



## Policy and Resources Committee – 29 September 2011

### Resourcing the production of the Four Towns Plan

#### Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to seek agreement from Members to fund the resources required for the production of the Four Towns Plan. Additional funding is sought for 2012/13 & 2013/14.

#### Attachment(s)

Appendix 1: Four Towns Plan evidence base projects with known cost estimates

#### 1.0 Background

- 1.1 The 29 October 2009 meeting of the Planning Policy Committee first resolved to produce a Four Towns Plan DPD for the south of the District. Following this, the 14 June 2010 Planning Policy Committee approved the scope, or list of issues that should be addressed by the Four Towns Plan. On 18 July 2011, Council approved that “work on the Four Towns Plan be progressed with all speed”.
- 1.2 The following report sets out the current anticipated resource plan required to carry this out to meet the adoption date of May 2014 to be proposed to the Planning Policy Committee on 19 September 2011. This time-frame is necessary in order to allow the appropriate stages of the Review of the Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) to be completed before the same stage of the Four Towns Plan (FTP), as the FTP has to be in conformity with the CSS. Any feedback from the Planning Policy Committee will be reported verbally to this Committee.

#### 2.0 Technical and other studies to support the evidence base for the Four Towns Plan

- 2.1 Attached at Appendix 1 is a table of some of the key areas of work that have already been completed, or for which new or additional work is now known to be required, with associated cost estimates. Members should note that :
- certain projects are uncertain or dependent upon other outcomes and these are highlighted in *italics*.
  - Projects marked \*\* have already been approved by Members at previous Planning Policy Committees.
  - Projects marked ## require committee approval now
  - Work in connection with affordable housing viability has been highlighted as it will be necessary to carry this out, but it is not required immediately
- Also approval for the SFRA work will be sought at the Planning Policy Committee on 19 September, due to the imminent nature of this work.
- 2.2 As far as possible, evidence-gathering work is intended to be undertaken in-house, or through using other studies or evidence collected for the emerging Core Strategy Review. However, a number of specific projects will require the specialist services of consultants to carry out the work or act as mentors for council staff:
- Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability Appraisal (SEA/SA) – £5,000 estimate for mentoring
  - Habitats Regulations Assessment / Appropriate Assessment (HRA/AA) – £8,500 estimate (funding was agreed 2010); consultants appointed February 2011
  - Level 2 SFRA – maximum £15,000 estimated: Level 1 recently completed by consultants

- Landscape Character Assessment – £5,000 estimate for mentoring
  - Affordable Housing Assessment (Economic Viability) – £2,500-£3,000 estimate for refresh/ update 2010 AECOM Assessment.
- 2.3 Specific currently known projects relevant to the Four Towns Plan requiring specialist consultant work/input are therefore estimated to cost approximately £35,000 (£150,000 has been allocated in 2011/12 to cover specialist work).
- 2.4 It should be noted that the figures given in the resource plan are estimates and that during the timescale for the preparation of Development Plan Documents etc, new areas of work may also be required, for example due to the introduction of new legislation, new policy, highlighted during the evidence base research/surveys themselves, or as a result of lessons learnt from planning appeals/plan inquiries etc. It is considered that a sum of £80,000 in 2012/13 will be sufficient to cover this element. A further sum of £150,000 will be required to cover the cost of the Examination process in 2013/14.
- 2.5 It should also be noted that, at the time of writing this report, discussions are ongoing about the resourcing required (staff and financial) to implement the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations came into force on 6 April 2010 and the Joint Planning Unit has been leading the investigatory work into this (if Members wish to view further summary details about CIL, the Planning Advisory Service provides a useful overview at [www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/applications/howtoapply/whattosubmit/cil](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/applications/howtoapply/whattosubmit/cil))

