

Foreword

The teams have experienced unprecedented demand for some of their services this year with the impact of the national increase in homelessness numbers, the ongoing cost of living crisis, the emergency incident at Huncote Leisure Centre, the increased focus on private rented housing sector standards and continued delivery of the core aims of the business.

The work undertaken has ranged from catching up on regulatory inspections such as food safety, health & safety, permitted processes and licensing, the delivery of which was impacted by the pandemic. Provision of business guidance and advice through to the invaluable support for our residents who are facing times of hardship with rising rent, food and fuel costs.

Housing Services have continued to respond to the increased numbers of households that are presenting as homeless by, where possible, utilising external funding streams and recruiting into fixed term posts to meet the additional need presenting. The team continue to provide homeless households, including those with complex needs and those who face losing their homes, with a safe place to stay.

The Community Services team have incorporated the role of the Community Hub into everyday work trying to ensure that the correct support is provided for residents wherever possible. The youth provision within the district has been redesigned to recognise the change in behaviours following the pandemic and taken an approach that allows flexible implementation to tackle emerging threats and identified hotspots.

Environmental Health are exceeding the inspection numbers and standards set out by the Food Standards Agency Covid recovery plan and are due to be back on the full inspection programme well within target. In addition to the routine work Environmental Health have also been heavily involved in the Homes for Ukraine scheme ensuring that all houses participating in the scheme meet the required standard.

The Environmental Services team have worked tirelessly to introduce a new, long term management plan for the Huncote site whilst consulting on and introducing the new Car Parking Strategy, reviewing our air quality management provision across the district, and delivering the DEFRA grant funded projects.

The Green Officer has worked with all services to ensure their Service Plans now have Green actions embedded within them to help us work towards our 2030 Carbon Neutral Target. Alongside this the Green Officer has supported key green projects such as the

introduction of HVO into the fleet, led on Countywide projects such as the delivery of Solar Together and supported external funding applications for future green projects.

A key priority across the portfolio areas of Green/Carbon Neutral, Community Safety and Air Quality in the coming year will be to maximise the external funding opportunities to deliver key priorities and services.

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Les Phillimore

**Senior Officer: Environmental Health, Housing & Community Services
Group Manager**

Portfolio Total

Housing, Community and Environmental Services - Total	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£1,936,391	£2,093,276	£2,195,397	£259,006 13.38%	£102,121 4.88%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£534,776	£1,450,685	£807,625	£272,849 51.02%	-£643,060 -44.33%
3. Direct Income	-£556,871	-£965,360	-£1,024,066	-£467,195 83.90%	-£58,706 6.08%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£1,914,296	£2,578,601	£1,978,956	£64,660 3.38%	-£599,645 -23.25%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	46.46	49.98	48.17	1.71 3.68%	-1.81 -3.62%

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This portfolio incorporates the establishment and operational costs in respect of Housing, Community Services, and Environmental Health & Services. As with all other portfolios, the establishment costs include provision for a 3% pay award, contractual increments, national insurance, and pension contributions.

The establishment budget for 2022/23 has been adjusted to allow for the recently settled pay award and uplifted pension contribution rates. The revised estimate for establishment allows for additional posts in Community Services, Housing Services, and Environmental Services. In Community Services, this relates to a fixed term Residents Support Officer which is funded from Contain Management funding left over from the pandemic. Homelessness Grant from central government is covering the fixed term Domestic Abuse Link Worker post in Housing Services. The increase in Environmental Services relates to a temporary Environmental Assistant post for which funding was carried forward from last financial year, and also a new Contaminated Land Officer post approved as part of the recent restructure.

Other Gross Direct Expenditure has increased in 2022/23, partly because of unspent budget brought forward from 2021/22 and new funding for projects such as Solar Together, Air Quality, and the Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LAD2), and partly because of homelessness pressures. Increasing numbers of families and individuals presenting as homeless continue to require bed and breakfast accommodation, although around 75% of the additional cost is met from housing benefit.

Increases in direct income come from housing benefit recovery in relation to homelessness, and car parking fees and charges.

Environmental Health and Environmental Services

Environmental Health	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£886,221	£979,040	£1,031,672	£145,451 16.41%	£52,632 5.38%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£272,636	£649,280	£311,670	£39,034 14.32%	-£337,610 -52.00%
3. Direct Income	-£375,771	-£495,660	-£614,666	-£238,895 63.57%	-£119,006 24.01%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£783,086	£1,132,660	£728,676	-£54,410 -6.95%	-£403,984 -35.67%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	22.37	23.37	22.17	-0.20 -0.89%	-1.20 -5.13%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 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 revised budget includes the extension to the temporary post of Environmental Assistant, and the new permanent Contaminated Land Officer post.
2. Budget carried forward from 2021/22 for specific projects is included within the revised estimate, as well as additional funding received in the year for Climate change and Air Quality projects.
3. The income budget for car parking has been increased to reflect the new tariffs introduced in October. External funding received for air quality monitoring and Solar Together.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Minor changes to working hours.

