



Committee: Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee

Report Title: Central Lincolnshire Local Plans Team Budget Review 2025-2030

Meeting date: 31 July 2024

Decision information	
Does the report contain information which has been identified as confidential or exempt?	No
Report Authorisation	
Report authorised by Secretariat of the Local Plan Partnership	

A. Purpose of Report

To provide the Committee with the background to the budget review process, to set out details of anticipated costs for the Local Plans Team and associated functions for the period of 2025-2030, and propose amendments to the contributions from the partner authorities.

B. Recommendations

That the Committee:

1. Approve the proposed budget and contribution levels from partner authorities for the period of 2025/26 to 2029/30; and
2. Approve the revised approach in reviewing annually anticipated costs and agreeing changes in contribution levels for the following year with s151 officers to retain a managed contingency in reserve, with exact contributions and expenditure being reported each year to the Committee at its annual meeting.

C. Financial and risk implications

The figures stated within the report have been validated and confirmed with Accountancy Services.

The financial information stated in this report does not include the cost impacts of the Principal Ecology and Wildlife Officer on the basis that the post is fully funded from external grants received to each of the 3 partners and then grant pooled to the CLLP partnership. It should be noted that if external funding was to cease for this post then

additional funding implications will fall upon partner contributions and reserve balances.

Completed by: Corporate Finance Manager 09/07/2024 (Acc24-25/Ref64/NK)

D. Human Resources Comments

None.

E. Legal implications

None.

F. Consultation and communications

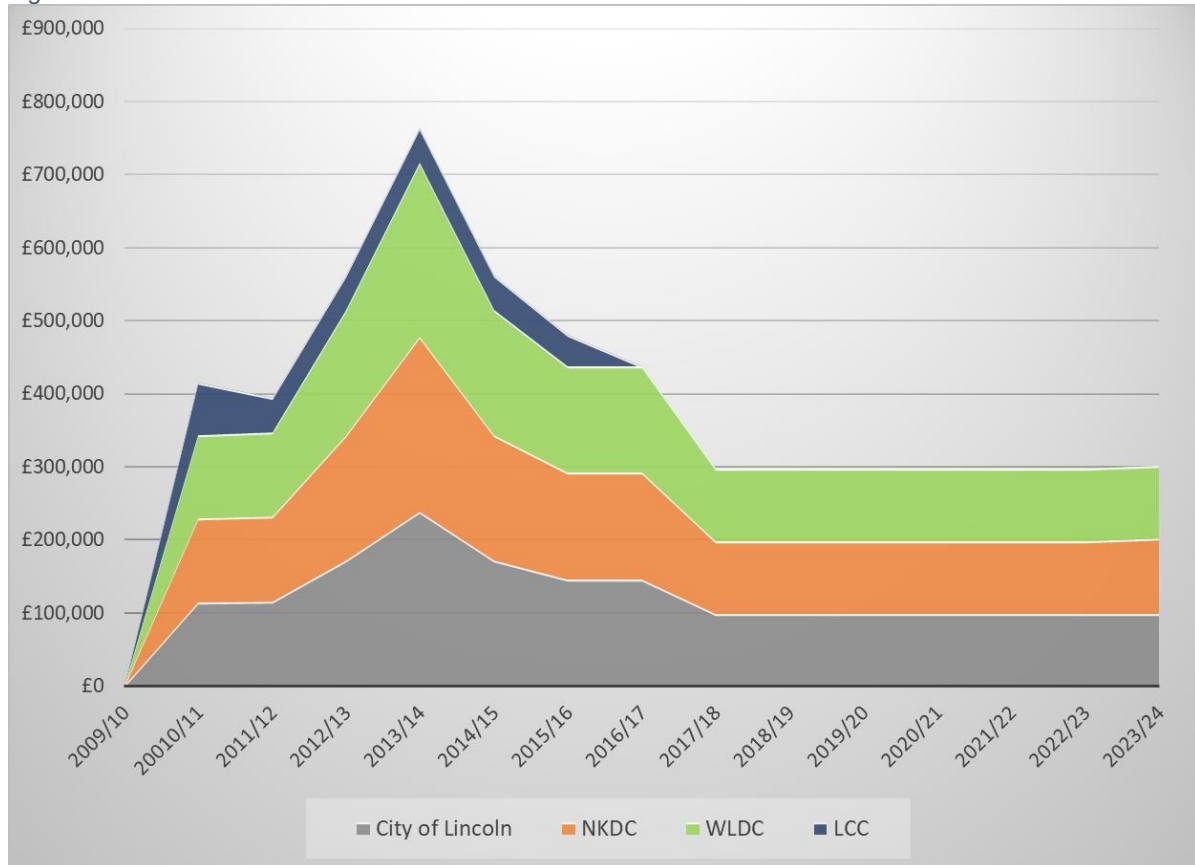
This report has involved detailed discussions with Chief Financial Officers at the Central Lincolnshire Districts.

