.94%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	10.80	10.80	10.50	-0.30 -2.78%	-0.30 -2.78%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. The temporary staffing provision has been reduced to reflect latest working practices.
2. No major changes but inflationary increases allowed as necessary.
3. Increase in line with inflation.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Minimal change in hours.

Refuse Collection & Recycling

Refuse Collection & Recycling	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£1,788,282	£1,903,718	£1,961,743	£173,461 9.70%	£58,025 3.05%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£514,519	£509,155	£591,052	£76,533 14.87%	£81,897 16.08%
3. Direct Income	-£1,691,750	-£1,653,750	-£1,728,250	-£36,500 2.16%	-£74,500 4.50%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£611,051	£759,123	£824,545	£213,494 34.94%	£65,422 8.62%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	49.61	49.61	49.61	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions.
2. Increases in composting fees, commercial waste fees, and software maintenance for Whitespace, offset by a reduction in the number of new domestic bins required.
3. Income from garden waste recycling credits, trade refuse, and commercial dry, mixed recycling has been increased. This is offset by a reduction in garden bin rental, in line with actual experience in 2022/23.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change.

Fleet Management

Fleet Management	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£275,615	£264,018	£274,256	-£1,359 -0.49%	£10,238 3.88%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£409,555	£560,155	£633,040	£223,485 54.57%	£72,885 13.01%
3. Direct Income	-£1,790	-£16,790	-£16,790	-£15,000 837.99%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£683,380	£807,383	£890,506	£207,126 30.31%	£83,123 10.30%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	5.00	5.00	5.00	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. The current year revised estimate, and next year's budget for overtime have been reduced.
2. The fuel budget was increased by £70,000 in 2022/23 to allow for the conversion to HVO. A further £70,000 increase has been allowed in 2023/24 to reflect rising prices. The vehicle repair budget has been doubled to reflect the current level of spend plus major improvements needed to a small number of vehicles.
3. The income budget relates to repair charges recovered in respect of, e.g., the Community Bus.
4. Net impact of the variances listed above.
5. No change.

Assets

Assets	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£172,300	£180,791	£185,601	£13,301 7.72%	£4,810 2.66%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£646,503	£827,579	£803,712	£157,209 24.32%	-£23,867 -2.88%
3. Direct Income	-£455,269	-£455,269	-£468,269	-£13,000	-£13,000
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£363,534	£553,101	£521,044	£157,510 43.33%	-£32,057 -5.80%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	4.00	4.00	4.00	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions.
2. Non-recurring budget has been carried forward from 2021/22 in respect of the Office Options Appraisal and added to the 2022/23 revised budget. Both 2022/23 and 2023/24 reflect increasing gas and electricity costs for the Council's buildings.
3. The income budget for industrial estate rents has been increased to allow for new lettings.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No changes.

Portfolio Priorities

Neighbourhood Services

- To deliver an efficient and cost-effective refuse and recycling service; and provide a clean and tidy district with well-maintained areas of open space.
- Deliver a green spaces strategy.
- Maximise income generating opportunities

Assets

- Maximising the use of the council's assets.

Services

Neighbourhood Services

- **Refuse & Recycling**

The Refuse and Recycling service provides an alternate weekly collection service to over 43,500 households and a chargeable garden waste collection service to over 25,000 households. The service also provides bulky waste collection services with over 2,000 collections made per year. Trade waste collections are provided to over 500 local businesses

- **Parks & Open Spaces**

The Grounds Maintenance service carries out the amenity mowing and horticultural services on all the Strategic Parks and Open Spaces owned by Blaby District Council. Additional works are also carried out for a number of Parishes, local sports clubs and external partners, and on behalf of in-house teams such as Environmental Services, Building Control, and support with emergency response.

- **District Cleansing**

District Cleansing delivers the litter picking, dog and litter bin emptying and street sweeping throughout Blaby District. In addition to this we also offer a litter and dog bin emptying service and the option of additional litter picking operatives for Parish Councils at agreed rates. We currently have approximately of 1,000 litter and dog bins which are emptied on frequencies dependant on their usage.

- **Fleet Management**

The Fleet consists of 21 HGV's, 25 Vans (below 3.5 Tonnes), 1 pool car, 1 tractor and side arm, 1 compact sweeper, 7 ride on mowers, 6 trailers, 12 assorted plant and equipment all of which are maintained and serviced in house at Whetstone Depot. The O licence for the fleet, for which there is a legal requirement in order to operate the service, is held by the Transport Services Manager.

- **Assets**

This includes costs for the Council Offices and the Depot, including the facilities management and maintenance of the buildings and the associated grounds maintenance. Also includes expenditure incurred in relation to public conveniences, the Glebe Road Caravan site in Countesthorpe, bus shelters, car parks, Enderby Road Industrial Estate and costs associated with the administration of property and assets owned by the Council. The team also administers Asset of Community Value applications made by residents.

Key Points

<p>Doing things differently – plans for the coming year</p>	<p><u>Refuse & Recycling</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A review of current Neighbourhood Services operations will explore options for cost savings and income generation. • Route optimisation will be undertaken to help balance days for efficiency. • Bulky waste collections will be reviewed in light of imminent legislation affecting the way foam filled furniture is treated for disposal. • The waste software system will be reviewed as part of procuring a new contract to deliver the in-cab offer. <p><u>District Cleansing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and build on the success of the Council's volunteer litter picking initiative and complete the transition to dual waste across the district to release opportunities for fuel savings by accessing disposal facility. <p><u>Parks and Open Spaces</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the new parks and open spaces strategy and associated management plans including exploring opportunities to fund improvements through biodiversity net gain funding. <p><u>Transport</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop a more streamlined digital process for recording and consolidating fleet information and documentation to aid compliance and adopt best practice. • To support Assets Team with delivering electric charging infrastructure
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	<p><u>Assets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the appraisals of the Council office campus in addition to other key locations and where appropriate undertake more detailed assessments to determine the long-term potential for office accommodation and affordable homes. • Deliver further accommodation improvements to support the transformation to more developed hybrid working such as a desk booking system and a staff communal area.
Income generation	<p><u>Refuse & Recycling</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will continue to charge for larger or additional bins following the introduction of alternate weekly collection. • The Council will continue to charge for Garden bins. • The Council will review its fees and charges to identify options of further growth in income. <p><u>District Cleansing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will continue to provide chargeable services to parish councils and developers for litter bin collections. <p><u>Parks and Open Spaces</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The service will continue to provide services for Parish Council's and will explore other opportunities to maximise income. <p><u>Transport Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council will continue to offer chargeable taxi vehicle inspections and MOTs in 2023-24. • The Council will explore opportunities to undertake chargeable fleet services on behalf of other organisations in 2023-24. <p><u>Assets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The utilisation of the Council's assets to obtain revenue or improve usage is an ongoing initiative. The lease of the Council offices to NHS and Citizens Advice Bureau not only bring revenue opportunities but also better outcomes for our customers with partners such as these delivering services alongside our own officers. • Income generation is also obtained via leased rental agreements on the Enderby Road Industrial Estate and Countesthorpe Mobile Home site.
Capital plans for the portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install solar panels and air source heat pump at the depot to deliver heating, lighting, and power. • Commence steps to improve electric charging infrastructure at the depot to accommodate electric refuse collection vehicles in the future. • Various schemes to improve the accessibility and enjoyment of the Council's strategic countryside parks.

