

Our Portfolio Priorities for 2020/21 are as follows:

For **Council Tax and Benefits** we need to observe how any potential newly introduced changes or phases of the national implementation of Universal Credit affect local residents and service delivery. Consideration to any further potential changes in the discretionary areas of Council Tax liability will be made. The team will continue the work to enable digitalisation of the service.

For the **Community Services** Team, to produce the Community Safety Partnership Strategy 2020-2023 and associated action plan for 2020/21 informed by a strategic assessment of needs and risk across the district. We will be focusing on emerging threats such as criminal exploitation, violent crime and modern slavery/human trafficking and ensuring our staff, communities and businesses know how to spot the signs, what help is available and how to report. We will be developing and implementing a BDC workplace Domestic Abuse Policy and promoting the adoption of workplace Domestic Abuse policies in local businesses. We will deliver and evaluate the South PCN GP referred Complex Case scheme. Our schools work offer (Safety Crew) will be delivered to the 3 high schools in the area and we will continue to develop and deliver Housing Skills 4 Life and other community support services.

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

For **Lightbulb**, we will fully deliver the revised Homes Support Grant and other elements of the Regulatory Reform Order. We will implement a Framework Agreement for Builders which will improve process flow and review the career pathway for Officers to better enable progression, and to provide better team resilience of key posts. Following successful recurrent funding being agreed by the Clinical Commissioning Group for the Hospital Enablement Team, a review of service will be initiated.

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

- Utilisation of the Disabled Facilities Grant is restricted by legislation and is a challenge to being able to provide more options for residents to remain independent at home for longer.
- Any new phase or change to the Universal Credit programme of implementation may impact on local residents, Council services, rent arrears for tenants and ability to be able to manage their benefit matters digitally.

- A replacement of the document management system needs to take place in quarters 1 and 2. Failure to procure a robust IT system for this purpose will seriously hamper the digitalisation process for the team and result in an inadequate storage of personal and sensitive document copies belonging to local residents.
- Increasing complexity of cases will impact on capacity of support workers and may mean that skill sets required are not available for the salary offered.
- We cannot build enough affordable housing to meet the demand, this continues to be tested by an increase in homelessness cases.
- The increase in homelessness cases will impact on the availability of temporary accommodation
- Any reduction in Government grant will lead to an impact on the housing services team and their ability to deal with homelessness demand.
- A reduction in affordable housing funding or Strategic Partnership funding will impact upon new affordable housing for both general needs and supported accommodation
- Lack of land availability or suitability for Registered Providers to acquire land will result in a drop in new affordable housing units and available public subsidy being repositioned elsewhere.

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Les Phillimore

Senior Officer: Housing & Community Services Group Manager

Portfolio Total

	2019/20 Approved Budget	2019/20 Revised Estimate	2020/21 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
Community Services - Total	[A]	[B]	[C]		
Establishment Costs	£2,370,901	£2,595,705	£2,631,820	£260,919 11.01%	£36,115 1.39%
Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£14,956,531	£13,167,157	£12,688,550	-£2,267,981 -15.16%	-£478,607 -3.63%
Direct Income	-£15,762,208	-£13,816,420	-£13,746,982	£2,015,226 -12.79%	£69,438 -0.50%
Net Direct Expenditure	£1,565,224	£1,946,442	£1,573,388	£8,164 0.52%	-£373,054 -19.17%
Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	68.74	77.90	73.86	5.12 7.45%	-4.04 -5.19%

Council Tax & Benefits

	2019/20 Approved Budget	2019/20 Revised Estimate	2020/21 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
Revenues & Benefits	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1.Establishment Costs	£833,978	£802,526	£799,502	-£34,476 -4.13%	-£3,024 -0.38%
2.Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£14,652,998	£12,332,702	£12,267,150	-£2,385,848 -16.28%	-£65,552 -0.53%
3.Direct Income	-£14,993,995	-£12,667,034	-£12,573,490	£2,420,505 -16.14%	£93,544 -0.74%
4.Net Direct Expenditure	£492,981	£468,194	£493,162	£181 0.04%	£24,968 5.33%
5.Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	26.99	26.88	25.69	-1.30 -4.82%	-1.19 -4.43%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2020/21 Establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. Restructure in within the department and a senior fixed term post added.
2. Gross Direct Expenditure mainly comprises the amount of estimated rent allowance that is due to be paid out by the authority to assist local residents in staying in their homes because they are on a low income, or in receipt of certain benefits.
3. The Direct Income figures include all government grants, one off costs, new burdens, rewards and subsidy.
4. This represents the net impact of the variances listed above.
5. As per note 1.