G. Report details

1. Introduction and background

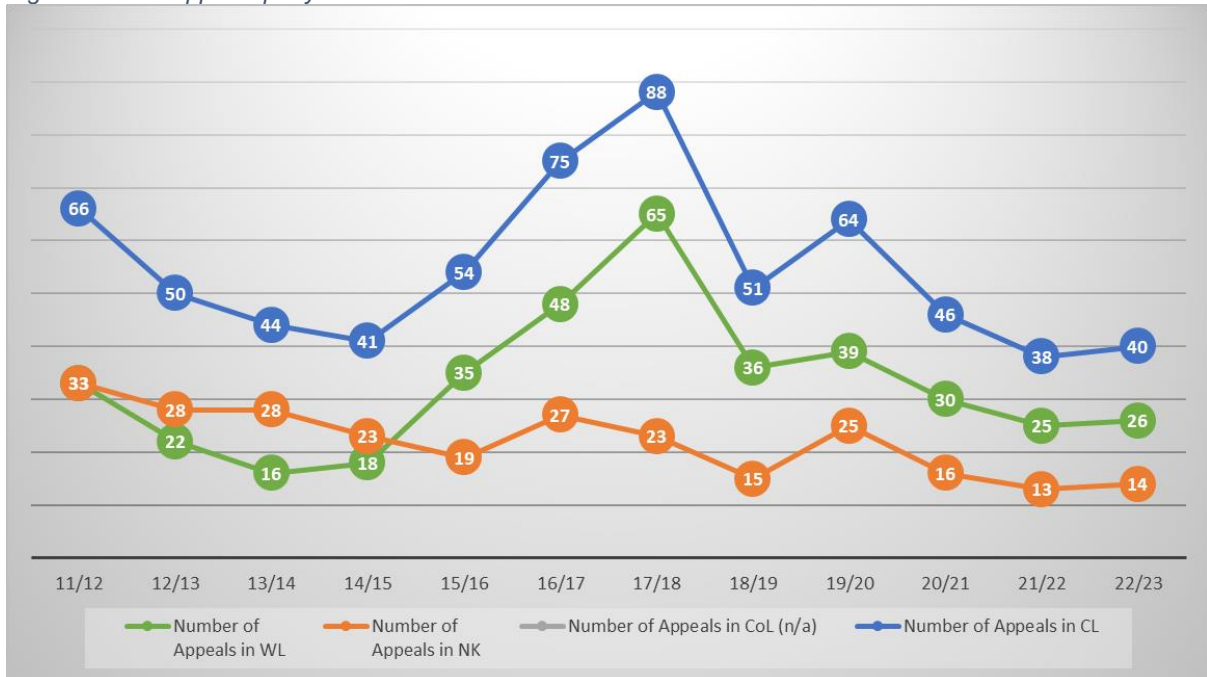
- 1.1. When the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee and the Local Plans Team (formerly the Joint Planning Unit) was first formed in 2009, the three partner Districts and County Council all made contributions to cover the anticipated costs of developing a Local Plan. These contributions varied and were supported by substantial Government grants.
- 1.2. By 2014/15 each District contributed £171,400 and the County Council contributed £47,500 – a total of £561,700. This was then revised down to £146,000 per district and £42,000 for the County Council in 2015/16 – a total of £480,000.
- 1.3. At the time when the 2017 Local Plan was being adopted, the budget and contributions being made by the partners were reviewed, partly to identify cost savings and partly to intentionally reduce the surplus in the reserve. It was also at this time that Lincolnshire County Council ceased contributing to the budget.
- 1.4. Since 2017/18 all partner Districts have contributed £98,900 per year and this has purposefully seen the reserve diminish until such time as was necessary to review the contributions. The historic contribution levels for each of the partner authorities is shown in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Annual contribution from Central Lincolnshire Partner Authorities



