

REPORT TO CABINET

REPORT OF: Head of Planning Policy & Economic Regeneration

REPORT NO. PLA.520

DATE: 8TH AUGUST 2005

TITLE:	PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT 2005/2006
FORWARD PLAN ITEM:	No
DATE WHEN FIRST APPEARED IN FORWARD PLAN:	N/A
KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:	N/A

COUNCIL AIMS/PORTFOLIO HOLDER NAME AND DESIGNATION:	Planning and Development Control Economic Development Portfolio Cllr J Smith
CORPORATE PRIORITY:	Planning and Development Control (B Priority)
CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS:	No significant implications
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IMPLICATIONS:	This report is publicly available via the Local Democracy link on the Council's website: www.southkesteven.gov.uk
BACKGROUND PAPERS:	None

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND SUMMARY

Cabinet will be aware that South Kesteven District Council was awarded a Planning Delivery Grant for 2005/2006 of £569,559. This has recently been supplemented by a further £54,545 arising from submission of its Local Development Scheme. The total award is therefore £624,104.

Whilst PDG is not specifically ring fenced the government has made it clear that future awards of PDG are dependent on authorities' performance across planning activities. The expectation therefore is that the Delivery Grant will be targeted towards the development and improvement of planning related services.

2. DETAILS OF REPORT

The Delivery Grant award was presented to Cabinet on 11th April 2005 (Report PLA.491: see extract of decision attached). Cabinet at that time endorsed the development of a strategy for the investment of the Grant into planning services and planning related projects around the following key issues;

- back scanning archived planning files
- IT initiatives
- External consultancy of service (particularly administrative function)
- Replace existing furniture and improve accommodation
- input into LDF project to help ensure that an up to date plan is available
- Staffing issues (additional hours/use of short term consultants)
- Future projects
- Financing a district-wide housing needs survey

Through discussions between ourselves, team leaders and the Corporate Director, and Accountancy Services, the following projects have been identified under the above themes. It is considered that these projects will;

- Expedite the delivery of a full and robust suite of e-deliverable planning services
- Sustain the significant improvements in performance experienced during 2004/2005
- Delivery of the new LDF within the timescales specified within the LDS.
- Delivery of associated town centre projects having a significant planning input / impact
- Provide a sound evidence base for the development of affordable housing policy for incorporation in the LDF.

The projects will contribute positively to the fulfilment of A priorities (Town Centres) and B priorities (affordable housing, planning & conservation and

business development). Based upon current performance levels the anticipated grant for 2006/2007 is approx. £300,000

PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT 2005/2006 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY (NB. Figures are estimates)		
1. Back scanning archived planning files		
Back scanning of planning application files	Back scanning of planning application files. This is a continuation of an ongoing project. Approximately 3-4 years worth of back scanning of files has already been completed. Estimated annual cost £7500 pa. Sum of £30,000 represents cost of back scanning for previous 3-4 years files plus ongoing scanning for the current year.	£30,000
Ongoing scanning for planning portal	Daily scanning of planning application files for public viewing on the internet. This is a significant drain on existing admin. resources, and significant delays are sometimes experienced. Provision for the appointment of a part-time dedicated scanning assistant. (suggested 12-month contract reviewable in the light of future PDG awards).	£15,000
2. IT initiatives		
Web interface for existing planning application administration system	Presently the web interface is provided by the Welland On-Line system. Functionality is limited. Providing a robust two-way interface has been difficult, and inefficient. The existing supplier of the planning application administration system (Swift LG) has developed an integrated web-interface that will provide a more robust and sustainable solution. Cost of acquisition and implementation	£50,000
Implementation of outstanding 'Pendleton' criteria / web-development	One factor which contributes to PDG is compliance with Pendleton Criteria for e-gov compliance in the planning area. Provision to meet outstanding criteria; appeals details online, application progress monitoring online, view decision notices online, planning conditions online, fee-payment online, map linked to planning policy text. Development of planning web facilities particularly in relation to LDF.	£20,000
Display screens	Replacement flat screen VDU's within Planning	£5,000
Presentation equipment	Digital projectors and display equipment, to reflect increasing numbers of presentations and display equipment to aid LDF consultation	£5,000
3. External consultancy of service		
Management consultancy – 'peer review'	External peer type review by planning consultant to review development control processes / practices with a view to service efficiencies / improvements	£30,000
Diversity and Equality within Planning Services	Consultancy project to identify necessary actions to ensure equality of service delivery	£20,000

