

# **SCRUTINY OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S BUDGET PROPOSALS**

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Offices, Narborough

**WEDNESDAY, 22 JANUARY 2020**

## **Present:-**

Cllr. Geoff Welsh (Chairman)

Cllr. Lee Breckon (Scrutiny Commissioner & Vice-Chair)

Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore

Cllr. Nick Chapman

Cllr. Adrian Clifford

Cllr. Roy Denney

Cllr. Alex DeWinter

Cllr. David Findlay

Cllr. Deanne Freer

Cllr. Janet Forey

Cllr. Chris Frost

Cllr. Nigel Grundy

Cllr. Paul Hartshorn

Cllr. Mark Jackson

Cllr. Trevor Matthews

Cllr. Christine Merrill

Cllr. Phil Moitt

Cllr. Antony Moseley

Cllr. Michael O'Hare

Cllr. Louise Richardson

Cllr. Ben Taylor

Cllr. Kirsteen Thomson

Cllr. Bev Welsh

Cllr. Jane Wolfe

## **Officers present:-**

Jane Toman

John Richardson

Nick Brown

Paul Coates

Teresa Neal

Quin Quinney

Kate Kells

Cat Hartley

- Chief Executive

- Strategic Director

- Strategic Finance Manager

- Neighbourhood Services & Assets Group  
Manager

- Leisure & Regulatory Services Group  
Manager

- Housing & Community Services Group  
Manager

- Strategic HR Manager

- Planning & Economic Development Group  
Manager

## **Also in attendance:-**

Cllr. Terry Richardson (Leader of the Council (and Cabinet Executive)),

Cllr. Maggie Wright (Deputy Leader and Finance & Assets Portfolio Holder),

Cllr. David Freer (Corporate Services & Neighbourhood Services Portfolio Holder),

Cllr. Sheila Scott (Planning, Housing Strategy, Economic Development Portfolio

Holder), Cllr. Sharon Coe (Health, Wellbeing & Regulatory Services Portfolio Holder)

and Cllr. Les Phillimore (Housing & Community Services Portfolio Holder)

## **Apologies:-**

Cllr. Shabbir Aslam, Cllr. Shane Blackwell, Cllr. Stuart Coar, Cllr. Iain Hewson,

Cllr. Sam Maxwell and Cllr. Mat Mortel

**1. CONSIDER NOTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON THE 15 JANUARY 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on the 15 January 2020, as circulated, were approved and signed as a correct record.

**2. 2020/21 DRAFT PORTFOLIO BUDGET PROPOSALS (Pages 7 - 20)**

The Chairman welcomed members and officers to the meeting and invited Portfolio Holders to respond to scrutiny questions submitted prior to the meeting.

Written responses for each Portfolio are attached with the minutes.

Additional questions raised:

1. What other commercial streams or plans do you have to bring more money in to the council.

The Commercial Strategy action plan outlines the Council's plans, going forward looking at property investment.

2. Investing in Small Business Units, what's happening?

A programme of work is planned to look at income growth and respond to market need which is currently saying businesses want less expensive units.

3. Who advises the Council on IT security?

Advice comes from our ICT Partnership in terms of procurement and specifications - firewalls etc. Risks have also been explored through independent experts, nothing is totally fool proof but confident.

4. With the growth of new Lubbesthorpe what is the forecast need for refuse lorries and staff requirements?

A number of factors are taken into account for example - waste tonnage collected, round length, new property data. Based on current trajectory would anticipate approximately 2 years before additional rounds and staff

resource is required.

5. Is there potential to expand the MOT service?

Permit requirements do not allow the Council to provide an MOT service to the public. Additional income will come from our brake testing service which is to be offered to neighbouring local authorities shortly.

6. Is there a cost to the Council of Primary Care Network (PCN) Pilot?

Yes, resource worker costs for 10 pilot interventions. Review of the pilot will look at where savings have been made including the difference made to those being supported and in terms of early identification, intervention and prevention.

7. Are there age restrictions on using Disabled Facilities Grant for children?

There is no restriction for children. Adult applications are means tested.

8. Do large scale developments and garden villages increase the ability to deliver more affordable homes?

Every opportunity is taken, as well as looking at demand data and statistics we also look at the wider picture to see what other benefits can be achieved including the diversity of affordable housing.

9. What is £20k East Midlands Homes contribution for?

The contribution from EMH for a housing support worker is reviewed annually.