- 1.5. At its meeting in June 2022, the Committee made the decision to bring the Local Plans Team back in-house following the decision to no longer utilise resources through a Service Level Agreement with Peterborough which ended in April 2023. Furthermore, there have been substantial changes to national policy which places additional requirements on plan-making for Local Authorities – this further emphasises the importance of maintaining a permanent planning policy resource.
- 1.6. As was reported to the Committee in June 2023, because the contributions had been set to reduce the reserve, it is anticipated the Local Plans Team budget will be overdrawn by 2026/27 if the current contribution levels were maintained. Officers committed to returning to the Committee with revised budget proposals.
- 1.7. It is also important to note that not only is it a statutory responsibility to produce Local Plans, but it also delivers significant benefits to the planning authorities, including attracting investment and being able to more effectively manage the development that takes place across the area and specifically within communities. Without a Local Plan there would be significantly more appeals, much like there was before the 2017 Local Plan was adopted. The number of which can be seen for West Lindsey and North Kesteven in Figure 2 below:

Figure 2: No. of appeals per year since 2011/12



- 1.8. This shows that before the first Local Plan was adopted in April 2017 far more ad hoc officer time was needed to defend appeals with more than double the number of appeals than in 2021-2023 and other years post plan adoption.
- 1.9. Prior to having a Local Plan adopted, there was significant pressure from speculative development particularly in the Lincoln fringe villages where developers could achieve favourable values and the absence of up to date policy allowed a good chance of success at appeal, resulting in unplanned and unsustainable development which had negative impacts on communities and infrastructure provision.
- 1.10. It is still apparent that sharing a Local Plans Team is a very cost-effective approach for Central Lincolnshire and the partnership has grown incredibly strong over the past 15 years. The partnership, originally formed to deal with cross-boundary development challenges particularly around City of Lincoln's constrained administrative geography, continues to allow a positive way to plan for the city and the surrounding areas to grow, whilst also positively addressing issues and opportunities in the wider Central Lincolnshire geography, for example being able to quickly address key issues such as a planning policy response to support the partners' climate emergency declarations. This joint approach continues to offer opportunity to work together on large projects with heightened influence and opportunities for external funding, as well as saving money on undertaking the Local Plan process independently for each District.
- 1.11. This budget review will ensure that the statutory responsibilities are maintained and that a value for money service is provided for all Central Lincolnshire partner authorities.

2. National requirements for plan-making

- 2.1. National policy has reinforced the importance of maintaining an up-to-date plan. Section 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 introduced the requirement for Local Plans to be reviewed every five years.
- 2.2. Failure to keep the Local Plan up to date will likely result in a lack of local control over the decisions being made on planning applications, with a significant increase in appeals and potentially the government could intervene in performing the planning functions.
- 2.3. Beyond Local Plans, section 15F of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 requires local planning authorities to produce an authority-wide design code, to form part of the development plan. There is nothing at present that requires this to be kept up to date in the same way as a Local Plan.
- 2.4. Legislation and national policy also require certain pieces of evidence to underpin planning documents. These also need to be factored into the assumptions of what work will need to be completed and when.
- 2.5. It is important to note that there is currently a significant amount of uncertainty for plan-making in part due to the recent general election. With the new government now in place, it is expected that substantial changes to the plan-making process will be implemented and swiftly.
- 2.6. The current Government proposes substantial changes to the planning system and have undertaken multiple stages of consultation on what these changes will be. The latest consultation confirmed the following as being proposed:
 - Local Plan process will be shortened to 30 months.
 - New national development management policies will impact the content of Local Plans.
 - New digitisation of plans and engagement.
 - The introduction of new Supplementary Plans – not to be confused with current Supplementary Planning Documents. These will form part of the development plan and have the same weight as a Local Plan and will be subject to consultation and examination. They are intended to allow local planning authorities to react swiftly to opportunities or events and can be used for design codes. The full detail of the process for Supplementary Plans is not yet known.
- 2.7. If a new Government is brought in, it is also expected that changes will be made, given past experience of new Governments and their goals for the planning system. However, there is little to provide a clear picture of what this might look like at this time.

- 2.8. It will be necessary to keep an ongoing review of how the national pictures evolves, but we must plan for the future based on the best information we have available.

3. Budget Period

- 3.1. This budget review will apply to the next financial year – 2025/26 and this process will feed into the budget setting for 2025/26 to ensure that the reserve does not become overdrawn.
- 3.2. To ensure that the budget setting is robust, given that the costs associated with Local Plans work vary greatly depending on the stage of producing plans, it has been necessary to look at anticipated costs across the cycle of producing a local plan (approximately 5 years). The budget period for this review is therefore 2025/26 to 2029/30. However, the work has also included taking a longer-term view across a ten-year period from 2025/26 to 2034/35 which is presented in Appendix 1 for information purposes only.
- 3.3. It is important to note that, as part of this budget review, there will be a ‘truing-up’ exercise each year to adjust to any unexpected changes in costs. The Local Plans Manager will keep the budget and reserve position under review and will bring any necessary changes to the contributions to each district through the established Central Lincolnshire Steering Group and the Committee.
- 3.4. The Committee will continue to receive an annual budget update and will have the ability to interrogate and make recommendations on an appropriate future budget position to enable the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee to fulfil the statutory requirements relating to plan-making in force at the time.