### **3.0 Officer Resources to support the plan**

- 3.1 In addition to the anticipated forthcoming external specialists' costs outlined above, Members are reminded that carrying out work in house will obviously incur costs too i.e. in officer time and in financial terms, for example to prepare studies and documents and carry out consultations. In addition, the officer resource within the section also needs to be sufficient to:
- enable East Northamptonshire to continue to play an appropriate role in the development of the review of the North Northamptonshire Core Strategy
  - provide local communities with professional support in the development of Neighbourhood Plans and associated projects (emerging as a result of the Localism Bill).
  - properly manage and implement the Community Infrastructure Levy, to ensure that the District receives the full benefits of it
- 3.2 When the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan was produced, three additional officers to the current structure were in place whose time was spent exclusively on that plan. These were two further Planning Policy Officer posts and an Administration Officer post. One of the two Planning Policy Officers and the Administration Officer posts were temporary contracts which ceased immediately after the completion of the plan. The second Planning Policy Officer post remains on the structure but was re-graded to a fixed term Senior Planning Policy Officer last autumn in recognition of forthcoming Four Towns Plan requirements. However there is no budget for the post.
- 3.3 This report seeks permission to use the remainder of the allocation in 2011/12 of £150,000 (of which £35,000 will be spent on studies as outlined above) to be used in 2012/13 & 2013/14 to fund two fixed term additional posts within the Planning Policy and Conservation Team to support the production of the Four Towns Plan by April 2014. The two fixed term posts include a budget for the second Senior Planning Policy Officer post noted above and a new Planning Policy Officer whose post will need to be added to the structure for the duration of the development of the Four Towns Plan.
- 3.4 In addition this report seeks approval to allocate £10,000 from the government grants of £20,000 each given for the production of Neighbourhood Plans for Oundle and

Rounds towards the cost of the Planning Policy Officer post.

3.5 A summary of the financial implications can be found paragraph 7.1

#### 4.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

4.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from the proposals in this report.

#### 5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 The lack of a Local Development Plan Document for the south of the District could lead to more speculative development proposals for the area which are not in accordance with the wishes of residents or the council's proposed plans. Without an up to date plan defence at planning appeals could be weakened, resulting in a higher level of costs against the council.

#### 6.0 Risk Management

6.1 Delays to the preparation of the Four Towns Plan will result in the south of the District not having an up-to-date, robust planning policy framework to defend against any unwanted development

#### 7.0 Financial Implications

Activity and Year	Budget from £150,000 already allocated to FTP production £000	Budget from Neighbourhood Plan production grant £000	New Budget requested in this report £000	TOTAL £000
<b>2011/12</b>				
Technical Studies	35	-	-	35
Fixed Term Contract Posts	25	10	-	35
<i>2011/12 total</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>70</i>
<b>2012/13</b>				
Technical Studies	15	-	65	80
Fixed Term Contract Posts	75	-	-	75
<i>2012/12 total</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>155</i>
<b>2013/14</b>				
Examination in Public	-	-	150	150
Fixed Term Contract Posts	-	-	75	75
<i>2013/14 total</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>225</i>	<i>225</i>

7.2 This is significantly less than the cost of production of the Rural North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan which took six years and cost an estimated £650,000.

7.3 Officers will endeavour to keep spend to a minimum but request because of the uncertainty posed by the timing and implications of changes to the Planning Framework that any monies allocated to the production of the Four Town Plan in any one year that are unspent at the end of the year are rolled forward to the following year to minimise the risk of having to seek further funding.

## 8.0 Corporate Outcomes

8.1 The relevant Corporate Outcomes are:

- Regeneration and Economic Development
- Sustainable Development: strong communities, high quality built environment
- Strong Strategic Partnerships

## 9.0 Conclusion

9.1 In order to ensure that the Four Towns Plan proceeds in accordance with Full Councils' recommendation of 18th July 2011 and to the timescale set out in the proposed Local Development Scheme, it is now necessary to agree what resources can be allocated to the Plan development. Officers consider that the level of additional resources identified in para 7.1 provides the minimum necessary to meet Members' aspirations in terms of timescale.