Key Performance Indicators

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR – NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES	2020-21	COMMENTS
Percentage of waste collected which is recycled.	42.4 %	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recycling rates have remained static which is usual when there is no service change such as reduced refuse capacity or no additional recyclable material collected.

Customers

The portfolio delivers many frontline services. Customer feedback is essential with all services to ensure we are outcome focussed and are delivering what really matters to and is valued by the customer. This information is used to help shape and measure service delivery.

The Assets team has a variety of different customers, both internal and external. These include, for example, requests from staff and managers for changes to the layout of the offices, local businesses in respect of the Enderby Road Industrial Estate, and Parish Councils and a variety of legal representatives. Internally the team provides professional property advice as required. The team also has a clear responsibility to ensure that all council buildings are accessible and meet the wide needs of residents who visit the offices.

Risks

Increased cost of living affecting prices, unavailability and/or long lead times of some key products and services, and national shortages in skilled staff may result in some service disruption throughout the year.

A route optimisation exercise may result in changes to the day of collection to some residents in parts of the district.

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Foreword

The teams have experienced unprecedented demand for some of their services this year with the impact of the national increase in homelessness numbers, the ongoing cost of living crisis, the emergency incident at Huncote Leisure Centre, the increased focus on private rented housing sector standards and continued delivery of the core aims of the business.

The work undertaken has ranged from catching up on regulatory inspections such as food safety, health & safety, permitted processes and licensing, the delivery of which was impacted by the pandemic. Provision of business guidance and advice through to the invaluable support for our residents who are facing times of hardship with rising rent, food and fuel costs.

Housing Services have continued to respond to the increased numbers of households that are presenting as homeless by, where possible, utilising external funding streams and recruiting into fixed term posts to meet the additional need presenting. The team continue to provide homeless households, including those with complex needs and those who face losing their homes, with a safe place to stay.

The Community Services team have incorporated the role of the Community Hub into everyday work trying to ensure that the correct support is provided for residents wherever possible. The youth provision within the district has been redesigned to recognise the change in behaviours following the pandemic and taken an approach that allows flexible implementation to tackle emerging threats and identified hotspots.

Environmental Health are exceeding the inspection numbers and standards set out by the Food Standards Agency Covid recovery plan and are due to be back on the full inspection programme well within target. In addition to the routine work Environmental Health have also been heavily involved in the Homes for Ukraine scheme ensuring that all houses participating in the scheme meet the required standard.

The Environmental Services team have worked tirelessly to introduce a new, long term management plan for the Huncote site whilst consulting on and introducing the new Car Parking Strategy, reviewing our air quality management provision across the district, and delivering the DEFRA grant funded projects.

The Green Officer has worked with all services to ensure their Service Plans now have Green actions embedded within them to help us work towards our 2030 Carbon Neutral Target. Alongside this the Green Officer has supported key green projects such as the

introduction of HVO into the fleet, led on Countywide projects such as the delivery of Solar Together and supported external funding applications for future green projects.

A key priority across the portfolio areas of Green/Carbon Neutral, Community Safety and Air Quality in the coming year will be to maximise the external funding opportunities to deliver key priorities and services.

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Les Phillimore

**Senior Officer: Environmental Health, Housing & Community Services
Group Manager**

Portfolio Total

Housing, Community and Environmental Services - Total	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£1,936,391	£2,093,276	£2,195,397	£259,006 13.38%	£102,121 4.88%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£534,776	£1,450,685	£807,625	£272,849 51.02%	-£643,060 -44.33%
3. Direct Income	-£556,871	-£965,360	-£1,024,066	-£467,195 83.90%	-£58,706 6.08%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£1,914,296	£2,578,601	£1,978,956	£64,660 3.38%	-£599,645 -23.25%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	46.46	49.98	48.17	1.71 3.68%	-1.81 -3.62%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This portfolio incorporates the establishment and operational costs in respect of Housing, Community Services, and Environmental Health & Services. As with all other portfolios, the establishment costs include provision for a 3% pay award, contractual increments, national insurance, and pension contributions.

The establishment budget for 2022/23 has been adjusted to allow for the recently settled pay award and uplifted pension contribution rates. The revised estimate for establishment allows for additional posts in Community Services, Housing Services, and Environmental Services. In Community Services, this relates to a fixed term Residents Support Officer which is funded from Contain Management funding left over from the pandemic. Homelessness Grant from central government is covering the fixed term Domestic Abuse Link Worker post in Housing Services. The increase in Environmental Services relates to a temporary Environmental Assistant post for which funding was carried forward from last financial year, and also a new Contaminated Land Officer post approved as part of the recent restructure.

Other Gross Direct Expenditure has increased in 2022/23, partly because of unspent budget brought forward from 2021/22 and new funding for projects such as Solar Together, Air Quality, and the Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LAD2), and partly because of homelessness pressures. Increasing numbers of families and individuals presenting as homeless continue to require bed and breakfast accommodation, although around 75% of the additional cost is met from housing benefit.

Increases in direct income come from housing benefit recovery in relation to homelessness, and car parking fees and charges.

