

COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO

Appendix B

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Maggie Wright

Senior Officer: Community Services Group Manager

Community Services - Total	2015/16 Approved Budget [A]	2015/16 Revised Estimate [B]	2016/17 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]	Reason for Variance
Establishment Costs	£1,589,528	£1,882,434	£1,700,764	£111,236 7.00%	-£181,670 -9.65%	There are 10 staff in the Community Services Team whose posts are externally funded. These figures reflect the reduction in salary costs.
Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£15,658,862	£15,272,467	£14,682,114	-£976,748 -6.24%	-£590,353 -3.87%	Welfare Reform changes implemented over the last 3 years have resulted in year on year reductions in benefit expenditure. The caseload is reducing on a steady but consistent basis and expenditure is reducing in line with this.
Direct Income	-£16,138,404	-£16,278,150	-£15,001,111	£1,137,293 -7.05%	£1,277,039 -7.85%	This income is made up of the various administrative subsidy income streams based on forecasted and actual expenditure.
Net Direct Expenditure	£1,109,986	£876,751	£1,381,767	£271,781 24.49%	£505,016 57.60%	
Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	44.39	55.02	45.25	0.86 1.94%	-9.77 -17.76%	

Benefits	2015/16 Approved Budget	2015/16 Revised Estimate	2016/17 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]	Reason for Variance
	[A]	[B]	[C]			
Establishment Costs	£500,364	£623,287	£529,547	£29,183 5.83%	-£93,740 -15.04%	The staffing costs for current year include the 4.43 FTE BEAT Team. Any potential underspend from 2015/16 will be utilised to introduce a worklessness officer within the Community Services Team.
Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£14,924,261	£14,328,535	£14,150,023	-£774,238 -5.19%	-£178,512 -1.25%	Welfare Reform changes implemented over the last 3 years have resulted in year on year reductions in benefit expenditure. The caseload is reducing on a steady but consistent basis and expenditure is reducing in line with this. Caseload at 01-01-16 is 5163, compared to 5242 (April 15), 5424 (April 14) and 5628 (April 13).
Direct Income	-£15,146,560	-£14,855,780	-£14,509,577	£636,983 -4.21%	£346,203 -2.33%	This income is made up of the various administrative subsidy income streams based on forecast expenditure.
Net Direct Expenditure	£278,065	£96,042	£169,993	-£108,072 -38.87%	£73,951 77.00%	
Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	17.78	22.19	18.19	0.41 2.31%	-4.00 -18.03%	Revised budget for 2015/16 includes BEAT team.

Community Services	2015/16 Approved Budget	2015/16 Revised Estimate	2016/17 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]	Reason for Variance
	[A]	[B]	[C]			
Establishment Costs	£495,155	£563,668	£453,407	-£41,748 -8.43%	-£110,261 -19.56%	Pay award, contractual increments, increased pension contributions. 2016/17 does not include funding for children's worker and male Domestic Abuse posts.
Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£162,870	£221,385	£165,825	£2,955 1.81%	-£55,560 -25.10%	Externally funded projects such as Childrens Support have been removed from the 2016/17 budget pending confirmation of ongoing funding.
Direct Income	-£230,344	-£275,583	-£196,034	£34,310 -14.90%	£79,549 -28.87%	External funding removed from 2016/17 budget except where it has already been confirmed.
Net Direct Expenditure	£427,681	£509,470	£423,198	-£4,483 -1.05%	-£86,272 -16.93%	
Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	11.61	14.03	12.26	0.65 5.60%	-1.77 -12.62%	Revised budget includes externally funded posts. Awaiting confirmation of funding for 2016/17. 2016/17 allows for mainstreaming of Youth Worker posts.

