

PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO
Councillor Sheila Scott

The last year has seen some significant changes for the Group. The number, scope and profile of strategic projects have grown significantly. This has led to a bigger remit, and more officers, for the Strategic Growth Team, not least of all due to the granting of Garden Village status and receipt of external funding.

At the same time, work has commenced, and is now well underway, on a new Local Plan. In addition, the focus on sensitive enforcement sites – with well planned action – has also increased.

Portfolio Priorities

Priorities for 2020/21 for the group include:

- 1. Large scale strategic projects.** The strategic growth team is now managing a full range of large scale projects. These include a Rail Freight Terminal, garden village and Fosse Park West. During 2020/21 the new offices, beer hall and brewery at Everards Meadows and Fosse Park West will both open.
- 2. Develop, adopt and deliver a new Economic Development Strategy.** The current Economic Development Strategy was refreshed and the new strategy adopted in September 2016, and good progress has been made against the action plan. It is now time to consider our priorities and action plan for the next four year period.
- 3. Develop a clear support offer and plan for our town centres and high streets.** Work has started on this, with much achieved in Blaby Town Centre over the last 12 months; and this will be further developed and rolled out to other areas within the district.
- 4. High profile enforcement action.** Ongoing action will continue for a number of current high profile cases; and the team will continue their pro-active approach across the District.
- 5. New Local Plan –** Work will continue on the brand new local plan for the district.
- 6. Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan –** The Statement of Common Ground to support this will be developed and adopted during 2020/21.
- 7. Delivery of the Lubbethorpe Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE).** The new community is going from strength to strength. Around 350 houses have been completed, the first primary school is open, and works continue to deliver the road infrastructure. During 2018 the development won three awards. Key milestones for 2020/21 will include the opening of the first Local Centre (including health centre), and development of the leisure offer.

Risks

- The increased level of planning applications will continue to place significant demands on the service. Ongoing resource reviews however should help to mitigate against this.
- Failure to progress the new Local Plan could leave the District vulnerable to unacceptable types of future development.
- High number of appeals will place further pressures on the Development Services Team.
- Inability to progress with the delivery of a clear and robust policy framework would put delivery of sustainable development at risk.
- Delivery of Lubbesthorpe against the current proposed timetable is essential – failure to do so could affect the 5 year housing land supply, and in turn the council's ability to defend against undesirable development.
- Significant reliance on partners and the wider economy to effectively implement the Economic Development Strategy.
- Failure to deliver an effective enforcement service could result in reputational damage.
- Failure to secure ongoing Garden Village Programme funding could jeopardise our ability to ensure that any such sites are delivered well.

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Sheila Scott

Senior Officer: Planning & Economic Development Group Manager

Portfolio Total

| Planning, Housing Strategy, Economic & Community Development - Total | 2019/20 Approved Budget | 2019/20 Revised Estimate | 2020/21 Proposed Budget | Variance [C] - [A] | Variance [C] - [B] |
|---|--|---|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | [A] | [B] | [C] | | |
| Establishment Costs | £1,378,003 | £1,358,692 | £1,474,004 | £96,001 6.97% | £115,312 8.49% |
| Other Gross Direct Expenditure | £548,881 | £921,629 | £373,968 | -£174,913 -31.87% | -£547,661 -59.42% |
| Direct Income | -£823,762 | -£860,762 | -£826,412 | -£2,650 0.32% | £34,350 -3.99% |
| Net Direct Expenditure | £1,103,122 | £1,419,559 | £1,021,560 | -£81,562 -7.39% | -£397,999 -28.04% |
| Overall No. of Posts (FTE) | 31.87 | 31.48 | 33.22 | 1.35 4.24% | 1.74 5.53% |