Environmental Health and Environmental Services

Environmental Health	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£886,221	£979,040	£1,031,672	£145,451 16.41%	£52,632 5.38%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£272,636	£649,280	£311,670	£39,034 14.32%	-£337,610 -52.00%
3. Direct Income	-£375,771	-£495,660	-£614,666	-£238,895 63.57%	-£119,006 24.01%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£783,086	£1,132,660	£728,676	-£54,410 -6.95%	-£403,984 -35.67%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	22.37	23.37	22.17	-0.20 -0.89%	-1.20 -5.13%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. The revised budget includes the extension to the temporary post of Environmental Assistant, and the new permanent Contaminated Land Officer post.
2. Budget carried forward from 2021/22 for specific projects is included within the revised estimate, as well as additional funding received in the year for Climate change and Air Quality projects.
3. The income budget for car parking has been increased to reflect the new tariffs introduced in October. External funding received for air quality monitoring and Solar Together.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Minor changes to working hours.

Community Services

Community Services	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£434,355	£445,321	£421,501	-£12,854 -2.96%	-£23,820 -5.35%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£27,300	£181,325	£36,615	£9,315 34.12%	-£144,710 -79.81%
3. Direct Income	-£27,600	-£60,300	£0	£27,600 -100.00%	£60,300 -100.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£434,055	£566,346	£458,116	£24,061 5.54%	-£108,230 -19.11%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	9.59	9.11	8.50	-1.09 -11.37%	-0.61 -6.70%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. The revised budget includes a fixed term Residents Support Officer but also reflects the restructuring of the youth service and a reduction of 0.61 FTE in Children's Support.
2. One off budget provision carried forward from 2021/22 is included in the revised budget to fund specific projects.
3. Revised Estimate includes external contributions towards Resident Support service expenses, and youth provision. Neither of these are included in 2023/24 due to uncertainty over external funding.
4. This represents the net impact of the variances listed above.
5. See 1 above.

Housing Services

Housing Services	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£510,465	£561,242	£625,008	£114,543 22.44%	£63,766 11.36%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£232,800	£618,190	£457,300	£224,500 96.43%	-£160,890 -26.03%
3. Direct Income	-£153,500	-£409,400	-£409,400	-£255,900 166.71%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£589,765	£770,032	£672,908	£83,143 14.10%	-£97,124 -12.61%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	13.00	16.00	16.00	3.00 23.08%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. Includes 3 fixed term posts until 31st October 2023.
2. Revised includes unallocated Grant funding received in the year and Government grant funding carried forward from 2021/22 to be used for reducing homelessness. Both years reflect a significant increase in bed and breakfast accommodation costs.
3. This represents income from Housing Benefit for households placed in temporary accommodation as well as Government grant funding.
4. This represents the net impact of the variances listed above.
5. See establishment – includes 3 fixed term posts.

Management & Administration

Group Manager	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£105,350	£107,673	£117,216	£11,866 11.26%	£9,543 8.86%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£2,040	£1,890	£2,040	£0 0.00%	£150 7.94%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£107,390	£109,563	£119,256	£11,866 11.05%	£9,693 8.85%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	1.50	1.50	1.50	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions.
2. Budget revised in line with actual expenditure.
3. No income in respect of this cost centre.
4. Net impact of the variances listed above.
5. No change.

Portfolio Priorities

Housing Services

- Increasing the supply of Affordable Homes.
- Investigate and try to identify a longer-term solution to the current temporary accommodation shortage being experienced.
- Provide specialist housing for vulnerable groups.
- Continue to work to prevent homelessness and end rough sleeping.
- Continue to work to minimise the environmental impact of the existing housing stock and future housing development.

Community Services

- Complete the Prevent & Protect Strategy Action Plans.
- Produce the new Community Safety Partnership Strategy.
- Complete the Community Safety Partnership Action Plan.
- Effective delivery of the youth divisionary programme including the Safer Streets Grant funding delivery.
- Develop a new digital offer for cost living support in a “self-help” format that will allow focus to be maintained on more complex cases.

Environmental Health

- Ensure the statutory food inspection programme is continued to be delivered in line with the Food Standards Agency Covid Recovery Plan.
- To continue to tackle Envirocrime across the district through the use of marketing campaigns, social media, partnership working and enforcement.
- To review the engagement and enforcement with owners of empty properties within the district.
- To ensure private rented housing sector standards are maintained within the district.

Environmental Services

- Continue to deliver the long-term strategy for managing the land fill gas at the Huncote Leisure Centre site
- Undertake a review and produce a new contaminated land strategy for the district
- Deliver our Air Quality Action Plan.
- Implement the objectives of the new Car Parking Strategy.

Green Initiatives/Actions

- Deliver our Carbon Neutral Action Plan.
- To review, update and renew our core Licensing policy and procedural documents.

- To maximise external funding opportunities to support local businesses and residents to work towards Carbon Neutrality.

Key points

<p>Doing things differently – plans for the coming year</p>	<p><u>Housing Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to influence housing requirements on major planning applications • Assess temporary accommodation options across the district • Improve housing statistics reporting and information management • Enabling new supported provision within the district • Continue to operate an effective private rented sector service for both tenants and landlords <p><u>Environmental Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final completion of the scanning of licensing documents into the DMS system to remove the need for paper files. • Work continues to implement back-office system for EPR, Contaminated Land, Service Requests, Licensing and Planning Consultations. • Online access to Licensing Services. • Deliver actions within the adopted air quality action plan. • Deliver the Carbon Neutral Action Plan • Deliver the new Contaminated Land Strategy. <p><u>Community Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To produce the Annual Community Safety Partnership Strategy Action Plan for 2023-24 • To produce the new Community Safety Partnership Strategy. • To deliver the bystander training across a range of delegates including staff from the night-time economy, schools, licensed trade. • To develop our performance management process to produce meaningful outcomes and data. <p><u>Environmental Health:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to deliver the Envirocrime work plan, liaising with colleagues from the Neighbourhood Services Team and partners across the county. • To increase core competencies across a wider range of staff within the team to increase resilience.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explore opportunities of collaborative working and shared efficiencies.
Income generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Car parks Licensing for animal health Permitted process income Regulatory income Provision of Accommodation certificates Food Hygiene Re-Score requests. Provision of Food Product Export Certificates
Capital plans for the portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Money to undertake works at Huncote Leisure Centre to mitigate the impact of landfill gas.

