

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

Cllr. Nick Brown (Chairman)
Cllr. Neil Wright (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr. Shabbir Aslam
Cllr. Royston Bayliss
Cllr. Dr John Bloxham
Cllr. Lee Breckon JP
Cllr. Adrian Clifford
Cllr. Stuart Coar
Cllr. Luke Cousin
Cllr. Tony Deakin
Cllr. Roy Denney
Cllr. Alex DeWinter

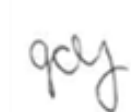
Cllr. Susan Findlay
Cllr. Janet Forey
Cllr. Helen Gambardella
Cllr. Hannah Gill
Cllr. Paul Hartshorn
Cllr. Richard Holdridge
Cllr. Mark Jackson
Cllr. Becca Lunn
Cllr. Antony Moseley
Cllr. Terry Richardson

Cllr. Ande Savage
Cllr. Tracey Shepherd
Cllr. Dillan Shikotra
Cllr. Roger Stead
Cllr. Matt Tomeo
Cllr. Bob Waterton
Cllr. Jane Wolfe
Cllr. Maggie Wright

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, 14 JANUARY 2026 at 5.30 p.m.** Please find attached a number of supplemental items that are required for the meeting and are in addition to the agenda and report pack that has already been circulated.

Yours faithfully



Gemma Dennis
Corporate Services Group Manager



SUPPLEMENTAL ITEMS

3. Budget Context Setting and Overview (Pages 3 - 26)

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

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4. 2026-2027 Draft Portfolio Budget Proposals (Pages 27 - 132)

- a) To consider the proposed 2026-27 budget and spending plans for the remaining Portfolio areas.
- b) Prepare lines of questioning for a written response from Portfolio Holders in advance of the next Scrutiny Budget meeting on Wednesday 21 January 2026.

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Appendix A

2026/27 Budget Overview 14th January 2026

Impact of the Settlement December 2025

Councillors will be aware that the Settlement figures are normally distributed to the Council in December and at the same time the Secretary of State makes their statement on local government funding for 2026/27 (referred to as 'the Statement' in this paper). The provisional Settlement was announced on the 18th December 2025.

Key elements of the Statement that impact on the budget position for 2026/27 are:

- Confirmation of provisional settlement figures for 2026/27, 2027/28 and 2028/29 i.e. a three-year settlement was provided.
- Confirmation that New Homes Bonus was discontinued
- Council Tax increase thresholds
- Changes to Business Rate Baseline
- Information relating to additional funding streams.

Alongside the Settlement the government also published a technical consultation paper on:

- The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2026/27 (open until 14th January)

A Policy Statement (20th November 2024) had already announced the key principles that ministers applied in the provisional settlement, however some elements, particularly the re-setting of the business rate baseline, were not fully understood until the Settlement was released.

The funding position for 2026/27 provides Settlement information spanning 3 years.

The Settlement will result in considerable redistribution of funding between authorities. The funding distribution was last updated in 2013-14 and no update has taken place of key datasets until now. The Relative Needs Formulas have seen major changes and many grants have either been rolled into the Settlement Funding Assessment or into one of four Consolidated Grants. Alongside this there has been a Full Baseline Reset for Business Rates.

Whilst there has been redistribution of funding through the formula to those authorities with higher needs, the inclusion of business rate growth and business rate pooling income has perhaps lessened the impact of redistribution for Blaby, as these income streams have been protected to some extent.

Total Budget Requirement

The proposed draft General Fund Revenue Account Net Budget Requirement for 2026/27 is **£19.731M**. The comparable Net Budget Requirement for 2025/26 that was approved in February 2025 was **£15.407M**.

It should be noted that significant increases in budget have been included within the budget requirement for 2026/27. These include:

- The additional expenditure for the delivery of the Food Waste Service from April 2026. An amount of £750k has been included. Whilst the Council were expecting 'New Burdens Funding' to be provided for this additional service requirement, the funding has been included within the Settlement and is not separately identifiable.
- An additional £500k has been included within the housing budget to allow for expenditure on homelessness in line with the current demand being experienced. This addition will allow the Council to accommodate those in need rather than fall outside of the statutory timeframes for cases to be accommodated within B&B accommodation and also run preventative initiatives.
- A provision of £700k included in the budget to be utilised to prepare for and facilitate actions arising from the Local Government Reform.

It should also be noted that additional funding streams or cost reductions have been included within the budget as follows:

- Funding of £1.6m will be received in 2026/27 from Defra relating to the Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (EPR). This is based on the Council's recycling collections and tonnages and passes the cost of collection onto those who produce the packaging. This funding has therefore considerably reduced the cost to the Council of providing the recycling collection to residents. An amount of £913k was included in the budget in 2025/26 which was the first year of the EPR payment.
- Reduction in pension contributions of £825k.

The Government have excluded the EPR from the calculation of Core Spending Power in 2026/27 and are also aware that Councils are seeing reductions in the pension contributions. Both were suggested by officers at MHCLG to mitigate the impact of the funding reductions over the period of the three-year Settlement.

Budget Gap 2026/27

After taking into account the Settlement against the draft budget, the funding gap for 2026/27 is **£1.522m** before planned utilisation of reserves which are presented later within this appendix.

Funding the Budget

The table below illustrates how the budget is funded and how the grants provided in the Settlement have contributed to producing the budget gap forecast.

Note that revenue income from services is netted off against the costs within the net budget requirement, so is not shown in the funding figures below.

Sources of funding are as follows: -

	2025/26 Approved Budget £	2025/26 Revised Estimate £	2026/27 Proposed Budget £	Variance Compared to Approved Budget
Income from Business Rates	(5,510,635)	(5,933,121)	(2,303,193)	(3,207,442)
Contributions (from)/ To Business Rates Reserves	1,649,329	2,395,987	0	1,649,329
S31 Grant - Business Rates Compensation	(2,738,694)	(3,054,466)	(920,274)	(1,818,420)
Revenue Support Grant	(95,767)	(95,767)	(7,474,028)	7,378,261
New Homes Bonus Grant	(426,048)	(426,048)	0	(426,048)
Funding Guarantee	0	0	0	0
Funding Floor	(1,573,114)	(1,573,114)	0	(1,573,114)
Services Grant	0	0	0	0
Damping/ Transitional Funding	0	0	(715,020)	715,020
Sub Total	(8,694,929)	(8,686,529)	(11,412,515)	2,717,586
Council Tax (Surplus)/Deficit	42,056	42,056	7,468	34,588
Council Tax Demand on Collection Fund	(6,754,058)	(6,754,058)	(6,803,487)	49,429
				0
Funding Envelope	(15,406,931)	(15,398,531)	(18,208,534)	2,801,603

The table above illustrates that the Council's overall funding has increased despite the Core Spending Power decreasing. This is due mainly to the Council being compensated for the Business Rate Baseline reset over and above the income that feeds directly from Business Rates. Both elements of the historic growth and Business Rate Pool income from the levy have been protected and are now included in the Revenue Support Grant. Funding has also been included to introduce the Food Waste Service from April 2026.

The funding is detailed further as follows:

- Redistributed NNDR has been forecast at the moment to reduce significantly due to the resetting of the baseline. Moving from £6.6m down to £3.2m. This is before any release of the Business Rate Reserve. Whilst this reduction is shown within the Business Rate funding lines a compensatory entry is included within the Revenue Support Grant which provides a 95% income protection floor.
- Revenue Support Grant (RSG) increased to £7.4m from £96k – now the grant through which the majority of government funding is provided.
- Funding Floor Grant – no longer provided. Awarded £1.573m in 2025/26.
- New Homes Bonus (NHB) Grant – no longer provided. Awarded £426k in 2025/26.
- Transitional Funding (Damping) – Awarded £715k in 2026/27. This increases as RSG reduces over the three-year Settlement.

- Council Tax precept has increased by £49k. This is before any increase is applied but reflects the increase in the tax base (increase in properties) in the district.

Planned Utilisation of Reserve and Closing the Budget Gap

The budget gap arising for the 2026/27 Financial Year is **£1.522m** before any planned contributions are made from reserves.

Officers anticipating a budget gap have sought opportunities to reduce costs or ensure income from fees and charges reflect the costs to provide the service. These have all been included in the base budget figures that are presented within portfolio reports and contribute to reducing the budget gap to this level.

The proposed planned utilisation of reserves and the resulting gap/surplus is detailed below.

Note: the budget gap arising is before any Council Tax increase – the financial implications of a Council Tax increase are presented below.

Contribution to Property Fund Reserve

Income of **£10k** expected from the Property Fund Investment is proposed to be placed in the Property Fund Reserve to continue to build up a reserve to provide for any devaluation of the Property Fund itself that may have to be recognised in the Income and Expenditure account.

Contribution from Contractual Losses Support Fund

As part of the support following the COVID pandemic funding was provided to compensate for reduced income from leisure contracts. It was necessary for Blaby to renegotiate the management fee in the contract arrangements with the leisure provider which spanned the remaining contract length. The proposed, planned release of this reserve over the remaining contract length is **£63,750** per annum.

Contribution from Blaby Plan Priorities Reserve

Proposed contribution from the Blaby Plan Priorities Reserve to support the Capital Grants Programme of **£54,500**. This reserve was provided to allow for future funding of initiatives that meet the priorities set out in the Blaby District Plan.

Contribution from Business Rate Pool Reserve

The Council, along with Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council, all Leicestershire District Councils and Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland Fire Authority since 2015/16 Pooled Business Rates under the Rates Retention Scheme. This has allowed additional monies raised through Business rates to be retained in the sub-region. The monies retained under the agreement have historically been

distributed by the LLEP with applications submitted to fund projects to support economic growth and infrastructure connected to this as per the terms of the pooling agreement.

In recent years however, the distribution of the pooled monies has been revised to distribute across the participating Council's on an agreed basis with Pool members utilising their allocation to support "economic health and vibrancy of our communities".

The Council is in receipt **£3.72m** of distributed Pool monies since 2020/21. Since 2024/25 these funds have supported the activity of the Economic Development of the District through the funding of the Economic Development Team. The Economic Development team continues to provide support to our local businesses, and it is proposed to utilise an element of the Business Rate Pool monies to support the department this year and in the future. An amount of **£327k** is proposed to be utilised from the Business Rate Pool Reserve for 2026/27.

Funds from the Business Rate Pool are anticipated to continue to be distributed under this mechanism up to and including the year 2025/26, however the resetting of the baseline has made the S151 Officers across Leicestershire reconsider the decision to stay in the Business Rate Pool from 2026/27.

Between 2013/14 and 2025/26, business rates pooling arrangements have delivered positive outcomes across England. Local authorities collectively retained a greater share of business rates growth by reducing the levy that would otherwise have been payable to central government. This approach enabled participating authorities to benefit from local economic growth and strengthen financial resilience.

However, the reset of the Business Rates Retention Scheme in 2026/27 has introduced revised baseline targets for each authority. These targets have been uplifted to reflect actual collections, effectively removing any growth from the system. As a result, there will be no levy payable and, consequently, no financial advantage from pooling arrangements.

It is therefore anticipated that business rates pools will not operate in England from 2026/27 onwards. This position is supported by external advisors and aligns with expectations from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

It is expected therefore that, under delegated authority the Executive Director (S151 Officer) will agree with the S151 officers across Leicestershire to dissolve the Business Rate Pool at a meeting held on the 8th January 2026.

Contribution from NNDR Income Reserve

Since the Localisation of Business Rates in 2013/14 local authorities have been in a position to benefit from a proportion of growth in business rates and Blaby has, like most councils, needed to release this growth to support the budget. The NNDR Income Reserve has been used to even out the Business Rate Income over the years. Contributions have been made to the reserve in years when Business Rate growth has outperformed expectations and funds have been drawn from the reserve when there has been a need to do so to support the budget.

It continues to be difficult to forecast the Business Rate income. This is due to:

- New properties not being officially rated by the Valuation Office (VO) and estimates having to be included.
- Estimating an allowance for the number of empty business properties that may arise.
- The ever-present risk that appeals put forward by businesses may impact unfavourably on the amount of income that Blaby is able to release.
- Changes to the multipliers used within the Business Rates
- With the changes to Business Rates in the Settlement we are still awaiting the full impact of this to be reflected in the NNDR1 to give certainty of the figures. The NNDR1 will be completed by the end of January.

We are continuing to finalise these figures prior to the budget setting in February however, as in previous years, we have planned for a release from the NNDR Reserve of **£765,698** to support the budget and to release the income that has been built within the reserve over the period of the MTFS.

Contribution from Homelessness Reserve

A planned release of this reserve was put forward as part of the funding to support the implementation of the purchase of housing as a measure to tackle our homelessness cases rising. It is proposed therefore to release **£64k** as planned.

Council Tax Increase

Members will be aware that over recent years there has been more of an expectation nationally that Council's will increase Council Tax as a mechanism for closing the financial gap. The calculation of the Council's Core Spending Power has again assumed that each Council will increase the Council Tax levels to the maximum amount. Council Tax increase threshold limits have remained static for District Council's in 2026/27.

For 2026/27 the threshold for Council Tax increases for "core" Band D Council Tax remains static with local authorities able to increase their Council Tax by up to 3% (2.99%) or £5 without triggering a referendum.

An increase of 2.99% would generate an additional amount of **£203k** which equates to an increase of £5.82 per annum. The Council Tax charge for Blaby would therefore be £200.62 for a Band D equivalent property.

The option to increase Council Tax by **£5** generates **£175k**; marginally less than the 2.99% increase. The Council Tax charge for Blaby would therefore be £199.79 for a Band D equivalent property.

For Shire County Councils threshold increases for 'core' Band D Council Tax has also remained unchanged, with an increase of up to 2.99% being allowed.

It is important to also note that within the Settlement those Authorities with responsibility for Adult Social Care, such as Leicestershire County Council, retain the additional flexibility to increase their current Council Tax referendum threshold by up to 2% on top of the core principle for an Adult Social Care precept.

The Leicestershire County Council proportion of the total Council Tax charge forms approx. 70% of the total charge (based on 2025/26).

Police and Crime Commissioners are able to increase their Council Tax precept by £15 and Fire & Rescue Authorities are limited to a referendum principle of no more than £5.

There is no council tax referendum limit for either mayoral combined authorities or town and parish councils.

Should all preceptors decide to increase Council Tax at the maximum levels (with Parish Councils increasing by the average amount based on 2025/26) the total annual increase on a band D property would be approximately £120.

Cumulative Impact of Council Tax increases

It is important to understand the cumulative impact of not increasing Council Tax. For a three-year period from 2011 the Council chose not to increase Council Tax but instead chose to be compensated with a Council Tax Freeze grant which the Council no longer benefit from. Had Council Tax been increased during that three-year period the Council Tax income would today be higher by £809k.

Impact of proposed utilisation of reserves and Council Tax increase to close the budget gap:

	£
Budget Gap	1,521,987
Contribution to Property Fund Reserve	10,200
Contribution from Leisure Man't Contractual Lossess Support Reserve	(63,750)
Contribution from Business Rate Pool for ED function	(326,855)
Contribution from NNDR Reserve	(765,698)
Contribution from Blaby Priorities Reserve for Capital Grants Programme	(54,500)
Contribution from Homelessness Reserve	(64,000)
Council Tax Increase	(203,426)
(Surplus)/Deficit	53,958

How the Budget has been formulated

The budget figures shown in the appendices providing more detail by portfolio are put together jointly by Finance officers working with service managers across the Council.

The substantial part of the costs is the establishment budget, i.e. the costs of employing staff which are then put alongside any other expenditure costs of running the service.

Where income is generated within a portfolio, officers have considered whether charges reflect the costs of delivering that service and if they are able to increase these charges. Inflationary increases will be applied where applicable.

It is important to note that in some cases charges are set nationally and we are unable to alter the income received.

The income is netted off against the costs within each portfolio to give the net direct expenditure by each service area and each portfolio in total.

Each of the portfolio budget appendices highlight the capital expenditure for each portfolio and what it relates to. Where borrowing is required to fund the capital, costs have been included within the budget for interest. MRP charges will be built in from the year after delivery of the capital project. The full Capital Programme will be detailed within the Report to Council in February, detailing the forecast programme for a 5 year period. The proposed Capital Programme was the subject of a Scrutiny Budget Workshop held on the 2nd December held in preparation for the budget.

General Assumptions within Budget Requirement

- The establishment budget allows for an increase of 3% in establishment costs for 2026/27 within the services. An additional 1% has been included centrally as a provision should the pay award be greater than the 3%.

The budget proposals for 2026/27 take into account the cost of employers' national insurance and pension contributions, contractual increments, and the Apprenticeship Levy. (More detail relating to the establishment budget is included within the report "Establishment 2025/26 2026/27" to be presented to Cabinet Executive on 12th January 2026).

- Planning appeals are not included within the budget requirement, but expenditure will be funded from reserves if it is necessary.
- Portfolio figures are shown before any recharges from department to department in order that the spending service is scrutinised rather than the method of apportionment across departments.