Arboricultural survey	Review of existing TPO's dating back to 1954, accurate verification and GIS plotting (also required to fully GIS enable Land Charges).	£30,000
Member training	Additional provision for specialist member training	£2,000
Stamford Car Parking Review	Consultancy project to identify future of long term parking solutions for the town.	£40,000
4. Replace existing furniture and improve accommodation		
Furniture	Provisional sum to upgrade workstations	£2,500
5. Input into LDF projects to help ensure that an up to date plan is available		
Grantham Town Centre Masterplan / Action Area Plan	Review and roll forward of Masterplan as contemplated in Draft Town Centre Action Plan. Masterplan to form the basis of Grantham Town Centre Action Plan which is included in the approved LDS.	£40,000
Stamford Action Area Plan	Preparation of an Action Area Plan contemplated in Draft Town Centre Action Plan and contained within the approved LDS	£40,000
Employment Land Survey	Partner document to Urban Capacity Study, necessary background document to LDF	£10,000
Developer contributions SPD	Contained within the approved LDS	£50,000
Retail Capacity Study update	Update of existing study necessary to reflect changing policy context, in particular Grantham's promotion as a sub-regional centre.	£35,000
6. Team development		
Team development	Across Development Control and Planning Policy & Economic Regeneration. Team development / service development event(s).	£20,000
Training	Additional training provisions for planning staff, including conference attendance (incl. Town & Country Planning Summer School)	£15,000
7.Future projects		
Bourne Town Centre Manager gap funding	Welland SSP part-funding of post now withdrawn after 3 years. Anticipated future funding via Bourne Core Area redevelopment; gap funding (50% of salary for 3 years) pending implementation of core area proposals	£30,000
8. District wide housing needs survey		
Housing needs survey	Authorised by Cabinet and in progress. Necessary background document to LDF	£110,000
Contingency	As the figures provided are at this stage estimates, a balancing contingency sum is included to secure the delivery of the above projects	£24,604
TOTAL		£624,104

3. COMMENTS BY THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND STRATEGIC RESOURCES

The Director of Finance and Strategic Resources has been involved in the preparation of the report and agrees with its content.

4. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet are invited to endorse the Planning Delivery Grant Implementation Strategy for 2005/2006 as outlined in this report.

5. Contact:

Mike Sibthorp

Head of Planning Policy & Economic Regeneration

Richard Edwards

Development Control Services Manager

APPENDIX

Extract of minutes; Cabinet 11th April 2005

CO129. PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT ALLOCATION 2005/06

DECISION:

- (1) To note the ODPM's award of planning delivery grant of £569,559 to South Kesteven District Council for achieving Best Value performance Indicator Targets and for improvement in performance up to September 2004;**
- (2) That the Cabinet's congratulations be conveyed to the staff of Development Control Services and the Development Control Committee for the hard work and effort put in to this achievement;**
- (3) To endorse the development of a strategy for the investment of planning delivery grant into planning services and planning related projects based around the following key issues:**
 - Back scanning archived planning files**
 - IT initiatives**
 - External consultancy of service (particularly administrative function)**
 - Replace existing furniture and improve accommodation**
 - Input into LDF project to help ensure that an up to date plan is available**
 - Staffing issues (additional hours/use of short term consultants)**
 - Future projects**
 - Financing a district wide housing needs survey**