

DATE: 26 January 2021  
MY REF: Scrutiny of the Budget  
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## SCRUTINY OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S BUDGET PROPOSALS

### Invitation and Agenda to all Members

Cllr. Geoff Welsh (Chairman)  
Cllr. Lee Breckon (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr. Sam Maxwell (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr. Shabbir Aslam  
Cllr. Shane Blackwell  
Cllr. Nick Brown  
Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore  
Cllr. Nick Chapman  
Cllr. David Clements  
Cllr. Adrian Clifford  
Cllr. Stuart Coar  
Cllr. Roy Denney

Cllr. Alex DeWinter  
Cllr. David Findlay  
Cllr. Janet Forey  
Cllr. Deanne Freer  
Cllr. Chris Frost  
Cllr. Nigel Grundy  
Cllr. Paul Hartshorn  
Cllr. Iain Hewson  
Cllr. Mark Jackson  
Cllr. Trevor Matthews  
Cllr. Christine Merrill

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

Dear Members,

A meeting of the **SCRUTINY OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S BUDGET PROPOSALS** will be held via Zoom on **WEDNESDAY, 27 JANUARY 2021** at **5.30 p.m.**

Yours faithfully



**Colin Jones**  
**Corporate Services Group Manager**



## **AGENDA**

### 3. 2021/22 Draft Portfolio Budget Proposals (Pages 3 - 62)

To consider the Portfolio Holder responses to scrutiny questions including any updates from the Strategic Director (s151 Officer).

- Cllr. Les Phillimore - Housing & Community Services Portfolio
- Cllr. Sharon Coe - Health Wellbeing & Regulatory Services Portfolio
- Cllr. Ben Taylor - Planning, Housing Strategy, Economic Development Portfolio

Scrutiny of the Administration's Budget 2021/22

Portfolio	Scrutiny Questions on Portfolio 2021-22 Budget Statements
<b>Leader – Cllr. Terry Richardson</b>	
Additional Question 1	<p data-bbox="479 437 1921 496"><u>The Chairman, Cllr. Geoff Welsh asked all portfolio holders to start by providing a summation of their respective forthcoming budget:</u></p> <p data-bbox="479 536 622 564">Response:</p> <ul data-bbox="479 608 2029 1362" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We were uniquely placed as a council to deal with this situation, finances were in good order, we were in a position to rise to the challenge, it has not been without difficulty and would like to thank all out staff who have risen to the challenge and have organised the community hub and business hub.</li> <li>• We were able to weather the storm of closing our Leisure centres, and press the Govt. to provide funding to local councils who were in the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier,</li> <li>• Going forward - the most uncertain year, we have a 1 year settlement, where we will have questions on the reserves and what we can use them for.</li> <li>• We're in a good position with the reserves –its worrying that we have to set a 1 year budget and we can't look any further than that due to the uncertainty/unknown funding, New Homes Bonus could completely disappear in future years, with a loss of £1.6m to the Council, what will it be replaced with? Business rates are due to change – how will the benchmarks change and what impact will this have on the council?</li> <li>• Our priority is that we must plan as we have certainty, and adjust as we need to in response.</li> <li>• We have spent additional money on recruitment, but we need to do this to keep looking forward, to meet the priorities in the Blaby Plan, Green Agenda, and keep on top of enforcement.</li> <li>• I am positive about the way forward, but it will be extremely challenging, we don't have clear sight of our finances going forward, but we are concerned about our staff and the impact on them. But we are a strong, efficient, effective council that has a vision on the way forward.</li> <li>• It may take us longer to achieve the things we wanted but we will grasp the opportunities available to us.</li> <li>• I am very positive about the way forward but it will be extremely challenging. We're concerned about the impact on staff, but we are a strong efficient council. We will not be able to achieve things as fast as we probably would have hoped for, may have to slow things down, but will grasp at the opportunities as they arise. We need to be clear on our goals, but need to be realistic with what we can achieve.</li> </ul>

1	<p><u>Democratic Services/Governance</u></p> <p><u>How do we ensure that decisions taken by the council consider the climate change strategy and its objectives?</u></p> <p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The report template has been amended recently – it needs embedding into to the culture of the council but we must be realistic - we can't do everything due to financial constraints.</li> <li>• Delivery of the Strategy will be monitored by the Portfolio Holder, the Senior Leadership Team and, should they consider it appropriate, the Scrutiny function of the Council</li> </ul>
2	<p><u>General:</u></p> <p>How is the authority building in resilience to ensure that staff are supported given the increased workload and the personal impacts of the pandemic?</p> <p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We hold SLT to account - they hold staff surveys regularly and we must ensure there is an open culture so officers feel they can express views</li> <li>• We check the establishment figures to ensure we have the correct number of staff, and don't overburden them with more projects</li> <li>• The Community hub have considered looking at using non- council support staff to support the hub to ensure that our own staff are not pressured</li> <li>• These are very difficult times for all staff; enormous change, increased demand and, different needs such as working at home, supporting the hub, as well as the pressures, shared by many of home schooling or, perhaps caring for others. As we endeavour to ensure that Blaby DC continues to be a great place to work, we recognise that each staff member is unique and, encourage them to talk to us about solutions which will work for them.</li> <li>• We offer a confidential counselling service should staff feel unable to talk to their manager. There are regular staff briefings and surveys to gauge how people are feeling and, how they feel they could be supported and, there is a mental health toolkit for all staff to access.</li> </ul>

3	<p><u>General:</u> What scope for additional savings and income have you considered which you have then rejected and why?</p> <p><u>Response:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salaries for staff – biggest expenditure, however not in a position to consider this, we have the reserves we have, so we can plan in a structured way. We have looked at, considered and rejected reducing staff and investigated possible outsourcing, e.g. refuse, however this was rejected as our staff are experienced and we have seen where this approach has not worked at other councils.</li> <li>• Income generation – work on The Grange (former Natwest Bank) has commenced, looked at building more homes, but was rejected as we don't have resources. The Council has the ability to borrow money to spend on income generation schemes but the return on investment needs to be sufficient to warrant it.</li> <li>• We have made significant savings over the past 10 years – will listen to suggestions from staff and councillors</li> <li>• As we come out of the pandemic we will be a new council, we need to determine what this will look like, this includes considering investment in leisure centre</li> </ul>
Additional Question 2	<p>Cllr. Geoff Welsh - as we come through the pandemic and lift restrictions, will you continue with supporting small businesses, e.g ability for cafes and pubs to do outside seating, will we seek a continuation of these planning discretions to allow small businesses to continue doing this?</p> <p><u>Response:</u></p> <p>Where the delegated authority will allow us to do so, it will be continued – and we will have to give consideration to support we can give if there are not enough sufficient funds to enable it to happen. The portfolio holder will look at using the discretionary grants in the most effective way to support those small businesses.</p>
Additional Question 3	<p>Cllr. Nick Brown – within the budget where have you prioritised services, and what have you prioritised for the climate change agenda?</p> <p><u>Response</u> – recruited a Green Officer, other projects outlined by other portfolio holders and will be outlined through the year. Ongoing discussion going forwards about the funding we receive and the decisions we need to make. Lots of issues with a 1 year funding settlement.</p>

	<p>Cllr. Nick Brown – are you satisfied that services are running as efficiently as they can</p> <p>Response – the council is meeting the needs of what is required to meet the needs of the pandemic – all services are prioritising what needs doing so priorities have changed.</p>
<b>Finance &amp; Assets – Cllr. Maggie Wright</b>	
Additional Question 4	<p><u>The Chairman, Cllr. Geoff Welsh asked all portfolio holders to start by providing a summation of their respective forthcoming budget:</u></p> <p><u>Response:</u> Priority is to come back and regroup with all teams and get clear picture where we are. Need a clearer picture on the financial position, especially council tax and business rates, estimating £1M financial gap but could be smaller – lots of uncertainty around this yet. New Homes Bonus is out for consultation, collection rates (residential/business) will be affected for years going forward. Pay award may be a different agreement. Relatively healthy reserves – but need to consider how they are replenished. May need to make difficult decisions down the line. Need to start our actions on the commercial strategy and the green agenda as well as considering the potential in the building and consider agile working.</p>
4	<p><u>Leisure Centre:</u></p> <p>What are your thoughts on the support we're providing to the leisure centre during the pandemic, and any support needed going forward?</p> <p><u>Response</u></p> <p>Not a quick fix or sudden change, need to consider impact of covid. It is a major revenue income stream for the council, we are currently waiving the management fee of approximately £0.5M per annum as well as providing further support up to a cap of £204,000 as agreed by Council. We have been able to recoup some of our loss in income from Government by way of the COVID sales, fees and charges scheme, and have recently submitted a bid for £170,000 funding from Sport England's National Leisure Recovery Fund, for which we await a decision. A further report will be brought to Council in April and will consider the position compared with the agreed cap this year, as well as any future funding requirement.</p>

5	<p><u>People:</u></p> <p>What type of risk assessment has been done in relation to resilience of staff in ensuring that services continue? What is the contingency if we need to buy in more staff? What options have you considered and what has been implemented?</p> <p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service specific risk assessments and plans</li> <li>• Additional staff brought in on a casual or temporary basis where needed</li> <li>• For example during the depot outbreak we temporarily stopped some services and used temporary staff to reinforce remaining staff to cover essential services.</li> </ul>
6	<p><u>HR:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>How many staff have been furloughed?</u> Response - Blaby District Council has not furloughed any staff during the Covid pandemic</li> <li>• What has been the rate of sickness absence across all the Portfolio's/departments Response - The pattern of absence rates changed significantly from pre-Covid to the months following the first lockdown. Absence rates dropped significantly at the start of the March 2020 lock down. In the FY to end November 2020 absence rates were at 2.63%. Sickness absence rates due to Covid remain low overall at 11% of overall absence (1.7% to November 2020). This pattern is reflected in all the portfolio areas, even those where staff are not home working</li> <li>• How have we handled health and wellbeing over the past year? Response - Health and wellbeing for our staff has always been a priority for our staff and has taken on additional importance for everyone since March 2020. Our action have included:</li> <li>• Practical issues around social distancing, minimising transmission risks and the viral load of our working areas dominated the early part of the financial year and this has been constantly reviewed and updated as the year has progressed (including Corporate Covid Secure Risk Assessments).</li> <li>• Staff who were deemed clinically vulnerable and clinically extremely vulnerable were supported to remain at home during the first lockdown and those who are CEV are continued to be supported to do this where needed</li> <li>• Support for staff's mental and emotional wellbeing has also been a key part of our Covid response; this has included regular updates on services that are available to staff, training for managers on how to support the</li> </ul>