Financial Budget Summary

Budget Summary by Portfolio	2025/26 Approved Budget £	2025/26 Revised Estimate £	2026/27 Proposed Budget £
Finance People & Transformation	4,886,659	6,550,741	6,667,226
Housing, Community Safety & Environmental Services	2,201,429	3,874,140	2,995,956
Health, Community and Economic Development	196,761	513,622	(25,648)
Leader	2,896,869	3,254,590	3,908,012
Neighbourhood Services & Assets	3,213,411	2,694,044	3,107,365
Planning and Strategic Growth	1,175,504	1,280,920	1,243,149
	14,570,633	18,168,058	17,896,059
	14,570,633	18,168,058	17,896,059
Revenue Contributions towards Capital Expenditure	54,500	261,210	178,430
Minimum Revenue Provision	1,000,318	789,016	1,340,480
Voluntary Revenue Provision	250,000	250,000	0
Other Appropriations & Accounting Adjustments	(93,689)	(1,066,799)	315,552
Net Total Expenditure	15,781,762	18,401,485	19,730,521
Contribution to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	(486,470)	(2,765,265)	
Contribution to/(from) General Fund Balances	111,639	(237,689)	
Net Budget Requirement	15,406,931	15,398,531	19,730,521
Income from Business Rates	(5,510,635)	(5,933,121)	(2,303,193)
Contributions (from)/ To Business Rates Reserves	1,649,329	2,395,987	
S31 Grant - Business Rates Compensation	(2,738,694)	(3,054,466)	(920,274)
Revenue Support Grant	(95,767)	(95,767)	(7,474,028)
New Homes Bonus Grant	(426,048)	(426,048)	0
Funding Guarantee	0	0	0
Funding Floor	(1,573,114)	(1,573,114)	0
Services Grant	0	0	0
Council Tax (Surplus)/Deficit	42,056	42,056	7,468
Council Tax Demand on Collection Fund	(6,754,058)	(6,754,058)	(6,803,487)
Transitional Funding	0	0	(715,020)
Funding Envelope	(15,406,931)	(15,398,531)	(18,208,534)
Funding Gap/(Surplus) before any contributions from reserves or Council Tax Increases			1,521,987

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	GL Code	Actual 31/03/25 £	Movement in 2025/26 £	Estimated 31/03/26 £	Movement in 2026/27 £	Estimated 31/03/27 £
Leisure Centre Renewals Fund	9999/VBA	(73,607)		(73,607)		(73,607)
Computer Room Environment	9999/VBB	(123,348)	7,528	(115,820)		(115,820)
Licensing Reserve	9999/VBC	(27,868)		(27,868)		(27,868)
Insurance Reserve Fund	9999/VBD	(100,000)		(100,000)		(100,000)
Blaby Plan Priorities Reserve	9999/VBJ	(288,697)	63,861	(224,836)	54,500	(170,336)
General Reserve Fund	9999/VBK	(1,612,310)		(1,612,310)		(1,612,310)
Ongoing Projects Reserve	9999/VBM	(3,130,441)	3,130,441	0		0
Elections Reserve	9999/VBQ	(122,259)		(122,259)		(122,259)
Homelessness Grant Reserve	9999/VBR	(64,952)		(64,952)	64,000	(952)
New Homes Bonus Reserve	9999/VBT	0		0		0
Contractual Losses Support Reserve	9999/VBU	(255,000)	63,750	(191,250)	63,750	(127,500)
Economic Development Initiatives	9999/VBX	(50,000)		(50,000)		(50,000)
Provision - ERIE Sinking Fund	9999/VCA	(8,487)		(8,487)		(8,487)
Community Rights Reserve	9999/VCB	(48,724)		(48,724)		(48,724)
Hardship Reserve	9999/VCD	(325,000)	18,000	(307,000)		(307,000)
Parish New Homes Bonus Reserve	9999/VCE	(881)		(881)		(881)
NNDR Income Reserve	9999/VCF	(1,432,502)	(2,395,987)	(3,828,489)	765,698	(3,062,791)
Flexible Working Reserve	9999/VCG	(161,792)		(161,792)		(161,792)
Local Plan Reserve	9999/VCJ	(365,755)		(365,755)		(365,755)
Lottery Reserve	9999/VCK	(36,584)	15,451	(21,133)		(21,133)
IT System Replacement Reserve	9999/VCL	(39,815)	39,815	0		0
Property Fund Reserve	9999/VCM	(201,628)	(13,500)	(215,128)	(10,200)	(225,328)
Huncote Major Incident Reserve	9999/VCP	(642,526)		(642,526)		(642,526)
Court Fees Income Reserve	9999/VCQ	(31,813)		(31,813)		(31,813)
Business Rates Pool Reserve	9999/VBV	(2,440,417)	(560,082)	(3,000,499)	326,855	(2,673,644)
		(11,584,406)	369,277	(11,215,129)	1,264,603	(9,950,526)
General Fund Balance	9999/ZZA	(7,246,467)	237,689	(7,008,778)	53,958	(6,954,820)

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SCHEDULE OF EXTERNAL FUNDING
Current Position 2025/26

Portfolio	Description	2025/26	Notes
<u>Health, Community & Economic Development</u>			
Leicestershire County Council	Sport & Physical Activity (SPA) Commissioning Fund	£48,960	
Leicestershire County Council	SPA Parents and Children	£39,350	
Leicestershire County Council	SPA Inactive Young People	£12,220	
Leicestershire County Council	SPA Exercise	£17,700	
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council	Sport & Physical Activity Funding	£35,154	O&W proposal awaiting confirmation of funding - not yet in budget
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council	Health Improvement Service	£26,078	O&W proposal awaiting confirmation of funding - not yet in budget
SLM Ltd	Contribution towards Community Grant Scheme	£3,040	SLM funding to support small community grant payments
PCC	Hate has no home here	£6,750	
<u>Housing, Community Safety & Environmental Services</u>			
Leicestershire County Council	Hospital Housing Enabler Service	£279,730	Contract now covers expanded structure including overheads.
Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust	Hospital Housing Enabler Service	£204,000	Contract now covers expanded structure including overheads.
NHS Leicester City CCG	Hospital Housing Enabler Service	£299,670	Contract now covers expanded structure including overheads.
Leicestershire County Council	Contributions towards Lightbulb Central Hub	£149,394	Based on budgeted establishment and subject to year end review.
District Councils	Contributions towards Lightbulb Central Hub	£150,824	Based on budgeted establishment and subject to year end review.
Leicestershire County Council	Lightbulb Locality Contributions	£367,878	Based on budgeted establishment and subject to year end review.
District Councils	Lightbulb Locality Contributions	£426,644	Based on budgeted establishment and subject to year end review.
Leicestershire County Council	Lightbulb Disabled Facility Grant Admin contribution	£31,400	To compensate for the cost of an additional administrative post.
DLUHC	Homelessness Prevention and Domestic Abuse Support Grant	£394,188	25/26 applied in full
<u>Leader</u>			
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council	Contribution towards Environmental Info Regulations (EIR) costs	£23,000	Recovery of statutory costs associated with the provision of personal
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council	Contribution towards EIR costs	£9,000	search responses which are not permitted to be charged to customers.
MHCLG	Contribution towards LGR costs	£114,914	Recovery of costs specifically linked to LGR
<u>Neighbourhood Services & Assets</u>			
Various Developers	S106 Commuted Maintenance contributions	£18,834	To offset the annual cost of maintaining transferred open spaces.
DLUHC	Refuse and Recycling New Burdens	£76,389	Food waste reimbursement to prepare for implementation of food waste
DEFRA	Refuse and Recycling	£1,532,487	Extended Producer Responsibility
Other Leicestershire District Councils	Building Control Partnership	£541,275	Share of non-fee earning cost of service (with staff retention scheme)
<u>Finance, People & Transformation</u>			
DLUHC	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	£564,210	Additional 1 year funding
<u>Planning and Strategic Growth</u>			
DEFRA	Biodiversity Net Gain Grant	£27,140	To offset the annual cost of Biodiversity Net Gain work.
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council	Provision of Heritage advice	£7,100	To offset the annual cost of providing Heritage advice.
		<u>£5,407,329</u>	

SCHEDULE OF EXTERNAL FUNDING
Current Position 2026/27

Portfolio	Description	2026/27	Notes
<u>Health, Community & Economic Development</u>			
Leicestershire County Council	Sport & Physical Activity (SPA) Commissioning Fund	£42,420	
Leicestershire County Council	SPA Parents and Children	£45,350	
Leicestershire County Council	SPA Inactive Young People	£43,850	
Leicestershire County Council	SPA Exercise	£0	
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council	Sport & Physical Activity Funding	£40,807	O&W proposal awaiting confirmation of funding
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council	Health Improvement Service	£42,299	O&W proposal awaiting confirmation of funding - not yet in budget
SLM Ltd	Contribution towards Community Grant Scheme	£2,500	
<u>Housing, Community Safety & Environmental Services</u>			
Leicestershire County Council	Hospital Housing Enabler Service	£344,049)	
Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust	Hospital Housing Enabler Service	£233,558)	- Contract now covers expanded structure including overheads.
NHS Leicester City CCG	Hospital Housing Enabler Service	£320,693)	
Leicestershire County Council	Contributions towards Lightbulb Central Hub	£159,610)	
District Councils	Contributions towards Lightbulb Central Hub	£161,140)	_ Based on budgeted establishment and subject to year end review.
Leicestershire County Council	Lightbulb Locality Contributions	£364,440)	
District Councils	Lightbulb Locality Contributions	£422,750)	
Leicestershire County Council	Lightbulb DFG Admin contribution	£31,500	To compensate for the cost of an additional administrative post.
DLUHC	Homelessness Prevention and Domestic Abuse Support Grant	£394,050	
<u>Leader</u>			
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council	Contribution towards Environmental Info Regulations (EIR) costs	£23,000	Recovery of statutory costs associated with the provision of personal
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council	Contribution towards EIR costs	£9,000	search responses which are not permitted to be charged to customers.
<u>Neighbourhood Services & Assets</u>			
Various Developers	S106 Commuted Maintenance contributions	£18,834	To offset the annual cost of maintaining transferred open spaces.
DLUHC	Refuse and Recycling New Burdens	£0	No reimbursement budgeted - included within Settlement figures
DEFRA	Refuse and Recycling	£1,588,307	Extended Producer Responsibility
Other Leicestershire District Councils	Building Control Partnership	£536,714	Share of non-fee earning cost of service (with staff retention scheme)
	Building Safety Levy	£42,140	Reimbursement of Establishment only at this stage
<u>Finance, People & Transformation</u>			
DLUHC	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	£0	No funding guaranteed for 2026/7
<u>Planning and Strategic Growth</u>			
DEFRA	Biodiversity Net Gain Grant	£0	No funding guaranteed for 2026/7
Oadby & Wigston Borough Council	Provision of Heritage advice	£0	No funding guaranteed for 2026/7

£4,867,011

Service	No. of FTEs 2023/24 Budget	Movement in FTEs 2023/24 to 2024/25	No. of FTEs 2024/25 Budget	Movement in FTEs 2025/25 to 2025/26	No. of FTEs 2025/26 Budget	Movement in FTEs 2025/26 to 2026/27	No. of FTEs 2026/27 Budget	Notes
LEADER								
CHIEF EXECUTIVE & DIRECTORS	3.00	1.00	4.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	4.00	
PA TEAM	2.43	0.00	2.43	0.00	2.43	0.00	2.43	
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & GOVERNANCE	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	
ELECTORAL SERVICES	2.67	0.00	2.67	-0.06	2.61	1.00	3.61	Senior Elections Manager agreed at Cabinet 15/05/2025
LAND CHARGES	5.70	-0.70	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.61	5.61	Local Land Charges Team Assistant
CORPORATE HEALTH & SAFETY	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	
COMMUNICATIONS	5.54	0.00	5.54	0.00	5.54	0.00	5.54	
CORPORATE SERVICES GROUP MANAGER	1.91	0.00	1.91	0.00	1.91	0.00	1.91	
CORPORATE PERFORMANCE	3.35	-0.31	3.04	0.20	3.24	0.95	4.19	Finance and HR Systems Officer agreed at Cabinet 15/05/2025
LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	3.00	3.00	HR Officer, Communication Officer and Project Officer agreed at Cabinet
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES & ASSETS								
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES GROUP MANAGER	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES MGMT & ADMIN	4.61	0.39	5.00	0.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	
CLEANSING	10.50	0.50	11.00	0.00	11.00	0.00	11.00	
REFUSE & RECYCLING	44.00	3.00	47.00	0.00	47.00	0.00	47.00	
VEHICLE MAINTENANCE	5.00	1.00	6.00	0.00	6.00	1.00	7.00	HGV Technician Apprentice agreed at Cabinet 15/05/2025
OPEN SPACES & GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	11.00	0.00	11.00	0.00	11.00	-1.00	10.00	Parks & Open Space Operative role removed agreed at Cabinet 15/05/2025
PROPERTY SERVICES	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	
COUNCIL OFFICES/CLEANERS/CARETAKERS	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	
BUILDING CONTROL	25.01	-0.27	24.74	0.00	24.74	2.18	26.92	Additional Roles due to restructure, senior roles replaced with additional posts, costs remain consistent
BUILDING SAFETY LEVY	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	Building Safety Ley & Audit Officer agreed at November Cabinet
ASSETS & MAJOR PROJECTS MANAGEMENT	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.61	1.61	0.00	1.61	
FOOD WASTE	0.00	0.00	0.00	22.00	22.00	-7.00	15.00	2025/26 budget was based on initial estimates of the new service, additional detail now received and estimate revised for the service going live
FINANCE, PEOPLE & TRANSFORMATION								
FINANCE	11.50	1.04	12.54	0.78	13.32	1.41	14.73	Business Accountant agreed at Cabinet 15/05/2025, additional hours for Payroll post
INCOME & COLLECTIONS	6.00	0.00	6.00	0.00	6.00	0.00	6.00	
REVENUES & BENEFITS	23.64	-0.59	23.05	0.35	23.40	-0.27	23.13	Changes to working hours
HR & TRAINING	7.48	-0.89	6.59	0.00	6.59	2.00	8.59	HR Support Officer (Apprentice) and Learning and Orgaisational Development Specialist agreed at Cabinet 15/05/2025
CUSTOMER SERVICES	14.88	-1.15	13.73	-0.76	12.97	-0.03	12.94	Changes in working hours
ICT SERVICES	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.00	7.00	0.00	7.00	
TRANSFORMATION	4.00	1.00	5.00	0.00	5.00	1.00	6.00	Service Transformation Officer FTC for 12 months
HOUSING, COMMUNITY SAFETY & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES								
COMMUNITY SERVICES GROUP MANAGER	1.50	0.00	1.50	0.00	1.50	0.00	1.50	
HOUSING SERVICES	16.00	0.00	16.00	2.00	18.00	0.00	18.00	
COMMUNITY SERVICES	7.00	0.00	7.00	-4.00	3.00	0.00	3.00	
CHILDRENS SERVICES	1.50	0.00	1.50	0.00	1.50	0.00	1.50	
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	10.61	-3.61	7.00	0.00	7.00	0.00	7.00	- 0.5 Manager due to 1 FTE role being split between Environmental Services and Environmental Health as opposed to 1 FTE in each, Team leader + 1, Environmental Health Officer 0.5 from Environmental Health then 1 post deleted
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	10.56	3.61	14.17	0.00	14.17	-1.00	13.17	-0.5 Environmental Health Officer Post transferred to Environmental Services,- 0.5 Manager due to 1 FTE role being split between Environmental Services and Environmental Health as opposed to 1 FTE in each
AIR QUALITY CONTROL	1.00	-0.16	0.84	0.16	1.00	-1.00	0.00	External funding ended
CRIME & DISORDER	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	
COMMUNITY SAFETY - DOMESTIC ABUSE	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	
RESIDENTS SUPPORT	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	
LIGHTBULB CENTRAL HUB	5.90	0.00	5.90	16.43	22.33	0.50	22.83	Externally Funded
LIGHTBULB LOCALITY TEAMS	15.64	1.00	16.64	-16.64	0.00	0.00	0.00	
HOSPITAL HOUSING ENABLER TEAM	6.00	4.77	10.77	1.77	12.54	-0.50	12.04	Changes in working hours
PLANNING AND STRATEGIC GROWTH								
PLANNING GROUP MANAGER	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	
UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND	0.00	2.00	2.00	-2.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
STRATEGIC GROWTH TEAM	0.86	0.09	0.95	0.00	0.95	2.05	3.00	Transfer from Lubbethorpe
PLANNING DELIVERY	14.61	-0.63	13.98	0.17	14.15	2.11	16.26	Planning Support Officer and Planning Support Officer agreed at Cabinet on 15/05/2025
PLANNING ENFORCEMENT	5.00	-1.00	4.00	0.00	4.00	0.00	4.00	
PLANNING ADMINISTRATION	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	6.51	-0.10	6.41	0.48	6.89	0.00	6.89	
WHETSTONE GARDEN VILLAGE	1.00	-1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
RAIL FREIGHT HUB TEAM	1.00	-0.83	0.17	-0.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	
NEW LUBBESTHORPE	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	-2.00	0.00	Transfer to Strategic Growth
HEALTH, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
REGULATORY & LEISURE SERVICES GRP MGR	1.61	0.00	1.61	-1.61	0.00	0.00	0.00	
HOUSING OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST	0.81	-0.81	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
LCC OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
ACTIVE TRAVEL	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	
HEALTH & RECREATION	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	0.00	2.00	
SOCIAL PRESCRIBING	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
LEISURE DEVELOPMENT - SPORTS	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	3.00	4.00	Externally Funded roles included
A PLACE TO GROW	0.55	0.00	0.55	-0.10	0.45	0.00	0.45	
COVID 19 CONTAIN FUNDING	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
CORPORATE HEALTH IMPROVEMENTS	0.81	0.00	0.81	0.00	0.81	0.19	1.00	Changes in working hours
TOURISM	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00	
DWP FLEXIBLE SUPPORT FUND	0.00	1.00	1.00	-1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
COMMUNITY, BUSINESS, WORK & SKILLS	7.22	0.00	7.22	2.00	9.22	1.00	10.22	Business Admin Support
TOTALS	328.91	8.35	337.26	33.61	370.87	10.20	381.07	

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Appendix E

Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) is the Council's key financial planning document.

The MTFS supports the '**Blaby District Plan**' which is our most important document clearly setting out our vision, values and strategic themes.

The current MTFS document contains a financial forecast which is updated each year to reflect the changes to funding. This update has been extended to include the years up to 2030/31 to ensure the Council continues to consider the financial picture with a longer-term strategic view and understand the financial resources available.

The future funding envelope beyond 2026/27 now has some stability in that a three year Settlement has been provided, however, the latter years and the forthcoming Local Government Reform (LGR) does mean that the latter years of the MTFS may not be a true reflection of the Council's financial position. As a consequence, there is a high degree of risk and uncertainty around the future funding estimates within the MTFS in years 2029 onwards.

Whilst the future funding levels are uncertain it is not unrealistic to assume there will continue to be funding reductions or higher demand placed upon the Council. It is important that the Council understands the potential future funding gaps and the estimates included attempt to illustrate possible financial position.

For this latest update of the MTFS, the provisional budget for 2026/27 has been used as the baseline for projecting the future budget requirement. However, priorities and services may have to be revised to ensure the Council remains financially sustainable.

The updated MTFS Summary will form part of the General Fund Budget Proposal report to be considered at Council in February 2026. In past years a high-level outline plan has been provided to illustrate how the future budget gaps may be met should they arise. Given the forthcoming LGR, some of the organisational savings included in this plan may be delayed and gaps planned to be funded from reserves as per the North City South proposal.

The MTFS Summary takes no account of the changes that may take place because of the Local Government Reform but assumes Blaby continues as an entity into future years.

Financial Summary

Forecast Net Revenue Expenditure						
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Portfolio:						
Finance, People & Transformation	6,550,741	6,667,226	6,823,435	6,986,995	7,155,044	7,327,701
Housing, Community Safety & Environmental Services	3,874,140	2,995,956	3,050,330	3,077,471	3,196,618	3,319,213
Health, Community and Economic Development	513,622	(25,648)	(16,663)	(7,211)	2,732	13,184
Leader	3,254,590	3,908,012	3,999,217	3,393,079	3,489,674	3,589,095
Neighbourhood Services & Assets	2,694,044	3,107,365	3,592,996	3,925,093	4,262,651	4,605,849
Planning and Strategic Growth	1,280,920	1,243,149	1,286,072	1,330,401	1,376,189	1,423,474
Net Direct Expenditure - Portfolio	18,168,058	17,896,059	18,735,387	18,705,828	19,482,908	20,278,516
RCCO	261,210	178,430	54,500	124,500	124,500	54,500
Minimum Revenue Provision	789,016	1,340,480	1,396,893	1,595,517	1,683,448	1,927,453
Voluntary Revenue Provision	250,000	0	0	0	250,000	200,000
Appropriations & Accounting Adjustments	(1,066,799)	315,552	(16,004)	(39,310)	(589,951)	(589,951)
Contribution to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	(2,765,265)	(498,905)	(1,244,711)	(524,810)	(471,463)	(412,178)
Net Revenue Expenditure	15,636,220	19,231,616	18,926,066	19,861,725	20,479,442	21,458,339
Funding Envelope						
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Income from Business Rates	(5,933,121)	(2,303,193)	(1,757,766)	(1,707,250)	(1,735,669)	(1,763,911)
Contribution to/(from) Business Rates Reserves	2,395,987	(765,698)	(765,698)	(765,698)	(765,698)	(765,697)
S31 Grant - Business Rates Compensation	(3,054,466)	(920,274)	(934,876)	(949,420)	(963,909)	(978,342)
Revenue Support Grant	(95,767)	(7,474,028)	(5,343,637)	(3,150,659)	(3,104,279)	(3,058,074)
Funding Floor	(1,573,114)	0	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus Grant	(426,048)	0	0	0	0	0
Transitional Funding	0	(715,020)	(2,536,229)	(4,417,709)	0	0
	(8,686,529)	(12,178,213)	(11,338,206)	(10,990,736)	(6,569,555)	(6,566,024)
Council Tax Deficit	42,056	7,468	0	0	0	0
Council Tax	(6,754,058)	(7,006,913)	(7,251,959)	(7,508,006)	(7,775,605)	(8,054,341)
Funding Envelope	(15,398,531)	(19,177,658)	(18,590,165)	(18,498,742)	(14,345,160)	(14,620,365)
Funding Gap/(Surplus)	237,689	53,958	335,901	1,362,983	6,134,282	6,837,974
Continuing Transitional Grant Funding					(4,417,709)	(4,417,709)
Revised Gap should Transitional Funding Continue	237,689	53,958	335,901	1,362,983	1,716,573	2,420,265

Forecast Assumptions

Set out below is a commentary relating to the key assumptions that have been made in drafting the future financial forecast.

