

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 30 July 2013

Portfolio Holder: Councillor R Bassett (Planning)

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT SCANNING - BUDGET UNDERSPENDS AND FUNDING OF AN ADDITIONAL POST

Recommending:

- (1) That approval be given to the under-spend of £11,600 in the Planning Support Budget for Document Scanning in 2012/13 be carried forward to 2013/14; and**
- (2) That this under-spend be combined with a smaller salary under-spend to fund one Grade 3 Administration Assistant post to scan the large site paper planning files which are considered too complex and detailed to be sent to Northgate for scanning as part of the standard 'back scanning' of records process.**

1. We have been informed that the progress of electronic records development in the Planning and Economic Development Directorate slowed down substantially in 2011 and 2012 due to staffing and resource difficulties in the Planning Support Team.

2. There is a need to support business processes within Planning and Economic Development to promote better ways of working. This has resulted in the identification in the Directorate Business Plan 2013 – 2014 of an Electronic Records Management Progress Plan which details the requirement to progress EDRMS (Electronic Document Records Management Systems).

3. Our recommendations will assist in taking steps to convert to electronic format a significant element of paper records for large site development control files, conservation files and contaminated land files.

4. We are proposing that the identified under-spend in 2012/13 should be combined with a two month salary under-spend for post PST11 to fund one scale 3 Administration Assistant for ten months to scan the large site planning files which are currently in paper format and are considered too complex and detailed to be sent to Northgate for scanning as part of our standard 'back-scanning' of paper records process.

5. Given the nature of Epping Forest District, the placement of planning information online has potentially saved the public long journeys to Epping Civic Offices. With Electronic Planning records now available online we are able to provide this information on a 24 hour basis, retrievable from our website at any location that has access to a PC and the Internet. This has been a major transformation for Planning and Economic Development, previously one of the most paper dependent Directorates.

6. We recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.