Housing Options	2015/16 Approved Budget [A]	2015/16 Revised Estimate [B]	2016/17 Proposed Budget [C]	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]	Reason for Variance
Establishment Costs	£187,682	£301,449	£198,873	£11,191 5.96%	-£102,576 -34.03%	The staffing costs for the 2016/17 do not include costs for the Homefinder Officer or staff at Leicester Royal Infirmary and Bradgate Unit (part of the City/County-wide Housing service managed by BDC).
Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£72,746	£221,322	£73,769	£1,023 1.41%	-£147,553 -66.67%	The reduced expenditure forecast is due to the funding for Leicester Royal Infirmary and Bradgate Unit project being unconfirmed for 2016/17 and there being no funding for Homefinder.
Direct Income	-£43,500	-£146,787	-£45,500	-£2,000 4.60%	£101,287 -69.00%	Additional income streams from external funding sources are unconfirmed for 2016/17.
Net Direct Expenditure	£216,928	£375,984	£227,142	£10,214 4.71%	-£148,842 -39.59%	
Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	6.00	10.00	6.00	0.00 0.00%	-4.00 -40.00%	Revised budget includes externally funded posts - awaiting confirmation of funding for 2016/17. 1 x Homefinder and 3 x Housing Hospital posts

Light Bulb	2015/16 Approved Budget	2015/16 Revised Estimate	2016/17 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]	Reason for Variance
	[A]	[B]	[C]			
Establishment Costs	£314,892	£302,595	£422,366	£107,474	£119,771	Planned recruitment of additional staff to support the development of the project Staff not in post for the whole of 2015/16 Variances are within budget parameters
				34.13%	39.58%	
Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£496,286	£498,436	£289,828	-£206,458	-£208,608	Grant funding direct cost expenditure has been front loaded to support the development of the project (eg IT, set up costs)
				-41.60%	-41.85%	
Direct Income	-£718,000	-£1,000,000	-£250,000	£468,000	£750,000	The Project is funded through a £1m government Transformation Challenge Award Grant. £250,000 contribution from LCC no longer receivable.
				-65.18%	-75.00%	
Net Direct Expenditure	£93,178	-£198,969	£462,194	£369,016	£661,163	
				396.03%	-332.29%	
Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	7.50	7.30	7.30	-0.20	0.00	Not all staff in post during 2015/16.
				-2.67%	0.00%	

Group Manager	2015/16 Approved Budget	2015/16 Revised Estimate	2016/17 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]	Reason for Variance
	[A]	[B]	[C]			
Establishment Costs	£91,435	£91,435	£96,571	£5,136 5.62%	£5,136 5.62%	Pay award, contractual increments, increased pension contributions.
Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£2,699	£2,789	£2,669	-£30 -1.11%	-£120 -4.30%	
Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%	
Net Direct Expenditure	£94,134	£94,224	£99,240	£5,106 5.42%	£5,016 5.32%	
Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	1.50	1.50	1.50	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%	

Movement in budget and staff from last year

Community Services

Direct income has reduced in line with the grant funding schedule distributed to Scrutiny. Where funding has not yet been confirmed the matching expenditure has not been reflected in the establishment costs, where it is funding towards a post, or in the other gross direct 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 have been submitted to the OPCC to access this fund. Decision on this is expected in January but it has been indicated that the same level of funding as 2015/16 is available. Funding contributions from other local authorities for shared posts are being agreed.

BB19 - Core funding remains for 3 sessions a week for 38 weeks in the year. This includes staffing and associated running costs including depreciation and maintenance of the bus. Summer campaign funding is unconfirmed for 2016/17 (comes from Friends of BB19) and external funding for extra sessions, schools work and campaigns is unconfirmed for 2016/17 (teenage pregnancy partnership and emh have provided funding in previous years).

Benefits

The variance in the establishment costs is due to the funding for the Blaby Employment and Training Team (BEAT) being for one year only. The significant budgetary issue

for Benefits for 2016/17 is the reduction in funding in the form of the Administration Grant and the New Burdens Fund to assist the team in alleviating any additional costs as a result of government changes in legislation, procedure or to be able to assist with any trials the Department for Work and Pensions are carrying out. This increases the contribution from the local authority towards the cost of the service. The funding allocation for Discretionary Housing Payments may impact on vulnerable residents and the demand for financial help may outstrip funding. In the previous three financial years we have seen a reduction from £88,000 to £63,000 and then a further reduction to £48,000. Financial assistance to help shore up the funding allocation has previously been sought from Council reserves. A further reduction this coming financial year may have a further impact on the reserves of the Council.

