

DATE:
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9 July 2024
Scrutiny Commission

Democratic Services
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To Members of the Scrutiny Commission

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

Cllr. Royston Bayliss
Cllr. Adrian Clifford
Cllr. Luke Cousin

Cllr. Roy Denney
Cllr. Susan Findlay
Cllr. Janet Forey

Cllr. Antony Moseley
Cllr. Tracey Shepherd
Cllr. Matt Tomeo

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **SCRUTINY COMMISSION** will be held in the Council Chamber on **WEDNESDAY, 17 JULY 2024 at 5.30 p.m.** for the transaction of the following business and your attendance is requested.

Yours faithfully



Louisa Horton
Monitoring Officer



AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Disclosures of Interests from Members
To receive disclosures of interests from Members (ie. The existence and the nature of those interests in respect of items on this agenda).
3. Minutes (Pages 3 - 8)
To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2024 (enclosed).
4. Update/Results of Residents Survey
Members will receive a presentation from the Communications, Consultation and Digital Services Manager and the Communications and Consultation Officer.
5. Financial Performance 2023/24 (Pages 9 - 26)
This report was approved by Cabinet Executive on 24 June 2024 and has been enclosed for Members consideration.
6. Scrutiny Work Programme (Pages 27 - 34)
For Members to consider and approve the new Scrutiny Work Programme for 2024/25.
7. Consideration of Forward Plan Items (Pages 35 - 42)
8. Further Actions for Scrutiny arising from Meeting

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Offices, Narborough

WEDNESDAY, 10 APRIL 2024

Present:-

Cllr. Nick Brown (Chairman - Scrutiny Commissioner)

Cllr. Nick Chapman
Cllr. Luke Cousin
Cllr. Janet Forey

Cllr. Antony Moseley
Cllr. Ande Savage
Cllr. Tracey Shepherd

Cllr. Matt Tomeo

Officers present:-

Lisa Boland	- ICT & Transformation Group Manager
Tiffany Back	- Transformation and Projects Service Manager
Katie Brooman	- Elections and Governance Manager
Nicole Cramp	- Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer
Isaac Thomas	- Democracy Support Officer

Also in attendance:-

Cllr. Ben Taylor (Planning Delivery and Enforcement & Corporate Transformation Portfolio Holder)

Apologies:-

Cllr. Roy Denney, Cllr. Susan Findlay and Cllr. Neil Wright

274. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

No disclosures were received.

275. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2024, as circulated, were approved and signed as a correct record.

276. CABINET EXECUTIVE RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY
RECOMMENDATIONS: ADMINISTRATIONS 2024-25 DRAFT BUDGET
PROPOSALS

Considered – report of the Senior Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer.

Cabinet Executive's response was noted.

With regards to Recommendation 9, Cllr. Luke Cousin requested that a cost-benefit breakdown of increasing HVO storage be provided. It was agreed that a more detailed answer would be provided by the Neighbourhood Services Group Manager.

DECISION

That Cabinet Executive's response to Scrutiny Commission be considered.

Reason:

As set out in the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, it is the duty of the Executive to respond to Scrutiny reports and recommendations.

277. UPDATE ON TRANSFORMATION

Considered – Presentation from the ICT & Transformation Group Manager and the Transformation & Projects Service Manager.

The ICT & Transformation Group Manager and the Transformation & Projects Service Manager provided an update on Transformation, covering the background to Transformation, the journey so far and future ambitions. Members were invited to ask questions throughout the presentation.

Question 1:

The Transformation & Projects Service Manager updated Members on the Transformation Survey which was distributed to all BDC staff members, including staff at the depot.

Cllr. Matt Tomeo queried, from a diversity and inclusion perspective, whether the survey received responses from all levels of staff, e.g., including staff on lower salary ranges and part-time staff?

Response:

The Transformation & Projects Service Manager responded that the survey was anonymised and therefore did not capture any employment information other than the respondent's group and service area.

Question 2:

Cllr. Luke Cousin asked whether any examples could be given of adverse or negative impacts of Transformation so far and, if so, how challenges were monitored and overcome.

Response:

The ICT & Transformation Group Manager explained that, in the early stages of the Transformation journey, it was important not to disengage staff. Therefore, initial Transformation projects focussed on areas where targets were easier to achieve, where improvements could be shown, and where there was more engagement from staff. Now, a year into the Transformation process, greater challenges would be expected and these would be tackled through the same project management process that guided earlier projects. The ICT & Transformation Group Manager expressed confidence in the team's ability to deal with upcoming challenges as staff members are now more confident in the process and many have engaged with the project management training that is available to all staff members.

Question 3:

Cllr. Matt Tomeo asked which projects the Transformation team expects will be the most challenging over the next year?

Response:

The Transformation & Projects Service Manager responded that greater challenges are expected where BDC is working with partnerships or delivering services on behalf of other authorities, as the Transformation team will have less control of the process.

Question 4:

Cllr. Antony Moseley asked how taxi licensing processing timescales were reduced and queried whether this has led to a reduction of quality?

Response:

The Transformation & Projects Service Manager responded that an emphasis was placed on maintaining the quality of the licensing service while reducing the timescales. Specifically, the team were able to reduce the amount of times an individual needs to visit the Council Offices to obtain their taxi license, by re-hashing the process into a logical order where multiple processes could be completed during one visit.

Question 5:

Referring to the reduced timescales in planning application initial evaluations, Cllr. Antony Moseley asked whether application numbers remained consistent during this time period, or whether the reduced timescales were partly due to less planning applications being received?

Response:

The Transformation & Projects Service Manager responded that the number of planning applications received has stayed consistent during the period in question.

Question 6:

Cllr. Antony Moseley asked whether much resistance has been received by teams at Blaby?

Response:

The Transformation & Projects Service Manager explained that some staff members were initially sceptical of the Transformation process but one way to overcome this has been to ask staff members to step into the shoes of the customer and experience the customer journey from their perspective. This has helped staff to realise that it is within their control to change processes, e.g., reducing the number of phone calls or visits that a resident has to make.

Question 7:

Cllr. Nick Chapman asked whether the reduced timescales for Planning Applications and taxi licensing will mean that less staff are needed to complete these tasks. Therefore, could savings be generated through staff reductions in this way?

Response:

The Transformation & Projects Service Manager explained that the reduced timescales show that teams are now responding to applications more quickly and providing a better service to those applying. These process efficiencies mean we can do things much more cheaply and will bring benefits. The ICT & Transformation Group Manager added that BDC staff are generally full to capacity with work and increased efficiencies release the capacity for teams to focus on things that they were unable to focus on previously. Additionally, increased efficiency has enabled vacancy posts to be removed, allowing £100,000 of savings through establishment reductions.

Question 8:

With regards to the slide on Transformation's 2024 Focus, Cllr. Nick Brown asked how the list of priorities was decided and queried whether any areas of focus had not made this list due to a lack of capacity?

Response:

The Transformation & Projects Group Manager responded that Mobile Working and ICT Stabilisation were identified as priorities as they are both cross-cutting projects with wide-reaching impacts across the organisation.

Question 9:

Cllr. Nick Brown asked the Planning Delivery and Enforcement & Corporate Transformation Portfolio Holder, Cllr. Ben Taylor, which areas we wishes to see priority and focus going forward?

Response:

Cllr. Ben Taylor responded that customer needs and digital inclusion would be high priorities going forward as part of the Council's digital agenda. Cllr. Taylor commended officers for their delivery so far.

Question 10:

Cllr. Luke Cousin asked whether Transformation projects would be added to iPlan as measurable targets for Members to monitor throughout the year.

Response:

The Transformation & Projects Group Manager responded that all projects are measurable on iPlan, with most impacts being shown through service performance measures. The Transformation & Projects Group Manager explained that further work would be done to incorporate Transformation into measures for services.

The Scrutiny Chairman, Cllr. Nick Brown requested that the Transformation team return to Scrutiny in 12 months' time with an update on their achievements and obstacles faced.

278. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Democracy Support Officer updated Members on several upcoming Scrutiny groups and informed Members that they would receive invitations to the following:

- Contaminated Land Task & Finish Group
- Net Zero by 2050 Working Group
- iPlan Working Group
- The Council's approach to Graffiti & Littering Task & Finish Group
- Parks and Open Spaces Strategy Task & Finish Group
- HR Review Task & Finish Group

Members accepted the items on the Scrutiny Work Programme 2023-24 and no additional actions were proposed.

279. CONSIDERATION OF FORWARD PLAN ITEMS

No items were raised for further information or examination.

280. FURTHER ACTIONS FOR SCRUTINY ARISING FROM MEETING

There were no further actions arising from the meeting.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 6.33 P.M.

Blaby District Council

Cabinet Executive

Date of Meeting	24 June 2024
Title of Report	Financial Performance 2023/24 This is a Key Decision and is on the Forward Plan.
Lead Member	Cllr. Maggie Wright - Finance, People & Performance (Deputy Leader)
Report Author	Accountancy Services Manager
Strategic Themes	Ambitious and well managed Council, valuing our people

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 This report sets out the details of the Council's financial performance against the General Fund revenue budget, Business Rates Retention, Council Tax and the Capital Programme for the year ended 31st March 2024.

2. Recommendation(s) to Cabinet Executive

- 2.1 That the financial performance for 2023/24 is accepted.
- 2.2 That the Council increases the upper limit for the level of General Fund balances as a percentage of the net revenue budget from 35% to 45%.

3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 The unaudited accounts for 2023/24 were published on 31st May 2024. Whilst the accounts are still subject to external audit, it is important to give Members early sight of the outturn to assist with the financial planning process.

4. Matters to consider

- 4.1 Background
The Council's net expenditure for 2023/24 is summarised by Portfolio in Appendix A, with a more detailed breakdown of the main variances shown below.

When the Quarter 3 budget review report was presented to Cabinet Executive in February 2024, the forecast was that a contribution to General Fund balances of £318,257 would be made. This was partly due to underspends in the Establishment, and the Investment income exceeding the budget. As at 31st March 2024, the Council had achieved a significant surplus for 2023/24, resulting in a contribution of £1,699,787 transferred to the General Fund balance. It should be noted however, that earmarked

reserves have been utilised to support this outturn position during the year which has reduced Earmarked reserves from £12.7m down to £9.8m and overall the Council's reserves have reduced by £1m.

This surplus has arisen due, primarily, to vacant posts during the financial year, investment income performing significantly better than budgeted as interest rates have continued to rise, and recovery of overpaid Housing Benefit exceeding the budget. Although this is an extremely positive outcome for 2023/24, it does not eliminate the risk of the future budget gap highlighted in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). Furthermore, the bank rate is expected to gradually reduce over the course of the financial year, meaning that investment income will be unlikely to reach the same level in 2024/25 and beyond.

The annual pay award for 2024/25 has not yet been agreed. The council has budgeted 3% within services, and an additional 1% held centrally. For every 1% that the pay award exceeds the budget, the cost will be approximately £164,000. Whilst vacant posts may reduce the financial impact, they create additional pressure on the rest of the workforce and can affect service delivery standards unless filled quickly.

The most significant variances against the revised budget are set out in the following paragraph.

Expenditure Variances

The variances against the revised budget are detailed below. These have been adjusted to exclude unspent budgets carried forward to 2024/25, and contributions to earmarked reserves.

	Note	Variance (£)	
<u>Reduced Expenditure</u>			
Establishment	1	(356,033)	
Interest Costs	2	(128,043)	
National Rail Freight Hub Project	3	(121,859)	
Homelessness Costs	4	(108,654)	
Software Maintenance	5	(63,399)	
Consultancy fees	6	(59,334)	
Building Control Partnership	7	(42,119)	
Furniture, Materials and Equipment	8	(39,069)	
Other Supplies and Services	9	(37,892)	
Purchase of Domestic Bins	10	(33,851)	
Travel and Subsistence	11	(33,304)	
Hired Services	12	(32,810)	
			(1,092,512)
<u>Additional Income</u>			
Investment Income	13	(404,240)	
Recovery of Overpaid Housing Benefit	14	(164,311)	
S106 Monitoring Income	15	(64,422)	
Planning Fees & Charges	16	(46,461)	
New Burdens Grant	17	(45,990)	
			(725,424)
<u>Increased Expenditure</u>			
Housing Benefit Payable net of Subsidy	18	70,972	
Bad Debt Provision and Write-offs	19	49,244	
			120,216

Reduced Income			
Liability Orders	20	55,308	
Other variances	21		55,308
Net Variance			340,263
			(1,946,530)

Notes re variances

1. Establishment – The Council has experienced significant turnover in its workforce since the pandemic. Vacancies across a number of services contribute to the underspend, most noticeable in Democratic Services, Human Resources, Service Transformation and Planning Enforcement. An additional £145,000 was added to the budget during the year for the increase in the pay award. However, this additional provision was not required as the cost of the pay award was absorbed by the underspends across services arising from vacancies.
2. Interest payable fell below budget due to no external borrowing being taken up in the year.
3. National Rail Freight Hub Project – The underspend relates to Blaby's share of project fees that have not been required.
4. The Council has seen an increase in expenditure on homelessness following the pandemic and the impact of the cost of living crisis. The budget had been increased to accommodate the rising costs, however expenditure on temporary accommodation was less than anticipated.
5. Reduced software costs, most noticeably in Performance and HR.
6. This budget covers professional support in respect of forestry advice, archaeological and ecological advice, conservation and historic buildings, and various other one-off work in relation to, e.g., planning appeals
7. See paragraph covering the Leicester Building Control Partnership below.
8. Reduced expenditure for furniture, materials and equipment across numerous services.
9. Reduced expenditure across numerous departments for supplies and services.
10. The Council makes budget provision for purchasing bins for new properties or to replace lost and damaged bins. The amount required will vary according to demand and growth in the district.
11. The Council has seen a reduction in expenditure on travel costs over the past few years following the pandemic, and the increase in meetings and training sessions being held remotely.
12. Reduced costs incurred for Hired Services within the Tourism and Refuse and Recycling teams.
13. See paragraph covering Key Income below.
14. This represents additional housing benefit overpayments identified as recoverable, over and above the expected level. Some of this will be recovered via deductions from ongoing benefit payments, although some will be subject to ongoing payment arrangements and recovery action.
15. Increased S106 income received in Development Strategy.
16. The budget for Planning fees was revised during the year following a reduction in income received in the 1st half of the year, however as at quarter 3 the income had surpassed the profiled budget, and a surplus was forecast for the end of the financial year.

17. New burdens funding is generally provided by the government to cover administrative costs arising from new initiatives. The variance relates to funding received for Council Tax Collection and for Local Land Charges.
18. Linked to homelessness and the provision of bed and breakfast accommodation. There has been considerable pressure on the Housing team to provide temporary accommodation for homeless families and individuals. Whilst we have been quite successful in recovering much of the cost through housing benefit, there is a knock-on impact on our ability to reclaim those costs through housing benefit subsidy. This is because there is a rent cap in place that limits the amount of subsidy recoverable, and as a result in recent years we have seen a widening gap between the amount of benefit paid and the amount that we can recoup from government. It is envisaged that the purchase of 15 properties, with the support of funding from the Local Authority Housing Fund, will assist in reducing the need to use bed and breakfast accommodation in the future.
19. Based on a review of outstanding debts on 31st March 2024. Most of the balance shown in the table (£49,244) relates to historic rent deposits given to customers to assist them in securing rented accommodation.
20. Court fee income has fallen below budget, this is partly due to a reduction in courts proceedings undertaken during the year to recover Council Tax debt. In year collection rates have however remained at normal levels (97.39% for 2023/24). The Council will continue to attempt to collect the remaining outstanding Council Tax.
21. This includes all other net variances with an individual value of less than £30,000.

