

DATE:
MY REF:
YOUR REF:
CONTACT:
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4 February 2025
Scrutiny Commission

Democratic Services
0116 272 7640
committees@blaby.gov.uk

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, 12 FEBRUARY 2025 at 5.30 p.m.** for the transaction of the following business and your attendance is requested.

Yours faithfully



Gemma Dennis
Corporate Services Group Manager & 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 13 November 2024 (enclosed).
4. Gender Pay Gap Report 2024 (Pages 9 - 12)
To consider the report of the HR Service Manager (enclosed).
5. Establishment 2024/25 and 2025/26 (Pages 13 - 24)
To note the report of the Accountancy Services Manager, which was considered and approved by Cabinet Executive at its meeting on 13 January 2025.
6. Scrutiny of the Administrations draft 2025/26 Budget Proposals (Pages 25 - 30)
To consider the report of the Senior Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer (enclosed).
7. Scrutiny Work Programme (Pages 31 - 40)
8. Consideration of Forward Plan Items (Pages 41 - 48)
9. Further Actions for Scrutiny arising from Meeting

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Offices, Narborough

WEDNESDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2024

Present:-

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

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

Cllr. Susan Findlay
Cllr. Janet Forey
Cllr. Tracey Shepherd

Cllr. Matt Tomeo

Substitutes:-

Cllr. Richard Holdridge (In place of Cllr. Antony Moseley)

Officers present:-

Sarah Pennelli	- Executive Director - S.151 Officer
Gemma Dennis	- Corporate Services Group Manager
Katie Hollis	- Finance Group Manager
Katie Brooman	- Elections and Governance Manager
Nicole Cramp	- Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer

Also in attendance as observers:-

Cllr. Tony Deakin

Apologies:-

Cllr. Antony Moseley

124. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

No disclosures were received.

125. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2024, as circulated, were approved and signed as a correct record.

126. REVIEW OF THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA) POLICY

Considered – Report of the Corporate Services Group Manager.

Members questioned if the powers available in the policy had been used over the previous 12 months. The Corporate Services Group Manager responded that she was unaware, but would find out from appropriate Officers.

DECISION

That the annual RIPA report be noted.

Reason:

Whilst the Council does not actively make use of its RIPA powers as a rule, it is important that members are aware of RIPA, the policy and its usage, or otherwise.

127. **QUARTER 2 BUDGET REVIEW 2024/25**

Considered – report of the Finance Group Manager.

Members discussed the write off of irrecoverable debt, which were signed off by the Cabinet Executive. There were a number of reasons for the debt to be irrecoverable, including the existence of a debt relief order and individual voluntary arrangements. Members were reassured that all the usual recovery routes had been attempted without success.

Officers also commented that the Revenue and Benefits team regularly review training guides to ensure they are kept up to date with any change in legislation and any procedural changes, helping to reduce the risk of errors being made.

Members received questioned the fall in Building Control income, which was largely due to the economic climate and changes to Building Control regulations.

The agreement that the Building Control partners signed up to was that any loss or surplus at the end of the financial year is shared in accordance with the application data from the previous three years. The partnership budget is currently being reviewed; it is unlikely that the income will reach the current working budget target and will be required to be reduced in line with the expected annual income.

Members noted that the planning income had increased substantially during the second quarter of the year, surpassing £700,000.

DECISION

That the report be noted.

Reason:

It is appropriate for Scrutiny Commission to receive financial reports for consideration ahead of the scrutiny of the draft budget work in January 2025.

128. QUARTER 2 CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW 2024/25

Considered – Report of the Finance Group Manager.

Members questioned spending not yet utilised, Officers responded that Portfolio Holders and SLT were consistently reviewing the projects.

DECISION

That the report be noted.

Reason:

It is appropriate for Scrutiny Commission to receive financial reports for consideration ahead of the scrutiny of the draft budget work in January 2025.

129. TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID YEAR MONITORING REPORT 2024/25

Considered – Report of the Finance Group Manager.

DECISION

That the report be noted.

Reason:

It is appropriate for Scrutiny Commission to receive financial reports for consideration ahead of the scrutiny of the draft budget work in January 2025.

130. SCHEDULE OF CHARGES 2024/25

Considered – Report of the Finance Group Manager.

Members questioned the review process for determining where increases were to be applied.

Members also questioned the increase to legal fees proposed for 2025/26. Members were informed that the increase is due to Officer time involved and the previous fees were not a true reflection of the time and work involved.

Members questioned whether any consideration would be given to support charities with waste collection. Officers responded that the service needed to remain competitive with other service providers.

Members questioned the rent of Glebe Drive in Countesthorpe, Officers responded that they would find out the information requested and circulate it to Members.

DECISION

That the report be noted.

Reason:

It is appropriate for Scrutiny Commission to receive financial reports for consideration ahead of the scrutiny of the draft budget work in January 2025.

131. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Members accepted the items on the Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-25 and no additional actions were proposed.

132. CONSIDERATION OF FORWARD PLAN ITEMS

No items were raised for further information or examination.

133. FURTHER ACTIONS FOR SCRUTINY ARISING FROM MEETING

There were no further actions arising from the meeting.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 6.29 P.M.

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Blaby District Council
Scrutiny Commission

Date of Meeting 12 February 2025
Title of Report **Gender Pay Gap Report 2024**
Report Author Service Manager HR

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 To present the Council's Gender Pay Gap Report for the year to 31 March 2024.

2. Recommendation(s) to Scrutiny Commission

- 2.1 That Scrutiny note the content of this report.

3. Reason for Decision(s) Recommended

- 3.1 To enable Scrutiny to monitor pay differentials by gender throughout the Council.

4. Matters to consider

4.1 Background

The Council is required by law to carry out Gender Pay Gap reporting under the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties & Public Authorities) Regulations 2017. This involves carrying out six calculations that show the difference between the average earnings of male and female employees. It does not involve publishing individual employee data. The Council is required to publish the results on its own and a government website by 30 March the year following the report. In this case by 30 March 2025.

Gender pay reporting differs from equal pay. Whilst equal pay concerns the pay differences between male and female employees who carry out the same roles, similar roles or work of equal value, the gender pay gap highlights the difference in the average pay between all male and female employees in the workforce at a particular date.

4.2 Gender Pay Gap Results

A snapshot of data was taken from 31 March 2024 and the results of the data review under the six required calculations are:

4.2.1 The average gender pay gap as a mean average

The hourly rate for a male is -2.0% lower than a female.
The mean hourly rate is £17.47 for males and £17.83 for females.

4.2.2 The average gender pay gap as a median average

There is 0.0% difference in the median average between males and females. The median average pay is £15.69 for both female and male employees.