10. The Council's Strategy refers to 2 garden villages is this still the case?

Yes.

11. Is the Portfolio Holder happy that the 5 year land supply will be met?

Yes, currently the Council's land supply is 7.3 which is brilliant.

An update was provided on various potential future costs which are being considered for the coming financial year and therefore included in the draft budget:

- Additional resource for Neighbourhood Services
- Housing Services Review
- Resource to support digitalisation
- Expenditure to Support the Green Agenda

The Chairman thanked the Portfolio Holders and Officers for the comprehensive information and responses provided. Scrutiny Members would formulate a response at its meeting on 27 January for Scrutiny Commission consideration on 5 February 2020.

3. **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING - MONDAY 27 JANUARY 2020 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER**

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 7.15 P.M.**

## SCRUTINY OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S DRAFT 2020/21 BUDGET PROPOSALS

### PORTFOLIO RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY QUESTIONS - 15 JANUARY 2020

#### PORTFOLIO: Leader – Cllr Terry Richardson

#### 1. Does the fair funding review relate to the UK as a whole or just England?

The fair funding review is aimed at designing a new system for allocating funding between English local authorities.

#### 2. What is the basis for the 2% pay settlement? Please provide a table to show and compare the impact of a 2.5% and 3% settlement.

The Trade Union side of the NJC have submitted a pay claim for:

- A real living wage of £10 per hour on NJC spinal column point 1 and a 10% increase on all other pay points.
- A one day increase to the minimum paid annual leave entitlement set out in the Green Book.
- A two hour reduction in the standard working week as set out in the Green Book.
- A comprehensive joint national review of the workplace causes of stress and mental health throughout local authorities.

The Unions see the claim as an attempt to claw back reductions in pay and conditions over the last ten years. The employers' side of the NJC have delayed responding to the claim until the new year.

It was considered unlikely that the claim would be agreed by the employers' side, and the establishment budget was, therefore, formulated on the basis of a 2% pay award, in line with recent years. The LGA have since advised that the Unions' claim will definitely not be accepted and that 2% is a reasonable assumption upon which to base our budgets.

	Increase £	Total Cost £
2020/21 Establishment based on 2019/20 Pay Scale		11,657,715
2% Pay Award – included in Base Budget	235,666	11,893,381
2.5% Pay Award	58,911	11,952,292
3% Pay Award	58,882	12,011,174

**1. What was the reason for investing in the Lothbury Property Fund, what is the potential risk and what is the estimated return on interest?**

The Council has previously invested some of its surplus balances in the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme, which enabled it to generate a rate of return that was considerably greater than normal money market investments. When LAMS reached the end of its life we looked for alternative investment opportunities that would deliver a similar, enhanced, rate of return, but also deliver similar outcomes for residents. Several options were considered but there was nothing available in the same vein as LAMS..

Property funds were suggested as a possible investment opportunity through discussions with our treasury advisors, Link Asset Management. After further investigation and consideration, a report was taken to Council on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018, seeking approval to invest up to £1m in a property fund.

The Property Fund investment is one of the key actions under Priority 2 of our Commercial Strategy – Investment in and Maximisation of Asset Utilisation.

Alongside this, it is recognised that there are limitations associated with our everyday money market investments. There are a relatively small number of investment counterparties on our approved lending list that offer a good rate of return, whilst also meeting our primary objective – the security of our returns. The Lothbury Property Fund offers an alternative investment opportunity in respect of some of our core balances and reserves.

Lothbury was chosen after a robust selection process because it not only offered a good, consistent rate of return (historically around 4% per annum), but the fund managers' risk appetite was the most closely aligned to our own, i.e. they clearly stated that they are risk averse.

Property Fund Investments should be viewed as a longer term investment, since the value can go down as well as increase, and that is the primary risk with this type of investment. It should be expected that the Council would hold the fund for a period of at least 2 to 5 years. The exact period of investment would be determined by the Council's need to utilise the monies invested and the performance of the fund.

As part of our Commercial Strategy, we also have an action in terms of investment in commercial property, such as industrial units. An update on the Commercial Strategy was provided to the Finance Scrutiny Working Group on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2019. Further research is required to understand the market need for industrial units in the district to promote economic growth. At present we don't have the in house resource

to deliver this and had planned to engage an expert from Harborough District Council to work with us – unfortunately that resource is no longer available.

