

## **Foreword**

This year has seen a continued rise in demand across the services within the Portfolio for the provision of frontline support for residents and businesses. Demand pressures have been driven by the ongoing national increase in homelessness numbers, asylum and refugee accommodation demands, rise in general living costs, running alongside the continued delivery of the core aims of the business.

The work undertaken by the group crosses a wide spectrum and ranges from regulatory inspections such as food & health and safety, to school sessions focusing on healthy relationships, noise and ASB investigations, specialised support for residents who have experienced Domestic Abuse, through to the provision of temporary accommodation and tenancy sustainment measures.

Housing Services have in the last year worked hard to deliver our own temporary accommodation units working to provide 15 units of self-contained accommodation for families who are experiencing homelessness. The team are continuing to respond to the increased numbers of households that are presenting as homeless by, where possible, utilising external funding streams to recruit into posts to meet the additional need presenting and trying to find an appropriate accommodation solution as quickly as we are able.

We have run several projects to support our businesses and residents through the year such as job seekers support, identification of properties in the private rented sector for homeless households, support for domestic abuse survivors presenting as homeless, CCTV provision for safety in the nighttime economy all funded through UKSPF.

The Community Services team have taken part in multiple community action days promoting community cohesion and raising awareness and offering support around important issues such as HATE, Domestic Abuse, White Ribbon and Serious Violence. The team continue to operate the community hub support providing access to food banks, food and support parcels, fuel bank referrals and beat the chill packs supporting our most vulnerable residents.

Our aim to ensure compliance with the Serious Violence Duty has seen the refocusing of the Children's Worker services to provide preventative input in schools (wellbeing, inclusion, healthy relationships, ASB Busters, Healing Together and Safety Crew) alongside their regular therapeutic work, this has had a very high uptake with the team reaching so far over 1200 pupils.

The Environmental Health team have continued to deliver the full inspection programme well within the target date set by the Food Standards Agency, ensuring standards of food and health & safety within the district are being effectively monitored. Campaign work has also taken place with regard to envirocrime, including a joint campaign with Leicestershire districts on littering, a number of successful fly tipping enforcement actions and campaigns working with local businesses in hot spot areas.

The Environmental Services team have now fully introduced the long-term site management plan for the Huncote site, have implemented ongoing management plans for 2 other Council owned former landfill sites and are actively working with other site owners in the district. This year has also seen the decision to revoke 3 of the Air Quality Management Areas in the District due to improving Air Quality standards. The Car Parking Strategy, and the DEFRA grant funded projects have also been delivered.

The Net Zero Programme Delivery Officer has continued to work as the lead officer for Solar Together for the County and supported external funding opportunities for future green projects. Alongside this the Green Officer has worked with other services on the electrification of the fleet and the depot. The Green Officer has also delivered members masterclass training, given presentations to scrutiny and delivered a project using UKSPF money where trees were given to community groups to improve biodiversity and educate on the green agenda.

A key priority across the portfolio areas of Net Zero, Community Safety and Housing 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 Safety Group  
Manager**

**Portfolio Total**

Housing, Community and Environmental Services - Total	2024/25 Approved Budget [A]	2024/25 Revised Estimate [B]	2025/26 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
1. Establishment Costs	£2,391,150	£2,452,045	£2,654,620	£263,470 11.02%	£202,575 8.26%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£1,159,652	£1,630,426	£1,164,646	£4,994 0.43%	-£465,780 -28.57%
3. Direct Income	-£1,264,291	-£1,393,626	-£1,371,924	-£107,633 8.51%	£21,702 -1.56%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£2,286,511	£2,688,845	£2,447,342	£160,831 7.03%	-£241,503 -8.98%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	48.01	49.01	50.17	2.16 4.50%	1.16 2.37%

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This portfolio incorporates the establishment and operational costs in respect of Housing, Community Services, and Environmental Health & Services. The establishment budget for 2024/25 allowed for a 3% pay award within services, with an additional 1% provision held centrally. Following protracted negotiations, a flat rate increase of £1,290 for employees on grades 1 to 9 was agreed with the trade unions. The nationally agreed pay award for Chief Executives and Chief Officers was 2.5%

Unspent budget from 2023/24 has been carried forward to be used in the year and is reflected in the revised estimate within Environmental Health, Environmental Services and Community Services.