Community Services

	2019/20 Approved Budget	2019/20 Revised Estimate	2020/21 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
Community Services	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1.Establishment Costs	£394,077	£404,792	£402,425	£8,348 2.12%	-£2,367 -0.58%
2.Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£65,788	£116,443	£40,670	-£25,118 -38.18%	-£75,773 -65.07%
3.Direct Income	-£23,785	-£23,790	-£25,217	-£1,432 6.02%	-£1,427 6.00%
4.Net Direct Expenditure	£436,080	£497,445	£417,878	-£18,202 -4.17%	-£79,567 -16.00%
5.Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	9.67	11.67	9.59	-0.08 -0.83%	-2.08 -17.82%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2020/21 Establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions.
2. One off budget provision carried forward from 2018/19 is included in the revised budget. Contribution made for Supporting Leicestershire Families is not due to continue in 2020/21.
3. Income increase in line with expected.
4. This represents the net impact of the variances listed above.
5. 2 fixed term domestic abuse outreach posts added.

Housing Services

	2019/20 Approved Budget	2019/20 Revised Estimate	2020/21 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
Housing Options	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1.Establishment Costs	£321,792	£337,633	£283,377	-£38,415 -11.94%	-£54,256 -16.07%
2.Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£157,875	£396,179	£192,420	£34,545 21.88%	-£203,759 -51.43%
3.Direct Income	-£74,336	-£81,040	-£83,140	-£8,804 11.84%	-£2,100 2.59%
4.Net Direct Expenditure	£405,331	£652,772	£392,657	-£12,674 -3.13%	-£260,115 -39.85%
5.Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	10.50	10.50	8.50	-2.00 -19.05%	-2.00 -19.05%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2020/21 Establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions. Tenancy sustainment post extended in 2019/20. The overall number of posts have been reduced by 2, this is due to fixed term contracts ending. It is acknowledged that this is likely to change again following the pending review of service.
2. Revised includes Government grant funding carried forward from 2018/19 to be used for reducing homelessness.
3. This represents income from Housing Benefit for households placed in temporary accommodation as well as Government grant provided for implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act as above, represented by Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and New Burdens Grant.
4. This represents the net impact of the variances listed above.
5. As per note 1.

Lightbulb

	2019/20 Approved Budget	2019/20 Revised Estimate	20/21 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
Light Bulb	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1.Establishment Costs	£713,164	£942,864	£1,035,664	£322,500 45.22%	£92,800 9.84%
2.Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£77,082	£319,053	£185,530	£108,448 140.69%	-£133,523 -41.85%
3.Direct Income	-£670,092	-£1,044,556	-£1,065,135	-£395,043 58.95%	-£20,579 1.97%
4.Net Direct Expenditure	£120,154	£217,361	£156,059	£35,905 29.88%	-£61,302 -28.20%
5.Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	20.08	27.35	28.58	8.50 42.33%	1.23 4.50%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2020/21 Establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions.
2. The revised includes one off budget provision for funding carried forward from 2018/19 in relation to the HET team and Lightbulb project.
3. Income from the Districts and County for the Lightbulb project, and funding for the HET team.
4. This represents the net impact of the variances listed above.
5. Change in hours within the department.

Management & Administration

Group Manager	2019/20 Approved Budget	2019/20 Revised Estimate	2020/21 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1.Establishment Costs	£107,890	£107,890	£110,852	£2,962 2.75%	£2,962 2.75%
2.Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£2,788	£2,780	£2,780	-£8 -0.29%	£0 0.00%
3.Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4.Net Direct Expenditure	£110,678	£110,670	£113,632	£2,954 2.67%	£2,962 2.68%
5.Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	1.50	1.50	1.50	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2020/21 Establishment budget takes account of the estimated pay award yet to be confirmed, contractual increments where applicable, and increases to employer's national insurance and pension contributions.
2. Minimal change.
3. No income in respect of this cost centre.
4. Net impact of the variances listed above.
5. No change.

Movement in budget and staff from last year

Council Tax & Benefits

The 2020/21 direct income does not include any new burdens funding or any one off cost contributions made by either the Department for Work and Pensions, or other organisations provided for the implementation of any new, sudden or software changes or costs that should be borne by the DWP for Universal Credit, amendments to legislation, other specialised works or exercises or initiatives.