**2. Is the Portfolio Holder comfortable with the implementation of 2 financial systems (e-Financials and HR/Payroll) so close together?**

The contract for supply of the main Finance system (e-Financials) has been awarded to our incumbent supplier ( as per the report to Cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019). Effectively this means that the move to the new cloud-based system is more akin to an upgrade than a full blown implementation. Naturally, there is still a significant amount of work involved in ensuring that the new version is set up in such a way that the Council can get maximum benefit from it. Nonetheless, we expect to go live with the new version of e-Financials around the end of September 2020.

In terms of i-Trent, the HR/Payroll system, the intention is to begin the procurement process once e-Financials goes live. Officers have previously stated that there is no particular drive to change systems, as i-Trent remains fit for purpose. The likely procurement route is via a framework, which is generally more straightforward than a full tender process. It may be possible to make a direct award to our existing supplier via a framework, and to continue to use i-Trent, and this is an option subject to value for money considerations. The contract with the supplier is on an annual rolling basis so we are not locked in to a particular implementation schedule – this gives us the flexibility to defer this procurement if necessary.

Overall, I have no concerns about the ability to implement both systems in a relatively short space of time.

**3. Is the Portfolio Holder concerned about the capacity to input and learn new financial systems?**

As stated in response to the previous question, we will be continuing to use e-Financials and most of the functionality will be familiar to system users. There are new modules covering budget monitoring and forecasting which will greatly enhance our medium term financial planning process. This will involve training for all budget managers as well as the Finance team, and that is provided for as part of the project plan.

## **PORTFOLIO: Housing & Community Services – Cllr Les Phillimore**

### **1. What is “South PCN GP” and how does it relate to the complex case scheme?**

South Area Primary Care Network is a group of GPs practices covering Countesthorpe, Blaby and Lutterworth areas. These practices are each referring 2 high cost complex cases to the scheme.

### **2. What do the Safety Crew’s do? Tell us more –**

Safety Crew is a schools programme offering interactive workshop sessions on antisocial behaviour, healthy relationships and substance use. It’s delivered by community services staff (or will be when training is complete) and a new module has been developed recently covering criminal exploitation (sexual exploitation, county lines etc). It’s aimed at year 7 young people.

### **3. What is the current situation with the disabled facility grants – Grant against spend? What are the legislative barriers to using it? If not spent will it roll over to 2020/21 or go back to the Government?**

Expenditure to 31<sup>st</sup> December was £265k of the £1.1m budget so approximately £866k remaining to spend, although there are commitments of around another £200k as well. We are able to carry forward any underspend at year end, so the grant does not need to be returned to government. The DFG fund is ring fenced for capital spend only which is restrictive, for example we would like to pilot an initiative around hoarding which is a barrier for some patients leaving hospital and receiving care or adaptations to their property but this is not permitted under DFG funding legislation.

### **4. What actions have been taken to reduce the risks relating replacement of the Document Management Systems by end of Qtr 2 and the impact on the digitalisation process? (p32 first bullet point)**

We have moved the existing document management product onto a newer compliant Windows 2016/SQL 2016 server. This has been tested and the move carried out by a third party that is familiar with the product. The old server can now be safely decommissioned. A replacement product that offers more automation in both the process and design is being sought that has compatibility with other products used by the local authority. A reduction in the manual intervention by officers and the physical moving of large numbers of electronic files is sought. We seek a product that will meet current records management and information security requirements in light of the introduction of GDPR which will assist in avoiding prevention of GDPR breaches and issues. The product will contain automated destruction profiles without the need for significant manual intervention.

There is not a direct correlation between replacement of the document management and digitalisation.

#### **5. What is the plan for increasing affordable houses in the District?**

This is a challenge recognised by the Council. An internal Affordable Housing Group has been established which facilitates discussions on potential sites and innovative ways of increasing the number of affordable houses in the District. Our positive relationship with EMH homes and other Registered Providers ensures that we maximise opportunities and make Blaby an attractive setting to utilise the increase in government funding for affordable housing.

We provide extensive pre-application advice to developers (for example need figures, design etc) so that planning applications can move through the planning system smoothly and as quickly as possible thus increasing the likelihood of developers returning to the area.