The Homelessness Service has seen an increase in homeless approaches over the past 5 years with a significant increase in the last year. Government grant funding has been used in the year towards staffing and is proposed to be used in 2025/26 to help support the service.

Grant funding where confirmed has been included in the Direct Income. Car Parking income has been revised to reflect what is expected to be received by the end of the financial year and estimated for 2025/26.

## **Environmental Health and Environmental Services**

<b>Environmental Health</b>	<b>2024/25 Approved Budget</b>	<b>2024/25 Revised Estimate</b>	<b>2025/26 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [A]</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [B]</b>
	<b>[A]</b>	<b>[B]</b>	<b>[C]</b>		
<b>1. Establishment Costs</b>	<b>£1,090,048</b>	<b>£1,090,048</b>	<b>£1,123,590</b>	<b>£33,542</b> 3.08%	<b>£33,542</b> 3.08%
<b>2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£290,612</b>	<b>£486,984</b>	<b>£321,014</b>	<b>£30,402</b> 10.46%	<b>-£165,970</b> -34.08%
<b>3. Direct Income</b>	<b>-£447,776</b>	<b>-£497,576</b>	<b>-£476,076</b>	<b>-£28,300</b> 6.32%	<b>£21,500</b> -4.32%
<b>4. Net Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£932,884</b>	<b>£1,079,456</b>	<b>£968,528</b>	<b>£35,644</b> 3.82%	<b>-£110,928</b> -10.28%
<b>5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)</b>	<b>22.01</b>	<b>22.01</b>	<b>22.17</b>	<b>0.16</b> 0.73%	<b>0.16</b> 0.73%

## **Reasons for Variances**

1. The 2025/26 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 and external funding carried forward from 2024/25 for specific projects is included within the revised estimate.
3. The income budget for car parking has been revised in line with income received.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. Minor changes in hours.

## **Community Services**

<b>Community Services</b>	<b>2024/25 Approved Budget</b>	<b>2024/25 Revised Estimate</b>	<b>2025/26 Proposed Budget</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [A]</b>	<b>Variance [C] - [B]</b>
	<b>[A]</b>	<b>[B]</b>	<b>[C]</b>		
<b>1. Establishment Costs</b>	<b>£445,858</b>	<b>£445,858</b>	<b>£467,680</b>	<b>£21,822</b> 4.89%	<b>£21,822</b> 4.89%
<b>2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£35,100</b>	<b>£118,947</b>	<b>£32,966</b>	<b>-£2,134</b> -6.08%	<b>-£85,981</b> -72.29%
<b>3. Direct Income</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>-£24,700</b>	<b>£0</b>	<b>£0</b> 0.00%	<b>£24,700</b> -100.00%
<b>4. Net Direct Expenditure</b>	<b>£480,958</b>	<b>£540,105</b>	<b>£500,646</b>	<b>£19,688</b> 4.09%	<b>-£39,459</b> -7.31%
<b>5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)</b>	<b>8.50</b>	<b>8.50</b>	<b>8.50</b>	<b>0.00</b> 0.00%	<b>0.00</b> 0.00%

## **Reasons for Variances**

1. The 2025/26 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 2023/24 is included in the revised estimate to fund specific projects.
3. Revised Estimate includes external contributions towards Resident Support service expenses, and youth provision. Neither of these are included in 2025/26 due to uncertainty over external funding.
4. This represents the net impact of the variances listed above.
5. No change.

## Housing Services

Housing Services	2024/25 Approved Budget	2024/25 Revised Estimate	2025/26 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£729,652	£790,547	£928,290	£198,638 27.22%	£137,743 17.42%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£831,900	£1,022,455	£808,521	-£23,379 -2.81%	-£213,934 -20.92%
3. Direct Income	-£816,515	-£871,350	-£895,848	-£79,333 9.72%	-£24,498 2.81%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£745,037	£941,652	£840,963	£95,926 12.88%	-£100,689 -10.69%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	16.00	17.00	18.00	2.00 12.50%	1.00 5.88%

## Reasons for Variances

1. The 2025/26 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 increase in establishment and proposed budget is due to additional posts funded from the Homelessness prevention grant.
2. Revised includes unallocated Grant funding received in the year and Government grant funding carried forward from 2023/24 to be used for reducing homelessness. The Grant allocation for 2025/26 has been confirmed and is included in the budget.
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. As per note 1.

