

# TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

<b>Report to:</b>	Executive
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	3 February 2016
<b>Subject:</b>	Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Joint Core Strategy Additional Budget Request
<b>Report of:</b>	Julie Wood, Development Services Group Manager
<b>Corporate Lead:</b>	Mike Dawson, Chief Executive
<b>Lead Member:</b>	Councillor D M M Davies
<b>Number of Appendices:</b>	None

## **Executive Summary:**

Due to the extended period of the examination of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS), and the extensive additional evidence and legal advice to support the process, the budget implications for each of the JCS authorities has been revised for the period 2016/17.

The JCS authorities have, since 2008, provided an annual contribution per authority of £60,000. This report sets out the detail of the request for a total contribution of £195,000 (i.e. £135,000 per Council in addition to the £60,000).

## **Recommendation:**

**That the Executive Committee approves the use of £135,000 of reserves within 2016/17 to further support the Joint Core Strategy.**

## **Reasons for Recommendation:**

To enable completion of the JCS.

## **Resource Implications:**

The extra £135,000 requested can be treated as a one-off and therefore reserves can be utilised to cover this cost in 2016/17. Provision has already been made within the Council's budget proposals for this to happen. This will of course consume resources that were originally intended for other purposes but it is anticipated that a significant surplus will be made within the current year budget to replenish those reserves utilised for this purpose. The £60,000 base budget to support the JCS remains part of the ongoing budget.

Should further monies be required for the JCS during the course of the year, a further approach to Executive Committee will be required to either vire monies between reserves or to utilise the uncommitted New Homes Bonus as proposed within the budget papers.

**Legal Implications:**

Having a local plan in place is a statutory requirement.

**Risk Management Implications:**

If the Council does not continue to deliver the required evidence work and obtain legal advice then adoption could be delayed with the risk of inappropriate development.

**Performance Management Follow-up:**

Performance is managed through the JCS reporting structure and through the Council's own performance and project management processes.

**Environmental Implications:**

The JCS will protect the Borough and its communities from inappropriate development.

**1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

**1.1** As Members will be aware, the Borough Council has been working in collaboration with Cheltenham Borough Council and Gloucester City Council since 2008 on the preparation of the JCS. This collaboration is supported by an annual commitment of £60,000 per authority. The JCS budget over 2015/16 and 2016/17 is very much focused on delivering the Examination in Public (EIP). Costs arising in support of this include Inspector and examination support costs, legal support and additional technical work arising from the debate at the EIP as directed by the Inspector.

**2.0 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

**2.1** The JCS examination process is taking significantly longer than expected. The JCS was submitted to the Secretary of State in November 2014 with the original expectation that the examination would be completed in the 2015/2016 financial year, with the adoption process continuing into 2016/17. The annual commitment of £60,000 was considered to be sufficient to cover this cost.

**2.2** However, with the substantial increase in work requested by the Inspector, including updates to objectively assessed need, housing market assessments, economy and viability, and with an increase in the number of sitting days and the delays incurred by the transport modelling, this has meant increased costs.

**2.3** The key areas will be the stage three examination covering flooding, infrastructure, transport modelling, monitoring, viability and more general policies; completion of the main modifications proposed, subsequent public consultation and a further examination review by the inspector before adoption. There will also be costs associated with the Community Infrastructure Levy.

**2.4** A budget review was tabled at the Cross Boundary Programme Board on 22 October 2015 and this totalled £435,000 across the three authorities (i.e. £145,000 per Council). It was also noted that it would be prudent to further increase the budget, given the likelihood of further costs including expert legal advice and support. Therefore a further increase of £150,000 was suggested (i.e. £50,000 per Council). Therefore, the total budget request for 2016/17 is £195,000 per Council (£135,000 per Council in addition to the annual budget allocation of £60,000).

**2.5** As Members will be aware, the Inspector has recently produced a Preliminary Findings

Report on Green Belt Release, Spatial Strategy and Strategic Allocations. This will inevitably result in additional work requested by the Inspector. It is hoped that the contingency of £50,000 per Council will cover any additional costs, however, these costs are currently unknown.

**3.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

3.1 None.

**4.0 CONSULTATION**

4.1 None.

**5.0 RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES/STRATEGIES**

5.1 Council Plan 2012–2016.

**6.0 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT POLICIES**

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance.

**7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (Human/Property)**

7.1 The Examination in Public involves a significant amount of officer time.

**8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (Social/Community Safety/Cultural/ Economic/ Environment)**

8.1 The purpose of the planning system is to contribute towards sustainable development principles. Planning decisions are required to be made in accordance with an adopted development plan. The plan-led approach to development will help to ensure that new development is supported by the necessary facilities and infrastructure to make it sustainable in the long term.

**9.0 IMPACT UPON (Value For Money/Equalities/E-Government/Human Rights/Health And Safety)**

9.1 None.

**10.0 RELATED DECISIONS AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT FACTS**

10.1 None.

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**Background Papers:** None.

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**Appendices:** None.