

Appendix K PLANNING & STRATEGIC GROWTH PORTFOLIO Councillor Ben Taylor

The last year has seen significant upheaval and uncertainty for the Group; with a raft of Government consultations, planning reform proposals, and staff redeployed at times as part of the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, demand has increased significantly - particularly, and perhaps unsurprisingly, in terms of householder applications and smaller scale enforcement cases.

Work has, however, continued as normal in the midst of this; with some large scale projects progressing at pace. The number, scope and profile of strategic projects continues to grow, and this is predicted to continue over the next 12 months. In addition, the new Local Plan continues to progress; with some significant milestones coming up.

The focus on delivery of a good enforcement service continues; with a range of sensitive and high profile cases ongoing, and a high caseload of varied investigations.

Portfolio Priorities

Priorities for 2021/22 for the group include:

- 1. Large scale strategic projects.** The strategic growth team is managing a full range of large scale projects. These include a rail freight terminal, garden village, further potential large scale site near to Stoney Stanton, and Fosse Park West. In April 2021 the new offices, beer hall and brewery at Everards Meadows and Fosse Park West will both open.
- 2. New Local Plan.** The next 12 months will see a number of important milestones for the new Local Plan, as we move closer to a submission version. Further detailed work on the policies, plus formal public engagement will be undertaken.
- 3. Respond to Planning Reforms.** During 2020, a number of consultations were undertaken by the Government on proposed reforms to the planning system. These reforms, should they be taken forward, will have a significant impact on the way we work in most planning related areas. We are hopeful of further consultation and guidance from Government as quickly as possible; which enables us to start considering the changes.
- 4. High profile enforcement action.** Ongoing action will continue for a number of current high profile cases; with Enforcement Notice appeal dates now set for early 2021/22. In addition the team will continue their pro-active approach across the District, in dealing with a varied case load of investigations.
- 5. Joint Strategic Planning –** work continues across Leicester and Leicestershire to support the delivery of the Strategic Growth Plan, key infrastructure to enable future growth, and other 'cross boundary' projects. We are exploring all

opportunities to work collaboratively with other local authorities; to ensure that we can maximise opportunities and efficiencies.

- 6. Delivery of the Lubbesthorpe Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE).** The new community is going from strength to strength. Around 500 houses are now occupied, the first primary school is open, and works continue to deliver the road infrastructure. To date the development has now won four awards. Key milestones for 2021/22 will include the opening of the first Local Centre (including health centre), and development of the leisure offer and secondary school.

Risks

- The increased level of planning applications, particularly the sharp recent increase in householder applications, continues to place significant demands on the service. Ongoing resource reviews are essential to help to mitigate against this.
- Failure to progress the new Local Plan could leave the District vulnerable to unacceptable types of future development.
- High number of appeals would place further pressures on the Development Services Team.
- 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 is essential – failure to do so could affect the 5 year housing land supply, and in turn the council's ability to defend against undesirable development.
- Ongoing lack of clarity, or a long period without further guidance, on planning reform proposals would lead to long periods of uncertainty; and could in turn delay the new Local Plan.
- Failure to deliver an effective enforcement service could result in reputational damage.
- Failure to secure ongoing Garden Village Programme funding could jeopardise our ability to ensure that any such sites are delivered well.

Portfolio Holder: Ben Taylor

Senior Officer: Planning & Economic Development Group Manager

Portfolio Total

Planning, Housing Strategy, Economic & Community Development - Total	2020/21 Approved Budget	2020/21 Revised Estimate	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£1,473,949	£1,471,814	£1,427,640	-£46,309 -3.14%	-£44,174 -3.00%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£347,418	£829,279	£288,350	-£59,068 -17.00%	-£540,929 -65.23%
3. Direct Income	-£826,412	-£561,412	-£770,000	£56,412 -6.83%	-£208,588 37.15%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£994,955	£1,739,681	£945,990	-£48,965 -4.92%	-£793,691 -45.62%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	33.22	32.78	31.78	-1.44 -4.33%	-1.00 -3.05%

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Development Strategy	2020/21 Approved Budget	2020/21 Revised Estimate	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£356,484	£265,019	£268,581	-£87,903 -24.66%	£3,562 1.34%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£107,594	£553,837	£93,594	-£14,000 -13.01%	-£460,243 -83.10%
3. Direct Income	-£2,000	-£2,000	-£2,000	£0 0.00%	£0 0.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£462,078	£816,856	£360,175	-£101,903 -22.05%	-£456,681 -55.91%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	7.94	5.50	5.50	-2.44 -30.73%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2021/22 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. 3 x Economic Development posts moved to Partnerships.
2. The revised budget includes significant grants and S106 monies carried forward from 2019/20 relating to the Neighbourhood planning, Local Development Framework and the production of the Delivery Development Plan Document (DPD). Any budget that is not utilised in the year will be transferred to an Earmarked reserve.
3. No change.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. As per point 1.

