

CORE OFFER BUDGET FOR PLANNING POLICY DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

WHY DOES THE COUNCIL HAVE TO PROVIDE THIS SERVICE AND WHAT DOES IT NEED TO COVER?

Planning Policy and Development Management (recently merged) are statutorily required through the Planning Acts and other environmental legislation.

The planning service manages and regulates the use of land and buildings. This involves the Local Plan making and associated processes that set land use and development policies through to considering applications for planning permission and then monitoring and regulation of developments. The service also contributes to other Plans in the region through the “duty to cooperate” and this is likely to include the new Combined Authority.

The Local Plan process includes.

- Overall vision for the Borough’s development over the next 20 years.
- Land allocation policies,
- Environmental policies,
- Social and Physical infrastructure
- Design quality, including built and natural environments
- Transport

Development Management manages the more detailed development process from pre-application enquiries through to planning applications, appeals and enforcement. Over 900 planning applications are considered each year and will range from the routine house extension to the master plan for West Park of some 1,200 houses and local centre.

HOW DOES THE CORE OFFER BUDGET MEET THE COUNCIL’S OBLIGATIONS?

The Core Budget for the planning service reflects the minimum service requirements to fulfil the statutory duties of the legislation. It is also reflective of current workloads that are relative to the energy in the local economy and where the Council is at in its Plan making and other processes. That energy is increasing both in terms of Local Plan Development pressures and applications.

DOES THIS DIFFER FROM THE CURRENT SERVICE?

A service review has been completed and is shaping the proposed restructure. Savings of £180,000 are anticipated through efficiency and process improvements.

No added resources for Neighbourhood Planning (new NPs being Heighington; Sadberge; Middleton St George, and Hurworth) or any initiatives emerging from Housing and Planning Act, e.g. Brown Field registers, self-build provisions are assumed in this MTFP context. The Act will require new tasks to be done and additional procedures to be put in place around the localism agenda. Enacting regulations are anticipated that will provide further guidance on these new statutory duties.

WHAT IS THE CORE BUDGET MADE UP OF?

2019/20 budget £743,197

	Budget 2019/20 £
Employee	959,500
Transport	5,400
Supplies & Services	296,136
Income	(625,700)
Overheads	107,861
Total	743,197

The Core budget is made up essentially of staff costs of £925,000, inclusive of on costs. Costs of the service are offset by income from fees that in the main are set by the government. Income from fees of around £590,000 is anticipated. Income from fees can be volatile as a single large application can generate a fee of £150,000.

There is a revenue budget of £134,000 that is split over several services other than Planning where resources are drawn down for work where external assistance might be required or for training, eg Consultancy advice on Local Plans or Planning Applications. This can vary from year to year depending upon the issues that need to be addressed. The demands on this budget can be difficult to manage as they can peak by as much as additional £100,000 when significant Planning Inquiries are encountered.

There is £30,000 support towards Business Central as part of the overall plan for economic regeneration within Darlington.