Key Income Streams

The following table provides an analysis of the performance of the Council's key income streams during the year:

	Approved Budget (£)	Revised Budget (£)	Actual Income (£)	Variance against Approved Budget (£)	Variance against Revised Budget (£)
Planning Fees	(560,000)	(500,000)	(546,461)	13,539	(46,461)
Building Control Fees	(1,260,480)	(1,060,480)	(1,091,068)	169,412	(30,588)
Land Charges	(247,000)	(236,500)	(200,143)	46,857	36,357
External Investment Interest	(360,000)	(1,300,000)	(1,699,508)	(1,339,508)	(399,508)
Refuse and Recycling	(1,722,500)	(1,699,500)	(1,690,360)	32,140	9,140
Car Parks	(331,000)	(226,000)	(235,549)	95,451	(9,549)
Leisure Income	(544,268)	(673,260)	(673,260)	(128,992)	0
Total	(5,025,248)	(5,695,740)	(6,136,349)	(1,111,101)	(440,609)

NB: brackets indicate excess income.

Investment income significantly outperformed the budget due to the higher interest rates throughout the year. However, we have seen reduced income from Land Charges since the pandemic. The short fall in refuse and recycling income is due to a reduction in recycling credits.

The above table does not show the full picture in respect of the Building Control Partnership or the Car Park Account, further detail on which is provided later in this report.

Carry Forward of Unspent Budgets

As part of the closedown process an exercise has been undertaken to identify where it is reasonable to carry forward unspent budgets from 2023/24 to the new financial year. As a rule, this applies to one-off project related budgets, which are usually externally funded. A total of £2,257,478 has been carried forward to 2024/25, of which £2,005,935 relates specifically to external funding, which is ring fenced and cannot be used for anything other than what it is initially intended for.

Leicestershire Building Control Partnership

The table below provides a summary of the partnership account for 2023/24.

	Revised Budget £	Final Outturn £	Variance £
Employee Costs	1,325,985	1,172,884	(153,101)
Transport Costs	56,333	52,647	(3,686)
Supplies and Services	51,150	39,166	(11,984)
Blaby Overheads and Support Services	66,000	66,000	0
Total Expenditure	1,499,468	1,330,697	(168,771)
Total Income	(1,085,480)	(1,115,570)	(30,090)
Net Expenditure	413,988	215,127	(198,861)
Partner Contributions	(326,305)	(169,563)	(156,742)
Cost to Blaby	87,683	45,564	(42,119)

As can be seen in the table above, Employee costs were below budget, this is mainly due to vacancies in the team. Unspent training budget totalling £40,376, has been carried forward to be used during 2024/25.

Within Supplies and Services is unspent budget totalling £18,674, which relates to publicity and promotion. This has also been carried forward to be used in 2024/25 to help with marketing of the partnership.

Fees and charges income exceeded the budget, and due to this and the other areas of underspend identified, the overall outturn is a positive variance of £198,861.

The agreement that partners signed up to is that any loss or surplus will be shared in accordance with the application data from the previous three years. Therefore, of the £198,861 surplus against the budgeted position, Blaby's share is £42,119.

Car Parking Account

The following table sets out the net position in relation to the car parking account in 2023/24.

	Revised Budget £	Final Outturn £	Variance £
Premises Costs	96,133	96,662	529
Supplies and Services	43,118	30,419	(12,699)
Enforcement Contract	47,000	33,263	(13,737)
Overheads and Support Services	107,093	79,294	(27,799)
Capital Financing Costs	27,014	30,824	3,810
Total Expenditure	320,358	270,462	(49,896)
Contributions towards Expenses	0	0	0
Fees and Charges	(226,000)	(235,620)	(9,620)
Penalty Charge Notices	(12,000)	(14,849)	(2,849)
Total Income	(238,000)	(250,469)	(12,469)
Net (Surplus)/Deficit	82,358	19,993	(62,365)

Whilst car parking income has not returned to the level it was prior to the pandemic, we have seen a small increase in the income during 2023/24, which, along with expenditure savings, has brought the car parking account much closer to achieving its breaking even target.

Earmarked Reserves

In addition to the General Fund balance the Council also maintains several Earmarked Reserves. Some of these are set aside for specific purposes whilst others have been created to mitigate the uncertainties that still surround local government funding and to support Spend to Save opportunities. A detailed breakdown of the movement on Earmarked Reserves appears at Appendix B. The overall balance on Earmarked Reserves has decreased from £12,735,996 at the beginning of the financial year to £9,812,871 as at 31st March 2024.

The Earmarked Reserves are routinely reviewed at each year end, to ensure that they are still required and/or they are reflective of the purpose for which they are maintained. This review has been undertaken by the Executive Director (Section 151) and, it is proposed that the Choice Based Lettings Reserve is redesignated as the "Homelessness Grant Reserve" to accurately reflect the purpose for which it is now held.

A new reserve has been set up named Business Rates Pool Reserve. The Council, along with Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council, all Leicestershire District Councils and Leicester, Leicestershire, and Rutland Fire Authority since 2015/16 pooled Business Rates under the Rates Retention Scheme, allowing additional monies raised through Business Rates to be retained in the sub region. In previous years applications were submitted for the monies to be distributed by the LLEP, to fund projects to support economic growth and infrastructure connected to this, as per the terms of the pooling arrangement. In recent years however, the distribution

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

The distributed pool monies for 2020/21 and 2021/22 which were received by the Council in the year have been transferred to the reserve. These will be used to support the Economic Development in 2024/25 onwards, with further consideration as to how this reserve will contribute to the Council's financial position in future years.

General Fund Balances

The General Fund balance has been increased by £1,944,787, comprising the following: year-end balance of £6,564,232. The increase comprises the following:

	£
Addition to balances arising from 2023/24 performance	1,699,787
Transfer from Contractual Losses Support Reserve (approved by Cabinet Executive July 2023)	445,000
Transfer to Huncote Major Incident Reserve (approved by Council October 2023)	(200,000)
	1,944,787

This has resulted in a year end balance of £6,564,232, representing 39.6% of the 2024/25 net budget requirement, after considering planned contributions to support the budget. This compares favourably with the 30.4% estimated at budget stage, enhancing the Council's resilience going into 2024/25. However, as the Council's upper policy limit has been exceeded, it is recommended that the limit is increased to 45% to allow headroom for future additions to the balances where applicable.

4.2 Business Rates Retention

When setting the budget for 2023/24 it was expected that business rates income would be approximately £48.0m, of which Blaby's share would be £19.2m (40%). This allowed for around £0.5m of growth from unoccupied units at Fosse Park that were expected to be brought into the rating list during the year. Various reliefs, such as small business rate relief, empty property relief, and retails, hospitality and leisure relief were also netted off the gross rates payable, as well as provisions for appeals and bad debts.

The outturn income from business rates in 2023/24 was £49.5m of which Blaby's share was just under £19.8m. The difference between the budgeted NNDR income and the outturn position flows through the Collection Fund, resulting in a surplus on 31st March 2024. This will then be taken into account when setting the budget for 2025/26. Out of Blaby's 40% share of the £19.2m estimated income, the Council is required to pay a tariff to central government (£14.0m) and a levy on growth (£2.3m), giving a net income from business rates of £2.5m. This is supplemented by Section 31 grant compensation in

respect of various reliefs implemented by government (£2.4m). The Council also must make good its share of the estimated deficit on 31st March 2023, which equates to a further £1.5m, although this is covered by the Section 31 Grant Reserve. A further £0.8m was taken from the NNDR Income Reserve to bring the net of all NNDR-related transactions to the £5.8m estimated when the budget was set.

The following table below shows the main variances between the estimated position on the NNDR1 return, and the final outturn.

	NNDR 1 £	NNDR 3 £	Variance £
Gross Rates Payable	(57,651,239)	(54,930,692)	2,720,547
Transitional Arrangements	1,947,203	1,336,552	(610,651)
Mandatory Reliefs	2,815,811	2,993,740	177,929
Discretionary Reliefs	85,056	92,929	7,873
Unoccupied Property	1,600,000	955,092	(644,908)
Discretionary Relief funded by S31 Grant	1,811,550	944,885	(866,665)
Net Rates Payable	(49,391,619)	(48,607,494)	784,125
Interest paid on refunds to ratepayers	0	30,567	30,567
Provision for Bad Debts/Write-offs	494,000	342,109	(151,891)
Provision for Appeals	2,717,000	(20,959)	(2,737,959)
Transitional Protection Payments	(1,947,203)	(1,336,552)	610,651
Cost of Collection Allowance	103,866	103,866	0
Non-Domestic Rating Income	(48,023,956)	(49,488,463)	(1,464,507)

Gross rates payable were £2.7m lower than forecast but this was largely due to the impact of appeals that were settled during 2023/24. Caution was exercised when completing the NNDR1 return in respect of the potential for businesses to close due to the pressures of the cost-of-living crisis.

