

# **WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **EXECUTIVE –**

**7 SEPTEMBER 2021**

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**Title:**

**Request for supplementary estimate to produce a Climate Change and Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**

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**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Andy MacLeod, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy, Services and Brightwells

**Head of Service:** Zac Ellwood, Head of Planning and Economic Development

**Key decision:** Yes – significant in terms of its effect on two or more Wards

**Access:** Public

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### **1. Purpose and summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a supplementary estimate to cover the fees of an external consultant to prepare a Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This report sets out that the Planning Service does not have sufficient identified budget to meet these fees.

### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Executive approve the supplementary estimate attached as Annexe 1 to this report for up to an additional £30,000 to go towards meeting the fees of procuring external consultants to prepare the Climate Change SPD, to be met from the General Fund Working Balance.

### **3. Reason for the recommendation**

- 3.1 £10,000 has already been agreed in principle from the climate change fund to prepare the Climate Change SPD, however the anticipated cost of producing the SPD is estimated to be between £30,000 and £40,000 which means there is a funding gap believed to be of up to £30,000 (albeit the full cost will only be known once an external procurement exercise has been undertaken. These additional funds cannot be met from within the current Local Plan budget as this is needed to fund the remaining stages of Local Plan Part 2, including a further round of public consultation and the Examination in Public. Furthermore, addressing the climate change emergency is a corporate priority that is an issue that goes across a few Council services.

### **4. Relationship to the Corporate Strategy and Service Plan**

- 4.1 The Corporate Strategy sets out the Council's strategic priorities. These priorities include acting on the climate emergency. There is a target in the Carbon Neutrality

Action Plan and the Planning & Economic Development Service Plan to produce an SPD focussing on climate change and sustainability by the end of 2021/22.

## 5. Implications of decision

### 5.1 **Resource (Finance, procurement, staffing, IT)**

The financial implications are set out above in this report.

The costs of the SPD is estimated at £30-40k. £10k has been identified from the climate change reserve (position detailed below) however the remaining £20-30k is requested to be funded from the General Fund working balances which has sufficient funds over the required £3.2m.

#### Climate Change Reserve Position

		£'000
<b>Total Reserve</b>		<b>200</b>
Amount Spent	Woolmer Hill Pavilion Energy Efficiency	6
	Memorial Hall feasibility	2
Amount Committed	Community Schemes	
	- Transport	50
	- Community Energy	40
	Feasibility & Project exploration	48
	Invest to Save Projects	
• Memorial Hall decarbonisation additional cost	30	
• Woolmer Hill Pavilion Energy Efficiency	14	
	Climate change SPD contribution	10
<b>Balance Available</b>		<b>0</b>

### 5.2 **Risk management**

No issues identified.

### 5.3 **Legal**

No legal implications identified.

### 5.4 **Equality, diversity and inclusion**

There are no direct equality, diversity or inclusion implications in this report. Equality impact assessments are carried out when necessary across the council to ensure service delivery meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.

### 5.5 **Climate emergency declaration**

As set out above, there is a target in the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan to produce an SPD focussing on climate change and sustainability by the end of 2021/22. The

SPD, once adopted, will be a material consideration in determining planning applications of all types and scales and will enable the Council to influence new development across the Borough so that it is sustainable and responds to the challenges of, and mitigates against, climate change. There are currently a number of planning policies contained within Local Plan Part 1 which focus on climate change and sustainability and the SPD will set out how the Council expects these policy requirements to be met, and will therefore support applicants, officers and Councillors to ensure that these policies are used to their maximum potential.

## **6. Consultation and engagement**

6.1 There are no comments from committees or other consultees.

## **7. Other options considered**

7.1 Due to other workstreams that are focussed on delivering Local Plan Part 2, assisting communities in progressing their neighbourhood plans, updating five-year housing land supply and implementing CIL, there is currently no capacity within the Planning Policy team for officers to progress with the SPD in a timely manner. A number of other options for producing the SPD, including a 'do nothing' option, have been considered and are set out in Annexe 1. It would be possible to delay preparation of the SPD for approximately 9-12 months, until after LPP2 has been delivered, but this would have a detrimental impact on our ability to positively influence improved sustainability credentials in new developments during that time. The Council is also statutorily required to consider whether a review of LPP1 is necessary within 5 years of its adoption (i.e. by February 2023) and it is considered likely that a review will be necessary which will, in itself, be very resource hungry in terms of officer time.

