

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-047-2016/17
Date of meeting: 1 December 2016



Portfolio: Planning Policy

Subject: Local Plan Resources Update

Responsible Officer: Kassandra Polyzoides (01992 564119)

Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) To note expenditure from the Local Plan budget to date in 2016/17 financial year, and to agree a bid for an addition to the DDF of £1,027,500 in 2017/18 and £237,000 in 2018/19 (£1,264,500 in total over the two financial years)

Executive Summary:

Regular monitoring of the resources available to deliver the Local Plan has identified a shortfall in the existing budget provision of £1,027,500 in 2017/18 and £237,000 in 2018/19. This shortfall arises from a number of elements, but particularly further extension to the programme management support for the Local Plan, a need to provide for maternity cover for the Assistant Director (Planning Policy & Economic Development), and continued consultancy support for the site selection work strand, including analysis of potential employment sites.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To ensure that the Local Plan is sound it is vital the process is adequately resourced. The requirement for a comprehensive and robust evidence base is clear, and must be in place prior to submission of the Local Plan for Examination.

Other Options for Action:

Not to agree the additional funding identified for the Local Plan DDF.

Report:

1. Cabinet received an update report on the Local Plan Timetable (Development Scheme) and resourcing in July 2016 (C-009-2016/17). This report identified a likely shortfall in the Local Plan budget for 2017/18 and beyond, and that appropriate reports would be bought before Cabinet to inform the budget setting process.

2. The Council has recently published the Draft Local Plan for public consultation, reaching a significant milestone in the Plan preparation process. It is clear that the scale of work required to progress the Plan further in a timely fashion remains significant. The final costs for running the consultation period are still being accumulated, but initial indications are that costs for printing particularly will be significantly lower than during previous

consultation periods. However, any saving in this area is offset by a further need to extend the project management support arrangements and to engage further support on site selection and employment site analysis through to the adoption of the Local Plan. Additional costs also arise from more detailed scoping of transport modelling and testing of potential site allocations to be included in the Local Plan.

3. A number of vacancies exist in the team, and it is recognised that the recruitment market for planning professionals is currently challenging. It will also be necessary to provide for maternity cover for the Assistant Director (Planning Policy & Economic Development) from December 2016. Steps have been taken to fill the vacant junior roles using secondments, with the vacant Planning Policy Manager post and the maternity cover referred to above being provided in combination with the extended project management support. These arrangements are intended to be in place until May 2017 in the first instance.

4. Finally, additional expenditure is included to provide for master planning of the strategic sites around Harlow. The Council has recently submitted a bid to Communities and Local Government jointly with Harlow and East Herts District Councils seeking funding towards the delivery of development under the Garden Cities programme. It is not yet known whether this bid will be successful, but the need to resource comprehensive master planning of these strategic sites will remain. The need for this element to be funded by the Council will be kept under review.

5. A small amount is currently forecast to be saved from the estimates made of costs for the consultation period. At present, these savings may amount to approximately £75,000, but this figure cannot be confirmed until the consultation period has ended. This saving will be used to offset further items required to support the preparation of the Local Plan.

6. Appendix 1 shows the detail of the currently forecast budget required to support the Local Plan to adoption in 2018. This shows that as of December 2016, there is forecast to be an overall shortfall in budget provision of £1,264,500. This shortfall will commence from 2017/18, and is largely a result of the additional spend required to achieve the consultation period on the Draft Local Plan.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	total
Spend	£297,481	£329,589	£0	£0	£627,070
Committed		£439,611	£0	£0	£439,611
Estimated spend (evidence)		£333,320	£921,900	£53,000	£1,308,220
Estimated spend (LP process)		£75,314	£105,600	£184,000	£364,914
TOTAL BUDGET REQUIRED	£297,481	£1,177,834	£1,027,500	£237,000	£2,739,815
Budget available 2015/16 (Cabinet Dec 2016)	£435,140	£551,910	£231,750	£254,000	£1,472,800
Total additional required			£1,027,500	£237,000	-£1,264,500

Resource Implications:

As set out above and by Appendix 1, the overall Local Plan budget requires an additional £1,027,500 in 2017/18 and £237,000 in 2018/19.

Legal and Governance Implications:

The preparation of a Local Plan is a statutory requirement for each Local Authority. It is necessary to ensure the preparation of this Plan is supported by comprehensive and robust evidence, and the necessary staffing resources are in place to ensure delivery in a timely manner.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

The preparation of a Local Plan is a key Corporate Priority for the Council, and will meet a number of additional Corporate Objectives.

