

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Tony Greenwood

Senior Officer: Planning Group Manager

Planning, Economic Development & Housing Strategy - Total	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	£1,056,065	£1,105,291	£1,206,862	£150,797 14.28%	£101,571 9.19%	
Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£403,509	£563,085	£390,683	-£12,826 -3.18%	-£172,402 -30.62%	
Direct Income	-£495,927	-£719,500	-£678,000	-£182,073 36.71%	£41,500 -5.77%	
Net Direct Expenditure	£963,647	£948,876	£919,545	-£44,102 -4.58%	-£29,331 -3.09%	
Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	26.55	31.31	31.26	4.71 17.74%	-0.05 -0.16%	

Development Strategy	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	£332,537	£332,537	£339,919	£7,382 2.22%	£7,382 2.22%	Pay award, contractual increments, increased pension contributions.
Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£158,360	£232,730	£232,780	£74,420 46.99%	£50 0.02%	The increase comprises additional spend on the Local Development Framework (such as technical studies); which is difficult to forecast due to the longer term nature of the work. It also includes unexpected strategic planning costs and s106 debt collection costs.
Direct Income	-£25,000	-£79,500	-£38,000	-£13,000 52.00%	£41,500 -52.20%	Exceptional one-off income from S106 monitoring fees in 2015/16 - £60,000. Balance relates to Neighbourhood Planning Grant.
Net Direct Expenditure	£465,897	£485,767	£534,699	£68,802 14.77%	£48,932 10.07%	
Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	8.55	8.55	8.55	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%	No change.

Planning Delivery	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	£602,834	£652,060	£765,934	£163,100 27.06%	£113,874 17.46%	Pay award, contractual increments, increased pension contributions. Also included are 2 new Enforcement posts and provision for 2 fixed term Planning Officers on 12 month contracts. A post has been transferred from Management & Admin.
Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£233,379	£310,836	£146,133	-£87,246 -37.38%	-£164,703 -52.99%	Mainly due to one off funding in 2015/16 in relation to Site Delivery and capacity funding. Any unspent balance will need to be rolled forward to 2016/17.
Direct Income	-£470,927	-£640,000	-£640,000	-£169,073 35.90%	£0 0.00%	Projected income based on current level of planning applications.
Net Direct Expenditure	£365,286	£322,896	£272,067	-£93,219 -25.52%	-£50,829 -15.74%	
Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	15.00	19.76	20.76	5.76 38.40%	1.00 5.06%	Includes 2 x Enforcement posts approved September 2015, 2 x Planning Officers on 12 month fixed term contracts. 1 post transferred from Management & Admin.

Management & Admin	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	£120,694	£120,694	£101,009	-£19,685 -16.31%	-£19,685 -16.31%	The decrease is a result of one admin post being transferred to Planning Delivery.
Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£11,770	£19,519	£11,770	£0 0.00%	-£7,749 -39.70%	DEFRA Inspire grant brought forward from 2014/15 - non recurring.
Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%	
Net Direct Expenditure	£132,464	£140,213	£112,779	-£19,685 -14.86%	-£27,434 -19.57%	
Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	3.00	3.00	1.95	-1.05 -35.00%	-1.05 -35.00%	Administrative post transferred to Planning Delivery team.

Movement in budget and staff from last year

The overall number of posts and the associated establishment budget for this portfolio has fluctuated slightly over the last year; as the final elements of the restructure have been delivered. A number of posts have been added to the Group to respond to the need for an improved enforcement service; and the increase in workload from a continued high level of planning applications.

Overall the 2016/17 budget for net direct expenditure across the whole group is 4.58% less than the anticipated outturn for 2015/16, due to a predicted continued increase in planning fee income.

Portfolio Priorities

- 1. Complete the Development Management (Planning Delivery) Systems Thinking Intervention.** The new planning application system, designed as a result of the systems thinking intervention, continues to be successful in terms of removing failure demand and waste within the system and faster determination times. The final phase of the work will involve a number of residual projects including channel shift, redesigning the appeals process, and finalising the improvements to the s106 process. We will also continue to support external organisations, such as Parish Councils, to work with us in the new system.
- 2. Review and refresh “Opportunity Blaby” – the Council’s Economic Development Strategy.** The Economic Development Strategy was adopted in January 2014 and considerable progress has been made against the action plan. The Strategy sets out the key economic priorities of the Council and our approach to implementation and delivery of its objectives. During 2016/17 a full review will be undertaken and a new strategy produced. Focus will also continue on developing the council’s overall culture in relation to economic development.
- 3. Further improvements to Planning Committee.** Improvements have already been made to Committee; following a review of the structure and format, and a comprehensive programme of Member Training. Further improvements will be considered during 2016/17 including more training and a review of the Scheme of Delegation.
- 4. Finalise the review of the Enforcement Team.** Significant work has been undertaken during 2015/16 to review the team; resulting in two additional posts, a revised Policy, and a new set of performance indicators. We have also strengthened our approach to taking action. This will continue into 2016/17 with the further development of our ‘zero tolerance’ approach, and the commencement of the new monitoring function.