	<p>wellbeing of their teams and provision of advice and information through intranet updates and a new Wellbeing Newsletter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The needs of staff and managers have been assessed through a number of bespoke staff surveys and we continue to meet and communicate regularly with our Trade Union colleagues who have helped us navigate the pandemic.</li> <li>• Individual risk assessments have been developed and introduced for staff working at home to support their physical work space and any wellbeing issues that may arise</li> <li>• All staff were offered flu vaccination vouchers (149 provided)</li> <li>• Individual risk assessments have been developed and introduced for staff who have additional risk factors</li> <li>• Financial support has been made available to support home working set ups</li> </ul>
7	<p><u>Council Tax Recovery</u></p> <p><u>During the pandemic council tax recovery was paused, how much is outstanding, and do you have an estimated timescale of when the recovery service can resume?</u></p> <p>Response - Prior year debt is £2.4m for council tax and £0.7m for business rates. In year, we are about 1.7% down on council tax collection compared to the previous financial year, with about £5.2m still to collect. Business rates is about 4.8% down on the previous year with around £3.9m to collect.</p> <p>Serious consideration was given as to whether or not we should resume recovery action at what is a very difficult time for our residents. We have had to weigh up the potential negative press against the risk that the longer we leave it the more difficult it will be to recover the debt. On balance, therefore, we took the decision to resume recovery action several months ago. It is our belief that we owe a duty of care to those residents that are struggling to pay their bills, and that recovery action is a tool for opening dialogue and ensuring that their debt situation is not worsened.</p> <p>We attended our first virtual Court hearing for a small number of Council Tax cases on 1st December 2020 and we are issuing court summonses for 998 Council Tax accounts this week for a further virtual Court hearing on 16th February 2021. This court will focus on those Council Tax payers who haven't paid anything in the last 2 months.</p>
8	<p><u>Sustainable Investing:</u></p> <p>Sustainable investing can have a positive long term impact, has any thoughts been given to sustainable investing that the council may make?</p>

	<p>Response:</p> <p>We are governed by our Treasury Management Strategy in terms of the type of investment vehicles that we are able to use. However, this is something that we have discussed with our treasury advisors and, where applicable and compliant with our TMS, may be something that is considered going forward.</p>
9	<p><u>Reserves:</u></p> <p>The funding gap will be filled from reserves, will it be earmarked reserves or general reserves and how will this be determined?</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>This is something that will be put forward with the budget proposals in February. Ordinarily it would be General Fund balances but could be a combination of that and earmarked reserves dependent upon what is deemed to be most prudent and appropriate in the context of the overall budget.</p>
10	<p><u>Savings:</u></p> <p>What scope for additional savings and income have you considered which you have then rejected and why?</p> <p>As Cllr Richardson has mentioned, we only have a one year settlement and it is difficult to predict whether future funding gaps will arise. We haven't specifically identified any areas of savings within my portfolio and as we go through the recovery stage we will be looking to revise the action plan within the commercial strategy to look at what income streams might be appropriate.</p>
11	<p><u>Loans/Borrowing</u></p> <p>Are there opportunities to borrow more to achieve what we want to achieve? E.g. investing in Bouskell Park, Fosse Meadows</p> <p>Response:</p>

	<p>This is something that will be considered as part of our capital planning process which will be brought to Council in February. Any borrowing must always be prudent, affordable and sustainable, in line with the Prudential Code, and whilst investment in our assets is important, we must always have regard to the ongoing financial impact on the revenue budget, and council tax.</p>
12	<p><u>Commercial Strategy</u></p> <p>How are we going to progress with the commercial strategy?</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>We were about to develop the new action plan in April last year, having already achieved many of the actions that had been identified in the original strategy. Obviously the pandemic has had a major effect on being able to progress the development of a new action plan and we will work on this as 'recovery' starts to happen and we have a greater understanding of what is required and what may be achieved.</p>
13	<p><u>Assets:</u></p> <p>As skeleton staff are in the offices, utilities are still being used, as such what is the net impact of the cost to the council in running and maintaining the council offices? What measures are being taken to minimise this cost?</p> <p>Have used this opportunity to do maintenance, some fixed expenditure still stands, electricity, lighting etc. a small number of staff have still been coming in to use the building so have had to keep it open.</p> <p>We have however seen a reduction of a third in electricity because a huge number of staff are not in the building the installation of automatic lighting in the building has helped with this and individual thermostats on radiators have limited their use to those areas that are in use.</p>

<p>Additional Question 5</p>	<p><u>Cllr Nick brown – are you confident you have the provisions and contingencies in the budget</u></p> <p>Response – yes confident we have both, we’re working on what we know, so we have planned for this, but future is uncertain, especially when considering the SLM contract and the revenue income stream. Will continue to work with the S.151 Officer.</p> <p>Cllr Nick Brown – what is strategy for regrouping, any priorities identified?</p> <p>Response - Priorities are: Understanding the financial future i.e. what is the future funding streams from Business Rates, NHB and Council tax.</p>
<p><b>Corporate Services &amp; Neighbourhood Services – Cllr David Freer</b></p>	
<p>Additional Question 6</p>	<p><u>The Chairman, Cllr. Geoff Welsh asked all portfolio holders to start by providing a summation of their respective forthcoming budget:</u></p> <p><u>Response:</u></p> <p>Customer service – moving the team to enable them to work from home, and keep everything running was a huge task, we are looking at: mot testing, commercial waste/recycling/more online forms/green vehicles/social media – and recruiting more staff/partnership working, and enabling more staff to be able to work from home. Green garden bins has been a success - much fairer system. 1600 new bins were ordered.</p>
<p>14</p>	<p><u>Corporate Services</u></p> <p>During the pandemic majority of staff have had to work remotely, each being provided with I.T equipment. What impact has this had financially to the council and to the cost of ICT support?</p> <p>Response</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All existing laptops in the building used for homeworking, including the desktop computers</li> <li>• £20k was used to top up a few laptops and to purchase some equipment</li> </ul>

15	<p><u>Corporate Services:</u></p> <p>With staff working remotely and the offices being closed to the general public, has there been an increased uptake in online services? And what is the cost of providing more online?</p> <p>Response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes – we have seen an increase in online services, pandemic has given a gentle push for residents to use digital services</li> <li>• Additional resource has been allocated for 3 extra members of staff to enhance the digital team</li> <li>• My Account: 38.5k accounts, up 32 % on the year, Contact Us form is up 21%, Bin orders up 32%, Benefits claims up 29%, fly tipping 57%, building control forms completed online up 19%.</li> </ul> <p>Note: the above are figures of the increased % use of online reporting/access to forms.</p>
16	<p><u>General:</u></p> <p>What scope for additional savings and income have you considered which you have then rejected and why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ambitions for the team is to consider any savings and will utilise staff however we can.</li> </ul>
Additional Question 7	<p>Question – are you looking at increase in the size of the car park at Bouskell Park</p> <p>Response – due to current circumstances, it has not been progressed yet, but is still in the process of being taken forward.</p>
Additional Question 8	<p>Question: - Electric vehicles, and new type of bins that are environmentally friendly,</p> <p>Response – bigger vehicles were replaced in 2020, we will be looking at electric/hydrogen vehicles – due to current circumstances we were unable to progress. The cost of machines is more than double of current vehicles. Wagons are £200k, and the electric version costs £0.5m. Refuelling infrastructure in depot would also need to be investigated. Small electric van are at the depot, however it manages a maximum range of up to 90 miles, but can reduce drastically with lights/heating usage. All options need to be investigated.</p>

Additional Question 9	<p>Question – increase of 57% in fly tipping - what is the impact in cost? What are the actions to reduce this? Cameras etc.</p> <p>Response: Environmental Health team are responsible for carrying out fly tipping investigations – the council does have some covert cameras, unsure of the number of investigations. Most rubbish is household/construction rubbish. The situation at Whetstone Tip - accessible only by an appointment which can takes a few days, has probably not helped the situation, and could in part be a reason for the high number of cases.</p> <p>In terms of cost, this has not been analysed to that level of detail, but further information can be sent to members.</p>
<b>Housing &amp; Community Services – Cllr. Les Phillimore</b>	
17	<p><u>Community Services:</u></p> <p>How are we ensuring that we are delivering the most efficient and cost effective services to our most vulnerable residents during the pandemic?</p>
18	<p><u>Community Services:</u></p> <p>What was the financial impact on the council as a whole in delivering the Community Hub?</p>
19	<p><u>Council Tax Support</u></p> <p>During the pandemic there was a higher uptake of council tax support, what has been the net impact of this in comparison to the previous year?</p>
20	<p><u>General:</u></p> <p>What scope for additional savings and income have you considered which you have then rejected and why?</p>
<b>Health, Wellbeing &amp; Regulatory Services – Cllr. Sharon Coe</b>	
21	<p><u>Leisure Centre:</u></p> <p>We have put lots of money into the leisure centre, despite the gap in budget, should we consider whether the support needs to continue?</p>

22	<p><u>Climate Change/Green Agenda</u></p> <p>How are we prioritising climate change/green objectives in the budget? Have we considered whether a green commercial strategy should be adopted?</p>
23	<p><u>General:</u></p> <p>What scope for additional savings and income have you considered which you have then rejected and why?</p>
<b>Planning, Housing Strategy, Economic Development – Cllr. Ben Taylor</b>	
24	<p><u>Economic Development:</u></p> <p>How can we best support businesses who may be affected by the Covid pandemic (e.g. pavement cafes, can this thinking be extended, making the best use of open spaces to be business friendly) what other innovative ideas are you considering and what is the financial impact?</p>
25	<p><u>Housing Numbers:</u></p> <p>How do we unlock the demand for housing that has been delayed by COVID to ensure ongoing financial support through NHB?</p>
26	<p><u>General:</u></p> <p>What scope for additional savings and income have you considered which you have then rejected and why?</p>

## **Foreword**

It would be remiss of me as we prepare for the 2021/22 year ahead to not recognise the extraordinary work, commitment and extremes that the teams within my portfolio have risen to and gone to since March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020, to ensure that our residents and our businesses were even more supported than in pre-Covid times.