## 10.0 Recommendation

10.1 The Committee is asked to resolve to recommend to full council the proposed resource plan at paragraph 7.1 for the current financial year, and record Member commitment to include provision in future budgets in 2012/13 & 13/14. (Note that approval for future years' budgets will follow the normal budgetary framework.)  
*(Reason – to ensure that the necessary resources required to prepare the Four Towns Plan are put into place)*

<b>Legal</b>	Power: Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and emerging Localism Bill				
	Other considerations: None				
<b>Background Papers:</b> None					
<b>Person Originating Report:</b>	Sharn Matthews, Executive Director 01832 742108 smatthews @east-northamptonshire.gov.uk				
<b>Date: 15 September 2011</b>					
<b>CFO</b>		<b>MO</b>		<b>CX</b>	

(Committee Report Normal Rev. 22)

Appendix 1: Four Towns Plan evidence base projects with costing details					
Evidence Gathering	Work Streams	Who	Potential Costs	Milestones	Outputs
<b>Spatial Strategy</b>					
Settlement Hierarchy	Rural settlement study currently being undertaken by North Northamptonshire JPU. Need for further work dependent upon final output from emerging JPU work.	JPU	Not specified	January/ February 2012 - JPU work finalised	JPU settlement hierarchy study to accompany pre-submission Core Strategy Review
	<i>Settlement hierarchy study</i>	<i>In house</i>	Not specified	<i>March/ April 2012 - Further ENC work completed</i>	<i>ENC settlement hierarchy study paper</i>
Settlement boundaries	Options review - need for boundaries or criteria - initial report drafted; to be considered through relevant Planning Policy Working Parties	In house/ JPU	Not specified	Autumn 2011 - Options review paper to Working Party	ENC settlement boundaries option paper
	Settlement boundary criteria	JPU	Not specified	December 2011 JPU work finalised	JPU settlement boundary criteria paper to accompany pre-submission Core Strategy Review
	<i>Review individual settlement boundaries (if necessary)</i>	<i>In house</i>	<i>Not specified</i>	<i>May/ June 2012 - Further ENC work to be completed</i>	<i>Boundaries paper agreed/ finalised through Working Party</i>
<b>Environmental Projects</b>					
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)/ Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)	Stage A - Scoping	In house/ with statutory consultees	Not specified	January/ February 2012	Consultation on Scoping Paper alongside "Regulation 25" Four Towns Plan consultation
	Stage B - Developing options and assessing effects	In house but with mentoring		September/ October 2012	Consultation on initial SA report alongside Four Towns Plan "options" consultation
	Stage C - Preparation of SA Report – inform preparation of pre-submission draft DPD	In house but with mentoring		October 2012 - March 2013	
	Stage D - Consultation on the SA Report	In house		March/ April 2013	Consultation on Scoping Paper alongside pre-submission Four Towns Plan consultation
	Stage E - Commencement of monitoring process for significant effects of DPD/ submission of final SA report	In house but with mentoring	£5,000 - estimated total cost of mentoring **	June/ July 2013	Submission of final SA report to Secretary of State

