

Community Services Group

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Maggie Wright

Senior Officer: Community Services Manager

Benefits	2014/15 Approved Budget	2014/15 Revised Estimate	2015/16 Proposed Budget	% Change [C] - [A]	% Change [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
Establishment Costs	£505,506	£488,846	£495,140	-£10,366 -2.05%	£6,294 1.29%
Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£12,448,067	£14,954,588	£14,924,261	£2,476,194 19.89%	-£30,327 -0.20%
Direct Income	-£12,797,329	-£15,281,820	-£15,146,560	-£2,349,231 18.36%	£135,260 -0.89%
Net Direct Expenditure	£156,244	£161,614	£272,841	£116,597 74.62%	£111,227 68.82%
Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	19.00	17.78	17.78	-1.22 -6.42%	0.00 0.00%

Community Services	2014/15 Approved Budget	2014/15 Revised Estimate	2015/16 Proposed Budget	% Change [C] - [A]	% Change [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
Establishment Costs	£446,798	£511,663	£421,364	-£25,434 -5.69%	-£90,299 -17.65%
Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£146,546	£297,056	£148,344	£1,798 1.23%	-£148,712 -50.06%
Direct Income	-£173,246	-£397,733	-£136,964	£36,282 -20.94%	£260,769 -65.56%
Net Direct Expenditure	£420,098	£410,986	£432,744	£12,646 3.01%	£21,758 5.29%
Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	12.81	14.86	11.61	-1.20 -9.37%	-3.25 -21.87%

Housing Options	2014/15 Approved Budget	2014/15 Revised Estimate	2015/16 Proposed Budget	% Change [C] - [A]	% Change [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
Establishment Costs	£334,394	£334,394	£273,174	-£61,220 -18.31%	-£61,220 -18.31%
Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£87,030	£137,065	£80,432	-£6,598 -7.58%	-£56,633 -41.32%
Direct Income	-£94,425	-£192,636	-£43,500	£50,925 -53.93%	£149,136 -77.42%
Net Direct Expenditure	£326,999	£278,823	£310,106	-£16,893 -5.17%	£31,283 11.22%
Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	10.50	10.50	8.50	-2.00 -19.05%	-2.00 -19.05%

Group Manager	2014/15 Approved Budget	2014/15 Revised Estimate	2015/16 Proposed Budget	% Change [C] - [A]	% Change [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
Establishment Costs	£77,505	£77,505	£91,435	£13,930 17.97%	£13,930 17.97%
Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£3,149	£2,699	£2,699	-£450 -14.29%	£0 0.00%
Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
Net Direct Expenditure	£80,654	£80,204	£94,134	£13,480 16.71%	£13,930 17.37%
Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	1.50	1.50	1.50	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Community Services - Total	2014/15 Approved Budget	2014/15 Revised Estimate	2015/16 Proposed Budget	% Change [C] - [A]	% Change [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
Establishment Costs	£1,364,203	£1,412,408	£1,281,113	-£83,090 -6.09%	-£131,295 -9.30%
Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£12,684,792	£15,391,408	£15,155,736	£2,470,944 19.48%	-£235,672 -1.53%
Direct Income	-£13,065,000	-£15,872,189	-£15,327,024	-£2,262,024 17.31%	£545,165 -3.43%
Net Direct Expenditure	£983,995	£931,627	£1,109,825	£125,830 12.79%	£178,198 19.13%
Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	43.81	44.64	39.39	-4.42 -10.09%	-5.25 -11.76%

Movement in budget and staff from last year

Benefits

The variance in the establishment costs is relatively minor but do reflect the transferring of the Overpayment Officer to the Revenues Team. The significant budgetary issue for Benefits for 2015 is the reduction in funding in the form of the Administration Grant (£42,000) and the New Burdens Fund (£50,000). This increases the contribution from the local authority towards the cost of the service. The New Burdens Fund was received to support the introduction of Council Tax Support. We have therefore released some of Council Tax Support Reserve to compensate for this loss of funding. In 2014 an additional £30,000 in Discretionary Housing Payment funding was provided from reserves which is not replicated in the 2015 provisional figure.

