

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - 25 JUNE 2003

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE

This Matter Is The Responsibility of Executive Cllr Bishop

PLANNING STAFFING

1.0 Purpose & Background

- 1.1 The Strategic Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Panel met on 10 June 2003 and considered the report of the Chief Planning Officer on "Performance and Staffing in Development Control".
- 1.2 The report outlined the use of the Planning Delivery Grant in 2003/04, and recommended the appointment of one full-time and one part-time member of staff within the Planning Unit.
- 1.3 The Executive Councillor for Planning and Transportation has agreed with the Panel's recommendations and seeks Executive and Council approval of the necessary budget changes.

2.0 Planning Delivery Grant

- 2.1 The Government have issued additional funds to all Planning authorities in 2003/04 under the heading of Planning Delivery Grant. This money has been issued to authorities based on planning performance - with this Council receiving £75,000. Similar grants may be available in future years, but this cannot be guaranteed, or indeed budgeted for with any certainty.
- 2.2 The grant should be targeted to delivering improved services and in this Council this will be achieved by allocating the grant as follows:-

	£
Development Control	
Increase in staffing	25,000
Consultants Fees	15,000
Additional training for staff	8,000
Additional training for councillors	2,000
Resourcing of IT systems	5,000
	55,000
Planning Policy & Regeneration	
Consultants Fees	15,000
Additional training for staff	5,000
	20,000
TOTAL	75,000

2.3 The funds set out above should only be used for one-off items, and the funding of temporary staff.

3.0 Staffing Issues

3.1 The report to the Panel outlined a request for additional staffing totalling £32,179 within the Planning Unit. This, as ongoing expenditure, cannot be funded from the Planning Delivery Grant.

3.2 The Planning Income levels have increased steadily over the last few years, and it is now felt appropriate to review the Councils base budget position. The base budget for 2003/04 estimates £342,000 of planning fee income (2002/03 actual £417k).

3.3 It is proposed to fund the cost of employing additional permanent staff within the planning Unit as set out in the report to the Panel by virement. This can be done by increasing the base budget for planning fee income by £32,180 and increasing the base budget for planning staff by £32,180. This has nil impact on the net budget of the authority. Should the planning fee income fall short of the new increased budget, then staffing levels will be revisited.

3.4 This level of virement requires Executive and Council approval.

4.0 Recommendation

4.1 The Executive is requested to ask full Council to
A/ approve the above virement totalling £32,180 for the funding of the additional staffing within the Planning Unit;and to
B/ approve the allocation of the Planning Delivery Grant within the 2003/04 budget as shown in paragraph 2.2 above.

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Background Paper

Performance and Staffing in Development Control - Strategic Planning,
Transportation and Economic Development Panel 10 June 2003