Key Performance Indicators

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2020/21	2021/22	2022/2023 YEAR TO DATE	COMMENTS
Number of cases where homelessness has been prevented	207	260	186	The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) places a duty on the Council to work with applicants for longer in order to help prevent them from becoming homeless. The figure currently remains consistent with previous years.
Number of homelessness applications taken	193	223	180	<p>The total number of applications no longer applies as the HRA splits cases into 'prevention' and 'relief'. From 2020/21 this figure represents the number of homeless cases that fall into the relief category.</p> <p>It should be noted that in addition to this figure there have been a further 200 prevention cases that have also been opened and to which the Council has a duty to take reasonable steps (including setting up personalised housing plans) in order to prevent homelessness.</p>

Number of Affordable Houses	30	77	34	Delivery remains consistently slow with overall house building. Our pipeline suggests this will pick up substantially in the early part of 2023.
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PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2020/21	2021/22	2022/2023 YEAR TO DATE	COMMENTS
Number of ASB cases reported in Blaby	926	687	373	These are Police figures of total ASB reported from April 2022 to September 30 2022 (the most up to date figures available). The trend data is downward for ASB and has been for 4 years both locally and nationally. However, there has been a corresponding rise in the number of crimes reported, particularly following the move out of lockdown. In 20/21 the ASB spikes corresponded to periods where covid restrictions were lifted and there were consequently high number of youth ASB reported. It must be noted that each report is counted although they may refer to the same incident.
Support services (Resident Support/Children's Worker/Domestic Abuse)– number of people supported	427	448	300	Figures are to the end of October. There were fewer referrals to Domestic Abuse in house services in the early qtrs. of this year, but since a change in the Police working procedures, this has started to pick up although it should also be noted that there has been a reduction in the number of cases referred from our in-house housing service since the Domestic Abuse Act burdens funding was used to strengthen housing related DA support, options and mechanisms.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2020/21	2021/22	2022/2023 YEAR TO DATE	COMMENTS
Total number of long-term empty homes returned into use	884	882	319 (to Sept 22)	During the two years of lockdown the numbers were very high. The overall number of long-

				term empty homes in the district was significantly lower in October 2022 than October 2020. 2022 – 269 2021 – 383 2020 – 413
Number of large fly tipping incidents	1092	624	297 (to end of Oct 22)	The numbers of have remained fairly stable since May 2021 and are substantially lower than during the lockdowns.
Number of food premises with a rating of 3 or above (satisfactory)	537 out of 553 rated food businesses . 907 food businesses in total	594 out of 611. 888 food businesses in total	592 out of 611. 888 food businesses in total	The proportion of businesses that have a rating of 3 or above is very consistent from Mar 22 to current (both 97%). The overall number of registered food businesses has dropped since April 21 which is in part due to officers actively checking all low-risk businesses and removing any that have closed.

Customers:

- Community Services carry out an annual Community Safety Partnership survey asking residents for their views on how safe the district is and what their community safety priorities are.
- Licensing have and will be continuing to consult on changes in Policies and Practices within the Licensing function.
- Information on how many Community Trigger (ASB reviews) and the outcomes are now on the website and the approach is continuing to be reviewed.

Risks:

- Recruitment and retention of qualified staff.
- Lack of Temporary accommodation options.
- Impacts of the rising costs such as energy, food, maintenance etc on businesses within the districts and their standards.
- Introduction of new legislation or workstreams that increases the workload of the teams.
- Lack of affordable housing will increase homelessness.

- Any reduction in the homelessness grant funding will impact on service delivery.
- The possible introduction of new restrictions and regulations that may fall to the teams to implement/regulate.
- We cannot build enough affordable homes to meet the demand, this continues to be tested by an increase in homelessness cases.
- The increase in homelessness cases has and will continue to impact on the availability of temporary accommodation within the district which is further impacted by the homes for the Ukrainian scheme and resettlement programmes.
- Lack of supported provision for single households with complex needs will increase the time some people stay in temporary accommodation.
- A reduction in affordable housing funding or strategic partnership funding will impact upon new affordable housing for both general needs and supported accommodation.
- Lack of land availability or suitability for Registered Providers to acquire land will result in a drop in new affordable housing units and available public subsidy being repositioned elsewhere.
- Key personnel leaving or reducing their hours within the key frontline services currently experiencing very high demand.

The past year has seen us continue to evolve our post-Covid world approach. We have seen significant achievements despite the difficult economic climate and customer demand remains high. Household planning applications have stayed at high levels, as have call volumes through the customer services and online visits with form submission increasing.

Planning, Planning Enforcement, Strategic Growth & Local Plan

Our new Local Plan is progressing well, we continue to be mindful of future impacts including Leicester City's unmet need, and potential planning reforms arising from the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

We ran several local plan workshops and we'll run more. These informally keep members up-to date of the progress so far, further supporting the work of scrutiny to ensure we're all happy with our new Local Plan when we make that final decision.

Development services are still getting planning decisions through to our customers, and applications levels continue to be healthy despite the current economic climate. Work is underway on a number of new projects such as charging for pre-application advice, bringing historic buildings advice in-house, and a potential net zero development toolkit.

Large-scale projects are progressing at pace. New Lubbethorpe continues to grow with critical infrastructure being provided at the right time, and work on other potential strategic sites such as a potential new garden village and potential new rail freight terminal continues, which will ensure that any potential development proposals are shaped through the work from officers, right from the start.

Enforcement continues to be customer focused, working with residents to ensure the best outcome. A number of high-profile cases have progressed to successful outcomes and some other sensitive enforcement cases are ongoing.

Transformation and Customer Services

The Transformation Group Manager has now joined the authority, as has the Service Manager for Transformation.

The launch of the transformation brand 'Transforming Blaby Together' saw 74% of employees in attendance at Blaby Matters rate their understanding as positive following the introductory presentation.

As we develop the transformation programme, engaging with and upskilling authority wide change champions, we will invest in and support each other, allowing and enabling, through the creation of space and time, to adapt and change to meet the

challenges we face, head-on, through developing new opportunities and different ways of working to drive effectiveness and build in efficiencies.

