



# Blaby District Council Annual Report 2022



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## OUR VISION FOR BLABY:

Blaby District is made up of thriving and vibrant communities where people are happy to live, work and visit.

## OUR VALUES:

- Put the customer at the heart of everything that we do.
- Listen, learn, and make a positive difference.
- Build and maintain strong partnerships to meet the needs of the district.
- Be ambitious, creative, and resourceful.

# INTRODUCTION

**Welcome to Blaby District Council's Annual Report. This is a summary of our work, achievements, and finances for the year between 01 April 2021 and 31 March 2022.**

The beginning of this period saw us emerging as a nation from the various restrictions and challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic had brought upon us. We followed the government's 'Roadmap out of Lockdown' which gradually lifted restrictions through a four-step plan between March and July 2021.

During that period, non-essential shops, businesses and a range of community and voluntary sector groups re-opened across the district. The council were able to help many of these by distributing much needed 'Welcome Back' and 'Restart' grants to help them get going again following the pandemic.

Work was able to continue on the historic 'Ice House' restoration project at Bouskell Park, which was finally completed in May 2021. We also helped residents get back to being active and exercising with friends again when our 'Active Blaby' walks resumed and our Leisure Centres reopened.

Of course, it wasn't long before one of these had to close again when it was discovered that there were elevated levels of landfill gas on the site containing Huncote Leisure Centre. Although a huge amount of work has since been undertaken to resolve this problem, the site sadly needed to remain closed throughout much of the year. However, after tremendous efforts from the teams involved, the centre successfully reopened on 17 October and we are delighted that residents have once again been able to enjoy the activities on offer there.

The council's services always strive to do the best they can for our residents and businesses and to help with this the year finished with an invitation from Blaby to the Local Government Association (The LGA) to provide a 'Corporate Peer Review'. This provides an opportunity for experienced senior officers from a variety of other councils to come together as a group to understand how Blaby District



**Julia Smith,  
Chief Executive**



**Sarah Pennelli,  
Strategic Director  
(Section 151 Officer)**



**John Richardson,  
Strategic Director**



**Cllr Terry Richardson,  
Leader Blaby District Council**



## INTRODUCTION CONTINUED

Council works, provide feedback on what we do well, and suggest areas in which we might be able to improve. The 'Peer Review' team's report, and the subsequent action plan created by Blaby staff, are available to view at [Leader's Statement \(blaby.gov.uk\)](https://blaby.gov.uk)

2021/22 also marked the first full year of the newly embedded Blaby District Plan, which encompassed the Council's vision for the district to be 'made up of thriving and vibrant communities where people are happy to live, work and visit'.

The three core priorities outlined within the vision then serve as the platform for all council services to focus their efforts upon.


**A Place to Live** endeavours to provide strong, healthy, safe, sustainable communities where the most vulnerable are supported.

**A Place to Work** focuses on ensuring a thriving, prosperous, innovative local economy with a skilled and healthy workforce contributing to the local community.

**A Place to Visit** aims for a strong leisure and tourism sector and well maintained and accessible attractions available in the local area to encourage visitors to the district.