4.2.3 The average bonus gender pay gap as a mean average

This is 0% between male and female employees. The Council does not pay bonuses in accordance with the criteria set out and therefore reporting on this element is not applicable.

4.2.4 The average bonus gender pay gap as a median average

This is 0% between male and female employees. The Council does not pay bonuses in accordance with the criteria set out and therefore reporting on this element is not applicable.

4.2.5 The proportion of females and males receiving a bonus payment

This is 0%. The Council does not pay bonuses in accordance with the criteria set out and therefore reporting on this element is not applicable.

4.2.6 The proportion of males and females when divided into four groups ordered from lowest to highest pay

	Male	Female	Avg. Hrly pay
Q1 Lower	56.3%	43.7%	£12.10
Q2 Lower Middle	35.6%	64.4%	£14.20
Q3 Upper Middle	43.7%	56.3%	£17.34
Q4 Upper	48.3%	51.7%	£27.01

In all but the lower quartile there are a higher number of females than males in the quartiles. There is little change in the overall pattern from last year.

4.3 Relevant Consultations
Chief Executive, Executive Director, Group Manager for Transformation, ICT and HR

4.4 Significant Issues
None.

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

5. Environmental impact

5.1 None

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

6.1 There are no costs associated with this report.

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

7.1 There are no risks identified with this report.

8. Other options considered

8.1 None.

9. Appendix

9.1 None

10. Background paper(s)

None

11. Report author's contact details

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Blaby District Council

Cabinet Executive

Date of Meeting	13 January 2025
Title of Report	Establishment 2024/25 and 2025/26 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	All Themes: Enabling communities and supporting vulnerable residents; Enhancing and maintaining our natural and built environment; Growing and supporting our economy; Keeping you safe and healthy; Ambitious and well managed Council, valuing our people

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 To provide members with an update in respect of the 2024/25 establishment budget, and to set out the proposed establishment budget for 2025/26.

2. Recommendation(s) to Cabinet Executive

- 2.1 That the latest forecast in respect of the 2024/25 establishment is accepted.
- 2.2 That the proposed establishment budget for 2025/26 is approved.
- 2.3 That additional resource requirement for 2025/26 as set out in paragraph 4.4, is approved.

3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 The cost of the establishment is a significant part of the council's overall budget and members are asked to consider and approve the budget for the next financial year. The final establishment costs will be incorporated into the General Fund budget for consideration in February 2025.

4. Matters to consider

- 4.1 Background

Establishment costs represent a substantial proportion of the Council's core costs, and include salaries, employers' pension and national insurance

contributions, as well as provisions for sickness, family leave, temporary staffing and agency costs.

The following report sets out the key facts and figures in relation to the size and structure of the current establishment, the associated costs, and additional staff-related information. It is based on the available information at the time of writing but any future changes which come to light will be reflected in the final budget proposals in February 2025.

4.2 Establishment Budget – Current Year

The 2024/25 Establishment cost which formed part of the original budget approved by Council on 27th February 2024 was £16,749,185 before taking into account external funding. The net budget after external funding was £13,833,688.

This allowed for a 3% estimated pay increase plus an additional 1% estimate that was built into central provisions, the cost of employers' national insurance and pension contributions, contractual increments, and the Apprenticeship Levy.

Since the budget was approved in February the following changes have been made to the establishment, this also includes budgets brought forward from 2023/24 specifically for Establishment posts, and establishment changes approved by Cabinet during the year -

	Gross Cost £	External Funding £	Net Cost £
Approved Budget	16,749,185	(2,915,497)	13,833,688
Finance	10,782	0	10,782
Housing Services Assistant and Agency	60,895	(60,895)	0
Parks & Open Spaces Operatives regrade	25,807	0	25,807
Light Bulb Project	129,248	(129,248)	0
SPA Parent and Children – Active Blaby	42,750	(42,750)	0
SPA Sports	0	(61,365)	(61,365)
SPA Older People & Health	40,540	(40,540)	0
SPA Inactive Young People	39,222	(39,222)	0
SPA Commissioning Fund	40,779	(40,779)	0
New Lubbesthorpe	0	7,000	7,000
Oadby & Wigston Partnership	571	(21,981)	(21,410)
Other minor adjustments	8,121	0	8,121
<u>Removed:</u> Final amendments made following approval of changes to Senior Management Structure November 2023	(30,885)	0	(30,885)
Working Budget	17,117,015	(3,345,277)	13,771,738

Performance against the Budget

As at 31st October, at an overall level, establishment costs were £9,723,569, against a profiled budget of £9,907,874, i.e. £184,305 under the profiled budget. The variances are shown in the table below:

Portfolio	(Under)/Over £
Planning, Transformation & IT	(51,748)
Neighbourhood Services & Assets	(28,505)
Health, Leisure, Climate & Economic Development	(91,616)
Leader	(15,326)
Housing, Community Safety and Environmental Services	(130,378)
Finance, People and Performance	138,843
Central Provisions	(5,575)
Total Variance	(184,305)

Reasons for variances

An estimate of 3% had been originally budgeted for the pay award, with an additional 1% equating to £164,000 held centrally. The Chief Executive and Chief Officers (Directors and Group Managers) was agreed at 2.5%. The offer made and agreed for Officers on grade 1 to 9 was a flat rate of £1,290 per annum across all scale points.

Vacant posts account for a large proportion of underspends across departments, HR continue to work with Service Managers to recruit to vacancies. A vacancy provision of £250,000 is included within the Establishment for vacancies arising through the year.

The Accountancy team will be working on updating the Establishment budgets during January and February, to remove any known vacancy savings and account for the full pay award, this will enable a clearer outturn forecast to be seen.

Staff Turnover

Staff turnover for 2023/24 was 15.51%, compared to 16.02% in the previous year.

Sickness Absence

The actual number of days lost to sickness in 2023/24 was 10.73 days per employee, compared to 7.66 days in the previous year. There was an increase

of 869 days lost to long term sickness in 2023/24 and short term sickness also increased with an additional 180 days recorded in 2023/24.

4.3 Budget Proposals 2025/26

The estimated costs for 2025/26, as shown in the table at Appendix A, are based on the forecast establishment as at 1st April 2025.

A 3% pay award has been built into the budget. Any change to this situation will be reflected in the base budget as soon as it becomes known.

In addition to a pay award provision, the budget proposals for 2025/26 take into account the cost of employers' national insurance and pension contributions, contractual increments, the Apprenticeship Levy, and any movement in headcount.

