

# Selby District Council

## REPORT

Reference: E/14/76



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<b>To:</b>	<b>The Executive</b>
<b>Date:</b>	5 March 2015
<b>Status:</b>	Non key decision
<b>Report Published:</b>	3 March 2015
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<b>Executive Member:</b>	Cllr Crane, Leader of the Council
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Keith Dawson Director of Community Services

### **Title: Local Plan Programme Update**

#### **Summary:**

The initial consultation on PLAN Selby closed on 19 January 2015. 249 responses were received which are currently being analysed alongside the output from various studies to update the evidence base. A range of further studies have been commissioned or are in the process of being commissioned to ensure that the overall evidence base is up to date and enable us to produce a sound plan for further consultation at the end of the current calendar year.

Progress on the Local Plan and 5 year land supply is being monitored through the Local Plan Programme Board which is chaired by the Chief Executive. A Strategic Development Enabler post has been recruited to and the officer takes up the post on Monday 9 March.

In the interim an analysis of long term trends has shown year on year increase in income from planning fees rising from £373k in 2010/11 to £650K in 2014/15. The situation requires increased capacity within the structure of the Planning Service. This report seeks authorisation for the release of resources to increase the capacity by creating additional fixed term contracts. Timely approval of appropriate and sustainable applications will assist in the selection of sites for allocation in PLAN Selby and enable us to achieve a 5 year land supply at the earliest opportunity.

#### **Recommendations:**

- (i) That Executive note the position in respect of PLAN Selby and the Local Plan Programme Board workstreams

- (ii) That Executive approve the virement of £54,895 in 2015/16 and 2016/17 from the Planning Fee income budget to the Access Selby Salary Budget to enable 1.5 FTE Planning Officers to be added to the establishment on 2 year fixed term contracts.

### **Reasons for recommendation**

To provide the Executive with an up to date position statement and enable Access Selby to meet the increased planning application workload and utilise additional income to maintain service levels with an appropriate increase in capacity.

## **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1 Available data suggests that there has been a sustained and substantial increase in demand for the planning service as the economic recovery continues.

## **2. The Report**

- 2.1 Initial consultation on PLAN Selby was carried out in December and January. The consultation period concluded on 19 January. In summary a total of 249 response were received.

This included:-

- 136 from individual members of the public
- 43 from landowners/developers/agents
- 33 from Parish / Town Councils
- 14 statutory consultees
- 7 adjoining LPA's
- 8 from pressure/community groups
- 4 local ward members
- 3 from business
- 1 member of Parliament

This appears to be a good rounded response and all the representation will be evaluated together with a substantial evidence base over the next few months.

- 2.2 The Local Plan Programme Board continues to monitor progress towards the next stage of further consultations which will consider the preferred options for allocation of sites.
- 2.3 A Strategic Development Enabler has been recruited and takes up his post on Monday 9 March 2015. An action plan aimed at re-establishing a 5 year land supply at the earliest opportunity will be considered by the Programme Board on 5 March and the officer will commence work on delivering the action plan on 9 March.
- 2.4 In the interim the number of applications being received is increasing. It is not possible to definitively identify how many of these are as a result of the

position on 5 year housing land supply and how many are as a result of the improving economy and national drivers on house building such as changes to s106 Agreements.

- 2.5 The number of planning related applications and the resultant income received fluctuates wildly. Consequently the Planning Service experiences sudden falls and increases in both income and workload. Long term trends are often governed by macro-economic factors, such as the economic cycle and to some extent granting regimes, for example in respect to renewable energy schemes.
- 2.6 Analysis of long term trends has shown a year on year increase in income from planning fees rising from £373k in 2010/11 to £650K in 2014/15 (see Appendix a). There is no indication that this trend will abate and indications are that it may continue as the economic recovery gathers pace.
- 2.7 The lack of a 5 year land supply and to some extent feed-in tariffs for renewables has generated increased interest in large scale housing and large solar PV schemes. This resulted in an unprecedented increase in income received in November 2014 when £145,857 was received in fees
- 2.8 The data therefore suggests that the Planning Service is on the verge of witnessing a sustained substantial increase in workloads. This could have implications not only for customer satisfaction and perceptions as to whether Access Selby is “open for business” and able to deliver on its growth agenda but more importantly the risk of designation if major applications are not determined within time, with consequent loss of credibility and income.
- 2.9 The situation requires increased capacity at the higher end of the structure (team leader and senior planner levels) and it is considered that in order to get the right skills/ experience and capacity within the Service, the staff resource at the 3c level is increased by half a post and that an additional 3b post will be required.
- 2.10 The additional resources to undertake the above on 2 year fixed term contracts equate to £54,895 p.a.

### **3. Legal/Financial Controls and other Policy matters**

#### **Legal Issues**

- 3.1 The creation of 2 year fixed term contracts may have employment law implications however with proper management of the termination of the contracts there should be no long term impact on the establishment.

#### **Financial Issues**

- 3.2 The resources for the increase in staff levels is to be met from the increase in planning income received. This will require a virement of the planning fee income budget to the Access Selby salary budget. Forecasts suggest that additional income generated will be in excess of the proposed virement but

income will be closely monitored to ensure that this proposal will not risk an increase to Access Selby's net expenditure.

### **Impact Assessment**

- 3.3 The proposal will enable the Council to deliver its legal requirements under the Planning Acts and maximise inward investment into the District.

### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 The Local Plan Programme is being delivered and monitored via the Programme Board. This includes a programme of consultation and engagement and an action plan on 5 year housing land supply.
- 4.2 The proposal to increase resource in the Planning Service would ensure that the right level of resources is in place to deliver the Council's growth agenda and to ensure customer satisfaction through determination of planning applications in a timely manner.

### **5. Background Documents**

None.

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### **Appendices:**

Appendix A: Trend in Planning Fees Received 2004 to 2015

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