



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Policy and Resources Committee 25 April 2016

Planning Services – Project Resources

Purpose of report

This report seeks permission from the Policy and Resources Committee to recruit an additional temporary member of staff in Planning Services to help drive forward priority projects – specifically the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension masterplan.

1.0 Background

1.1 Planning Services is leading three important projects:

- A new district-wide Part 2 Local Plan
- A masterplan for the Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE)
- A masterplan for the Deenethorpe Garden Village

This report identifies an additional resource requirement within the Planning Policy and Conservation team that will enable this programme of projects to move forward effectively as corporate priorities.

1.2 At officer level, the Part 2 Local Plan and the Rushden East SUE masterplan will be led by the Planning Policy and Conservation Team. The Deenethorpe Garden Village masterplan will be led by the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit. The Head of Planning Services will be actively involved in each of these projects, as will other members of the Planning Services team, the Corporate Management Team, and other officers from across the council.

1.3 Members will continue to be actively engaged in each of the projects through the Rushden East SUE Project Board, the Deenethorpe Garden Village Project Board, and the Local Plan Working Party, as well as the main Committee structures that these groups feed into.

2.0 Rushden East SUE Masterplan

2.1 The principle of development at Rushden East is being established through the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS), which is at an advanced stage of preparation and is scheduled to be formally adopted in July 2016. JCS Policy 33 'Rushden East Sustainable Urban Extension' requires that:

'A masterplan will be prepared in consultation with the local community and stakeholders and agreed by the local planning authority. The masterplan will define the development boundaries and policy expectations for inclusion in the Part 2 Local Plan covering Rushden or the preparation of a planning application for development of the Sustainable Urban Extension.'

(North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 – February 2016 – Proposed Main Modifications to the Submitted Plan – page 161)

2.2 The Rushden East Project Board is established to consider the content and format of the masterplan. This work is being done in conjunction with the landowners and development interests within the SUE area. It will need to be completed to inform the preparation of a planning application for the SUE by the developers and landowners.

2.3 It is important to make demonstrable progress with the Rushden East Masterplan SUE project. It is considered, therefore, that a further officer resource is required within the Planning Policy and Conservation team to provide the extra capacity required to focus on the preparation of the Rushden East SUE masterplan.

3.0 Resource Requirement

3.1 A new permanent Principal Planning Officer (Grade 8) post for the Planning Policy and Conservation team has recently been through job evaluation, is corporately funded as part of the establishment, and is ready to be advertised. It is proposed that an additional temporary Principal Planning Officer (Grade 8) within that team should also be advertised at the same time. The additional temporary post would be an 18 month contract.

3.2 Both posts would be recruited under the same Job Description and Person Specification. The management of the workload of the new officers, and their respective focus on the Part 2 Local Plan and Rushden East SUE Masterplan, would then be determined by the Head of Planning Services and the Planning and Conservation Manager.

4.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

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

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

6.0 Risk Management

6.1 The appointment of an additional Principal Planning Officer on a temporary 18 month contract will help to reduce the risk that the Rushden East SUE masterplan will not be completed in a timely manner. This risk is already recorded in the Risk Register.

6.2 Further risks that have been identified include:

- Failure to recruit to an 18 month contract, in which case further consideration would need to be given to the post in discussion with Members.
- The potential need to place both the permanent and temporary posts 'at risk' for HR and legal purposes at the 18 month point.

7.0 Resource and Financial Implications

7.1 It is proposed that the funding for the temporary 18th month contract will be from the council's reserves. It is estimated that the call on the council's reserve for this contract would be £73,000 in total. This takes account of all on-costs.

8.0 Constitutional Implications

8.1 No constitutional implications have been identified.

9.0 Customer Service Implications

9.1 The additional resource would enable the council to consult properly with the local community and stakeholders during the preparation of the Rushden East SUE masterplan, as required by JCS Policy 33.

10.0 Corporate Outcomes

10.1 The proposal contributes to the following Corporate Outcomes:

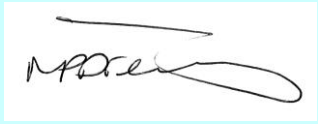
- Good Quality of Life – through the preparation of the Rushden East SUE masterplan which will shape the future development of the area.
- Good Value for Money – through ensuring that a corporate priority can be delivered in a timely manner.
- Effective Partnership Working – through the provision of a dedicated officer resource to work with the range of interests involved in the Rushden East SUE.
- Effective Management – the proposal enables the provision of effective project management and professional input into the Rushden East SUE masterplan project, from the council’s perspective.
- High Quality Service Delivery – the proposal will enable Planning Services to deliver priority projects.
- Strong Community Leadership – the proposal will help the council to demonstrate that it considers the Rushden East SUE masterplan project to be a corporate priority.
- Knowledge of Customers and Communities – the post holder will develop a good knowledge of the local issues related to the preparation of a masterplan for the area.

11.0 Recommendation

11.1 The Committee is recommended to

- (1) Approve the appointment of an additional Principal Planning Officer (Grade 8) on an 18 month temporary contract.

(Reason – to assist with the delivery of corporately important projects being led by Planning Services.)

Legal	Power: Town and Country Planning legislation				
	Other considerations: National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance				
Background Papers: N/A					
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