The establishment budget for 2025/26 is £18,890,310 before taking into account external funding. It is estimated that external funding will account for £3,943,536, leaving a net establishment cost of £14,946,774 for the year. This represents an increase of £1,175,036 compared with the 2024/25 current Working Budget.

Appendix B details the movements in posts between the Original approved 2024/25 budget and the proposed budget for 2025/26.

Full Time Equivalents (FTEs)

The establishment budget is based upon 411 posts, or 382.37 full time equivalents (FTEs). Appendix B provides a summary of the movement between the two years.

Employers' National Insurance Contributions

Contribution rates and thresholds for 2025/26 have been announced and, therefore, contributions have been included in the budget at the new proposed rate of 15% with the revised thresholds from April 2025. The increase of 1.2% year on year and reduction in threshold leads to additional costs of £345,000 which could be partly or fully reimbursed. Clarity is still being sought as to what reimbursement will be made to the Council regarding this additional cost. We have included what is believed to be the worst case scenario of £117,000 reimbursement in the budget.

Employers' Pension Contributions

Contributions to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) have been included in the Establishment at 28.3%. The rate has remained unchanged from 2024/25 and will remain the same through to 2025/26.

Rates are set by Leicestershire County Council, the scheme administrators, in conjunction with the Pensions Actuary on a triennial basis.

External Funding

The following table demonstrates the extent to which services are funded or part-funded by external grants and contributions over the two years 2024/25 and 2025/26. These figures also appear in Appendix A.

	2024/25 Approved £	2024/25 Working £	2025/26 Base £
Defra Air Quality	32,350	32,350	39,600
Housing Services	131,500	192,395	323,680
SPA – Parents & Children	0	42,750	0
SPA – Older People & Health	0	40,540	0
SPA – Inactive Young People		39,222	
SPA - Sports	0	61,365	62,300
OWBC SPA Commissioning Funding	0	40,779	0
Light Bulb Contingency	0	20,600	0
Light Bulb Pilot	0	108,648	0
Light Bulb Central Hub and Localities*	1,042,053	1,042,053	1,572,190
Hospital & Housing Enablement Officers	522,078	522,078	567,450
New Lubbethorpe	50,000	43,000	40,000
Community & Skills Co-ordinator	10,220	10,220	20,200
Rail Freight Project	9,510	9,510	0
Business Support – UK Shared Prosperity fund	80,781	80,781	0
Building Control Partnership*	1,037,005	1,037,005	1,102,866
Oadby & Wigston Partnership**	0	21,981	0
Active Travel Advisor	0	0	6,300
Food Waste Positions	0	0	208,950
Total	2,915,497	3,345,277	3,943,536

*Light Bulb and Building Control are Partnerships that Blaby District Council lead on. The External funding detailed in the above table relates to the partners share of Establishment costs.

**£8,691 of the £21,981 was unspent external funding carried forward from 2023/24 for establishment costs.

The table above includes the additional funded resource detailed in section 4.4 of this report.

Salary costs that are reliant upon external funding have only been included in the 2025/26 establishment budget where that funding has formally been confirmed. If external funding is confirmed at a later date, both salary costs and grant income will be brought into the budget at that point.

Apprenticeship Levy

All employers with a pay bill of over £3m are required to pay an apprenticeship levy to make an investment in apprentices. Employers pay a levy of 0.5% of their pay bill above £3m. For Blaby this equates to approximately £79,728 in 2025/26. In return, an employer's Apprenticeship Levy Account is credited with a sum of money which may then be spent on training apprentices.

Vacancy Savings Provision

The budget makes allowance for vacancy savings of £250,000 arising during the financial year.

4.4 Additional Resource Requirement 2025/26

Approval is requested for the addition of two Homelessness Case Officers, Scale 5, 37 hours per week each, within the Housing Services Team.

The number of Homeless Approaches have increased significantly in the last five years with a marked increase in the last twelve months. In addition, the complexity of cases is increasing with a vast increase in the number of domestic abuse presentations and cases involving mental health considerations. This makes the cases more involved and difficult to resolve.

The Council receives an annual Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG), which is used to fund a number of posts within the Homelessness team and contributes towards providing the homelessness service. It is proposed to use this funding for the two additional posts.

The total cost of the additional posts is £110,500, which includes salary and oncosts.

To support the delivery of our economic delivery framework, which was approved by Cabinet in September 2023, approval is also requested for the addition of three Economic Development posts.

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 was revised and distribution to 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 totalled £1,065,209 and were transferred to an Earmarked reserve. A further £811,881 has been received for 2022/23, and will be transferred to the Earmarked Reserve at Year End.

The Council has utilised £300,000 during 2024/25 from the Earmarked Reserve to support the Economic Development Service, a further £300,000 is proposed to be used to fund the service during 2025/26.

The total cost of the additional 3 posts is £133,420 including salary and oncosts, funding has been secured for 6 months towards one post, therefore £113,220 is proposed to be funded from the Business Pool Reserve, in addition to the £300,000.

As can be seen in Appendix B, there has been an increase in FTE's for ICT as per the report taken to Council on 27 February 2024. This is as a result of the ICT Service being brought back in house. These posts have been built into the Establishment budget.

Appendix B also reflects 22 full time posts as part of the food waste collection service. The service is to run from 1st April 2026, therefore budget has been added for these posts for 3 months to enable recruitment to be undertaken in advance of the service going live. New burdens funding is expected to be received to cover the costs.

4.5 Significant Issues

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

5. Environmental impact

5.1 In preparing this report, the author has considered the impact on the Environment, and there are no areas of concern.

No Net Zero and Climate Impact Assessment (NZCIA) is required for this report.

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

6.1 Financial implications are covered throughout this report.

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

7.1

Current Risk	Actions to reduce the risks
Withdrawal of external funding used to support posts within the establishment.	Salary costs have only been included within the establishment where external funding has been confirmed for 2025/26. Beyond 2025/26 officers will maintain dialogue with partners in order to identify any loss of external funding at an early stage.
Contribution rates for employer's national insurance and pension contributions could exceed the assumptions built into the draft budget.	Officers will monitor announcements by the Government and Leicestershire County Council to ensure that any changes to contribution rates are reflected in the final budget proposals.

8. Other options considered

- 8.1 Not to produce a separate report on establishment costs ahead of the main budget proposals. This option is not considered appropriate given that the establishment budget constitutes such a significant proportion of core costs.

9. Appendix

- 9.1 Appendix A – Budgeted Establishment Costs for 2024/25 and 2025/26
- 9.2 Appendix B – Numbers of FTEs for 2024/25 and 2025/26

10. Background paper(s)

- 10.1 None.