Ultimately, though, this did not materialise to the extent that was expected. The bad debt provision for arrears is based upon an assessment of the level of arrears outstanding at year end, and the likelihood of this being recovered. The appeals provision was reviewed at year end in light of outstanding checks, challenges, and appeals submitted to the Valuation Office Agency (VOA). The result of this is that the provision was reduced to take account of appeals that had been either settled or withdrawn during the year, and it will be noted that the scale of the reduction is similar in value to the variance against the gross rates payable. Since a new rating list was implemented on 1st April 2023, there are only a very limited number of appeals remaining against the 2017 rating list, and it is unusual for any new appeals to come forward in respect of expired rating lists.

In overall terms, the Business Rates Collection Fund has moved from a deficit of £3,238,781 on 31st March 2023 to a surplus of £1,509,052 on 31st March 2024. Blaby's share of that surplus is £603,622 (£1,295,511 deficit on 31st March 2023).

Due to the way in which local authorities are required to account for business rates income, the year-end surplus will not be felt until 2025/26. The Council has allowed for an estimated deficit of £237,154, when setting the 2024/25 budget; the difference between the estimated deficit and actual

surplus on 31st March 2024 will be brought into account in the 2025/26 budget setting process. The remaining balance of £1,516,792 in the Section 31 Grant Reserve was utilised in 2023/24 to cover Blaby's share of the estimated deficit on 31st March 2022.

4.3 Council Tax

The Council Tax Collection Fund has moved from a deficit of £829,079 on 31st March 2023 to a deficit of £815,382 at the end of 2023/24. This represents an in-year surplus of £13,697. The outturn position was not as good as anticipated when setting the 2024/25 budget, where a deficit of £626,809 was anticipated. This is due to the impact of historic bad debts written off during the financial year.

Blaby's share of the deficit on 31st March 2024 is £114,460 compared with the previous year deficit share of £117,574.

Accounting for council tax is like NNDR, in that any difference between the estimated income and the outturn income flows through the Collection Fund in the form of a surplus or deficit. That surplus or deficit will then be factored in when setting the 2025/26 budget.

4.4 The Capital Programme

In 2023/24 the Council spent £6,996,593 on Capital schemes, compared with the latest Capital Programme budget of £11,857,490. This represents an underspend of £4,860,897 or 40.99% against planned capital expenditure, of which £4,386,430 has been carried forward to 2024/25 to enable the schemes to be completed.

Appendix C shows expenditure against the budget by scheme.

<u>Capital Expenditure:</u>	Approved Budget £	Revised Budget £	Actual Outturn £	(Under)/ Overspend £
Invest to Save Schemes	600,000	4,515,250	2,643,473	(1,871,777)
Essential/Contractual				
Schemes	2,290,500	5,097,471	2,747,762	(2,349,709)
Desirable Schemes	68,000	84,000	78,410	(5,590)
Externally Funded				
Schemes	660,000	2,160,769	1,526,948	(633,821)
Other Schemes	0	0	0	0
Contingency Budget	0	0	0	0
Total Capital Expenditure	3,618,500	11,857,490	6,996,593	(4,860,897)
<u>Financed by:</u>				
Borrowing	2,295,500	6,205,895	2,858,707	(3,347,188)
Capital Receipts	525,000	1,675,424	1,536,582	(138,842)
Earmarked Reserves	92,000	107,000	371	(106,629)
Revenue Contributions	0	112,811	4,000	(108,811)
External Funding	706,000	3,756,360	2,596,933	(1,159,427)
Total Capital Financing	3,618,500	11,857,490	6,996,593	(4,860,897)

The main variances against budget are as follows:

- Regeneration Property – Underspend of £662,067. Approval was given at Council on 25th October 2023 to use the budget set aside for strategic investment for the purchase of 16 dwellings to reduce homelessness pressures. This followed the award of grant funding from the Local Authority Housing Fund. In total £2,597,933 has been spent during 2023/24.
- Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) – Underspend of £512,789. DFG allocation has been increased by central government over recent years. Following the pandemic there has been an increase in more complex cases, due to the impact on residents' health which take longer to complete.
- Income Management System – Underspend of £220,000. Progress was delayed whilst officers explored various procurement options ahead of the contract expiry date of 31st March 2024. However, a new contract was agreed shortly before year end, to take effect from 1st April, and implementation is underway. The upgrade involves moving to a Cloud-based software solution as well as new modules that will enhance our compliance with Payment Card Industry (PCI) data security standards and provide the option of bank-to-bank payments for customers.
- Electric Vehicle Infrastructure for Depot – Underspend of £720,000. Additional funding was approved at Council on 26th September. Work on the project commenced at the end of 2023/24 and the project is currently progressing through the planning stages.
- HR & Payroll System – Underspend of £111,114. The second phase of the project is due to be undertaken during 2024/25, £100,000 has been carried forward towards this next stage.
- ICT: IT infrastructure Improvements - £497,378: the project was delayed pending the outcome of the options appraisal which was taken to Council on 27th February 2024.
- Walk and Ride, Blaby – Underspend of £140,000. The project is being delivered by Leicester City Council. The project is expected to complete during 2024/25, and the Council's share of the costs will be transferred on completion.
- Strategic Review: Land Rear of Enderby Leisure Centre – Underspend of £503,710. The project is currently in progress with public engagement currently taking place in preparation for submission and consideration in the local plan process.
- Strategic Asset Review – Underspend of £250,000. The project is to commence in 2024/25.
- Solar Panels for the Depot – Underspend of £456,000. The panels are expected to be installed during 2024/25.
- Fleet Vehicle Replacement Programme – Underspend of £364,238. Due to the maintenance programme followed by the Vehicle Maintenance team, and the work undertaken on the vehicles, the life of the vehicles has increased and therefore the requirement to replace so often has reduced.

5. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

5.1 Financial implications are included in the main body of this report.

6. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

6.1

Current Risk	Actions to reduce the risks
That the unaudited accounts are misstated and require amendment	The 2023/24 accounts are subject to independent examination by the Council's external auditors, Azets. The Audit of the prior year accounts for 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 which were subject to independent examination by Ernst and Young (EY) have not yet been concluded. Any revisions to those years accounts may have a corresponding impact on the 2023/24 accounts, although any agreed amendments are already reflected. The deadline for publication of the audited accounts is by 30 th September 2024. If any amendments are required as a result of the audit, financial implications will be reported back to Cabinet Executive at the earliest opportunity following publication.