Net Direct Expenditure

Net Direct Expenditure budgets have been compiled by rolling forward the 2026/27 draft budget numbers and applying inflationary factors where appropriate to the elements. Key areas of note are:

- Establishment – assumes a 3% increase to cover the annual pay award, increments and increases in national insurance and pension contributions.
- Other costs – increases in line with contractual arrangements or by reference to appropriate inflationary factors, dependent upon the nature of the expenditure.
- Fees and charges – non-statutory income budgets have been increased by inflation and with a view to achieving full cost recovery.

RCCO

Revenue Contributions towards Capital Outlay – this is where revenue expenditure (including earmarked reserves) is used to finance capital expenditure.

Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

MRP is a proxy for depreciation used in local government finance. It is charged on any capital expenditure funded through borrowing, over a period commensurate with the estimated life of the asset. Much of the current MRP relates to the purchase of fleet vehicles, investment in our leisure facilities, and historic disabled facilities grants. The increase in MRP from 2026/27 reflects the impact of new expected borrowing to fund our 5-year Capital Programme.

Voluntary Revenue Provision (VRP)

VRP is in addition to MRP and is applied to smooth the impact of introducing the Council's new MRP policy.

Contributions to/(from) Earmarked Reserves

This represents the release of reserves to support one-off expenditure items, brought forward budget or spend to save initiatives.

Net Revenue Expenditure

The Council's forecast net expenditure position prior to the application of balances, government grants and council tax.

Income from Business Rates

Income from Business Rates has been reset in 2026/27. As a result it is forecast that levels reduce from 2025/26 levels going forward as historic growth is removed.

S31 Grant – Business Rates Compensation

The amount of business rates collectable is reduced by various reliefs that have been introduced by the government, for example, to freeze the business rate multiplier. This

results in a loss of income to the Council, which is usually compensated by the government through Section 31 grant.

Revenue Support Grant

This is the grant through which the majoring of government funding is now provided.

Funding Floor Grant

Discontinued in 2026/27

New Homes Bonus

Discontinued in 2026/27

Transitional Funding

Introduced in 2026/27 as part of the changes brought in with the Fair Funding Review and Business Rate Baseline Reset. This forms the damping mechanism to protect Council's from the cliff edge of funding changes. As the Revenue Support Grant is forecast to reduce during the term of the 3-year Settlement the transitional funding increases.

Council Tax Deficit

The amount by which council tax due in the previous year, falls short of the expected sum collectable.

Council Tax

The expected amount of revenue receivable from Council Taxpayers, assuming an increase of 2.99% on Band D council tax each year and an assumed increase in the tax base to reflect new build.

Release of Reserves

A programmed utilisation of reserves has been included within the MTFS Summary as detailed in the table below.

	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30	2030/31
NNDR Income Reserve	(765,698)	(765,698)	(765,698)	(765,698)	(765,697)
Contractual Losses Support Reserve	(63,750)	(63,750)	(63,750)	0	0
Business Rate Pool Reserve	(326,855)	(336,661)	(346,760)	(357,163)	(367,878)
Blaby Plan Priorities Reserve	(54,500)	(754,500)	(124,500)	(124,500)	(54,500)
Property Fund Reserve	10,200	10,200	10,200	10,200	10,200
District Election	0	(100,000)	0	0	0
Homelessness Reserve	(64,000)	0	0	0	0
Total	(1,264,603)	(2,010,409)	(1,290,508)	(1,237,161)	(1,177,875)

Note:

- NNDR Income reserve continues to release income over the course of the MTFS
- Contractual losses reserves is release in line with the Leisure Contract term.
- Business Rate Pool Reserve continues to fund the Economic Development Service
- An additional £700k has been included to be provided from reserves in 2027/28 to support LGR.
- An additional £70k has been provided in years 2028/29 and 2029/30 to support the expenditure on end user device replacement as proposed within the Capital Programme.

Financial Risks

- **Business Rates Retention Reform**

The Business Rates Retention Reform incorporating the Rebasing of the Business Rate Baseline has been introduced from April 2026. Whilst the 3-year Settlement has protected 95% of the income historically generated through growth and the Business Rate Pool, it is unknown as to what extent this will be retained from 2029/30 onwards. It is evident from the increase in the Transitional Funding line (up to £4.4m in 2028/29) that considerable damping protection is being applied and unclear as to how this will be viewed in future Settlement periods.

- **Fair Funding Review**

The 3-year Settlement has incorporated changes from the Fair Funding Review from April 2026. Whilst Blaby hasn't fared well from the review the manner in which Business Rate Income has been treated within the Settlement has somewhat masked the detrimental impact. Future risk is associated with how the Transitional Funding will be viewed in future Settlement periods.

- **County Council Funding Reductions.** The County Council has openly illustrated the level of funding cuts that they will be required to make over the coming years. Whilst we can plan to mitigate any obvious impacts of this, some are more subtle and the increased demand that results from this is difficult to quantify financially. This is a considerable risk to which we will put financial values to as and when we are in a position to do so.

- **New Demands from Residents.** We have seen a considerable increase in homelessness costs and whilst allowance has been made in the budget for additional expenditure there is the potential for costs to continue to increase. Blaby has an ageing population which brings with it challenges such as dealing with dementia and issues such as loneliness. What role Blaby will play in our community to combat these challenges and what different demand this drives for services that are needed have not yet been identified. However, we have taken opportunity to reduce such costs by taking advantage of funding initiatives to support such demand e.g. the investment in properties to utilise for temporary homelessness using both the Local Authority Housing Fund and the Council investing itself.

- **Funding Associated with Food Waste Implementation.** The Council is required to implement the collection of food waste by April 2026. Funding has been provided within the Settlement however it is not specifically identified. Officers have modelled the costs of providing this service, however until the

service 'goes live' and demand levels from residents are understood, there is a risk costs could exceed those budgeted.

- **Defra Funding: Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging.** Funding of £1.6m has been included in 2026/27 budget figures from Defra relating to the Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (EPR). This is based on the Council's recycling collections and tonnages and passes the cost of collection onto those who produce the packaging. Whilst this funding is expected to be ongoing, it is uncertain as to whether it will be taken into consideration when the Fair Funding Review is completed. At the moment this falls outside of the Core Spending Power calculation. The amount received may also be impacted in future years as schemes for consumers to deposit items of recycling in return for cash are introduced. If this reduces the tonnage collected by Blaby DC the Defra funding will reduce and the operation will be required to downscale accordingly, otherwise this provides a further financial risk to the Council. The MTFS has modelled for a reduction of 20% in EPR from 2027/28 and a 10% reduction in the years following.
- **Local Government Reform.** Provision has been made in the 2026/27 budget for £700k of expenditure in preparation for LGR and a further £700k has been forecast in the MTFS to be released from reserves in the following year. These are provisional sums and currently there is no agreement between authorities in Leicestershire as to how transition costs might be shared to form the new unitary authorities. As such there is a risk that Blaby's share of transition costs is greater than the amounts allowed for.
- **Rate of Change from Government.** In recent months we have seen considerable changes to national policy and strategy that impact on key areas within the Council. Some of these changes bring additional responsibilities and demand for the Council and it will be of utmost importance that officers keep up to speed with the changes to ensure the implications are fully understood.

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**LEADER'S PORTFOLIO
Councillor Ben Taylor**

This year's budget marks a pivotal moment it is a chance to plan boldly for the future while navigating a landscape of change. This is a huge challenge however, the move to a three-year budget settlement gives us the stability we've long needed, enabling us to think beyond the immediate and invest in the long term. This is an opportunity to shape a stronger, more resilient Blaby District for years to come, whilst ensuring we plan for and ensure we are in the best position possible as we enter into the next phase of the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) agenda.

We face significant challenges. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and devolution are on the horizon, bringing both opportunity and uncertainty. These changes will redefine how we work, and we are determined to lead with confidence and collaboration. Our budget reflects this, with provisions to support transition costs, strengthen partnerships, and ensure that vital services remain uninterrupted. We are planning for different scenarios as best we can to ensure we are ready for whatever timescales, geography and approach is chosen.

We have also taken decisive action to respond to the growing homelessness crisis. By increasing our budget by £500,000, we are not only meeting rising demand but investing in innovative solutions, such as bringing empty properties back into use, driving system leadership, and working hand-in-hand with partners to respond to one of the biggest issues the Country faces. This is about more than funding; it's about commitment to those who need us most. We will be innovative in our approach and focus on things we think will make a real difference, continuing to invest in our property portfolio and working with partners to address the root causes of homelessness.

Looking ahead, new government strategies and legislation will require us to adapt quickly, from tackling food waste legislation to the strengthening renters' rights legislation. We will lobby where appropriate, implement the changes required and ensure that we are communicating any changes in advance.

There are risks associated with the budget such as business rate volatility, assumptions we have had to make and the fixed nature of the settlement. But with careful planning, flexibility and a shared vision, we can ensure we manage these risks effectively and in a transparent way. Our Blaby District Plan and corporate action plan 26/27 will ensure that we are focusing our attention and resources in the right places, putting our customers at the heart of everything we do.

This is a budget built on responsibility, ambition, and partnership. Together, we will not only deliver for today but be able to respond to the uncertainties and challenges the future will no doubt bring.

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ben Taylor

**Senior Officers: Chief Executive, Executive Directors, Corporate Services
Group Manager, Neighbourhood Services Group Manager,
Planning & Strategic Growth Group Manager**

Portfolio Total

	2025/26 Approved Budget	2025/26 Revised Estimate	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£2,158,160	£2,301,370	£2,419,210	£261,050 12.10%	£117,840 5.12%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£1,163,972	£1,487,359	£1,732,267	£568,295 48.82%	£244,908 16.47%
3. Direct Income	-£425,263	-£534,139	-£243,465	£181,798 -42.75%	£290,674 -54.42%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£2,896,869	£3,254,590	£3,908,012	£1,011,143 34.90%	£653,421 20.08%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	32.73	36.40	38.29	5.56 16.99%	1.89 5.19%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Leader's portfolio includes establishment and running costs in respect of the Chief Executive, Directors, Health and Safety, Elections, Democratic Services, Land Charges, Legal, Communications, Consultation, Web Development, Emergency Planning/Business Continuity and Local Government Reorganisation.

The establishment budget for 2025/26 allowed for a 3% pay award within services. The nationally agreed pay award for Chief Executives, Chief Officers (Directors and Group Managers) and officers on grades 1 to 9 was 3.2%. The establishment budget for 2026/27 allows for a 3% estimated pay award within each portfolio and a further 1% held centrally, contractual increments where appropriate, and employer's national insurance and pension contributions within service budgets. The Leicestershire Pension Fund confirmed a decrease in the Councils Employer contribution rate of 6% from 2026/27. The Council currently pays a rate of 28.3%, this will reduce to 22.3% from 2026/27 through to 2028/29.

The increase in other gross direct expenditure between approved and revised stage for 2025/26 is due to the following reasons:

- The carry forward of unspent budget provision and external funding from 2024/25.
- LGR costs incurred in relation to research and reporting conducted by Opinion Research Services in order to prepare and submit the North, City, South proposal. Contributions towards these costs from other Local Authorities are included within direct income.

The annual provision for local elections is included at £50,000 as there are no planned district elections until 2027/28. This will be added to the Elections Reserve if unused. The reserve is maintained to smooth the impact of district elections so that the cost does not fall in one financial year. A County Council Election and a Parish Council Election was held in 2025/26, expenditure budget was added, with reimbursement income expected/received.

A £700,000 provision is included within direct expenditure in the proposed budget for work required in preparation for the Local Government Reform.

Chief Executive, Directors, and Health & Safety

	2025/26 Approved Budget	2025/26 Revised Estimate	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment	£782,400	£782,400	£781,870	-£530 -0.07%	-£530 -0.07%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£37,624	£36,807	£40,337	£2,713 7.21%	£3,530 9.59%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£820,024	£819,207	£822,207	£2,183 0.27%	£3,000 0.37%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	7.43	7.43	7.43	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. Additional Corporate First Aider course budgeted in 2026/27.
3. Not applicable.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change.

Electoral Registration

	2025/26 Approved Budget	2025/26 Revised Estimate	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£129,730	£162,579	£172,840	£43,110 33.23%	£10,261 6.31%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£290,848	£342,046	£131,207	-£159,641 -54.89%	-£210,839 -61.64%
3. Direct Income	-£183,800	-£193,262	-£1,800	£182,000 -99.02%	£191,462 -99.07%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£236,778	£311,363	£302,247	£65,469 27.65%	-£9,117 -2.93%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	2.61	3.28	3.61	1.00 38.31%	0.33 10.06%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. The revised estimate includes unspent budget carried forward from 2024/25. The 2026/27 proposed budget includes recurring expenditure which is incurred in a non-election year.
3. Reimbursements for the County Council Election. No elections scheduled for 2026/27.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. One additional role being a Senior Elections & Governance Officer.

Democratic Services, Governance, Information Management and Legal Services

	2025/26 Approved Budget	2025/26 Revised Estimate	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£742,150	£720,111	£762,080	£19,930 2.69%	£41,969 5.83%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£531,779	£623,741	£548,893	£17,114 3.22%	-£74,848 -12.00%
3. Direct Income	-£241,463	-£225,963	-£241,665	-£202 0.08%	-£15,702 6.95%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£1,032,466	£1,117,889	£1,069,308	£36,842 3.57%	-£48,581 -4.35%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	13.91	13.91	14.52	0.61 4.39%	0.61 4.39%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. The increase in the revised estimate mainly relates to non-recurring budget carried forward from 2024/25. The 2026/27 budget includes an inflationary provision for members allowances.
3. The decrease in the revised estimate is due to a reduction in S106 planning fee income due to outsourcing. No significant change in the 2025/26 budget.
4. Net impact of the variances listed above.
5. Local Land Charges Team Assistant additional role (part time).

Emergency Planning & Business Continuity

	2025/26 Approved Budget	2025/26 Revised Estimate	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£0	£0	£0	£0 N/A	£0 N/A
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£53,265	£53,265	£55,129	£1,864 3.50%	£1,864 3.50%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£53,265	£53,265	£55,129	£1,864 3.50%	£1,864 3.50%
5. 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.

Communications, Consultation and Digital Services

	2025/26 Approved Budget	2025/26 Revised Estimate	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£313,540	£313,540	£314,720	£1,180 0.38%	£1,180 0.38%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£184,079	£169,849	£175,837	-£8,242 -4.48%	£5,988 3.53%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£497,619	£483,389	£490,557	-£7,062 -1.42%	£7,168 1.48%
5. 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 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. Revised estimate removes the lease and copy charge costs for Multi-Functional Devices that are no longer costed against this service. The 2026/27 budget includes an inflationary provision for software maintenance, subscriptions and HBBC web services provision.
3. Not applicable.
4. Net impact.
5. Not applicable.

Performance

	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A] 	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£190,340	£215,406	£222,580	£32,240 16.94%	£7,174 3.33%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£66,378	£97,907	£80,864	£14,486 21.82%	-£17,043 -17.41%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£256,718	£313,313	£303,444	£46,726 18.20%	-£9,869 -3.15%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	3.24	4.24	4.19	0.95 29.32%	-0.05 -1.18%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. Revised costs include budget carried forward from 2024/25 in relation to the ongoing Microsoft BI Project. 2026/27 budget includes ongoing Infrastructure and Software Maintenance costs in relation to Microsoft BI System.
3. Not applicable.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Additional role for a Business Systems Officer (HR & Finance) offset against a slight change in hours.

Local Government Reorganisation

	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
5. Establishment Costs	£0	£107,334	£165,120	£165,120 100.00%	£57,786 53.84%
6. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£0	£163,744	£700,000	£700,000 100.00%	£536,256 327.50%
7. Direct Income	£0	-£114,914	£0	£0 0.00%	£114,914 -100.00%
8. Net Direct Expenditure	£0	£156,164	£865,120	£865,120 100.00%	£708,956 453.98%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	0.00	2.00	3.00	3.00 100.00%	1.00 100.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions. Local Government Reorganisation had not been announced at budget setting at the end of 2024 and hence, no budget was initially included in 2025/26.
2. Revised estimate allows for costs incurred in relation to research and reporting conducted by Opinion Research Services. These are costs incurred in order to prepare and submit the North, City, South proposal. A £700,000 provision is included within direct expenditure in the 2026/27 proposed budget for work required in preparation for the Local Government Reform.
3. Contributions from the seven other authorities that form part of the North, City, South proposal towards costs incurred above. No income has been recognised if not guaranteed. No funding has been agreed for 2026/27.
4. Net impact.
5. Roles wholly attributable to work performed in relation to Local Government Reorganisation. This includes an HR Officer, Communication Officer and Project Officer.

Portfolio Priorities

- To represent the Council on key local, sub-regional and regional partnerships – particularly aimed at influencing and engaging around LGR and devolution.
- To lead the Council through the implementation of the Blaby District Plan and ensure delivery of the corporate action plan.
- To oversee the measures taken to meet the financial challenge for the Council to remain sustainable given reductions in core funding and increased responsibilities.
- 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 oversee major projects and continue to address our homelessness demands.
- To ensure that effective performance and fair practices are in place across the Council and they we deliver best value.
- Focus on positive communication messages ensuring the complexity of some of the matters we deal with is understood and communities are engaged.

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 District Elections are paid for by the district council (national election/referendums, County and Parish election expenses are recoverable).

Democratic Services, Land Charges, Information Management & Legal

Includes costs for the Legal, Land Charges, 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.

Communications, Consultation and Web Development

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

Business Systems & Information

This includes staffing and operational costs for the Business Systems and Information team, including licences costs for corporate systems such as Pentana and Idox. The

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.

Local Government Reorganisation – JS Suggestion

This includes leading and engaging internally and externally to ensure we are able to respond to the challenges and opportunities created by local government reorganisation. This means ensuring our teams, systems and councillors are ready to implement the requirements of the LGR process positively irrespective of the proposal chosen. This will require a huge effort from all concerned and will rely on an effective recruitment and retention process. All of this alongside ensuring we deliver our much needed and valued services to our communities.