Housing Options

The variance in the establishment costs is due to the funding for Homefinder ceasing in 2016/17 and being unconfirmed for the Hospital projects. Homelessness Grant from the Department of Communities and Local Government has been confirmed for 2016/17, but this forms part of the Council's core funding grant settlement..

Lightbulb

The Light Bulb project team is funded through a £1m Department for Communities and Local Government Transformation Challenge Award (TCA) Grant (covering the financial years 2015/16 and 2016/17). The team also oversees the capital funding to deliver the Council's statutory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) responsibilities. Government capital funding DFG allocations for DFGs (via the Better Care Fund) for 2016/17 have yet to be announced but in 2015/16 the allocation was £256,068.

Budgeted spend, including variances, is in line with the TCA grant submission and overall TCA funding envelope.

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

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 and the Hospital Housing Enabler Projects.

Light Bulb

A countywide partnership project to make practical housing support easier to access, easier to use and tailored to the particular needs of vulnerable individuals. It will provide early support when people need it, avoiding the need for more costly help later. A holistic housing needs assessment (the Housing MOT) will ensure that housing support needs are proactively identified and that the right solution is found. Solutions could be provided by local organisations, District or County Council or directly provided through Lightbulb itself but will be co-ordinated to ensure the customer is not faced with navigating through a variety of different systems or organisations.

The overall ambition is to maximise the contribution that housing support can play in keeping vulnerable people independent in their homes; helping to avoid unnecessary hospital admissions and readmissions or GP visits and facilitating timely hospital discharge. Light Bulb will help vulnerable people with a range of housing related issues including; affordable warmth (including delivery of the Emergency Minor Works Grant to repair or replace heating systems), home safety and security, aids, minor adaptations and equipment to support

independence in the home, provision of major adaptations to the home through the Disabled Facilities Grant, small handyperson jobs, advice and support about different housing options to support independence such as sheltered housing or extra care.

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. 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.

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.

Responsibility for 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.

Key points

<p>Doing things differently – plans for the coming year</p>	<p><u>Benefits</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Benefit fraud - Transfer of Housing Benefit fraud to the Department for Work and Pensions Single Fraud Investigation Service (called SFIS). The challenge that this will bring is a new and quite different way of working with the Department for Work and Pensions. The local authority will still retain ownership of Council Tax Support Fraud in the short term and retain ownership of the data to which the DWP will require access. Other factors such as the Fraud hotline (operational here for nearly 20 years) and other associated fraud work such as how single person discounts checks will be managed. Liaison and partnership arrangements will need to be maintained and strengthened as there will still be a level of reliance on the local authority to provide expertise, advice and assistance to the DWP.• Council Tax Support Scheme - A significant review of the local Council Tax Support scheme is expected to be carried out within the next financial year. There will need to be increased levels of partnership working with both the City and County Councils and the other local councils within Leicestershire. Any significant changes to the present scheme will require a formal consultation.• Universal Credit implementation - Local residents will begin to be affected by the deletion of a number of national benefits and the introduction of Universal Credit within the district. The impact on local residents will need to be monitored along with the provision of support to residents in need of extra support in order to access the new benefit. The district will be assisting with budgetary support to those residents identified by the Department for Work and Pensions as in specific personal need of such support. New partnerships will need to be forged and maintained with the DWP to enable new ways of working to take place. <p><u>Community Services/Housing Options</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To ensure that County commissioned services (Domestic Abuse contract and hostel provision) meet the needs of clients and to be involved in any further commissioning
---	---

