

**Resources and Personnel Policy Portfolio
Councillor G Marshall**

Report to Council – 16 July 2025

Finance Services Update

Statement of Accounts 2024/25

The draft Statement of Accounts for 2024/25 has been published on the Council's website. The accounts closedown process is an extensive and complex project, and it is a real achievement by the Finance Services team to meet the 30 June statutory deadline. In the previous year, Broxtowe was one of only 41% of local authorities to publish their draft accounts by the required deadline.

The accounts will then be subjected to scrutiny by Forvis Mazars, with the audit due to start in September. The audit should then be completed and the final accounts signed off by 30 November. In the meantime, regular updates will be provided to the Governance, Audit and Standards Committee.

Accounts Outturn

The accounts outturn report was presented to Cabinet on 1 July with the report providing the figures and highlights for financial performance in 2024/25.

There was a net underspend of £1.4m on the General Fund revenue budget. Overall, after financing and transfers to and from earmarked reserves, there was a net withdrawal of £489k from General Fund balances which closed at £5.6m at 31 March 2025. The variations were due to a combination of net budget underspends, additional income, budget carry forwards, changes in provisions and grants and effective financial management across the Council.

This included a net underspend in employee related costs of £949k against the budget which also had a challenging vacancy target of £600k. Outturn included the full-year impact of the pay award, the senior managers pay review, and the costs of agency and interim staff used to cover vacancies within the establishment.

It was pleasing to note the sustained levels of income being generated from its fees and charges and commercial property rentals. This is essential to support the Council in balancing its budgets and achieving financial sustainability.

In terms of financing the budget, the main area of risk, volatility and complexity is linked to Business Rates. Whilst there continues to be growth across the Nottinghamshire Business Rates Pool area, the value of net rates received by the Council can be significantly impacted by rating appeals and void periods, particularly for larger units. With Business Rates being accounted for through the Collection Fund, any impact on General Fund balances will not materialise until the following year. This timing issue for the General Fund is monitored by the Section 151 Officer.

The Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) showed a £534k net underspend for 2024/25. This resulted in a decreased draw of £667k on HRA working balances which amounted to £2.2m as at 31 March 2025.

There was an underspend of £609k on employee related costs, mainly due to vacancies across the Housing Service particularly within the Strategy and Performance and Housing Repairs teams. Key services were maintained by the continued use of sub-contractors, the cost of which has offset the saving.

The cost of Housing Disrepair Claims continues to be a budget pressure for the HRA, with a £170k budget overspend recorded and a further provision of £300k being included for the potential cost of outstanding claims.

It was pleasing to note that Housing Rents income was £527k more than budgeted, which is vital to the sustainability of the HRA. Income from investments was £155k higher than estimated due to positive cash flows and interest rates across the year.

In terms of the approved Capital Programme, the Council spent £31.4m against a total budget of £64.8m. This included the significant investment in the Council's housing stock, housing delivery programme acquisitions and new builds, regeneration projects with the Stapleford Towns Fund, Kimberley Means Business and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Pride in Parks, Chilwell Quarry, vehicle fleet and the ICT development programme. The capital programme is financed by a mixture of capital receipts, capital grants, Section 106 contributions and prudential borrowing.

The main slippage in the programme largely related to the housing delivery schemes, where progress can be affected by many external factors, and the regeneration projects which continue to progress at a pace. Many of the unutilised capital budgets were approved for carry forward into 2025/26. The progress and risks associated with all schemes continues to be carefully managed by the respective budget holders and is monitored GMT. More details were presented to Cabinet on 1 July.

Medium Term Financial Strategy and Business Strategy

The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and Business Strategy will be refreshed over the summer to reflect outturn and the latest budget information. The outcomes will be presented to Cabinet in early November for approval in advance of 2026/27 budget setting.

