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The Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Memorandum

Main Supply Estimate – 2024/25

1. Overview

1.1. Objectives

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body, accountable to Parliament through the Speaker's Committee.

We recommend fair electoral and boundary arrangements for local government electors in England and support associated changes in local governance and structures.

We conduct electoral reviews by considering the electoral boundaries of local authorities in England and recommending any changes to Parliament. In doing this, we aim to:

- Make sure that, within an authority, each councillor represents a similar number of electors.
- Create boundaries that are appropriate and reflect community ties and identities.
- Deliver reviews informed by local needs, views and circumstances.

1.2. Spending controls

Spending is broken down into several different spending totals, for which approval is sought.

Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (Resource DEL) – comprising day-to-day running costs.

Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) – to cover dilapidations costs.

Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit (Capital DEL) – for the investment in capital equipment, both tangible and intangible in nature. In 2024/25, this is predominantly associated with a move to new premises in autumn 2024.

1.3. Comparison of net spending total sought

The table below shows how the spending totals sought by us compare with last year:

Spending total amounts sought this year (Main Estimate 2024-25)		Main Estimate 2023-24	Difference (+ / -) compared to original budget last year (Main Estimate 2023-24)	
Resource DEL	£2.769m	£2.633m	£0.136m	+5%
AME	£0.010m	£0.010m	£0m	0%
Capital DEL	£0.050m	£0.050m	£0m	0%

1.4. Key drivers of spending changes since last year

The net resource DEL has increased by 5%.

The key drivers for this increase are:

- 5% uplift to staff costs
- 4% non-pay budget inflation
- Training & development funding
- Mapping costs
- Removal costs
- Internal audit

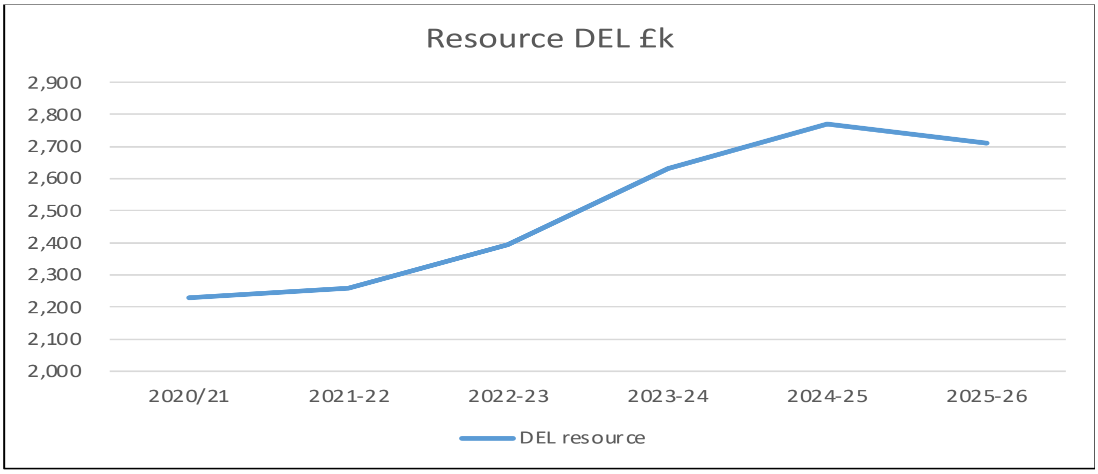
However, our estimate also reflects decreases relating to:

- Recruitment
- IT equipment
- Office accommodation, due to relocation to a smaller footprint from autumn 2024
- Depreciation

1.5. Spending and income trends

The chart below shows overall resource DEL spending over the five years covered by the current corporate plan and an estimate for the year following this Main Supply Estimate.

Our anticipated budget reduction next year is as a result of a move in office premises during 2024-25 which should result in an ongoing saving from 2025-26 onwards.



1.6. Administration costs and efficiency plans

The efficiencies, savings and increase in review numbers we achieved in our early years means that we have reached a place where our budget currently offers little opportunity for further significant savings without reducing staff numbers, reviewing our premises footprint (which is being undertaken currently) or compromising the quality of our reviews and the number of reviews we can deliver.

