

Agenda Item

Executive Board

6 August 2008

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Infrastructure Needs Analysis and Framework Model in support of the East Devon LDF

Summary

This report seeks authority to appoint consultants to prepare an Infrastructure Needs Analysis and model to inform the Local Development Framework. The work is required to provide the Core Strategy with a robust strategy for the development of social and community infrastructure in the District by undertaking a review of the local issues relating to the supply and future demand for a range of infrastructure to service the planned growth to 2026. The work would be jointly funded with SWRDA and the Council's contribution is in the LDF budget. The procurement of the consultants will be undertaken by SWRDA with an exemption under the Financial Standing Orders.

Recommendation

Authority is given to commission with the SWRDA an Infrastructure Framework Model for East Devon, including the Growth Area, to identify the areas infrastructure needs to service the planned growth to 2026.

a) Reasons for Recommendation

This work is necessary to support the production of the Core Strategy and to enable the Council to benefit from the Community Infrastructure Levy when it is introduced.

b) Alternative Options

To build a model of the infrastructure needs through current staff resources. This will have severe consequences on the time line and other work.

c) Risk Considerations

This work will minimise the risk of under providing infrastructure to service the planned growth and should reduce the risk of failing to provide evidence in support of the core strategy.

d) Policy and Budgetary Considerations

The budget is in place to cover the cost of this work. The LDF is a core corporate document and many of the Council's priorities require 106 funding to assist delivery.

e) Date for Review of Decision

NA

1.0 Comment

- 1.1 The Council requires an analysis of the planned growth for the District, assessing the likely changes in population size and character over the next 20 years. We require an Infrastructure Framework Model to be built and for this to be applied to the planned housing growth in the District. This will allow us to provide a details analysis of future social and community infrastructure service and facility requirements calculated and compared against future provision. We would also expect this model to sit with a comprehensive spatial analysis of social infrastructure provision across the District, so that we can understand not only the level and type of provision required, but also to identify where this will be most effectively located in the District.

- 1.2 Significant work has already been done identifying the infrastructure needs associated with Cranbrook's 2,900 dwellings, but with the draft RSS now requiring 7,500 dwellings plus a further 4,000 dwellings - that may constitute a second new community - there is some urgency required to model the infrastructure needs of this larger growth as this will be a key element in testing the soundness of the core strategy the Council will need to produce. From the regional point of view there is an awareness of the length of time it has taken (5 years) to identify the infrastructure needs for Cranbrook and to negotiate the 106 agreement; and there is a desire to see if we can shorten this process to accelerate delivery of major urban extensions across the region. SWRDA is therefore keen to assess whether a different approach in the manner we are proposing can bring benefits in terms of speed of delivery.
- 1.3 The SWRDA are interested in a joint commissioning of consultants on the basis that this work could demonstrate useful lessons of interest across the region. The work should be able to accelerate delivery of the growth agenda by reducing time pre-application negotiating with service providers on their needs, and save significant amounts of time negotiating complex 106 agreements. This work is essential if the Council is to be in a position to access the proposed community infrastructure levy. The DGLC on the community infrastructure levy, commenting on what local planning authorities should do before the CIL is introduced and transitional arrangements, states:
- “A first and fundamental step is to ensure that there is a good evidence base both on infrastructure needs and priorities, and on the changes in land value that occur when planning permissions are granted in an area. The latter may vary substantially from site to site and from one type of development to another. Charging authorities will need to have a good understanding of those variations if they are to produce charging regimes which promote rather than prevent development. Collecting this evidence base now will put authorities in a good position to move quickly to consultation on a charging schedule once the detail of the new regime is settled. It builds on existing responsibilities for infrastructure planning.” Para 86
- 1.4 The work that we are proposing to be carried out by consultants will provide the evidence base for the introduction of the CIL. The consultants would be engaged by SWRDA and would be jointly funded; the Council's cost is likely to be £40,000. The work will take 6 months from the date approval is given for the work to be done. The budget for the work of the LDF is in place to cover the cost of this study. As the consultants will be engaged by SWRDA an exemption will be required from the financial standing orders.

Legal Implications

There are no legal observations.

Financial Implications

The financial implications are included in the report.

Consultation on Reports to the Executive

Corporate Overview Committee was informed of this work on 26 June and was supportive.

SMT considered this on the 22 July 2008 and was supportive of the approach.

Background Papers

The Planning Bill

Community Infrastructure Levy, DCLG

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/674479.pdf>