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support development and delivery of the LWP furniture and white goods provision through Housing Options • To review the allocations policy and delivery mechanisms to reduce waste in the system and to ensure that allocations reflect the housing needs of Blaby residents • To deliver a collective energy switching campaign • Use of young inspectors and mystery shopping programme by young people to feedback on services that young people use (housing and community services) <p><u>Light Bulb</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a new service offer for practical housing support that is holistic, co-ordinated and customer focused • Work with key partners to integrate the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants based on a systems thinking approach
Income generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £16k confirmed from Leicestershire County Council towards Children Workers posts. (This covers the period April 2016 to March 2017). • 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 Discretionary Discount fund (Council Tax Hardship) is expected for 2016/17. • Blaby District Council will be agreeing the roll over of Blaby's own Council Discretionary Discount fund contribution to 2016/176. • The DWP have announced plans to make a contribution to the Authority of up to £40,000 over 14 months for the changes that are required to implement Universal Credit.
Capital plans for the portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget of £200k for DFGs in capital programme of BDC. £190k Government allocation not confirmed yet • Budget of £30k for Emergency Affordable Warmth Minor Works Grant planned

Key Performance Indicators

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR	2014/15 RESULTS	2015/16 YEAR TO DATE	COMMENTS
Number of cases where homelessness has been prevented	150	147	The number of positive outcomes is set to exceed that for 14/15
Number of homelessness applications taken	27	16	Demand is not likely to be as high as last year
End to end times for completion of DFGs (time taken from receipt of recommendation to approval of grant – average days)	74	66	Performance to date this year for all DFGs is in line with that of last year
Demand for DFGs (number of recommendations received)	153	134	Demand is largely in line with last year
Time taken to complete DFGs (from initial enquiry by customer to completion of work, broken down by stages)	N/A	N/A	This is a future performance indicator which is still in development
Number of hospital admissions/readmissions avoided as a result of Lightbulb intervention	N/A	N/A	This is a future performance indicator which is still in development
Number of holistic housing needs assessment carried out (through Lightbulb Project) and outcome	N/A	15	The Housing MOT has been used since late October 2015 to support the Lightbulb pilot work
Average number of days taken to process housing & council tax benefit claims	19.23	22.85	The national average is circa 24 days and the team are striving to keep Blaby's out turn faster than this average
Percentage of benefit claims which were paid correctly	90.93	88.95	The current year figure is within the ratio of 88% to 92% so a slight deterioration compared to the previous year
Number of ASB cases reported in Blaby	74	63	Outturn is likely to exceed the number of cases recorded in 2014/15. This is due to changes in recording and increased promotion of the service.

Support services (Resident Support/Substance Use/Children's Worker/Domestic Abuse)– number of people supported/outcomes	375	358	Demand is likely to exceed demand for last year. This is due to promotion of the services and increased numbers of households considering themselves to be vulnerable and in need of support due to financial/employment/social pressures
---	-----	-----	---

Customers

- Blaby District Council in partnership with Leicestershire County Council ran a voice pop up event to capture the voices of our most vulnerable families in relation to services they had received regarding health focusing mainly on adult and children's mental health services.
- Community Safety Team have run safer summer, 'Woody Nickit' and the Winter safety campaign, as well as hate crime awareness campaigns.
- The Light Bulb Project has included initial customer insight work which has informed planning and development of the Project.
- An action plan is in place to ensure continued customer input into the Light Bulb Project as it develops.
- Family fun days for Supporting Leicestershire families. Regular support programmes being run including Recovery Toolkit, Freedom Programme and Feeling Safe.
- 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 2016/17
- Feedback from young people collected on ASB Busters, School Programmes and other BB19 bus programmes
- Feedback on the Choice Based Lettings system collated from applicants prior to re-procurement in 2016/17

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 implementation of Universal Credit commences on 25th January 2016 in Blaby district area 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 and 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 Blaby's 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 (DFGs) will impact on the number of adaptations carried out.
- Changes to the way the funding for DFGs will be via the Better Care Fund may affect working practice and impact on the number of adaptations completed.
- Demand for DFGs and Affordable Warmth Minor Works Grant may increase as a result of Light Bulb Project's proactive/early identification of need.
- The move towards integration of housing and social care activities and responsibilities for DFGs through the Light Bulb Project may affect working practice, job roles, staff morale etc.
- That homelessness may rise due to the impact of Welfare Reform and other economic factors.