7. Other options considered

7.1 None

8. Environmental impact

8.1 No direct impact arising from this report.

9. Other significant issues

9.1 In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities, and Climate Local and there are no areas of concern.

10. Appendix

10.1 Appendix A – General Fund Revenue Account: Performance against Budget

10.2 Appendix B – Earmarked Reserves and General Reserve Balances

10.3 Appendix C – Capital Expenditure against Budget

11. Background paper(s)

11.1 None

12. Report author's contact details

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OUTTURN SUMMARY BY PORTFOLIO 2023/24**Appendix A**

	Approved Budget 2023/24 £	Revised Estimate 2023/24 £	Outturn 2023/24 £	Variance vs Revised £
<u>Expenditure by Portfolio:</u>				
Finance, People & Performance	2,790,824.00	2,302,689.00	1,496,663.51	(806,025.49)
Housing, Community & Environmental Services	3,323,678.00	4,108,150.50	1,577,330.45	(2,530,820.05)
Health, Wellbeing, Community Engagement & Business Support Leader	3,183,633.00	4,487,019.00	2,598,265.59	(1,888,753.41)
Neighbourhood Services & Assets	1,847,700.00	1,923,311.00	1,243,773.54	(679,537.46)
Planning Delivery, Enforcement & Corporate Transformation	5,624,030.00	5,981,844.71	5,433,094.16	(548,750.55)
Blaby share of Leicestershire Business Rates Pool	2,667,957.00	3,330,743.53	1,989,016.44	(1,341,727.09)
	0.00	(1,065,210.00)	(1,065,209.49)	0.51
	19,437,822.00	21,068,547.74	13,272,934.20	(7,795,613.54)
<u>Central Items:</u>				
Revenue Contributions towards Capital Expenditure	100,000.00	200,811.29	4,371.33	(196,439.96)
Minimum Revenue Provision	478,077.00	484,445.00	484,445.00	0.00
Voluntary Revenue Provision	250,000.00	300,000.00	300,000.00	0.00
Other Appropriations & Accounting Adjustments	(5,193,699.00)	(4,757,671.00)	(716,968.52)	4,040,702.48
Contribution to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	(241,017.00)	(2,384,214.00)	(362,624.68)	2,021,589.32
	14,831,183.00	14,911,919.03	12,982,157.33	(1,929,761.70)
<u>Financed By:</u>				
NNDR	(3,062,440.00)	(3,049,060.00)	(2,908,270.60)	140,789.40
Contributions from NNDR Reserves	(1,955,656.00)	(2,271,803.00)	(2,315,500.00)	(43,697.00)
S31 Grant - Business Rates Compensation	(2,587,873.00)	(2,285,106.00)	(2,382,198.00)	(97,092.00)
NNDR (Surplus)/Deficit	1,313,331.00	1,313,331.00	1,315,267.00	1,936.00
<i>Sub-total: Total NNDR-related Transactions</i>	(6,292,638.00)	(6,292,638.00)	(6,290,701.60)	1,936.40
New Homes Bonus	(430,029.00)	(430,029.00)	(430,029.00)	0.00
Funding Guarantee	(1,530,635.00)	(1,530,635.00)	(1,530,635.00)	0.00
Services Grant	(90,200.00)	(90,200.00)	(90,200.00)	0.00
Levy Account Surplus Grant	0.00	0.00	(18,704.00)	(18,704.00)
Revenue Support Grant	(74,608.00)	(74,608.00)	(74,609.00)	(1.00)
BDC Demand on Collection Fund	(6,311,930.00)	(6,311,930.00)	(6,311,930.00)	0.00
Council Tax (Surplus)/Deficit	64,864.00	64,864.00	64,864.00	0.00
	(14,665,176.00)	(14,665,176.00)	(14,681,944.60)	(16,768.60)
Overspend/(Underspend) for year	166,007.00	246,743.03	(1,699,787.27)	(1,946,530.30)
Contribution to/(from) General Fund Balances	(166,007.00)	(246,743.03)	1,699,787.27	1,946,530.30
	(166,007.00)	(246,743.03)	1,699,787.27	
	0.00	(0.00)	(0.00)	

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NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2023/24

APPENDIX B

TRANSFERS TO/FROM EARMARKED RESERVES

	GL Code	Balance at 31/03/2022 £	Reallocated Reserves £	Contributions from I&E A/c £	Utilisation of Balances £	Balance at 31/03/2023 £	Reallocated Reserves £	Contributions from I&E A/c £	Utilisation of Balances £	Balance at 31/03/2024 £
Leisure Centre Renewals Fund	9999/VBA	(62,361)	0	(11,246)	0	(73,607)	0	0	0	(73,607)
Computer Room Environment	9999/VBB	(255,407)	0	0	114,567	(140,840)	0	0	5,020	(135,820)
Licensing Reserve	9999/VBC	(27,868)	0	0	0	(27,868)	0	0	0	(27,868)
Insurance Reserve Fund	9999/VBD	(100,000)	0	0	0	(100,000)	0	0	0	(100,000)
Blaby Plan Priorities Reserve	9999/VBJ	(452,667)	0	0	86,843	(365,824)	0	0	371	(365,453)
General Reserve Fund	9999/VBK	(1,697,764)	0	0	85,454	(1,612,310)	0	0	0	(1,612,310)
Ongoing Projects Reserve	9999/VBM	(2,923,063)	0	(3,599,422)	2,759,644	(3,762,841)	567,201	(2,181,245)	3,086,911	(2,289,974)
Elections Reserve	9999/VBQ	(121,944)	0	(20,000)	0	(141,944)	0	(66,304)	0	(208,248)
Choice Based Lettings Reserve	9999/VBR	(952)	0	0	0	(952)	0	(104,000)	0	(104,952)
New Homes Bonus Reserve	9999/VBT	(41,327)	0	0	0	(41,327)	0	0	41,327	0
Contractual Losses Support Reserve	9999/VBU	(700,000)	0	0	0	(700,000)	445,000	0	0	(255,000)
Economic Development Initiatives	9999/VBX	(50,000)	0	0	0	(50,000)	0	0	0	(50,000)
Provision - ERIE Sinking Fund	9999/VCA	(34,654)	0	0	7,877	(26,777)	0	0	17,630	(9,147)
Community Rights Reserve	9999/VCB	(48,724)	0	0	0	(48,724)	0	0	0	(48,724)
Hardship Reserve	9999/VCD	(325,000)	0	0	0	(325,000)	0	0	0	(325,000)
Parish New Homes Bonus Reserve	9999/VCE	(881)	0	0	0	(881)	0	0	0	(881)
NNDR Income Reserve	9999/VCF	(1,702,174)	0	(751,752)	0	(2,453,926)	0	0	798,708	(1,655,218)
Flexible Working Reserve	9999/VCG	(162,678)	0	0	0	(162,678)	0	0	886	(161,792)
Local Plan Reserve	9999/VCJ	(483,595)	0	(40,000)	67,289	(456,306)	0	0	41,730	(414,576)
Lottery Reserve	9999/VCK	(21,132)	0	(5,334)	0	(26,466)	0	(6,233)	5,334	(27,365)
IT System Replacement Reserve	9999/VCL	(54,415)	0	0	14,600	(39,815)	0	0	0	(39,815)
Property Fund Reserve	9999/VCM	(88,462)	0	(40,000)	0	(128,462)	0	(39,111)	0	(167,573)
Tax Income Guarantee Reserve	9999/VCN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S31 Grant Reserve	9999/VCO	(4,270,355)	0	0	2,753,563	(1,516,792)	0	0	1,516,792	0
Huncote Major Incident Reserve	9999/VCP	(423,433)	(100,000)	(50,000)	72,590	(500,843)	(200,000)	0	58,317	(642,526)
Court Fees Income Reserve	9999/VCQ	(31,813)	0	0	0	(31,813)	0	0	0	(31,813)
Business Rates Pool Reserve	9999/VBV	0	0	0	0	0	0	(1,065,210)	0	(1,065,210)
		(14,080,669)	(100,000)	(4,517,754)	5,962,427	(12,735,996)	812,201	(3,462,103)	5,573,027	(9,812,871)
Less Earmarked Reserves set aside to meet the Collection Fund Deficit		4,270,355				1,516,792				(0)
Usable Earmarked Reserves		(9,810,314)				(11,219,204)				(9,812,871)
General Fund Balance		(4,698,909)	0	(20,535)	100,000	(4,619,445)	0	(1,699,787)	(245,000)	(6,564,232)