Habitats Regulations Assessment/ Appropriate Assessment (HRA/ AA)	Stage 1 - Screening (from Four Towns Plan scoping)	Enfusion (Appointed February 2011 to undertake HRA/ AA work alongside Four Towns Plan preparation)	Stage 1 completed by Enfusion (July 2011)		Plans and Programmes/ Site Characterisation work completed
	Stage 2 - Initial evidence gathering (surveys) - Natural England guidance awaited	Enfusion/ Natural England	£5,000 estimate- Stages 2/3 (see total below cost estimate total) **	Summer 2012	
	Stage 2 - Scoping and further evidence gathering (through consultation process)	Enfusion/ Natural England		September/ October 2012	Consultation on HRA/ AA Scoping Paper alongside Four Towns Plan "options" consultation
	Stage 3 - Assessment of impacts (HRA/ AA, to inform preparation of pre-submission draft DPD)	Enfusion/ Natural England		October 2012 - March 2013	
	Submission of final HRA/ AA Report	Enfusion/ Natural England	£8,500 (Stage 1-3 total) (Estimated) **	February/ March 2013	Final HRA/ AA Report completed
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)	Level 1 - Completed August 2011; Final approval/ sign off by Environment Agency still awaited	URS/ Scott Wilson	Level 1 SFRA already completed	Autumn 2011 - EA sign off	Publication of updated Level 1 SFRA
	Level 2 - Detailed site assessment/ modelling work of potential development sites in Rushden and Irthlingborough	URS/ Scott Wilson	<b>maximum £15,000 estimated ##</b>	Autumn 2011 - Reappointment of consultants	
				Summer 2012 - Completion of Level 2 SFRA	Publication of Level 2 SFRA (Rushden and Irthlingborough)
Landscape Character Assessment - update and locality issues	Review current evidence and prepare scoping study, undertake study	In house but with mentoring	£5,000 - estimated total cost of mentoring **	September 2012 - Completion	Completed report
Open Space Study (2006 PMP study update)	Open Space SPD - Completion of final document	In house	Not specified	October 2011 - SPD finalised	Final draft SPD
	Complete final Open Space Study update report for publication/ submission alongside Four Towns Plan	In house	Not specified	June/ July 2013	Final Open Space Study update report

Local Listings - Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest	Comprehensive list of Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest prepared	Ann Bond/ Rockingham Forest Trust	Study partially completed/ further work ongoing funded through external grant	June/ July 2013	Publication of completed report
<b>Social/ Housing projects</b>					
Housing site selection work	Stage 1 - Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) site discounting: initial draft methodology/ study prepared May 2010 - update needed to reflect recent changes/ imminent SHLAA update	In house	Not specified	November/ December 2011	Publication of completed report (as at October 2011)
	Stage 2 - PPS3 paragraph 54 assessment - update to November 2010 draft study needed	In house	Not specified	January/ February 2012	Publication of completed report (as at October 2011)
	Stage 3 - Site by site assessment (sites not discounted at stages 1/2) - update to 2010 draft assessment/ study needed	In house	Not specified	March/ April 2012	Publication of completed report (as at October 2011)
Affordable Housing Assessment (Economic Viability)	Draft viability assessment completed August 2010	AECOM	Draft assessment completed		
	Refresh AECOM assessment, taking account of site specific viability assessments prepared to accompany planning applications	In house/ AECOM	<b>£2,500 - £3,000 estimate ##</b>	November 2012 - March 2013	Publication of updated AECOM assessment
<b>Economic Projects</b>					
Employment Land Review (update of 2006 Atkins study)	Stage 1 - Existing employment areas site by site review - database update/ current business survey	In house	Not specified	Autumn 2011	Completion of existing employment areas review
	Stage 2 - Employment site assessment - completion of study document	In house	Not specified	January/ February 2012	Publication of completed report
Employment site selection work	Northamptonshire Strategic Employment Land Assessment (SELA) sites - assessment of smaller potential employment sites below Core Strategy Review threshold (5ha)	In house	Not specified	April/ May 2012	Publication of completed report (possibly combined with Employment site assessment)
Retail frontage/ town centre boundary assessment	Town centre boundary methodology - Initial draft paper presented to Working Parties (Spring 2010)	In house	Not specified	July/ August 2012	Publication of methodology paper
	Retail surveys (twice yearly)	In house	Not specified	Dec-11	Publication of latest retail surveys in Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)
	Town centre boundary studies	In house	Not specified	August/ September 2012	Publication of boundary assessment paper(s) for Four Towns
<b>Masterplans</b>					
Rushden Town Centre Regeneration Strategy	Regeneration Strategy document completed June 2010	Princes Foundation	Already completed		