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"> • Deliver the mobilisation phase of LGR • The Senior Leadership Team to continue to deliver the Blaby District Plan • All members of the Senior Leadership Team will be supporting the Transformation agenda to ensure we approach LGR in a strong position, with excellent, optimal and well managed services. <p><u>Electoral Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of Votes to sixteen • Review of election processes following completion of the Election Act 2022 implementation • Neighbourhood plan referendums as required • Delivery of the annual canvass <p><u>Democratic Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of the Constitution • Support elected members through LGR • Review of Auditel system <p><u>Land Charges and Legal Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic signature • Continuing migration to HM Land Registry <p><u>Emergency Planning and Resilience</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen Leadership Capability: Continue to build tactical and strategic awareness across the Senior Leadership Team and Service Manager level to enhance collective expertise in responding to both immediate and long-term emergency events. • Flood Response and Recovery continuous improvement: Review and streamline flood response and recovery processes, with a focus on digitisation to improve data quality
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	<p>and ensure timely, accurate information for partner agencies and vulnerable residents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance Resilience Against Emerging Threats: Engage in scenario-based exercises to strengthen resilience and business continuity planning in response to risks associated with terrorism and hate-related incidents. <p><u>Health & Safety</u></p> <p>The Health & Safety portfolio underpins the safety and wellbeing of staff, contractors, and visitors. For the upcoming year, our focus will remain on robust compliance, targeted training, and embedding a positive organisational safety culture.</p> <p>Key Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy and Procedure Updates • Training and Capacity Building • Incident Management • Strategic Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review and update of the Tread Carefully Policy and Procedure. ○ Update of the Asbestos Management Plan. ○ Comprehensive review of the corporate H&S management system (Blueprint) to ensure effectiveness and compliance. • Cultural Initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continued promotion of a proactive health & safety culture, ensuring all staff and stakeholders understand the importance of compliance and risk mitigation. <p><u>Communications, Consultation and Digital Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To align communication activity to support the Council's delivery of strategic themes. • Deliver meaningful consultation processes to improve service delivery and transparency. • Continue to improve our self-service offer, implementing new digital systems to enable customers to easily obtain information and make service requests.
Income generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Information Governance team continues to provide ongoing services HBBC for an annual fee. This is due for review and potential renewal in Q4 2025/26. It has also recently assisted O&W with a charged review of its processes. Land Charges income will 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"> Provision has been made to improve audio-visual technology in the Council Chamber and all meeting rooms to better meet the needs of members and residents.
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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
2024/25	4.33	5	5	5.33	4.67	5	4	4	3.33	4	4	4
2025/26	5	4.67	4.33	5	4	4	4.33	3.67	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Income

	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
2024/25	£14,592	£21,014	£14,095	£24,176	4.67	£23,758	£17,236	£15,718	£9,920	£15,595	£21,865	£15,943
2025/26	£22,202	£14,278	£21,646	£4,218	£15,998	£46,664	£24,298	£18,568	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Note – the income in September 2025/26 includes £16,500 one off, non-recurring income.

Information Governance

Complaints Escalated to the Local Government Ombudsman

	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March
2024/25	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
2025/26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Communications

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – CORPORATE SERVICES	2025/26 April - Nov	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23
Number of online forms submitted by customers	35,474	64,319	64,606	64,029
Number of email subscribers	30,101	30,069	29,300	27,644

Number of customers logged into My Account	17,269	24,599	20,166	24,859
% of positive (4-5*) online form feedback ratings	89.1%	87.9%	87.1%	86.9%

Customers

The Council will continue with its focus on delivering services that our customers need. This will remain as a key focus as we 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 continue to 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 multiple flooding incidents, landfill gas site management 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 external factors may influence the Council's progress on achieving this.
- **Reduction in Land Charges Income** as a result of the HM Land Registry migration and the downturn in the Housing market.

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FINANCE, PEOPLE AND TRANSFORMATION
Cllr Cheryl Cashmore

The Autumn Budget and the Local Government Policy Statement, both issued in November, confirmed the long-awaited changes to the Business Rates Baseline and also the introduction of Fair Funding. For the first time in many years a multi-year Settlement was provided for a three-year period.

Whilst the Council had been made aware that the Council's Core Spending Power was going to decrease by 5%, MHCLG and the consultation exercise were silent on how reductions from the Business Rate Baseline reset were to be compensated. As such the Settlement received on the 17th December confirmed that those Districts that had generated historic Business Rate Growth and Business Rate Pooling monies would retain some of that funding.

The Settlement has therefore allowed us to incorporate additional investment and contingency both for the homelessness pressures and the next stages to prepare for LGR.

The Settlement included new burdens funding for the introduction of Food Waste; however it isn't separately identifiable. The receipt of funding for the Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging (EPR) from Defra will continue and has increased to an amount of £1.6m for 2026/27. This funding has considerably reduced the cost to the Council of providing the recycling collection to residents.

As per previous years, the settlement gives local authorities the ability to increase council tax by the greater of £5 or 2.99% at band D level. For Blaby, 2.99% is marginally higher than £5 at band D level.

The ever-complicated picture surrounding business rates is even more difficult to predict this year, and the precise amount will not be known until the NNDR1 return has been completed towards the end of January.

During 2025, HR managed a complex workload amid ongoing resourcing challenges, working collaboratively across the organisation to maintain momentum and support projects aligned with the Blaby District Plan. The service remained focused on attracting and retaining talent, developing leadership, and strengthening workforce resilience — key to making Blaby a great place to work and ensuring future organisational sustainability.

Throughout the past 12 months, the Customer Insights, Experience and Engagement (CIEE) service strengthened its data-driven approach to keep customers at the heart of service delivery. We expanded online services and promoted self-service to target resources where they are most needed, while ensuring inclusive and accessible options for all. Our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) underpins this approach, recognising the diverse needs and preferences of our communities.

Across the organisation, significant progress has been achieved through transformation programmes and key projects aimed at improving efficiency, modernising service delivery, and enhancing customer experience. One of these critical projects saw the successful transition to an in-house ICT service which was completed on 1st July 2025, since then we've transformed the way the council works. We've built a secure, scalable architecture and sparked a culture of innovation that puts people first. Our approach blends technical excellence with user-centric design, delivering real impact. The result: security methods which safeguard our new systems and strengthen governance, a complete redesign introducing automation, self-service, and a rich knowledge base – supported by an AI-driven support bot, ultimately a frictionless experience for staff, reduced manual intervention, and a smarter, more responsive service.

The focus in the Council Tax and Benefits team this year has been on redesigning and improving processes, training new team members, and increasing usage of the Citizens Access online system implemented in November 2024. Further work is planned in the coming year to further improve processes and ensure the customer journey is as streamlined as possible.

The Finance Team continue to look at developing and growing the financial awareness across all service areas to help support the financial challenges and the transformation agenda. This of course goes alongside the ongoing operational requirements to produce the financial statements. The Financial Accounts for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 were completed and signed on the 12th December 2024. The 2023/24 Financial Accounts were signed on 25th February 2025. The Audit of the 2024/25 Accounts is currently ongoing; the Auditors are working on building back assurance due to the impact of the delay in the previous year audits. The focus in the new year will be on improving and streamlining processes with a move to a Cloud based Finance System.

The Finance, People, and Transformation portfolio continues to embrace change and drive improvement, ensuring the council delivers excellent services for our residents.

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Cheryl Cashmore

**Senior Officers: Executive Director (S151), Finance Group Manager,
Transformation, and ICT Group Manager**

Portfolio Total

Finance, People and Transformation - Total	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£3,609,044	£3,643,869	£3,725,840	£116,796 3.24%	£81,971 2.25%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£11,474,825	£13,327,652	£12,626,286	£1,151,461 10.03%	-£701,366 -5.26%
3. Direct Income	-£10,197,210	-£10,420,780	-£9,684,900	£512,310 -5.02%	£735,880 -7.06%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£4,886,659	£6,550,741	£6,667,226	£1,780,567 36.44%	£116,485 1.78%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	74.28	75.69	78.39	4.11 5.53%	2.70 3.57%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This portfolio incorporates the establishment costs relating to the Finance, Council Tax and Benefits, Income and Collection, HR, Customer Services, Service Transformation, and ICT Information teams. The establishment budget for 2025/26 allowed for a 3% pay award within services. The nationally agreed pay award for Chief Executives, Chief Officers (Directors and Group Managers) and officers on grades 1 to 9 was 3.2%. The establishment budget for 2026/27 allows for a 3% estimated pay award within each portfolio and a further 1% held centrally, contractual increments where appropriate, and employer's national insurance and pension contributions within service budgets. The Leicestershire Pension Fund confirmed a decrease in the Councils Employer contribution rate of 6% from 2026/27. The Council currently pays a rate of 28.3%, this will reduce to 22.3% from 2026/27 through to 2028/29.

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 current vacancy savings provision of £250,000 recognises that the Council is unlikely to be fully staffed throughout the financial year.

In terms of other gross direct expenditure, the most significant movement relates to housing benefit payable, which is showing a significant increase due to the impact of homelessness. This expenditure is partially covered by housing benefit subsidy, which is included within the direct income line. The interest payable budget has been revised to reflect borrowing to support the planned Capital Programme. Although no external borrowing has been undertaken to date this financial year, there is still a requirement to provide for potential borrowing, whether that be internal or external. The Council is currently using internal borrowing (by applying reserves and balances) in lieu of external borrowing as a means of reducing interest costs but also reducing the counterparty risk associated with investment.

The original budget and revised estimate includes provision for expenditure on projects funded from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). The UKSPF scheme is due to end on 31st March 2026.

Investment income has continued to perform well, as had been seen in the prior year. It is expected to remain at a similar, although slightly reduced, level for 2026/27.

Financial Services

Financial Services	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£755,280	£817,578	£821,970	£66,690 8.83%	£4,392 0.54%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£1,261,542	£1,240,738	£1,313,004	£51,462 4.08%	£72,266 5.82%
3. Direct Income	-£1,145,000	-£1,213,500	-£1,110,200	£34,800 -3.04%	£103,300 -8.51%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£871,822	£844,816	£1,024,774	£152,952 17.54%	£179,958 21.30%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	13.32	14.73	14.73	1.41 10.59%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for additional hours for the Finance Assistant (Payroll) which is now a full-time position. It also allows for a Business Accountant role which has been casual for a number of years and was approved by Cabinet in May 2025. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. The Banking contract with HSBC was extended in September 2025 and has been reflected within the revised estimate. The revised estimate has also been adjusted for the eFinancials project. The upgrade to the Finance system is no longer being undertaken as the move to a Saas solution is being progressed, this has resulted in a reduction to the Capital project budget, and an increase in the Revenue budget in line with the contract terms. The loan interest payable reflects the latest draft capital programme and any changes to borrowing plans between now and February, when the budget is approved, will be reflected in the final budget proposals.
3. Investment income has again performed well during the year; the revised budget reflects the increase in the additional income expected to the end of the year. Estimated

Investment income for 2026/27 is based on forecasted interest rates reducing during the year.

4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. As per point one.

Council Tax & Benefits

Revenues and Benefits	2025/26 Approved Budget	2025/26 Revised Estimate	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£1,028,090	£1,028,090	£1,007,650	-£20,440 -1.99%	-£20,440 -1.99%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£8,468,278	£10,136,577	£10,061,364	£1,593,086 18.81%	-£75,213 -0.74%
3. Direct Income	-£8,309,200	-£8,420,380	-£8,395,900	-£86,700 1.04%	£24,480 -0.29%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£1,187,168	£2,744,287	£2,673,114	£1,485,946 125.17%	-£71,173 -2.59%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	23.40	23.40	23.13	-0.27 -1.15%	-0.27 -1.15%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils 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. Revised and proposed figures have been updated in line with the mid-year subsidy claim.
3. The Direct Income figures include all government grants, one off costs, new burdens, rewards, and subsidy. Housing Benefit Subsidy does not completely offset benefit payable as the amount that can be claimed in relation to bed and breakfast accommodation is capped. Revised and proposed figures have been updated in line with the mid-year subsidy claim.
4. This represents the net impact of the variances listed above.
5. Small change in hours.

Income & Collections Team

Income and Collections	2025/26 Approved Budget	2025/26 Revised Estimate	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
[A]	[B]	[C]			
1. Establishment Costs	£275,840	£275,840	£274,550	-£1,290 -0.47%	-£1,290 -0.47%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£18,190	£17,270	£18,710	£520 2.86%	£1,440 8.34%
3. Direct Income	-£178,800	-£178,800	-£178,800	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£115,230	£114,310	£114,460	-£770 -0.67%	£150 0.13%
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 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. Budget revised in line with expenditure to date and future expectations.
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	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 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	£302,888	£259,580	£284,590	-£18,298 -6.04%	£25,010 9.63%
3. Direct Income	£0	-£43,890	£0	£0 0.00%	£43,890 -100.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£302,888	£215,690	£284,590	-£18,298 -6.04%	£68,900 31.94%
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. Cost of Statutory External Audit service, in line with PSAA Scale Fee.
3. One off Grant in relation to a contribution towards building back assurance.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Not applicable.

Human Resources

Human Resources	2025/26 Approved Budget	2025/26 Revised Estimate	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£270,524	£257,386	£299,430	£28,906 10.69%	£42,044 16.33%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£208,551	£185,400	£184,450	-£24,101 -11.56%	-£950 -0.51%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£479,075	£442,786	£483,880	£4,805 1.00%	£41,094 9.28%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	6.59	6.59	8.59	2.00 30.35%	2.00 30.35%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, additional apprenticeship levy and increases to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. Decrease in 2025/26 relates to occupational health costs which increased following COVID-19, these have now reduced significantly.
3. Not applicable.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Two additional posts agreed, Learning & Organisational Development Specialist and HR Apprentice. The HR Apprentice post is from 01/04/2026 and as such included in the 2026/27 budget only. One additional part time post has been added for a Human Resources Advisor in the 2026/27 budget.

Customer Insight, Experience & Engagement

Customer Services	2025/26 Approved Budget	2025/26 Revised Estimate	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£526,320	£518,361	£524,500	-£1,820 -0.35%	£6,139 1.18%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£4,605	£3,755	£4,067	-£538 -11.69%	£312 8.31%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£530,925	£522,116	£528,567	-£2,358 -0.44%	£6,451 1.24%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	12.97	12.97	12.94	-0.03 -0.23%	-0.03 -0.23%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. No significant change.
3. Not applicable.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Sundry change in hours.

UKSPF

UKSPF	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 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	£564,210	£564,210	£0	-£564,210 -100.00%	-£564,210 -100.00%
3. Direct Income	-£564,210	-£564,210	£0	£564,210 -100.00%	£564,210 -100.00%
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. No establishment costs are applicable to this service.
2. The UKSPF funding is due to end on the 31st March 2026.
3. As per point two.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Not applicable.

Transformation & Projects

	2025/26 Approved Budget	2025/26 Revised Estimate	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£372,010	£368,183	£404,350	£32,340 8.69%	£36,167 9.82%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£5,264	£5,294	£5,306	£42 0.79%	£12 0.23%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£377,274	£373,477	£409,656	£32,382 8.58%	£36,179 9.69%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	5.00	5.00	6.00	1.00 20.00%	1.00 20.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. No significant change.
3. Not applicable.
4. Net impact of the variances listed above.
5. One additional fixed term Transformation Officer.

ICT

	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A] 	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£380,980	£380,980	£393,390	£12,410 3.26%	£12,410 3.26%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£641,297	£914,828	£754,795	£113,498 17.70%	-£160,033 -17.49%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£1,022,277	£1,295,808	£1,148,185	£125,908 12.32%	-£147,623 -11.39%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	7.00	7.00	7.00	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2025/26 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. Revised figures include unspent revenue budget carried forward from 2024/25 totalling £256k. The 2026/27 budget reflects the revised costings now that the ICT service has been brought in house and costs are known.
3. Not applicable.
4. Net impact of the variances listed above.
5. No change

Portfolio Priorities

Financial Services

- To continue to lead on the understanding and implications of the financial reforms and take action to identify savings measures and efficiencies in order to address forecast financial shortfalls within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- Understand costs and deliver a responsive, cost effective and high-quality financial service.
- Progress with the Efinancials project to migrate to a cloud based solution.

Council Tax & Benefits

- To continue 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 internal controls, audit, and having due regard for the prevention of fraud and management of risk.

Human Resources (HR)

Our people and organisational development delivery plan will continue to focus on enhancing employee experience and engagement by fostering an inclusive, supportive culture and ensuring policies remain clear and relevant. We will strengthen recruitment and retention through improved employer branding, a seamless candidate experience, and targeted retention strategies for critical roles. To future-proof our workforce, we will prioritise learning and development by advancing leadership programs, promoting continuous learning via our new e-learning platform, and driving upskilling and reskilling initiatives across the organisation.

Customer Insights, Experience and Engagement (CIEE) and Equalities Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

Our focus will be on positioning Blaby District Council as a leader in customer-centric and inclusive service delivery. We will champion a culture where every decision and interaction reflects our commitment to putting customers first and valuing the diversity of our communities. This means embedding accessibility and inclusion into all services, leveraging data and insight to anticipate evolving needs, and strengthening engagement to ensure every voice is heard. By investing in staff capability, digital inclusion, and innovative service design, we aim to create a seamless, equitable

experience that builds trust and demonstrates our role as advocates for all customers across Blaby District.

Transformation & Projects

Our priority is to continue to deliver transformative change that enhances efficiency, resilience, and customer value across Blaby District Council. We will focus on modernising systems and processes, embedding digital solutions that enable smarter working, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. By aligning projects to strategic objectives and ensuring robust governance, we will deliver outcomes that maximise resources and improve service delivery. Collaboration and engagement will be central to our approach, ensuring that transformation is inclusive and responsive to the needs of our communities. Through data-driven decision-making and agile project delivery, we aim to position the Council as a forward-thinking organisation ready to meet future challenges.

ICT

Over the next 12 months, our priority is to continue to establish a robust, agile, and customer-focused ICT service that empowers Blaby District Council to deliver modern, efficient, and secure solutions. This new in-house model will enable greater control, flexibility, and responsiveness to organisational needs while driving innovation and cost-effectiveness. We will focus on building strong governance, implementing best-practice service management frameworks, and ensuring resilience through enhanced cybersecurity and infrastructure. By investing in skilled teams, scalable technologies, and proactive support, we aim to create a trusted ICT function that underpins transformation, improves user experience, and positions the Council for future digital opportunities.

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 District Council as part of a shared service arrangement which includes Blaby District Council and Charnwood Borough Council.

Human Resources (HR)

The role of HR is one of an enabling and advisory service, aligning people strategies with organisational goals by managing talent acquisition, employee engagement, performance, and development. HR ensures compliance with policies and legislation, fosters an inclusive and supportive culture, and drives initiatives that enhance workforce capability and retention. Ultimately, HR acts as a strategic partner, enabling business success through effective people management and continuous improvement.

Customer Insights, Experience and Engagement (CIEE) and Equalities Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

Customer Insights, Experience and Engagement (CIEE) focuses on understanding customer needs and behaviours to shape services that deliver exceptional experiences and build strong relationships. It drives data-led decision-making to enhance satisfaction and loyalty. Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) ensures fairness, representation, and inclusivity across the organisation, embedding equality into policies, practices, and culture to create a workplace where everyone can thrive. Together, these functions strengthen trust, engagement, and organisational integrity.

Transformation and Projects

The role of Transformation and Projects is to drive organisational change and deliver strategic initiatives that improve efficiency, innovation, and service outcomes. This function ensures projects are aligned with business priorities, managed effectively, and deliver measurable benefits. By embedding robust governance, agile methodologies, and continuous improvement, it enables the organisation to adapt to evolving needs and achieve long-term sustainability.

ICT Services

ICT Service Delivery ensures reliable, secure, and efficient technology services that enable the organisation to operate effectively and innovate. It focuses on maintaining robust infrastructure, delivering responsive support, and implementing solutions that enhance productivity and user experience. By prioritising service quality, cybersecurity, and continuous improvement, ICT acts as a critical enabler for business transformation and digital resilience.

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 2026/27 has allowed for provision to be made to support expenditure and investment in both homelessness and preparations for LGR. The release of Business Rate Pool monies continues to support Economic Development Expenditure and the funding gap for 2026/27 is manageable. With the release of a 3 year settlement the medium to longer term position is more predictable however, the years from 2029/30 illustrate a potential cliff edge should the transitional funding be removed.• Continue to review fees and charges to ensure that, as a minimum, the Council recovers its full costs of service delivery.• The Finance team will continue to challenge budgets and support services to ensure full cost recovery in relation to shared services.• Migrate the Finance System to a Cloud based solution.• Increased focus on Budget monitoring with additional work planned to support Budget Holders to ensure the budgets continue to be effectively monitored throughout the year, and any variances are highlighted to SLT and in the quarterly monitoring reports brought to Cabinet Executive. This will be aided by the Cloud based solution above. <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.• To encourage residents and customers towards our online services where possible, whilst we continue to grow our digital options, helping to deliver a more efficient and streamlined customer journey. <p><u>Income & Collections</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Income & Collections team continues to work with external agencies, including bailiffs and legal experts, to implement additional debt recovery measures in line with the Corporate Debt Policy. <p><u>Audit</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Internal Audit Shared Service will continue to comply with the Global Internal Audit Standards in the Public Sector. The annual audit plan and individual audit programmes will be developed using a risk-based approach, and through discussion with Group Managers, Directors and the Chief Executive. 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 (assessed against the previous standards – Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS)). 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.
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- 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.