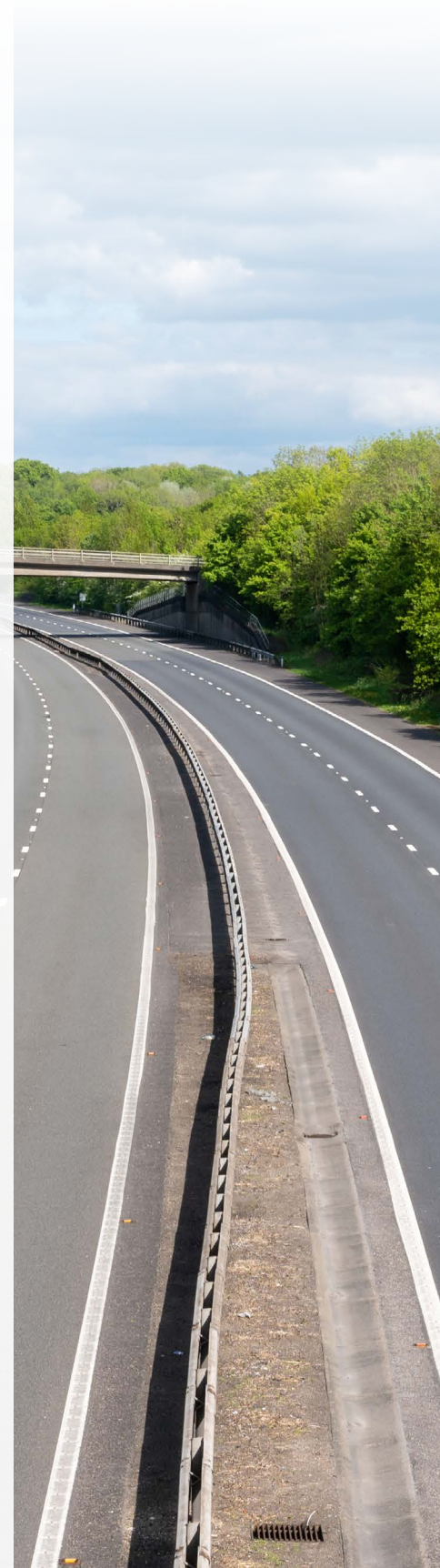
Finally, given its importance to our future generations, we are proud of the progress being made towards our target of being net zero for carbon emissions by 2030, and the way in which we are leading by example in prioritising our efforts to contribute towards positively affecting the climate change emergency.



Some examples of this progress can be found later in this report. They are shaded in green and have the  icon next to them.

This report will highlight many of the key achievements and work that has been accomplished across all three of our core priorities, as well as those that have contributed towards the net zero target. For more detail on all of these, you can read the Council Leader's full annual statement here.

We look forward to continuing the journey into the year ahead and beyond, pressing on with accomplishing more positive work for the district and supporting our residents and businesses through some challenging times.





# A PLACE TO *live*



**285** cases resolved for households facing the threat of homelessness.



**220 households** secured social housing through our Housing Register.



Our **'Ready to Be'** digital campaign reached over **76,000** people, with **20,000** video views and over **1400 visits** to our health partnership website.

**77** new build affordable housing units delivered, and approval secured for a further **398** affordable units, to include dementia friendly bungalows and a Supported Housing unit for working age residents with learning difficulties.

**270 people** attended the **Place to Grow** community open day, raising over **£700** to help support Covid recovery and tackle isolation and loneliness across the District.

Nearly **£4 million** has been paid out to **26,568 residents** as part of the Energy Rebate Scheme, to help with rising energy costs.



Fosse Villages Neighbourhood Plan adopted with more than **85%** backing from residents.



**10** falls prevention programmes and 8 falls follow on programmes for **284** people. Exercise Referral Scheme for **230** residents and a new Lower Back Pain programme for 12 people.

# A PLACE TO *live*



**427** women participated in the **JUST Programme**, **56%** of who increased their overall physical activity in 8 weeks and the majority reporting health improvements.



**£10,000** awarded to Blaby District Council by the **Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust**, for 'coffee and wellbeing' mornings for members of the armed forces community within the District.

The **Connecting the Community** – Social Prescribing service has supported over 2,000 residents with emotional wellbeing, healthy lifestyle advice, life events, access to financial support since it began in 2019.

**Care Choices Dementia Guide Edition 3 Launched** – a practical support guide for those who may have recently received a formal diagnosis or who may be struggling to find out about local support.



In partnership with **EMH Homes**, funding has been secured to retrofit a further **30 homes** under the Social Housing Decarbonisation Scheme, to improve energy efficiency and reduce fuel bills.



**79** properties have benefitted from cavity wall and/or loft insulation as part of the Blaby Help to Heat Homes scheme, saving residents on average **£175 per year**.





# A PLACE TO *work*



Over **£1.6 million** secured through external funding bids.

Ten businesses have saved over **£12,000** in running costs, through partnership work with a leading consultancy to identify money saving opportunities.