4. Key assumptions of the review

- 4.1. The review has focused on the primary pieces of work for the Local Plans Team at this time (Local Plan and its evidence, and an Authority-wide Design Code) and does not seek to cost every other process. For example there is a need to keep Local Development Schemes and Statements of Community Involvement up to date and there is a significant amount of work needed in implementing and monitoring the plan. The costs associated with these additional tasks are incorporated into the staff costs, both within the CLLP Team but also calling on District resource and skills as required.
- 4.2. The Local Plans Team is currently made up of one Manager, one Principal Planning Policy Officer and three Planning Policy Officers¹. This staffing level is significantly lower than the Local Plans Team operated with in

¹ Please note, additionally the Local Plans Team includes a Principal Wildlife and Ecology Officer. However, as this post is funded by the Central Lincolnshire Partner Districts through separate arrangements, this is not included in the calculations before the Committee, nor is it subject to the proposals in this report.

previous years and is considered to be the minimum needed in order to deliver our statutory requirements. At present there is no intention of increasing or decreasing this staffing level unless the requirements of the team change substantially.

4.3. Costs included for pieces of work are based on the best available data including:

- Recent experience of plan-making;
- Historic experience of plan-making;
- Benchmarking from other Local Planning Authorities' work;
- Assumptions about inflation following those applied in budget planning by the finance department at NKDC; and
- Projections for some unknowns, such as the process for Supplementary Plans, which has yet to be confirmed in legislation.

4.4. As such, these figures are best estimates. Whilst budget planning over a five-year period can be challenging, the approach used provides a robust basis for budget planning purposes.

5. Local Plan Reviews

5.1. The core work of the Local Plans Team is producing and reviewing Local Plans for Central Lincolnshire to ensure that they provide a sustainable strategy for the future of Central Lincolnshire and ensure that local planning policy remains up to date and robust in decision making.

5.2. The process of producing a Local Plan includes research and evidence development; production of the plan itself and a number of required associated documents (such as sustainability appraisals, consultation reports, and many more); undertaking engagement exercises; reporting to the Committee; and liaising with partners to develop policy. It typically has taken in the region of 4 years to produce the Local Plans in Central Lincolnshire, however the current Government has consulted on shortening this timeframe so that there is a 30-month timetable for the bulk of the process, although there will be additional months of preparation needed. The new timetable proposed by Government has been used to inform the assumptions on timetables and budgets in this review.

5.3. The core officer time in this budget proposal accounts for the bulk of this work, but there are pieces of work that cannot reasonably be produced in-house, either due to technical skills or capabilities not being available, or due to resource limitations meaning that outsourcing is more efficient.

5.4. Beyond the staff costs and the costs of producing evidence, detailed below, the final costs associated with producing a Local Plan is that relating to the examination. This cost is made up of the bill from the Planning Inspectorate, the costs of hosting the hearing sessions, and the cost of the Programme Officer role throughout the examination. These costs are unavoidable. Based on the past two Local Plan examinations, a cost of £125,000 is

included for each of the next Local Plan examinations. Whilst there is potential for these costs to increase, Government does propose to shorten the examination timetable so this should hopefully offset increases in costs.

Local Plan Evidence

- 5.5. A review of the evidence likely to be needed in the production of the next two Local Plans for Central Lincolnshire has been undertaken across the budget review period. This review has included a review of the cost of evidence undertaken in past Local Plans in Central Lincolnshire and a benchmarking of similar projects undertaken recently elsewhere. For the benchmarking work, wherever possible locations of a similar scale and with a similar scope of work has been used.
- 5.6. For each piece of evidence listed in Table 1 below, a brief assessment is presented of the need for the evidence, the anticipated cost against benchmarking and previous costs, and possible alternative options are also provided where relevant.