Millions of pounds of Government grants and support have been analysed, designed and processed by the Revenue and Benefits team with what seems to have been business-as-usual but in a thoroughly unusual and ever-changing world and that is reflected in the £24.45m of direct income compared to the budgeted £12.58m in 2019/20

The Housing Strategy team have been able to restructure and recruit whilst “clearing the streets” and ensuring that our homeless, needy and those fleeing domestic violence were provided with a place of safety and as I write this foreword, the Housing Team are confident that not a single person will be either homeless or in Bed & Breakfast over Christmas.

The Community Services team, like many others, have had to adapt to remote working and designing new ways to ensure that we retain a safe district to live within and to understand the underlying issues that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought to the surface whilst formulating and designing new strategies and the new Community Hub to take us forward in the new normal whatever that may become.

Lightbulb has overcome considerable barriers with being unable to enter domestic residences but to still provide the same levels of service despite Covid-19. Tara has just proposed a reform to the DFG element of their work and I look forward to seeing how this reform materialises in being able to do more for those who need our support.

The Hospital Enablement Team has excelled during the pandemic and Kyle is working on new initiatives to further develop this incredibly successful service.

Technology and data will play an ever more important role in the new world and Covid-19 has taught us all many things, no more so than who and where our elderly, our vulnerable, our needy and our challenges and opportunities are and how we can adapt and enhance our services to the benefit of our residents. I very much look forward to many new and exciting initiatives being brought forward to this council by these teams.

### **Our Portfolio Priorities for 2020/21 are as follows:**

For **Council Tax and Benefits** there may be further phases of the national implementation of Universal Credit and the phasing out of older legacy benefits. The current pandemic situation has stalled plans in this area presently but this could change if the national picture stabilises. Service delivery being operated remotely will continue to bring some challenges including the training of new recruits to the service. We will focus on the complaints that the service receives to help shape delivery going forward. The profile of the Business Rate element of the service has increased significantly together with the associated grant work

which may continue into 2021. Operation of the Test and Trace service is due to end at the beginning of February 2021 but this could extend further into 2021.

For the **Community Services** Team, to produce the Community Safety Partnership Strategy action plan for 2021/22. We will be focusing on emerging threats from the pandemic such as criminal exploitation, violent crime, the Night Time Economy and antisocial behaviour (particularly neighbour nuisance) and ensuring our staff, communities and businesses know how to spot the signs, what help is available and how to report. Having developed and implemented a BDC workplace Domestic Abuse Policy, we will be promoting the adoption of workplace Domestic Abuse policies in local businesses. We will produce a Serious Violence Reduction Plan for the Community Safety Partnership that is based on a strategic assessment of issues in our area. We will support the delivery of the Violence Reduction Network Mentors in Violence Programme in 1 High School and Our schools work offer (Safety Crew) will be delivered to the 3 high schools in the area and we will continue to develop and deliver Housing Skills 4 Life and other community support services.

In **Housing Services**, we aim to continue to manage the implications of the Homelessness Reduction Act and in doing so manage the additional footfall that has been experienced by the housing services team throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. This will include our aim to continue to reduce the use of Bed and Breakfast Accommodation, increasing the supply of affordable housing and enabling more supported provision for our most vulnerable customers. We will continue to support and utilise our partnership links and the projects set up through the likes of the trailblazer funding, Rapid Rehousing Pathways and the Cold Weather Fund. We also have plans to work collaboratively to increase availability of accommodation in the Private Rented Sector. The review of service was approved by Council in May 2020 and recruitment into the new posts has been completed. 2020/21 will see the implementation of a new Housing Strategy which will set out our strategic housing priorities for the next five years and will build upon some of the excellent partnership work that has previously helped us to deliver our housing service.

For **Lightbulb**, we aim to further develop the new ways of working which include telephone and digital appointments as well as self-referral that were initially implemented, due to the pandemic. We will work with partners to ensure that DFG funding is fully utilised via Regulatory Reform Order policy as well as campaign for the review of the statutory guidelines. We also aim to further develop out Trusted Assessor Framework to offer more advanced services and also support Officers with career progression. We also aim to follow up on the review of service for the hospital Housing Enablement Team which was halted due to the pandemic.

**Our main Challenges / Opportunities for 2020/21 will be:**

- Utilisation of the Disabled Facilities Grant is restricted by legislation and is a challenge to being able to provide more options for residents to remain independent at home for longer.
- Manage assessments for vulnerable customers with no ICT and no family / friends support if further restrictions introduced.
- Any new phase or change to the Universal Credit programme of implementation may impact on local residents, Council services, rent arrears for tenants and ability to be able to manage their benefit matters digitally.

- A replacement of the document management system was delayed during 2020. This will be picked up in 2021. Failure to procure a robust IT system for this purpose will seriously hamper the digitalisation process for the team and result in an inadequate storage of personal and sensitive document copies belonging to local residents.
- Absorbing the work of the pandemic response arising from the Community Hub into business as usual in the Community Services team as the socio-economic effects continue to drive demand for support
- We cannot build enough affordable housing to meet the demand, this continues to be tested by an increase in homelessness cases.
- The increase in homelessness cases has and will continue to impact on the availability of temporary accommodation
- Any reduction in Government grant will lead to an impact on the housing services team and their ability to deal with homelessness demand.
- 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.

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor Les Phillimore**

**Senior Officer: Housing & Community Services Group Manager**

**Portfolio Total**

<b>Community Services - Total</b>	<b>2020/21 Approved Budget</b>	<b>2020/21 Revised Estimate</b>	<b>2021/22 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [A]</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [B]</b>
	<b>[A]</b>	<b>[B]</b>	<b>[C]</b>		
<b>1. Establishment Costs</b>	<b>£2,631,820</b>	<b>£2,855,235</b>	<b>£2,941,922</b>	<b>£310,102</b> <b>11.78%</b>	<b>£86,687</b> <b>3.04%</b>
<b>2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£12,709,575</b>	<b>£25,102,141</b>	<b>£11,903,598</b>	<b>-£805,977</b> <b>-6.34%</b>	<b>-</b> <b>£13,198,543</b> <b>-52.58%</b>
<b>3. Direct Income</b>	<b>-£13,791,370</b>	<b>-£25,746,974</b>	<b>-£13,097,043</b>	<b>£694,327</b> <b>-5.03%</b>	<b>£12,649,931</b> <b>-49.13%</b>
<b>4. Net Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£1,550,025</b>	<b>£2,210,402</b>	<b>£1,748,477</b>	<b>£198,452</b> <b>12.80%</b>	<b>-£461,925</b> <b>-20.90%</b>
<b>5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)</b>	<b>73.86</b>	<b>80.36</b>	<b>77.97</b>	<b>4.11</b> <b>5.56%</b>	<b>-2.39</b> <b>-2.97%</b>

## Council Tax & Benefits

Revenues and Benefits	2020/21 Approved Budget	2020/21 Revised Estimate	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£799,502	£805,762	£817,814	£18,312 2.29%	£12,052 1.50%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£12,288,175	£24,217,496	£11,511,148	£-777,027 -6.32%	- £12,706,348 -52.47%
3. Direct Income	£-12,577,878	£-24,447,584	£-11,787,751	£790,127 -6.28%	£12,659,833 -51.78%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£509,799	£575,674	£541,211	£31,412 6.16%	£-34,463 -5.99%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	25.69	25.69	24.10	-1.59 -6.19%	-1.59 -6.19%

## Reasons for Variances

1. The 2021/22 Establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions in addition to the reduced costs of the fixed term post that has been removed.
2. Gross Direct Expenditure mainly comprises the amount of estimated rent allowance that is due to be paid out by the authority to assist local residents in staying in their homes because they are on a low income, or in receipt of certain benefits. The revised Estimate includes Covid-19 Discretionary and Small Business Grants paid to residents.
3. The Direct Income figures include all government grants, one off costs, new burdens, rewards and subsidy.
4. This represents the net impact of the variances listed above.
5. Fixed term post removed.

## Community Services

<b>Community Services</b>	<b>2020/21 Approved Budget</b>	<b>2020/21 Revised Estimate</b>	<b>2021/22 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [A]</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [B]</b>
	<b>[A]</b>	<b>[B]</b>	<b>[C]</b>		
<b>1. Establishment Costs</b>	<b>£402,425</b>	<b>£452,427</b>	<b>£443,075</b>	<b>£40,650</b> <b>10.10%</b>	<b>-£9,352</b> <b>-2.07%</b>
<b>2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£40,670</b>	<b>£148,204</b>	<b>£34,650</b>	<b>-£6,020</b> <b>-14.80%</b>	<b>-£113,554</b> <b>-76.62%</b>
<b>3. Direct Income</b>	<b>-£25,217</b>	<b>-£55,604</b>	<b>-£26,700</b>	<b>-£1,483</b> <b>5.88%</b>	<b>£28,904</b> <b>-51.98%</b>
<b>4. Net Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£417,878</b>	<b>£545,027</b>	<b>£451,025</b>	<b>£33,147</b> <b>7.93%</b>	<b>-£94,002</b> <b>-17.25%</b>
<b>5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)</b>	<b>9.59</b>	<b>12.59</b>	<b>10.59</b>	<b>1.00</b> <b>10.43%</b>	<b>-2.00</b> <b>-15.89%</b>

## Reasons for Variances

1. The 2021/22 Establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. Including one off grant funding carried forward from 2019/20 to fund Resident Support and Domestic Abuse posts.
2. One off budget provision carried forward from 2019/20 is included in the revised budget.
3. Income increase in line with expected. Revised Estimate includes Defra funding re Covid-19.
4. This represents the net impact of the variances listed above.
5. As per note 1.

## Housing Services

Housing Services	2020/21 Approved Budget	2020/21 Revised Estimate	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£283,377	£441,749	£464,513	£181,136 63.92%	£22,764 5.15%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£192,420	£540,713	£193,000	£580 0.30%	-£347,713 -64.31%
3. Direct Income	-£123,140	-£163,756	-£148,100	-£24,960 20.27%	£15,656 -9.56%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£352,657	£818,706	£509,413	£156,756 44.45%	-£309,293 -37.78%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	8.50	12.00	12.00	3.50 41.18%	0.00 0.00%

## Reasons for Variances

1. The 2021/22 Establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. The revised estimate increase relates to the restructure approved during the year.
2. Revised includes Government grant funding carried forward from 2019/20 to be used for reducing homelessness and expenditure in relation to COVID-19 grant funding.
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. As per note 1.

