

LEWISHAM FUTURE PROGRAMME – SAVINGS REPORT APPENDICES – SEPTEMBER 2015

APPENDIX 13 – SAVINGS PROPOSALS FOR SCRUTINY, SECTION P

Contents page

Section P: Planning

P2: Planning Service – Budget Savings 2016/17 and 2017/18

231

1. Savings proposal	
Proposal title:	Planning Service – Budget Savings 2016/17 and 2017/18
Reference:	P2
LFP work strand:	Planning
Directorate:	Resources and Regeneration
Head of Service:	John Miller
Service/Team area:	Planning Service, incorporating Development Management, Conservation & Urban Design, Planning Policy and Economic Development.
Cabinet portfolio:	Growth and Regeneration
Scrutiny Cttee(s):	Sustainable Development

2. Decision Route			
Saving proposed:	Key Decision Yes/No	Public Consultation Yes/No	Staff Consultation Yes/No
a) Restructure of Development Management team and restructure and amalgamation of the Conservation, Urban Design and Planning Policy teams. (£185k)	Yes	No	Yes
b) Substitution of part of base budget by alternative funding sources (S.106 and fee income). (£45K)	Yes	No	No
c) Further increase in charges and changes to funding together with an assessment of savings achievable from a corporate approach to and restructure of employment services. (£305k)	Yes	No	Yes
d) Review of Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) on the way in which the service consults on planning applications. Efficiency savings based on paper, printing and postage costs. (£20k).	Yes	Yes	No

3. Description of service area and proposal

Description of the service area (functions and activities) being reviewed:

The Planning Service forms part of the Resources and Regeneration Directorate and operates from 3rd Floor Laurence House. The Planning Service currently comprises: Forward Planning, Urban Design and Conservation, Development Management, Land Charges and Economic Development. This saving proposal affects all areas of the Planning Service.

Development Management deals with individual planning applications within the policy framework set by the development plan, as well as appeals against Council decisions, and enforcement action against unauthorised development. This team has recently been re-structured, but further changes are required to provide a more proactive and delivery focused approach, with more resources needed to be allocated to pre-application discussions with applicants and the local community. Closer and more flexible working is also required between the planning officer, support and enforcement functions to enable the service to be more efficient and effective.

Forward Planning provides a policy framework in the development plan to promote and guide development and investment in the built environment.

Design and Conservation advise on planning applications and undertake specific projects to protect and improve the environment and to promote development opportunities.

Economic Development exists to provide strategic expertise on matters relating to the economy as well as providing guidance, commissioning and delivery of employment and business support. It also provides an EU funding and advisory role council wide.

Saving proposal

Savings proposal covers 4 areas of potential budget savings:

1. A staff re-structure of our Development Management team to further embed the principles of Development Management and to enable us to build flexible, well trained Planning Casework teams that can respond to fluctuations in caseload. Wherever possible, case officers will be fully responsible for all aspects of the processing of their applications.
2. An amalgamation and re-structure of our Conservation & Urban Design and Planning Policy teams.
3. Increasing the non-statutory fees / charges for major developments and funding services / posts from CIL / S.106 income. This will reduce the Planning Service's base budget, without impacting service delivery.
4. A Council wide review to include the role and function of the Economic Development service in delivering place making, business development and employment objectives.

4. Impact and risks of proposal

Outline impact to service users, partners, other Council services and staff:

1. Planning Case Officers will have more input and control into the quality and processing timescales of their individual caseloads. A larger percentage of Planning decisions will be issued within published timescales. Residents and other professional bodies will be able to contact their Planning Officer for the majority of aspects of their application.
2. Residents, Members and other professional bodies will have a single point of contact for strategic Planning Policy, Conservation and Urban Design queries / comments. Clearer career paths in place for staff within these teams.
3. There will be little, if any, impact on service users in increasing the non-statutory fees / charges for major developments and changes to way the Planning Service is funded.
4. There may potentially be significant impacts on economic development service users depending on the outcome of the corporate review.
5. Residents will be impacted by the proposed changes to the SCI as they will no longer be sent an individual notification letter. These will be replaced by additional site notices.

Outline risks associated with proposal and mitigating actions:

1. Planning policy could increase in relation to the government's recent reforms and interest in Neighbourhood Planning. The latter is increasing the borough; such as Deptford and New Cross where there could be significant tensions between local objectives and the Council's regeneration programme. The full impact of these pressures on the planning service is not yet known.
2. Changing or ceasing some activities / responsibilities of the Economic Development service could significantly reduce the Council's ability to assist residents into work or support businesses to locate and grow in the borough.
3. Legislation has now been passed to enable HM Land Registry to take responsibility for and administer the Local Land Charges Service. This could result in loss of up to £220k annual income which underpins the planning service's net budget. However, the council will still need to maintain the Local Land Charges Register and supply the necessary data to Land Registry.