Table 1: List of key evidence documents needed for Local Plans

Document	Costs			Notes
	Previous	Benchmark ²	Assumed	
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment: Level 1 & 2	£62,080 / £6,220 ³	£36,000-£93,500	£40,000	This is required. The precise extent of what we have to commission for each plan will depend on discussions with the Environment Agency and national policy at the time of the review.
Whole Plan Viability	£28,000	£22,000-£40,000	£30,000	This will be required for each plan review and will need to be undertaken by an external consultant.
Housing Needs Assessment	£35,000	£47,500-£60,000	£50,000	These two documents are typically commissioned together. They are also both generally needed and require technical input to make projections. Whilst there could be some potential to bring in-house, it is likely that this will not be cost-effective
Economic Needs Assessment	£18,500			
Green Infrastructure Strategy	£86,960	£27,000-£78,000	£40,000	An update to this document can likely build on the findings of the previous document. Assumed amount takes account of

² Information on the benchmarking can be made available.

³ Second figure was for partial update only as agreed by EA.

				geography and scope needed for Central Lincolnshire.
Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment and allocations work	£14,200	£19,000-£35,000	£20,000	This evidence will be needed for each plan review.
Infrastructure Delivery Plan	£12,000	£50,000-£70,000	£30,000	This document will be required for the plan review. Much of the work for this document can be undertaken by officers across the partnership, reducing what is outsourced.
Playing Pitch and Sports Facilities Strategies	Not available	£25,000-£45,000	£40,000	Assumed costs include the production of the strategies and regular ongoing monitoring. Monitoring could potentially be brought in house, but may not be cost-effective.
Transport modelling	Unknown	n/a	£30,000	This is based on latest costs of running the Lincoln Traffic Model confirmed in January 2024.

5.7. There is potential that additional evidence may be required, for example retail needs or open spaces, but at this time it is not certain that it will be required. The evidence listed in Table 1 is considered to be required as a minimum, based on what is known at present.

5.8. When the assumed costs of the evidence in Table 1 are added together it comes to £280,000 across the five-year period.

6. **Authority-wide Design Code**

6.1. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 now requires Local Planning Authorities to have an Authority-wide Design Code. It is down to the Local Planning Authority how detailed this will be, and it is generally expected that this will be in the form of a new Supplementary Plan. As is mentioned above, the exact process for a Supplementary Plan is yet to be confirmed, but it is expected to require at least one formal stage of consultation and an examination – presumably less substantial and costly than those for a Local Plan.

- 6.2. As such, the production of a Design Code has now been added to the budgeting process. Importantly there is no requirement at this time to review Design Codes regularly so it is hoped that once it is produced, it can then be relied on for the rest of the budget period.
- 6.3. The majority of the production of the Design Code will be covered by existing staff budget and associated costs, including software. The only significant cost to account for at this time in this budget is for the examination of the Design Code. As there is no detail about what form the examination will take for Supplementary Plans, it has been assumed that £25,000 will cover the cost of examination and that this will take place in 2025/26.⁴

7. Staffing and associated costs

- 7.1. As is highlighted in the previous sections, it is anticipated that current staffing levels will be maintained as the minimum required to undertake the statutory functions for plan-making of a Local Planning Authority without a significant increase in use of external consultancy support.
- 7.2. The projected cost of maintaining this staffing level has been calculated by NK finance team, this includes the standard on-costs such as National Insurance and pension costs, as well as anticipated costs for benefits and other reasonable costs associated with employing the staff. This is projected forward with assumptions of scale point progression within the current Grade and a general assumption of 2% increase in salaries following on from an assumed increase of 4% in 2024/25.
- 7.3. The 2% assumption provided is based on the standard assumptions applied by finance for budgeting purposes in the absence of information on specific increases from future national pay awards.
- 7.4. Beyond the costs for salaries and employment there are additional costs incurred by the team undertaking their roles, such as travel costs, equipment, printing, insurances, hardware and software used by the team, and professional subscriptions.
- 7.5. The costs for staffing the Local Plans Team and associated costs have been calculated and are provided in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Staff and associated costs of the Local Plans Team

2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
£342,300	£352,700	£361,500	£374,000	£376,100

- 7.6. Across the five-year period this amounts to **£1,806,600**.

⁴ This figure is based on the known costs of the Local Plan examination (£100,000 without the cost for the Programme Officer) and the cost of Neighbourhood Plan examinations (c.£5,000-£10,000) assuming that there is additional opportunity for hearing sessions and some more complexity to deal with.

