

# Chichester District Council

THE COUNCIL

23 January 2018

## Planning Policy Team Resourcing

### 1. Contacts

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### 2. Recommendation

**That the Council notes the urgent decision made to recruit two new principal planning officer posts and one additional planning officer post to the Planning Policy team prior to the annual budget setting process being considered by the Cabinet and the Council.**

### 3. Background

- 3.1 The timescale for review of the current Local Plan requires the process to be completed and a new plan adopted by July 2020 in order that the plan remains up to date and the Council remains in control of the delivery of new sites for housing and other development. The Local Plan timetable is therefore challenging with milestones at key stages of the process that will need to be met.
- 3.2 An 'Issues and Options' consultation was carried out during 2017 but as a result of expected changes to national policy and legislation e.g. concerning the methodology for measuring housing need together with other important work associated with the Site Allocations DPD, Southern Gateway masterplan, Brownfield Register and Planning Inquiries, resources have at times been diverted away from the Local Plan review. As a consequence, there has been some slippage to the current programme. At its meeting on 9 January 2018, Cabinet agreed to recommend to Council that it approves a revised Local Plan programme as part of the Local Development Scheme (see separate report in this agenda). That report identifies slippage of five months between the Issues and Options consultation referred to above and the next key stage, consultation on the Preferred Approach Plan. Adoption of the new Local Plan is, as a consequence, anticipated 4 months later than was previously envisaged, i.e. by March 2020. This timescale is nevertheless within the period that the Inspector who examined the current Local Plan expected the Council to commit to.
- 3.3 The Planning Policy Team is managed by the Planning Policy Divisional Manager, supported by three principal planning officers, responsible for Strategic planning; Local/Neighbourhood planning and Infrastructure (CIL/S106) planning. A dedicated neighbourhood planning officer and 3 planning officers support the

work within these sub areas. Following a senior officer review of staffing levels within the Planning Policy Team it is considered that further staff resources as detailed below are now necessary to enable effective progress to be made on the development of the Local Plan evidence base, studies and associated work.

#### **4. Outcomes to be Achieved**

- 4.1 That the Council achieves adoption of a new Local Plan by July 2020 to ensure that local planning policies, particularly for housing development remain up to date and defensible at planning appeals.

#### **5. Proposal**

- 5.1 Three additional posts are required to support the work of the team. These additional posts comprise two principal officer posts to support strategic and local planning work and one additional planning officer.

#### **6. Alternatives Considered**

- 6.1 The alternative is not to add these additional posts to the establishment. This will increase the risk that the programme to adoption of a new local plan in 2020 will not be achieved.

#### **7. Resource and Legal Implications**

- 7.1 The cost of these new posts would be £156,400 p/a although this would be reduced by the remaining unallocated additional estimated planning fee income (£32,000) as a result of the government's forthcoming increase in planning application fees. The net cost of the new posts would therefore be £124,400 p/a and would have formed part of the proposed budget to the Cabinet in February 2018 and the Council in March 2018. The cost of the posts for 2017-2018 is not likely to be significant and can be met from either the Local Plan budget or existing service budgets.

#### **8. Consultation**

- 8.1 The urgent decision was made in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee together with relevant senior officers in accordance with the Council's *Constitution*.

#### **9. Community Impact and Corporate Risks**

- 9.1 The timely production of the Chichester Local Plan Review will require appropriate consultation with a wide range of stakeholders at key stages in the plan making process and help ensure that community impacts can be positively managed.

#### **10. Other Implications**

Are there any implications for the following?		
	Yes	No
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>		✓
<b>Climate Change</b>		✓

<b>Human Rights and Equality Impact</b>		✓
<b>Safeguarding and Early Help</b>		✓
<b>Other</b>		✓

## **11. Appendices**

11.1 None.

## **12. Background Papers**

12.1 None.