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	Approved Capital Programme 2023/24 £	Budgets Brought Forward from 2022/23 £	Virements / Additions etc within the year £	Project completed Saving realised £	Latest Capital Programme 2023/24 £	Capital Expenditure to 31st March 2024 £	Variance as at 31st March 2024 £
Invest to Save Schemes							
Regeneration & Housing Property	0	2,500,000	760,000	0	3,260,000	2,597,933	662,067
Strategic Asset Review	0	0	250,000	0	250,000	0	250,000
Strategic Review : Land Rear Of Enderby Leisure Centre	0	0	530,000	0	530,000	26,290	503,710
Revenues & Benefits - Document Management & MyView	0	19,250	0	0	19,250	19,250	0
Solar Panels for Depot	600,000	0	(144,000)	0	456,000	0	456,000
	600,000	2,519,250	1,396,000	0	4,515,250	2,643,473	1,871,777
Essential/Contractual Schemes							
Electric Vehicle Infrastructure for Depot	250,000	0	470,000	0	720,000	0	720,000
Refurbishment of Vacant Units at Enderby Road Industrial Estate	0	450,000	(12,210)	0	437,790	425,965	11,825
Contaminated Land Works, Sandhill Drive, Enderby	0	0	25,000	0	25,000	16,892	8,108
Southey Close Landfill Gas Remedial Works	25,000	0	25,000	0	50,000	37,510	12,490
Walk & Ride Blaby	0	140,000	0	0	140,000	0	140,000
Extension of Enderby Leisure Centre Car Park	0	190,000	0	0	190,000	190,000	0
Capital Grants Programme	54,500	630	(12,000)	0	43,130	32,765	10,365
Blaby Town Centre Improvements	0	28,602	0	0	28,602	0	28,602
Blaby Town Centre Toilets	0	116,390	0	0	116,390	122,825	(6,435)
Works to Landfill Gas Monitoring System, Pavilion	0	10,931	0	0	10,931	10,931	0
Trenching Works at Huncote Leisure Centre	0	0	122,965	0	122,965	121,165	1,800
Replacement of Air Quality Analysers	0	29,643	0	0	29,643	637	29,006
Income Management System	200,000	20,000	0	0	220,000	0	220,000
HR & Payroll System	0	150,000	0	0	150,000	38,886	111,114
End User Device Replacement	15,000	0	0	0	15,000	0	15,000
Office 365 Consultancy	32,000	0	0	0	32,000	371	31,629
Network Upgrades - Phase 2	46,000	0	0	0	46,000	21,040	24,960
ICT Security Upgrades	107,000	0	15,000	0	122,000	53,690	68,310
ICT: IT Infrastructure Improvements	0	0	500,000	0	500,000	2,622	497,378
Emergency Generator at LICTP Data Centre	8,000	0	0	0	8,000	0	8,000
Network Load Balancing	8,000	0	0	0	8,000	0	8,000
Multi-Factor Authentication	5,000	0	0	0	5,000	0	5,000
UPS Replacement at LICTP Data Centre	24,000	0	0	0	24,000	0	24,000
Fleet Vehicle Replacement Programme	1,505,000	0	164,861	0	1,669,861	1,305,623	364,238
Vehicle CCTV & Tracking Upgrade	0	47,000	0	0	47,000	33,143	13,857
Entrance & Path Improvements at the Osiers, Braunstone	11,000	0	0	0	11,000	11,000	0
Council Offices - Green Heating Solution	0	234,838	0	0	234,838	239,614	(4,776)
Council Offices - Work Stations Upgrades	0	17,296	0	0	17,296	15,010	2,286
Refurbishment of Council Offices	0	68,966	82	0	69,048	66,098	2,950
Resurfacing of Car Parks	0	0	0	0	0	(2,002)	2,002
Active Blaby Website Enhancement	0	3,977	0	0	3,977	3,977	0
	2,290,500	1,508,273	1,298,698	0	5,097,471	2,747,762	2,349,709
Desirable Schemes (subject to affordability)							
Green Community Grants	0	0	16,000	0	16,000	10,723	5,277
Installation of new footpath, Fosse Meadows	22,000	0	0	0	22,000	21,851	149
Regrade and dress pathway at Whistle Way, Narborough	11,000	0	0	0	11,000	10,902	98
Replace steps, fencing & sleepers, regrade & dress paths at Crow Mills, Countesthorpe	35,000	0	0	0	35,000	34,934	66
Car Park and bridge improvements, Bouskell Park, Blaby	0	200,000	(200,000)	0	0	0	0
	68,000	200,000	(184,000)	0	84,000	78,410	5,590
Externally Funded Schemes							
Disabled Facilities Grants	630,000	758,526	61,142	0	1,449,668	936,879	512,789
Housing Support Grants	30,000	30,480	0	0	60,480	25,773	34,707
CCTV cameras, Blaby Town Centre & Narborough Station	0	40,000	(40,000)	0	0	0	0
CCTV cameras at 3 Other sites in District	0	0	31,000	0	31,000	29,368	1,632
Hardware for IER Implementation	0	3,057	(3,057)	0	0	0	0
Section 106-backed Schemes	0	289,618	330,003	0	619,621	534,928	84,693
	660,000	1,121,681	379,088	0	2,160,769	1,526,948	633,821
TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023/24	3,618,500	5,349,204	2,889,786	0	11,857,490	6,996,593	4,860,897

	Approved Capital Programme 2023/24 £	Budgets Brought Forward from 2022/23 £	Virements / Additions etc within the year £	Project completed Saving realised £	Latest Capital Programme 2023/24 £	Capital Expenditure to 31st March 2024 £	Variance as at 31st March 2024 £
FINANCED BY:							
Internally Resources							
Prudential Borrowing	2,295,500	3,827,980	82,415	0	6,205,895	2,858,707	3,347,188
Usable Capital Receipts	525,000	254,551	895,873	0	1,675,424	1,536,582	138,842
Blaby District Council Plan Priorities Reserve	47,000	0	0	0	47,000	371	46,629
IT Reserve	0	0	60,000	0	60,000	0	60,000
IT Systems Replacement Reserve	45,000	0	(45,000)	0	0	0	0
Revenue Funded Capital Expenditure	0	108,729	4,082	0	112,811	4,000	108,811
					0	0	0
					0	0	0
External Resources							
Disabled Facilities Grant	660,000	789,006	21,367	0	1,470,373	922,877	547,496
DFG Contribution from East Midland Housing	0	0	39,775	0	39,775	39,775	0
Defra	0	0	213,201	0	213,201	0	213,201
LA Housing Fund Round 2	0	0	1,366,000	0	1,366,000	1,053,595	312,405
S106 Contributions - Various	46,000	289,618	284,003	0	619,621	534,928	84,693
Changing Places Funding	0	16,390	0	0	16,390	16,390	0
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	0	40,000	(9,000)	0	31,000	29,368	1,632
Central Government IER Funding	0	3,057	(3,057)	0	0	0	0
LLEP Funding	0	19,873	(19,873)	0	0	0	0
TOTAL FUNDING	3,618,500	5,349,204	2,889,786	0	11,857,490	6,996,593	4,860,897

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Scrutiny Work Programme 24/25

Timescale	Item	Detail	Attendance required	Forum	Progress
5 June 2024	Private residential care home	<p>Are there powers available that the Council may use in order to influence the number and location of these facilities.</p> <p>Concern regarding the Change of Use decisions – Officer delegation/Factors and reasons for the Change of use. Intensification?</p> <p>Are licences granted from LCC on these homes? External Regulation?</p>	Jonathan Hodge – Planning & Strategic Growth Group Manager	Scrutiny Commissioners	Jonathan Hodge presented a briefing note – agreed that this would be circulated to BT/TA Members and added to Members SP Site. Also agreed no further action on this item.
6 June 2024	Active Travel Strategy and LCWIP	Review of the Strategy	Luke Raddon-Jackson Phill Turner	Task & Finish	Following the discussion, Members agreed that a further update be brought back to Scrutiny in 6 months. (Nov/Dec24)
17 July 2024 (previously 12 June)	Residents Survey Update	Members will receive a presentation on the results of the resident's survey	Karen Almond Julie Hutchinson	Scrutiny Commission	
31 July 2024	HR Review	To continue and 'wrap-up' the commission's work on current HR provision at The Council.	<p>1st meeting- members only</p> <p>2nd meeting- HR Officers- Date TBC</p>	Task & Finish 2 meetings	
11 September 2024 (previously 12 June)	Corporate Parenting Responsibilities	Members will receive a presentation.	Caroline Harbour	Scrutiny Commission	
11 September 2024	State of the District	To provide the annual update on the state of the district and leader's annual statement.	Cllr Terry Richardson Julia Smith	Scrutiny Commission	