Human Resources (HR)

Position the organisation for future challenges by strengthening workforce capability, engagement, and resilience through collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement. The supporting priorities for this will be to:

- Continue to collaborate with neighbouring authorities to leverage Local Government Reform (LGR) and Devolution opportunities, ensuring best value and equipping our workforce with the skills and tools to succeed.
- Prioritise recruitment and retention by continuously improving systems, processes, and engagement offers to build a diverse, future-ready workforce.
- Expand internal capability through dedicated expertise in recruitment, retention, learning, and organisational development to strengthen resilience and position Blaby District as an employer of choice.
- Promote workforce development by implementing learning and development programs to upskill employees, support career progression, and build leadership capability.
- Enhance employee engagement and performance by fostering a positive, inclusive culture that promotes engagement, well-being, and high performance.

Customer Insights, Experience & Engagement (CIEE), and Equalities Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

The service will lead on embedding customer insight and equality principles into service design and organisational culture to strengthen trust, engagement, and satisfaction. The supporting priorities for this will be to:

- Leverage data and insights to understand customer needs and behaviours, ensuring services are designed to deliver exceptional experiences.
- We will embed customer insight into planning and service delivery to improve satisfaction and overall engagement.
- We will ensure fairness, representation, and inclusivity across all policies, practices, and culture, creating a workplace where everyone can thrive.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will strengthen trust and engagement through integration of CIEE and EDI principles to foster transparency, inclusivity, and responsiveness, reinforcing organisational integrity and stakeholder confidence. <p><u>Transformation & Projects</u></p> <p>The Transformation and Projects function will act as a catalyst for change, enabling the organisation to adapt to evolving needs and future challenges. The supporting priorities for this will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Alignment: Ensuring every project supports business priorities and contributes to long-term sustainability. • Robust Governance: Embedding clear frameworks for accountability, risk management, and performance monitoring. • Agile Delivery: Applying flexible, iterative approaches to accelerate delivery and respond quickly to emerging opportunities. • Continuous Improvement: Driving innovation and efficiency by reviewing processes, identifying savings, and optimising resources. • Measurable Impact: Establishing clear success metrics to demonstrate value and outcomes for both the organisation and its customers. <p><u>ICT</u></p> <p>The new Blaby District Council ICT service will provide technology services that enable operational excellence, digital resilience, and business transformation through robust infrastructure, responsive support, and continuous improvement. The supporting priorities for this will be to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a secure and reliable ICT infrastructure to ensure continuity and protect organisational assets. • Deliver efficient, high-quality support that enhances user experience and productivity. • Support the implementation of innovative digital solutions to drive efficiency and enable transformation. • Embed service quality monitoring and continuous improvement practices. • Build resilience and future readiness through scalable solutions and workforce capability.
Income generation	<p>Income from the Council's central treasury function is included in this portfolio. As has been seen over the past couple of years, returns have improved considerably from previous years in line with increases in the Bank of England base rate, designed to combat inflation. Rates are expected to reduce during 2026/27, and this is reflected in the estimated income budget.</p> <p>Collection of Council Tax and Business Rates.</p>

	<p>The Transformation and Projects team will continue to collaborate with services to review current practices, identifying income opportunities and efficiency savings, which will be reflected in service budgets.</p>
Capital plans for the portfolio	<p>The Finance team monitors and maintains oversight of the overall Capital Programme. In terms of Finance-specific schemes, a project is being undertaken to migrate the Finance system to a Cloud based solution. The Cloud based solution will enable upgrades to be undertaken when required, automatic security updates with no service interruption, and a reduction in manual work required and increased data reporting.</p> <p>There will be a carryover of capital funding for the HR & Payroll System project as the great work continues in terms of optimising the functionality to support process improvements in the shape of automation where possible/appropriate. This will remain in service plans as a continued key area of focus into 2026/27.</p> <p>The capital programme for 2026/27 allows for £25,000 to be spent on ICT development and refresh activities. This is budget that was part of the report approved in the ICT transition to an in-house service in February 2024.</p>

Key Performance Indicators

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR – FINANCE	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 YEAR TO DATE	COMMENTS
Invoices Paid within 10 days	86.15%	85.07%	84.90%	The team continue to work with departments to ensure all invoices received include a purchase order number which enables more automation within the system and increases the number of invoices paid in a timely manner. The move to a Cloud based system with enable more atomisation of upload of invoices to the system, which will help to increase the number of invoices paid within 10 days.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR - REVENUES AND BENEFITS	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 YEAR TO DATE	COMMENTS
Percentage of cases checked which were paid correctly	82.50%	90.12%	93.21%	Improvement has been seen following time spent focussing on training and support in the areas needed. Newer team members continue to progress in their training.

Customers

The Finance team's external customers include suppliers who invoice the Council for goods and services, 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. The team is also responsible for discretionary housing benefits payments and 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.

Customer Insights, Experience and Engagement will remain central as the main point of contact for Blaby District Council residents, businesses, and partners. We will focus on monitoring interactions, measuring performance, and gathering feedback to drive continuous improvement and transformation.

For Human Resources, ICT, and Transformation & Projects, our primary customers are internal teams. However, these critical support services are essential in enabling frontline teams to deliver high-quality services that keep our Blaby District residents at the heart of everything we do.

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 undertaken two major reviews of the Business Rates Retention Scheme, and the wider Fairer Funding mechanism. How the transitional funding will be applied in future years and how funding will be allocated when LGR is implemented is still uncertain.
- **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.
- **Internal 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.

- **External Audit** – the Council’s 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 financial accounts were signed off by our previous external auditors on 25th November 2024, following the implementation by Government of backstop measures to bring the outstanding audits up to date. Following this the 2023/24 financial accounts were signed off by our current auditors on the 25th February 2025 in line with the back stop date. Due to the delay in the accounts being signed the risk arising from the backlog is the impact in assurance that the auditors can take from the opening balances, the Council are working with the auditors to build back this assurance.
- **Failure of ICT systems** - This risk is not specific to this portfolio as IT systems are used across all departments, however the ICT Team have numerous internal controls in place to reduce this risk.
- **ICT security breaches and non-compliance with Government security standards** – This risk has been reduced and the internal controls updated following the ICT service being brought back in house. A case study on Blaby District Council bringing the ICT service back in house has been published in the Cyber Centre of Excellence for local public services.

The areas covered in our portfolio are wide ranging and complex. The portfolio includes several multi agency partnerships, led by Blaby District Council.

Health, Leisure, and Tourism

The 2026-27 financial year represents an exciting opportunity for Blaby District Council to build on the momentum of its ongoing work in Health, Leisure, and Tourism Services. Through innovation, strategic partnerships and a focus on community outcomes, the council will deliver on several key initiatives designed to enhance the quality of life for residents. Below, we outline the key achievements and priorities that will define our progress over the coming year.

The Health, Leisure, and Tourism Service is focused on creating opportunities for residents to lead active, healthy lifestyles while promoting the district as a vibrant destination. For the year ahead, the team will continue to deliver on its commitments to improve health outcomes, support sustainable tourism growth and manage leisure services effectively. Highlights include:

- 1. Strategic Sports Planning:** The council will continue to focus on implementing technical recommendations for provision of playing fields and sports facilities across the district, supporting the delivery of new facilities where developer contributions are sufficient.
- 2. Active Blaby Programme:** The Active Blaby initiative has gone from strength to strength, benefitting hugely from the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, website, and digital tools. These enhancements have ensured a more user-friendly experience for residents accessing sport and physical activity services. Key performance statistics include:
 - a. 42,202 attendances
 - b. 2,185 participants
 - c. 61 programmes delivered
 - d. 90% of Steady Steps class participants feel less worried about falling
 - e. 100% of participants would recommend the service to a friend
- 3. Health & Wellbeing Services:** The council have delivered targeted programmes under its Health & Wellbeing Service for Blaby and Oadby and Wigston residents as part of the shared service partnership delivered by BDC. These initiatives include tailored interventions to promote physical activity and wellbeing among priority groups.
- 4. Tourism Growth Plan:** The Tourism Growth Plan has played a key role in supporting local businesses, enhancing visitor experiences, and raising the profile of Blaby as a key tourism destination. Several Blaby tourism partners

received awards at the recent Leicestershire Tourism Awards and we aim to build upon this success in 26/27.

5. **A Place to Grow (APTG):** The community garden continues to provide a space for health, education, and social inclusion, with new programmes and activities being planned to engage a wider audience. We will also finalise the process for APTG to be managed as a Constituted Group, enabling APTG access to a broader range of external funding.
6. **Leisure Contract Management:** The council will maintain its robust partnership with SLM, ensuring high-quality leisure provision through monthly and quarterly contract meetings. Additionally, the delivery of new gym capacity at Enderby Leisure Centre will further enhance our offer to residents from January 2026.

Community Health & Wellbeing Plan

The Community Health & Wellbeing Plan 2023-26 has helped to guide the delivery of health interventions and support for residents. This document will be reviewed in 2026 as we approach the end of its cycle. Programmes supporting health and wellbeing participation will continue to be delivered across the district, with a focus on increasing accessibility and inclusivity.

Work and Skills Agenda

The Work and Skills Agenda focuses on empowering residents and businesses by providing access to resources, training, and opportunities to develop local skills and drive economic growth. Key initiatives for 2026-27 include:

1. **Youth Engagement and Leadership:** The Youth Council provides young people with a platform to influence decision-making and engage with local governance. This initiative supports the next generation of leaders while fostering civic pride and responsibility.
2. **Job Fairs and Employment Support:** Continued delivery of Job Fairs will connect residents with employers, training providers, and support services. These events will focus on raising awareness of sector-based opportunities and increasing employment rates.
3. **Business Support and Growth:** The council will further its Business Support Programme by delivering regular Business Breakfasts and newsletters. These efforts will provide local businesses with vital information, networking opportunities and access to innovation grants and funding for growth. The new Blaby District Business Board will enable the council to further improve its links with the business community and enable joint-working to deliver key outcomes for the local economy.
4. **Access to Financial Support:** We will continue to investigate the potential to establish a Business Grant's Scheme, to support micro businesses and SME's on their growth journey in Blaby district.

5. **Securing External Funding:** Efforts to secure external funding will continue, with a focus on supporting key projects and services. This will involve identifying new funding streams to bolster community and economic initiatives.

Community Engagement and Voluntary Sector Support

Blaby District Council remains committed to fostering a strong and resilient community by supporting voluntary organisations and encouraging civic participation. For 2026-27, priorities include:

1. **Support for the Armed Forces Community:** The council will enhance its engagement with the armed forces community through tailored initiatives that recognise their unique contributions and needs, strengthening the council's commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant and seeking the 'Gold' award.
2. **Community Grants and Blaby Lottery:** The council will deliver Community Grants to support local projects that improve the quality of life for residents. The Blaby Lottery will continue to provide an innovative funding source for local voluntary groups.
3. **Voluntary Sector Support:** Providing guidance and resources for voluntary organisations will be a key focus, ensuring these groups can thrive and continue their invaluable work in the community.
4. **Innovation and Collaboration:** New initiatives to promote Access to Grant Funding for Innovation will help organisations explore creative solutions to local challenges. This will be complemented by efforts to encourage collaborative working across sectors.

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Nick Chapman

Senior Officers: Assets and Major Projects Group Manager

Portfolio Total

Health, Community and Economic Development - Total	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£818,760	£928,050	£961,070	£142,310 17.38%	£33,020 3.56%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£176,913	£698,911	£206,682	£29,769 16.83%	- £492,229 -70.43%
3. Direct Income	-£798,912	-£1,113,339	-£1,193,400	-£394,488 49.38%	-£80,061 7.19%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£196,761	£513,622	-£25,648	-£222,409 -113.04%	- £539,270 -104.99%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	15.48	18.48	19.67	4.19 27.07%	1.19 6.44%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This portfolio incorporates the establishment costs for Health & Leisure Services, and the Community Development, Work & Skills.

The establishment budget for 2025/26 allowed for a 3% pay award within services. The nationally agreed pay award for Chief Executives, Chief Officers (Directors and Group Managers) and officers on grades 1 to 9 was 3.2%. The establishment budget for 2026/27 allows for a 3% estimated pay award within each portfolio and a further 1% held centrally, contractual increments where appropriate, and employer's national insurance and pension contributions within service budgets. The Leicestershire Pension Fund confirmed a decrease in the Councils Employer contribution rate of 6% from 2026/27. The Council currently pays a rate of 28.3%, this will reduce to 22.3% from 2026/27 through to 2028/29.

Some expenditure within Health, Leisure and Tourism Services is externally funded and as such has not been included within the budget until that funding has been confirmed. This is the reason why the revised estimate is significantly higher than the 2025/26 approved budget, since the external funding was only secured after the budget was approved last February. Discussions have been undertaken with OWBC to continue the Partnership for an additional two years; this is subject to formal sign off at committee in February 2026.

Establishment costs have increased within Community, Business Work and Skills as an additional post has been accounted for in 2026/27.

Other gross direct expenditure in the 2025/26 revised estimate is inflated by several factors. These include external funding (mainly for Health & Leisure Services) which is unconfirmed for 2026/27, and unspent budget provision carried forward from 2024/25 (non-recurring). The contractual arrangement with Oadby and Wigston Borough Council to run their Sport and Physical Activity programme has continued. Discussions are currently being undertaken with the potential to continue for a further two years. Budget will be added to reflect this once confirmed.

In terms of income for this portfolio, the same principles apply to the 2025/26 revised estimate as described above, i.e., since the original budget was approved in February 2025, we have secured additional external funding in respect of Health & Leisure Services.

Leisure Centres

	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 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	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
3. Direct Income	-£779,012	-£825,620	-£1,041,880	-£262,868 33.74%	- £216,260 26.19%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	-£779,012	-£825,620	-£1,041,880	-£262,868 33.74%	- £216,260 26.19%
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.
2. Not applicable.
3. This is income to be received through the leisure management contract. The revised estimate is in line with contractual uplift that was not included in the approved budget. Inflation is also applied to arrive at the estimated management fee for 2026/27,
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Not applicable.

Health, Leisure & Tourism

	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£310,040	£443,580	£429,030	£118,990 38.38%	-£14,550 -3.28%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£96,438	£414,928	£108,543	£12,105 12.55%	-£306,385 -73.84%
3. Direct Income	-£7,400	-£250,139	-£139,020	-£131,620 1778.65%	£111,119 -44.42%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£399,078	£608,369	£398,553	-£525 -0.13%	-£209,816 -34.49%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	5.26	8.26	8.45	3.19 60.65%	0.19 2.30%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions. The revised estimate includes externally funded posts that had not been confirmed at the time of budget setting. The proposed budget for 2026/27 also includes these externally funded posts,
2. Revised estimate includes externally funded project expenditure (level currently unknown for 2026/27)
3. Awaiting level of external funding to be confirmed for 2026/27.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Externally funded posts have been included in the budget as per point 1. These posts were not included in the 2025/26 approved budget but are included within the revised estimate.

Community, Business, Work & Skills

	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£508,720	£484,470	£532,040	£23,320 4.58%	£47,570 9.82%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£80,476	£283,983	£98,139	£17,663 21.95%	- -65.44%
3. Direct Income	-£12,500	-£37,580	-£12,500	£0 0.00%	£25,080 -66.74%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£576,696	£730,873	£617,679	£40,983 7.11%	- -15.49%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	10.22	10.22	11.22	1.00 9.78%	1.00 9.78%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. The revised estimate includes several one-off budgets that were carried forward from 2024/25. These have been removed for 2026/27, which also reflects a reduction in costs relating to the Blaby Lottery (income also reduced).
3. Only funding that has been confirmed is included in the Direct Income. Income earned via the Blaby Lottery and Youth Council Grants has been reflected in the revised estimate. Proposed budget for 2026/27 in relation to the Blaby Lottery in line with 2025/26 approved budget.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Additional Business Admin Support included in the 2026/27 proposed budget.

Operational Summary

Leisure Centres

Enderby Leisure Centre continues to thrive with an attractive range of services and the number of visits. Huncote's performance is slowly increasing. Quarterly performance and financial reports are shared with the group manager and portfolio holder.

Health & Leisure Services

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.

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council have now confirmed they are able to sign up to an additional two year contract, taking the contract through to 2028. Formal ratification will be finalised by their Committee in February 2026.

Tourism

Members of the tourism partnership remain committed to delivering the new Tourism Growth Plan 2025-30. Feedback from the businesses has been very positive in terms of visitor numbers.

Portfolio Priorities

The priorities for our portfolio are: -

Health, Leisure, and Tourism

- To ensure that our Leisure Contract delivers the expected financial return and provides a high quality service for residents.
- Influence developments throughout the District through the use of the Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan, Built Facilities Strategy, Playing Pitch Strategy and Tourism Plan.
- 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 partners to deliver the Community Health & Wellbeing Plan.

Community, Business, Work and Skills

- Deliver the action plans that underpin the Economic Development Framework.

- To work with all our businesses to empower the growth of the economy across Blaby District.
- Achieve the Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award.
- Work with young people to enable them to engage and inform local democracy.
- Support Voluntary and Community groups across the District to thrive.

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). The team are investigating how a new volleyball court could increase usership and variety in sports provision.
- Enderby Leisure Centre provides a range of leisure services including a swimming pool, swimming lessons, fitness suite, spa suite, indoor bowls, golf course, fitness studios, all weather pitches, café, soft play centre, and meeting room. This service is delivered through a leisure contract with SLM.

Health & Leisure

- Health Improvement – services include A Place to Grow, Dementia Action Alliance, Health Promotion, delivering the Community Health & Wellbeing Plan and playing an active part in the Community Health & Wellbeing Partnership. This includes partners such as 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 Visit Blaby 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, and weight management.

Community, Business, Work and Skills

- This team offers a wide 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 developed an Economic Development Framework (adopted by Cabinet Executive in September 2023) and five action plans that sit under this which support the delivery of the framework. They will coordinate activity across different teams within the local authority to ensure the delivery of these plans.

- 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 and ensure our businesses can share good practice and network.
- 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.

Key Points

Doing things differently – plans for the coming year	<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"> • To work with partners to deliver our Community Health & Wellbeing Plan. <p><u>Tourism:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to implement the Tourism Growth Plan • To support the Economic Development Framework and specifically the Building Pride in Place Action Plan. <p><u>Community, Business, Work & Skills</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deliver the five action plans that underpin the Economic Development Framework. • To deliver our work & skills pathway to support our businesses with recruitment and retention. • To identify and submit applications for external funding to support delivery of Blaby's priorities and corporate plan. • To support our young people to have a voice through the Youth Council on what matters to them. • To deliver our community offer to support our community and voluntary groups and our residents.
Income generation	<p><u>Health & Leisure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure income from the Leisure Contract. • Continue to secure external funding to support front line delivery.
Capital plans for the portfolio	£140k is allocated to the Walk and Ride project, but it is anticipated that £26k will be used to contribute to a potential new volleyball court at Huncote Leisure Centre. This is subject to confirmation from partners on external match funding.

Key Performance Indicators

Health, Leisure & Tourism Services:

- Active Lives Survey (measures levels of physical activity).
- STEAM Data (provides Tourism statistics).