5. Financial information

Controllable budget:	Spend £'000	Income £'000	Net Budget £'000
General Fund (GF)	3,270	(1,611)	1,659
HRA	N/A		
DSG	N/A		
Health	N/A		
Saving proposed:	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	Total £'000
a) Restructure of Development Management team and restructure and amalgamation of the Conservation, Urban Design and Planning Policy teams.	185		185

5. Financial information			
b) Substitution of part of base budget by alternative funding sources (S.106 and fee income).	45		45
c) Further increase in charges and changes to funding coupled with savings achievable from a corporate approach to and restructure of employment services.		305	305
d) Review of Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) on the way in which the service consults on planning applications. Efficiency savings based on paper, printing and postage costs. (£20k).		20	20
Total	230	325	555
% of Net Budget	13%	20%	33%
Does proposal impact on: Yes / No	General Fund	DSG	HRA
	Yes	No	No
If impact on DSG or HRA describe:			

6. Impact on Corporate priorities		
Main priority	Second priority	Corporate priorities
10	5	1. Community leadership and empowerment 2. Young people's achievement and involvement 3. Clean, green and liveable 4. Safety, security and a visible presence 5. Strengthening the local economy 6. Decent homes for all 7. Protection of children 8. Caring for adults and the older people 9. Active, healthy citizens 10. Inspiring efficiency, effectiveness and equity
Impact on main priority – Positive / Neutral / Negative	Impact on second priority – Positive / Neutral / Negative	
Positive	Negative	
Level of impact on main priority – High / Medium / Low	Level of impact on second priority – High / Medium / Low	
Medium	Medium	

7. Ward impact

Geographical impact by ward:	No specific impact / Specific impact in one or more	
	No specific Impact	
	If impacting one or more wards specifically – which?	

8. Service equalities impact

Expected impact on service equalities for users – High / Medium / Low or N/A			
Ethnicity:	Low	Pregnancy / Maternity:	N/A
Gender:	Low	Marriage & Civil Partnerships:	N/A
Age:	Low	Sexual orientation:	N/A
Disability:	N/A	Gender reassignment:	N/A
Religion / Belief:	N/A	Overall:	Low
For any High impact service equality areas please explain why and what mitigations are proposed:			
Impact on users is considered low, and may occur as a result to changes in the Economic Development Service.			
Is a full service equalities impact assessment required: Yes / No			No

9. Human Resources impact

Will this saving proposal have an impact on employees: Yes / No					Yes
Workforce profile:					
Posts	Headcount in post	FTE in post	Establishment posts	Vacant	
				Agency / Interim cover	Not covered
Scale 1 – 2	0	0	2	0	2
Scale 3 – 5	2	2	5	3	0
Sc 6 – SO2	8	8	14	6	0
PO1 – PO5	27	24.8	33	6	0
PO6 – PO8	3	2.9	4	1	0
SMG 1 – 3	1	1	2	1	0
JNC	1	1	1	0	0
Total	42	39.7	61	17	2
Gender	Female	Male			
Ethnicity	BME	White	Other	Not Known	
Disability	Yes	No			
Sexual orientation	Straight / Heterosex.	Gay / Lesbian	Bisexual	Not disclosed	

10. Legal implications

State any specific legal implications relating to this proposal:

This proposal is subject to staff consultation as stipulated within the Council's Employment/Change Management policies.

11. Summary timetable

Outline timetable for main steps to be completed re decision and implementation of proposal – e.g. proposal, scrutiny, consultation (public/staff), decision, transition work (contracts, re-organisation etc..), implementation:

Month	Activity
August 2015	Proposals prepared (this template and supporting papers – e.g. draft public consultation)
September 2015	Proposals submitted to Scrutiny committees leading to M&C on 30 September
October 2015	Consultations ongoing
November 2015	Consultations ongoing and (full decision) reports returned to Scrutiny for review
December 2015	Consultations returned to Scrutiny for review leading to M&C for decision on 9 December
January 2016	Transition work ongoing
February 2016	Transition work ongoing and budget set 24 February
March 2016	Savings implemented
April 2016	
May 2016	
June 2016	
July 2016	
August 2016	
September 2016	
October 2016	