Customer Services and its importance in terms of customer experience continues to be of high priority. Our Service Manager for Customer Insights, Experience and Engagement will join in January, leading the Customer Services Team to not only further enhance what we do well, but explore with the team through authority wide engagement, how we can broaden our reach and adopt continuous improvement to ensure our customers truly are at the heart of everything we do.

There is a handover of ICT to bring it into the Transformation Service going forward.

ICT

While changes to how we work continue, it's important that our organisation and members are correctly equipped to carry out their duties. That's why in the last year we have invested in ICT equipment for officers and members, allowing mobile working especially useful when home working is required. Our ICT contract/ service is evolving (see the ICT Briefing Note at Appendix L for details), and we'll continue to make sure this best fits our Blaby District ambitions.

Remote working and virtual meetings have become the norm, we'll continue to invest here to make sure officers and members can work flexibly.

UKSPF

The last year has seen the allocation of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to local authorities across the country, for expenditure across a range of Levelling Up themes and priorities. The Council will allocate its c£2.1m to a range of projects between now and 2024/25, in accordance with the submitted Investment Plan.

Future

Our focus continues to be on delivering for the customer. While pressures are still being experienced from the post-covid world and more recently the economic climate and cost of living crisis, we are being successful in reducing our planning backlog and delivering on digital service improvements.

We will be developing our corporate transformation programme over the coming year and implementing changes which will see benefits and efficiencies for both customers and colleagues. We will ensure that we continue to provide and improve digital access to services for residents and businesses.

My thanks go out to all our officers who have worked tirelessly to ensure customers remain at the heart of what we do in what continue to be challenging times.

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ben Taylor

**Senior Officer: Executive Director, Planning & Strategic Growth Group
Manager, Transformation Group Manager, Corporate
Services Group Manager**

Portfolio Total

Planning Delivery & Enforcement and Corporate Transformation - Total	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£2,377,984	£2,549,044	£2,872,276	£494,292 20.79%	£323,232 12.68%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£1,170,799	£1,956,346	£1,989,390	£818,591 69.92%	£33,044 1.69%
3.Direct Income	-£731,626	-£937,460	-£1,356,302	-£624,676 85.38%	-£418,842 44.68%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£2,817,157	£3,567,930	£3,505,364	£688,207 24.43%	-£62,566 -1.75%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	53.66	57.95	59.61	5.95 11.09%	1.66 2.86%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This portfolio includes the establishment and operational costs relating to Planning, Transformation (including ICT and Customer Services) and Communications. The establishment budget for 2022/23 has been adjusted to allow for the recently settled pay award and uplifted pension contribution rates. The 2023/24 establishment costs make allowance for a 3% pay award, contractual increments, and national insurance and pension contributions. The increase in headcount includes two new posts in Transformation which were approved as part of the management restructure, along with a further two transferred from the Performance team.

Other gross direct expenditure includes one-off unspent budget brought forward from 2022/23, reflected in the revised estimate for 2023/24. In addition to this, the revised estimate includes provision of £100,000 for specialist advice on the Hinckley National Rail Freight project, additional funding released from the Local Plan Reserve, and provision to cover specialist advice on matters such as the Cork Lane planning appeal, and a solar farm application.

There have been several IT issues arising during the financial year which have incurred additional cost, and budget provision has been added accordingly.

Direct income includes sums in both financial years in recognition of allocations from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The sums receivable will be allocated to individual services once funding bids have been reviewed.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Development Strategy	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£277,679	£288,598	£330,661	£52,982 19.08%	£42,063 14.57%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£39,834	£165,285	£94,471	£54,637 137.16%	-£70,814 -42.84%
3. Direct Income	-£2,000	-£24,000	-£4,000	-£2,000 100.00%	£20,000 -83.33%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£315,513	£429,883	£421,132	£105,619 33.48%	-£8,751 -2.04%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	5.50	5.50	6.51	1.01 18.36%	1.01 18.36%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions.
2. The revised budget includes grants carried forward from 2021/22 relating to the Local Development Framework and funding taken from the Local Plan Reserve in respect of the production of the Delivery Development Plan Document (DPD).
3. The additional income in 2022/23 is grant received in relation to the Leicester Forest East Neighbourhood Plan.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Additional Planning Policy Officer on a fixed term contract until end of September 2023.

PLANNING DELIVERY

Planning Delivery	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A] 	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£583,996	£609,834	£670,655	£86,659 14.84%	£60,821 9.97%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£108,797	£176,291	£136,247	£27,450 25.23%	-£40,044 -22.71%
3. Direct Income	-£560,000	-£560,000	-£560,000	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£132,793	£226,125	£246,902	£114,109 85.93%	£20,777 9.19%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	12.65	12.65	14.61	1.96 15.49%	1.96 15.49%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions as well as increase due to career progression posts.
2. The revised budget includes budget carried forward from 2021/22 plus additional costs of specialist advice relating to the Cork Lane appeal and a solar farm planning application.
3. The income budget was reduced during the pandemic and fees and charges have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Additional posts approved after initial budget was set.

ENFORCEMENT

Planning Enforcement	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£216,725	£226,646	£240,596	£23,871 11.01%	£13,950 6.15%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£12,396	£17,508	£19,628	£7,232 58.34%	£2,120 12.11%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£229,121	£244,154	£260,224	£31,103 13.57%	£16,070 6.58%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	4.81	4.81	5.00	0.19 3.95%	0.19 3.95%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions.
2. The revised budget includes budget approved for consultants' fees relating to Enforcement action.
3. Not applicable.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. One officer has increased their working hours.

STRATEGIC GROWTH

Strategic Growth	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£262,288	£296,212	£281,841	£19,553 7.45%	-£14,371 -4.85%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£31,410	£308,231	£154,766	£123,356 392.73%	-£153,465 -49.79%
3. Direct Income	-£158,826	-£89,884	-£266,712	-£107,886 67.93%	-£176,828 196.73%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£134,872	£514,559	£169,895	£35,023 25.97%	-£344,664 -66.98%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	6.36	6.36	4.86	-1.50 -23.58%	-1.50 -23.58%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. Also reflects the removal of fixed term posts that were previously externally funded.
2. 2022/23 revised estimate includes non-recurring expenditure brought forward from 2021/22. It also includes an additional, one-off £100,000 approved by Council for external support on the Hinckley National Rail Freight Initiative.
3. Revised budget and proposed budget include confirmed external funding.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. As per note 1.

