

Committee:	Executive	Agenda Item No.:	12
Date:	14 th May 2013	Status	Open
Category	Decision within the functions of Executive		
Subject:	Appointment of Planning Consultant to provide support for Local Plan Public Hearing		
Report by:	Assistant Director – Planning		
Other Officers Involved			
Director	Director of Development		
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Dennis Kelly, Cabinet Member for the Environment		

RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS

The Local Plan (Strategy) outlines a vision, key principles and policies to underpin the future planning and development of the District. It will provide the foundation on which further more detailed policies will be developed and covers a wide range of economic, environmental and social issues. Supporting the delivery of this Plan as such affects all the following aims:

- COMMUNITY SAFETY – Ensuring that communities are safe and secure
- CUSTOMER FOCUSED SERVICES – Providing excellent customer focused services
- ENVIRONMENT – Promoting and enhancing a clear and sustainable environment
- REGENERATION – Developing healthy, prosperous and sustainable communities
- SOCIAL INCLUSION – Promoting fairness, equality and lifelong learning.
- STRATEGIC ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – Continually improving our organisation.

TARGETS

The adoption of a Core Strategy (now re-titled Local Plan Strategy) is the subject of Corporate Plan Target E03. Appointment of the necessary staffing is required to deliver this target.

VALUE FOR MONEY

The proposal is to provide a short term cost effective solution following the leaving of the Planning Policy Manager and to re-allocate a proportion of the salary savings to provide support for the Local Plan Hearing. This allows for the longer term consideration of the needs of the service and options for joint

working with North East Derbyshire District Council to be considered with potential for savings to Bolsover District Council.

THE REPORT

The Planning Policy Manager left the employment of the Council at the end of March 2013. This departure comes at a challenging stage for delivering the Local Plan for Bolsover with the Planning Service in the final stages of consultation and preparation prior to submission of the Plan to the Secretary of State. The Local Plan (Strategy) is targeted for submission in the summer with an anticipated Public Examination before the end of 2013.

The Planning Policy Manager would have taken the lead though the Local Plan examination process presenting the Council's case and responding on all aspects raised by the Inspector and to issues or arguments raised through formal representations. Without a satisfactory backfill the Council will be at significant risk of not delivering the Local Plan to programme, which is a corporate target and key requirement from Members.

The short term objective for the Planning Service is to put in place the temporary resource required to ensure that the Council can get through the public examination process in Bolsover and maintain the agreed programme for delivering a Local Plan (Strategy). Following the completion of the public examination (targeted for the end of 2013) the Planning Service will review its existing team and consider any restructuring or permanent filling of vacant posts required to deliver Corporate needs and will consider options and opportunities created by existing vacancies. This will be contained in a further staffing report for consideration by Members.

Agreement has been reached with NEDDC to second their Planning Policy Manager for 2 days per week to BDC on a temporary basis for upto 1 year and this arrangement commenced on April 1st 2013. This still leaves a capacity issue for BDC to ensure proper representation and advice to get through the Public Examination as set out above.

To deal with this it is proposed to appoint planning consultants utilising the salary savings remaining from the existing Planning Policy Manager post. The consultants appointed will represent the Council at the Public Examination and take the lead role in responding to the Inspector. This process includes responding to initial queries, and then to detailed issues, matters and questions that the Inspector identifies. Tendering and procurement issues will follow Council procedures and will be undertaken through the joint Procurement Unit.

This proposal is cost neutral as set out below:

Existing BDC Planning Policy Manager	Proposed temporary staffing changes
Planning Policy Manager Cost - £49,379 pa (including on costs)	Temporary Secondment Planning Policy Manager for 2 days (NED) - £20,035 pa (including on costs) (Commenced April 1 st 2013)
	Appointment of Planning Consultant to represent/prepare evidence to support the Local Plan Public Hearing – up to £25,000

ISSUES/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Whether to appoint planning consultants to support the Local Plan Hearing as set out in the report above utilising salary savings.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial: There are no financial implications as the cost will be contained within the existing Planning salary budget for 2013/14.

Legal: None

Human Resources: None

RECOMMENDATION

To approve the use of up to £ 25,000 planning service salary savings to fund an external planning consultant to support the Local Plan Hearing.

REASON FOR DECISION TO BE GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CONSTITUTION

The development of a Local Plan is a target within Bolsover's corporate plan.

ATTACHMENT: **N**
 FILE REFERENCE:
 SOURCE DOCUMENT: **N/A**