**ShopAppy** was launched in February 2022 as part of a wider initiative to support businesses as they rebuild following the pandemic. It provides an e-commerce platform for them to promote their services and products and to date has supported **64** local businesses across the district.

**53** grants awarded to different voluntary and community sector organisations, totalling **£75,000**.



**£6.5 million** in Business Grants distributed to local businesses.

LOVE YOUR COMMUNITY?  
LOVE **BLABY** LOTTERY

**Love Blaby Lottery celebrated its fourth anniversary in February:**

- Since its launch in 2018, **£122,000** has been raised for good causes
- **51** voluntary and community sector organisations are currently registered

Revenue from the lottery has funded 29 one-off re-start grants to help organisations re-open safely following the pandemic, totalling **£6,738.00**.



The Council reduced its carbon emissions by **13%** in 2020/21 over the previous year and work is ongoing to reduce this still further, as we focus on our Net Zero 2030 target.



Out of **409** councils, BDC was **ranked 36th** by Climate Emergency UK for its Climate Strategy and Action Plan and was the top district council in the County.

External areas at the council office building have benefitted from a refresh of the external lighting, moving from halogen to LED fittings – not only better for the environment but more effective and cost saving.

# A PLACE TO *visit*



Tourism map developed and a series of **12** individual heritage trails around the District launched, pulling out the stories, characters, and history of our area.



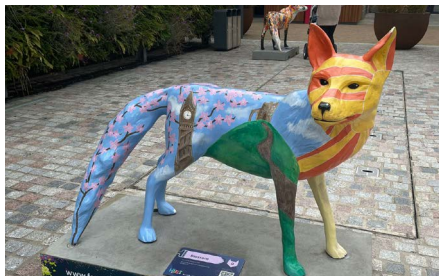
Work on the 'Buried Bouskell' project involved restoration of the grade II listed Ice House and a community archaeological dig in which **110** residents participated, all culminating in a community day attended by around **800** people.



Free Light Projection event held at Blaby Hall, showcasing what the District has to offer, included **26 stalls** from local organisations and attracted nearly **2,500** visitors.



The Fosse Fox Tourism Trail was launched with **18 fox** statues installed at visitor locations across the District.



**68,450** views on the revamped Visit Blaby website.

Brand new social media channels developed, with **2,888** followers and growing.

2021 saw the return of some of the District's biggest events, including the Victory Show and BMX National Championships.



**24** electric vehicle charge-points commissioned in Blaby and Narborough, funded by the Government's on-street residential charge point scheme. Expansion units at 3 of the locations have further increased capacity, bringing the total number of charge points to 42.














**£155,121** grant funding awarded by DEFRA towards improving air quality in the District.



# ABOUT THE DISTRICT

**Total Population** (Note 1) - **102,900**: **51%**  **Female 52,500** **49%**  **Male 50,400**

											
<b>Age</b> (Note 2)	0-4	5-9	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80-89	90+
<b>Population</b>	5,700	6,200	11,400	10,900	13,700	13,000	14,500	11,700	10,000	4,800	900
<b>Female</b>	2,800	3,000	5,500	5,500	7,100	6,600	7,400	6,000	5,300	2,800	600
<b>Male</b>	3,000	3,300	5,900	5,400	6,600	6,300	7,100	5,700	4,700	2,100	300

**Note 1:** At 21 March 2021, information taken from the 2021 Census.

**Figures are individually rounded to the nearest hundred. Figures may not add exactly due to this rounding.**

**Note 2:** This is someone's age on their last birthday on Census Day, 21 March 2021 in England and Wales. Infants under one year old are classified as 0 years.



The Office for National Statistics Population and household estimates, England and Wales: Census 2021 can be viewed [here](#).

## Unemployment at March 2022 (ONS Crown Copyright Reserved)

Age	Blaby	East Midlands	Nationally
16-29	405	32,425	488,125
30-49	640	49,295	778,605
50+	345	26,650	413,020

**Note 1:** All data are rounded to the nearest 5 and may not precisely add to the sum of the number of people claiming JSA, published on Nomis, and the number of people claiming Universal Credit required to seek work, published by DWP, due to independent rounding.

