

**WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**Budget to deliver the approved Local
Development Scheme**

REPORT OF THE INTERIM HEAD OF THE JOINT PLANNING UNIT

Background

1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the budget required to deliver the necessary staff resource and capacity to meet the remaining workload represented by the approved Local Development Scheme timetable. This covers the period 2009-2012.

Budget

1.2 The following table highlights key expenditure headings.

		2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
1	Total salary costs	686,700	760,400	801,100
2	Travel and training costs	50,000	51,700	53,300
3	Other operational costs e.g. IT services	38,000	30,000	31,000
4	Consultations & website support	65,000	66,600	68,400
5	Mapping monitoring and database maintenance	15,000	5,300	5,500
	Total operational costs	168,000	153,600	158,200
6	Consultancy on remaining evidence base	95,000	-	-
7	Contingency for evidence base*	150,000	100,000	50,000
	Total evidence costs	245,000	100,000	50,000
8	Examination in Public and counsel	20,000	180,000	170,000
9	Budget Contingency	30,000	35,000	50,000
	Total other costs			
	Total	1,149,700	1,229,000	1,229,300
	* this accounts for studies that are to be completed but not yet costed and work arising from options generation and selection.			

- 1.3 The total estimated budget for 2009-2010 amounts to £1,149,700 which is £104,200 more than 2008-2009 of £1,045,500. The apportionment to individual councils based on number of votes at JSPC is therefore:
- Daventry DC - £287,400
 - South Northants DC - £287,400
 - Northampton BC - £383,300
 - Northamptonshire County Council - £191,600
- 1.4 The salary bill has increased from £395,300 in 2008-2009 to £686,700 for 2009-2010. This is in order to ensure salaries are at a level commensurate with skills required and includes additional posts. The year on year variance in salary costs includes the additional programme officer required for development plan documents examinations in 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 together with salary increments on all of the posts.
- 1.5 The majority of the evidence base costs that can be readily assessed at this stage are covered in 2008-2009 as the target for completion is within this financial year. However, as Item 6 sets out there is likely to be further need for evidence gathering when the options are selected and the Core Strategy and Central Area Action Plan are worked up for publication. Therefore the contingency sum for evidence is critical. In addition the overall budget contingency is also required for a range of costs such as top up on the costs of consultations.
- 1.6 In order to manage a still fluid situation with respect to our understanding of needs for phase 2 of the evidence base (please refer to item 6 of this agenda) and to provide the maximum contingency if there are difficulties with recruitment then it is imperative that any underspend on the current year budget is carried over to the 2009/2010 financial year. The current view of the likely underspend at end year is £213,000.
- 1.7 As outlined in items 6 and 7 there is an urgent need to recruit early, after the JSPC meeting on 16th December, in order to fill the skills and capacity gaps in the current team and deliver the approved programme in the local development scheme. The cost of recruiting in this financial year can be covered by the projected underspend as can the salary costs for the final quarter of this financial year.

Recommendation

- 1.8 The Joint Strategic Planning Committee is recommended to take the budget forward for approval by constituent councils.
- 1.9 The Joint Strategic Planning Committee is recommended to take the budget forward to roll over any underspend on the 2008-2009 budget to 2009-2010.