

PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT 2005/6

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) has been paid to local authorities for the past three years and is due to continue for a further two. It rewards planning authorities for good performance in meeting timescales for processing planning applications (60% of total grant) as well as progress in producing Local Development Frameworks and hitting targets relating to the e-planning agenda.
- 1.2 In 2003/4 the Council received £109,000 of PDG. In 2004/5 this increased to £522,000. The announcement of the grant allocations was made in March 2003 and 2004 so that the sums could not be dealt with through the normal expenditure plan process.
- 1.3 The purpose of the grant (although not ring fenced) is to enable Councils to invest in and further improve their planning services. It was a requirement of the 2005/6 award that at least 25% of the money be spent on capital schemes. This is being achieved in the New Forest by investing in a new computer system due to be installed this autumn.
- 1.4 The spending of the PDG is split between the Planning Development Control Committee mainly on the processing of applications, appeals and enforcement and the Economy and Planning portfolio budgets mainly relating to the production of the Local Development Framework (LDF) and associated policy matters.

2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 2.1 In budgeting for 2005/6 it was assumed that the Council would receive the same amount of PDG, £522,000, as it received in 2004/5. In fact the actual amount received was £618,000, an increase of £96,000.
- 2.2 This report seeks formal authority to spend this extra amount on the improvement of planning services

3. SPENDING OF PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT 2005/6

- 3.1 On development control the spending is split between extra temporary staffing, both professional and administrative, increased use of consultants and extra legal resources to speed up the production of Section 106 agreements. The staffing figure in this year's budget was increased to allow for more information and liaison with Parish/Town Councils on planning applications matters.

2005/6	£'000
Additional staffing	140
Extra staff training	10
Equipment and Accommodation	8
Extra consultancy	30
Extra legal support	25
	213

- 3.2 On planning policy the spending is split between extra specialist staff to support the development control process, the use of consultants to produce survey and related work essential to the production of the LDF and temporary staff for the Town and Parish Councils community planning initiative.

2005/6	£'000
Community Planning initiative	50
Extra specialist support for DC	40
Consultants - policy generation	25
	105

- 3.3 In addition, a substantial part of the cost of the new planning computer system is being funded from the PDG allocation.

4. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The extra PDG money this year is largely being used to support local Town and Parish Council involvement in the planning process. This is intended to improve environmental outcomes in the longer term.

5. PORTFOLIO HOLDER/COMMITTEE COMMENTS

- 5.1 Councillor Jeremy Heron supports the proposal and welcomes the improved partnership in working with Town and Parish Councils.
- 5.2 The Planning Development Control Committee on 14 September supported the recommendation below.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Although for budgeting purposes the assumed amount of PDG was the same as last year (£522,000), the work programme, and particularly the extra work with Parish and Town Councils, was agreed based upon the larger sum announced in March, £618,000. Without authority to spend the additional £96,000 the existing work programme, particularly the Town and Parish Council element, cannot be sustained and some elements will have to be discontinued.

7. RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 That it be recommended to the Council that additional expenditure of £96,000 in 2005/6 to be funded from the receipt of additional Planning Delivery Grant be approved.

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Background Papers

None