Leisure Contract (Enderby & Huncote 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 Income from Blaby Lottery

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 three posts (Active Blaby Referral Co-ordinator x2 and Community Engagement Officer x1) across the Health, Leisure and Tourism services. 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. We have received written confirmation from OWBC of their intention to continue the contract until 2028, but this is subject to their committee approval in February 2026.
- Performance of Leisure Contractor (SLM) and the impact of the operating costs on the leisure industry. This is mitigated through the performance management approach outlined above.
- Recruitment and retention of qualified staff.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES & ASSETS PORTFOLIO

Councillor Nigel Grundy

As we stand on the threshold of a new financial year, Blaby District Council faces a landscape filled with both challenges and opportunities. The year ahead will demand resilience, innovation, and a steadfast commitment to serving our community. Here, we outline the key challenges that will shape the journey in my portfolio:

1. **Financial Stability and Resilience:** With shrinking revenues and increasing demands on our key services, maintaining financial stability will be a critical challenge. The uncertainty around new burdens revenue streams, and the performance of the wider economy requires us to consider more radical ideas to increase income and reduce operational expenditure.
2. **Adoption and development of Advanced Technologies:** Embracing new technologies will be essential to enhance the services we deliver to our Blaby residents and businesses.
3. **Employee Recruitment and Retention:** Attracting and retaining skilled employees in a competitive job market is crucial for maintaining high-quality public services. We need to create a supportive and rewarding work environment to keep our workforce motivated and engaged.

Neighbourhood Services

In 2026-27 the Neighbourhood Services Team will be focussing on:

1. **Successfully delivering the new weekly food waste collection service:** following the preparations that took up most of 2025 the team are poised to deliver the new service in 2026 on time and within the capital and transition budget allocated by Defra. The operational delivery will be supplemented with regular communications to promote widespread engagement with the service and drive recycling rates from 42% to well over 50%. We will also provide support to a greater number of businesses to help them meet their obligations to arrange for separate food waste collections in 2026.
2. **Delivering net zero ambitions at the depot:** with a year of solar energy powering a large proportion of the depot's electricity needs this year the focus from the depot team will be completing the electric vehicle charging infrastructure and harness the suns energy to power its recently acquired electric bin lorry and electric mini- sweeper. The team will also be considering the feasibility of air source heat pumps at the depot to continue the net zero journey and maximising the energy generated by the solar panels.
3. **Digitising Services:** To improve the residents experience, we will focus on innovative ways to deliver services. This includes building on the recent investment in our district cleaning and parks and open spaces services to digitise processes and introduce the latest technologies for improved efficiency.
4. **Open Space Management** – the team will continue to review its assets, enhance biodiversity on many of the sites through rewilding projects and more sympathetic maintenance regimes. Following a number of UKSPF funded

schemes in 2025-26 another capital scheme will see improvements to the open spaces site at Crow Mills.

5. **Fleet Management:** Our fleet management operation will focus on maintaining the council's fleet of vehicles efficiently including the new fleet of food waste vehicles and electric vehicle additions. The team will also be seeking to promote staff MOT's this year to provide our staff with impartial MOT service offer and increase income.

Property and Assets

As we enter the 2026-27 financial year, Blaby District Council remains committed to delivering robust services and ambitious projects that address the evolving needs of our community. This year will require resilience, innovation and proactive strategies to ensure our resources are used effectively. Below are the key priorities and initiatives within the Property Services and Health & Safety areas, which will be instrumental in shaping our progress over the coming year.

Property Services

The Property Services team plays a pivotal role in managing Blaby District Council's assets, ensuring the efficient operation of council-owned facilities while driving forward strategic projects. For the 2026-27 financial year, the team will focus on several key areas of Business as Usual (BAU) and major projects:

1. **Operational and Facilities Management:** The team will continue to manage the day-to-day operations of the council's estate, including scheduled and reactive maintenance to ensure facilities remain functional and compliant with health and safety regulations.
2. **Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM):** A detailed schedule of works, including statutory testing and servicing, will remain a priority to maintain compliance across all council properties.
3. **Asset Disposals and Land Transfers:** The team will oversee land valuations, GIS research and asset register updates to support disposals, transfers, and potential community use opportunities.
4. **Commercial Opportunities:** Expanding the commercial use of council assets, including lease renewals and the identification of new revenue streams, will underpin efforts to enhance financial sustainability.
5. **Strategic Projects:** The portfolio will continue to lead Council priorities including the promotion of Hayes Gardens and sale of South Drive. The integration of modern technologies, including digital solutions for property management, will also be explored.
6. **Sustainability Goals:** The continuation of initiatives supporting the council's Net Zero ambitions will include improving energy efficiency across assets.

Leicestershire Building Control Partnership

The Leicestershire Building Control Partnership continues to operate an excellent value for money regulatory Building Control service for both its customers and Partners. It does this whilst operating in competitive environment against other private sector providers.

The BC team are continuing their journey of implementing required operational changes to comply with the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Building Act 1984 as amended.

Both Local Authority and Private Sector Building Control providers must now report to the Building Safety Regulator (Health and Safety Executive) on various key performance indicators and operational standards rules on a quarterly and annual basis. The team have put measures in place to facilitate this requirement from the 1st of April 2025, and we have already now started this reporting process.

The Surveyors are continuing to take the required competency assessments and validation exams, so they can legally perform their duties under the Building Inspector Registration process. Despite high failure rates nationally throughout the UK for those taking the exams, those staff that have taken the exams within the LBCP have all passed. It is only the newly appointed trainee surveyors that are still to take their competency exams as and when they have been trained up and ready to do so.

LBCP has been audited on numerous occasions in 2025 including an audit which was undertaken by the Building Safety Regulator. All audits had successful outcomes with some compliance items needing attention. Works connected with Audits is a continuing commitment for LBCP which is why we are currently seeking to recruit a Building Control Admin Team Leader with an auditing background and associated skills.

In response to the national shortage of validated and qualified/competent Surveyors now available and operating within the UK, LBCP prepared a recruitment and retention policy/package to attempt to both recruit and retain staff. This package was agreed and signed off by all Partner authorities and was paid to Surveyors in September 2025. Given that we have only lost one surveyor in the last financial year, this has been a clear success.

The initial LBCP delegation legal agreement signed in April 2022 by all Partners came to an end on 1st April 2025. Given the uncertainties around LGR and how this may shape and affect LBCP in the future a new legal agreement has been circulated to Partners in the form of a "letter of comfort" and all Partner Councils have stated that they will be signing up to continue with this interim/extended Partnership arrangement.

Looking Ahead

The year ahead promises significant challenges and opportunities, requiring robust action in both the Property Services and Health & Safety domains. By focusing on operational excellence, sustainability, and strategic sites, we aim to deliver lasting value for Blaby District Council and its community. Together, these initiatives will ensure our assets, staff and services remain fit for purpose, supporting the council's broader mission of building a thriving, resilient future for all.

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Nigel Grundy
Senior Officers: Executive Directors, Neighbourhood Services Group Manager, Assets and Major Projects Group Manager, Corporate Services Group Manager

Portfolio Total

Neighbourhood Services & Assets - Total	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£5,692,380	£5,610,374	£6,072,890	£380,510 6.68%	£462,516 8.24%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£2,726,097	£2,696,318	£2,764,298	£38,201 1.40%	£67,980 2.52%
3. Direct Income	-£5,205,066	-£5,612,647	-£5,729,823	-£524,757 10.08%	-£117,176 2.09%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£3,213,411	£2,694,044	£3,107,365	-£106,046 -3.30%	£413,321 15.34%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	133.35	110.85	129.53	-3.82 -2.86%	18.68 16.85%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The establishment budget for 2025/26 allowed for a 3% pay award within services. The nationally agreed pay award for Chief Executives, Chief Officers (Directors and Group Managers) and officers on grades 1 to 9 was 3.2%. The establishment budget for 2026/27 allows for a 3% estimated pay award within each portfolio and a further 1% held centrally, contractual increments where appropriate, and employer's national insurance and pension contributions within service budgets. The Leicestershire Pension Fund confirmed a decrease in the Councils Employer contribution rate of 6% from 2026/27. The Council currently pays a rate of 28.3%, this will reduce to 22.3% from 2026/27 through to 2028/29.

The food waste collection service is due to Go Live from 30 March 2026. Establishment budget has been revised based on latest forecasts. New burdens funding was expected to offset the costs of providing the service, the revised estimate reflects actual receipt. No additional funding is scheduled to be received in 2026/27, instead, this service is to be funded via the financial settlement with no specific apportionment.

Fees and charges have been increased where necessary to ensure that full cost recovery is achieved. Refuse and Recycling includes an additional £619,000 of grant income due to be received for extended producer responsibility to manage packaging waste. This additional income has been replicated in the 2026/27 budget.

One of the key income streams for this portfolio is building control services. Under the delegated model for Building Control, Blaby retains all the income generated, no matter to which district it relates. The revised estimate on income has been reduced to reflect predicted final income for 2025/26, and this lower amount is then inflated by 3.5% for 2026/27. Overall, an increased net deficit is anticipated for the Building Control service due to lower take up by customers and economic pressures in addition to new and increased regulatory burdens, but any deficit will be shared by all partners so that the financial burden does not just rest with Blaby. Where possible the service will try to reduce this deficit by managing headcount and costs however, there is an element of building control that is regulatory and non-fee earning and the proportion of this will need to be increased given recent legislative changes.

Parks & Open Spaces

	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£536,840	£485,140	£482,860	-£53,980 -10.06%	-£2,280 -0.47%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£247,451	£279,974	£252,492	£5,041 2.04%	-£27,482 -9.82%
3. Direct Income	-£55,969	-£50,398	-£47,334	£8,635 -15.43%	£3,064 -6.08%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£728,322	£714,716	£688,018	-£40,304 -5.53%	-£26,698 -3.74%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	11.00	10.00	10.00	-1.00 -9.09%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. Revised estimate includes additional costs incurred in relation to tree maintenance. 2026/27 budget includes Inflationary increases in relation to open space development work, and tree maintenance.
3. No significant change.
4. The net impact of changes referred to above.
5. One Parks and Open Space Operative post released.

District Cleansing

	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£470,340	£470,340	£465,860	-£4,480 -0.95%	-£4,480 -0.95%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£74,531	£78,832	£79,606	£5,075 6.81%	£774 0.98%
3. Direct Income	-£102,000	-£124,550	-£124,550	-£22,550 22.11%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£442,871	£424,622	£420,916	-£21,955 -4.96%	-£3,706 -0.87%
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 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. Inflationary increases.
3. Additional income received for litter and dog bins.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change.

Refuse Collection & Recycling

	2025/26 Approved Budget	2025/26 Revised Estimate	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£2,342,500	£2,337,335	£2,363,190	£20,690 0.88%	£25,855 1.11%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£666,203	£656,948	£623,249	-£42,954 -6.45%	-£33,699 -5.13%
3. Direct Income	-£2,742,389	-£3,353,772	-£3,465,659	-£723,270 26.37%	-£111,887 3.34%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£266,314	-£359,489	-£479,220	-£745,534 -279.95%	-£119,731 33.31%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	53.00	53.00	53.00	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. The decrease in the draft 2026/27 budget is due to no ongoing requirement for hired services.
3. The revised estimate includes an additional £619k of grant income due to be received for extended producer responsibility to manage packaging waste. This increased income has been replicated in the draft 2026/27 budget.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change.

Fleet Management

	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£394,270	£410,257	£415,170	£20,900 5.30%	£4,913 1.20%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£665,006	£587,586	£681,623	£16,617 2.50%	£94,037 16.00%
3. Direct Income	-£19,200	-£15,600	-£15,600	£3,600 -18.75%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£1,040,076	£982,243	£1,081,193	£41,117 3.95%	£98,950 10.07%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	6.00	6.50	7.00	1.00 16.67%	0.50 7.69%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. The budget has been reviewed and in year savings identified resulting in reductions to the vehicle repair and fuel costs. The draft 2026/27 budget is based on original 2025/26 budget.
3. Decrease in fees and charges income.
4. Net impact of the variances listed above.
5. Additional post for an HGV Apprentice, only included for 6 months in the revised estimate.

Assets

	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£343,270	£325,804	£339,410	-£3,860 -1.12%	£13,606 4.18%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£854,370	£853,769	£861,612	£7,242 0.85%	£7,843 0.92%
3. Direct Income	-£484,969	-£503,163	-£517,163	-£32,194 6.64%	-£14,000 2.78%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£712,671	£676,410	£683,858	-£28,812 -4.04%	£7,449 1.10%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	5.61	5.61	5.61	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. Revised 2025/26 and proposed budget for 2026/27 includes expenditure relating to the Council owned temporary accommodation.
3. Income budget for Enderby Road Industrial estate has been revised to account for rent reviews. Additional income is included in the 2026/27 budget as a result of the NHS moving into the South Wing at the Council Offices.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change.

Food Waste Collection

	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£208,950	£185,288	£572,730	£363,780 174.10%	£387,442 209.10%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£0	£69,203	£135,660	£135,660 100.00%	£66,457 96.03%
3. Direct Income	-£208,950	-£76,389	£0	£208,950 -100.00%	£76,389 -100.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£0	£178,102	£708,390	£708,390 100.00%	£530,288 297.74%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	22.00	22.00	15.00	-7.00 -31.82%	-7.00 -31.82%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. Direct expenditure costs included based on latest forecasts. As the service is yet to go live, these will be continually updated.
3. New burdens funding was expected to offset the costs of providing the service, revised estimate reflects actual receipt. No additional funding is scheduled to be received in 2026/27; this service is to be funded via the financial settlement with no specific apportionment.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. New Service. Roles budgeted for final 3 months of 2025/26 to allow recruitment prior to go live on 1 April 2026. 7 Loader roles have been released in the 2026/27 draft budget based on latest estimates of requirements for the service.

Building Control

	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£1,396,210	£1,396,210	£1,433,670	£37,460 2.68%	£37,460 2.68%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£218,537	£170,006	£130,056	-£88,481 -40.49%	-£39,950 -23.50%
3. Direct Income	-£1,591,589	-£1,488,775	-£1,559,517	£32,072 -2.02%	-£70,742 4.75%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£23,158	£77,441	£4,209	-£18,949 -81.82%	-£73,232 -94.56%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	24.74	24.74	27.92	3.18 12.85%	3.18 12.85%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. Estimated costs of recruitment and a retention policy were budgeted at £100,000. Actual costs were significantly lower and reflected in the revised estimate. Additional "bonus" payments for 2026/27 are included within Establishment as opposed to Direct Costs.
3. Revised estimate shows a reduction in contribution from Partners directly linked to the reduced costs.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Number of roles have increased by three, however, this has been completed within existing budgets by removing some Surveyor positions and replacing them with Administration staff and junior/trainee surveying staff. Any recruitment relating to the Building Safety Levy collection service will be funded by the below. The Levy collection service commences in October 2026.

Note: 6 payments of £109,000 (No. of Councils) re the Building Safety Levy collection service (£654,000) is likely to be paid to Leicestershire Building Control Partnership by Central Government in April 2026 to fund staffing and set up costs such as IT database systems to undertake this function. This has not been included in any of the above budgeting and will be at a net £nil contribution to the Council.

Portfolio Priorities

Neighbourhood Services

- To implement, deliver and embed the new food waste collection service
- To review its open space assets and recommend disposal options where appropriate and in accordance with the POS strategy
- To introduce Staff and Member MOT's at the Council's vehicle depot
- Continue to maximise income and savings opportunities
- To deliver efficient and effective services that are valued by the districts residents and businesses.

Assets

- Maximising the use of the council's assets.
- Providing quality places for staff to work.

Services

Neighbourhood Services

- **Refuse & Recycling**

The Refuse and Recycling service provides an alternate weekly collection service to approximately 45,000 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 several Parishes 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 20 HGV's all operating on Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil, 1 x fully electric HGV bin lorry , 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 Operator 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 Assets of Community Value applications made by residents.

- **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. Due to new legislation being introduced via the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Building Safety Regulator this service has begun and will continue to see major changes to how it operates. The LBCP contributes to all Partner Councils Corporate plans in various ways and will continue to do so.

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 to other services as and when required. It is important to note that some elements of this service are not fee earning.

Blaby District Council currently delivers the Leicestershire Building Control Service which covers Harborough District Council, Oadby & Wigston Borough Council, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council, Melton Borough Council and Rutland County Council under a delegated service agreement.

The Building Control team will continue to work to embed the new legislation into Leicestershire Building Control Partnership including ensuring all staff undertake the required training and exams to be able to practice.

Key Points

<p>Doing things differently – plans for the coming year</p>	<p><u>Refuse & Recycling</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To embed the new food waste service • To evaluate the impacts of not providing garden waste stickers this year as a cost saving measure • To explore opportunities to develop digital enhancements to improve the customer experience. <p><u>District Cleansing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To further develop the recent in cab software system to improve processes and efficiencies in the service. • Continue to support 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"> • To deliver the actions within the approved POS strategy including a review of open space assets suitable for disposal <p><u>Transport</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To grow internal expertise of electric vehicle maintenance. • To explore the feasibility of delivering fleet services on behalf of other Councils and partners including food waste vehicles and electric vehicles. <p><u>Assets</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To progress strategic site projects through the next stages to ensure the Council's assets are utilised to gain best value. • To support the delivery of the solar panel and EV charging infrastructure at the depot. • Help internal customers to self-serve and reduce ad hoc demand on asset team. • Working with Customer Services, we will be exploring opportunities to improve the customer experience when attending the Council's office.
<p>Income generation</p>	<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 for all taxi services in 2026-27; and to undertake chargeable fleet services on behalf of other organisations in 2026-27. To offer staff MOT's in 2026-27. <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 a section of the Council offices to NHS 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, The Old Bank and Countesthorpe Mobile Home site. The team actively work with the Council's letting agent to ensure that units at the industrial estate are let quickly following them becoming vacant. <p><u>Building Control</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To monitor our income levels and market share. Fees will be increased from April 2026 by 4% for all partners within LBCP. To review the demand data annually to ensure each partners contribution to the cost of the service matches their demand. Ensure that Blaby's costs for leading the service are included within each partners contribution. To implement the requirements of the Building Safety Levy and collect the Levy on behalf of Partners from October 2026. To continue to review how the service operates following the introduction of the new Building Act 2022 legislation and the regulatory requirements verses an income generation service.
Capital plans for the portfolio	<p>The 2026-27 Capital Programme includes the following proposals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £310k for replacement of fleet vehicles. £27k for replacement work required to the entrance of Crow Mills open space. £30k for purchase and integration of a Building Asset Management System to more accurately and effectively manage the Council's physical assets and to support delivery of compliance requirements. Capital expenditure for the purchase of temporary accommodation will be included in the Capital Programme for 2026/27. Final figures will be available for the Council meeting in February when Heads of Terms have been agreed.

Key Performance Indicators

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR – NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES	2025-26	COMMENTS
Percentage of waste collected which is recycled.	42.5%* (*pending verification from Defra final audited data)	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 such as food
Income generated by the Leicestershire Building Control Partnership	£746,085	The figure for 2025/26 is to the end of November 2025

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.

Impacts to Building Control from the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Building Safety Regulator and the continuing requirements for all building control surveyors to undertake training and exams to demonstrate competence still remains. There is still a risk that these continuing requirements will lead to the loss of experienced building inspectors, particularly those that are nearing retirement age, we have seen examples of this within our own workforce and are focussing on recruitment and retention packages to mitigate this risk. The BC Surveyor staff retention and remuneration

package which took effect in September 2025 helped to retain all Surveying staff except one who left to take up Agency working.

Economic uncertainty and increased taxes including the introduction of the Building Safety Levy will weigh heavily on the construction industry. Early signs are indicating substantial contractions in terms of UK construction activity which may well affect Building Control income levels.

Building Safety Regulator requirements and the number of Audits that LBCP are expected to undertake will adversely affect our ability to bring income in, with the same staff resources. The additional regulatory burdens being imposed on Building Control will mean that staff can do less work and therefore income levels will likely fall to reflect this position.

