

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 31 July 2012

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Richard Bassett
(Planning)

SUPPLEMENTARY DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FUND (DDF) ESTIMATE – LOCAL PLAN PROJECT

Recommending:

That a supplementary DDF estimate of £160,000 be approved to ensure that there are sufficient resources available to deliver the Local Plan on time.

1. We have considered the resources necessary to deliver the Local Plan which is the Council's number one priority for the foreseeable future.
2. The then Cabinet at its meeting on 17 December 2007 agreed the estimated costs of delivering the Local Plan Framework over a period of four years and six monthly progress reports were submitted following that meeting to the Local Development Framework Cabinet Committee. The last of these reports was considered in December 2011.
3. The original estimate was £1.4M over the four year period. In the first two years there was limited expenditure because work was diverted to meet the requirements of a Direction by the Government to tackle Gypsy, Roma and Traveller issues and some £0.25M of the £1.4M provision was used for this project. More recently part of the provision has been used to fund a Design and Development Brief for Loughton Broadway (£65,000) although this was subsequently re-credited to the Local Plan budget and to fund a similar Brief for the St John's Road, Epping scheme (£85,000 which has not yet been re-credited).
4. Although the recent switch from a Local Development Framework to a new style Local Plan has reduced some of the tasks which would have been necessary there is also a need for some additional tasks, eg, the adoption of a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which will require substantial research work.
- 5.....In the past few months the Local Plan work has been accelerated with consultants appointed to assist on project management and extra staff employed on secondment and fixed-term contracts.
6. The original DDF underspends have been carried forward in the budget but there is a requirement that this can only take place for a maximum of two years unless a renewed authority is obtained.
- 7....The updated project plan for the project has a key milestone of the end of August 2013 at which time the Local Plan should be developed to a point where it can be submitted for public examination.

8. Other significant costs will arise in relation to project management, updating evidence to meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework, ensuring that a complementary CIL is brought in with the new Local Plan, and updating the Sustainability Assessment.

9. The attached Appendix sets out what the expenditure has been since 2007, what is committed and what is predicted for the next three financial years. It also indicates the sources of funding. It is clear that to complete the Plan on time some additional funding is required. Existing Continuing Services budgets will continue to be applied but we estimate that a further £160,000 needs to be allocated.

10. Accordingly, we recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.