### Management & Administration

Group Manager	2024/25 Approved Budget	2024/25 Revised Estimate	2024/26 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£125,592	£125,592	£135,060	£9,468 7.54%	£9,468 7.54%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£2,040	£2,040	£2,145	£105 5.16%	£105 5.16%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£127,632	£127,632	£137,205	£9,573 7.50%	£9,573 7.50%
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 2025/26 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. Proposed budget reflects inflationary increases.
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.
- Build upon and expand the current Council owned temporary accommodation units, providing more appropriate self-contained accommodation for families.
- Continue to work with partners to 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 and future housing stock.

### **Community Services**

- To continue to improve in house Domestic Abuse Services through reviewing referral and case management processes, improving data collection and reporting, awareness and marketing campaigns, delivery of 121 and group work and delivery of projects such as Smart Doorbell and Target Hardening packs
- Continue to work with partners to reduce Serious Violence in the district (encompassing Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Night-Time Economy, Terrorism, Hate, Exploitation, Knife crime and substance misuse related crime).
- Review and deliver our Community Safety Partnership Strategy Action Plan
- Support the implementation and embedding of new ASB recording system across LLR and Police
- To continue deliver a programme of work with young people including 121 and group work interventions, schools work and diversionary activities.
- To deliver the PLF funding programme

### **Environmental Health**

- Ensure the statutory food inspection programme is continued to be delivered in line with the Council's Food Safety Service Plan 2024/2025.
- To continue to tackle Envirocrime across the district using marketing campaigns, social media, partnership working and enforcement.
- To ensure private rented housing sector standards are maintained/improved within the district.
- To review and update the Public Spaces Protection Order for dogs for the Council to ensure it is robust and enforceable.
- To continue to utilise transformation priorities to examine the taxi licensing service to ensure value for money and ensure that the drivers and operators are receiving the most efficient service that suits their needs.

## Environmental Services

- Continue to deliver the long-term strategy for management of former landfill sites owned by the Council.
- Continue to risk assess and investigate contaminated land in the district in line with the objectives of the Contaminated Land Strategy.
- Develop a new Air Quality Action Plan for the district.
- Assess current Smoke Control areas in the district and undertake a project to consider any amendments to these.
- Continue to deliver the Particulates Matter Defra funded air quality project working in partnership with health partners.
- Continue to implement the objectives of the Car Parking Strategy.

## Key points

<p>Doing things differently – plans for the coming year</p>	<p><u>Housing Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enable high quality affordable homes that meet the needs of the District.</li><li>• Deliver a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.</li><li>• Enabling new supported provision within the district.</li><li>• Ensure appropriate support is in place for victims of Domestic Abuse who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.</li><li>• To enhance and expand the Council owned temporary accommodation offer.</li></ul> <p><u>Environmental Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deliver the required processes to enable us to adopt and implement a new Air Quality Action Plan for the district</li><li>• Devise and start to implement a new Smoke Control Area plan/ policy for the district.</li><li>• Deliver the 2030 Net Zero Council Action Plan</li><li>• Deliver the management plan for council owned former landfill sites in the district</li><li>• Deliver the objectives in the Contaminated Land Strategy</li></ul> <p><u>Community Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To produce the Annual Community Safety Partnership Strategy Action Plan for 2025-26</li><li>• To maintain compliance with the Serious Violence Duty</li><li>• To deliver innovative projects (Smart Doorbell project, Warm Packs, Fuel Bank etc) that have a measurable impact on vulnerable people's wellbeing and safety</li></ul>
---	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure a programme of ASB and Crime prevention work in schools paired with therapeutic 121 and group sessions and diversionary activities for young people to reduce likelihood of young people being drawn into crime.</li> <li>• To ensure that vulnerable people get the right support, at the right time, in the right way</li> </ul> <p><u>Environmental Health:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To continue to deliver the Envirocrime work plan, liaising with colleagues from the Neighbourhood Services Team and partners across the county.</li> <li>• To review work areas and structure within the team to ensure competency and suitable officers in all work areas.</li> <li>• To explore opportunities of collaborative working and shared efficiencies.</li> <li>• To explore opportunities of mobile working and development of online inspection proformas.</li> </ul>
Income generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Car Parks</li> <li>• Licensing for animal health</li> <li>• Taxi Licensing</li> <li>• Permitted process income</li> <li>• Regulatory income</li> <li>• Provision of Accommodation certificates</li> <li>• Food Hygiene Re-Score requests.</li> <li>• Provision of Food Product Export Certificates</li> <li>• Focus on identifying unlicensed HMO's</li> <li>• Contaminated Land Search enquiries</li> <li>• Seeking to establish Primary Authority agreements where possible with businesses in the district</li> </ul>
Capital plans for the portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £40,000 included for 24/25 to progress the actions contained within the Contaminated Land Strategy.</li> <li>• £2,958 included for the replacement programme for the Air Quality Analysers.</li> <li>• £147,200 LEVI Fund included for 2024/25 for the purchase of the Electric Vehicle Charging hub for Enderby Leisure Centre. (Delivery facilitated by the Green Living Leicestershire Partnership).</li> <li>• £15,000 included for 2025/26 to progress the Contaminated Land Strategy.</li> <li>• £28,000 included for 2025/26 to replace equipment installed as part of the landfill gas mitigation at Huncote Leisure Centre.</li> <li>• £21,000 included for 2025/26 to replace and update signage regarding the Public Spaces Protection Order for Dogs.</li> </ul>