11. Report author's contact details

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Establishment Costs Summary Approved 2024-25 - Revised Working 2024-25 - Proposed 2025-26

	February 2024 -			Revised Working				Proposed Budget				
	Approved Budget	Externally	Net Approved Budget	Budget	Externally	Net Working Budget	Difference Between	2025-26	Externally	Net Proposed	Difference Between	Difference Between
	2024-25	Funded	2024-25	2024-25	Funded	2024-25	Net Working to Net Original	2025-26	Funded	Budget 2025-26	Net Proposed to Net Original	Net Proposed to Net Working
LEADER	1,848,721	0	1,848,721	1,848,721	0	1,848,721	0	1,958,960	0	1,958,960	110,239	110,239
FINANCE, PEOPLE & PERFORMANCE	2,984,542	0	2,984,542	2,995,324	0	2,995,324	10,782	3,128,180	0	3,128,180	143,638	132,856
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES & ASSETS	4,990,808	-1,037,005	3,953,803	5,113,242	-1,037,005	4,076,237	122,434	5,692,380	-1,311,816	4,380,564	426,761	304,327
HEALTH, LEISURE, CLIMATE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	2,338,679	-1,655,132	683,547	2,512,398	-2,031,017	481,381	-202,166	2,958,400	-2,228,440	729,960	46,413	248,579
HOUSING, COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	2,391,150	-163,850	2,227,300	2,452,045	-224,745	2,227,300	0	2,654,620	-363,280	2,291,340	64,040	64,040
PLANNING, TRANSFORMATION & IT	2,031,285	-59,510	1,971,775	2,031,285	-52,510	1,978,775	7,000	2,497,770	-40,000	2,457,770	485,995	478,995
ADDITIONAL 1% PAY INCREASE PROVISION	164,000	0	164,000	164,000	0	164,000	0	0	0	0	-164,000	-164,000
	16,749,185	-2,915,497	13,833,688	17,117,015	-3,345,277	13,771,738	-61,950	18,890,310	-3,943,536	14,946,774	1,113,086	1,175,036
CENTRAL PROVISIONS												
SICK PAY/COVER	25,625	0	25,625	25,625	0	25,625	0	25,625	0	25,625	0	0
OCCUPATIONAL MATERNITY PAY	21,000	0	21,000	21,000	0	21,000	0	21,000	0	21,000	0	0
GROSS STATUTORY MATERNITY PAY	43,200	0	43,200	43,200	0	43,200	0	43,200	0	43,200	0	0
RECOVERABLE STAT. MATERNITY PAY	-35,553	0	-35,553	-35,553	0	-35,553	0	-35,553	0	-35,553	0	0
CHILDCARE VOUCHER SCHEME	40	0	40	40	0	40	0	40	0	40	0	0
APPRENTICE LEVY	71,882	0	71,882	71,882	0	71,882	0	79,452	0	79,452	7,570	7,570
ESTIMATED REIMBURSEMENT OF EMPLOYERS NATIONAL INSURANCE CONTRIBUTIONS	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-117,000	0	-117,000	-117,000	-117,000
OTHER												
NET TURNOVER SAVINGS RE VACANCIES	-250,000	0	-250,000	-250,000	0	-250,000	0	-250,000	0	-250,000	0	0
	16,625,379	-2,915,497	13,709,882	16,993,209	-3,345,277	13,647,932	-61,950	18,657,074	-3,943,536	14,713,538	1,003,656	1,065,606

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Movement in Posts between Original Budget 2024/25 and Proposed Budget 2025/26

Cost Code	Department	Original Budget 2024/25	Original No of Posts	Original FTE	Movement in Posts	Movement in FTE	Proposed Budget 2025/26	Proposed No of Posts	Proposed FTE
	LEADER								
1103, 8023,8023,8090,8037	CHIEF EXECUTIVE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS AND CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY	649,258	5	5.00	0	0.00	661,870	5	5.00
1109	COMMUNICATIONS	289,411	6	5.54	0	0.00	313,540	6	5.54
1111	INFORMATION MANAGEMNT	98,802	2	2.00	0	0.00	105,200	2	2.00
1301	CORPORATE SERVICES GROUP MANAGER	143,865	2	1.91	0	0.00	154,300	2	1.91
1305	ELECTORAL SERVICES	122,460	3	2.67	0	-0.06	129,730	3	2.61
1308	LAND CHARGES	179,659	5	5.00	0	0.00	200,380	5	5.00
1370	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & GOVERNANCE	112,332	2	2.00	0	0.00	123,860	2	2.00
8005	DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	139,655	3	3.00	0	0.00	149,550	3	3.00
8037	PA TEAM	113,279	3	2.43	0	0.00	120,530	3	2.43
	1,848,721	31	29.55				1,958,960	31	29.49
	FINANCE, PEOPLE & PERFORMANCE								
8006	FINANCE	671,255	15	12.54	0	0.78	734,950	15	13.32
3070	INCOME & COLLECTIONS	259,675	6	6.00	0	0.00	275,840	6	6.00
8002	HR & TRAINING	367,272	7	6.59	0	0.00	386,800	7	6.59
8025	CUSTOMER SERVICES	494,476	18	13.73	-2	-0.76	526,320	16	12.97
1112	PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	171,611	4	3.04	0	0.03	176,180	4	3.07
1302	REVENUES	337,211	10	8.59	0	0.19	374,230	10	8.78
2272	UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND	80,781	2	2.00	-2	-2.00	0	0	0.00
3008	BENEFITS	602,261	17	14.46	-1	0.16	653,860	16	14.62
	2,984,542	79	66.95				3,128,180	74	65.35
	NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES & ASSETS								
2005	PARKS AND OPEN SPACES	485,099	11	11.00	0	0.00	536,840	11	11.00
2126	ENVIRONMENTAL MAINTENANCE	436,010	12	11.00	0	0.00	470,340	12	11.00
2127	REFUSE & RECYCLING	1,874,851	48	47.00	0	0.00	2,011,310	48	47.00
2130	VEHICLE MAINTENANCE	363,621	6	6.00	0	0.00	394,270	6	6.00
2144	FOOD WASTE	0	0	0.00	22	22.00	208,950	22	22.00
2212	BUILDING CONTROL	1,337,781	29	24.74	0	0.00	1,396,210	29	24.74
8008	COUNCIL OFFICES/CLEANERS/CARETAKERS	70,854	2	2.00	0	0.00	78,740	2	2.00
8016,8060,8070	NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES GROUP MANAGER, MANAGEMENT, ADMIN AND ASSETS & MAJOR PROJECTS MANAGEMENT	302,650	6	6.00	2	1.61	468,500	8	7.61
8029	PROPERTY SERVICES	119,942	2	2.00	0	0.00	127,220	2	2.00
	4,990,808	116	109.74				5,692,380	140	133.35
	HEALTH, LEISURE, CLIMATE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT								
2003,2017,2036,2141, 8052	LEISURE DEVELOPMENT - SPORTS, ACTIVE TRAVEL, A PLACE TO GROW, CORPORATE HEALTH IMPROVEMENTS AND DWP - FLEXIBLE SUPPORT	140,549	4	3.36	1	0.90	193,080	5	4.26
2044	HOSPITAL HOUSING ENABLER TEAM	522,078	13	10.77	1	1.77	567,450	14	12.54
2140	HEALTH & RECREATION	107,281	2	2.00	0	0.00	113,620	2	2.00
3500	LIGHTBULB CENTRAL HUB	1,042,053	25	22.54	9	10.46	1,572,190	34	33.00
8017	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS	344,509	8	7.22	2	2.00	460,220	10	9.22
8050	REGULATORY & LEISURE SERVICES GRP MGR	134,427	2	1.61	-2	-1.61	0	0	0.00
8055	TOURISM	47,782	2	1.00	0	0.00	51,840	2	1.00
	2,338,679	56	48.50				2,958,400	67	62.02
	HOUSING, COMMUNITY, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES								
2006	COMMUNITY SERVICES	367,912	7	7.00	1	0.00	385,170	8	7.00
2025	CHILDRENS SERVICES	77,946	2	1.50	0	0.00	82,510	2	1.50
3021	HOUSING SERVICES	729,652	17	16.00	2	2.00	928,290	19	18.00
3050	COMMUNITY SERVICES GROUP MANAGER	125,592	2	1.50	0	0.00	135,060	2	1.50
8013, 2054	ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES and DEFRA AIR QUALITY	392,297	9	7.84	0	0.16	429,440	9	8.00
8014	ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH	697,751	16	14.17	0	0.00	694,150	16	14.17
	2,391,150	53	48.01				2,654,620	56	50.17
	PLANNING, TRANSFORMATION & IT								
2202	PLANNING DELIVERY	726,485	15	13.98	0	0.17	777,750	15	14.15
2204	PLANNING ENFORCEMENT	196,234	4	4.00	0	0.00	176,390	4	4.00
2205	PLANNING POLICY	375,875	7	6.41	0	0.48	417,610	7	6.89
2215	NEW LUBBESTHORPE	130,506	2	2.00	0	0.00	136,440	2	2.00
2270, 2210,2013,2214	PLANNING GROUP MANAGER, PLANNING ADMIN, STRATEGIC GROWTH AND RAIL FREIGHT HUB	249,171	4	3.12	-1	-0.17	236,590	3	2.95
8007	ICT SERVICES	0	0	0.00	7	7.00	380,980	7	7.00
8200	SERVICE TRANSFORMATION	177,497	2	2.00	0	0.00	186,240	2	2.00
8202	SERVICE TRANSFORMATION SM	175,517	3	3.00	0	0.00	185,770	3	3.00
	2,031,285	37	34.51				2,497,770	43	41.99
	TOTALS	16,585,185	372	337.26	39	45.11	18,890,310	411	382.37