8. Software and hardware

- 8.1. Whilst basic software costs associated with the Local Plans Team are included in the section above, in addition to this there are specific costs associated with software needed to undertake various tasks for Local Plan production, specifically relating to consultation and mapping. This functionality is increasingly essential to the production of Local Plans so are not optional.
- 8.2. The Local Plans Team recently submitted a funding bid to implement a new system for this functionality. This bid was successful and £225,000 has been provided to fund a project that will result in necessary software licences being purchased and for associated costs in this one-year project. It is important to note that not all of this funding can be counted as a budget saving as it is effectively allowing us a unique opportunity to implement a very robust system, investigate opportunities to share this across the districts and the potential for aligning our systems, and to trial the gold standard of such software to assess what works locally. The funding needs to be spent within the project period to the end of 2024 and so cannot be used to fund the long-term costs of licences, although two additional years are being funded.
- 8.3. The funding will mean that there will be no costs associated with such software for the initial licence period of three years. The Local Plans Team will be able to identify what functionality of the system are the most beneficial to retain for undertaking Local Plan work and only retain the necessary licences for these functions.
- 8.4. Based on what is known about the new system (ArcGIS), it is anticipated that £21,000 starting from 2027/28 would cover the essential elements of retaining a system beyond the period funded by the grant.
- 8.5. Beyond the cost of licences for software, procurement rules may result in a necessity to change providers and with this will come a set up cost, or as the requirements on Local Plans Team may also be accompanied by the need for new systems. From experience, such new systems typically come with a substantial cost to set up the system (c.£10,000 to £15,000). However, given that it is not known when such new or changes to software systems will take place, this is not included at this time.
- 8.6. Furthermore, periodically hardware used by the team will require replacement as it grows old. At present the IT department have not identified any planned replacement of existing equipment within the budget period and so no costs associated with hardware replacement have been included at this time.
- 8.7. The expected costs from software systems is shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Anticipated software costs beyond grant-funding

2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
		21,000	21,600	22,200

8.8. Including reasonable assumptions about inflation (3% per year), it is anticipated that this system will cost **£64,800** during the five-year period.

9. **Total costs**

9.1. Taking the figures from each of the Tables above and adding in assumptions about the timing of the key evidence listed, the overall cost of the service is shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Total anticipated costs for the Local Plans Team (2025/26-2029/30)

Year	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30
Salaries & additional costs	£342,300	£352,700	£361,500	£374,000	£376,100
Software cost ⁵			£21,000	£21,600	£22,200
Evidence costs	£195,000	£82,500		£2,500	
Examinations	£25,000		£62,500	£62,500	
Total	£562,300	£435,200	£445,000	£460,600	£398,300

9.2. The total cost for the service detailed in Table 4 is £2,301,400.

10. **Variable considered**

10.1. The above sections set out the proposed budget position, based on the information available, however, it is important to note that there are a number of variables that have been considered.

10.2. Firstly, it was considered whether some additional pieces of evidence could be brought in-house, either within the Local Plans Team, or within one or more of the districts, as this could save a substantial amount of cost. However, this would have a resource cost, and there may not be capacity within current roles across the partner organisations.

10.3. Other variables will include the uncertainty around staff costs, software costs, the potential need to buy new hardware and the wider anticipated changes to the planning system which introduces substantial uncertainty at this time. All costs included are not considered to be flexible – they are fixed costs associated with running the statutory function. The costs included in this document provide a best estimate at this time and will be kept under review.

10.4. The final variable relates to timings of the Local Plan review. Local Plans are required to be reviewed every five years and with the expected changes to the planning system it is expected that a review of the plan will need to

⁵ Costs for 2024-2026 covered by grant funding so excluded from budget.

commence from approximately 2025/26. Clearly there is uncertainty about precisely what changes will be implemented and this may result in the anticipated costs associated with the review of the plan being delayed until 2026/27. However, if the assumption were to be made that the review would be delayed, this would run the risk of not being able to commence the review when it is needed. It is therefore appropriate to work on the best assumption of the plan review commencing at this time and managing subsequent contributions through the 'truing-up' exercise in future years.