Timescale	Item	Detail	Attendance required	Forum	Progress
11 September 2024	Homelessness & Social Housing	How many families/individuals have been impacted during this time (homelessness numbers)? Impact on the budget and the officers administering of the rise in homelessness and demand for social housing. Has it impacted on the resource needed? Will the team be able to continue absorbing the demand? Can we keep delivering our service? Other options, e.g. partnerships?	Caroline Harbour Ian Jones	Scrutiny Commission	
18 September (Brooks Room)	The Council's plans for historic contaminated land sites	The scope of what we have, how big is the potential danger? Information on Contaminated Land owned by the Council as well as sites that consume the Council's time and effort (even if the Council does not have direct liability). What do we know so far about these sites? E.g. their location, are they being monitored? Update on the current strategy to be given.	Caroline Harbour, Anna Farish and Declan Goodwin (Contaminated Land Officer)	Task and Finish	
18 September (Brooks Room)	Update on the Environmental Health, Environmental Services and Community Safety Enforcement and Compliance Policy Update on proposed changes to	Provide an update on the proposed changes to the policy including an appendix specifically on environmental crime. Propose new FPN levels for environmental crime offences following a change in legislation.	Caroline Harbour and Phil Fasham	Task and Finish	

Timescale	Item	Detail	Attendance required	Forum	Progress
	Environmental Crime Fixed Penalty Notices				
<p>Tuesday 2 July 2024 – cancelled</p> <p>Thursday 26 September 2024 (Brooks Room)</p> <p>Thursday 7 November 2024 (Brooks Room)</p> <p>Monday 3 February 2025 (Brooks Room)</p> <p>Thursday 3 April (Brooks Room)</p> <p>Thursday 10 July 2025 (Brooks Room)</p> <p>Monday 8 September (Brooks Room)</p>	iPlan Workshop (Corporate Measures)	To examine areas of concern, trends and poor performance through iPlan – the Council’s Corporate Measures system.	Luke Clements	All Commission Members as a Working Group to log into iPlan	<p>21 November 2023 – Members were successful in logging into iPlan. Queries were raised on P1 Measures which have now been added onto a spreadsheet for senior officers to respond to. One of the key areas raised was that you could not easily find the underperforming areas.</p> <p>6 March 2024 – Members reviewed the responses from SLT from queries raised at the previous meeting. Members discussed and reviewed the current P1 Measures. Members reviewed evidence and delivery of the Blaby Corporate Plan Actions</p>

Timescale	Item	Detail	Attendance required	Forum	Progress
Thursday 6 November (Brooks Room)					
15 October 2024	New Food Waste Collection Scheme	Scrutiny to feed into and examine the Council's proposed approach. Scrutiny want early sight of this to feed into draft proposals for implementation.	Paul Coates	Briefing	
11 November 2024 (previously 26 June)	Net Zero by 2050 target	Which projects are contributing to our target? What is the budget and are we thinking of dropping any projects? Is our target realistic? Can we do more to achieve it? Have we understood all potential challenges, what gaps are there? Potential area for exploration at a subsequent meeting: Our community leadership role e.g. supporting parish councils to implement their own net zero measures. Information on electrification of the fleet with a specific focus on ongoing budgetary requirements to be provided to Commissioners.	Caroline Harbour Anna Farish Jill Stevenson (to potentially come to later meetings)	Working Group	
11 December 2024	Lightbulb	Scrutiny requests a breakdown of Blaby's contribution compared to other partner authorities. Exploration of Lightbulb pilots and suggested outcome.	Caroline Harbour	Task & Finish	

Timescale	Item	Detail	Attendance required	Forum	Progress
13 November 2024	Establishment Budget Quarter 2 Budget Review Revised Capital Programme Proposed Capital Programme	Early involvement in Budget setting to provide comment on proposals; understand possible risks and impacts on budget proposals	Finance Group Manager	Scrutiny Commission	
15, 22, 29 January 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget context setting Portfolio Holder Sessions Draft Scrutiny response 	Consider financial picture in context of setting a balanced budget. Examine and respond to Portfolio Holder proposed draft budgets and funding priorities.	All SLT/Cabinet Executive	Scrutiny of the 25/26 Administration's Budget Proposals	
TBC	Regulation of Investigatory Powers	Consider the annual monitoring report (statutory requirement)	?	Scrutiny Commission	
TBC	Corporate Action Plan Updates (Half Year and year end report?)	Examine delivery against Blaby Plan vision and themes	?	Scrutiny Commission	
13 November 2024/12 February 2025	Gender Pay Gap	Annual reporting reviewed by Scrutiny	HR/Lisa Boland	Scrutiny Commission	
TBC	Annual Complaints Report	Reviewed annually	Luke Clements	Scrutiny Commission	
18 September 2024	The Council's approach to Graffiti & Littering	<p>Additional meeting to consider draft FPN levels and draft policy.</p> <p>To also review the wider enforcement policy, incorporate the environmental crime sections, and bring the whole enforcement policy to Scrutiny later in the year</p>	Caroline Harbour Phil Fasham	Task & Finish	

Timescale	Item	Detail	Attendance required	Forum	Progress
TBC	Footpaths and Cycle Routes.	<p>Is there a means by which the Council may enforce better interconnectivity between new and existing settlements through footpaths and cycle routes?</p> <p>Can section 106 be utilised to support/maintain the creation of footpaths and cycle routes?</p> <p>Members will also examine this when the Active Travel Strategy is considered by Scrutiny on the 6 June.</p>	<p>Jonathan Hodge – Planning</p> <p>Luke Raddon-Jackson/Phill Turner</p>	Task & Finish	Complete – pending a review of the Active Travel Strategy in 6 months.
TBC	Car Parks	<p>Scrutiny want early sight of the revised strategy/plan.</p> <p>Scrutiny to explore what residents want from car parks compared to our current offering.</p>	Caroline Harbour Anna Farish	Working Group	Deferred to the 25/26 work programme following discussion with officers and agreement from Commissioners.
TBC	Local Police	<p>Updates are not consistently provided from local police to ward members/parishes. Why?</p> <p>What can be done to improve the channels of communication between the two?</p> <p>Examine the level of communication between local police with ward members/parish councils.</p>	Caroline Harbour Rebecca Holcroft	Scrutiny Commission	
TBC	Health and Leisure offering	<p>How are the Health and Leisure service responding to a reduced funding?</p> <p>What is the proposed new offer?</p>	Luke Raddon-Jackson	Scrutiny Commission	

Information to be provided to Commissioners:

Neighbourhood services fees and charges – Paul Coates

The recent increase in discretionary fees and charges to be provided to Commissioners. Where has the increase been applied in the service?

Available Scrutiny Dates

Available Scrutiny Dates		Scrutiny Topic:	Scrutiny Commission Dates		Scrutiny Topic:
Date of meeting:	Report deadline		Date of Meeting	Report Deadline	
31 July (rearranged from 25 June)	22 July, publish 23 July	HR Scrutiny	17 July – NEW (previously 12 June)	8 July, publish 9 July	Residents Survey presentation
29 July 2024	18 July, publish 19 July		11 September	2 September, publish 3 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of the District • Homelessness • Corporate Parenting
10 September	30 August, publish 2 September		13 November	4 November, publish 5 November	Establishment report
4 October	20 September, publish 23 September		12 February 2025	3 February, publish 4 February	Gender Pay Gap?
15 October	3 October, publish 4 October	Food Waste Collection Scheme - Briefing	2 April	24 March, publish 25 March	
14 November	31 October, publish 1 November	Net Zero by 2050	11 June	2 June, publish 3 June	
11 December	3 December, publish 4 December	Lightbulb	10 September	1 September, publish 2 September	
10 March 2025	27 February, publish 28 February		12 November	3 November, publish 4 November	
26 March 2025	17 March, publish 18 March				

**BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL
Forward Plan
FOR THE PERIOD: June – September 2024**

What is the Plan?

It is a list of the Key Decisions to be taken by the Cabinet Executive during the period referred to above. The Council has a statutory duty to prepare this document, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended). The Plan is published 28 clear days before a meeting of Cabinet Executive is to be held. The Plan is available to view at the Council's main offices in Narborough, or on the Council's website, www.blaby.gov.uk.

