

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Planning and Development)	General Purposes Committee	Wednesday, 7 September 2022

## Highways evidence

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	Not applicable
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## Purpose of the Report

- To consider the provision of independent highways consultants to provide robust assessments for planning applications.

## Recommendations

- To establish a non recurring budget of £125,000 to fund highways evidence to present to the Planning Committee. It is noted spend to be authorised by the Director of Planning and Development, Development Control and Forward Planning in consultation with the Executive Member for Economic Development and Public Service Reform

## Reasons for recommendations

- To ensure Planning Committee is fully informed when making a decision on a planning application based on concerns raised by the Committee.

## Other options considered and rejected

- To remain as is.

## Corporate priorities

- The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	A strong local economy
<b>Clean, safe and healthy communities</b>	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area

## **Background to the report**

6. Planning Committee members have raised concerns recently regarding the views from Lancashire County Council Highways on planning applications being determined by Chorley Borough Council. Whilst the Committee notes that Lancashire County Council is the Local Highway Authority and needs to provide technical views assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework and the Development Plan it is concerned that local circumstances are not being taken account of as much as they would like. The Committee also realises that the Lancashire County Council Highways function is under pressure with a high workload County wide.

## **Highways evidence**

7. Given the above it is considered that to assist the proper consideration of highways and access matters that Chorley Council consider appointing retained independent consultants to provide input in to planning applications as a local check. This would be limited to assessments in relation to major applications or those with particular local issues. Furthermore the consultant could input in to ensuring a robust evidence base to assist in the progression of the Local Plan and sustainable site allocation
8. The Council could alternatively offer funding to LCC to provide dedicated resource for Chorley to ensure that responses to planning applications are considered fully and within timescales. Equally both options could be run alongside each other.
9. It is considered that such advice would be in the region of £10,000 to £12,500 per site depending on site size. As an estimate there may be say up to 10 sites per year so a budget of up to £125,000 may be required.

## **Climate change and air quality**

10. The work noted in this report has an overall neutral impact on the Councils Carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council.

## **Equality and diversity**

11. There are no equality impacts as a result of this decision.

## **Risk**

12. Members should be provided with detailed comments to enable robust decisions regarding sustainable development and active travel.

## **Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer**

13. Funding required within 2022/23 financial year will be required from existing reserves. As part of the budget setting for 2023/24 a further amount will be incorporated within the MTFS as appropriate.

## **Comments of the Monitoring Officer**

14. Although it is unusual for a planning authority to commission independent consultants as proposed the requirement when considering planning applications is to ensure there is a fully informed decision. The proposal will address concerns raised by the Planning Committee and serve to ensure informed and robust decision making.

### Background documents

There are no background papers to this report.

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