PLANNING DELIVERY

	2020/21 Approved Budget	2020/21 Revised Estimate	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
Planning Delivery	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£540,632	£544,797	£580,621	£39,989 7.40%	£35,824 6.58%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£125,016	£125,630	£107,663	-£17,353 -13.88%	-£17,967 -14.30%
3. Direct Income	-£768,000	-£520,000	-£768,000	£0 0.00%	-£248,000 47.69%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	-£102,352	£150,427	-£79,716	£22,636 -22.12%	-£230,143 -152.99%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	13.61	13.61	13.61	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2021/22 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 as well as increase due to career progression posts.
2. One off non reoccurring budget has been removed from the proposed budget.
3. Income budget reduced in line with expected income, reduction due to the impact of Covid-19.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change.

ENFORCEMENT

Planning Enforcement	2020/21 Approved Budget	2020/21 Revised Estimate	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£195,723	£197,183	£204,541	£8,818 4.51%	£7,358 3.73%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£13,046	£21,536	£13,046	£0 0.00%	-£8,490 -39.42%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0 #DIV/0!	£0 #DIV/0!
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£208,769	£218,719	£217,587	£8,818 4.22%	-£1,132 -0.52%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	4.81	4.81	4.81	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2021/22 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. The revised budget includes budget approved for consultants' fees relating to Enforcement action carried forward from 2020/21.
3. Not applicable.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change.

STRATEGIC GROWTH

Strategic Growth	2020/21 Approved Budget	2020/21 Revised Estimate	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£240,638	£323,291	£228,238	-£12,400 -5.15%	-£95,053 -29.40%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£41,567	£58,081	£14,784	-£26,783 -64.43%	-£43,297 -74.55%
3. Direct Income	-£56,412	-£39,412	£0	£56,412 -100.00%	£39,412 -100.00%
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£225,793	£341,960	£243,022	£17,229 7.63%	-£98,938 -28.93%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	4.86	6.86	5.86	1.00 20.58%	-1.00 -14.58%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2021/22 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 budget also includes 2 x 2 year externally funded Garden Village Project posts and the removal of one fixed term post.
2. 2021/22 revised estimate includes non recurring expenditure brought forward from 2020/21.
3. No income expected in 2021/22.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. As per note 1, and 1 fixed term post ended.

MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION

Management & Admin	2020/21 Approved Budget	2020/21 Revised Estimate	2021/22 Proposed Budget	Variance [C] - [A]	Variance [C] - [B]
	[A]	[B]	[C]		
1. Establishment Costs	£140,472	£141,524	£145,659	£5,187 3.69%	£4,135 2.92%
2. Other Gross Direct Expenditure	£60,195	£70,195	£59,263	-£932 -1.55%	-£10,932 -15.57%
3. Direct Income	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
4. Net Direct Expenditure	£200,667	£211,719	£204,922	£4,255 2.12%	-£6,797 -3.21%
5. Overall No. of Posts (FTE)	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.00 0.00%	0.00 0.00%

Reasons for Variances

1. The 2021/22 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. Revised Estimate includes one off carry forward of budget from 2020/21
3. No income receivable in respect of this service.
4. Net impact of variances listed above.
5. No change.

Movement in budget and staff from last year

The establishment budget for this portfolio includes contractual increases in relation to the new pay spine, increments and employer contributions for national insurance and pensions. The headcount has decreased compared to 2020/21, due to the ending of a fixed term post in the Strategic Growth Team and a number of Economic Development posts moving over to a different portfolio. The net decrease is only one post however, due to an adjustment made last year for 1.5 externally funded posts added to the Strategic Growth Team (covered by external Garden Village Programme) funding.

Other than establishment costs the main variances in expenditure are associated with the ongoing costs of producing the new Local Plan.

Portfolio Priorities

Priorities for 2021/22 for the group include:

- 7. Large scale strategic projects.** The strategic growth team is managing a full range of large scale projects. These include a rail freight terminal, garden village, further potential large scale site near to Stoney Stanton, and Fosse Park West. In April 2021 the new offices, beer hall and brewery at Everards Meadows and Fosse Park West will both open.
- 8. New Local Plan.** The next 12 months will see a number of important milestones for the new Local Plan, as we move closer to a submission version. Further detailed work on the policies, plus formal public engagement will be undertaken.
- 9. Respond to Planning Reforms.** During 2020, a number of consultations were undertaken by the Government on proposed reforms to the planning system. These reforms, should they be taken forward, will have a significant impact on the way we work in most planning related areas. We are hopeful of further consultation and guidance from Government as quickly as possible; which enables us to start considering the changes.
- 10. High profile enforcement action.** Ongoing action will continue for a number of current high profile cases; with Enforcement Notice appeal dates now set for early 2021/22. In addition the team will continue their pro-active approach across the District, in dealing with a varied case load of investigations.
- 11. Joint Strategic Planning –** work continues across Leicester and Leicestershire to support the delivery of the Strategic Growth Plan, key infrastructure to enable future growth, and other ‘cross boundary’ projects. We are exploring all opportunities to work collaboratively with other local authorities; to ensure that we can maximise opportunities and efficiencies.
- 12. Delivery of the Lubbethorpe Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE).** The new community is going from strength to strength. Around 500 houses are now occupied, the first primary school is open, and works continue to deliver the road infrastructure. To date the development has now won four awards. Key milestones

for 2021/22 will include the opening of the first Local Centre (including health centre), and development of the leisure offer and secondary school.

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 decisions. The Local Plan, and other key planning policies, are the key mechanisms for place shaping and the delivery of many other corporate priorities.

This budget includes the costs of Planning Policy Officers and a Planning Obligations Officer; all 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 as fast as possible.

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

Planning Enforcement

This budget includes the costs of Enforcement Officers; who monitor development across the district, carry out investigations, enforce planning controls, and take forward prosecutions where necessary.

Strategic Growth Team

This team manages a range of high profile, large-scale, strategic projects. These are considered to be projects which fall outside of the usual planning process, due to their profile and need for a more complex range of skills – a typical example would be housing developments of more than 1,000 houses.

This budget includes the cost of a manager, Major Schemes Officers and an admin officer, along with some external funding which covers the cost of two of these posts.

Management & Administration

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>The department continues to perform well, despite an unprecedented and challenging year. Staff are working hard, and are naturally tired as a result, but remain motivated. Over the last year the remit of the group has continued to grow – particularly in the areas of strategic growth and infrastructure planning.</p> <p>As set out in the priorities for the forthcoming year; we expect the next 12 months to be equally challenging – but also rewarding and exciting.</p> <p><u>Strategic Growth</u></p> <p>The team will continue to project manage some of the district's most high profile and complex strategic projects. This includes a wide range of sites; from retail and commercial developments, to a garden village, and of course Lubbesthorpe.</p> <p><u>Development Strategy</u></p> <p>The team will continue to focus on strategic planning and the Local Plan</p> <p>Work will continue during 2021/22 on the new Local Plan.</p> <p><u>Planning Delivery</u></p> <p>The workload of the team has continued to increase over the last year, as application levels rise at an unprecedented rate.</p> <p>During 2021/22 the team will focus on ensuring the continued delivery of an excellent service in this demanding environment.</p> <p><u>Enforcement</u></p> <p>The enforcement team will continue its proactive monitoring approach next year. In addition, work on the high profile and sensitive sites will also progress.</p> <p><u>Management & Administration</u></p> <p>The focus for 2012/22 will be on continuing the growth of the department, whilst supporting and enabling staff development.</p>
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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>Income generation across the group is restricted to fees for documents; and national set planning application fees. The Government implemented a 20% increase to planning application fees during 2018, which is reflected in the ongoing income figures. This increased income is ring-fenced to expenditure on planning staffing only, and additional posts were put in place over the last year.</p> <p>The group will seek to maximise opportunities for cost saving through collaborative working, particularly on Local Plan technical work.</p>
Capital plans for the portfolio	There are no current capital plans for the portfolio.

Key Performance Indicators

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 Apr - Sept
Number of planning applications received	1091	1132	1089	1111	1104	545
Planning application fee income	£676,273	£470,671	£656,689	£775,940	£647,370	£296,537
Number of planning applications determined	1010	1048	1076	1099	1043	467
% of applications delegated	94.06	93.73	93.60	94.2	95.2	95.58
% of major applications determined in 13 weeks	94.44	100.00	93.54	100	96.3	81.81
E2E (householders)	44.03	33.55	46.50	47.89	46.2	61.86
E2E (minors)	65.85	53.07	65.92	84.5	80.33	97.25
E2E (others)	55.98	48.02	38.61	44.8	50.59	51.63
Housing Land Supply	Currently at 7 years					

Customers

- 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.
- There are a number of significant public consultations planned for 2021/22 including the next stage of the new Local Plan, and a number of large strategic sites.

Risks

- The increased level of planning applications, particularly the sharp recent increase in householder applications, continues to place significant demands on the service. Ongoing resource reviews are essential to help to mitigate against this.
- Failure to progress the new Local Plan could leave the District vulnerable to unacceptable types of future development.
- High number of appeals would place further pressures on the Development Services Team.
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