11. Maintaining a reserve

- 11.1. There is a need to remain fleet of foot through a local plan cycle to ensure no unforeseen costs significantly impact the process – something that can have severe cost and reputational implications, not only for the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee, but also for each partner authority. In the absence of an up to date Local Plan, communities can be subject to speculative development, which is unpopular and costly for authorities to manage due to the number of appeals and level of ad hoc case work which impacts on the ability of the Local Planning Authority to make positive and consistent decision making for the benefit of communities.
- 11.2. Examples of unforeseen costs include additional evidence being required and challenges at examination that require swift resolution.
- 11.3. One recent example in Central Lincolnshire was the requirement to produce climate change evidence to inform the plan. At a cost of approximately £75,000 this was commissioned and brought in without significant delay to the Local Plan process. With the Local Plan being a joint venture, it would be challenging to secure additional in-year funding without delaying progress.
- 11.4. Historically, a substantial reserve has been held for Local Plans work and this has been 'managed down'. Whilst maintaining substantial reserves are unnecessary, it is recommended that some reserve is maintained as a contingency to mitigate against risk of delays if budget cannot be found in-year.
- 11.5. Based on experience, it is recommended that the reserve level is maintained to be approximately £80,000. This will serve an operational purpose, much like a contingency, which is always factored in when undertaking project work. Whilst a Local Plan is a statutory duty, the process of developing and adopting a Local Plan is like managing a complex project, where a contingency for unforeseen costs and changes in operating circumstances require additional funds, sometimes at short notice, so as not to undermine the broader viability of the project.
- 11.6. As such, the need to hold a reserve (or contingency) for this area of work is evidenced and therefore justified.

12. Changing the approach to funding

- 12.1. Following discussions with the Section 151 Officers of each of the Central Lincolnshire districts, the overall approach to funding the Local Plans Team is proposed be amended to reflect budgeting for other council services.
- 12.2. Through this revised proposed approach there will no longer be a set annual contribution which looks to manage the overall costs of the Local Plans Team across a set period, taking into account the rising and falling costs across the plan making cycle. Instead, the contributions will change annually to take account of the expected costs for the coming year, taking into account the position in the plan-making cycle.
- 12.3. At the end of each year there will be a 'truing-up' exercise where any higher or lower costs will be reflected in the subsequent contribution level.
- 12.4. The benefit of this approach is that it will better reflect the costs of the Local Plans Team on an annual basis, rather than having a static annual contribution which results in peaks and troughs of reserve level.
- 12.5. The drawbacks of this approach include the contributions changing annually for districts, rather than providing a consistent cost over a period of time.
- 12.6. However, as we are able to forecast costs based on the position in the plan-making cycle, a clear projection of the contribution levels needed for subsequent years can be provided. This will allow the districts to budget for the contributions in their forecasts.

13. **Proposed contributions**

- 13.1. The costs of running the service have been identified as being £2,301,400 over the five-year period, which broadly covers one local plan cycle. This would equate to an average annual contribution of £153,427 per district.
- 13.2. However, at the start of this budget period, it is expected that there will be a reserve of £230,000. This can be drawn down on to reduce the contributions in 2025-26 whilst maintaining the reserve to an acceptable amount of approximately £80,000. Taking into account the reduction in the reserve in 2025-26, the average contribution across the five-year period will be reduced to £144,540.
- 13.3. The proposed contributions and related reserve level at the start of each year of the five-year period is shown in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Proposed contribution levels for districts (prior to any annual 'truing up' exercise)

Category	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30
Reserve level (start of year)	£230,000	£81,700	£81,700	£81,700	£81,700
Cost of Local Plan function	£562,300	£435,200	£445,000	£460,600	£398,300
Contribution per District	£138,000	£145,067	£148,333	£153,533	£132,767

Total contribution	£414,000	£435,200	£445,000	£460,600	£398,300
Reserve level (closing balance)	£81,700	£81,700	£81,700	£81,700	£81,700

- 13.4. It is proposed that the figures in Table 5 will form the basis of the contributions for each partner district and that these contribution levels are built into district medium term financial plans. If fluctuations or timing of costs vary significantly from the projections, the contributions will be revisited as part of an annual 'truing-up' exercise, taking into account any subsequent changes anticipated for future years.
- 13.5. This approach will ensure that the funding is available when needed to undertake plan-making activities, will ensure that the reserve is maintained in the region of £80,000, and that contributions from the partner districts are not unnecessarily inflated.
- 13.6. In the event that an unexpected cost is incurred in-year, the partner districts will work with the Local Plans Manager to identify an appropriate amendment to future contributions to restore the reserve to the agreed level. This will take into account the stage of plan-making at the time and the likely risk of additional costs being incurred in subsequent years and the impact of any potential short-term funding deficits at that time resulting from a reduced reserve.
- 13.7. The Committee will continue to receive annual reports on the budget position and the contribution levels proposed.

H. Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

As the reserve has intentionally been 'manged down' over the past 7 years it is now necessary to revisit the contributions from the Central Lincolnshire Districts for the next 5 years, between 2025/26 and 2029/30.

