

NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL DECISION

DECISION OF: THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND
S151 OFFICER



DECISION NO: CSD 089 2020/2021

SUBJECT: FUNDING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL PLAN

KEY DECISION: NO

REASONS: Although the expenditure associated with developing a new Local Plan will exceed £500,000, the authority to spend will be approved through separate decisions as and when contracts are awarded. This decision is to approve transferring existing funding into a reserve to fund future costs.

BACKGROUND:

The current North Somerset Core Strategy (Local Plan) and its associated Site Allocations and Development Management Policies have a horizon to 2026. Local Planning Authorities are required by the Town & Country Planning Regulations to have adopted Local Plans in place. Therefore, the Council has embarked upon developing a new Local Plan with a horizon to 2038. The Local Plan anticipates the need to allocating land for around 20,535 homes and 28.5ha for new jobs.

The work involved in developing a new Local Plan includes some key work stream, as detailed below, all of which are additional to the Council's current base budget:

- Evidence Stage
- Engagement
- Examination
- Transport Assessment

In order to progress the various work strands above, the funding associated with the creation of the new Local Plan needs to be approved.

DECISION:

To approve;

- 1) the allocation of resources currently held within the Corporate Risk Reserve, as funding towards the Local Plan Work – value of £570,000
- 2) the transfer of this funding into the Strategic Projects Reserve so that all Local Plan resources can be collectively held and managed

REASONS:

The process of developing the Local Plan is extensive and funding needs to be agreed and in place before commissioning of external support commences.

Some funding is currently available and allocated to the Local Plan within the Strategic Projects reserve (£295k), but this is not sufficient to complete the work.

A report was considered by CLT on 23rd October 2019 outlining the request for additional funding and it was agreed to allocate monies held within the Corporate Risk Reserve.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

Other funding opportunities are being explored, if any are successful they would replace the use of corporate reserves.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Costs

The initial estimates of the Local Plan work packages total £865k and are included in the table below.

Stage	Total 2020-24	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23 &2023/24
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	£35,000	£15,000	£20,000	
Local Housing Needs Assessment	£5,555	£5,555		
Economic Land and Spatial Needs Assessment	£9,800	£9,800		
Habitats Regulations Assessment	£15,000	£10,000	£5,000	
Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment	£0			
Renewable energy resource mapping	£10,000	£10,000		
Costs of carbon study	£10,000	£10,000		
Viability	£18,000	£8,000	£10,000	
Sustainability Appraisal	£20,000		£20,000	
Masterplanning	£20,000	£5,000	£10,000	£5,000
SW Bristol Infrastructure and Investment Strategy	£0			
Other studies similar to SWBIIS?	£0			
Mass Transit Study	£0			
Landscape sensitivity assessment	£10,000		£10,000	
Deliverability study	£0			
Town centre briefs/studies	£0			
Total - Evidence	£153,355	£73,355	£75,000	£5,000
Launch of LP	£0			
Internal comms recharge	£36,000	£18,000	£18,000	
Challenges	£2,000	£2,000		

Choices	£3,000	£3,000		
Consultation Draft	£5,000		£5,000	
Pre-submission document	£1,000		£1,000	
Other comms costs	£10,000	£5,000	£5,000	
Total - Engagement	£57,000	£28,000	£29,000	£0
Inspector	£80,000			£80,000
Programme Officer	£20,000			£20,000
Venue and associated costs	£2,000			£2,000
Consultants	£20,000			£20,000
Barrister	£20,000			£20,000
Total - Examination	£142,000	£0	£0	£142,000
Stage 1 - Existing & Future Transport Conditions	£29,000	£29,000		
Stage 2 - Assessment of Potential Spatial Strategies	£20,000	£20,000		
Stage 3 - Assessment of Preferred Spatial Strategy	£84,000	£84,000		
Stage 4 - Assessment of Candidate Sites	£89,000	£59,000	£30,000	
Stage 5 - Assessment of Preferred Sites	£110,000	£55,000	£55,000	
Stage 6 - Respond to Local Plan Consultation Draft	£50,000		£50,000	
Stage 7 - Assessment of Final Site Allocations	£15,000		£15,000	
Stage 8 - Preparation for Examination in Public	£78,000			£78,000
Stage 9 - Examination in Public & Response	£24,000			£24,000
Stage 10 - Modification	£14,000			£14,000
Total - Transport Assessment	£513,000	£247,000	£150,000	£116,000
Overall Total	£865,355	£348,355	£254,000	£263,000

This decision seeks to approve an overall resource plan for developing the Local Plan, although it should be noted that the values included within the table are estimates and some work packages will be subject to tender meaning that costs may vary or, it could be that costs may move between different work-streams however, the Local Plan Programme will be managed within the agreed funding envelope.

Funding

Developing the Local Plan will be funded from;

- £295k of resources held Strategic Projects reserve, and
- £570k from the Corporate Risk Reserve – which will be transferred into the SP Reserve following this decision.

Cost Centre	Balance at 01/04/20	Current Commitments	Corporate Risk Reserve	D&E Revenue	Balance at 31/03/2021
Local Plan (will be 2 codes – Planning / Transport)	-£316,342	£61,162	-£570,000	-£40,175	-£865,355

LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

In progressing the Local Plan the Council acts under its powers as Local Planning Authority as defined by the Town & Country Planning Regulations.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS:

The strategic policy approach to climate change and environmental issues will be revisited and taken forward through the new planning policy documents.

CONSULTATION

The Local Plan itself will have a number of public and stakeholder consultations, culminating in an Examination in Public.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The costs included are estimates at this stage, there is a risk that these could increase, if for example there is a substantial developer challenge; however equally, officers will continue to seek alternative sources of funding, in particular through developer contributions and funding bids.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

The Local Plan will have an equality impact assessment.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

The Local Plan will have significant implications for a wide range of Council services in terms of, for example, the future location of population, jobs and infrastructure.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report to Full Council where the Council withdrew from the JSP and embarked on the new Local Plan; <https://apps.n-somerset.gov.uk/Meetings/document/report/NSCPM-38-549>

CLT paper 23rd October 2019 - Proposal/request for JSP/SDL resourcing

SIGNATORIES:


DECISION MAKER(S):

Signed:



Title: Executive Member for Finance

Date: 1 March 2021

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. B. Pense". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "R".

Signed:

Title: Interim Director of Finance and Property (S151 Officer)

Date: 22 February 2021