Private sector BC companies such as Oculus going into administration and the total amount of Building Regulations applications that are/have just returned back to LAs as a result – 16,000 in that particular case, can be overwhelming in terms of workloads that need to be managed with exist staff resources. This is a risk as the numbers of qualified and competent surveyors available within the UK cannot adequately meet current service demands.

Foreword

The work undertaken across the group encompasses a broad and diverse range of activities, including regulatory inspections relating to food safety and health and safety, Children's Worker sessions in schools across the district promoting topics such as healthy relationships and inclusion, investigations into noise and anti-social behaviour, and the provision of specialised support for residents affected by domestic abuse or experiencing periods of crisis. In addition, the group delivers specialised disabled facility grants, supports the hospital discharge process through the work of the Hospital Enablement Team, and provides temporary accommodation alongside measures to sustain tenancies.

The Housing Service have continued to experience a very high demand in the last year with high caseloads and an increase in complexity of need for people they are supporting. The 15 units of Council owned self-contained accommodation for households who are experiencing homelessness has proved to be a valuable resource providing safe and secure accommodation for individuals.

The Environmental Health team have continued to deliver the full food and health & safety inspection programme within the target date set by the Food Standards Agency and The Health & Safety Executive, ensuring standards within the district are being effectively monitored.

The Environmental Services team have been delivering the long-term site management plan for the historical landfill site located in Huncote, whilst working alongside other teams on a project to rewild the area and reopen it to residents. Work has also continued on the management of two other Council owned former landfill sites.

In addition this year, extensive work has been underway to develop a new Air Quality Action Plan which addresses exceedances within the district's Air Quality Management Areas and improving overall air quality. It is expected to be implemented in early 2026. As part of the teams work the Car Parking Strategy, Environmental Permitting, Planning consultations and the DEFRA grant funded projects have also been delivered.

The Net Zero Programme Delivery Officer has continued to work as the lead officer for Solar Together for the County and supported sourcing external funding opportunities for future green projects. Alongside this the Officer has worked with other services on the electrification and supporting infrastructure of the fleet and the depot.

In Lightbulb, following the announcement of LGR the partnership agreed to extend the current Lightbulb Agreement for 12 months while the wider implications of LGR were considered.

Despite this pause on the planned implementation of a 5 year agreement, improvement work has continued across the service. There has been a focus on streamlining processes, reducing delays and meeting turnaround targets. The early implementation of the caseworker pilot this year has already had a notable impact, with every service user on the waitlist contacted for an update, improving communication and enabling more proactive case progression. Early feedback shows a more efficient customer journey.

The Housing Enablement Team has had yet again another extremely busy year in fact, the busiest year to date with demand for complex housing support linked to hospital discharge continuing to rise across all acute, community and mental health settings.

This year marked the conclusion of the CAMHS pilot, which provided valuable insight into the housing barriers experienced by young people and their families. All other pilots have continued, including the countywide Mental Health Relationship Enabler project and the Discharge Accommodation Pilot, both of which remain essential in supporting the most vulnerable patients to return home safely and avoid unnecessary delays.

Alongside the growth in demand, a significant focus has been placed on developing a refreshed business case for HET, as the current funding agreement comes to an end in March 2026. This work aims to strengthen the service model, reflect the increasing complexity of need, and ensure the partnership can continue to meet system pressures in the years ahead.

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Les Phillimore

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

Portfolio Total

Housing, Community Safety and Environmental Services - Total	2025/26 Approved Budget	2025/26 Revised Estimate	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£4,317,540	£4,820,156	£4,298,940	-£18,600 -0.43%	-£521,216 -10.81%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£1,583,409	£4,219,638	£3,343,709	£1,760,300 111.17%	-£875,929 -20.76%
3. Direct Income	-£3,680,171	-£5,165,654	-£4,646,694	-£966,523 26.26%	£518,960 -10.05%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£2,220,778	£3,874,140	£2,995,956	£775,177 34.91%	-£878,184 -22.67%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	85.04	96.71	83.04	-2.00 -2.35%	-13.67 -14.14%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This portfolio incorporates the establishment and operational costs in respect of Housing, Community Safety, and Environmental Services.

The establishment budget for 2025/26 allowed for a 3% pay award within services. The nationally agreed pay award for Chief Executives, Chief Officers (Directors and Group Managers) and officers on grades 1 to 9 was 3.2%. The establishment budget for 2026/27 allows for a 3% estimated pay award within each portfolio and a further 1% held centrally, contractual increments where appropriate, and employer's national insurance and pension contributions within service budgets. The Leicestershire Pension Fund confirmed a decrease in the Councils Employer contribution rate of 6% from 2026/27. The Council currently pays a rate of 28.3%, this will reduce to 22.3% from 2026/27 through to 2028/29.

Unspent budget from 2024/25 has been carried forward to be used in the year and is reflected in the revised estimate within Environmental Health, Environmental Services, Community Services, Lightbulb and HET and Management and Administration.

The Homelessness Service has seen an increase in homeless approaches over the past 6 years with significant increases in the last two years. Government grant funding has been used in the year towards staffing and is proposed to be used in 2026/27 to help support the service. The cost of hiring rooms has seen a disproportionate increase and revised estimate has been updated based on actual costs incurred in the year to date. The 2026/27 budget has been based on the level of costs currently being seen. A provision of £500,000 has been added to the proposed budget to be used for homelessness prevention due to the increasing costs.

Grant funding where confirmed has been included in the Direct Income. If no confirmation of funding has been received, no income assumption is built into the 2026/27 budget.

At the time of the budget being drafted for 2025/26 discussions were still being undertaken with partners regarding the Lightbulb Service. The approved budget for 2025/26 reflects the no change 12 month agreement. Pilot schemes were added into the budget once confirmed and the Establishment costs offset with top sliced DFG funds. The proposed budget for 2026/27 includes Establishment costs for Lightbulb and HET. As the Pilot schemes are not yet confirmed, these will be added at a later date once confirmed, with the top sliced funding also built into direct income.

Environmental Health and Environmental Services

	2025/26 Approved Budget	2025/26 Revised Estimate	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£1,123,590	£1,123,590	£1,043,190	-£80,400 -7.16%	-£80,400 -2.47%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£329,484	£499,434	£337,802	£8,318 2.52%	-£161,632 -32.36%
3. Direct Income	-£461,076	-£445,511	-£430,391	£30,685 -6.66%	£15,120 -3.39%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£991,998	£1,177,513	£950,602	-£41,397 -4.17%	-£226,911 -19.27%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	22.17	22.17	20.17	-2.00 -9.02%	-2.00 -9.02%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. Budget and external funding carried forward from 2024/25 for specific projects is included within the revised estimate.
3. The revised estimate for the DEFRA AQ Scheme reflects actual income received. No such income has been budgeted for 2026/27.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Air Quality Officer role released, in addition the Environmental Health and Environmental Services Manager roles were originally budget as 2 FTE roles, these have been combined into one role across both services.

Community Services

	2025/26 Approved Budget	2025/26 Revised Estimate	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£467,680	£467,680	£463,480	-£4,200 -0.90%	-£4,200 -0.90%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£32,966	£131,364	£33,002	£36 0.11%	-£98,362 -74.88%
3. Direct Income	£0	-£27,700	£0	£0 N/A	£27,700 -100.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£500,646	£571,344	£496,482	-£4,164 -0.83%	-£74,862 -13.10%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	8.50	8.50	8.50	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. One off budget provision carried forward from 2024/25 including £86,000 external funding in relation to Community Development Projects is included in the revised estimate.
3. Revised Estimate includes external contributions towards Resident Support service expenses, and youth provision. Neither of these are included in 2026/27 due to uncertainty over external funding.
4. This represents the net impact of the variances listed above.
5. No change.

Housing Services

	2025/26 Approved Budget	2025/26 Revised Estimate	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£930,060	£989,046	£976,410	£46,350 4.98%	-£12,636 -1.28%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£818,621	£2,304,422	£2,699,321	£1,880,700 229.74%	£394,899 17.14%
3. Direct Income	-£1,015,448	-£2,048,188	-£2,096,550	-£1,081,102 106.47%	-£48,362 2.36%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£733,233	£1,245,280	£1,579,181	£845,948 115.37%	£333,901 26.81%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	18.00	19.00	18.00	0.00 0.00%	-1.00 -5.26%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. The revised estimate includes a significant increase in the cost of temporary accommodation (such as Bed and Breakfasts) and is based on actual costs incurred year to date. These increased costs are also reflected in the 2026/27 draft budget as it is not anticipated that these will decrease. The revised estimate also includes grant funding carried forward from 2024/25 to be used for reducing homelessness. A provision of £500,000 has been added to the proposed budget to be used for homelessness prevention due to the increasing 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. Included within the revised estimate is a Fixed Term role for a Housing Accommodation Manager approved by Cabinet in May 2025. A Fixed term contract for a Housing Assessment Officer has been removed in the 2026/27 proposed budget as the contract is due to end in March 2026.

Management & Administration

	2025/26 Approved Budget	2025/26 Revised Estimate	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£135,060	£135,060	£133,540	-£1,520 -1.13%	-£1,520 -1.13%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£2,145	£255,915	£2,517	£372 17.33%	-£253,398 -99.02%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 N/A	£0 N/A
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£137,205	£390,975	£136,057	-£1,148 -0.84%	-£254,918 -65.20%
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 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. Proposed budget reflects inflationary increases. The revised estimate includes Ukrainian Refugee Scheme Funding brought forward from 2024/25, if any of the funding is unspent at the end of the year it will be requested to be carried forward into 2026/27 and utilised in year.
3. No income in respect of this cost centre.
4. Net impact of the variances listed above.
5. No change.

Lightbulb and HET

	2025/26 Approved Budget	2025/26 Revised Estimate	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£1,661,150	£2,104,780	£1,682,320	£21,170 1.27%	-£422,460 -20.07%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£400,193	£1,028,503	£271,067	-£129,126 -32.27%	-£757,436 -73.64%
3. Direct Income	-£2,203,647	-£2,644,255	-£2,119,753	£83,894 -3.81%	£524,502 -19.84%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	-£142,304	£489,028	-£166,366	-£24,062 16.91%	-£655,394 -134.02%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	34.87	45.54	34.87	0.00 0.00%	-10.67 -23.43%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions. The 2025/26 revised estimate includes externally funded projects in respect of Assisted Technology and Caseworker Pilot. In line with the previous year, these have been removed for 2026/27 until the funding is confirmed. Both Original 2025/26 budget and 2026/27 revised budget are based on the agreed no change budget.
2. The revised estimate includes underspent budget provision brought forward from 2024/25 (non-recurring in 2026/27), much of which is externally funded. As BDC lead on the Lightbulb service, the direct expenditure is split between the Council and the partners - Melton, Charnwood, Oadby & Wigston, Harborough, Hinckley & Bosworth, North West Leicestershire and County in line with the lightbulb agreement.
3. The revised estimate takes into account increased funding for the additional posts included in point one above. This direct income includes partner contributions for the Lightbulb and HET services.
4. This represents the net impact of the variances listed above.
5. As per point one.

Portfolio Priorities

Housing Services

- Continue work to aim to increase the supply of Affordable Homes.
- Build upon and expand the current Council owned temporary accommodation units, providing more appropriate self-contained accommodation for homeless households.
- Continue to work with partners to provide specialist housing for vulnerable groups.
- Continue to work to prevent homelessness and aim to end rough sleeping.
- Continue to work to minimise the environmental impact of the existing and future housing stock.

Community Services

- To review the provision of domestic abuse services across the authority from point of entry through to referral and case management processes.
- Embed the serious violence reduction and prevention principles into the work of the team across the roles of domestic abuse support, children's workers, and ASB prevention.
- Continue to work with partners to reduce Serious Violence in the district (encompassing Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Night-Time Economy, Terrorism, Hate, Exploitation, Knife crime, and substance misuse related crime).
- Review and deliver our Community Safety Partnership Strategy Action Plan
- Support the continued development of the new ASB recording system across LLR and Police
- To continue to deliver a programme of work with young people including 121 and group work interventions, schools work and diversionary activities meeting the priority areas set out within the community safety partnership plans.
- To deliver the PLF funding programme

Environmental Health

- Ensure the statutory food inspection programme is continued to be delivered in line with the recently published Food Law Code of Practice (October 2025) and the Council's developed Food Safety Service Plan 2026/27.
- To continue to tackle Envirocrime across the district using marketing campaigns, social media, partnership working and enhanced enforcement through a range of approaches such as CCTV.
- To ensure private rented housing sector standards are maintained/improved within the district and that the new provisions of the Renters Rights Bill are implemented enabling the authority to meet the new service demands.
- To implement the changes of the new Public Spaces Protection Order for dogs for the Council to ensure its effective enforcement.
- To increase proactive licensing enforcement activities across the range of licenses issued to ensure safe and compliant service for our residents.

- To continue to increase engagement with our licensed premises and effectively link with partners to increase safety in the nighttime economy and address areas of concern.

Environmental Services

- Continue to deliver the long-term strategy for management of the former landfill sites owned by the Council.
- Continue to risk assess and investigate contaminated land in the district in line with the objectives of the Contaminated Land Strategy.
- To implement the objectives of the new Air Quality Action Plan
- To complete the review of smoke control areas within the district which includes campaigns to raise awareness of the health impacts of smoke.
- To collaborate with Environmental Health to incorporate smoke control into the existing enforcement policy.
- To finalise the Particulates Matter Defra funded air quality project working in partnership with health partners.
- Continue to implement the objectives of the Car Parking Strategy which will involve replacing/ upgrading eight machines which have come to the end-of-life cycle.
- Continue to deliver the Net Zero Action Plan
- Continue to inspect regulated businesses to ensure full compliance with the Environmental Permitting regulations.

Lightbulb and Housing Enablement Team

- To gain agreement by all partners for funding for Lightbulb from 2026 to 2028.
- To continue to develop the Home Gadgets, Caseworker, Safespaces, and the Housing & Respiratory Illness pilots over the next 12 months to inform whether they become business as usual.
- To gain further funding agreements and deliver the Housing Enabler Service across all hospital settings in Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland.
- Maintaining awareness of Equalities and Human Rights across the council by staff and members to ensure equitable access to services remains a focus for 2026/27.

Key points

<p>Doing things differently – plans for the coming year</p>	<p><u>Housing Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enable high quality affordable homes that meet the needs of the District.• Deliver a new Housing Strategy 2026 - 2031.• Enabling the development of new supported provision within the district meeting the needs of our residents.• Ensure appropriate support is in place for victims of Domestic Abuse who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.• To enhance and expand the Council owned temporary accommodation offer. <p><u>Environmental Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement the new Air Quality Action Plan for the district following approval from DEFRA• Devise and start to implement a new Smoke Control Area plan/ policy for the district if required• Continue to deliver the 2030 Net Zero Council Action Plan• Continue to deliver the management plan for council owned former landfill sites in the district• Continue to deliver the objectives in the Contaminated Land Strategy• Continue to deliver the Car park Strategy• To ensure businesses remain compliant with the Environmental Permitting regulations by conducting inspections, monitoring business activity, and reviewing permit conditions where necessary. <p><u>Community Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To produce the Annual Community Safety Partnership Strategy Action Plan for 2026-27• To maintain compliance with the Serious Violence Duty• To deliver innovative projects (Rural crime initiatives, Joint Youth council projects, Smart Doorbell project, Warm Packs, Fuel Bank etc) that have a measurable impact on vulnerable people's wellbeing and safety• To ensure a programme of ASB and Crime prevention work in schools paired with therapeutic 121 and group sessions and diversionary activities for young people to reduce likelihood of young people being drawn into crime.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that vulnerable people get the right support, at the right time, in the right way <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 explore opportunities of collaborative working and shared efficiencies across teams and wider authorities. • To explore opportunities of mobile working and development of online inspection proformas. • To implement the changes required by the introduction of the Renters Right Act. <p><u>Lightbulb</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To gain agreement from all partners to sign up to a new legal agreement from April 2026. • Look to review, and where appropriate expand the service offered via the pilots, e.g. Caseworkers, Home Gadgets and Housing Occupational Therapist. <p><u>Housing Enablement Team</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that the service is a key part of the Integrated Discharge Team and the Community Care Partnership • To gain agreement to further fund the project from April 2026 across all partners. <p><u>Climate Change & Net Zero</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devise and start to implement a new Smoke Control Area plan/ policy for the district. • Deliver the 2030 Net Zero Council Action Plan • Work with Partners in the Green Living Leicestershire Group to deliver the installation of an Electric Vehicle Charging hub and charge points across the district. • To continue to work towards the 2050 Net Zero Target for the District, including development of a 2050 Action Plan • To continue to lead on projects for the County such as Solar Together and Collective Switching. • To review and update the Climate Change Strategy
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Income generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car Parks • Licensing for animal health • Licensing support for wider geographical areas • Taxi Licensing • Permitted process income • Regulatory income – Civil penalties • Provision of Accommodation certificates • Food Hygiene Re-Score requests. • Provision of Food Product Export Certificates • Focus on identifying unlicensed HMO's • Contaminated Land Search enquiries • Seeking to establish Primary Authority agreements where possible with businesses in the district
Capital plans for the portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £24,000 included for the replacement of air quality monitoring equipment to ensure our statutory monitoring requirements are met. • £50,000 included for the replacement of car parking machines to progress actions contained within the Car Parking Strategy • £165,700 LEVI/BRP (pooled business rated) funding included for 2025/26 for the purchase of the Electric Vehicle Charging hub for Enderby Leisure Centre. (Delivery facilitated by the Green Living Leicestershire Partnership- project lead is HDC). • £25,000 included for 2026/2027 to progress the actions contained within the Contaminated Land Strategy. • £3000 included for 2026/2027 to replace equipment installed as part of the landfill gas mitigation at Huncote Leisure Centre.

Key Performance Indicators

Net Zero and Climate Change

This measure is the number of tonnes of carbon dioxide which makes up the Councils Carbon footprint, it demonstrates progression towards the target of net zero by 2030 as a Council.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	COMMENTS
Number of tonnes of carbon dioxide which makes up the Councils Carbon footprint, it demonstrates progression towards the target of net zero by 2030 as a Council.	488.35	178.78	181.3	23/24 is the first complete year following the switch to HVO from diesel. The 77% decrease in emissions from the baseline year is primarily as a result of this change. 25/26 has seen a slight overall increase of 1.4% which can be attributed to a 3% rise in neighbourhood services. The total is calculated annually so we do not provide a half year figure.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 YEAR TO DATE	COMMENTS
Number of cases where homelessness has been prevented	272	284	207	The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) places a duty on the Council to work with applicants for longer to help prevent them from becoming homeless.

Number of homelessness presentations	1014	1102	698	The total number of homelessness approaches to the Council remains high. However, we have seen a significant increase in the numbers since August 2024. This figure represents all approaches and takes account of both prevention, relief, and main duty cases that the team are managing.
Number of Affordable Homes completed.	131	36	6	Delivery remains consistently slow. Only 36 new affordable homes were built in 24/25 as overall build rates on major schemes slowed considerably. In the current financial year there are further problems regarding the capacity of Registered Providers resulting in them being unable to purchase new affordable homes on s106 sites.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 YEAR TO DATE	COMMENTS
Number of ASB cases reported in Blaby	607	335	665	The figures for 23/24 and 24/25 are Police figures including all ASB reported across several systems. The new Ecins case recording system has now been fully implemented data sets are still being finalised and embedded which at present means there may be some cross over between multiple system.

