

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: THURSDAY, 15 MARCH 2012
title: LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – CORE STRATEGY – BUDGET PROVISIONS
submitted by: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: COLIN HIRST – HEAD OF REGENERATION & HOUSING

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To agree a detailed budget provision to progress the Core Strategy to its completion.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions – The Core Strategy is the central strategy of the Local Development Framework. It will help in the delivery of housing employment and the protection and enhancement of the environment, ultimately presenting the delivery strategy for implementing the vision for the Ribble Valley for the next 15-20 years.
- Community Objectives – As a tool for delivering spatial policy the Core Strategy identifies how a range of issues relating to the objectives of a sustainable economy, thriving market towns and housing provision will be addressed through the planning system.
- Corporate Priorities – The Core Strategy is the central document of the LDF and sets the overall vision and approach to future planning policy which will aid performance and consistency.
- Other Considerations – The Council has a duty to prepare spatial policy under the Local Development Framework system.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Members are aware of the programme of work being undertaken to put in place the Core Strategy for the borough in accord with current planning legislation. A range of reports has been considered and work is currently being carried out to prepare the next key stage, namely drawing together a composite preferred option/ pre submission version of the strategy. This stage is the key stage that triggers a range of steps that move the Council towards Adoption of the Core Strategy including further public consultation, Public Examination by the Secretary of State and ultimately formal adoption and publication of the strategy.

2.2 The majority of resources applied to the preparation of the strategy have been set aside from the former Planning Delivery Grant provisions, with additional support from special reserve funding and of course the application of operational revenue budgets and as such a separate budget for the Core Strategy has not been shown within the Council's estimates. The purpose of this report is to provide members with more detail on the

anticipated costs to see the Core Strategy to its completion and give a budget going forward for 2012/2013.

3 BUDGET FOR NEXT STAGES OF CORE STRATEGY

- 3.1 In terms of general budget requirements it is anticipated that to deliver the stages to adoption in the order of £46,000 would be required. It is also prudent to make some provision for Legal Advice as a contingency and this is estimated at £20,000. The Council would also need to put in place a Programme Officer to assist the Inspector during the Examination. This can be by way of a short-term appointment, in which case a budget provision would be required, this is estimated to be £20,000. An alternative would be to second an appropriate member of staff. In this case, provision may be required to provide cover for the secondee.
- 3.2 The total potential budget required therefore is estimated at £86,000. The table at Appendix 1 gives further details of the costs that make up the budget proposal.
- 3.3 As has been previously indicated whilst it is possible to prepare a general budget framework, costs may vary as a result of additional work that is required arising from consultation or to respond to issues raised during the Examination or specifically by the Inspector. Equally, costs may be reduced, for example if less consultancy or legal support is needed.
- 3.4 The legal contingency for example makes allowance for a presumed number of advice sets, not all may be required. The Examination process is not an adversarial one in the same way as old style local plan Inquiries or planning appeal Inquiries however there may be a need for specialist legal advice to ensure the Council's interests are protected. Similarly with the provision for Consultancy support, the amount of support actually required will largely depend on the need to address issues raised in the process as we move forward. If that support is not required then we will be in a position to save on that expenditure. Costs for mailings may increase if the number of contacts grows through the process or there are additional publicity or mailings required.

4 FUNDING THIS BUDGET

- 4.1 As referred to above, the total budget requested is £86,000. This could be funded partly from the residual Planning Delivery Grant monies which currently stand at £49,000. This would leave a potential shortfall of £37,000 which will need to be referred to Policy and Finance Committee to agree how this should be financed.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:
- Resources – The information in the report provides more details on the anticipated expenditure for the Core Strategy. The shortfall as set out above is £37,000. When the Council agreed the 2011/2012 revised estimates, the planning earmarked reserved fund was increased to £150,000 to cover any costs arising from the Core Strategy/planning appeals if required.

- Technical, Environmental and Legal – The Core Strategy is prepared within a statutory framework that the Council has to follow.
- Political – The preparation of the Core Strategy has widespread public interest.
- Reputation – The Council's decision on how to proceed may affect its reputation, consideration of the report will support the Council's aim of being a well run authority.

6 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 6.1 Agree the budget set out in the report at appendix 1.
- 6.2 Request that Policy and Finance Committee release £37,000 from the planning earmarked reserve to fund the shortfall identified.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

For further information please ask for Colin Hirst, extension 4503.

APPENDIX 1

CORE STRATEGY BUDGET NEEDED

	£
Examination costs – (assumes 12 day hearing)	15,000
Postage/mailing costs	10,000
General stationery	500
Copying costs	1000
Telephone	-
Travel for Programme Officer	200
Statutory adverts	2000
Publicity/printing docs Posters etc A3/A4	1000
Photocopier (dedicated)	500
Subsistence (general)	300
IT kit, printer and licences	500
Consultancy support (including contingency)	15,000
SUB-TOTAL	46,000
Barrister/legal support	20,000
Programme Officer	20,000
TOTAL	86,000