

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT- CABINET

04 July 2023

Report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Key Decision

1. LOCAL PLAN EVIDENCE BASE DOCUMENTS UPDATE

1.1.1 This supplementary report sets out further detail on the assumptions around the Local Development Scheme (LDS) timetable within Annex 1 of the Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee (HPSSC) of 7 June 2023 and the evidence base studies and cost assumptions as set out within Annex 3.

1.1.2 Members were asked at paragraph 1.10.1 and 1.10.2 to recommend to Cabinet:

1.1.3 *APPROVAL of the new Local Development Scheme*

1.1.4 *NOTE the additional budget requirements of the local plan and the need for further financial provision in future budget setting process.*

1.2 Local Development Scheme timetable

1.2.1 To add some further detail to paragraph 1.4.3 of the report which sets out the assumptions behind the LDS work programme. Members are also requested to note that the timetable assumptions for the LDS as set out within Annex 1 of the HPSSC report are based on the ability to procure appropriate evidence in a timely manner, any delay to procurement of work has potential to impact upon the key dates as set out within the LDS.

1.3 Local Plan budget

1.3.1 This budget position was based on assumptions around the likely evidence base requirements at the time. This included a 'light touch' Green Belt Study, to reflect the change in approach as set out within the NPPF consultation and the cost included within Annex 3 includes a budget of approximately £70,000 for this work.

- 1.3.2 The Green Belt Study is referenced at paragraphs 1.3.2 and paragraph 1.8.3 of the report, which state a “*Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment will shortly be commissioned (pending approval) to assess parcels of land against the purposes of the Green Belt*” and (with reference to risks of the NPPF not coming forward as previously anticipated) “*Under these circumstances it is not considered possible to progress under the current arrangements as a more detailed Green Belt Study would be required, with an estimated 3-month delay to the programme*”.
- 1.3.3 Following further discussions (as referenced in the report above), the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Cllr Mike Taylor has requested that further work should be produced, to investigate the potential for a ‘strategic gap’. It is anticipated that this further work would cost in the region of an additional £15,000. It should be noted that all cost assumptions within Annex 3 are an informed estimate. This further cost is also an estimate of the additional cost and cannot be confirmed until bids are received from consultants.
- 1.3.4 The Green Belt Study is a crucial piece of evidence which influences other key policy decisions, such as that relating to the spatial strategy. Therefore, it is imperative that this study is commissioned as soon as possible to realistically meet the timeframes as set out in the LDS, and ultimately the transition periods as highlighted within Table 1 of the HPSSC report.
- 1.3.5 Members are asked to note the additional funds required with amendments as below to Table 3 and paragraph 1.6.5 (shown in red) of the HPSSC report as below:

Table 1- Budget spends

	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £
<i>Opening Balance</i>	£834,798	£323,608	£69,361	(£246,000)	(£341,375)
<i>Contribution</i>	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000
<i>External Spend</i>	(£528,794)	(£270,291)	(£395,362)	(£175,375)	(£40,000)
<i>PPO</i>	(£62,396)	(£63,956)	£0	£0	£0
<i>Closing Balance</i>	£323,608	£69,361	(£246,000)	(£341,375)	(£301,375)

- 1.6.5 *Based on the forecast spend, the reserve will need a one-off injection of **£345,000** (rounded up) to prevent it from going into the “red”. This is in addition to the one-off injection of £750,000 made in 2021/22 following Council decision on 13 July 2021 to withdraw the current plan and review, refresh and resubmit the Local Plan.*
- 1.3.6 The recommendation remains as per paragraph 1.10.2 of the HPSSC report.