## Lightbulb

Light Bulb	2020/21 Approved Budget  [A]	2020/21 Revised Estimate  [B]	2021/22 Proposed Budget  [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£1,035,664	£1,043,612	£1,102,553	£66,889 6.46%	£58,941 5.65%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£185,530	£193,728	£162,800	-£22,730 -12.25%	-£30,928 -15.96%
3. Direct Income	-£1,065,135	-£1,080,030	-£1,134,492	-£69,357 6.51%	-£54,462 5.04%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£156,059	£157,310	£130,861	-£25,198 -16.15%	-£26,449 -16.81%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	28.58	28.58	29.78	1.20 4.20%	1.20 4.20%

## Reasons for Variances

1. The 2021/22 Establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. Plus an additional fixed term Technical Officer Post.
2. The revised includes one off budget provision for funding carried forward from 2019/20 in relation to the HET team and Lightbulb project.
3. Income from the Districts and County for the Lightbulb project, and funding for the HET team.
4. This represents the net impact of the variances listed above.
5. As per note 1, plus change in hours.

## Management & Administration

Group Manager	2020/21 Approved Budget	2020/21 Revised Estimate	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£110,852	£111,685	£113,967	£3,115 2.81%	£2,282 2.04%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£2,780	£2,000	£2,000	-£780 -28.06%	£0 0.00%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£113,632	£113,685	£115,967	£2,335 2.05%	£2,282 2.01%
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 2021/22 Establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions.
2. Saving made where possible.
3. No income in respect of this cost centre.
4. Net impact of the variances listed above.
5. No change.

## **Movement in budget and staff from last year**

### Council Tax & Benefits

The 2020/21 direct income does not include any new burdens funding, administration grant funding for pandemic related initiatives or grants, any one off cost contributions made to the Council from various sources for any new, sudden and immediate, or software changes or costs for start-up or administration.

### Community Services

2021/22 income only includes external funding where that funding stream has been confirmed. Similarly, staffing costs do not include externally funded posts for which funding is unconfirmed (0.5 FTE Children's Worker funded by Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council) 1 FTE fixed term Community Services Staff have been included in the budget for 2021/22.

### Housing Services

A review of the service was approved by Members in May 2020. This results in an increase in posts and recruitment into those roles has now been completed which reduces the reliance on temporary staff. This will assist the Housing Services Team in managing the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act, the increase in homelessness applications as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic as well as being able to retain experienced staff members that have previously been lost to higher paying neighbouring authorities.

### Lightbulb

The funding for staffing comes from Leicestershire County Council and all those district and borough councils for which we are running Lightbulb. In terms of the central hub team this is a shared cost with all 8 partners making contributions based upon an assumed caseload. A small contingency budget remains out of the Transformational Challenge Award Grant, and this will be used to support the delivery of Lightbulb across Leicestershire.

The Hospital Housing team is funded through Leicestershire and Leicester City Better Care Fund and with a contribution from Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT). Going forward the funding will come from the LPT and the amalgamated Clinical Commissioners Group.

## **Portfolio Priorities**

### **Services**

#### **Council Tax & Benefits**

The team priorities for 2020/21 are:

- To increase the resilience of the Business Rate element of the service
- To respond to and prepare for any pandemic related initiatives that are allocated to the team for delivery
- To prepare for and implement any changes to the Full Service Universal Credit delivery including any change or reversion of the DWP approach
- To introduce an electronic change of circumstances form

#### **Community Services Team**

Team priorities for 2020/21 are:

- To produce the annual CSP strategy action plan
- To deliver a schools programme to all High Schools
- To deliver Housing Skills 4 Life, Friends Against Scams, Ask for Angela and Keep Safe Places
- To deliver the annual programme of campaigns and awareness for Community Safety
- To implement a viable staffing structure that meets the demands of the service
- To procure and implement a document and case management system for support services

#### **Housing Services:**

Team priorities for 2021/22 are:

- To take an active role in the delivery of the County wide funded Homelessness Prevention Trailblazers and Preventing Rough Sleeping projects
- Preventing and relieving homelessness in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act
- To ensure maximisation of affordable housing delivery
- To enable new supply of supported housing provision
- To increase Private Sector Housing provision
- To review the current Housing Strategy
- To provide further Member Training on the local housing and homelessness picture

### **Lightbulb**

Lightbulb priorities for 2020/21 are:

- To ensure that advantage is taken in any flexibility in the DFG mandatory legislation to allow new initiatives and provide more options to residents to keep them at home and enable independence.
- To support the DFG review which calls for a review of statutory guidance for the use of the grants.

- To further develop the digital offers to customers such as virtual assessments and easy self-referral forms and assistive technology
- Review the staff structure for the Hospital Enablement Team following changes due to the pandemic and health restructure
- To further develop the Trusted assessor framework to improve the range of services to residents

### Key points

<p>Doing things differently – plans for the coming year</p>	<p><u>Council Tax &amp; Benefits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise service to take account of legislative changes or Universal Credit changes</li> <li>• Digitalise change of circumstance reporting</li> </ul> <p><u>Housing Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To continue to influence housing requirements on major planning applications</li> <li>• Review and reduce temporary accommodation options</li> <li>• Improve housing statistics reporting and information management</li> <li>• Development and delivery of a new housing strategy</li> <li>• Enabling new supported provision within the District</li> <li>• Operating an effective private rented sector service for both tenants and landlords</li> </ul> <p><u>Community Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To produce the Annual Community Safety Partnership Strategy Action Plan for 2021-22</li> <li>• To support the delivery of the Violence Reduction Network Mentors In Violence programme in 1 High School</li> <li>• To facilitate workplace domestic abuse policies in local businesses</li> <li>• To produce a CSP Serious Violence Reduction Action Plan</li> </ul> <p><u>Lightbulb</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop the preventative offers to residents</li> <li>• Develop the Hospital Enablement Service</li> <li>• To develop the virtual and self-assessments</li> </ul>
<p>Income generation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To maximise overpayment recovery.</li> <li>• To minimise local authority overpayment error by getting it right first time</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timely returns for the DWP and Inland Revenue</li> <li>• The correct interpretation and applications of any government led grants or funding</li> <li>• Collection from the timely and efficiently paid instalments of Council Tax and Business Rates</li> </ul>
Capital plans for the portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The contract for the provision of the Council Tax and Benefits software, currently Northgate has been extended beyond 2021. There is no pressing need to replace the current software, the Council will need to ensure that it complies with the prevailing procurement rules following the exit from the EU. Given the value of the contract the full procurement rules will apply.</li> <li>• The purchase of a replacement document storage and management product with full workflow capability for the Council Tax and Benefits Team and the Income and Collection Team.</li> </ul>

### **Key Performance Indicators**

<b>PERFORMANCE INDICATOR</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21 YEAR TO DATE</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Number of cases where homelessness has been prevented	262	323	152	The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) places a duty on the Council to work with applicants for longer in order to help prevent them from becoming homeless. The figure currently remains consistent with previous years.
Number of homelessness applications taken	132	230	134	The total number of applications no longer applies as the HRA splits cases into 'prevention' and 'relief'. This 2018/19 figure represents the number of homeless cases that fall into the relief category. It should be noted that in addition to this figure there have been a further 216 prevention cases that have also been opened and to which the Council

				has a duty to take reasonable steps (including setting up personalised housing plans) in order to prevent homelessness.
Number of Affordable Houses	119	47		Due to delays in receiving completions data this figure is no longer recorded on a month by month basis. The actual figure will be recorded at year end.

<b>PERFORMANCE INDICATOR</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21 YEAR TO DATE</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
End to end times for completion of DFGs (time taken from receipt of a completed application to approval of grant – average days)	16.5 weeks	20.20 weeks	10.99 weeks	16.5 weeks
Demand for DFGs (number of recommendations received)	150	169	117	83
Time taken to complete DFGs (from initial enquiry by customer to completion of work, broken down by stages)	26 weeks	25 weeks	21 weeks	4.8 weeks
Number of hospital admissions/readmissions avoided as a result of Lightbulb intervention	647 patients seen, Referral to resolution times 6.8 days	786 patients seen, Referral to resolution times 7.79 days	935 patients seen, referral to resolution times of 7.2 days	808 patients so far with a referral to resolution time of 3 days so far
Number of holistic housing needs assessment carried out (through	1532	2497	4137	4032

Lightbulb Programme) and outcome				
Percentage of benefit claims which were paid correctly	95.74%	87.72%	84.77%	We now have a dedicated officer for monitoring work that is carried out. We provide active refresher and on the job training solutions for staff although the social distancing of the team this year has reduced the ability of the team to seek guidance. Yearly subsidy claims continue to demonstrate a good accuracy rate and there are relatively few changes to the DWP subsidy claim in terms of entitlements and subsidy that is due.
Number of ASB cases reported in Blaby		926	650	These are Police figures. There is likely to be an increase in recorded ASB in 20/21 due to the pandemic as Covid breaches were recorded as ASB. There was also a sharp increase in neighbour nuisance complaints at the beginning of the first national lockdown which has now steadied out.
Support services (Resident Support/Children's Worker/Domestic Abuse)– number of people supported		480	265	2020/21 turnout is likely to be below 19/20. Whilst Domestic Abuse has seen a significant rise in referrals (in line with National trends during the pandemic), children's workers services were put on hold whilst schools were closed meaning no referrals were received for 4 months.

## Customers

- We noticed a reduction in paper surveys being returned, however customers have been providing feedback to Officers following telephone calls. So far residents have been really positive about having a telephone assessments.
- Residents have been calling in to show their appreciation for the Trusted Assessors and Technical Officers carrying out full health and safety checks to ensure residents safety and enable them to get the adaptations they need to remain independent.
- *"I have found her (HSC) to be nothing but kind, understanding and extremely competent in not just my physical needs, but working with empathy towards making my life better."*
- Digital access for changes in circumstance will reduce postage costs for customers
- Customers personal records will be held securely
- Increased use of email for contact will save on postage costs and information supplied more efficiently to the Council Offices
- Changes to the DWP Universal Credit process will receive careful and considered preparation
- Businesses receive clear guidance and timely responses to application for assistance
- 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.
- Information on how many Community Trigger (ASB reviews) and the outcomes are now on the website
- Online referral forms are in place for all support services
- The new housing jigsaw system includes an on-line module which measures customer satisfaction. This module will be available later in 2020 and feedback will be available towards the end of the 2020/21 financial year.