In 2015 the responsibilities of the team (and number of officers) will increase to include the adoption of the 'Me and My Learning' initiative within the district to help local residents move into or nearer to employment. Separate funding for this initiative has been awarded and there will be no adverse effect on the BDC budget. No funding or costs are included in the figures above for this initiative at this point in time.

Community Services

Direct income has reduced as detailed in the grant funding schedule distributed to Scrutiny on the 13th January. Where funding has not yet been confirmed the matching expenditure has not been reflected either in establishment costs or other gross expenditure. This is also why there is a reduction in the number of posts.

Grant funding for Community Safety issues has been pooled into one fund managed by the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC). Action plans will need to be submitted to the OPPC in February 2015 to access this fund. Funding contributions from other local authorities for shared posts is unknown, funding from the Locality Partnership Group for support work with children will not continue.

Housing Options

Establishment posts are reduced with the predicted end of Homefinder for 2015/16. The income line is decreased for the same reason. We expect not to receive income for Homefinder or Mortgage Rescue, (although underspend from 2014/15 will roll into 2015/16) and Net Direct Expenditure is reduced for 2015/16 due to the end of Homefinder project.

Group Manager

Table reflects contractual increments, pay award and pension costs.

Portfolio Priorities

- 1 Improve outcomes and opportunities for communities and individuals
- 2 Help residents understand what services are available and make it possible for them to be able to use them

Services

Benefits Team

The chief aim of the team is to efficiently assess and pay both Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support to those entitled to receive such payments. The service provision extends to supportive working to provide emergency funding, discretionary financial assistance and food parcels to residents in immediate crisis.

Housing Benefit fraud will transfer to the Department for Work and Pensions in March 2016 which will include the transferral of the Investigation Officer to that service.

The Me and My Learning initiative will commence in 2015 and help to identify potential residents in need of support to move either nearer to work readiness or into some form of employment.

Community Services Team

Partnership working across the district to engage with the public in making Blaby District a safer place to live and work and also providing personalised support to individuals and families with support and advice on debt, substance use, domestic abuse and maintaining independent living. Provide support to those families "at risk" as part of the Supporting Leicestershire Families Programme. To provide specialist support to young people through the Children's Worker; and in addition to provide an outreach service for young people via the BB19 bus.

Housing Options:

Housing Advice and Homelessness Prevention - Provision of housing advice and support to households, including management of the Choice Based Lettings Scheme (housing register), project management of the Homefinder Scheme for the County and City.

Private Sector Housing Grants and Loans - Provision of Disabled Facilities Grants to provide adaptations for disabled home owners, private and social tenants, emergency minor works grants to repair or replace heating systems for vulnerable households and in conjunction with Housing Strategy and Environmental Health, delivering the Empty Homes programme. Access to affordable warmth schemes, emergency heater loan, emergency gas repair and county warm homes officer service for older, vulnerable people through 4ways to warmth and First Contact.

Key points

Doing things differently – plans for the coming year	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To develop and implement options for temporary accommodation for young people (such as “crash pad”)• To implement and develop No Second Night Out rough sleeper initiative with City, County and voluntary partners• To deliver the Warm Home Officer revised programme• To support the development of the Light Bulb Project• To work with the “Y” and The Bridge to implement the Ambition East Midlands programme for young people aged 18-25• Housing options currently host a DWP/Acorn work placement. To continue working with DWP and other partners to expand the work placement scheme in the Council• To work towards achieving the Communities and Local Government Gold Standard in Homelessness provision• To deliver Payment By Results (PBR) for the Supporting Leicestershire Families programme.• To support the delivery of the Crime and Community Safety Action plans to make the district a safer place to live, work and visit.• Children & Young Peoples Services and Leicestershire County Council Staff are co-located within the Community Services Team. To continue to work towards more partners being based within the team to strengthen links and the support available to vulnerable people.• To work with Leicestershire County Council colleagues on the commissioning of all domestic abuse services to have new contracts in place from October 2015.• To review current community safety meetings across Blaby & Hinckley & Bosworth in order to ensure effectiveness and value for money in light of the change in the policing structure.• To maintain and continue for 2015/16 both the Council Tax Support Discretionary Discount Fund and Department of Work and Pensions Discretionary Housing Payment Fund• To implement an online benefits form
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work towards adopting the Department of Work and Pensions' Local Services Support Framework for the Benefit Service. • To investigate additional funding schemes for the BB19 bus including hiring the bus out to other local authorities and the forming of a 'Friends of BB19' group • To implement the Me and My Learning Model in the District • To implement Local Area Coordination in Enderby and Braunstone
Income generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emh homes have not confirmed whether they will continue to provide a £20,000 contribution to Support Services. • A roll over of unspent contributions from preceptors (including Leicestershire County Council) towards the administration of the Council Tax Support is confirmed for 2015/16. • Blaby District Council will be agreeing the roll over of Blaby's own Council Tax Support fund contribution to 2015/16. • An award of £250k of funding to implement the Me and My Learning project has not yet been fed into the budget, however the income and corresponding expenditure will be included in the budget when more detail is developed.
Capital plans for the portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget of £200k for DFGs. 190k Government allocation not confirmed yet. • £21k in the 2014/15 capital programme for the development of an online Housing Benefit form which will be delivered in 2015/16.