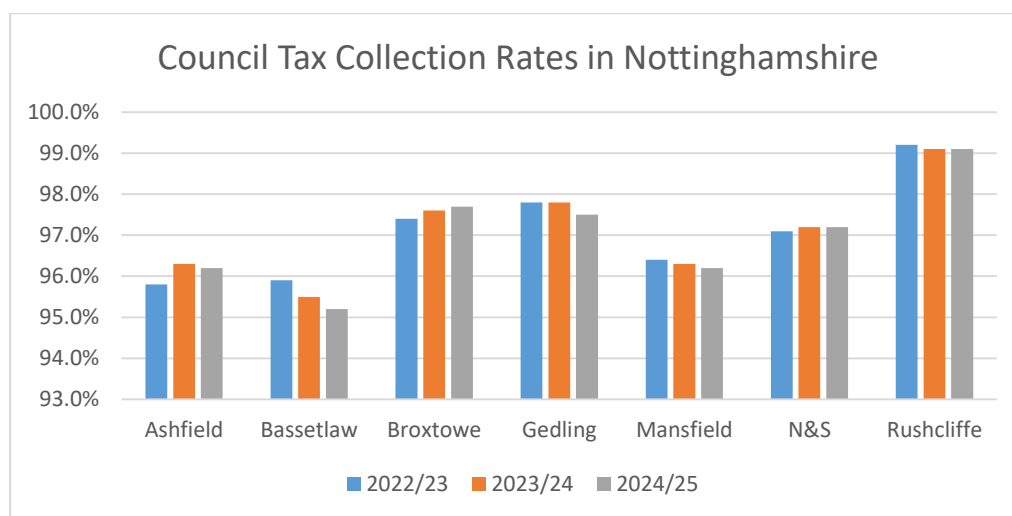
Local Government Reorganisation

The Deputy Chief Executive and Assistant Director of Finance, through the Nottinghamshire Finance Officers Association (NFOA), are continuing to provide financial data relating to the Government's requirement for Local Government Reorganisation in Nottinghamshire. NFOA is working to validate the baseline financial data that will support the options being considered and prior to submitting a final business case for Nottingham and Nottinghamshire. Section 151 Officers are content that the financial assumptions made in the interim plan are reasonable.

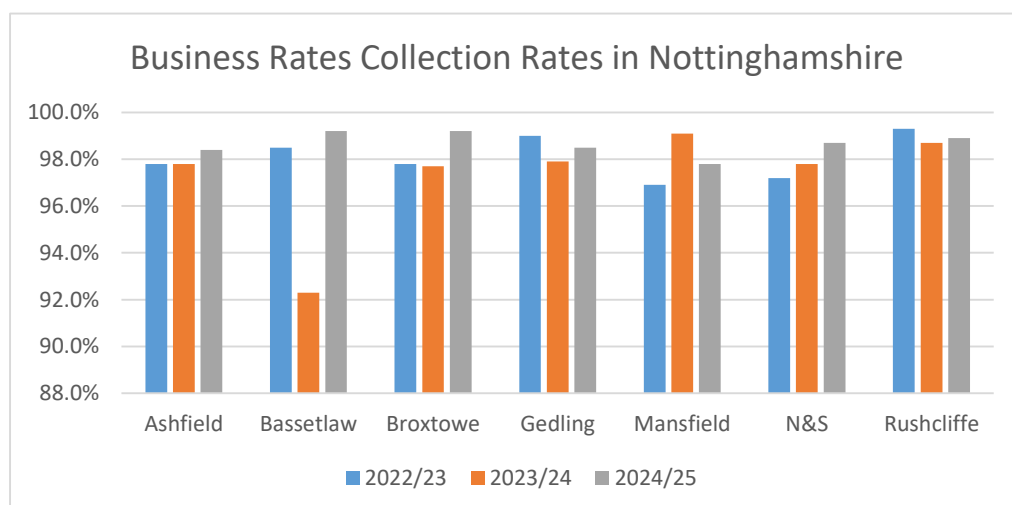
Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services