* The additional posts detailed in section 4.4 of the Establishment Report are included in the above table

** In addition to the 2024/25 figures above, £164,000 general pay provision was included in Establishment

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Blaby District Council Scrutiny Commission

Date of Meeting	12 February 2025
Title of Report	Scrutiny of the Administrations draft 2025/26 Budget Proposals
Report Author	Senior Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 To detail the findings and conclusions from the Budget Scrutiny sessions for consideration and approval by Scrutiny Commission prior to submission to Cabinet Executive on 24 February 2025.

2. Recommendation(s) to Scrutiny Commission

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Commission considers the report and approves the proposed Statement on the Administrations 2025-26 Draft Budget Proposals for submission to Cabinet Executive on 24 February 2025. (To Follow)

3. Reason for Decision(s) Recommended

- 3.1 Scrutiny Commission has a mandate to scrutinise the Administration's draft budget proposals and make recommendations to Cabinet which it is obliged to consider before making final recommendations on the Budget to Council.

4. Matters to consider

4.1 Background

The Administration's 2025/26 draft Budget proposals for the General Fund Revenue Account have been fully considered by the Scrutiny Commission and non-executive members.

Cabinet Portfolio Holders and Senior Officers attended Scrutiny budget meetings to answer questions relating to the draft budget proposals as follows:-

15 January 2025 - Budget Context and Overview

22 January 2025 – Portfolio Holder Question Sessions for:

- Leader
- Finance, People & Performance

- Health, Leisure, Climate and Economic Development
- Neighbourhood Services & Assets
- Housing, Community Safety & Environmental Services
- Planning, Transformation and ICT

All figures are as presented at the time scrutiny meetings took place, and do not take account any minor adjustments that may have been made to the budget after those dates.

4.2 Key issues raised by the Executive Director (S.151 Officer):

The key elements of the Local Government Statement that impact on the budget position for 2024/25 are:

- Confirmation of a one-year settlement for 2025/26.
- Continuation of New Homes Bonus.
- Council Tax increase thresholds.
- Business Rate Baseline.
- Information relating to additional funding streams.

The provisional settlement delivered larger increases in funding than expected; however efforts have been made to direct funding to authorities with higher levels of deprivation and less ability to generate income from Council Tax.

There is also scaling back of the Minimum Funding Guarantee and as a result, Blaby's Government Funded Core Spending Power has actually decreased from that of 2024/25.

Substantial uncertainty remains surrounding how changes to Business Rate Retention and the Fair Funding Review will affect the Council in future years. These changes were originally proposed for 2020/21, it is now expected that these will not be brought in until 2026/27. While this does not impact the 2025/26 budget directly, the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) illustrates the impact this may have on the Council's finances in the future.

As such, the funding position for 2025/26 is a one year settlement and it is difficult to make assumptions from it as to the level of funding anticipated in future financial years.