Community Services

Community Services	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£434,355	£445,321	£421,501	-£12,854 -2.96%	-£23,820 -5.35%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£27,300	£181,325	£36,615	£9,315 34.12%	-£144,710 -79.81%
3. Direct Income	-£27,600	-£60,300	£0	£27,600 -100.00%	£60,300 -100.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£434,055	£566,346	£458,116	£24,061 5.54%	-£108,230 -19.11%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	9.59	9.11	8.50	-1.09 -11.37%	-0.61 -6.70%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 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 revised budget includes a fixed term Residents Support Officer but also reflects the restructuring of the youth service and a reduction of 0.61 FTE in Children's Support.
2. One off budget provision carried forward from 2021/22 is included in the revised budget to fund specific projects.
3. Revised Estimate includes external contributions towards Resident Support service expenses, and youth provision. Neither of these are included in 2023/24 due to uncertainty over external funding.
4. This represents the net impact of the variances listed above.
5. See 1 above.

Housing Services

Housing Services	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£510,465	£561,242	£625,008	£114,543 22.44%	£63,766 11.36%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£232,800	£618,190	£457,300	£224,500 96.43%	-£160,890 -26.03%
3. Direct Income	-£153,500	-£409,400	-£409,400	-£255,900 166.71%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£589,765	£770,032	£672,908	£83,143 14.10%	-£97,124 -12.61%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	13.00	16.00	16.00	3.00 23.08%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 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. Includes 3 fixed term posts until 31st October 2023.
2. Revised includes unallocated Grant funding received in the year and Government grant funding carried forward from 2021/22 to be used for reducing homelessness. Both years reflect a significant increase in bed and breakfast accommodation costs.
3. This represents income from Housing Benefit for households placed in temporary accommodation as well as Government grant funding.
4. This represents the net impact of the variances listed above.
5. See establishment – includes 3 fixed term posts.

Management & Administration

Group Manager	2022/23 Approved Budget	2022/23 Revised Estimate	2023/24 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£105,350	£107,673	£117,216	£11,866 11.26%	£9,543 8.86%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£2,040	£1,890	£2,040	£0 0.00%	£150 7.94%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£107,390	£109,563	£119,256	£11,866 11.05%	£9,693 8.85%
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 revised estimate allows for the pay award effective from 1st April 2022, which exceeds the provision made in the original budget. The 2023/24 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. Budget revised in line with actual expenditure.
3. No income in respect of this cost centre.
4. Net impact of the variances listed above.
5. No change.

Portfolio Priorities

Housing Services

- Increasing the supply of Affordable Homes.
- Investigate and try to identify a longer-term solution to the current temporary accommodation shortage being experienced.
- Provide specialist housing for vulnerable groups.
- Continue to work to prevent homelessness and end rough sleeping.
- Continue to work to minimise the environmental impact of the existing housing stock and future housing development.

Community Services

- Complete the Prevent & Protect Strategy Action Plans.
- Produce the new Community Safety Partnership Strategy.
- Complete the Community Safety Partnership Action Plan.
- Effective delivery of the youth divisionary programme including the Safer Streets Grant funding delivery.
- Develop a new digital offer for cost living support in a “self-help” format that will allow focus to be maintained on more complex cases.

Environmental Health

- Ensure the statutory food inspection programme is continued to be delivered in line with the Food Standards Agency Covid Recovery Plan.
- To continue to tackle Envirocrime across the district through the use of marketing campaigns, social media, partnership working and enforcement.
- To review the engagement and enforcement with owners of empty properties within the district.
- To ensure private rented housing sector standards are maintained within the district.

Environmental Services

- Continue to deliver the long-term strategy for managing the land fill gas at the Huncote Leisure Centre site
- Undertake a review and produce a new contaminated land strategy for the district
- Deliver our Air Quality Action Plan.
- Implement the objectives of the new Car Parking Strategy.

Green Initiatives/Actions

- Deliver our Carbon Neutral Action Plan.
- To review, update and renew our core Licensing policy and procedural documents.

- To maximise external funding opportunities to support local businesses and residents to work towards Carbon Neutrality.