Transformation, Customer Insight & ICT

Transformation & Customer Insight	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£495,954	£583,449	£797,353	£301,399 60.77%	£213,904 36.66%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£754,549	£770,877	£807,875	£53,326 7.07%	£36,998 4.80%
3. Direct Income	-£9,400	-£9,400	-£9,400	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£1,241,103	£1,344,926	£1,595,828	£354,725 28.58%	£250,902 18.66%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	14.89	19.18	19.18	4.29 28.81%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. The revised estimate and 2023/24 budget include new posts approved as part of the management restructure. Two posts have been transferred from the Performance team to Transformation as part of the same restructure.
2. Includes additional costs in relation to the ICT contract, with inflationary increases applied to 2023/24 where applicable.
3. Income in relation to rent of floorspace to CAB.
4. Net impact of the variances listed above.
5. New posts approved in the management restructure plus posts transferred from Performance.

Management & Administration

Management & Admin	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£287,278	£278,892	£265,394	-£21,884 -7.62%	-£13,498 -4.84%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£60,733	£108,029	£102,129	£41,396 68.16%	-£5,900 -5.46%
3. Direct Income	£0	-£2,800	-£2,800	-£2,800 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£348,011	£384,121	£364,723	£16,712 4.80%	-£19,398 -5.05%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	3.91	3.91	3.91	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. Where officers have opted out of the Local Government Pension Scheme, pension contributions have been removed from the budget.
2. Revised estimate includes uplifted cost of software maintenance following migration to a new supplier, and one-off administration fees associated with the Levelling Up bid.
3. Contribution towards the cost of provision of open data.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change.

UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

UK Shared Prosperity Fund	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£0	£250,695	£513,390	£513,390 0.00%	£262,695 104.79%
3. Direct Income	£0	-£250,695	-£513,390	-£513,390 0.00%	-£262,695 104.79%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. Not applicable at this stage.
2. Reflects the actual allocation due for 2022/23 and indicative allocation for 2023/24.
3. As above.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Not applicable.

COMMUNICATIONS

Management & Admin	2022/23 Approved Budget [A]	2022/23 Revised Estimate [B]	2023/24 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£254,064	£265,413	£285,776	£31,712 12.48%	£20,363 7.67%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£163,080	£159,430	£160,884	-£2,196 -1.35%	£1,454 0.91%
3. Direct Income	-£1,400	-£681	£0	£1,400 -100.00%	£681 -100.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£415,744	£424,162	£446,660	£30,916 7.44%	£22,498 5.30%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	5.54	5.54	5.54	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions.
2. Change to contractual cost of Web Team as part of LICT Partnership – transferred to main contract.
3. Short term contributions from Melton Borough Council towards website costs.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change.

Portfolio Priorities

Priorities for 2023/24 for the portfolio include:

- 1. Large scale strategic projects.** The strategic growth team is managing a full range of large-scale projects. These include a rail freight terminal, garden village, further potential large-scale site near to Stoney Stanton, and Fosse Park West. Significant milestones for 2023 include the submission of the rail freight terminal project.
- 2. New Local Plan.** The next 12 months will see a number of important milestones for the new Local Plan, as we move closer to a submission version. Further detailed work will result in a draft final version of the Plan during 2023.
- 3. Neighbourhood Plans.** Work will continue to progress and finalise a number of Neighbourhood Plans, to support our parishes to shape their places.
- 4. Respond to Planning Reforms.** During 2022, consultations continued to be undertaken by the Government on proposed reforms to the planning system. These reforms, should they be taken forward, will have a significant impact on the way we work in most planning related areas. We are hopeful of further consultation and guidance from Government as quickly as possible, which enables us to start considering the changes.
- 5. Delivering a high performing Development Management Service.** Planning application levels continue to be high, and the team have delivered a quality and customer focussed service despite these demands. The focus for 2023 will be on continuing with this approach, progressing a number of specific projects such as the pre-application charging project, and ensuring sufficient resources.
- 6. High profile enforcement action.** Ongoing action will continue for a number of current high-profile cases; with Enforcement Notice appeal outcomes expected during 2023. In addition, the team will continue their pro-active approach across the district, in dealing with a varied case load of investigations.
- 7. Joint Strategic Planning –** work continues across Leicester and Leicestershire to support the delivery of the Strategic Growth Plan, key infrastructure to enable future growth, and other ‘cross boundary’ projects. We are exploring all opportunities to work collaboratively with other local authorities; to ensure that we can maximise opportunities and efficiencies.
- 8. Delivery of the Lubbethorpe Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE).** The new community is going from strength to strength. Around 800 houses are now occupied, the first primary school is thriving, and works continue to deliver the road infrastructure. To date the development has now won five awards. Key milestones for 2023/24 will include the opening of the first Local Centre (including health centre), and development of the leisure offer and secondary school.
- 9. Continue to deliver a high quality, first point of contact, service to the customer.** Review the Customer Service Delivery Model, in line with the review of

customer access channels and the digital transformation activities across the authority.

- 10. Transforming Blaby Together.** Development of a robust corporate transformation and change programme. Our transformation team will work in collaboration with services to upskill and enable colleagues' authority wide, to not only adopt a culture of continuous improvement, but make that concept a reality through support and successful, measurable delivery of effective and efficient services.
- 11. ICT.** To ensure that the ICT provision for Blaby DC is robust, reliable and the infrastructure is fit for purpose. In addition, the Blaby ICT provision should support Blaby to utilise digital means as effectively as possible. See also Appendix L ICT Briefing note.
- 12. Digital service delivery and integration for Council Tax and Benefits.** Review and improve the digital transformation activities for Council Tax and Benefits. Implementing solutions to further improve operational efficiency with the service, whilst retaining or improving the customer experience.
- 13. Raise the profile of the Leicestershire Building Control Partnership.** Following the launch of the partnership, including the new website and online forms communication and marketing activities will continue throughout the year to help raise the profile and reputation of LBCP.
- 14. Acting on the Recommendations from the LGA Communications Review.** Continuing to support new initiatives and service delivery whilst making improvements to internal and external communication.
- 15. Continue to maintain and develop the Council's corporate website** www.blaby.gov.uk, www.visitblaby.org.uk, and www.lbcp.co.uk Work also continues to support services with corporate branding and accessibility compliance of web solutions.