Funding the Budget

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

Sources of funding are as follows:-

	2024/25 Approved Budget £	2024/25 Revised Estimate £	2025/26 Proposed Budget £	Variance Compared to Approved Budget
Income from Business Rates	(3,387,423)	(3,762,727)	(5,429,170)	2,041,747
Contributions (from)/ To Business Rates Reserves	(290,204)	305,340	1,894,178	(2,184,382)
S31 Grant - Business Rates Compensation	(2,922,373)	(3,142,613)	(3,065,008)	142,635
Revenue Support Grant	(79,550)	(79,550)	(95,767)	16,217
New Homes Bonus Grant	(14,280)	(14,280)	(426,048)	411,768
Funding Guarantee	(2,245,863)	(2,245,863)	0	(2,245,863)
Funding Floor	0	0	(1,573,114)	1,573,114
Services Grant	(15,571)	(15,571)	0	(15,571)
Sub Total	(8,955,264)	(8,955,264)	(8,694,929)	(260,335)
Council Tax (Surplus)/Deficit	87,887	87,887	87,887	0
Council Tax Demand on Collection Fund	(6,526,402)	(6,526,402)	(6,557,973)	31,571
Funding Envelope	(15,393,779)	(15,393,779)	(15,165,015)	(228,764)

The table above illustrates that the Council's funding has remained fairly static, decreasing by £229k. It reflects a position comparable with funding in 2024/25 if an increase in Council Tax is also taken into account.

This reflects:

- Redistributed NNDR has been forecast at the moment to remain static with a positive out turn position that is being clarified currently. This may change as we are in the process of assessing the NNDR income which has become more complex following a number of recent changes to how the multiplier is applied across different sizes of business. There has been some growth this year with the prison coming on line and a number of appeals being finalised. Included in these figures is currently a contribution to the Business Rate Reserve of £1.89m. This is following a number of years where contributions from the Business Rate Reserve have been taken and assists in providing against the Business Rate Reset which is now expected to be brought in 2026/27.
- Revenue Support Grant £96k – represents no change in funding other than a small increase.
- Services Grant – No longer provided; reduced from £16k.
- Funding Guarantee – No longer provided - Replaced with Funding Floor Grant. £2.246m awarded in 2024/25 to Blaby. Designed to ensure each authority has an increase in core spending power of at least 3% in previous years.
- Funding Floor Grant – Awarded £1.573m. Reduction compared to Funding Guarantee awarded in 2024/25 takes into account an increase in funding for 2025/26 for New Homes Bonus and Council Tax raising ability which is now included in Core Spending Power calculations.

- New Homes Bonus (NHB) Grant £426k – an increase of £412k.
- Council Tax precept has increased by £32k. This is before any increase is applied but reflects the increase in the tax base (increase in properties) in the district.

Total Budget Requirement Proposal

The proposed General Fund Revenue Account Net Budget Requirement for 2025/26 is £15.775M.

Budget Gap

The budget gap arising for the 2025/26 Financial Year is £610k. Scrutiny noted the measures proposed to reduce/close the gap:

	£
Budget Gap	609,923
Contribution to Property Fund Reserve	45,000
Contribution from Leisure Man't Contractual Losses Support Reserve	(63,750)
Contribution from Business Rate Pool for ED function	(413,220)
Contribution from Blaby Priorities Reserve for Capital Grants Programme	(54,500)
Council Tax Increase	(196,085)
(Surplus)/Deficit	(72,632)

4.3 Proposal

Statement on the Administrations 2025-26 Draft Budget

The Scrutiny Commission is asked to approve the following statement for submission to Cabinet Executive in response to the Administrations draft 2025-26 Budget Proposals. **To Follow**

4.4 Relevant Consultations

All Non-Executive Members, Portfolio Holders, Senior Officers.

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

- 5.1 Opportunities for savings are a key element of examining the Administration's draft Budget proposals and where identified are within this report.

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

- 6.1 Effective financial scrutiny is one of the few ways that councils can assure themselves that their budget is robust and sustainable, and that it intelligently takes into account the needs of residents.

7. Other options considered

- 7.1 No other options were considered, Budget scrutiny is a constitutional requirement.

8. Other significant issues

- 8.1 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.

9. Appendix

- 9.1 None.

10. Background paper(s)

- 10.1 Meeting of the 'Scrutiny of the Administration's Budget Proposals'
[15th January 2025](#)

Meeting of the 'Scrutiny of the Administration's Budget Proposals'
[22 January 2025](#)

11. Report author's contact details

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25 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	Complete - 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	Complete - 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	Complete
31 July 2024	HR Review	To continue and 'wrap-up' the commission's work on current HR provision at The Council.	1 st meeting members only	Task & Finish 2 meetings	31 st July – Members reviewed previous notes and completed a new scope for intended work. It was agreed that due to time lapsed from the last meeting, that data and trends were out of date, and requested up to date information from HR to be presented at the next meeting.

Timescale	Item	Detail	Attendance required	Forum	Progress
					<p>1 October – Presentation from HR, Members agreed that the next meeting will seek evidence from Service Managers and People Managers on their experiences</p> <p>26 November – Members considered evidence from Service Managers who volunteered to provide information on their own experiences of recruitment and retention.</p> <p>Next Meetings: 11 February – for members to discuss key findings 25 March – for HR/Portfolio Holder to attend (TBC)</p>
11 September 2024	Corporate Parenting Responsibilities	Members will receive a presentation.	Caroline Harbour	Scrutiny Commission	Complete – slides to be circulated to Members
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	Complete – Slides to be circulated to Members
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	Caroline Harbour Ian Jones	Scrutiny Commission	Complete – slides to be completed to Members.

Timescale	Item	Detail	Attendance required	Forum	Progress
		<p>demand for social housing.</p> <p>Has it impacted on the resource needed?</p> <p>Will the team be able to continue absorbing the demand? Can we keep delivering our service?</p> <p>Other options, e.g. partnerships?</p>			
18 September (Brooks Room)	The Council's plans for historic contaminated land sites	<p>The scope of what we have, how big is the potential danger?</p> <p>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?</p> <p>Update on the current strategy to be given.</p>	Caroline Harbour, Anna Farish and Declan Goodwin (Contaminated Land Officer)	Task and Finish	Complete – that an update on the desktop study to be brought back in 12 months.
18 September (Brooks Room)	Update on the Environmental Health, Environmental Services and Community Safety	Provide an update on the proposed changes to the policy including an appendix specifically on environmental crime.	Caroline Harbour and Phil Fasham	Task and Finish	Complete – update to be brought back to consider how the new FPN levels have been embedded. Scrutiny will also monitor on iPlan.