## Life Expectancy (years):

	Blaby	East Midlands	Nationally
	81.7	79.5	79.8
	85.2	82.9	83.4

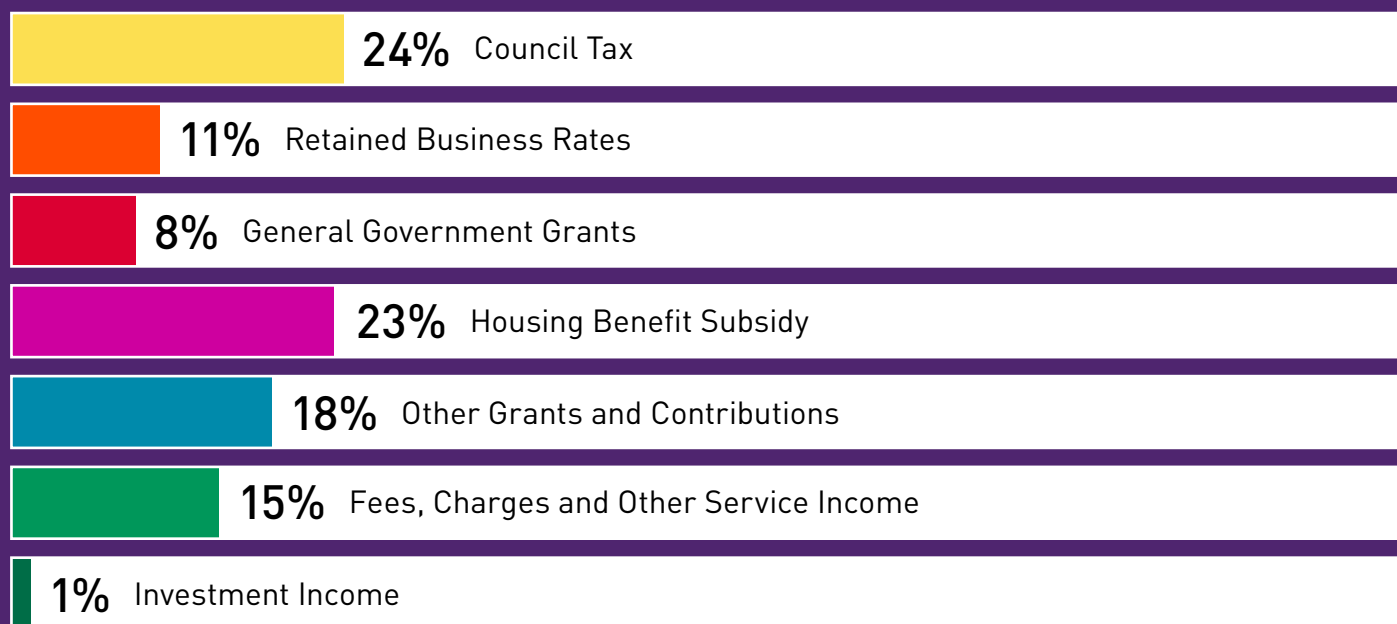
- Numbers registered to vote (at 1.9.2022) **75,546**
- Number of registered domestic properties **44,105**
- Ethnic make-up information – **11.5%** identify with a minority ethnic group (Census 2011, information not yet released from Census 2021)
- Geographical area of Blaby – **129km<sup>2</sup>** (about the size of the island of Jersey)
- As of 2021, Blaby is ranked 12 out of the 35 local authority areas in the East Midlands for population density, with on average six people living on each football pitch-sized area of land.

# OVERVIEW

## OUR FINANCES, YOUR MONEY

### Where does the money come from?

In 2021/22 the Council's revenue income was just under £40 million. This money came from the following sources:



Some of the Council's income streams continued to feel the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Fees and charges from planning applications, car parking and leisure management were reduced from normal levels, although other services such as building control, land charges, and refuse and recycling all recovered well and exceeded the budgeted income. The Government provided support to local authorities to help mitigate lost income as well as ongoing expenditure pressures that arose due to the pandemic.

