



Policy and Resources Committee 9th January 2017

Planning Services – Project Funding

Purpose of report

This report seeks authority for funds from reserves as one-off expenditure in 2016/17 to enable the appointment of consultants to complete specific research and advisory projects.

1.0 Background

1.1 The following research and advisory projects have been identified as priorities for completion within the 2016/17 financial year:

- Rushden East Business Incubation Centre Feasibility Study: £10,000
- Housing Mix Study: up to £20,000
- Local Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal (Part 1): up to £20,000
- Ashton Conservation Area Design Guidance: £5,000

Total = up to £55,000

1.2 There is no Planning Services budget coverage in 2016/17 for these projects. It is therefore requested that up to £55,000 is identified from reserves to cover the costs of these projects.

2.0 The current situation

2.1 **Rushden East Business Incubation Centre Feasibility Study:** Funds for the Rushden East Business Incubation Centre Feasibility Study have been requested as part of a North Northamptonshire bid for the DCLG's Large Sites and Housing Zones Capacity Fund. No announcement has been made at the time of writing this report, so the updated position on this will be reported verbally. The project has been tendered and the consultants are able to complete the work by 31st March 2017.

2.2 **Housing Mix Study:** This study has been tendered to a range of consultants, and proposals are due to be returned by 21st December 2016. The study will have a particular focus on identifying the opportunities for delivering larger and higher value houses to stimulate economic development in parts of the district.

2.3 **Local Plan Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal (Part 1):** This is a key element of the evidence base for the Local Plan. The work needs to commence at the start of the Local Plan preparation process, and will run throughout the process until the Local Plan is completed. A detailed project brief for this work will be tendered in early January 2017, which will enable Part 1 of the work to be completed by 31st March 2017.

2.4 **Ashton Village and Wold Conservation Area Design Guidance:** Historic England has advised that an additional element of design guidance needs to be completed to

ensure that the extended Ashton Village and Wold Conservation area is suitably protected. This will support recommendations on planning applications in the designated Conservation Area. This work has been tendered and can be completed by 31st March 2017.

3.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

3.1 There are no quality and diversity issue associated with this report.

4.0 Legal Implications

4.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

5.0 Risk Management

5.1 The main risk is that work on these projects will be delayed if the funding is not available to make progress in the 2016/17 financial year.

6.0 Resource and Financial Implications

6.1 The financial implications are set out in Section 1 above and total up to £55,000. All expenditure is anticipated to be incurred in the 2016/17 financial year.

6.2 The funding for these projects is proposed to be from the Delivering the Corporate Plan earmarked reserve. This reserve was established by Council in October 2016 as part of the review of reserves when the Council approved its Efficiency Plan.

7.0 Constitutional Implications

7.1 There are no constitutional implications arising from this report.

8.0 Customer Service Implications

8.1 There are no customer service implications arising from this report.

9.0 Corporate Outcomes

9.1 The proposal will have a positive impact on the following corporate outcomes:

- Good Quality of Life – Sustainable – ensuring that development in the district meet the needs of local communities in respect of housing, employment and conservation
- Good Value for Money – enabling important work to be undertaken in a timely manner.

10.0 Recommendation

10.1 That the Committee recommends that full Council agree to allocate up to £55,000 from the Delivering the Corporate Plan reserve to enable the completion of Planning Services projects identified in section 2.0 of this report.

(Reason – To ensure that development in the district meet the needs of local communities in respect of housing, employment and conservation)

Legal	Power: Town and Country Planning legislation				
	Other considerations:				
Background Papers: Policy and Resources Committee Reports April and July 2016					
Person Originating Report: Paul Bland, Head of Planning Services ☎ 01832 742218 ✉ pbland@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk					
Date: 19 th December 2016					
CFO		MO		CX	