Services

The portfolio comprises the following services:

Planning & Strategic Growth:

Development Strategy

The purpose of the Development Strategy Service is to ensure that the district has a robust and up-to-date strategic framework for planning decisions. The Local Plan, and other key planning policies, are the key mechanisms for place shaping and the delivery of many other corporate priorities.

This budget includes the costs of Planning Policy Officers and a Planning Obligations Officer; all involved in developing robust policies and guidance, gathering, and interpreting the data necessary to do this, advising on the interpretation of policies and designing and implementing initiatives to deliver strategic objectives.

Planning Delivery

The purpose of the Planning Delivery Service is to ensure that development is acceptable whilst determining planning applications as fast as possible.

This budget includes the costs of Planning Officers and Technical staff involved in providing advice to potential applicants and determining applications.

Planning Enforcement

This budget includes the costs of Enforcement Officers, who monitor development across the district, carry out investigations, enforce planning controls, and take forward prosecutions where necessary.

Strategic Growth Team

This team manages a range of high profile, large-scale, strategic projects. These are considered to be projects which fall outside of the usual planning process, due to their profile and need for a more complex range of skills – a typical example would be housing developments of more than 1,000 houses.

This budget includes the cost of a manager and Major Schemes Officers, along with some external funding which covers the cost of two of these posts.

Transformation & Customer Insight:

Customer Services

The team provide the main front of house services for the authority – at present this includes answering general queries, payments, incoming / outgoing post and telephony services. The team also assist with linking residents and businesses to our other Partners, Services and promote the use of online / web services.

This budget includes Customer Insights, Experience and Engagement Manager, Customer Service Team Leaders, and Customer Service Advisors associated costs.

Transformation [Transforming Blaby Together]

A newly formed team which will develop a transformation and change programme, driven corporately to meet the Council's strategic aims and ambitions. This team will enable the organisation to continuously realise improvements that are efficient, cost effective, and sustainable. This will be achieved through the promotion of a culture of high performance, continuous improvement and innovation, that values learning and commitment.

This budget includes Transformation Group Manager, Service Manager, and Project Support Officers associated costs.

ICT Services

The Council receives ICT support and services from the Leicestershire ICT Partnership, through delegation to Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council providing an insourced ICT service for Blaby District Council and Melton Borough Council. See also Appendix L – ICT Briefing note.

Management & Administration

This budget includes the costs of the Corporate Services Group Manager and the support staff who manage the portfolio budgets and systems.

Communications

Delivery of external and internal communications, management of the website and intranet and digital improvements for customer access.

Key Points

Doing things differently – plans for the coming year	<p>The portfolio continues to perform well, despite a further unprecedented and challenging year due to the economic crisis. Staff are working hard but remain motivated. Over the last year the remit of the portfolio has continued to grow – particularly in the areas of strategic growth and infrastructure planning.</p> <p>As set out in the priorities for the forthcoming year; we expect the next 12 months to be equally challenging – but also rewarding and exciting.</p> <p><u>Strategic Growth</u></p> <p>The team will continue to project manage some of the district's most high profile and complex strategic projects. This includes a wide range of sites; from retail and commercial developments to a garden village, a strategic rail freight interchange and of course Lubbethorpe.</p> <p><u>Development Strategy</u></p> <p>The team will continue to focus on strategic planning, Neighbourhood Plans, planning obligations and the Local Plan</p>
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	<p>Work will continue during 2023/24 on the new Local Plan.</p> <p><u>Planning Delivery</u></p> <p>The workload of the team has reached a steady level over the last year, as application levels have become more manageable, and this will enable focus to turn to the delivery of a number of specific projects.</p> <p>During 2023/24 the team will focus on ensuring the continued delivery of an excellent service to customers.</p> <p><u>Enforcement</u></p> <p>The enforcement team will continue its proactive monitoring approach next year. In addition, work on the high profile and sensitive sites will also progress.</p> <p><u>Transformation (Transforming Blaby Together) & Customer Insight</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop our transformation strategy and programme • Through a suite of workshops enable and upskill colleagues, instilling confidence resulting in a cross-cutting team of successful change champions • Develop a robust framework to support transformation benefit realisation • Develop our customer insights, experience and engagement strategy ensuring it cuts across the depth and breadth of Blaby District Council with positive customer experience at its heart • Continue the development of online services and processes to improve the digital experience for our customers accessing services and tracking progress through these channels • Always look for ways to integrate front facing interactions with back-office processes to enhance the customer experience • Continuously review the approach and consider improvements to customer services and associated technologies <p><u>ICT Service</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Generator to ensure our applications and data can be closed down safely in the event of power outages • Multi-factor authentication for our devices for enhanced security • Uninterrupted power supply replacement due to ageing equipment • Network load rebalancing hardware to ensure optimal systems performance <p>See also Appendix L ICT Briefing note</p> <p><u>Management & Administration</u></p> <p>The focus for 2023/24 will be on the delivery of high-quality services, whilst supporting and enabling staff development.</p> <p><u>Communications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the recommendations from the LGA Communications Review
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Income generation	<p>The fees and charges for all aspects of the services will be kept under review to ensure that these maximise income without impacting on the quality of communications and applications submitted and increasing costs elsewhere in the delivery of the services.</p> <p>Income generation across the group is restricted to fees for documents; and nationally set planning application fees. A project to look at charging for pre-application advice will continue to delivery in 2023/24.</p> <p>The group will seek to maximise opportunities for cost saving through collaborative working, particularly on Local Plan technical work.</p>
Capital plans for the portfolio	<p>The capital programme for 2023/24 allows for £245,000 to be spent on various ICT schemes including security upgrades (£107,000), network upgrades (£46,000), Office 365 consultancy (£32,000).</p>