The Council has worked hard to support its business community through the administration of various government-funded business grant schemes during the financial year and paid out £6.5m to businesses across Blaby District. For most of these grants the Council was acting as agent of the Government for the purpose of distributing funding to businesses, and in these cases the grant payments were made in accordance with set criteria. This means that only around £3.5 million of the grant funding is included in the "Other Grants and Contributions" figure above, where the Council had discretion over how to deliver grants to businesses.

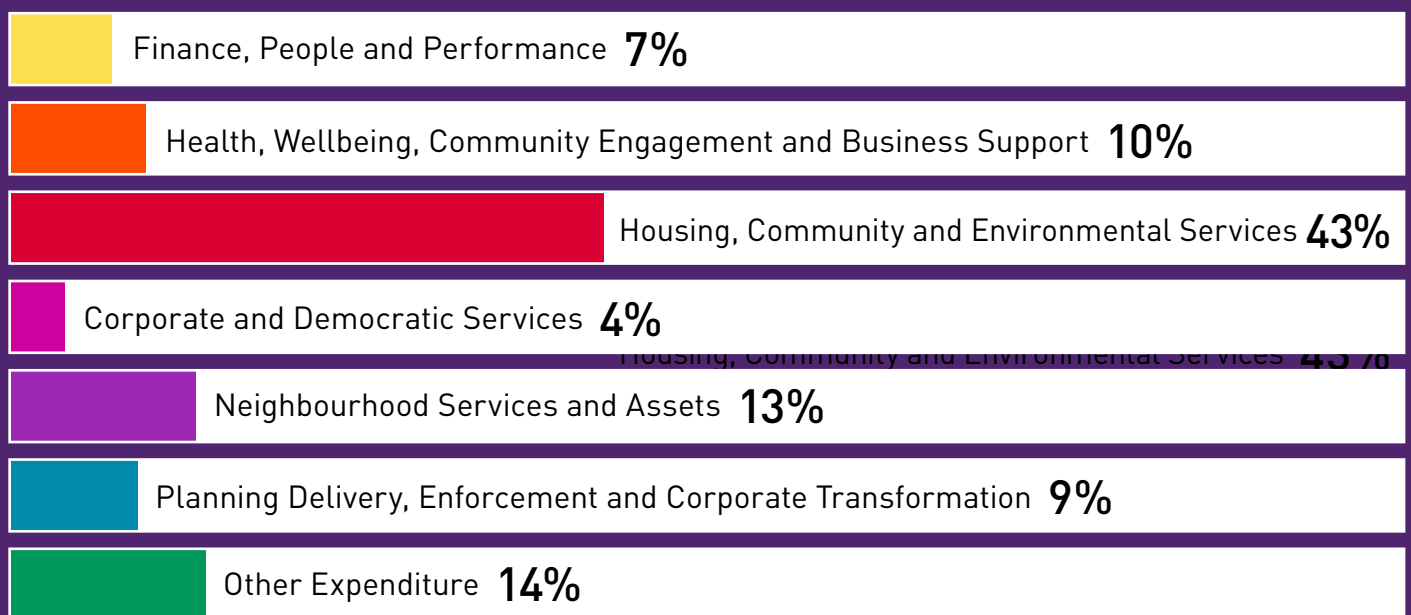


## How the money is spent

The money available is allocated through an annual budget which funds services including the costs of meeting corporate priorities and commitments. The budget is considered each year by Scrutiny Commission and Cabinet Executive before being presented to full Council for approval.

Once the budget is set the Cabinet Executive is responsible for ensuring that it is spent as planned. As part of the Blaby District Plan, we have a Medium-Term Financial Strategy supported by a five-year financial forecast to make sure that future financial resources are allocated in line with corporate objectives and priorities.