Key points

<p>Doing things differently – plans for the coming year</p>	<p><u>Housing Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to influence housing requirements on major planning applications • Assess temporary accommodation options across the district • Improve housing statistics reporting and information management • Enabling new supported provision within the district • Continue to operate an effective private rented sector service for both tenants and landlords <p><u>Environmental Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final completion of the scanning of licensing documents into the DMS system to remove the need for paper files. • Work continues to implement back-office system for EPR, Contaminated Land, Service Requests, Licensing and Planning Consultations. • Online access to Licensing Services. • Deliver actions within the adopted air quality action plan. • Deliver the Carbon Neutral Action Plan • Deliver the new Contaminated Land Strategy. <p><u>Community Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To produce the Annual Community Safety Partnership Strategy Action Plan for 2023-24 • To produce the new Community Safety Partnership Strategy. • To deliver the bystander training across a range of delegates including staff from the night-time economy, schools, licensed trade. • To develop our performance management process to produce meaningful outcomes and data. <p><u>Environmental Health:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To continue to deliver the Envirocrime work plan, liaising with colleagues from the Neighbourhood Services Team and partners across the county. • To increase core competencies across a wider range of staff within the team to increase resilience.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To explore opportunities of collaborative working and shared efficiencies.
Income generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Car parks Licensing for animal health Permitted process income Regulatory income Provision of Accommodation certificates Food Hygiene Re-Score requests. Provision of Food Product Export Certificates
Capital plans for the portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Money to undertake works at Huncote Leisure Centre to mitigate the impact of landfill gas.

Key Performance Indicators

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2020/21	2021/22	2022/2023 YEAR TO DATE	COMMENTS
Number of cases where homelessness has been prevented	207	260	186	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	193	223	180	<p>The total number of applications no longer applies as the HRA splits cases into 'prevention' and 'relief'. From 2020/21 this figure represents the number of homeless cases that fall into the relief category.</p> <p>It should be noted that in addition to this figure there have been a further 200 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.</p>

Number of Affordable Houses	30	77	34	Delivery remains consistently slow with overall house building. Our pipeline suggests this will pick up substantially in the early part of 2023.
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PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2020/21	2021/22	2022/2023 YEAR TO DATE	COMMENTS
Number of ASB cases reported in Blaby	926	687	373	These are Police figures of total ASB reported from April 2022 to September 30 2022 (the most up to date figures available). The trend data is downward for ASB and has been for 4 years both locally and nationally. However, there has been a corresponding rise in the number of crimes reported, particularly following the move out of lockdown. In 20/21 the ASB spikes corresponded to periods where covid restrictions were lifted and there were consequently high number of youth ASB reported. It must be noted that each report is counted although they may refer to the same incident.
Support services (Resident Support/Children's Worker/Domestic Abuse)– number of people supported	427	448	300	Figures are to the end of October. There were fewer referrals to Domestic Abuse in house services in the early qtrs. of this year, but since a change in the Police working procedures, this has started to pick up although it should also be noted that there has been a reduction in the number of cases referred from our in-house housing service since the Domestic Abuse Act burdens funding was used to strengthen housing related DA support, options and mechanisms.

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2020/21	2021/22	2022/2023 YEAR TO DATE	COMMENTS
Total number of long-term empty homes returned into use	884	882	319 (to Sept 22)	During the two years of lockdown the numbers were very high. The overall number of long-

				term empty homes in the district was significantly lower in October 2022 than October 2020. 2022 – 269 2021 – 383 2020 – 413
Number of large fly tipping incidents	1092	624	297 (to end of Oct 22)	The numbers of have remained fairly stable since May 2021 and are substantially lower than during the lockdowns.
Number of food premises with a rating of 3 or above (satisfactory)	537 out of 553 rated food businesses . 907 food businesses in total	594 out of 611. 888 food businesses in total	592 out of 611. 888 food businesses in total	The proportion of businesses that have a rating of 3 or above is very consistent from Mar 22 to current (both 97%). The overall number of registered food businesses has dropped since April 21 which is in part due to officers actively checking all low-risk businesses and removing any that have closed.

Customers:

- 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.
- Licensing have and will be continuing to consult on changes in Policies and Practices within the Licensing function.
- Information on how many Community Trigger (ASB reviews) and the outcomes are now on the website and the approach is continuing to be reviewed.

Risks:

- Recruitment and retention of qualified staff.
- Lack of Temporary accommodation options.
- Impacts of the rising costs such as energy, food, maintenance etc on businesses within the districts and their standards.
- Introduction of new legislation or workstreams that increases the workload of the teams.
- Lack of affordable housing will increase homelessness.

- Any reduction in the homelessness grant funding will impact on service delivery.
- The possible introduction of new restrictions and regulations that may fall to the teams to implement/regulate.
- We cannot build enough affordable homes to meet the demand, this continues to be tested by an increase in homelessness cases.
- The increase in homelessness cases has and will continue to impact on the availability of temporary accommodation within the district which is further impacted by the homes for the Ukrainian scheme and resettlement programmes.
- Lack of supported provision for single households with complex needs will increase the time some people stay in temporary accommodation.
- 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.
- Key personnel leaving or reducing their hours within the key frontline services currently experiencing very high demand.