Revenues

The main KPI in respect of Revenues is the in year collection rate for Council Tax and Business Rates, which were 97.7% and 99.2% respectively. This collection rate on Council Tax makes us the second highest performing Council in Nottinghamshire behind Rushcliffe. This interesting point to note is that in respect of Council Tax collection rate, Broxtowe is the only Council in Nottinghamshire that has seen an improved position for each of the last three years. It must also be noted that collection of charges continues after the year and it is estimated that that after three to six year the Council collects 99.6% of the appropriate net collectable debit. The chart below shows the authorities in Nottinghamshire.



Business Rates is much more volatile in respect of collection however, Broxtowe have seen an improved position in 2024/25 compared to the previous year. The chart below shows how this compares to other authorities in Nottinghamshire.



Revenues will also be developing and implementing new online forms to promote self service for those that want to utilise this functionality. This will be rolled out in phases throughout the financial year.

In addition, the Sundry Debtors collection rate is 90.18% against a target of 90%.

Benefits

The Benefit service is monitored externally by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) through key performance indicators (KPIs) relating to new claims, change in circumstance processing times and the annual subsidy audit.

Performance in benefits remains one of the best in the country with new claims taking on average 7.47 days to process and change in circumstances taking 3.33 days in 2024/25.

The Benefits Team received another unqualified Housing Benefit Subsidy report in 2024/25, making it the ninth year in a row. This unqualified claim provides DWP with full assurance that the service is making payments of Housing Benefit in accordance with the regulations.

Active promotion of Discretionary Housing Payments continues and in 2024/25 the team paid out more than the DWP contributions. The additional amounts were covered by funding from the Household Support Fund. This will be the same in 2025/26.

Customer Services

During 2024/25 the Customer Services Team were able to see a significant improvement in the service being provided. The Team is responsible for the following service areas in 2024/25:

- Switchboard
- Rents
- Benefits
- Council Tax
- Business Rates
- Grounds Maintenance
- Street Cleansing
- Refuse
- Garden Waste

The percentage abandonment was 8.41% against a target of 10%. This shows a significant improvement from the previous year of 15.88%. This is reflected in the positive comments being received by members of the public.

This performance has continued into the new year and is even more impressive based on the fact that the team implemented a new telephony system on 2 May 2025 and have now started taking calls for Housing Allocations, with no increase in resources.

Communications and Engagement

The Communications Team have been supporting various Council projects over recent months including:

- Progress on the Housing Building Delivery plan
- Climate Change Strategy delivery
- Summer events programme
- Stapleford Towns Fund
- Kimberley Means Business project
- CEDARs launch

The team are also working with the Finance Services Team on this year's budget consultation.

Options are currently being developed for a programme of face to face and direct engagement with harder to reach groups for 2025/26.

Email Me Service

At the end of May 2025, The Council's Email Me Service had 30,754 subscribers who were signed up to receive updates on a range of topics including Latest News, Jobs, Business Updates, Parks and Open Spaces and Environment updates. It is also used to share the Council's weekly Employee Briefing and monthly Member Briefing, Members Matters. Residents can sign up at www.broxtowe.gov.uk/emailme

Civic Office

Afternoon Tea Parties will take place in each of the four towns to thank members of the community who support the local area. The Civic Office has been in touch with Members and Town and Parish Council for nominees.

A date for the next Broxtowe Voluntary Awards has been set for 13 March. Nominations will open on 1 September on the Council's website in each of the 8 award categories:

- Benefitting Broxtowe Award (Overall winner)
- Community Hero Award
- Culture and Heritage Award
- The Green Futures Award
- Sporting Volunteer Award
- Youth Work Volunteer Award
- The Young Volunteer Award
- Lifetime Achievement Award

This year, to make the event more accessible to the volunteers nominated, tickets will be free. Local businesses are being approached for sponsor the event or an award category.