What is a Key Decision?

Definition of a key decision as detailed in Part 2 Article 11 of the Council's Constitution:

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- (i) Is, in value, worth more than £50,000 of the annual revenue budget for the service or function or of the capital allocation to the scheme concerned, or
 - (ii) Has a significant impact because it either:
 - Affects individuals or organisations outside the District;
 - Affects individuals or organisations in more than one Ward; or
 - Will have a long term (more than 5 year) or permanent effect on the Council or District
 - (iii) Involves significant changes to the policy and budget framework (involves the adoption or amendment of a policy or strategy or to the budgets which the Executive has the power to adopt).

Who makes Key Decisions?

Under the Council's constitution, Key Decisions are made by:

- Cabinet Executive
- The Leader or Deputy Leader (in matters of urgency only)
- Individual officers acting under delegated powers. (it is rare for any decision delegated to an officer to be a Key Decision)

Are only Key Decisions published on the Plan?

The Council has a statutory obligation to publish Key Decisions in the Plan. However, the Council has voluntarily decided to list non-key Cabinet Executive and Council decisions as well. To clarify matters, Key Decisions will be identified on the Plan with a Yes, non-key decisions with a No.

What does the List tell me?

The List gives information about:

- Upcoming Key and Non-Key Decisions (identified by **Yes** or **No** next to them)
- Whether the decision will be made in public or private.
- When decisions are likely to be made.
- Who will make these decisions.
- Who you can contact for further information.

Who are the members of the Cabinet Executive?

The members of the Cabinet Executive and their areas of responsibility are:

- Cllr. Terry Richardson Leader of the Council & Cabinet Executive
- Cllr. Maggie Wright Deputy Leader and Finance, People & Performance
- Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore Health, Leisure, Climate and Economic Development
- Cllr. Nigel Grundy Neighbourhood Services & Assets
- Cllr. Les Phillimore Housing, Community Safety and Environmental Services
- Cllr. Ben Taylor Planning, Transformation and ICT

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What is the role of Overview and Scrutiny?

The Council's Scrutiny Commission's role is to contribute to the development of Council policies, scrutinise decisions of the Cabinet Executive and hold them to account and to consider any matter affecting Blaby District or its citizens. Dates of these meetings can be found on the Council's website.

Who do I contact, and how?

Each entry on the Plan indicates the names of the people to contact about that item. They can be contacted via the switchboard on 0116 275 0555.

Request to view Background Papers

Should you wish to request copies or extracts of any documents listed under the column entitled 'Background Papers', for items which are considered to be Key Decisions, please contact Democratic Services at, Blaby District Council, Desford Road, Narborough, Leicestershire, LE19 2EP. Please note that copies or extracts of documents which contain information of a confidential or exempt nature cannot be disclosed to the public.

Submission of Additional Documents

Additional documents which are deemed relevant to a particular Key Decision item may be submitted to the Cabinet Executive for consideration. Copies of such documents may also be requested under the same process for requesting to view Background Papers.

Confidential and Exempt Information

This list may also include items to be considered which contain confidential or exempt information, but will not disclose any detail of a confidential or exempt nature. Such items will be identified with '(Exempt)' in the report title.

<u>Report Title</u> and Expected Decision	Background Papers	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Key Decision?	Report Available/ Portfolio Holder/ Contact Officer	Decision to be taken in public or private session?
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June 2024

Page 37	<u>Treasury Management Outturn 2023/24</u> The report reviews the Council's treasury management activities undertaken during the 2023/24 financial year and gives details of the prudential and treasury indicators for the same period.	None	Cabinet Executive Council	24 June 2024 16 July 2024	No	Cabinet Executive: 14 June 2024 Council: 5 July 2024 Councillor Maggie Wright Nick Brown, Finance Group Manager	Public
	<u>Financial Performance 2023/24</u> This report sets out details of the Council's financial performance against the General Fund revenue budget, Business Rates Retention, Council Tax, and the Capital Programme for the year ended 31st March 2024.	None	Cabinet Executive	24 June 2024	Yes	14 June 2024 Councillor Maggie Wright Katie Hollis, Accountancy Services Manager	Public
	<u>IFRS 16 Lease Policy</u> To seek approval of a new leasing policy following the introduction of a new accounting standard (IFRS 16) effective from 1st April 2024.	None	Cabinet Executive	24 June 2024	No	14 June 2024 Councillor Maggie Wright Nick Brown, Finance Group Manager	Public

Report Title and Expected Decision	Background Papers	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Key Decision?	Report Available/ Portfolio Holder/ Contact Officer	Decision to be taken in public or private session?
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<u>DLUHC Productivity Plan</u> The Dept for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) has asked that all local authorities submit a 'Productivity Plan' by 19 July 2024. The letter requesting this outlined that member oversight and endorsement of the plan must be sought.	Letter from Minister for Local Government	Cabinet Executive	24 June 2024	No	14 June 2024 Councillor Terry Richardson Julia Smith, Chief Executive	Public
<u>Annual Governance Statement</u> This report sets out the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24. The Annual Governance Statement provides a review of the Council's governance arrangements that were in place for 2023/24 and also puts forward an assurance table and actions to further improve the Council's governance arrangements for 2024/25 for consideration and approval.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework – CIPFA/SOLAC E 2016 • Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Guidance Notes for English Authorities CIPFA/SOLAC E 2016 	Cabinet Executive	24 June 2024	No	14 June 2024 Councillor Maggie Wright Sarah Pennelli, Executive Director - S.151 Officer	Public

Report Title and Expected Decision	Background Papers	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Key Decision?	Report Available/ Portfolio Holder/ Contact Officer	Decision to be taken in public or private session?
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<u>Air Quality Annual Status Report 2024</u> Consideration of the Annual Status Report (ASR) 2024 prior to its submission to DEFRA. The ASR includes a discussion of air quality monitoring data for 2023 and an update on the Air Quality Action Plan	None	Cabinet Executive	24 June 2024	Yes	14 June 2024 Councillor Les Phillimore Anna Farish, Environmental Services Manager	Public
<u>Active Travel Strategy and LCWIP (Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan)</u> To approve an Active Travel Strategy and LCWIP for the Blaby District.	None	Cabinet Executive	24 June 2024	No	14 June 2024 Councillor Cheryl Cashmore Luke Raddon-Jackson	Public

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July 2024

<u>Modern Slavery Statement 2024</u> There are several duties under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. This report set out requirements and recommended good practice for local authorities under the Act.	None	Council	16 July 2024	No	5 July 2024 Councillor Cheryl Cashmore Sally Dorans, Customer Insight, Experience and Engagement Service Manager	Public
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<u>Report Title</u> and Expected Decision	Background Papers	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Key Decision?	Report Available/ Portfolio Holder/ Contact Officer	Decision to be taken in public or private session?
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September 2024

<p><u>Quarter 1 Treasury Management Update 2024/25</u></p> <p>This report provides Members with an update on the Council's treasury activities for the quarter ended 30th June 2024, and the economic factors that have affected those activities.</p>	None	Cabinet Executive	16 September 2024	No	Cabinet Executive: 6 September 2024	Public
		Council	24 September 2024		Council: 13 September 2024 Councillor Maggie Wright Nick Brown, Finance Group Manager	
<p><u>Quarter 1 Capital Programme Review 2024/25</u></p> <p>This report provides Members an update on expenditure against the Capital Programme for the first quarter of 2024/25.</p>	None	Cabinet Executive	16 September 2024	No	Cabinet Executive: 6 September 2024	Public
		Council	24 September 2024		Council: 13 September 2024 Councillor Maggie Wright Nick Brown, Finance Group Manager	

<u>Report Title</u> and Expected Decision	Background Papers	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Key Decision?	Report Available/ Portfolio Holder/ Contact Officer	Decision to be taken in public or private session?
<u>Quarter 1 Budget Review 2024/25</u> This report provides Members with an overview of the financial performance against the revenue budget for the quarter ending 30th June 2024.	None	Cabinet Executive	16 September 2024	Yes	Cabinet Executive: 6 September 2024 Councillor Maggie Wright Nick Brown, Finance Group Manager	Public

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