The 'do nothing' option would mean that the SPD will not be delivered during 2021/22. Based on the challenges presented by the other two options which have been considered, officers believe the best approach to move the project forward in a timely manner is to pay for consultants to produce the SPD. As is set out above, the cost of this cannot be met within the local plan budget which leaves a funding gap. Therefore, a supplementary estimate is requested to meet this funding gap.

## **8. Governance journey**

8.1 This decision will be made by the Executive.

### **Annexes:**

Annexe 1 – Supplementary Estimate Request Form

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### **Background Papers**

There are no background papers, as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972).

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### **CONTACT OFFICER:**

Name: Alice Knowles

Position: Senior Planning Policy Officer  
Telephone: 01483 523527  
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Agreed and signed off by:

Legal Services: 12 August 2021

Head of Finance: 25 August 2021

Strategic Director: 25 August 2021

Portfolio Holder: 24 August 2021

## Supplementary Estimate Request Form

Annexe 1

<b>Your name / team</b> Alice Knowles Planning Policy	<b>Date of request</b> 7 September 2021
<b><u>Why</u> has the need for additional funds which cannot be met from existing budgets arisen?</b>	
<p>There is a target in the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan and the Planning &amp; Economic Development Service Plan to produce an SPD focussing on climate change and sustainability by the end of 2021/22. £10,000 has been agreed in principle from the climate change fund, however the anticipated cost of producing the SPD is estimated to be £30-40,000 which means there is a funding gap of up to £30,000. These additional funds cannot be met within the local plan budget as this is needed to fund the remaining stages of Local Plan Part 2, including the examination in public.</p>	
<b><u>How much</u> money is being requested and <u>what</u> will it be spent on?</b>	
<p>Up to £30,000 is being requested. This will be used to secure consultants to produce a Climate Change and Sustainability SPD.</p>	
<b><u>When</u> will the money be spent by?</b>	
<p>End of financial year (April 2022).</p>	
<b>Value for Money Assessment</b>	
<b><u>What other options</u> have been considered (including doing nothing)?</b>	
<p>Due to other workstreams that are focussed on delivering Local Plan Part 2, assisting communities in progressing their neighbourhood plans, updating five year housing land supply and implementing CIL, there is currently no capacity within the Planning Policy team for officers to progress with the SPD in a timely manner. The 'do nothing' option would therefore mean that the SPD will not be delivered during 2021/22. The team has considered a number of options for delivering the SPD, which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• paying for consultants to do the bulk of the work,</li><li>• recruiting in-house expertise so that there is an ongoing climate change capability within the Planning Team, and</li><li>• working with LPA partners.</li></ul> <p><u>Working with LPA partners</u></p> <p>To further explore the opportunities for working with Guildford or other local authority partners, an email was sent to planning policy teams at all other Surrey authorities via the Planning Working Group and also to Rushmoor, South Downs National Park, Horsham and Chichester as neighbouring authorities to Waverley. The email asked whether they had any resources within their team with climate change specialisms which they would be willing to second to Waverley for the project. An email response was received from Horsham and a telephone response from Reigate and Banstead, both confirming that they did not have any resources to second. No response was</p>	

received from the other authorities we contacted.

Recruiting in-house expertise

Based on officer experience in recruiting planning officers with a particular specialism, officers consider that the option of recruiting in-house expertise on a temporary basis is likely to be very challenging and cause a delay to producing the SPD, due to there being a very small recruitment pool. However, recruitment agencies have not been approached and therefore this is anecdotal.

Based on the challenges presented by the above two options, officers believe the best approach to move the project forward is to pay for consultants to produce the SPD.

**What are the expected benefits will the planned expenditure bring?**

The SPD will be a way that the Council can influence new development across the Borough so that it is sustainable and responds to the challenges of, and mitigates against, climate change. There are currently a number of planning policies contained within Local Plan Part 1 which focus on climate change and sustainability. The SPD will support applicants, officers and Councillors to ensure that these policies are used to their maximum potential.

**What are the risks, if any, of agreeing or refusing the supplementary estimate?**

The risk of refusing the supplementary estimate is a delay to producing the SPD meaning that it is unlikely that the SPD will be delivered during 2021/22.

Please complete this form and send it to the Head of Finance & Property and s.151 Officer.