

Responses to Questions Raised by Corporate Scrutiny Committee 4 January 2023

Question Raised	Cabinet Response
<p>Enforcement Service</p> <p>A member wished to formally express the proposal that Cabinet be requested to assess what is required to deliver a full spectrum, proactive enforcement service and set out a plan to address any shortfall in staffing levels.</p>	<p>Private Sector Housing</p> <p>Community Services currently has 1.2 full time officers for private sector housing enforcement functions. This level of resource allows the Council to deliver an effective reactive service which is mainly complaint driven. In the last two years the team has been proactive in terms of changes to the Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) legislation and has commenced proactive Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards Regulations compliance which forms part of the Council's Zero Carbon Roadmap and Fuel Poverty Task and Finish Group. A series of Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policies are scheduled to go through Scrutiny and Cabinet in 2023. To support this additional work and move to a more proactive service, Cabinet is to be asked to approve the recruitment of two additional posts utilising funding for this from the Government's Disabled Facilities Grant at its meeting on 31 January 2023.</p> <p>Antisocial Behaviour</p> <p>The current level of resource in Community Services allocated to reports of antisocial behaviour is one full-time officer. The resource enables the Council to provide a good level of service particularly relating to the highest risk cases of antisocial behaviour. Work is underway to explore ways of increasing resources through the Leicestershire Police and Crime Commissioners Office and such a resource would add further capacity for the investigation of lower risk reports of antisocial behaviour. In the Council's Housing Service there are two staff members managing cases that relate solely to the Council's own tenants.</p> <p>Planning Enforcement</p> <p>With regard to more proactive planning enforcement, the budget contains a bid for a new Planning Enforcement Team Leader. Officers have already reported to Community Scrutiny on the effectiveness of Planning Enforcement and advised that a further report would be presented in the autumn this year.</p>

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	With the above current resource status combined with the related planned increase in officer posts, officers consider that there are sufficient resources in place to effectively manage these functions.						
<p>Property Services Budget A member noted that the Property Services budget had been increased by around £800,000 and questioned why such a large increase would be occurring.</p>	It was identified that there was an error on Appendix 1 and the Property Services figures and the Revenues & Benefits figures were on the wrong lines. The overall budget figures were correct. This was corrected in an addendum report to Cabinet on 10 January 2023.						
<p>Coalville Regeneration Programme A member noted that the Coalville Regeneration Programme featured work associated with a Coalville railway station and expressed a wish to see similar works carried out at Ashby de la Zouch and at other locations throughout the district. Concerns were also raised at the marked increase in the cost of using public conveniences in Ashby de la Zouch, but officers confirmed that these increased costs had been in line with inflation</p>	Officers have developed a strong working relationship with CRiL and are involved in discussions about passenger infrastructure at all planned halts along the line through NWL.						
<p>Council Tax Members asked how much income would have been generated had there not been a freeze on council tax, and officers advised that this is something which would have to be worked out and brought back to members, however it was noted that this freeze had created some element of income which would have been foregone if the council tax had increased.</p>	<p>If the Council increased the council tax by the maximum amount allowed in 2023/24 without the need for a referendum from the 2022-23 rate of £158.58 Band D, it would generate an additional £173,000 council tax in 2023/24.</p> <p>If the Council had increased the council tax by the maximum amount allowed each year since 2010/11 without the need for a referendum, the rate of Band D Council Tax would be £228.20 and generate an additional £2.5m in 2023/24.</p> <p>The income foregone over the 14-year period that the council tax has been frozen (assuming the maximum increase of 2.99% or £5 each year is:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="869 1129 1603 1241"> <tbody> <tr> <td>District Council Tax Income Foregone</td> <td>£17.3m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Less Council Tax Freeze Grant Received</td> <td>£0.5m</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>£16.8m</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	District Council Tax Income Foregone	£17.3m	Less Council Tax Freeze Grant Received	£0.5m	Total	£16.8m
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<p>Sale of Council Offices and Car Park A member enquired where the receipt for the sale of the Council offices and the car park appeared in the budget and if it had been included as capital receipt. Officers advised that it had not been factored in at present and</p>	No disposal of the Whitwick Road Council offices and car park has been agreed at this time, so it would be inappropriate to report or account for a capital receipt at present. Once any sale has been negotiated the relevant figures will be reported.						

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<p>offered clarification around the separate issues of the business case for the accommodation changes and plans for the future site, and what the future income stream might be.</p>	
<p>Asset Management Team A member requested clarification on the large investment proposed to restructure the asset management team and asked for more information on exactly what the £350,000 would be spent on. Officers advised that this was still in process but would primarily be staff focussed and at the time of the meeting was dependant on various factors such as staff changes, which could be discussed outside of the public meeting.</p>	<p>Noted</p>