Support services (Resident Support/Children's Worker/Domestic Abuse)– number of people supported	322	416	183	There is a reduction in the number of individuals supported in 1-2-1 sessions as following a review of the Children's Workers delivery approach to meet the needs of the Serious Violence duty a focus has been placed on group session delivery which reaches a wider target audience.
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PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 YEAR TO DATE	COMMENTS
Total number of long-term (6 months+) empty properties in the district. Figures reported on annually in October.	390	346	Annual figure calculated in October each year so no part year figure produced 346	The team have continued to work with property owners to bring empty homes back in to use. We will be looking to refresh our approach to empty properties in the coming year to ensure all new guidance and tools are utilised to bring properties effectively back into use.
Number of large fly tipping incidents	741	824	414	In 2025 (Qtrs 1, 2&3), the number of reported fly tipping incidents across the district has decreased compared with the same period in 24/25. The team will continue to take action where we are able and are actively partaking in Countywide campaigns to raise awareness of individual responsibilities and potential sanctions that could be faced. We have also managed to secure grant funding to support the purchase of new covert camera's.

Number of food premises with a rating of three or above (satisfactory)	601 out of 623 relevant food outlets 96.5%	608 out of 623 relevant food outlets 97.6%	603 out of 610 relevant food outlets 98.9%	The proportion of compliant food businesses (rating of three or above) has been very consistent over the last three years.
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Lightbulb

New performance reporting measures have been agreed amongst all partners including: first contact, end to end times for completion of DFG's etc.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 YEAR TO DATE	COMMENTS
Number of DFG Applications made. (Total number of applications made some may result in refusals or withdrawals)	146	127	97	The number of DFG applications received so far in 2025/26 indicates a positive upward trend when compared with the same period in previous years and suggests that overall application numbers are likely to exceed those seen in both 2023/24 and 2024/25. This reflects increasing demand, driven by ongoing referrals from health and housing partners and continued pressures across the wider system.
Number of DFG's completed.	67	77	64	The number of DFGs completed so far in 2025/26 remains steady in the context of year-to-date delivery. Ongoing process improvements and continued support from caseworkers have enabled progress on simpler cases, while more complex adaptations continue to impact overall throughput. Performance will continue to be monitored as the year progresses.

End to End time taken to complete DFGs (from initial enquiry by customer to completion of work, broken down by stages)	203 days	213 days	252 days	End-to-end completion times for 2025/26 currently show an increase when compared with previous years. This reflects a higher proportion of complex cases within the system, alongside continued pressures across TO capacity and contractor availability.
Number of holistic housing needs assessments carried out for Blaby Residents (through The Lightbulb Partnership).	376	338	212	Activity remains strong and continues to include both new assessments and follow-up reviews to ensure the appropriateness of equipment and interventions. Demand is expected to remain consistent through the remainder of the year.
Number of patients supported to be able to leave Hospital through intervention by The Housing Enabler Team.	1515	2129	1457	Demand remains high, driven by ongoing pressures within the health and housing system, including homelessness and accommodation shortages. The Housing Enablement Team continues to work closely with NHS and local authority partners to support timely and safe discharges.

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.

- Car parking have and will continue to consult on changes in the Car Parking orders and strategy.
- We will continue to consult on changes across the teams such as log burners, public spaces protection orders etc.

Risks:

- Recruitment and retention of qualified staff.
- Lack of temporary accommodation and appropriate temporary accommodation options.
- Impacts of the rising costs such as energy, food, maintenance etc on businesses within the districts and their standards.
- Impacts of rising cost of energy and food increasing demand on services and impacting crime figures
- 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 or PLF (Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner) will impact on service delivery.
- 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 resettlement programmes and landlords leaving the private sector rented market.
- 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.
- The limited capacity of Registered Providers to pick up the affordable housing gain on major schemes remains a concern and may lead to less affordable homes coming forwards.
- Key personnel leaving or reducing their hours within the key frontline services currently experiencing very high demand.
- All Partners do not sign up to the new Lightbulb 2 year extension proposal and/or do not agree to extend the pilots and undertake work to look at minor adaptations becoming part of the Lightbulb offer.
- Integrated Care Board and Leicestershire Partnership Trust not agreeing to the extension and/or proposed uplift in the new business case for the HET service, there is a risk that the service will face a funding shortfall, impacting delivery, capacity, and future sustainability.

**Planning and Strategic Growth Portfolio
Councillor Mike Shirley**

Against the backdrop of significant policy changes, this past year has seen us continue to evolve our approach in the current planning environment. Changes have taken place, with more expected in the future, meaning that my portfolio has seen plenty of challenges with unprecedented levels of planning applications but also positive results. We continue to deliver the Council's Blaby Plan priorities whilst ensuring we provide an open and transparent service that residents can be proud of.

Development Strategy

The Local Plan continues to progress despite ongoing amendments resulting in revisions to the timeframe of the Reg 19 publication. Furthermore, we anticipate the forthcoming Planning & Infrastructure Act which will comprehensively change the way Local Plans are formed and delivered in the future.

The Local Plan Member Development Group continue to meet regularly to ensure leadership input and effective communication with Members. A briefing with all member is planned to strengthen engagement, which remains critical as we move towards publication of the draft Local Plan in April.

Planning Delivery

We continue to drive forward the service offer available and have once again generated more income from planning applications this last year than ever before. We continue to provide training and support to the cross-party Planning Committee which has settled into its role, delivering democratic accountability in decision making, ensuring we continue to deliver planning decisions in line with national targets. This is achieved against the backdrop of changes to planning processes and procedures.

We are also continuing to invest in our customer journey, with the successful implementation of improvements to the planning front door through the Customer Services team. This has seen more customer enquires resolved at first point of contact. Plans to enhance this work will continue into 2026/27.

Planning Enforcement

The Planning enforcement team continue to deal with a wide range of matters. We continue to have an excellent record in obtaining successful outcomes from both the appeals and prosecutions processes but only take action where it is necessary.

Strategic Growth

Our Strategic Growth team continued its hard work this year in continuing to develop New Lubbethorpe. Over the last year this has culminated in approval to extend the current Primary School to ensure local children can access their local school, as well as delivery of the new local centre, which includes a small supermarket, GP practice with more to come shortly. The team are also continuing work on other potential strategic sites ensuring they are right for Blaby District. These projects continue to ensure Blaby's place shaping vision, meaning it is a great place to live, work and visit.

Future

Our focus continues to be on delivering for the customer. While pressures are still being experienced from a number of areas, including the imposition of mandatory housing numbers, the Council and its officers are committed to delivering the emerging local plan and regaining control of our 5 Year Housing Land Supply.

We will be continuing to explore opportunities that technological advancements provide us and will look for efficiencies whilst ensuring we put the customer at the heart of everything we do.

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mike Shirley

Senior Officers: Planning & Strategic Growth Group Manager

Portfolio Total

Planning and Strategic Growth – Total	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£1,744,780	£1,807,522	£1,809,350	£64,570 3.70%	£1,828 0.10%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£322,039	£822,638	£315,799	-£6,240 -1.94%	-£506,839 -61.61%
3. Direct Income	-£891,315	-£1,349,240	-£882,000	£9,315 -1.05%	£467,240 -34.63%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£1,175,504	£1,280,920	£1,243,149	£67,645 5.75%	-£37,771 -2.95%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	29.99	31.99	32.15	2.16 7.20%	0.16 0.50%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This portfolio includes the establishment and operational costs relating to Planning.

The establishment budget for 2025/26 allowed for a 3% pay award within services. The nationally agreed pay award for Chief Executives, Chief Officers (Directors and Group Managers) and officers on grades 1 to 9 was 3.2%. The establishment budget for 2026/27 allows for a 3% estimated pay award within each portfolio and a further 1% held centrally, contractual increments where appropriate, and employer's national insurance and pension contributions within service budgets. The Leicestershire Pension Fund confirmed a decrease in the Councils Employer contribution rate of 6% from 2026/27. The Council currently pays a rate of 28.3%, this will reduce to 22.3% from 2026/27 through to 2028/29.

Other gross direct expenditure includes one-off unspent budget brought forward from 2024/25, and additional funding released from the Local Plan Reserve for consultancy work is reflected in the revised 2025/26 budget. One off costs have been included within the revised 2025/26 budget relating to the Concept Framework and Stewardship.

Planning income has increased substantially during the year, the revised 2025/26 budget has been revised to reflect this. This income stream can be challenging to predict - the robustness of the general economy can have a big impact on the planning applications received, and income generated. As such, the 2026/27 has been reduced back to original 2025/26 budgeted levels.

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

	2025/26 Approved Budget	2025/26 Revised Estimate	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£417,610	£417,610	£413,380	-£4,230 -1.01%	-£4,230 -1.01%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£93,552	£455,237	£88,106	-£5,446 -5.82%	-£367,131 -80.65%
3. Direct Income	-£42,000	-£75,000	-£42,000	£0 0.00%	£33,000 -44.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£469,162	£797,847	£459,486	-£9,676 -2.06%	-£338,361 -42.41%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	6.89	6.89	6.89	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. The revised budget for 2025/26 includes expenditure relating to the Local Development Framework, for which funding is from the Local Plan Reserve and consultancy work associated with the local plan. 2026/27 proposed budget is in line with the original 2025/26 budget.
3. The revised budget for 2025/26 includes S106 contribution relating to Lubbesthorpe.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change.

PLANNING DELIVERY

	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£777,750	£440,492	£824,530	£46,780 6.01%	-£15,962 -1.90%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£137,454	£189,405	£141,316	£3,862 2.81%	-£48,089 -25.39%
3. Direct Income	-£809,315	-£1,234,240	-£800,000	£9,315 -1.15%	£434,240 -35.18%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£105,889	-£205,343	£165,846	£59,957 56.62%	£370,189 -181.16%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	14.15	16.15	16.26	2.11 14.91%	0.11 0.68%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. The revised budget includes additional consultant's fees relating to Oak Road. One off expenditure items from 2025/26 have been removed from the proposed budget for 2026/27.
3. The income budget has been increased in 2025/26 to reflect the forecast outturn position. Budget for 2026/27 based on 2025/26 approved budget.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Senior Planning Officer role replaced with two Planning Officers and a Planning Support Officer Apprentice. In addition, slight change in hours.

ENFORCEMENT

	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£176,390	£176,390	£201,310	£24,920 14.13%	£24,920 14.13%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£23,669	£21,687	£23,069	-£600 -2.53%	£1,382 6.37%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£200,059	£198,077	£224,379	£24,320 12.16%	£26,302 13.28%
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 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. No significant movement.
3. Not applicable.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change.

STRATEGIC GROWTH

	2025/26 Approved Budget	2025/26 Revised Estimate	2026/27 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£212,510	£212,510	£205,310	-£7,200 -3.39%	-£7,200 -3.39%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£11,670	£91,815	£7,614	-£4,056 -34.75%	-£84,201 -91.71%
3. Direct Income	-£40,000	-£40,000	-£40,000	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£184,180	£264,325	£172,924	-£11,256 -6.11%	-£91,401 -34.58%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	2.95	2.95	3.00	0.05 1.69%	0.05 1.69%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. 2025/26 revised estimate includes non-recurring expenditure brought forward from 2024/25, for Whetstone Garden Village and Lubbethorpe.
3. No movement.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Slight increase in hours in one post.

MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION

	2025/26 Approved Budget [A]	2025/26 Revised Estimate [B]	2026/27 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£160,520	£160,520	£164,820	£4,300 2.68%	£4,300 2.68%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£55,694	£64,494	£55,694	£0 0.00%	-£8,800 -13.64%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£216,214	£225,014	£220,514	£4,300 1.99%	-£4,500 -2.00%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2026/27 establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, any increase to employer's national insurance and the decrease of 6% to the Councils pension contributions.
2. 2025/26 revised estimate includes costs of microfiche as the new MFD's cannot scan in house historic planning applications.
3. Not applicable.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change.

Portfolio Priorities

Priorities for 2026/27 for the portfolio include:

- 1. Future Strategic sites** - The Strategic Growth team manages a range of large-scale projects which are likely to come forward in the future. These include:
 - a. Whetstone Pastures Garden Village
 - b. Land West of Stoney Stanton
 - c. Land West of Lubbethorpe
- 2. Other Strategic sites** – The team will also progress the delivery and further development of other large scale sites already committed across the District. This includes:
 - a. Hastings Fields (Land north of Hinckley Road, Kirby Muxloe) – delivering the outline planning permission and progressing the reserved matters and delivery of the development.
 - b. Everards Meadows and Fosse Park – working with landowners on any future developments in this area.
- 3. Delivery of the Lubbethorpe Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE)** - The development continues to be held up as a beacon of best practice for how to deliver a SUE, as not only has it delivered a place but also a community. There are currently nearly 1300 occupied dwellings, including nearly 200 Affordable Homes (approximately 15%). As well as a recently completed Local Centre (including health centre and retail outlet) with the Primary School currently being extended. Over the next few years, further homes will be built alongside a new secondary school, further primary school, District Centre and second Local Centre, as well as community facilities and further open space provision.
- 4. Emerging Local Plan** - The next 12 months will see crucial milestones for the emerging Local Plan, these being publication of Regulation 19 in April 2026 and submission to the Planning Inspectorate by December 2026, with the aim of having an adopted Local Plan by the end of 2027.
- 5. Planning Reforms** - During the last 12 months there have been many consultations on proposed planning reforms which will inevitably impact the way we work across the planning service. We have recently received another National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) the second in 12 months as well as the progression of the Planning & Infrastructure Act which we expect to be implemented via secondary legislation in the Spring. This will bring with it a plethora of changes to fees, schemes of delegation and committees among other things; all in a bid to unlock development and drive economic growth.
- 6. Delivering an effective and efficient Development Management Service** – Planning application numbers are stable and manageable across the team. They range in complexity and we remain focussed on being able to determine these as efficiently as possible. We will build on existing knowledge and expand this through suitable training opportunities. We will continue to meet government timeframes for decisions and quality. The focus for 2026/27 is to deliver a number of projects including introduction of a paid pre-application service, and a validation checklist. A focus on continuing to improve our customer interface will remain a priority for 2026/27.

- 7. Enforcement action** - The team will continue to investigate breaches of planning regulations and take proportionate action where necessary. Any notices that are served will be done so accurately and effectively to ensure they stand up to external scrutiny. An expansion of more proactive enforcement through compliance monitoring will also be considered.
- 8. Joint Strategic Planning** – We maintain close collaboration with local authorities across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, actively engaging with external stakeholders (Homes England, National Highways etc) to facilitate the delivery of critical infrastructure, thereby enabling sustainable growth within the District and the wider region. This will continue and be critical as we progress through to Spatial Development Strategies which will come forward prior to devolution.

Services

The portfolio comprises the following services:

Planning & Strategic Growth:

Development Strategy

The key 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 a Service Manager, Principal/Senior/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 in line with government timescales.

This budget includes the costs of a Service Manager, Team Leaders, Senior/Planning Officers and Technical/support staff involved in providing advice to potential applicants and determining applications.

Planning Enforcement

This budget includes the costs of a Team Leader, Enforcement Officers and Technical/support staff, who proactively monitor development across the district, carrying out investigations, enforce planning controls and take forward prosecutions where necessary.

Strategic Growth Team

The Strategic Growth team are responsible for progressing the planning, development, and delivery of large strategic sites across Blaby District. These are considered to be projects which fall outside of the usual development management process, due to their profile and the need for a more complex range of skills and will include applications which generate significant infrastructure requirements such as schools, local centres, strategic open space and road infrastructure.

This budget includes the cost of the Strategic Growth Manager and two Major Schemes Officers, along with some external funding from Planning Performance Agreements and external government funding.

Management & Administration

This budget includes the cost of the Planning & Strategic Growth Group Manager and the support staff who manage the portfolio budgets and systems.

Key Points

Doing things differently – plans for the coming year	<p>The portfolio continues to excel, despite a further challenging year due to unprecedented levels of planning reform which shows no sign of abating. However, staff remain motivated and continue to provide an efficient service.</p> <p>The focus of the portfolio continues to be on the submission of our emerging local plan and regaining our 5 Year Housing Land Supply position, which will allow greater control and focus on place shaping of the District.</p> <p>As set out in the priorities for the forthcoming year; we expect the next 12 months to be challenging –but also rewarding and exciting with the prospect of significant investment in the District coming forward.</p> <p><u>Development Strategy</u> The team will continue to focus on strategic planning and the emerging Local Plan. Work will continue during 2026/27 on the key objective and corporate priority of delivering a new Local Plan which aims to progress to Regulation 19 and submission to the Secretary of State.</p> <p><u>Strategic Growth</u> The team will continue to project manage and deliver some of the district's most high profile and complex strategic projects. This includes a wide range of sites; from commercial developments, two new strategic sites and the continued delivery of Lubbethorpe.</p> <p><u>Planning Delivery</u> The workload of the team has reached a stable level recently as application levels have become more manageable. This will enable focus to turn to the delivery of a number of specific projects, which will improve efficiency and transparency for all involved in the planning process. This includes the creation of a pre-application service, rollout of validation checklists and ongoing customer service improvements.</p>
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	<p><u>Enforcement</u> The enforcement team will continue its work on the high profile and sensitive sites, as well as expanding its proactive monitoring approach utilising new ways of working in its capabilities.</p> <p><u>Management & Administration</u> The focus for 2026/27 will be on the delivery of high-quality services, whilst supporting and enabling staff development, leading to improved business continuity and resilience.</p>
Income generation	<p>The fees and charges for the service are constantly being reviewed to ensure that we maximise our income without impacting on the service from both a customer and officer perspective.</p> <p>Income generation across the group is currently restricted to fees for documents, and nationally set planning application fees. However we anticipate this to change in 2026/27 with the Planning and Infrastructure Act which is likely to include an element of locally set planning fees. In addition, a project to look at chargeable pre-application advice will be delivered in 2026/27.</p> <p>The group will seek to maximise opportunities for cost saving through collaborative working.</p>
Capital plans for the portfolio	<p>There are no current capital plans for the portfolio.</p>

Key Performance Indicators

Planning & Strategic Growth	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26 Apr - Dec
Number of planning applications received	943	961	938	900	713
Planning application fee income	£572,724	£464,613	£546,461	£1,027,450	£817,174
Number of planning applications determined	1,280	842	536	852	594
% of major applications determined in 13 weeks	100	88.89	93.33	90	94.73
End to End (householders)	91.65	80.59	67.83	69.87	72.01
End to End (majors)	256.22	197.89	492.59	266.55	327.53
End to End (non-majors)	74.6	82.42	104.48	68.81	63.26
End to End (DOC)	90.59	84.3	94.01	106.44	81.81

Customers

- The Planning Delivery and Enforcement services in particular have heavy interaction with residents, and we continue to monitor customer feedback to ensure that all interactions with customers and stakeholders to these services are conducted appropriately and professionally, whilst continuing to deliver any efficiencies where possible.
- Customer Service improvements have been made throughout 2025/26 enabling more requests to be resolved at the first point of contact through joint working with

the Customer Services Team. This work will be reviewed and further improvements identified in 26/27.

- During 2026/27 we will be conducting a significant publication on the next stage of the emerging Local Plan which is our Regulation 19 (a full draft plan).
- A pre application service and validation checklists will support further improvements to customer communications in 2026/27 and beyond.

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. This will ensure we continue to meet national performance targets whilst delivering the housing growth Blaby requires.
- Failure to progress the emerging Local Plan would leave the district vulnerable to unacceptable speculative developments.
- High numbers of appeals would increase pressures on the Development Services Team.
- Continued delivery of Lubbesthorpe is essential, as a failure to do so would continue to have a detrimental effect on the Councils 5-year housing land supply.
- Whilst clarity on plan making reforms has been provided, further planning reform is expected in 2026/27. Therefore, further amendments could lead to delays to plan making and decision making.
- Failure to deliver an effective enforcement service could result in reputational damage to the Council.
- Failure to ensure a robust and risk assessed approach to enforcement investigations, could leave staff at risk of harassment or violence.

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