

ALLOCATION OF PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT RESERVE

Head of Service/Contact:	Ruth Ormella, Head of Planning
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
Annexes/Appendices (attached):	
Other available papers (not attached):	Allocation of Planning Delivery Grant Service – S&R 11/11/14 Local Plan Report Update and Overview – LPP 13/06/19 Local Plan Programme 2019 – LPP 13/06/19

Report summary

This report updates Members on the allocation of funds from the Planning Delivery Grant Reserve and presents an updated proposal for allocation of funds required to support the current Local Plan delivery schedule.

Recommendation (s)

- (1) To approve the use of the balance of the Planning Delivery Grant Reserve to support the work on the Local Plan over the period 2019 – 2021, as set-out in Section 3 of this report.**

1 Implications for the Council’s Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.1 The delivery and implementation of the Epsom & Ewell Local Plan contributes towards all of the Council’s Key Priorities. The new Epsom & Ewell Local Plan is critical as it will set out how sustainable growth, particularly in relation to new housing, will be delivered during the plan period.

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2 Background

- 2.1 The Local Plan sets out the strategic direction for the Borough and the policies needed to ensure that the future development of the area meets the local needs. The Epsom and Ewell Core Strategy is a 2007 document in need of updating in line with current evidence and National Planning Policy. The Licensing and Planning Policy Committee considered a report on 13 June 2019 which sets out the programme for delivery of the Local Plan.
- 2.2 The Planning Delivery Grant Reserve (PDG) has historically been used to support the Council's Local Plan preparation work. A report to Strategy & Resources Committee in November 2014 set out a proposal for the use of these funds over the period 2015 to 2018. During this period, £33.9k was used and the balance currently stands at £175,788.
- 2.3 In July 2018, Strategy and Resources Committee approved the earmarking of £20k of PDG to fund the delivery of the Future 40 programme. This leaves the current available balance of funds standing at £155,788.
- 2.4 The Local Plan Report Update and Overview report which went to Licensing and Planning Policy Committee on 13 June 2019 details a number of technical studies that are required to inform the Local Plan. These studies require external professional expertise and this is identified to be funded via the PDG.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 The Planning Delivery Grant Reserve has a balance of £155,788. It is proposed that this balance be earmarked to fund the technical studies required to prepare the Local Plan. The Local Plan Update and Overview Report identifies the following studies which are being commissioned:

Table 1

Revised Strategic Housing Market Assessment	£8,000
Strategic Development Viability Assessment	£21,000
Spatial Economical Development Strategy	£25,000
Retail Needs Study & Town Centre Health Check	£27,000
Sports Facilities	£25,000
Habitats Regulations Assessment	£21,000
Professional desk top publication of the various Local Plan documents, marketing materials, and consultation materials	£3,000

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Total	£130,000
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- 3.2 In addition to the above studies the Licencing & Planning Policy Committee may seek to progress other technical studies which could for example relate to car parking standards. It is therefore recommended that all of the remaining PDG be allocated for this type of work.
- 3.3 There are a number of studies and supporting documents required for the Local Plan that are being undertaken in-house by the Policy Planners which include the Sustainability Appraisal, the Open Space technical study and the Housing Delivery Action Plan. For those documents being produced internally there is a need for professional production so as to set and maintain a high standard.
- 3.4 The figures in table 1 have been estimated and therefore the actual studies could be slightly higher or lower. It is proposed that where the actual cost of a study varies from the amounts in table 1, the Head of Planning be permitted to proceed with the procurement of these studies within the envelope of the total PDG available, £155,788, with the agreement of the Chief Finance Officer.

4 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 4.1 The Planning Delivery Grant Reserve has a current balance of £175,788 of which £25k has been earmarked for funding the Future 40 project. This leaves an available balance of £155,788 which can be earmarked for delivering the Local Plan.
- 4.2 Although there is a risk that costs could exceed the grant available (in which case additional funds would need to be identified), current estimates for the technical studies show a funding requirement of £130k - as detailed in Table 1 - which is within the available grant balance.
- 4.3 The Planning Delivery Grant is a one-off funding source. Once utilised, it will not be replenished. Therefore, the resourcing of future Local Plans will need to be determined in future years.
- 4.4 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** All financial implications are set-out in the body of the report.

5 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 5.1 None arising from this report.
- 5.2 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** None arising from the contents of this report.

6 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

- 6.1 None for the purposes of this report.

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7 Partnerships

7.1 None for the purposes of this report.

8 Risk Assessment

8.1 Having an up-to-date Local Plan Programme is a key measure in mitigating possible risk of direct intervention by the government. Ensuring that our agreed milestones towards submission and examination are met is important. If we do not fund the work streams required to inform the local plan we are likely to face criticism and the possibility of intervention.

9 Conclusion and Recommendations

9.1 The Committee are requested to approve the use of the PDG Reserve for the production of the Local Plan and its use in funding the work streams as set out in this report.

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);