- Continue to explore Rural Housing Need through our work with the Rural Enabler Service and thus deliver more Rural Housing Exception Sites
- Continue to maintain an acceptable level of affordable housing per development to meet our needs without putting the viability of schemes at risk and suffering lengthy delays
- Increase our focus on innovative housing schemes for particular sub groups – for example Extra Care Schemes, Foyer Schemes for Young people and Supported Housing schemes for those with Learning Difficulties and Mental Health issues
- Work closely with Environmental Health and develop new ways of returning Empty Homes to use by offering incentives and a close working relationship with the Housing Options Team to prospective landlords

#### **7. What is the HET team (p37)?**

Hospital Enablement Team, this team are based across the 2 main hospital sites and work with health professionals to prevent hospital discharge delays caused through housing related issues such as hoarding, homelessness, accessibility issues etc.

**Neighbourhood Services**

**1. What are the benefits of the new waste software and cab technology? What cost savings and other positive impacts should we see from this technology.**

- The new replacement system meets the latest security and data protection requirements to keep customer details secure.
- The new system is paperless as the crews use iPads in the cab – this saves two trees worth of paper every year.
- The new system was only implemented before Xmas so these are the benefits to be expected in the coming year:
  - It's likely that the number of missed bin rates will reduce by a third. This will save approximately £10,000 per year in fuel alone.
  - The system has a built in route optimisation tool so will again save fuel and time by providing the most efficient route.
- The customer will experience a fairer system where those who have put their bin out on time won't have to subsidise the returning to those who haven't.
- The crews will report issues on the iPads in real time meaning Customer Services will see the latest information with which to help the customer.
- Customers will be given correct and accurate advice at first point of contact to find out any issues about their bin collection. This means customers will spend less time on hold and get the right advice first time without having to be transferred to somebody else.
- The system also shows a range of performance information such as missed bins, compliments, and complaints so that crews can get meaningful feedback on their performance.
- The system we have implemented is also used by over 100 other waste collection authorities in both the public and private sector. The system is continually being improved upon using the feedback from other contractors and local authorities and as existing customers we benefit from any future upgrades which are usually free of charge.
- There will be a reduced admin burden in the back office which means more focus on value added work such as promoting the kerbside service, and being more active on social media.

## **2. Direct Income – where is the increase from £1.4m to £1.6m coming from?**

- The actual variance is £138,000 and is due to a range of factors combined:
  - Inflationary increases to prices for trade waste, bulky waste, and garden waste.
  - As part of the new garden waste sticker system to be implemented in April we will likely attract more paying customers.
  - Residents are also still buying additional bins at a rate of approximately 60 per month.
  - Additional income achieved in year by selling services such as grass cutting and some Corporate support services to other local authorities.

## **3. Clarification on the variance for gross direct expenditure for parks and open spaces.**

The reduction in gross direct expenditure is due to one off budgets that do not carry forward to the next year.

For example, one off grant funding for 2019/20 will be spent in this year so won't carry forward into 2020/21.

Likewise some necessary one off works were required during the year which will not carry forward to next year.

Example of breakdown:

- Grant funding for improvements to Parks and Open Spaces of £15,000.
- One off expenditure for urgent non-scheduled tree maintenance works, a one off insurance claim, and a one off survey on the Ice house totalled £15,000.

## **Corporate Services**

### **1. What is the source and certification of the “District Council Website rating” is SiteMorse a major contender in the market?**

SiteMorse has led the way in benchmarking digital across public sectors, being the most recognised continual assessment of digital capability. A SiteMorse test the website across a range of functional, code and accessibility criteria on a weekly and monthly basis. In addition SiteMorse also benchmark over 400 local authorities for compliance and provide a quarterly leader board.

The Society of Information Technology Managers (SOCITM) who are leading advisers in local government ICT, also partnered with SiteMorse to provide the benchmark assessments for accessibility.

## **2. Clarification on the decrease in the online forms received, are numbers for 2019 expected to match or beat the figure for 2018 of 39,613 (p57 )**

2018/19 showed a particularly high number of online form submissions with the change of refuse and recycling scheme and the launch of online ordering for bins; over 69% of orders were taken online.

There are a number of reasons that the online form numbers are showing a decrease for the current year, in addition to the decrease in orders for bins as we move into business as usual. Some forms are only used for a temporary period of time and other factors include changing the long term behaviour of customers.

Neighbourhood Services are launching the new subscription based service for Garden Waste in January 2020 and coupled with marketing tactics, it is expected a high percentage of orders will be placed through the online form. Therefore, the actual outturn of online forms submitted for 2019/20 may exceed previous years.