A breakdown of how the money was spent in 2021/22 is shown in the table below:



# OUR CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

This is expenditure on long term assets such as land and buildings. In 2021/22 we spent £2.147 million which was funded from a variety of sources as illustrated in the table below.

	Net Expenditure £'000
Corporate Aims and Objectives	1,027
Asset Management Planning	701
Section 106-backed Schemes (Schemes with a legal funding agreement between local authorities and landowners/ developers)	388
Other Capital Schemes	31
<b>Total Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>2,147</b>
Financed by:	
Borrowing	(444)
Capital Receipts (sale of assets and repayment of grants etc)	(286)
Government Grants	(519)
Other Grants and Contributions	(465)
Revenue Contributions and Reserves	(433)
<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>(2,147)</b>

## OUR BALANCE SHEET

The balance sheet below shows the assets we owned and the amounts we owed (liabilities) on 31 March 2022. It also shows how these net assets are allocated between spendable and non-spendable reserves.

	Net Expenditure £'000
<b>Assets</b>	
Long Term Assets	34,793
Money Owed to the Council	7,844
Cash, Investments and Other Short-Term Assets	36,199
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>78,836</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	
Items Owed by the Council	(29,249)
Borrowing	(8,629)
Other Short-Term Liabilities	(2,778)
Pension Scheme and Long-Term Liabilities	(34,259)
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>(74,915)</b>
<b>Net Assets/(Liabilities)</b>	<b>3,921</b>
Non Spendable Reserves*	18,544
Spendable Reserves**	(22,465)
<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>(3,921)</b>

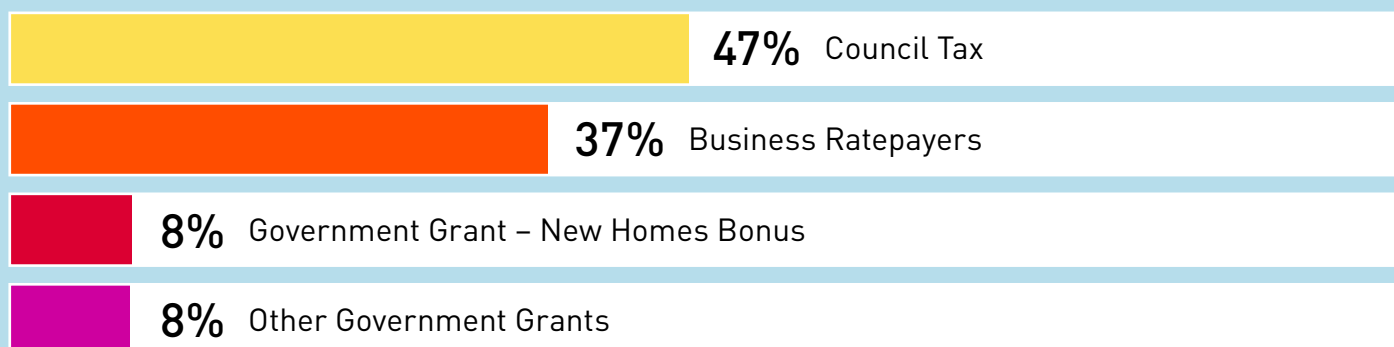
\* The non-spendable reserves are amounts arising from the financing and revaluation of fixed assets, and the pension reserve, and this sum is not available for us to spend on Council services.

\*\* Spendable reserves include £4.270 million that has been set aside to meet the abnormally high council tax and business rates deficits that have arisen out of the pandemic. Whilst classed as spendable it is not available to support the delivery of services.



# FUNDING 2022/23 ONWARDS

The Council approved a net revenue budget of £12.9 million for 2022/23, funded as follows:



The Government once again postponed the introduction of changes to the Business Rates Retention Scheme and the proposed Fair Funding Model and announced a single year settlement for local government funding in 2022/23. This means that the uncertainty over the longer-term funding position continues. Initially, indications were that Government would consult over the funding proposals during Spring 2022, with a view to implementing the new measures from 2023/24. However, it has recently been suggested that local government will receive a two-year financial settlement for 2023/24 and 2024/25, which implies that the business rates baseline reset and Fair Funding will not be introduced until 2025/26. Funding from the New Homes Bonus was much reduced in 2022/23, although for Blaby much of the loss in grant was replaced by a combination of Lower Tier Services Grant and a new Services Grant. It is expected that New Homes Bonus will be discontinued in its existing form.