Community Services

2020/21 income only includes external funding where that funding stream has been confirmed. Similarly, staffing costs do not include externally funded posts for which funding is unconfirmed (0.5 FTE Children's Worker funded by Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council) 2 FTE fixed term Community Services Staff have been included in the budget for 2020/21

Housing Services

An increase in staffing numbers and also an increase in salaries to bring the team structure in line with neighbouring authorities is proposed. This will assist the Housing Services Team in managing the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act as well as being able to retain experienced staff members that have previously been lost to higher paying neighbouring authorities.

Lightbulb

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

The Hospital Housing team is funded through Leicestershire and Leicester City Better Care Fund and with a contribution from Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT). The County element, the City and LPT funding ends on the 31st March 2020. Going forward the funding will come from the LPT and the amalgamated Clinical Commissioners Group.

Portfolio Priorities

Services

Council Tax & Benefits

The team priorities for 2020/21 are:

- To prepare for and implement any changes to the Full Service Universal Credit delivery including any change or reversion of the DWP approach
- To introduce an electronic change of circumstances form

Community Services Team

Team priorities for 2020/21 are:

- To produce the Community Safety Partnership Strategy 2020-23
- To deliver “Safety Crew” schools programme to all High Schools in BDC
- To deliver Housing Skills 4 Life, Friends Against Scams, Ask for Angela and Keep Safe Places
- To refresh the Early Help and Prevention Strategy Action Plan
- To deliver the annual programme of campaigns and awareness for Community Safety
- To deliver and evaluate the “top 10” complex cases scheme for South Blaby PCN

Housing Services:

Team priorities for 2020/21 are:

- To take an active role in the delivery of the County wide funded Homelessness Prevention Trailblazers and Preventing Rough Sleeping projects
- Preventing and relieving homelessness in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act
- To implement a viable staffing structure that meets the demands of the service
- To ensure maximisation of affordable housing delivery
- To increase Private Sector Housing provision
- To review the current Housing Strategy
- To provide further Member Training on the local housing and homelessness picture

Lightbulb

Lightbulb priorities for 2020/21 are:

- Review pathways for the new Regulatory Reform Order which includes the new pathway for Home Support Grants
- To ensure that advantage is taken in any flexibility in the DFG mandatory legislation to allow new initiatives and provide more options to residents to keep them at home and enable independence.
- Review the staff structure for the Hospital Enablement Team ready for their transition from project to mainstream service
- Procure a Framework Agreement for Builders which will improve process flow

Key points

<p>Doing things differently – plans for the coming year</p>	<p><u>Council Tax & Benefits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise service to take account of legislative changes or Universal Credit changes • Digitalise change of circumstance reporting <p><u>Housing Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review and implement a new staffing structure • To continue to influence housing requirements on major planning applications • Improve housing statistics reporting and information management • Development and delivery of a new housing strategy • Enabling new supported provision within the District • Operating an effective private rented sector service for both tenants and landlords <p><u>Community Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To produce the Community Safety Partnership Strategy 2020-23 • To deliver “Safety Crew” schools programme to all High Schools in BDC • To deliver Housing Skills 4 Life, Friends Against Scams, Ask for Angela and Keep Safe Places • To refresh the Early Help and Prevention Strategy Action Plan • To deliver the annual programme of campaigns and awareness for Community Safety • To deliver and evaluate the “top 10” complex cases scheme for South Blaby PCN <p><u>Lightbulb</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop the preventative offers to residents • Develop the Hospital Enablement Service • Implement a Framework for Builders
<p>Income generation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work to maximum efficiency to receive local authority error rewards from the DWP • To maximise income generation for the percentage of housing benefits recovered. • To work towards maximising opportunity to increase income to the Council from the timely and efficiently paid instalments of Council Tax and Business Rates

Capital plans for the portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The contract for the provision of the Council Tax and Benefits software, currently Northgate has been extended until February 2021. Whilst there is no pressing need to replace the current software, the Council needs to ensure that it complies with the prevailing procurement rules. Given the value of the contract the full procurement rules will apply. • The purchase of a document storage and management product with full workflow capability for the Council Tax and Benefits Team and the Income and Collection Team.
---------------------------------	---