Key Performance Indicators

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	13/14 RESULTS	14/15 YEAR TO DATE	COMMENTS
Number of cases where homelessness has been prevented	207	150	On track to prevent more homelessness than in 2013/14. Demand for homelessness prevention services has increased slightly on previous year.
Number of homelessness applications taken	15	22	Have seen an increase in homeless cases in 2014/15. However the majority of those cases have been resolved before actual homelessness occurred and with only low demand for bed and breakfast accommodation.
End to end times for completion of DFGs	161.00	147.00	Referrals have slightly increased

			compared to 13/14. Overall, end to end times have reduced over the year to date.
Average number of days taken to process housing & council tax benefit claims	23.7 days	16.23 days to date	Year on year improvement to end of Nov
Percentage of benefit claims which were paid correctly	94.50%	91.50% to date	Changes to the way monitoring is carried out in the current year
Number of ASB cases reported in Blaby	1655	1127	The ASB figure for this year is only to the end of Nov.
Support services (Resident Support/Substance Use/Children's Worker/Domestic Abuse)– number of people supported/outcomes	266	259	Figures for Resident Support and Children's Workers are much higher than previous year.

Customers

- Domestic abuse survivors group and alcohol support group as well as family fun days for Supporting Leicestershire families. Regular support programmes being run including Recovery Toolkit, Freedom Programme and Feeling Safe. Wellbeing courses will continue to run till March 2015.
- Children's Workers and family support workers capture children's voice.
- A decision has been made to leave the localised Council Tax Support scheme unaltered for 2015/16
- Feedback is collated from young people via BB19 bus
- Feedback to be sought on the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy action plan with partners, voluntary agencies and support groups.
- The Me and My Learning initiative will help more local residents move into or nearer to employment

Risks

- That demand for the Council Tax Support Discretionary Discount Fund and the Discretionary Housing Payment Fund may outstrip funding
- That changes in the way Council Tax Support is funded has an increased risk on the finances of the Authority
- The introduction of Universal Credit commences in March 2015 and may impact on service users and the Local Authority e.g. Loss of staff morale and Benefit staff
- The introduction of a single fraud investigation service affecting Blaby from March 2016 will cause the loss of experienced staff to this service could impact on the authority's ability to prevent, investigate and detect fraud
- Demand for all support services (Resident Support/Domestic Abuse/Substance Use/Children's worker/SLF) increasing beyond BDC capacity as a result of the economic downturn and reduction in funding available.
- Possible loss of contribution to funding from emh homes for Resident Support
- Reduction/Loss of funding from the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for projects/initiatives to support our most vulnerable residents.
- Loss/Reduction of funding from other Local authorities for shared posts e.g. Male Domestic Abuse Worker and Children's Worker.
- Loss of funding from the Locality Partnership Group for the Children's Worker post for 2015-16.
- Reduced funding for Disabled Facilities Grants will impact on the number of adaptations carried out
- Changes to the way the funding for DFGs will be via Health may affect working practice and impact on the number of adaptations completed.

- That homelessness may rise due to the impact of Welfare Reform and other economic factors
- Funding for Homefinder is not secured from County partners which will mean they no longer have access to Homefinder