The impact of COVID-19 is likely to continue into 2022/23 and beyond, with some of our key income streams still not having recovered to pre-pandemic levels. There is no continuation of the emergency funding from Government that has been received in the previous two years.

Adding to the uncertainties surrounding the future of business rates and fair funding, is the impact of the cost-of-living crisis caused mainly by significant rises in gas, electricity, and fuel prices. These increases have in turn driven a general rise in the cost of living that will add to the cost pressures that the Council is feeling, as well as having a detrimental impact on many of our residents.

The protection of front-line services remains a priority and the Council is taking a structured, measured approach to finding new ways to deliver lower cost services, so that we can get the maximum value for our taxpayers' money.

# APPENDIX 1

## SUMMARY OF ACCOUNTS 2021-22

The Council's spending can be separated into revenue expenditure and capital expenditure. Revenue expenditure is our day-to-day spending on services including employee costs, premises, and other running costs. Capital expenditure relates to the purchase, enhancement, and improvement of our fixed assets, such as offices, leisure centres and car parks.

Please note that this summary shows net rather than gross figures, i.e., the net cost of services of £14.884 million is made up of gross costs less fees and charges, specific grants etc.

### OUR DAY TO DAY SPENDING

The Council's General Fund balance represents a key element of our overall financial resources. In 2021/22 we made a surplus of £1.124 million. During the year Council approved the re-allocation of £1.140 million to earmarked reserves to mitigate against future spending pressures in specific areas, and a further £0.5 million was set aside to cover emergency landfill gas monitoring works at Huncote Leisure Centre. This means that the Council's General Fund balance on 31 March 2022 was £4.699 million. The table below shows the net cost of funding all the services provided by Blaby District Council.

Income and Expenditure Account	Net Expenditure £'000
Finance, People and Performance	2,252
Health, Wellbeing, Community Engagement and Business Support	778
Housing, Community and Environmental Services	2,565
Corporate and Democratic Services	1,439
Neighbourhood Services and Assets	4,782
Planning Delivery, Enforcement and Corporate Transformation	3,068
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>14,884</b>
Other Operating Expenditure	3,606
Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure	636
Taxation and Non-Specific Grant Income and Expenditure:	
- Government Grants	(6,395)
- Redistributed Business Rates	(1,224)
- Council Tax	(9,659)
- Capital Grants and Contributions	(304)
<b>(Surplus)/Deficit on Provision of Services</b>	<b>1,544</b>
Statutory Accounting Adjustments	(3,113)
Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	445
<b>Net (Surplus)/Deficit for the year</b>	<b>(1,124)</b>
General Fund Opening Balance	(5,215)
Re-allocated to Earmarked Reserves	1,640
General Fund Closing Balance	(4,699)



# APPENDIX 2

Improved

\*Unchanged

Declined

Performance & Information Measures	2019	2020	2021	2022	2021 v 2022
<b>Accounts</b>					
Percentage of invoices paid within 10 days	91.44	91.03	87.99	86.3	*Unchanged
<b>Customer Services</b>					
Percentage of total payments received by direct debit	80.87	80.78	82.6	83.7	Improved
<b>Information and Contracts</b>					
Number of new 'Freedom of Information' and 'General Environmental Information' requests	776	613	496	535	*Unchanged
Percentage of local land charge (searches) completed within 10 working days (Blaby, Hinckley and Bosworth and Oadby and Wigston Councils combined)	98.67	99.84	91.17	90.80	*Unchanged
<b>Communications</b>					
Number of self-service accounts created	8,404	7,448	8,308	6181	Declined
<b>Community Services</b>					
Domestic Abuse - number of new cases supported	90	88	94	52	n/a
Resident Support - number of new cases supported	213	278	290	319	n/a
<b>Council Tax</b>					
Percentage of Council Tax collection	97.96	98.04	97.79	98.02	Improved
<b>Domestic Disabled Facilities Grants</b>					
Average days taken from first contact to approval - Major applications	183.41	225.63	344.59	288.84	Improved
Average days taken from first contact to approval - Minor applications	218.85	189.49	105.32	120.96	Declined
<b>Environmental Services</b>					
Number of large flytipping incidents	534	547	1,092	624	Improved
<b>Housing</b>					
Homelessness - number of 'potentially homeless' cases dealt with	382	574	728	737	*Unchanged