Key Performance Indicators

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2017/18 RESULTS	2018/19	2019/20 YEAR TO DATE	COMMENTS
Number of cases where homelessness has been prevented	330	262	216	The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) places a duty on the Council to work with applicants for longer in order to help prevent them from becoming homeless. The figure currently remains consistent with previous years.
Number of homelessness applications taken	47	132	141	The total number of applications no longer applies as the HRA splits cases into 'prevention' and 'relief'. This 2018/19 figure represents the number of homeless cases that fall into the relief category. It should be noted that in addition to this figure there have been a further 216 prevention cases that have also been opened and to which the Council has a duty to take reasonable steps (including setting up personalised housing plans) in order to prevent homelessness.
Number of	132	119	41	The affordable housing

Affordable Houses				figures to date this year are lower than last year. This is due to a delay in completions being received. There are a significant number of completions due between now and the end of the financial year.
-------------------	--	--	--	--

End to end times for completion of DFGs (time taken from receipt of recommendation to approval of grant – average days)	16.5 weeks	20.20 weeks	14.70 weeks	This is below the target agreed by the Management Board of 20 weeks, and is an improvement on last year's figure
Demand for DFGs (number of recommendations received)	150	169	178	The number of DFG recommendations has decreased which is believed to be attributed to the increase in preventative cases negating the need for DFG work
Time taken to complete DFGs (from initial enquiry by customer to completion of work, broken down by stages)	26 weeks	25 weeks	39 weeks	In quarter 1, the average was 32 weeks. We have some historic cases being picked up by consultants which have increased the end to end times, however this is being monitored and we predict will decrease by the end of the financial year.
Number of hospital admissions/readmissions avoided as a result of Lightbulb intervention	647 patients seen, Referral to resolution times 6.8 days	786 patients seen, Referral to resolution times 7.79 days	486 patients seen, Referral to resolution 5.28 days so far	The number of cases the team deal with has increased and referral to resolution times has decreased.
Number of holistic housing needs assessment carried out (through	1532	2497	1618	Based on projected end of year figures the, there will be an increase of 22% from 18/19 (52% increase

Lightbulb Programme) and outcome				from 17/18)
Percentage of benefit claims which were paid correctly	95.74%	83.75%	85.55%	This is a year on year improvement. We continue to provide an active refresher and on the job training solution for staff. The yearly subsidy claim to the DWP last year confirmed a 99.9% accuracy rate in terms of entitlements and subsidy due to the authority. Whilst the current years DWP outcome is still awaited it is anticipated to be in the same ratio percentage (ie 99.9%).
Number of ASB cases reported in Blaby		887	491	The trend continues downward for the number of ASB cases reported for the third year. This year's to date figure is a 12% decrease on the same period as 2018/19. This is in line with County, regional and national trends.
Support services (Resident Support/Substance Use/Children's Worker/Domestic Abuse)– number of people supported/outcomes		371	265	In 2018/19 the total number of referrals into support services was 371, slightly lower than in 2017/18. However, 2019/20 is on target to exceed last years total by a significant amount with increases in numbers referred to Children's workers and resident support in particular.

Customers

- Lightbulb measures service outcomes with every service user. The biggest impact recorded was against the quality of life and mental health outcomes, followed by home warmth and managing in the home.
- In quarter 2 of 2019/20 100% of Lightbulb service users answered yes to being asked if the service achieved everything that they wanted.

- Digital access for changes in circumstance will reduce postage costs for customers
- Customers personal records will be held securely
- Changes to the DWP Universal Credit process will receive careful and considered preparation
- Community Services carry out an annual Community Safety Partnership survey asking residents for their views on how safe the district is and what their community safety priorities are. This survey runs until January when the results will be fed into the 2020-23 CSP strategy
- The new housing jigsaw system includes an on-line module which measures customer satisfaction. This module will be available later in 2020 and feedback will be available towards the end of the 2020/21 financial year.

Risks

- Demand for Lightbulb preventative work has increased as a result of Lightbulb Programme's proactive/early identification of need. The flexibility in the DFG legislation has not, which could hinder new initiatives
- Any reduction in funding for the Hospital Housing team from both the city and county will impact on the team establishment and the number of patients the service can help.
- Universal Credit may impact local residents greater than anticipated causing difficulties in meeting other liabilities such as payments towards rent and council tax liabilities, and other council services
- Lack of affordable housing options will increase homelessness.
- Lack of suitable supported provision in the affordable sector could lead to a lack of appropriate accommodation for the more complex homelessness cases.
- Any reduction in homelessness grant funding will impact upon service delivery.
- Lack of land availability or suitability for Registered Providers to acquire will result in a drop in new affordable housing units and available public subsidy being repositioned elsewhere.