These annual figures may well continue to fluctuate depending on what new and major campaigns are done in any particular year.

### **PORTFOLIO: Health Improvement, Leisure & Regulatory Services Portfolio – Cllr Sharon Coe**

#### **1. Assisting and managing services for other District Councils and Borough Councils in Building Control, Licencing and Food Inspection why a temporary and not permanent basis? If temporary as stated what direct income will be lost?( P57 2<sup>nd</sup> parag)**

The Building Control Partnership is a long term agreement and we are in the process of signing a new legal agreement which will see this arrangement remaining in place for five years. Our partner LA's currently pay for staff time plus oncosts plus 10% as well as mileage. Partners agreed from the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019 to equally share the costs of the Partnership Manager and Team Leader posts, both full time posts on Blaby's establishment.

Alongside the above Blaby also takes a percentage of the income each Building Control Team makes, depending on how long the LA has been a member this is between 5-10%.

Food Inspections we have been undertaking these on behalf of Oadby and Wigston since November 2019. We have undertaken all of their inspections that were due as well as undertaking a desk top audit of 150 of their cases. The current arrangement that is in place ends on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. We are in discussion with Oadby & Wigston as to whether they want this to continue. They currently pay for the hours worked by officers undertaking their work. All of these

officers are on our establishment costs therefore any money paid to Blaby is income generated. We charge them hourly rate, with oncosts plus 10%.

The income we have received to date is £1,100.

Licensing we have been supporting Oadby & Wigston Licensing team since December 2018. This is a temporary arrangement until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020. As above we charge them for the officer's time plus on costs and 10% as well as any mileage incurred. Under this arrangement they have not required any of our officers time since July 2019. We have not recruited any additional staff to manage this work this has been covered by staff on the establishment.

The income we have received to date is £7,600

## **2. Explain the work and skills plan, what is it, is it internal for Blaby or a District wide plan?**

A comprehensive district wide plan to support businesses, young people and residents into accessing work and skills. The plan, running to 2021, will aim to broaden young people's career perception about what's available and help those furthest from the job market, as well as ex-offenders into work experience and job opportunities.

Large businesses based in the district have already signed up to be part of the Work and Skills initiative, which will involve linking organisations together with the seven academies with pupils from the District of Blaby involved with the Work and Skills plan.

Since March 2017, the Council has helped more than 200 college students into attending construction industry workshops or site visits, has seen eight ex-offenders into employment in construction and seen more than 35 jobs created through the project.

## **3. Clarification is sought about the leisure centre contract figures and the direct income.**

There is a schedule within the contract with SLM that sets out the management fee income that we will receive across the life of the contract. The schedule is based on prices at the time we entered into the contract so doesn't take account of inflation – this means that the amount we actually receive will be greater than the amounts in the schedule. The report to Council in September 2018 details the financial benefit to the Council over the life of the contract. This takes into account the cost of borrowing to fund the refurbishment of Enderby Leisure Centre and the Pavilion as well as the income we will receive from SLM.

#### **4. What is walk and ride?**

Project to upgrade and connect existing cycleways and footpaths to key employment sites Next/Carlton Park/Grove Park/Blaby Town Centre to Narborough Station and Everards Meadows as a hub to the Great Central Way and National Cycle Route 6 connecting to Leicester City Centre, to encourage modal shift from car to bike. LLEP funding bid has been submitted for £500,000 along with match funding to include £100k from BDC Business Rate Pilot fund matched with £400k from Leicester City Transforming Cities Fund. Further contribution to be sought from Sustrans.

#### **5. Car parking, is the council on track to hit cost neutral, many residents don't see the difference 20p would make and many feel it would cost more to incorporate and run?**

The current minimum cost for the car park is 30p which covers two hours. We are not in a position as yet where the car parks are cost neutral this is due to the experimental order in Blaby Town Centre when Waitrose left offering 2 hours free parking, two of the car parks machines being stolen as well as problems with the machines not working at the weekend in Blaby. Our current position is that up to period 9 our income was £2,061 down for Blaby car parks and £1,006 up for Narborough Car Parks. (These figures do not take into account any maintenance costs incurred.)