Improved

\*Unchanged

Declined

Performance & Information Measures	2019	2020	2021	2022	2021 v 2022
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### Neighbourhood Services

Percentage of household waste diverted to reuse, recycling or composting	43.2	44.87	45.12	44.76**	Declined
Average kilograms of residual (black lid bin) waste per household per year	450.5	459.24	487.08	489	Declined

### Benefits

Average number of days taken to process a change of circumstances	6.18	7.71	9.03	8.67	Improved
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### Development Services

Percentage of planning applications that were valid for assessment upon receipt	51.64	57.22	65.14	64.86	Declined
Percentage of planning applications approved.	90.35	87.73	88.35	89.29	Improved
Planning - number of days taken to reach an approval decision (householder applications)	47.89	46	73.13	91.65	Declined
Planning - number of days taken to reach an approval decision (major applications)	138.8	201.8	201	208.71	Declined
Planning - number of days taken to reach an approval decision (minor applications)	84.51	96.23	97.73	120.16	Declined
Planning - number of days taken to reach an approval decision (other applications)	47.71	47.77	56.9	58.92	Improved

### Corporate Health

Average number of days sickness per employee	7.3	10.22	6.96	8.49	Declined
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\* An 'unchanged' indicator may have a tolerance applied to allow for changes within 10 per cent either way from the previous year's performance

\*\*This data is provisional pending verification by Defra

# APPENDIX 3

## Equality and Monitoring

### STAFF BREAKDOWN

Category	%
<b>Gender %</b>	
Females	55%
Males	45%
<b>Disability %</b>	
Employees with a disability	6.43%
<b>Age Bandings %</b>	
Age 0 - 18	0.0%
Age 18 - 30	12.8%
Age 31 - 40	15.8%
Age 41 - 50	27.2%
Age 51 - 60	35.7%
Age 60+	8.5%

Category	%
<b>Ethnicity</b>	
Asian or Asian British-Indian	4.09%
Black British	1.17%
Mixed heritage (white and black)	0.88%
White- any other white background	2.92%
White and Asian	0.29%
White British	83.92%
White- Irish	0.0%
Undeclared- preferred not to specify	6.73%



## Key to Photographs in this Report

### Front page

Countesthorpe – village view  
Fosse Fox  
Glenfield – village view  
Stoney Stanton – quarrying history sculpture  
Narborough Station  
Light Projection Show, Blaby Hall  
Blaby Tourism Map

### Page 3

Julia Smith, Chief Executive  
Sarah Pennelli, Strategic Director  
(Section 151 Officer)  
John Richardson, Strategic Director  
Cllr Terry Richardson, Leader Blaby  
District Council

### Page 5

Computer/tablet/phone graphic  
A Place to Grow  
Steady Steps class (Ready to Be...)  
Exercise referral

### Page 6

Armed Forces Installation, May 2022  
Armed Forces Installation, May 2022  
Loft insulation home improvements

### Page 7

ShopAppy  
Launch of Money Saving Advice Scheme  
Business Gateway meeting/speaker  
Blaby Business Breakfast

### Page 8

Tourism Map & guide launch  
Blaby Hall Light Projection Show  
Fosse Fox  
Ice House  
Bouskell dig  
Vehicle charging point

# CONTACT US

This document can be made available on request in other languages and formats (large print, Braille or on audio tape) by contacting:

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The document is available on our website: [www.blaby.gov.uk](http://www.blaby.gov.uk)