### **Key Performance Indicators**

<b>PERFORMANCE INDICATOR</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/2025 YEAR TO DATE</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Number of cases where homelessness has been prevented	255	272	224	The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) places a duty on the Council to work with applicants for longer to help prevent them from becoming homeless. This figure continues to rise year on year and is expected to exceed 330 for 2024/25.
Number of homelessness	948	1014	740	<p>The total number of homelessness approaches to the Council continues to rise year on year. However, we have seen a significant increase in the numbers from August 2024 which is continuing to rise.</p> <p>This figure represents all approaches and takes account of both prevention, relief and main duty cases that the team are managing.</p>
Number of Affordable Houses	51	131	34	Delivery remains consistently slow with overall house building. 131 new affordable homes were built in 23/24 which exceeded previous years, however this was mainly due to sites that had previously stalled (during the pandemic) being completed.

<b>PERFORMANCE INDICATOR</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/2025 YEAR TO DATE</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Number of ASB cases reported in Blaby	562	607	167	The figures for 22/23 and 23/24 are Police figures including all ASB reported across several systems. A review of data as part of the procurement of a new ASB recording system revealed that this data is not necessarily robust due to the different classification thresholds for the systems and risk of duplication. This may account for the increase in cases recorded. The figures for 24/25 are those taken from Sentinel which avoids possible duplication.
Support services (Resident Support/Childrens Worker/Domestic Abuse)– number of people supported	424	322	154	<p>Figures are to the end of Q2. Children Workers and DA figures were down due to the focus on launching the Schools work programme. These sessions have been delivered to over 1500 young people since the launch in Q3 2023/24 in addition to the 121 and group work.</p> <p>Domestic abuse referrals are on track to reach the same as last year however the focus for 25/26 is to increase the number of survivors receiving support and increase the range and breadth of support offered to survivors through group work, target hardening projects and awareness raising campaigns.</p>

<b>PERFORMANCE INDICATOR</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/2025 YEAR TO DATE</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
Total number of long-term (6 months+) empty properties in the district.	269	390	354	The team have continued to work with property owners to bring empty homes back in to use. The figure of long-

Figures reported on annually in October.				term empty homes for 2024 has decreased.
Number of large fly tipping incidents	665	741	615 year to date	There has been an increase in reported incidents in 23/24 compared to 22/23. The team will continue to take action where we are able and are actively partaking in Countywide campaigns to raise awareness of individual responsibilities and potential sanctions that could be faced.
Number of food premises with a rating of 3 or above (satisfactory)	592 out of 611 relevant food outlets 96.9%	601 out of 623 relevant food outlets 96.5%	584 out of 607 relevant food outlets 96.1%	The proportion of compliant food businesses (rating of 3 or above) has been very consistent over the last three years.

#### **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.

#### **Risks:**

- Recruitment and retention of qualified staff.
- Lack of temporary accommodation and appropriate temporary accommodation options.
- Impacts of the rising costs such as energy, food, maintenance etc on businesses within the districts and their standards.
- Impacts of rising cost of energy and food increasing demand on services and impacting crime figures
- 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 or PLF (Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner) will impact on service delivery.

- 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 other 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.
- The limited capacity of Registered Providers to pick up the affordable housing gain on major schemes remains a concern and may lead to less affordable homes coming forwards.
- Key personnel leaving or reducing their hours within the key frontline services currently experiencing very high demand.