Timescale	Item	Detail	Attendance required	Forum	Progress
	Enforcement and Compliance Policy Update on proposed changes to Environmental Crime Fixed Penalty Notices	Propose new FPN levels for environmental crime offences following a change in legislation.			
<p>Tuesday 2 July 2024 – cancelled</p> <p>Thursday 26 September 2024</p> <p>Thursday 7 November 2024</p> <p>Thursday 3 April 2025</p> <p>Thursday 10 July 2025</p> <p>Thursday 18 September 2025</p> <p>Thursday 6 November 2025</p>	iPlan Workshop (Corporate Measures)	To examine areas of concern, trends and poor performance through iPlan – the Council's Corporate Measures system.	Luke Clements	Working group	<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> <p>26 September 2024 – Members reviewed responses from SLT, reviewed current P1 Measures. Unfortunately, the work was incomplete, and the meeting had to end due to flooding at the Council Offices.</p> <p>7 November 2024 – Members noted a reluctance of officers to put targets and meaningful commentary on iPlan and considered whether a recommendation to Cabinet Executive would encourage services to prioritise iPlan.</p>

Timescale	Item	Detail	Attendance required	Forum	Progress
					Next Meeting: 3 April 2025
15 October 2024	Blaby District Tourism Growth Plan 2025-2030	<p>BDC has appointed Business Tourism Solutions to review the current 2020-2025 Tourism Growth Plan and prepare a new Growth Plan for 2025-2030.</p> <p>The Growth Plan is being developed in consultation with the Council and Tourism Stakeholders and will provide a framework of action for the next five years. The plan will be closely aligned to and effectively integrate with the key existing tourism strategies across Leicestershire and will play a vital role in the delivery of the Blaby District Plan 2024-2028, Economic Development Framework, and Blaby Action Plan.</p> <p>There is a three-stage process to develop and deliver the new Tourism Growth Plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of Blaby District's position in the marketplace 2. Industry engagement and consultations 	Tracy Gaskin, Nadia Alam, Kirsty Beauchamp	Task and Finish	Complete – that an update be brought back to Scrutiny Commission in the future to consider a progress update.

Timescale	Item	Detail	Attendance required	Forum	Progress
		<p>3. Development of tourism growth and action plan for 2025-2030</p> <p>As part of stage two of the project, a consultation with members to gain their valuable input has been factored in. During this Scrutiny Session BTS will present key findings from the progress review and gather views from members to feed into the final Tourism Growth Plan.</p>			
<p>New Date: 29 October</p> <p>(Previously 30 October 2024)</p>	New Food Waste Collection Scheme		Paul Coates	All Member Briefing	Complete - Following consultation with the Commissioners, an all-Member Briefing was held. It has been agreed that a further update be brought back to Members in September to input into plans.
<p>11 November 2024</p> <p>(previously 26 June)</p>	Net Zero by 2050 target	<p>Which projects are contributing to our target? What is the budget and are we thinking of dropping any projects?</p> <p>Is our target realistic? Can we do more to achieve it?</p> <p>Have we understood all potential challenges, what gaps are there?</p>	<p>Caroline Harbour Anna Farish</p> <p>Jill Stevenson (to potentially come to later meetings)</p>	Working Group	<p>Chaired by Cllr Tony Deakin.</p> <p>Complete – pending an update to the Commissioners on the progress of the new electric fleet.</p>

Timescale	Item	Detail	Attendance required	Forum	Progress
		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.			
13 November 2024	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	Complete
13 November 2024	Regulation of Investigatory Powers	Consider the annual monitoring report (statutory requirement)	Gemma Dennis	Scrutiny Commission	Complete
TBC	Corporate Action Plan Updates (Half Year and year end report?)	Examine delivery against Blaby Plan vision and themes	Julia Smith or Executive Director	Scrutiny Commission	The Corporate Action Plan 2024-25 Mid-Year Progress Report was considered by Cabinet Executive at its Extraordinary meeting on 27 November.
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	

Timescale	Item	Detail	Attendance required	Forum	Progress
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	Currently ongoing.
TBC	Lightbulb	<p>Scrutiny requests a breakdown of Blaby's contribution compared to other partner authorities.</p> <p>Exploration of Lightbulb pilots and suggested outcome.</p>	Caroline Harbour	Task & Finish	<p>TBC – this meeting was originally planned on 11 December, Officers requested that this be deferred.</p> <p>Seek alternative dates for this meeting.</p>
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</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.

Timescale	Item	Detail	Attendance required	Forum	Progress
		considered by Scrutiny on the 6 June.			
TBC	Car Parks	Scrutiny requests early sight of the revised strategy/plan. Scrutiny to explore what residents want from car parks compared to our current offering.	Caroline Harbour Anna Farish	Working Group	Deferred to the 25/26 work programme following discussion with officers and agreement from Commissioners.
TBC	Local Police	Updates are not consistently provided from local police to ward members/parishes. Why? What can be done to improve the channels of communication between the two? Examine the level of communication between local police with ward members/parish councils.	Caroline Harbour Rebecca Holcroft	Scrutiny Commission	
TBC	Health and Leisure offering	How is the service responding to reduced funding? What is the proposed new offer?	Luke Raddon-Jackson	Scrutiny Commission	

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	N/A	11 September	2 September, publish 3 September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State of the District • Homelessness • Corporate Parenting
1 October	20 September, publish 23 September	Recruitment and Retention – HR	13 November	4 November, publish 5 November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RIPA • Finance reports (Q2 Budget, Capital Programme, Treasury Management)
5 October	3 October, publish 4 October	Tourism Growth Plan	12 February 2025	3 February, publish 4 February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Pay Gap • Budget report to Cabinet
29 October	N/A	Food Waste Collection Scheme	2 April	24 March, publish 25 March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Travel Strategy Progress Review (TBC) • A Strategic Guide to Empty or Occupied Eyesore Premises-
11 November	31 October, publish 1 November	Net Zero by 2050	11 June	2 June, publish 3 June	
26 November	15 November, publish 18 November	Recruitment and Retention	10 September	1 September, publish 2 September	New – Health and Leisure introduction (TBC)
11 December	3 December, publish 4 December	Homelessness Strategy	12 November	3 November, publish 4 November	

**BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL
Forward Plan
FOR THE PERIOD: February – March 2025**

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:

- Page 41
- (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.terry.richardson@blaby.gov.uk |
| • Cllr. Maggie Wright | Deputy Leader and Finance, People & Performance | cllr.maggie.wright@blaby.gov.uk |
| • Cllr. Cheryl Cashmore | Health, Leisure, Climate and Economic Development | cllr.cheryl.cashmore@blaby.gov.uk |
| • Cllr. Nigel Grundy | Neighbourhood Services & Assets | cllr.nigel.grundy@blaby.gov.uk |
| • Cllr. Les Phillimore | Housing, Community Safety and Environmental Services | cllr.les.phillimore@blaby.gov.uk |
| • Cllr. Ben Taylor | Planning, Transformation and ICT | cllr.ben.taylor@blaby.gov.uk |

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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February 2025