As part of our ongoing drive to reduce costs and increase efficiency, we keep under continuous review our processes and ways of working. We expect review costs to remain broadly in line this coming year with last, although we will continue to explore opportunities to increase efficiency in our processes.

2. Spending and income detail

2.1. Explanations of changes in spending and income

The table below shows how spending plans compare with last year.

Resource DEL	Amounts sought this year (Main Estimate 2024-25)	Last year (Main Estimate 2023-24)	Changes from last year	
Subhead A	£2.8m*	£2.6m*	+£0.2m	+5%

*rounded

Capital DEL	Amounts sought this year (Main Estimate 2024-25)	Last year (Main Estimate 2023-24)	Changes from last year	
Subhead A	£0.1m*	£0.1m*	£0.0m	0%

*£50k rounded up

AME	Amounts sought this year (Main Estimate 2024-25)	Last year (Main Estimate 2023-24)	Changes from last year	
Subhead B	£0.0m*	£0.0m*	£0.0m	0%

*£10k rounded down

Our 2024-25 budget reflects the following:

Inflationary and other increases to our budgets taking account of HM Treasury guidance and discussions, likely market conditions and negotiations with our individual suppliers. We have included provision for a 5% increase to staff costs and a 4% increase to cover inflationary increases from suppliers and other government agencies.

2.2. Ring fenced budgets

As in 2023-24, we have included a contingency of 4% of our resource DEL budget which will be ring-fenced and used for such exceptional and unforeseen items that would normally necessitate a small Supplementary Estimate to be sought.

We recognise the value for money implications of convening a Speaker's Committee to approve a small amount of expenditure and have built in this buffer to avoid this.

Resource DEL

Ring fenced budgets Amounts sought this year (Main Estimate 2024-25)		Difference (+ / -) compared to original budget last year (Main Estimate 2023-24)	
Risk & resilience	£106k	+£5k	+5%

2.3. Changes to contingent liabilities

We do not have any contingent liabilities.

3. Priorities and performance

3.1. Measures of performance against each priority

Our updated Corporate Plan for 2024-25 sets out our high-level objectives, and measures of performance, for the financial year.

Our focus over the coming year will continue to be on delivering a programme of reviews to provide fair electoral and boundary arrangements for local government electors in England and to support associated changes in local governance and structures.

Once again, we plan to start around 25 reviews over the course of the year. This will be made up of a programme of periodic electoral reviews (meeting our duty to review authorities 'from time to time') along with a number of intervention reviews, addressing poor levels of electoral equality. We will also retain flexibility in our programme to ensure we are able to respond to requests from local authorities, or from Government, where reviews may assist in the delivery of effective and convenient local government.

In 2023-24, we are on track to complete all planned reviews in time for their implementation at the election date agreed at the start of the process. We want to build on this level of performance next year and will continue to seek improvements and efficiencies to the review process.

The input to our reviews from local people and organisations is essential in helping us to refine the proposals in our electoral reviews. We are therefore continuing to focus on improving public engagement in our work. We are currently achieving high levels of satisfaction (77% of respondents expressed being 'highly satisfied' or 'quite satisfied' with their overall experience of dealing with the Commission in 2022-23), and in the next year we intend to review the questions we are asking in order to deepen our understanding of the experiences of those engaging with our reviews and to help identify areas for improvement.

3.2. Major projects

This year we will need to identify and relocate to new office premises at the end of our current lease in September 2024. This provides an opportunity not only to reduce our footprint and accommodation costs but also to ensure that our premises support the way we want to work as an organisation, enabling us to deliver efficiently and effectively for all our stakeholders.

4. Accounting Officer Approval

This memorandum has been prepared according to the requirements and guidance set out by HM Treasury and the House of Commons Scrutiny Unit, available on the Scrutiny Unit website.

The information in this Estimate Memorandum has been approved by myself as Accounting Officer.

Ailsa Irvine

Accounting Officer

Local Government Boundary Commission for England

16 February 2024