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

| Development Strategy | 2019/20 Approved Budget | 2019/20 Revised Estimate | 2020/21 Proposed Budget | Variance [C] - [A] | Variance [C] - [B] |
|---|--|---|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | [A] | [B] | [C] | | |
| 1.Establishment Costs | £341,927 | £322,616 | £356,539 | £14,612 4.27% | £33,923 10.51% |
| 2.Other Gross Direct Expenditure | £333,923 | £627,249 | £134,144 | -£199,779 -59.83% | -£493,105 -78.61% |
| 3.Direct Income | -£2,000 | -£12,000 | -£2,000 | £0 0.00% | £10,000 -83.33% |
| 4.Net Direct Expenditure | £673,850 | £937,865 | £488,683 | -£185,167 -27.48% | -£449,182 -47.89% |
| 5.Overall No. of Posts (FTE) | 7.65 | 7.26 | 7.94 | 0.29 3.79% | 0.68 9.37% |

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. Reduction in revised is due to the Principal Planning Policy Officer working reduced hours and the High Street Coordinator post has been added into 2020/21 budget.
2. The revised budget includes significant grants and S106 monies carried forward from 2018/19 relating to the Neighbourhood planning, Local Development Framework and the production of the Delivery Development Plan Document (DPD).
3. No Significant change.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. As per point 1.

PLANNING DELIVERY

| | 2019/20 Approved Budget | 2019/20 Revised Estimate | 2020/21 Proposed Budget | Variance [C] - [A] | Variance [C] - [B] |
|---|--|---|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Planning Delivery | [A] | [B] | [C] | | |
| 1.Establishment Costs | £486,653 | £486,653 | £540,632 | £53,979 11.09% | £53,979 11.09% |
| 2.Other Gross Direct Expenditure | £136,270 | £151,541 | £125,016 | -£11,254 -8.26% | -£26,525 -17.50% |
| 3.Direct Income | -£768,000 | -£768,000 | -£768,000 | £0 0.00% | £0 0.00% |
| 4.Net Direct Expenditure | -£145,077 | -£129,806 | -£102,352 | £42,725 -29.45% | £27,454 -21.15% |
| 5.Overall No. of Posts (FTE) | 13.41 | 13.41 | 13.61 | 0.20 1.49% | 0.20 1.49% |

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 x fixed term Planning Officer Posts included in 2020/21 budget to be funded from 20% fee income.
2. The revised estimate includes provision budget yet to be allocated.
3. No change.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. As above point 1. Apprentice post and fixed term planning officer post removed.

ENFORCEMENT

| | 2019/20 Approved Budget | 2019/20 Revised Estimate | 2020/21 Proposed Budget | Variance [C] - [A] | Variance [C] - [B] |
|---|--|---|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Planning Enforcement | [A] | [B] | [C] | | |
| 1.Establishment Costs | £198,329 | £198,329 | £195,723 | -£2,606 -1.31% | -£2,606 -1.31% |
| 2.Other Gross Direct Expenditure | £14,246 | £24,546 | £13,046 | -£1,200 -8.42% | -£11,500 -46.85% |
| 3.Direct Income | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 0.00% | £0 0.00% |
| 4.Net Direct Expenditure | £212,575 | £222,875 | £208,769 | -£3,806 -1.79% | -£14,106 -6.33% |
| 5.Overall No. of Posts (FTE) | 4.81 | 4.81 | 4.81 | 0.00 0.00% | 0.00 0.00% |

Reasons for Variances

1. The 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 budget includes budget approved for consultants' fees relating to Enforcement action.
3. Not applicable.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change.

