



Report to: Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Performance & Finance  
 Decision Date: 13<sup>th</sup> January 2025  
 Portfolio Holder: Councillor Paul Peacock, Leader of the Council  
 Director Lead: Matt Lamb Director of Planning & Growth  
 Lead Officer: Matthew Norton Business Manager Planning Policy & Infrastructure

<b>Report Summary</b>	
<b>Type of Report</b>	Non-Key Decision
<b>Report Title</b>	Amended Allocations & Development Management Development Management Development Plan Document (DPD) Examination Costs
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	The report seeks approval from the Portfolio Holder to transfer £80,000 from the Planning Cost Reserve to the Local Development Framework budget to cover the costs of the DPD Examination process
<b>Recommendation</b>	That £80,000 is transferred from the Planning Cost Reserve to the Local Development Framework budget
<b>Alternative Options Considered</b>	Alternative options were not explored as the Planning Cost Reserve exists to support the work of the Council's Planning teams therefore using it in this way is appropriate.
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	To ensure that the Council can pay for the costs of the DPD Examination process.
<b>Decision Taken</b>	As per the recommendation.

## 1.0 Background

1.1 The Council's Amended Allocations & Development Management Development Plan Document (DPD) is currently under the process of Examination. The Council is responsible for its own costs (professional support from consultants and the costs of a programme officer to manage the examination process) but also for those of the Planning Inspectorate. As these costs are unknown at the time of budget setting, as they are based on how the Inspectorate conducts the examination process officers set the budget based on previous examination cost experience. This assumed that the

Inspectorate bill would be circa £55,000. The Local Development Framework budget was therefore set at £60,000 and following a rollover of a commitment for existing work the budget for 2024/25 amounted to £90,000.

- 1.2 We received a half year invoice from the Inspectorate for £38,776.65. This is the period between May and October 2024 so does not include the time when the Hearing sessions were being undertaken and the costs associated with that. Cost on consultants to support the Council have also been incurred, although this is not quite as high as anticipated, as a number of hearing sessions were cancelled so support was not required, they were still substantial.
- 1.3 Currently the Local Development Framework budget has incurred expenditure of £96,432.09 and has commitments of £40,446.50 meaning it is over committed by £46,878.59. It is anticipated that a similar bill will be received from the Inspectorate at the end of the financial year, along with further costs for the programme officer. Other work including a review of the Habitat Regulations Assessment in relation to Main Modifications will be required to be undertaken adding further costs.
- 1.4 A Planning Cost Reserve exists to support the work of the Planning Development and Planning Policy & Infrastructure Business Units and deal with costs as they occur. It current holds £119,940.00.

## **2.0 Proposal**

- 2.1 It is proposed that a figure of £80,000 is transferred from the Planning Cost Fund to the Local Development Framework budget to cover the existing over commitment of £41,216.89 and make provision for additional spend this year.

## **3.0 Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations officers have considered the following implications; Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability, and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

### **3.1 Financial Implications (FIN24-25/1176)**

The Planning Cost Reserve has a current balance of £119,940, as mentioned in Paragraph 1.4. A commitment is to be provided of £80,000 and to be drawn down in year into the LDF budget to cover the costs of the DPD Examination Process.

This will reduce the reserve balance to £39,940. Given the unpredictable nature and the monetary value of planning costs, it's essential that the reserve remains at a more appropriate level. Therefore, at the year end, once the overall Council position is known any transfers to reserves will be reviewed by the Section 151 Officer.

## **Background Papers and Published Documents**

None