

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee: Cabinet**

**Date 22 February 2018**

**Subject: Planning and Governance Portfolio**

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor J Philip**

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**Recommending:**

**That the report of the Planning and Governance Portfolio Holder be noted.**

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## **1. Development Management**

The latest income figures indicate that while there has been a slight dip in income for Development Control, the increase in planning fees and better performance by Building Control indicates that overall income for both Development Control and Building Control is very positive with the expectation that the revised budget targets will be met.

Building Control income for January 2018 (Period 10) was £31,996 (January 2017 £23,305) as compared with the recently increased revised budget requirement of £32,310. Year to date income for Building Control up to January 2018 is £463,405 (January 2017 £388,039) which indicates Building Control is £75,366 better off in January 2018 compared to January 2017.

In order to match the upwardly revised budget of £530,000 for the year, Building Control needs to achieve an income of £67,000 for February and March 2018 which is quite likely considering that the revised budget for February and March 2018 is £94,560.

Therefore it is likely Building Control will meet the revised income of £530,000 for 2017/18 particularly as the actual for ten months plus budget for two months is £557,965.

There are a number of positives that illustrate the strength and resilience of Building Control within the competitive building control service;

- Building Control turnover has increased by 30% since 2014/15 when comparing turnover of £408,000 with 2017/18 budget of £530,000;
- During this period Building Control has taken steps to develop and train two Building Control Surveyors (40% of the surveyor establishment); and
- Building Control is actively seeking different income streams against a background of competition from Approved Inspectors as well as working hard to improve links with partners and architects.

Income for Development Control for January 2018 (Period 10) was £81,160 (January 2017 £59,810). The year to date turnover is £681,251 (January 2017 £837,442).

Actual income to January 2018 plus two months is £808,421. However planning fees increased by 20% from 17 January 2018 which should have a positive effect on Development Control income.

In addition, Pre-Application income for January 2018 is £88,000 and indications are that this will meet budget of £106,000 for the year.

As a result of the fee increase it is likely that Development Control will come close to the revised budget of £840,000 for 2017/18 and that overall income should reach £950,000 for 2017/18.

## **2. Local Plan**

An extraordinary meeting of the Council on 14 December 2017 agreed to publish the Epping Forest District Local Plan Submission Version 2017 for a six week period from 18 December 2017 to 29 January 2018 in accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012. About 1,000 representations have been received and are currently being logged and coded ready for submission to the Planning Inspectorate together with the relevant supporting documents for independent examination by the end of March 2018.

A Programme Officer, Louise St John, has been appointed to liaise with the Planning Policy Team and the Inspectorate and to provide administrative support to the Inspector and the Council as appropriate for the examination. She will be helping to ensure that the representations are presented to the Inspectorate in the appropriate format and will help to organise and maintain the library of examination related documents. One of the first tasks will be the establishment of an examination page on the Council's website. Louise is very experienced and has recently undertaken a similar role for the examination of the East Herts District Local Plan.

## **3. Implementation of the Local Plan**

In December 2017, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) issued a prospectus for the Planning Delivery Fund which is part of the resource funding announced in the Housing White Paper. The Council submitted a bid for funding for 2017/18 and 2018/19 under the Design Quality funding stream to support the implementation of the local plan. Support under the funding stream is offered to increase design skills in local authorities to ensure that new development meets the Governments ambitions for quality as well as quantity. The Council has sought funding, in particular, to support the masterplanning process identified in the Submission Version Local Plan - £100,000 in 2017/18 and £50,000 in 2018/19. The prospectus advised that funding would be confirmed for 2017-18 and indicative amounts awarded for 2018/19 by the end of January 2018. This will enable the Council to accelerate the Implementation Team recruitment ahead of the bid for £278,010 approved by the Council on 7 December 2017 to fund a team for two years.

In the meantime, work has continued with the promoters of the sites around Harlow and the identification of teams to start the preparation of masterplans. A template for Planning Performance Agreements is being prepared, with discussions ongoing with Essex County Council in order to establish the appropriate costs and the scope of masterplans. Updates will be given regularly on progress.

The setting up of the Quality Review Panel for both the Garden Town and for the District has progressed with the appointment of a Chair – Peter Maxwell who is the Head of Design at the London Legacy Development Corporation and a panel of planning, architecture, urban design and construction experts to provide impartial expert advice in relation to development schemes and proposals. The Quality Review Panel's feedback will be a material planning consideration for local authorities and the planning inspectorate when determining planning applications and will help ensure that new development is of a high quality and contributes to place making. Details of the Quality Review Panel membership and the terms of reference will be placed on the website when these have been finalised.

#### **4. Harlow and Gilston Garden Town**

Funding received from the Government, for the Garden Town of £175,000 for 2017/18 has been ringfenced to support the setting up of a Quality Review Panel and to provide support for transport and other evidence based work to help bring the strategic sites forward for development. Consultants are preparing a spatial vision and design charter and separately consultants have been appointed to develop proposals for the implementation of sustainable transport corridors for the Garden Town.

A bid has been submitted on behalf of the Garden Town under the Joint Working fundstream of the Planning Delivery Fund for a total of £119,000 for 2017/18 and £290,000 for 2018/19 to provide support on the preparation of a Garden Town Infrastructure Plan, identifying and setting out all the infrastructure requirements for the Garden Town and its hinterland and to carry out more detailed work to take the sustainable transport proposals to design stage.

A Project Director for the Garden Town has been appointed. Claire Hamilton started on 5 February 2018.