## Risks

- Demand for Lightbulb preventative work has increased as a result of Lightbulb Programme's proactive/early identification of need. The flexibility in the DFG legislation has not, which could hinder new initiatives
- Demand has increased for the Hospital Housing Enablement team and the system for patient flow has been redesigned. Without expansion into community hospitals, residents risk being stranded.
- Any further funding may be limited and demand may exceed allocation of funding for either residents or businesses
- Lack of affordable housing options will increase homelessness.
- Lack of suitable supported provision in the affordable sector could lead to a lack of appropriate accommodation for the more complex homelessness cases.
- Any reduction in homelessness grant funding will impact upon service delivery.
- Lack of land availability or suitability for Registered Providers to acquire will result in a drop in new affordable housing units and available public subsidy being repositioned elsewhere.

Thank you for inviting me to present my Portfolio Budget to you in my second year holding this position. I am delighted to be able to present the following.

The areas covered in this portfolio are indeed wide ranging and often complex but the officers that work in these areas are professional, knowledgeable and work as real teams supporting each other at all times. They are led and inspired by my Group Manager Teresa who in my view is exceptional.

The services we provide include a very broad and wide range to support Residents, Employees and Employers within our district. With the COVID pandemic the teams have had to adapt to new challenges, the first and perhaps most vitally important of these was in March when the Community Development Work and Skills team headed the establishment of the Community Hub, subsequently being joined by other staff from across the Council as this lifeline of a service grew and provided support for all who needed it. This was followed by the creation of the Business Hub to support our residents and businesses during the pandemic and then ongoing recovery! We have amended our criteria for our community grants in order to help vital community groups to open again and support vulnerable residents during these difficult times.

Our Environmental Health Team have been exceptional this year, working long hours and weekends, and have been key in ensuring that our businesses are compliant with Covid 19 regulations and that all our residents are kept safe. This has meant that we have had to respond very quickly to interpreting and enforcing new legislation which has often changed at very late notice, whilst also completing their "normal" day jobs of investigating fly tipping, food inspections etc. . We have also significantly improved conditions on our mobile home sites by the use of licensing conditions. Truly a monumental effort by all involved in sometimes very challenging situations.

The Environmental Services team have had many successes this year. With our dedicated Green Officer they have developed and published our Green Strategy and have developed a Carbon Neutral Action Plan to support this, something that will benefit our whole District going forward.

We have listened to our businesses and offered Car Parking that was proportionate to the evolving situation at the time, and by April 2021 we will have electric charging points in our car parks! Our animal services have also won the Gold Paw Prints award for the second year, a great achievement.

Alongside the above we have seen many achievements this year, including the success of our Work and Skills Programme, and the transfer of Enderby and Huncote Leisure Centres over to SLM to run on behalf of the council. Our excellent Funding

and Grants Officer has secured over £830,000 of external funding. Our Health and Leisure team benefitted from funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund that meant we were able to commence work on the restoration of the Ice House in Blaby. This is a big step in our Tourism Growth Plan and the Tourism wall has been installed at Fosse Park. A Green Flag award was also won for our excellent Place to Grow site which will surely benefit our residents' wellbeing as we start to recover from this pandemic. We have also progressed our Walk and Ride work and this will continue delivering connectivity.

I am immensely proud of my portfolio and the officers that work within it as they have delivered great services with a professional and friendly attitude to our residents over a very challenging year.

The priorities for my portfolio are

- To ensure that Enderby and Huncote Leisure Centres are on target and that we begin to see a return on our investment.
- Ensuring that BDC can benefit from Tourism, including delivering the tourism growth plan
- To expand our offer of support to employers and business through our account manager service.
- To work with key partners to deliver our Work and Skills Plan
- Ensuring that we manage empty homes to be turned around and back into use
- That we implement any new regulatory requirements as and when required
- To continue to work with our health partners to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents.
- Continue to work to move our car parks to a position where they are cost neutral.
- To deliver the updated Air Quality Action Plan
- To deliver a business case for the delegation of Building Control Services
- To deliver the Green Action Plan
- To deliver Walk & Ride
- Develop & implement a Housing Civil Penalties Policy

The risks and challenges to my Portfolio are

- Performance of the Leisure Contract.
- External funding of a number of posts within the Health & Leisure Services Team.
- Commitment from partners including health, local tourism businesses, developers and contractors in terms of delivery of our work & skills offer.
- High levels of unemployment and the impact on our businesses following the pandemic.

- Ensuring the business case for the delegation of the Building Control service to Blaby protects the local authority.

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor Sharon Coe**

**Senior Officer: Regulatory & Leisure Services Group Manager**

**Portfolio Total**

<b>Health Improvement, Leisure &amp; Regulatory Services - Total</b>	<b>2020/21 Approved Budget</b>	<b>2020/21 Revised Estimate</b>	<b>2021/22 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [A]</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [B]</b>
	<b>[A]</b>	<b>[B]</b>	<b>[C]</b>		
<b>1. Establishment Costs</b>	<b>£2,018,796</b>	<b>£2,427,282</b>	<b>£2,278,095</b>	<b>£259,299</b> <b>12.84%</b>	<b>-£149,187</b> <b>-6.15%</b>
<b>2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£649,801</b>	<b>£1,421,462</b>	<b>£576,993</b>	<b>-£72,808</b> <b>-11.20%</b>	<b>-£844,469</b> <b>-59.41%</b>
<b>3. Direct Income</b>	<b>-£1,646,187</b>	<b>-£1,487,916</b>	<b>-£1,948,661</b>	<b>-£302,474</b> <b>18.37%</b>	<b>-£460,745</b> <b>30.97%</b>
<b>4. Net Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£1,022,410</b>	<b>£2,360,828</b>	<b>£906,427</b>	<b>-£115,983</b> <b>-11.34%</b>	<b>-£1,454,401</b> <b>-61.61%</b>
<b>5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)</b>	<b>49.51</b>	<b>58.20</b>	<b>52.27</b>	<b>2.76</b> <b>5.57%</b>	<b>-6.93</b> <b>-11.71%</b>

## Leisure Centres

<b>Enderby Leisure Centre</b>	<b>2020/21 Approved Budget</b>	<b>2020/21 Revised Estimate</b>	<b>2021/22 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [A]</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [B]</b>
	<b>[A]</b>	<b>[B]</b>	<b>[C]</b>		
<b>1. Establishment Costs</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£204,000</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>-£204,000</b> <b>-100.00%</b>
<b>3. Direct Income</b>	<b>-£549,807</b>	<b>-£50</b>	<b>-£684,013</b>	<b>-£134,206</b> <b>24.41%</b>	<b>-£683,963</b> <b>1367926.00%</b>
<b>4. Net Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>-£549,807</b>	<b>£203,950</b>	<b>-£684,013</b>	<b>-£134,206</b> <b>24.41%</b>	<b>-£887,963</b> <b>-435.38%</b>
<b>5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>

## Reasons for Variances

1. Not applicable.
2. Revised estimate expenditure relates to financial support agreed at Council due to the impact of Covid-19 on the Leisure Centre.
3. SLM contract income has been removed in the revised budget as agreed due to the impact of Covid -19.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Not applicable.

## Health & Leisure

Health & Leisure	2020/21 Approved Budget	2020/21 Revised Estimate	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£310,810	£520,986	£292,353	-£18,457 -5.94%	-£228,633 -43.88%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£106,038	£458,485	£107,049	£1,011 0.95%	-£351,436 -76.65%
3. Direct Income	-£43,894	-£429,070	-£52,248	-£8,354 19.03%	£376,822 -87.82%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£372,954	£550,401	£347,154	-£25,800 -6.92%	-£203,247 -36.93%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	8.83	13.08	7.65	-1.18 -13.36%	-6.43 -45.67%

## Reasons for Variances

1. The 2021/22 Establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. Revised budget includes externally funded posts that hadn't been confirmed at the time of budget setting.
2. Revised budget includes externally funded project expenditure (level currently unknown for 2021/22) as well as various non-recurring expenditure carried forward from 2019/20.
3. Awaiting level of external funding to be confirmed for 2021/22.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Externally funded posts have been removed from the budget where this funding has not yet been confirmed for 2021/22.

## Environmental Health and Environmental Services

Environmental Health	2020/21 Approved Budget  [A]	2020/21 Revised Estimate  [B]	2021/22 Proposed Budget  [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£954,826	£923,055	£952,813	-£2,013 -0.21%	£29,758 3.22%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£359,747	£439,197	£282,833	-£76,914 -21.38%	-£156,364 -35.60%
3. Direct Income	-£419,621	-£259,573	-£402,921	£16,700 -3.98%	-£143,348 55.22%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£894,952	£1,102,679	£832,725	-£62,227 -6.95%	-£269,954 -24.48%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	23.14	22.14	21.64	-1.50 -6.48%	-0.50 -2.26%

### Reasons for Variances

1. The 2020/21 Establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. Environmental Maintenance Operative has been moved to Parks and Open Spaces.
2. Premises costs in relation to Car Parks have been moved to the Assets portfolio. One off budget provision for Climate Change project approved at Cabinet and unspent budget carried forward from 2019/20 is included in the revised.
3. Reduced income in line with reduction to car parking income following free parking period in Blaby due to impact of Covid-19.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. See above point 1, and the end of a fixed term post removed in the proposed.