Consultation Undertaken:

Accountancy, within the Resources Directorate.

Background Papers:

Cabinet report C-009-2016/17

Risk Management:

Adequate resourcing is key to the timely delivery of the Local Plan. Without suitable funding, there is a risk that the Local Plan will take significantly longer to prepare bringing a heightened risk of Government intervention, inappropriate development across the District and reputational damage to the Council.

Equality Analysis:

Counsel advice was sought on whether the Draft Local Plan should be subject to an EqIA, the advice received was that a full EqIA should only be considered at the Reg 19 stage of Local Plan preparation.

An Equality Analysis was prepared for the Draft Local Plan. Given Counsel's advice as above it is not deemed necessary to conduct a full EqIA for the current Local Plan budget update.

Appendix 1 – Local Plan expenditure and forecast commitments

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	total
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**Strategic Programme
(July 2016)**

Evidence gathering

Evid & Draft LP
Consultation
(Oct-Dec 16)Pre-Sub Reps
(Summer'17), Sub
to Plg Insp
(End'17)Examination
(Feb'18)
Adoption
(Sept'18)

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	
Spend					
Evidence base work	£162,853	£168,174			£331,027
Project Management	£124,165	£143,415			£267,580
Legal advice	£10,463	£18,000			£28,463
TOTAL	£297,481	£329,589	£0	£0	£627,070

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	
Committed (by order or contract)					
Evidence base work		£379,325			£379,325
Project Management (to Nov 2016)		£40,000			£40,000
Draft Local Plan - Consultation costs		£20,286			£20,286
		£439,611	£0	£0	£439,611

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	
Evidence Base work & studies (estimated spend)					
Project management (Dec 2016 - May 2017)		£28,800	£14,400		£43,200
Maternity and vacancy cover (Dec 2016 - May 2017)		£70,000	£35,000		£105,000
Project management (June 2017 - Dec 2017)			£43,200		£43,200
Maternity and vacancy cover (June 2017 - Dec 2017)			£122,500		£122,500

Population estimates project (ECC)		£1,500	£1,500		£3,000
Strategic Housing Market Assessment			£40,000		£40,000
EF District Transport Accessibility & input to site selection		£35,000			£35,000
EF District Transport Modelling		£10,000	£30,000		£40,000
Contribution to Wider Harlow VISUM transport modelling		£15,000			£15,000
Sustainability Appraisal		£22,250	£10,000		£32,250
Strategic Sustainability Appraisal (joint work)		£5,000			£5,000
Habitat Regulation Assessment		£15,000	£4,300		£19,300
Habitat Regulation Assessment (cross boundary strategic review)		£5,000			£5,000
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Level 2) & EiP support			£11,000	£3,000	£14,000
Viability Assessment of emerging plan (CIL prep)			£30,000		£30,000
Economic Study (HJA)			£30,000		£30,000
Strategic Functional Economic Area study (joint on HMA area)		£12,500			£12,500
Glasshouses		£30,000			£30,000
Town Centres Study			£30,000		£30,000
Open Space, Sport & Recreation			£20,000		£20,000
Tourism/Hotel capacity & demand research (Phase 2)		£21,370			£21,370
Masterplanning for Harlow area (if Garden Cities bid is unsuccessful)			£100,000	£50,000	£150,000
Masterplanning to support strategic site delivery (beyond sites around Harlow)			£50,000		£50,000
Site selection further iteration and employment analysis			£350,000		£350,000
Hillhouse Outline Planning Application		£57,000			£57,000
Green Infrastructure Strategy - ancillary consultation costs		£4,900			£4,900
		£0	£921,900	£53,000	£1,308,220

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	
Local Plan process					
Consultation on draft Plan (Oct - Dec 2016) (remaining budget)		£75,314			£75,314
Publication for representations (Summer 2017)			£95,600		£95,600
Counsel advice (Pre-Submission reps)			£10,000		£10,000
Local Plan Examination in Public (Feb 2018)				£120,500	£120,500
Counsel advice (examination)				£20,000	£20,000
Local Plan Adoption (Sept 2018)				£23,500	£23,500
CIL Examination in Public (Sept 2018)				£20,000	£20,000
	£0	£75,314	£105,600	£184,000	£364,914