#### **6. Which posts are externally funded, are there any posts at risk of being lost if funding is not provided, what provision is in place should this happen?**

The externally funded posts are part of the Health & Leisure Team, there are 6 posts in total that will be affected. We have received confirmation of funding for one of these posts but not the other five. The funding for these comes from Leicestershire County Council, Sport England and DEFRA. We are planning to extend their contracts for one month till the end of April by then we should have received confirmation of funding which will mean that we do not have to issue redundancy notices. We are confident that we will receive a similar amount for 2020/21 to what we received for 2019/20.

**1. Provide an update on Whetstone Garden Village.**

Good progress is being made on progression of the garden village. The project team has been meeting for around 3 years now, and there is a development partner secured. The team includes representation from agencies/organisations such as LCC, Highways England, Harborough DC, and Homes England.

The project team manage and monitor a range of work-streams; which include infrastructure (J20a), local plan work, and visioning. This is all taken forward through a detailed Project Plan.

The Garden Village Programme capacity funding received this financial year has been fully allocated. It is being used to fund two dedicated posts, and a range of specific external technical advice – such as visioning, and local plan policy advice. At this current time, we do not have details of any future potential funding rounds.

**2. What delivery actions is Whetstone Garden Village dependent on i.e. J20a ?**

The key areas of work that will affect the delivery of the garden village are as follows:

Infrastructure Planning & Funding – the overall project includes a proposed new motorway junction, J20a, which will be required to deliver the commercial development and the majority of the housing development.

This new junction will be extremely expensive to deliver, and therefore work is ongoing to produce a business case to secure Government funding.

Local Plan Work / Site Allocation – The site as yet does not have any planning status, and a great deal of work is required before it can be considered as suitable to become an allocated site. When the new Local Plan goes through Public Examination, the developer and landowner will be required to demonstrate that it can actually be delivered. The work involved mainly comprises technical studies, such as transport modelling. As set out above, consideration of how the new motorway junction can be delivered and funded is a critical part of this.

Visioning and Masterplanning – A great deal of work is currently underway to prepare a comprehensive ‘vision’ for the site – a set of key principles – which will ensure that if it goes ahead, that it delivers our joint aspirations.

Duty to Cooperate – Joint working with both neighbouring local authorities (Harborough DC and Oadby & Wigston BC) is essential; both in terms of site delivery and allocation. Part of the current proposed site falls into Harborough DC, and therefore it will be important to show how this can come forward given their different local plan timescales.

### **3. Lubbesthorpe – is new home delivery here on track and what is being done to ensure targets are sustained?**

We have exceeded our projected number of completions, and sales rates for each developer on the site are also above that expected.

Monitoring period	Projected delivery (dwellings)	Actual delivery (dwellings)
2016 – 2017	0	2
2017 – 2018	100	98
2018 – 2019	150	171
TOTALS	250	271

The current number of completions stands at around 370.

The Lubbesthorpe project is a key priority within the group and very important to our rate of new home delivery, and as such benefits from significant resourcing. The Group Manager, Strategic Growth Manager, and a number of Major Schemes Officers – along with others across the organisation – are all working on different elements of it continuously. In addition to housing; other elements such as local centres, schools and health centres are also being delivered.

There are monthly project management meetings with the developer and a range of actions are in place to ensure that pace is maintained. Actions include ensuring submission of reserved matters applications in a timely manner against the project plan; and joint working to resolve issues and plan each phase of the development proactively.

### **4. What are the difficulties to complete homes on schedule. Does this impact on the five year land supply?**

Housing delivery rates on all sites are dependant on a number of factors. These include the general health of the housing market, site specific viability issues, delivery of key infrastructure, and the site owner's willingness to bring a site forward.

This impacts significantly on the 5 year housing land supply, and therefore is closely monitored. The overall national housing market situation is out of our control; however there are proactive steps that we can take in relation to the other factors. These include working closely with other organisations to secure funding for infrastructure, and fostering good relationships with developers.

**5. What are the consequences if demand for new houses falls and what is being done to manage this risk?**

If the demand for new homes falls, this is usually the result of a change in the national housing market; and therefore is relatively difficult to manage and/or predict. This would result in the sales of new homes falling, and in turn developers would slow their build rates. It is important to remember though that if this happens, it is likely to be the case across the country, and all local authorities will be in the same position. Locally, the demand for new homes in Blaby has always been consistently above the average.

When looking to allocate sites, we are always very careful to robustly interrogate delivery rates, to ensure that sites are phased appropriately to avoid local 'saturation'.

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