## **Building Control**

<b>Building Control</b>	<b>2020/21 Approved Budget</b>	<b>2020/21 Revised Estimate</b>	<b>2021/22 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [A]</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [B]</b>
	<b>[A]</b>	<b>[B]</b>	<b>[C]</b>		
<b>1. Establishment Costs</b>	<b>£538,155</b>	<b>£656,398</b>	<b>£714,777</b>	<b>£176,622</b>  <b>32.82%</b>	<b>£58,379</b>  <b>8.89%</b>
<b>2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£50,694</b>	<b>£61,225</b>	<b>£52,740</b>	<b>£2,046</b>  <b>4.04%</b>	<b>-£8,485</b>  <b>-13.86%</b>
<b>3. Direct Income</b>	<b>-£567,225</b>	<b>-£720,468</b>	<b>-£743,840</b>	<b>-£176,615</b>  <b>31.14%</b>	<b>-£23,372</b>  <b>3.24%</b>
<b>4. Net Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£21,624</b>	<b>-£2,845</b>	<b>£23,677</b>	<b>£2,053</b>  <b>9.49%</b>	<b>£26,522</b>  <b>-932.23%</b>
<b>5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)</b>	<b>11.61</b>	<b>14.61</b>	<b>14.61</b>	<b>3.00</b>  <b>25.84%</b>	<b>0.00</b>  <b>0.00%</b>

## **Reasons for Variances**

1. The 2020/21 Establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. New Building Control Partnership posts added to the revised and proposed estimates.
2. Revised estimate includes 1 off budget provision carried forward from 2019/20.
3. Increase in line with Partnership agreement.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. See 1 above.

## **Community Development Work & Skills**

<b>Partnerships</b>	<b>2020/21 Approved Budget</b>	<b>2020/21 Revised Estimate</b>	<b>2021/22 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [A]</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [B]</b>
	<b>[A]</b>	<b>[B]</b>	<b>[C]</b>		
<b>1. Establishment Costs</b>	<b>£215,005</b>	<b>£326,843</b>	<b>£318,152</b>	<b>£103,147</b> <b>47.97%</b>	<b>-£8,691</b> <b>-2.66%</b>
<b>2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£133,322</b>	<b>£258,555</b>	<b>£134,371</b>	<b>£1,049</b> <b>0.79%</b>	<b>-£124,184</b> <b>-48.03%</b>
<b>3. Direct Income</b>	<b>-£65,640</b>	<b>-£78,755</b>	<b>-£65,639</b>	<b>£1</b> <b>0.00%</b>	<b>£13,116</b> <b>-16.65%</b>
<b>4. Net Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£282,687</b>	<b>£506,643</b>	<b>£386,884</b>	<b>£104,197</b> <b>36.86%</b>	<b>-£119,759</b> <b>-23.64%</b>
<b>5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)</b>	<b>5.93</b>	<b>8.37</b>	<b>8.37</b>	<b>2.44</b> <b>41.15%</b>	<b>0.00</b> <b>0.00%</b>

### **Reasons for Variances**

1. The 2021/22 Establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. 3 x Economic Development posts have been moved into Partnerships and added to the revised and proposed
2. 2020/21 revised estimate includes non-recurring expenditure brought forward from 2019/20.
3. Includes S106 contributions to cover the cost of employing the Employment, Skills and Training Co-ordinator in 2020/21 and Lottery sales.
4. Net impact of the variances listed above.
5. As per point 1.

## **Movement in budget and staff from last year**

### Leisure Centres

Covid 19 has had a major impact on the financial return from SLM operating both Enderby Leisure Centre and Huncote Leisure Centre. Regular reports are taken to Full Council to update on the financial position.

### Health & Leisure Services

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

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

### Tourism

Due to the pandemic our work in this area has been slower than planned, however we do have the tourism wall at Fosse Park in place and we are just about to finalise the sites for the Foxes project. We are currently within the allocated budget to support Tourism.

### Environmental Health

Additional funding was received from National government to support the delivery of additional enforcement work in relation to Covid 19. This included additional hours at the weekend for existing staff, some of the work outsourced to a consultant and the cost of a marshalling service to undertake visits to ensure compliance to Covid 19 regulations.

### Environmental Services

A bid has been submitted to DEFRA for an Air Quality Grant, we should know the result of this in February 2021. Due to the pandemic for a period of time charges were removed for the use of the car parks, this was linked to the installation of safety barriers to ensure people could maintain a 2m distance while visiting the shops. Since then an experimental order has been put in place in Blaby and Narborough to allow two hours free to encourage people to shop local. Unspent budget allocated to the green agenda will be carried forward to 20/21.

## Building Control Services

The Service continues to operate as a lean self-financing business unit, competing for work against the private sector. From the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 we increased the fees for building control work. The plan is for the four other local authorities who make up the partnership to align their fees with Blaby's. Oadby and Wigston have gained agreement to do this from April 1<sup>st</sup> 2021, we are working with the other three to secure agreement. The Management Board continues to meet, income and performance figures are shared on a regular basis and we are currently developing a business case for full delegation.

## Portfolio Priorities

1. Monitor and manage the performance of the Leisure Contract with SLM.
2. Deliver the Tourism Growth Plan.
3. Increase physical activity levels across the District by delivering the Sport & Physical Activity Commissioning Plan, the Playing Pitch Strategy and the 'Active Blaby' scheme.
4. Protect and improve the health, safety and wellbeing of local residents, visitors and people who live and work in the District of Blaby.
5. Ensure the safety and quality of the built environment.
6. Lead and maintain a Building Control Partnership with other local authorities.
7. Deliver the Work & Skills Action Plan.
8. Deliver our Air Quality Action Plan
9. Deliver the Buried Bouskell Heritage Lottery Fund Project
10. Continue the development of our Walk & Ride Work
11. Deliver our Green Action Plan.
12. To tackle Envirocrime across the district through the use of marketing campaigns, social media and enforcement.
13. To develop and implement a Housing Civil Penalties Strategy

## Services

### Leisure Centres

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

Enderby Leisure Centre provides a range of leisure services including a swimming pool, swimming lessons, fitness suite, health suite, indoor bowls, golf course, fitness studios, all weather pitches, café and meeting room (some of these will be developed during 2019/20). This service is delivered through a leisure contract with SLM (expires 2029).

## Health & Leisure

- Health Improvement– services include A Place to Grow, Dementia Action Alliance, Health Promotion, delivering the Blaby District Staying Healthy Partnership. This area of work also includes delivery of the Social Prescribing model and links with our Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Public Health, GPs and other partners around health.
- Tourism & Heritage – services include the delivery the Blaby District Tourism Growth Plan, a range of projects such as Walk & Ride, English Tourism Week and The Ice House Project.
- Sport & Physical Activity – these services complement the universal offer in our Leisure Centres by providing outreach programmes throughout our District to residents who may not be able to access our centres. They also provide support to help develop our network of community sports clubs. The services include exercise referral, outreach physical activity sessions, cardiac rehabilitation scheme, falls prevention, older people activities, weight management, inclusive activities, sports development, events, a commercial programme, the Positive Activities Referral Scheme (PARS), Sports Awards, JUST (women’s activity programme), national and local awareness campaigns and co-ordinating the Local Sports Alliance (LSA). This service secures a significant amount of external funding from Public Health (this amount is still to be confirmed for 2021/22).

## Environmental Health

Environmental Health is predominately a statutory service that safeguards public health and the environment. The areas of work include food safety, noise, ‘envirocrime’ (graffiti, fly posting, litter, fly tipping, abandoned vehicles), supported through the recruitment of an Envirocrime Officer, private sector housing enforcement, empty homes, waste accumulations, filthy and verminous premises and hoarding, health and safety at work, public health, infectious disease control. The majority of their work in 20/21 has been about ensuring covid compliance and the safety of all of our residents. This has put a lot of pressure on the team as they have been managing the pandemic while managing their normal work, it has required them to work extra hours including weekends.

## Environmental Services

Environmental Service key areas are – air quality management, contaminated land, pollution control, car parking, climate change, stray dogs and fouling, licensing of taxis and private hire operators, licensing of sale of alcohol, regulated entertainment and gambling.

## Building Control

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

This service competes with other private sector building control providers. Additional services are provided to deal with dangerous structures, safe demolition of buildings and street naming and numbering, in addition to providing support and added resilience to the Council's Property Services team and other services as and when required.

Blaby Building Control currently supports the delivery of building control services at Harborough District Council, Oadby & Wigston Borough Council, Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council and Melton Borough Council. As well as covering the out of hours service for Rutland.

### Economic and Community Development, Work and Skills

Economic Development Team joined this team from September this year, following this we established our business hub which provided support to businesses during the pandemic. Our vision is to offer our businesses an acct manager so they have a single point of contact for all their enquiries.

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 governing documentation. Our community volunteer week supports the voluntary and community sector to achieve tasks it may not ordinarily have capacity to do. It also encourages individuals and groups to partake in social, charitable and environmental activities on a voluntary basis.

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.

The Work and Skills action plan is our approach to how we will focus ideas to meet the 3 overarching themes contained within the plan. The themes have helped shape the priorities around the work and skills agenda, giving a clear timetable and defined steps for how this will be implemented, measured and reported against.

### Key Points

<p>Doing things differently – plans for the coming year</p>	<p><u>Leisure Contract:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase usage of new facilities across both sites</li> </ul> <p><u>Health &amp; Leisure:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch Active Blaby</li> <li>• Develop our walk and ride</li> </ul> <p><u>Tourism:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver Tourism Growth Plan with a range of projects</li> <li>• Marketing our tourism offer</li> <li>• Deliver the Buried Bouskell HLF project</li> </ul>
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	<p><u>Environmental Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scanning of licensing documents into the DMS system and getting rid of paper files.</li> <li>• Work continues to implement back office system for EPR, Contaminated Land, Service Requests, Licensing and Planning Consultations.</li> <li>• Online access to Licensing Services.</li> <li>• Further assess the taxi testing provision at the new depot and online access for all licenses to improve the customer journey.</li> <li>• Deliver actions within the adopted air quality action plan.</li> <li>• Deliver the Green strategy and action plan.</li> </ul> <p><u>Environmental Health</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop the work around envirocrime including working more closely with colleagues at the depot and a more proactive enforcement element.</li> <li>• To develop and implement a Housing Civil Penalties Policy</li> </ul> <p><u>Work &amp; Skills and Businesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To expand our work &amp; skills offer to other industries apart from construction for example Tourism and Retail.</li> <li>• To establish our acct managers so businesses have a single point of contact.</li> <li>• To deliver a comprehensive offer to our schools and academies for those young people who are not choosing an academic route.</li> </ul>
Income generation	<p><u>Health &amp; Leisure</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure income from the new Leisure Contract.</li> <li>• Continue to secure external funding to support front line delivery.</li> <li>• Achieve income goal for the Events Hire equipment scheme.</li> </ul> <p><u>Environmental Health</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulatory income</li> </ul> <p><u>Environmental Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Car parks</li> <li>• Licensing for animal health</li> <li>• Permitted process income</li> </ul> <p><u>Building Control</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market share and income levels are closely monitored. Blaby Building Control continues to perform well against both the private sector and other Leicestershire Building Control providers.</li> <li>• Blaby Building Control leads the Leicestershire Building Control Partnership covering HDC, OWBC, HBBC and MBC. This will generate revenue from partner income share and providing staff with an overhead recharge.</li> <li>• Lightbulb have commissioned Building Control to support the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants.</li> </ul>