STRATEGIC GROWTH

| | 2019/20 Approved Budget | 2019/20 Revised Estimate | 2020/21 Proposed Budget | Variance [C] - [A] | Variance [C] - [B] |
|---|--|---|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Strategic Growth | [A] | [B] | [C] | | |
| 1.Establishment Costs | £218,640 | £218,640 | £240,638 | £21,998 10.06% | £21,998 10.06% |
| 2.Other Gross Direct Expenditure | £7,747 | £60,648 | £41,567 | £33,820 436.56% | -£19,081 -31.46% |
| 3.Direct Income | -£53,762 | -£80,762 | -£56,412 | -£2,650 4.93% | £24,350 -30.15% |
| 4.Net Direct Expenditure | £172,625 | £198,526 | £225,793 | £53,168 30.80% | £27,267 13.73% |
| 5.Overall No. of Posts (FTE) | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.86 | 0.86 21.50% | 0.86 21.50% |

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. The budget also includes a 2 year externally funded Garden Village Project post.
2. 2019/20 revised estimate includes non recurring expenditure relating to the Lubbethorpe project brought forward from 2018/19.
3. Additional funding received in relation to the Garden Village Project Post.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. As per note 1, and 1 post reduced hours.

MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION

| | 2019/20 Approved Budget | 2019/20 Revised Estimate | 2020/21 Proposed Budget | Variance [C] - [A] | Variance [C] - [B] |
|---|--|---|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Management & Admin | [A] | [B] | [C] | | |
| 1.Establishment Costs | £132,454 | £132,454 | £140,472 | £8,018 6.05% | £8,018 6.05% |
| 2.Other Gross Direct Expenditure | £56,695 | £57,645 | £60,195 | £3,500 6.17% | £2,550 4.42% |
| 3.Direct Income | £0 | £0 | £0 | £0 0.00% | £0 0.00% |
| 4.Net Direct Expenditure | £189,149 | £190,099 | £200,667 | £11,518 6.09% | £10,568 5.56% |
| 5.Overall No. of Posts (FTE) | 2.00 | 2.00 | 2.00 | 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. No change.
3. No income receivable in respect of this service.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change.

Movement in budget and staff from last year

The establishment budget for this portfolio includes contractual increases in relation to the new pay spine, increments and employer contributions for national insurance and pensions. The headcount has increased by 1.74 FTE compared to 2019/20, largely due to new posts covered by external (Garden Village Programme) funding.

Other than establishment costs the main variances in expenditure are associated with the completion of the work on the Delivery DPD the new Local Plan starting, the receipt of Garden Village Programme external funding, and consultant costs increasing in relation to sensitive enforcement cases.

Portfolio Priorities

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- 1. Large scale strategic projects.** The strategic growth team is now managing a full range of large scale projects. These include a Rail Freight Terminal, garden village and Fosse Park West. During 2020/21 the new offices, beer hall and brewery at Everards Meadows and Fosse Park West will both open.
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- 3. Develop a clear support offer and plan for our town centres and high streets.** Work has started on this, with much achieved in Blaby Town Centre over the last 12 months; and this will be further developed and rolled out to other areas within the district.
- 4. High profile enforcement action.** Ongoing action will continue for a number of current high profile cases; and the team will continue their pro-active approach across the District.
- 5. New Local Plan –** Work will continue on the brand new local plan for the district.
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Services

The Vision for the Planning and Economic Development Group is:

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

This is delivered through the following core functions:

Development Strategy

The purpose of the Development Strategy Service is to ensure that the district has a robust and up-to-date strategic framework for Planning, Economic Development and Housing and to enable the delivery of these strategies.

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

Planning Delivery

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

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

Planning Enforcement

This budget includes the costs of Enforcement Officers, who monitor development across the district and enforce planning controls.