5. **Increase work on Strategic Planning.** Work has commenced during 2015/16 across the County on the production of a Joint Strategic Plan. We have made budget provision to participate in this, and will also be increasing officer time spent working on it.
6. **Prepare the Delivery DPD.** Significant work has already been undertaken on the next stage of the Local Plan; the Delivery DPD. This is the document which identifies and allocates new sites for housing, employment, 'Gypsy and Travellers' accommodation and other land uses in the District in accordance with the Core Strategy. It will also include further Development Management policies required to supplement the Core Strategy. The need to include policies of the Blaby District Local Plan (1999) will also be reviewed which, although not allocations, are the subject of specific designations e.g. Green Wedges. During 2016/17 a draft document will be published for consultation.
7. **Finalise the Planning Obligations SPD (Supplementary Planning Document) and associated processes.** Council have agreed not to implement Community Infrastructure Levy in the district at the current time but instead to review the 2010 Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document and associated processes in order to ensure effective management of applications and infrastructure planning. Significant work has been undertaken during 2015/16 and the final document will be adopted during 2016/17.
8. **Delivery of the Lubbethorpe SUE.** The SUE is now fully on site – works are underway to deliver the road infrastructure and the first phase of residential development has been approved. During 2016/17 the focus will turn to a design review for Phase 1b, applications for the school and District Centre, and community capacity building. This will also involve the effective engagement of local stakeholders on the creation of a successful and sustainable community.

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 Officers, Housing Strategy Officers and Economic Development Officers 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 and resolving enforcement complaints as fast as possible.

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

Management & Admin

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

Key Points

<p>Doing things differently – plans for the coming year</p>	<p><u>Development Strategy</u> A renewed focus on the approach to developer contributions and s106 functions has already resulted in considerable service improvements, and this will continue to be a priority going forward.</p> <p>The pace of work around the Delivery DPD will be increased; and the focus on economic development will be widened out across the organisation.</p> <p><u>Planning Delivery</u> The systems thinking intervention, and subsequent new planning application process has resulted in improvements and a vibrant and highly motivated department; and we will continue to build on this.</p>
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	<p>Significant changes have been made to the enforcement service, and this will continue.</p> <p><u>Management & Admin</u> The focus for 2016/17 will be for a management function which leads and supports; whilst enabling staff to develop and grow. The management style is innovative and not risk averse and this will continue.</p>
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><u>Development Strategy</u> Income generation in this area is restricted to fees for documents. One of the focuses of the Economic Development function for 2015/16 will continue to be working with partners across the LLEP area to enable grant income investments in the district.</p> <p><u>Planning Delivery</u> Fees for planning applications are set nationally by Government. Therefore the focus during 2016/17 will be on maximising efficiency and keeping costs to a minimum; whilst delivering an exceptional service.</p> <p><u>Management & Admin</u> There are no opportunities for income generation in this area; however costs will be continually monitored.</p>
Capital plans for the portfolio	Not applicable.

Key Performance Indicators

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16*
Number of planning applications received	932	959	922	1080	1018	662
Planning application fee income	£279,117	£387,519	£396,596	£711,229	£574,632	£482,807
Number of planning applications determined	652	673	651	962	1064	702
% of applications delegated	94.62	95.65	93.88	90.28	89.57	88.00
% of major applications determined in 13 weeks	70.58	11.11	21.43	75.67	84.62	100
E2E (householders)	47.7	41.65	47.21	50.28	38.13	45.69
E2E (minors)	73.7	66.56	108.6	89.14	80.52	65.77
E2E (others)	75.4	44.89	91.38	49.07	46.20	55.76
Housing land supply	Currently at 5.75 years					

*year to date

Customers

The Group will be focussing heavily on channel shift during 2016/17, to ensure that customers can access our service in the most effective and appropriate way. This will include improvements to the website, consultation processes, and payment methods.

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.

The Group has made significant improvements to relationships with Parish Councils and this will continue.

Risks

- The increased level of major applications will continue to place significant demands on the service.
- 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 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 Opportunity Blaby.
- Failure to deliver an effective enforcement service could result in reputational damage.