<u>Blaby District Tourism Growth Plan 2025-2030</u> Blaby District Council has appointed Business and Tourism Solutions (BTS) to prepare a refresh of the current 2020-2025 Tourism Growth Plan and the associated actions. The Growth Plan is being developed in consultation with tourism stakeholders in the area and the Council and will provide a framework for action from 2025 - 2030. The plan will be closely aligned to and effectively integrate with the key existing tourism strategies across Leicestershire and the Blaby District Plan 2024-2028, Active Travel Strategy, Community, Health and Well-being Plan and the Economic Development Framework.	Blaby District Tourism Growth Plan 2020 - 2025 Project Brief for Blaby District Tourism Growth Plan 2025 -2030	Cabinet Executive	24 February 2025	Yes	14 February 2025 Councillor Cheryl Cashmore Tracy Gaskin, Health, Leisure and Tourism Service Manager, Nadia Alam, Tourism and Heritage Officer, Kirsty Wilby, Tourism and Heritage Officer	Public
<u>Quarter 3 Budget Review 2024/25</u> This report gives Members an overview of the financial performance against the budget for the third quarter of 2024/25.	None	Cabinet Executive	24 February 2025	Yes	14 February 2025 Councillor Maggie Wright Joanne Davis, Accountancy Services 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?
<u>Quarter 3 Treasury Management Update 2024/25</u> That the latest position in respect of treasury activities, and the prudential indicators, are accepted.	None.	Cabinet Executive	24 February 2025	Yes	14 February 2025 Councillor Maggie Wright Katie Hollis, Finance Group Manager	Public
<u>Scrutiny Commission response to the Administrations 2025/26 Draft Budget Proposals</u> That Cabinet Executive considers the comments and recommendations of Scrutiny Commission in respect of the draft 2025/26 budget proposals before making final recommendations to Council.	Agenda and documents presented to the Scrutiny Commission.	Cabinet Executive	24 February 2025	No	14 February 2025 Sandeep Tienas, Senior Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer	Public
<u>Quarter 3 Capital Programme Review 2024/25</u> This report provides Members an update on expenditure against the Capital Programme for the third quarter of 2024/25.	None	Cabinet Executive Council	24 February 2025 25 February 2025	No	Cabinet Executive: 14 February 2025 Council: 14 February 2025 Councillor Maggie Wright Joanne Davis, Accountancy Services Manager	Public

<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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<p><u>General Fund Budget Proposals 2025/26</u></p> <p>The report sets out the Council's General Fund budget proposals for the forthcoming financial year. This includes details of the financial settlement that will support service delivery, and a high level summary of planned expenditure by portfolio. The Council holds a number of reserves that it can draw upon to fund future expenditure. The level of reserves is noted within this report, along with an update of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>	None	<p>Cabinet Executive</p> <p>Council</p>	<p>24 February 2025</p> <p>25 February 2025</p>	No	<p>Cabinet Executive: 14 February 2025 Council: 14 February 2025</p> <p>Councillor Maggie Wright</p> <p>Sarah Pennelli, Executive Director - S.151 Officer</p>	Public
<p><u>5 Year Capital Programme 2025/26 to 2029/30</u></p> <p>This report sets out the Council's proposed Capital Programme and resources for the next five financial years commencing in 2025/26. The Capital Programme covers our planned expenditure on the acquisition, construction and/or enhancement of non-current assets, i.e., those assets with a useful life of greater than one year.</p> <p>The report also presents the Council's updated Capital Strategy in accordance with the requirements of the Prudential Code.</p>	None	<p>Cabinet Executive</p> <p>Council</p>	<p>24 February 2025</p> <p>25 February 2025</p>	No	<p>Cabinet Executive: 14 February 2025 Council: 14 February 2025</p> <p>Councillor Maggie Wright</p> <p>Katie Hollis, Finance Group Manager</p>	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?
<p><u>Prudential Indicator & Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26</u></p> <p>This report lays down the guidelines and rules that Officers are required to follow when making decisions to borrow or when investing Council funds. Such decisions are made daily under delegated authority. The report outlines the Council's prudential indicators for 2025/26 to 2029/30 and sets out the expected treasury management activities for that period. The report also sets out the financial institutions the Council may invest in, the maximum investment level and the periods over which the investments can be made.</p>	None	<p>Cabinet Executive</p> <p>Council</p>	<p>24 February 2025</p> <p>25 February 2025</p>	No	<p>Cabinet Executive: 14 February 2025 Council: 14 February 2025</p> <p>Councillor Maggie Wright</p> <p>Katie Hollis, Finance Group Manager</p>	Public
<p><u>Council Tax 2025/26</u></p> <p>The Council is required to set out the total amount that needs to be raised from the collection of Council Tax in the forthcoming year. This is known as the Council Tax Requirement for Blaby District Council and forms part of the funding towards the services provided by the Council. The report sets the amount of Council Tax charged to each household in the district.</p>	None	<p>Cabinet Executive</p> <p>Council</p>	<p>24 February 2025</p> <p>25 February 2025</p>	No	<p>Cabinet Executive: 14 February 2025 Council: 14 February 2025</p> <p>Councillor Maggie Wright</p> <p>Katie Hollis, Finance Group Manager</p>	Public

<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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<u>Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 - 2030</u> To ask Members to approve the strategy	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2025 - 2030	Council	25 February 2025	No	14 February 2025 Councillor Les Phillimore Ian Jones, Housing Services Manager	Public
<u>Local Development Scheme</u> This report seeks approval for the revised Blaby District Local Development Scheme (LDS), which sets out the timescales for the production of the emerging Local Plan.	None	Council	25 February 2025	No	14 February 2025 Councillor Ben Taylor Vicky Chapman, Development Strategy Manager, Jonathan Hodge, Planning & Strategic Growth Group Manager	Public

March 2025

<u>Cabinet Executive Response to Scrutiny Commission Recommendations on the Administrations 2025-26 Draft Budget Proposals</u> To present the Cabinet Executive's response to the recommendations of Scrutiny Commission.	None	Cabinet Executive	24 March 2025	No	Cabinet Executive: 14 March 2025 Councillor Maggie Wright Sarah Pennelli, Executive Director - S.151 Officer	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?
<p><u>A Strategic Guide to Empty or Occupied Eyesore Premises</u></p> <p>The purpose of this strategy is to set out how Blaby District Council will deal with empty or occupied eyesore premises and it is intended to replace the existing empty homes strategy.</p>	<p>Equalities impact assessment</p> <p>Carbon neutral / net zero benefits</p>	<p>Cabinet Executive</p>	<p>24 March 2025</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>14 March 2025</p> <p>Councillor Les Phillimore</p> <p>Caroline Harbour, Environmental Health, Housing & Community Services Group Manager, Anna Farish, Environmental Services Manager</p>	<p>Public</p>