Capital plans for the portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver the Ice House restoration project with Funding Secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund.</li> <li>• Money to be carried forward from 2019/20 to ensure the equipment is maintained at Huncote with regard to landfill gas. Further work on the external site is due to take place early 2021.</li> </ul>
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### Key Performance Indicators

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

#### Work & Skills and businesses

- Number of people supported to take up a work, placement, trial and or a job.
- Number of VCS groups supported via the Community Grants Programme and Health checks
- Number of community development projects completed
- Number of business we have supported

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2019/20 RESULTS	2020/21 YEAR TO DATE	COMMENTS
Building Control inspections carried out on the same day as requested	3,534	1, 563 up to the end of October.	Building Control has maintained its 100% record of undertaking inspections on the same day when requested to do so.
Total number of long term empty homes returned into use		So far this year 817. This is not the "long term empty" figure though – just any property that has had any	Due to the transfer to a new database the data for 19/20 is not available.  Staff have been doing a huge amount of work on the new system and improving

		period of time empty before the next tenant/owner has moved in.	the new recording mechanisms.
Number of large fly tipping incidents	689	839	Large increase due to impact of lockdown and tip closures.
Number of food premises with a rating of 3 or above (satisfactory)	753 out of 835 food businesses  (some businesses don't get a FHRs such as Manufacturers etc )	761 out of 876 food businesses	We have seen an increase in the number of new businesses starting up during the pandemic providing take away food and home caterers.
Total number of people supported through our work and skills programme	710	229	Includes work experience, training, school visits, jobs, apprenticeships.  20/21- this figure is lower due to covid, as many of the normal activities have not taken place.

### **Customers**

- Use data to understand our customers and local trends, such as the Joint Strategy Needs Assessment, Health Profiles, Sport England 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:

External funding supports 6 posts (Physical Activity Development Officers – PADOs) across the Health and Leisure Services Team. These posts currently deliver physical activity and GP referral services that support inactive, vulnerable,

the elderly, people with dementia and disability, residents at risk of developing health conditions including mental health and vulnerable young people.

Securing external funding is, therefore, essential to continue these services. A significant amount of this is received from Sport and Physical Activity Strategic Commissioning funded by Leicestershire Country Council Public Health (PH). Informal indications for 2020/21 suggest we will receive a similar level of funding to 2019/20, although this has not been confirmed. Other funding is made available through partnership working with Leicestershire and Rutland Sport (LRS).

- Commitment from health partners and construction partners
- Performance of Leisure Contractor (SLM)
- Reducing Council budgets
- Recruitment and retention of qualified staff.
- Competency of all Regulatory Officers (continued professional development).
- Building Control's inability to react to increased workloads and economic upturn whilst funding and staffing levels within the Council and Public sector as a whole are in active decline.
- Market share for Building Control who are in competition with many private sector Building Control providers.

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<b>Appendix K</b> <b>PLANNING &amp; STRATEGIC GROWTH PORTFOLIO</b> <b>Councillor Ben Taylor</b>
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The last year has seen significant upheaval and uncertainty for the Group; with a raft of Government consultations, planning reform proposals, and staff redeployed at times as part of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, demand has increased significantly - particularly, and perhaps unsurprisingly, in terms of householder applications and smaller scale enforcement cases.

Work has, however, continued as normal in the midst of this; with some large scale projects progressing at pace. The number, scope and profile of strategic projects continues to grow, and this is predicted to continue over the next 12 months. In addition, the new Local Plan continues to progress; with some significant milestones coming up.

The focus on delivery of a good enforcement service continues; with a range of sensitive and high profile cases ongoing, and a high caseload of varied investigations.

### **Portfolio Priorities**

Priorities for 2021/22 for the group include:

- 1. Large scale strategic projects.** The strategic growth team is managing a full range of large scale projects. These include a rail freight terminal, garden village, further potential large scale site near to Stoney Stanton, and Fosse Park West. In April 2021 the new offices, beer hall and brewery at Everards Meadows and Fosse Park West will both open.
- 2. New Local Plan.** The next 12 months will see a number of important milestones for the new Local Plan, as we move closer to a submission version. Further detailed work on the policies, plus formal public engagement will be undertaken.
- 3. Respond to Planning Reforms.** During 2020, a number of consultations were undertaken by the Government on proposed reforms to the planning system. These reforms, should they be taken forward, will have a significant impact on the way we work in most planning related areas. We are hopeful of further consultation and guidance from Government as quickly as possible; which enables us to start considering the changes.
- 4. High profile enforcement action.** Ongoing action will continue for a number of current high profile cases; with Enforcement Notice appeal dates now set for early 2021/22. In addition the team will continue their pro-active approach across the District, in dealing with a varied case load of investigations.
- 5. Joint Strategic Planning –** work continues across Leicester and Leicestershire to support the delivery of the Strategic Growth Plan, key infrastructure to enable future growth, and other 'cross boundary' projects. We are exploring all

opportunities to work collaboratively with other local authorities; to ensure that we can maximise opportunities and efficiencies.

- 6. Delivery of the Lubbesthorpe Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE).** The new community is going from strength to strength. Around 500 houses are now occupied, the first primary school is open, and works continue to deliver the road infrastructure. To date the development has now won four awards. Key milestones for 2021/22 will include the opening of the first Local Centre (including health centre), and development of the leisure offer and secondary school.

### **Risks**

- The increased level of planning applications, particularly the sharp recent increase in householder applications, continues to place significant demands on the service. Ongoing resource reviews are essential to help to mitigate against this.
- Failure to progress the new Local Plan could leave the District vulnerable to unacceptable types of future development.
- High number of appeals would place further pressures on the Development Services Team.
- Inability to progress with the delivery of a clear and robust policy framework would put delivery of sustainable development at risk.
- Delivery of Lubbesthorpe against the current proposed timetable is essential – failure to do so could affect the 5 year housing land supply, and in turn the council's ability to defend against undesirable development.
- Ongoing lack of clarity, or a long period without further guidance, on planning reform proposals would lead to long periods of uncertainty; and could in turn delay the new Local Plan.
- Failure to deliver an effective enforcement service could result in reputational damage.
- Failure to secure ongoing Garden Village Programme funding could jeopardise our ability to ensure that any such sites are delivered well.

Portfolio Holder: Ben Taylor

Senior Officer: Planning & Economic Development Group Manager

**Portfolio Total**

<b>Planning, Housing Strategy, Economic &amp; Community Development - Total</b>	<b>2020/21 Approved Budget</b>	<b>2020/21 Revised Estimate</b>	<b>2021/22 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [A]</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [B]</b>
	<b>[A]</b>	<b>[B]</b>	<b>[C]</b>		
<b>1. Establishment Costs</b>	<b>£1,473,949</b>	<b>£1,471,814</b>	<b>£1,427,640</b>	<b>-£46,309</b> -3.14%	<b>-£44,174</b> -3.00%
<b>2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£347,418</b>	<b>£829,279</b>	<b>£288,350</b>	<b>-£59,068</b> -17.00%	<b>-£540,929</b> -65.23%
<b>3. Direct Income</b>	<b>-£826,412</b>	<b>-£561,412</b>	<b>-£770,000</b>	<b>£56,412</b> -6.83%	<b>-£208,588</b> 37.15%
<b>4. Net Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£994,955</b>	<b>£1,739,681</b>	<b>£945,990</b>	<b>-£48,965</b> -4.92%	<b>-£793,691</b> -45.62%
<b>5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)</b>	<b>33.22</b>	<b>32.78</b>	<b>31.78</b>	<b>-1.44</b> -4.33%	<b>-1.00</b> -3.05%

## **DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

<b>Development Strategy</b>	<b>2020/21 Approved Budget</b>	<b>2020/21 Revised Estimate</b>	<b>2021/22 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [A]</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [B]</b>
	<b>[A]</b>	<b>[B]</b>	<b>[C]</b>		
<b>1. Establishment Costs</b>	<b>£356,484</b>	<b>£265,019</b>	<b>£268,581</b>	<b>-£87,903</b> <b>-24.66%</b>	<b>£3,562</b> <b>1.34%</b>
<b>2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£107,594</b>	<b>£553,837</b>	<b>£93,594</b>	<b>-£14,000</b> <b>-13.01%</b>	<b>-£460,243</b> <b>-83.10%</b>
<b>3. Direct Income</b>	<b>-£2,000</b>	<b>-£2,000</b>	<b>-£2,000</b>	<b>£0</b> <b>0.00%</b>	<b>£0</b> <b>0.00%</b>
<b>4. Net Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£462,078</b>	<b>£816,856</b>	<b>£360,175</b>	<b>-£101,903</b> <b>-22.05%</b>	<b>-£456,681</b> <b>-55.91%</b>
<b>5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)</b>	<b>7.94</b>	<b>5.50</b>	<b>5.50</b>	<b>-2.44</b> <b>-30.73%</b>	<b>0.00</b> <b>0.00%</b>

### **Reasons for Variances**

1. The 2021/22 Establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. 3 x Economic Development posts moved to Partnerships.
2. The revised budget includes significant grants and S106 monies carried forward from 2019/20 relating to the Neighbourhood planning, Local Development Framework and the production of the Delivery Development Plan Document (DPD). Any budget that is not utilised in the year will be transferred to an Earmarked reserve.
3. No change.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. As per point 1.