Key Performance Indicators

Planning & Strategic Growth	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 Apr - Nov
Number of planning applications received	1132	1089	1111	1104	1305	943	512
Planning application fee income	£470,671	£656,689	£775,940	£647,370	£513,563	£572,724	£279,917
Number of planning applications determined	1048	1076	1099	1043	1004	1280	708
% of applications delegated	93.73	93.60	94.2	95.2	94.6	97.53	96.21
% of major applications determined in 13 weeks	100.00	93.54	100	96.3	100	100	100
E2E (householders)	33.55	46.50	47.89	46.2	74.12	91.65	74.46
E2E (minors)	53.07	65.92	84.5	80.33	97.73	121	150.9
E2E (others)	48.02	38.61	44.8	50.59	59.9	58.92	57.47

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – CORPORATE SERVICES	2022/23 (up to Dec)	2021/22	2020/21	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Number of followers on Facebook	6,014	5,558	5,118	3,893	2,680	1,997
Number of followers on Twitter	5,334	5,294	5,010	4,502	4,028	3,696
Number of followers on LinkedIn	1,893	1,636	1,422	1,159	880	732
Number of online forms submitted by customers	38,989	64,637	66,832	54,385	39,613	43,053
Number of email subscribers	28,013	27,409	25,843	22,002	18,684	12,862
My Account Subscribers	50,165	46,914	40,771	32,434	25,063	16,106
% of positive (4-5*) online form feedback ratings	86.6%	87.9%	86.4%	84.7%	85.1%	85.5%

Customers

- The Planning Delivery and Enforcement services in particular have heavy interaction with residents, and we will continue to monitor customer feedback to ensure that all interactions with customers and stakeholders to these services are conducted appropriately and professionally.
- There are a number of significant public consultations planned for 2023/24 including the next stage of the new Local Plan, and a number of large strategic sites.
- Customer Insights, Experience and Engagement will continue to be pivotal as the 'face' (virtual or in person) of Blaby District Council when customers make contact. As such we will prioritise monitoring interactions, measuring performance, and seeking feedback as critical enablers for continuous improvement.

Risks

- Planning application levels have stabilised, but should they increase suddenly this will place significant demands on the service. Ongoing resource and service delivery reviews are essential to help to mitigate against this.
- Failure to progress the new Local Plan could leave the district vulnerable to unacceptable types of future development.
- High number of appeals would place further pressures on the Development Services Team.
- Inability to progress with the delivery of a clear and robust policy framework would put delivery of sustainable development at risk.
- Delivery of Lubbesthorpe against the current proposed timetable is essential – failure to do so could affect the 5-year housing land supply, and in turn the council's ability to defend against undesirable development.
- Ongoing lack of clarity, or a long period without further guidance, on planning reform proposals would lead to long periods of uncertainty; and could in turn delay the new Local Plan.
- Failure to deliver an effective enforcement service could result in reputational damage.
- Failure to ensure a robust and risk assessed approach to enforcement investigations, on sensitive and high-risk sites, could leave staff at risk of harassment or violence.
- Ongoing lack of clarity around the ICT and digital transformation deliverables through the LICT Partnership would lead to long periods of uncertainty and wasted investment. Ongoing discussions and project plans would help to mitigate against this.
- Failure to retain skilled staff within the services could lead to a loss in service delivery and reputational damage
- Failure of the STORM telephone system. This is a separate system from the back office (Jabba) system and provides the platform for the Customer Services Team.
- With regard to the communications and digital team there is a risk in ensuring that there is capacity and skills to deliver the improvements identified by the LGA Communications Review.
- The Council has experienced downtime in key ICT systems during 2022 and although a range of mitigation measures have been put in place there remains an on-going risk whilst historic infrastructure is replaced and/or upgraded and data storage capacity is increased.

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Appendix L – ICT Briefing Note

The Councils ICT service is currently delegated to Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council who brought the service back in house from Sopra Steria on 1st January 2022.

The service has had its challenges through the year including;

- Recruitment of staff to key positions
- An ageing ICT infrastructure at Blaby
- Failure of key systems due to contractors cutting through power cables affecting our data centre at HBBC
- Lack of storage space affecting performance of servers and a 3 working day downtime
- Lack of documented information on hardware, software and licences meaning slower resolution to issues

The LICTP relationship management was given to the Communications Service Manager who was also charged with implementing the rollout of new agile equipment (laptops) for staff and members.

The rollout has improved remote and agile working and allowed the future staff footprint of the offices to be reduced.

In Q3 the ICT service resilience at Blaby has been affected with a serious incident occurring with a downtime of 3 working days. The partnership has responded with the following proposals being taken forward;

- A secondary server built and operational to provide operational resilience
- A new Broadband line to be installed for the first time
- A systems engineer to be engaged to work through some ageing equipment
- A temporary Infrastructure & Security Engineer to be engaged to add capacity and bring forward enhancements

In addition, there are four Capital schemes proposed for 23/24 which the above resource will be focussed on;

- Emergency Generator to ensure our applications and data can be closed down safely in the event of power outages
- Multi-factor authentication for our devices for enhanced security
- Uninterrupted power supply replacement due to ageing equipment
- Network load rebalancing hardware to ensure optimal systems performance

The contract cost is likely to come in on budget which includes the investment in the aforementioned four proposals committed to following the downtime. The supplies and services budget is currently being reconciled due to costs from 21/22 being brought forward but is likely to be over budget. These are spend to save initiatives to ensure our infrastructure and equipment is fit for purpose and as such we may need to spend more than originally budgeted.

The plans for 23/24 also include the following;

- A review of the delegation agreement and consideration of a partnership agreement to give the Council increased control over the service
- A service healthcheck/diagnostic to ensure the proposed future investments/roadmap meet the needs of Blaby as we progress our Transformation agenda
- The consideration of an ICT specialist post to be located within the new Transformation team
- The change of responsibility for the relationship management of the LICTP to the Transformation Service Manager.

At the time of writing the service is currently stable and staff are reporting very few system issues which is testament to a considerable focus on improving Blabys ICT performance by the partnership. However, the cost of down time throughout the year has been significant and this has been raised at all levels within the Partnership.

However, it is important to us at Blaby that we not only build an IT system that is fit for purpose, giving customers, staff, and members the right tools and infrastructure, but one that also builds upon our digital ambitions to improve customer access; improve staff efficiencies and have systems and processes that update and communicate with each other.