Strategic Growth Team

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

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

Management & Administration

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

Key Points

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| <p>Doing things differently – plans for the coming year</p> | <p>The department continues to perform well and staff are highly motivated. Over the last year the remit of the group has continued to grow – particularly in the areas of strategic growth and infrastructure planning.</p> <p>The climate change agenda continues to gather pace and become more important; and this will be reflected across the work of the department – particularly in the areas of Strategic Growth and Development Strategy.</p> <p><u>Strategic Growth</u></p> <p>The team will continue to project manage some of the district’s most high profile and complex strategic projects. This includes a wide range of sites; from retail and commercial developments, to a garden village, and of course Lubbesthorpe.</p> <p><u>Development Strategy</u></p> <p>The team will continue to focus on strategic planning and the Local Plan</p> <p>Work will continue during 2020/21 on the new Local Plan. Additional resource has already been put in place in preparation for this.</p> <p>The focus on economic development will continue with the production and adoption of a new strategy during the next year.</p> <p><u>Planning Delivery</u></p> <p>The workload of the team has continued to increase over the last year, as application levels remain high.</p> <p>During 2020/21 the team will focus on ensuring the continued delivery of an excellent service in this demanding environment.</p> <p><u>Enforcement</u></p> <p>The enforcement team will continue its proactive monitoring approach next year. In addition, work on the high profile and sensitive sites will also progress.</p> <p><u>Management & Administration</u></p> <p>The focus for 2020/21 will be on continuing the growth of the department, whilst supporting and enabling staff development.</p> |
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|---------------------------------|---|
| Income generation | <p>The fees and charges for all aspects of the service will be kept under review to ensure that these maximise income without impacting on the quality of communications and applications submitted and increasing costs elsewhere in the delivery of the services.</p> <p>Income generation across the group is restricted to fees for documents; and national set planning application fees. The Government implemented a 20% increase to planning application fees during 2018, which is reflected in the ongoing income figures. This increased income is ring-fenced to expenditure on planning staffing only, and additional posts were put in place over the last year.</p> <p>The group will seek to maximise income into the district through the delivery of economic development support and large scale project management; which will bring in NNDR, New Homes Bonus and LLEP investment.</p> <p>Savings will be sought wherever possible.</p> |
| Capital plans for the portfolio | There are no current capital plans for the portfolio. |

Key Performance Indicators

| | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20* |
|---|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Number of planning applications received | 1018 | 1091 | 1132 | 1089 | 1111 | 582 |
| Planning application fee income | £574,632 | £676,273 | £470,671 | £656,689 | £775,940 | £403,841 |
| Number of planning applications determined | 1064 | 1010 | 1048 | 1076 | 1099 | 520 |
| % of applications delegated | 89.65 | 94.06 | 93.73 | 93.60 | 94.2 | 96.1 |
| % of major applications determined in 13 weeks | 84.62 | 94.44 | 100.00 | 93.54 | 100 | 100.00 |
| E2E (householders) | 38.13 | 44.03 | 33.55 | 46.50 | 47.89 | 46.2 |
| E2E (minors) | 80.52 | 65.85 | 53.07 | 65.92 | 84.5 | 80.33 |
| E2E (others) | 46.20 | 55.98 | 48.02 | 38.61 | 44.8 | 50.59 |
| Housing Land Supply | Currently at 7.07 years | | | | | |

*year to date; **1st and 2nd quarter only

Customers

- The Planning Delivery and Enforcement services in particular have heavy interaction with residents and we will continue to monitor customer feedback to ensure that all interactions with customers and stakeholders to these services are conducted appropriately and professionally. Complaints remain at a low level.
- There are a number of significant public consultations planned for 2020/21 including the next stage of the new Local Plan, and a number of large strategic sites.
- We continue to engage and consult with our businesses through business surveys, business breakfasts, monthly bulletins, and targeted consultations such as the one undertaken for the emerging new Economic Development Strategy.

Risks

- The increased level of planning applications will continue to place significant demands on the service. Ongoing resource reviews however should help to mitigate against this.
- Failure to progress the new Local Plan could leave the District vulnerable to unacceptable types of future development.
- High number of appeals will place further pressures on the Development Services Team.
- Inability to progress with the delivery of a clear and robust policy framework would put delivery of sustainable development at risk.
- Delivery of Lubbethorpe against the current proposed timetable is essential – failure to do so could affect the 5 year housing land supply, and in turn the council's ability to defend against undesirable development.
- Significant reliance on partners and the wider economy to effectively implement the Economic Development Strategy.
- Failure to deliver an effective enforcement service could result in reputational damage.
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