

Planning & Transportation Oct 2017

Priorities of the Portfolio

- Protecting the local character of the place
- Living within our means
- Working with others to achieve more

Performance

The cost of this portfolio is £7.56 (4.6%) of the £163.36 annual Band D council tax, including planning development control. The budgeted costs from 2016/17 to 2017/18 reduced by £397k. Further opportunities to reduce net expenditure within this Portfolio may emerge over the coming years.

The Portfolio is on target to submit part 1 of the Local Plan by the middle of 2018.

The development management function of dealing with planning applications and giving people advice on development matters has continued to achieve its main timescale and financial targets, the percentage of appeals allowed is low and income targets are forecast to be met. Application numbers continue to be high with 1,135 received in the first eight months of the year.

The viability of the existing arrangements for Building Control need to be reviewed further, following the assessment of alternatives such as multi-authority joint service provision or a joint (arm's length) local authority trading company, to determine the future delivery of this service. Opportunities to improve processes, to restructure the Team to deal with current workloads, and merge administrative functions and management arrangements with the Development Management team are also being pursued.

The Transportation team continues to meet its targets for delivering small scale traffic management schemes, making various types of traffic order and deploying traffic speed warning devices.

The installation of 73 new pay and display machines took place in December 2016, with 13 of these accepting card payments, which are providing residents and visitors with more options. In addition, better data is being received due to remote monitoring, and this will support the upcoming Enforcement Review which will look at identifying opportunities for joining up activities of visible officers.

Challenges

The Council once again had to identify significant savings in setting the 2017/18 budget to help mitigate a £1.8m reduction in government determined funding in comparison to 2016/17. A further reduction in funding of £1.7m is expected in just 2 years to 2019/20, whilst cost increases over the same period based on a 1% pay award are forecast at another £1.7m. The Council's future plans must address this major financial challenge and ensure the Council's strategic objectives are aligned to resources available.

The most significant risk continues to be the Planning Policy Framework 2012 (NPPF) and its requirement for 'objectively assessed needs' for housing to be met, together with changes to the way in which the OAN is calculated which will require a significant increase in house building in the District. It is challenging to meet these external pressures, which fail to recognise and protect the special and unique character of the New Forest. There are likely to be changes to the NPPF before the end of 2017 which may well impact on the emerging Local Plan

In addition it has been recognised by Officers that the way open space is provided and managed needs a fundamental review and additional emphasis on monitoring development on site will be required.

Continuing changes to NPPF and other guidance and legislation introduced by the Government have resource implications for Local Planning Authorities, make it difficult to plan resource needs effectively. Additionally the Portfolio will need to respond to the changes in the provision of land charges.

In general the workload of the Planning Service will increase significantly in connection with the need to deliver much higher levels of growth within the area and in particular major growth areas. The Planning Service is currently resourced to deal with much smaller levels of development and there will be additional demand for pre-application work, applications and appeals. Most of this will be funded by additional fee income although any significant rise in the number of major appeals would need to be monitored.

The ability to recruit and retain a sufficient number of suitably qualified and experienced staff to carry out a range of complex functions remains a concern.

The council's funding for the Traffic Management Agency from Hampshire County Council will reduce from £99,182 in 2016/17 to £59,511 in 2017/18 and £39,674 in 2018/19, which will mean additional sources of funding and a reduction in costs will need to be sought.

Corporate Requirements

- Undertake reviews and key activities as identified in the corporate plan (delivery plan) to improve services for our customers and meet the budget shortfall, including an increased focus on collaborative working.

Key Activities

- Submission of the Local Plan (Part 1- Planning Strategy) for public examination by mid 2018
- Continue to consider and implement new sources of funding to offset the financial implications of the reduced traffic management agency payment from Hampshire County Council.

- Fundamental review of how the Building Control service operates by the end March 2018, and implementation of actions resulting from the above by September 2018
- Integration of Development Management and Building Control administrative and management teams
- Responding to changes in provision of land charges and the associated transfer of land charges data to land registry
- Developing enhanced processes and procurement of appropriate resources to deal with Open Space

and the active monitoring of major sites during construction

Supporting Information

In support of this plan the following documents are available:

- 1) The Portfolio's Performance Scorecard
- 2) Summary of Net Portfolio Spend