## PLANNING DELIVERY

	2020/21 Approved Budget	2020/21 Revised Estimate	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
Planning Delivery	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£540,632	£544,797	£580,621	£39,989 7.40%	£35,824 6.58%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£125,016	£125,630	£107,663	-£17,353 -13.88%	-£17,967 -14.30%
3. Direct Income	-£768,000	-£520,000	-£768,000	£0 0.00%	-£248,000 47.69%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	-£102,352	£150,427	-£79,716	£22,636 -22.12%	-£230,143 -152.99%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	13.61	13.61	13.61	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

### Reasons for Variances

1. The 2021/22 Establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions as well as increase due to career progression posts.
2. One off non reoccurring budget has been removed from the proposed budget.
3. Income budget reduced in line with expected income, reduction due to the impact of Covid-19.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

Planning Enforcement	2020/21 Approved Budget  [A]	2020/21 Revised Estimate  [B]	2021/22 Proposed Budget  [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£195,723	£197,183	£204,541	£8,818 4.51%	£7,358 3.73%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£13,046	£21,536	£13,046	£0 0.00%	-£8,490 -39.42%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 #DIV/0!	£0 #DIV/0!
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£208,769	£218,719	£217,587	£8,818 4.22%	-£1,132 -0.52%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	4.81	4.81	4.81	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

### **Reasons for Variances**

1. The 2021/22 Establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions.
2. The revised budget includes budget approved for consultants' fees relating to Enforcement action carried forward from 2020/21.
3. Not applicable.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change.

## **STRATEGIC GROWTH**

Strategic Growth	2020/21 Approved Budget  [A]	2020/21 Revised Estimate  [B]	2021/22 Proposed Budget  [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£240,638	£323,291	£228,238	-£12,400 -5.15%	-£95,053 -29.40%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£41,567	£58,081	£14,784	-£26,783 -64.43%	-£43,297 -74.55%
3. Direct Income	-£56,412	-£39,412	£0	£56,412 -100.00%	£39,412 -100.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£225,793	£341,960	£243,022	£17,229 7.63%	-£98,938 -28.93%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	4.86	6.86	5.86	1.00 20.58%	-1.00 -14.58%

### **Reasons for Variances**

1. The 2021/22 Establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. The budget also includes 2 x 2 year externally funded Garden Village Project posts and the removal of one fixed term post.
2. 2021/22 revised estimate includes non recurring expenditure brought forward from 2020/21.
3. No income expected in 2021/22.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. As per note 1, and 1 fixed term post ended.

## **MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION**

<b>Management &amp; Admin</b>	<b>2020/21 Approved Budget</b>	<b>2020/21 Revised Estimate</b>	<b>2021/22 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [A]</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [B]</b>
	<b>[A]</b>	<b>[B]</b>	<b>[C]</b>		
<b>1. Establishment Costs</b>	<b>£140,472</b>	<b>£141,524</b>	<b>£145,659</b>	<b>£5,187</b> <b>3.69%</b>	<b>£4,135</b> <b>2.92%</b>
<b>2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£60,195</b>	<b>£70,195</b>	<b>£59,263</b>	<b>-£932</b> <b>-1.55%</b>	<b>-£10,932</b> <b>-15.57%</b>
<b>3. Direct Income</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>4. Net Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£200,667</b>	<b>£211,719</b>	<b>£204,922</b>	<b>£4,255</b> <b>2.12%</b>	<b>-£6,797</b> <b>-3.21%</b>
<b>5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>0.00</b> <b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00</b> <b>0.00%</b>

### **Reasons for Variances**

1. The 2021/22 Establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions.
2. Revised Estimate includes one off carry forward of budget from 2020/21
3. No income receivable in respect of this service.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change.

## **Movement in budget and staff from last year**

The establishment budget for this portfolio includes contractual increases in relation to the new pay spine, increments and employer contributions for national insurance and pensions. The headcount has decreased compared to 2020/21, due to the ending of a fixed term post in the Strategic Growth Team and a number of Economic Development posts moving over to a different portfolio. The net decrease is only one post however, due to an adjustment made last year for 1.5 externally funded posts added to the Strategic Growth Team (covered by external Garden Village Programme) funding.

Other than establishment costs the main variances in expenditure are associated with the ongoing costs of producing the new Local Plan.

## **Portfolio Priorities**

Priorities for 2021/22 for the group include:

- 7. Large scale strategic projects.** The strategic growth team is managing a full range of large scale projects. These include a rail freight terminal, garden village, further potential large scale site near to Stoney Stanton, and Fosse Park West. In April 2021 the new offices, beer hall and brewery at Everards Meadows and Fosse Park West will both open.
- 8. New Local Plan.** The next 12 months will see a number of important milestones for the new Local Plan, as we move closer to a submission version. Further detailed work on the policies, plus formal public engagement will be undertaken.
- 9. Respond to Planning Reforms.** During 2020, a number of consultations were undertaken by the Government on proposed reforms to the planning system. These reforms, should they be taken forward, will have a significant impact on the way we work in most planning related areas. We are hopeful of further consultation and guidance from Government as quickly as possible; which enables us to start considering the changes.
- 10. High profile enforcement action.** Ongoing action will continue for a number of current high profile cases; with Enforcement Notice appeal dates now set for early 2021/22. In addition the team will continue their pro-active approach across the District, in dealing with a varied case load of investigations.
- 11. Joint Strategic Planning –** work continues across Leicester and Leicestershire to support the delivery of the Strategic Growth Plan, key infrastructure to enable future growth, and other ‘cross boundary’ projects. We are exploring all opportunities to work collaboratively with other local authorities; to ensure that we can maximise opportunities and efficiencies.
- 12. Delivery of the Lubbethorpe Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE).** The new community is going from strength to strength. Around 500 houses are now occupied, the first primary school is open, and works continue to deliver the road infrastructure. To date the development has now won four awards. Key milestones

for 2021/22 will include the opening of the first Local Centre (including health centre), and development of the leisure offer and secondary school.

## **Services**

The Vision for the Planning and Economic Development Group is:

***“To have a pro-active, customer centred and comprehensive planning service that delivers the Council’s development and economic aspirations and ambitions for the District, and enhances the Council’s reputation”.***

This is delivered through the following core functions:

### **Development Strategy**

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

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

### **Planning Delivery**

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

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

### **Planning Enforcement**

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

### **Strategic Growth Team**

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

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

## Management & Administration

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

### Key Points

<p>Doing things differently – plans for the coming year</p>	<p>The department continues to perform well, despite an unprecedented and challenging year. Staff are working hard, and are naturally tired as a result, but remain motivated. Over the last year the remit of the group has continued to grow – particularly in the areas of strategic growth and infrastructure planning.</p> <p>As set out in the priorities for the forthcoming year; we expect the next 12 months to be equally challenging – but also rewarding and exciting.</p> <p><u>Strategic Growth</u></p> <p>The team will continue to project manage some of the district’s most high profile and complex strategic projects. This includes a wide range of sites; from retail and commercial developments, to a garden village, and of course Lubbesthorpe.</p> <p><u>Development Strategy</u></p> <p>The team will continue to focus on strategic planning and the Local Plan</p> <p>Work will continue during 2021/22 on the new Local Plan.</p> <p><u>Planning Delivery</u></p> <p>The workload of the team has continued to increase over the last year, as application levels rise at an unprecedented rate.</p> <p>During 2021/22 the team will focus on ensuring the continued delivery of an excellent service in this demanding environment.</p> <p><u>Enforcement</u></p> <p>The enforcement team will continue its proactive monitoring approach next year. In addition, work on the high profile and sensitive sites will also progress.</p> <p><u>Management &amp; Administration</u></p> <p>The focus for 2012/22 will be on continuing the growth of the department, whilst supporting and enabling staff development.</p>
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Income generation	<p>The fees and charges for all aspects of the service will be kept under review to ensure that these maximise income without impacting on the quality of communications and applications submitted and increasing costs elsewhere in the delivery of the services.</p> <p>Income generation across the group is restricted to fees for documents; and national set planning application fees. The Government implemented a 20% increase to planning application fees during 2018, which is reflected in the ongoing income figures. This increased income is ring-fenced to expenditure on planning staffing only, and additional posts were put in place over the last year.</p> <p>The group will seek to maximise opportunities for cost saving through collaborative working, particularly on Local Plan technical work.</p>
Capital plans for the portfolio	There are no current capital plans for the portfolio.

### **Key Performance Indicators**

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 Apr - Sept
<b>Number of planning applications received</b>	1091	1132	1089	1111	1104	545
<b>Planning application fee income</b>	£676,273	£470,671	£656,689	£775,940	£647,370	£296,537
<b>Number of planning applications determined</b>	1010	1048	1076	1099	1043	467
<b>% of applications delegated</b>	94.06	93.73	93.60	94.2	95.2	95.58
<b>% of major applications determined in 13 weeks</b>	94.44	100.00	93.54	100	96.3	81.81
<b>E2E (householders)</b>	44.03	33.55	46.50	47.89	46.2	61.86
<b>E2E (minors)</b>	65.85	53.07	65.92	84.5	80.33	97.25
<b>E2E (others)</b>	55.98	48.02	38.61	44.8	50.59	51.63
<b>Housing Land Supply</b>	Currently at 7 years					

## **Customers**

- The Planning Delivery and Enforcement services in particular have heavy interaction with residents and we will continue to monitor customer feedback to ensure that all interactions with customers and stakeholders to these services are conducted appropriately and professionally.
- There are a number of significant public consultations planned for 2021/22 including the next stage of the new Local Plan, and a number of large strategic sites.

## **Risks**

- The increased level of planning applications, particularly the sharp recent increase in householder applications, continues to place significant demands on the service. Ongoing resource reviews are essential to help to mitigate against this.
- Failure to progress the new Local Plan could leave the District vulnerable to unacceptable types of future development.
- High number of appeals would place further pressures on the Development Services Team.
- Inability to progress with the delivery of a clear and robust policy framework would put delivery of sustainable development at risk.
- Delivery of Lubbesthorpe against the current proposed timetable is essential – failure to do so could affect the 5 year housing land supply, and in turn the council's ability to defend against undesirable development.
- Ongoing lack of clarity, or a long period without further guidance, on planning reform proposals would lead to long periods of uncertainty; and could in turn delay the new Local Plan.
- Failure to deliver an effective enforcement service could result in reputational damage.
- Failure to secure ongoing Garden Village Programme funding could jeopardise our ability to ensure that any such sites are delivered well.

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