The costs associated with the Local Plans Team statutory functions will be met by the district contributions at a variable rate to retain a contingency reserve of approximately £80,000. The exact contribution levels will be agreed each year based on the anticipated costs of the coming years dependent on the point of the plan-making process and associated activities. These costs will form part of a 'truing-up' exercise and will be agreed between the S151 Officers of the districts and the Local Plans Manager.

Lincolnshire County Council will continue to contribute through officer support rather than financial contributions.

As such, it is requested that the Committee:

1. Approve the proposed budget and contribution levels from partner authorities for the period of 2025/26 to 2029/30; and
2. Approve the revised approach in reviewing annually anticipated costs and agreeing changes in contribution levels for the following year with s151 officers to retain a managed contingency in reserve, with exact contributions and expenditure being reported each year to the Committee at its annual meeting.

I. Other options considered and reasons rejected

Alternative option 1: Retain the current approach of managing the costs of the service across a plan-making cycle with fixed annual contribution levels

This option was discounted as it does not reflect the wider accounting practices in Local Government.

Alternative option 2: Retain a larger reserve

This option was discounted as it is not necessary to carry a large reserve and retaining one would effectively reduce funding for other services at the districts.

Alternative option 3: Proceed with no reserve

This option was discounted as it would present challenges should there be any unexpected overspends in year. Given the service is shared between three districts, this could result in problems.

Alternative option 4: Reduce costs by bringing more work in-house within the Local Plans Team or the partnership

This option has not been discounted but will be managed over time. Opportunities to undertake tasks in house will be considered as and when appropriate. At this stage, it has not been possible or appropriate to assume all evidence can be produced in house.

J. Document Information	
APPENDIX NO.	TITLE
1.	Detailed Gantt Chart & Budget Planner
2.	Graphical illustration of costs, contributions & reserve
BACKGROUND PAPERS	
Title	
Report Author:	Phil Hylton
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Appendix 1 – Detailed Gantt Chart and Budget Planner – 5 and 10 year

Process / Task	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
Local Plan Production (Plan # 3)										
Plan scoping										
Updating core evidence										
Give notice of plan-making (4 months)										
30 month period										
Gateway 1										
Public consultation stage 1 (8 weeks)										
Gateway 2										
Public consultation stage 2 (6 weeks)										
Programme Officer Appointed			£ 12,500	£ 12,500						
Gateway 3 and submission										
Examination (6 months)			£ 50,000	£ 50,000						
Adoption (1 month)										
Implementation										
Local Plan Production (Plan # 4)										
Plan scoping										
Updating core evidence										
Give notice of plan-making (4 months)										
30 month period										
Gateway 1										

Process / Task	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
Public consultation stage 1 (8 weeks)										
Gateway 2										
Public consultation stage 2 (6 weeks)										
Programme Officer Appointed								£ 12,500	£ 12,500	
Gateway 3 and submission										
Examination (6 months)								£ 50,000	£ 50,000	
Adoption (1 month)										
Implementation										
Authority Wide Design Code										
Scoping and preparation										
Graphic design support										
Urban design support										
Analysis Scoping Consultation										
Vision consultation										
Code consultation										
Examination	£ 25,000									
Adoption										
Other Statutory Requirements										
Publish Revised LDS										
Environmental Outcome Report										
Design Code										
Scoping stage										

Process / Task	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
First public consultation										
Second public consultation										
Amendment for submission										
Amendment for adoption										
Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)										
Duty to Cooperate										
Statement of Common Ground (SCG)										
Policies Map										
Evidence work										
Site allocations										
Call for sites										
Assess sites										
Publish HELAA										
Consult bodies										
Shortlisting/deciding on sites										
Housing Needs Assessment	£ 35,000					£ 35,000				
Economic Needs Assessment	£ 15,000					£ 15,000				
Infrastructure Needs and Delivery Plan	£ 30,000					£ 30,000				
Whole Plan Viability		£ 30,000					£ 30,000			
Gypsies and Travellers	£ 12,000					£ 12,000				

Process / Task	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
Accommodation Needs										
Gypsies and Travellers Site Allocations	£ 8,000					£ 8,000				
Retail and Town Centres Strategy										
Green Infrastructure Strategy	£ 40,000									
Open space standards / mapping										
Local Green Spaces Evidence										
Important Open Spaces Evidence										
Settlement Hierarchy Review										
Strategic Growth Options										
Housing Delivery Study										
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	£ 20,000	£ 20,000					£ 20,000			
Sequential Test										
Playing Pitch and Sports Facilities Strategy	£ 35,000	£ 2,500		£ 2,500		£ 2,500		£ 2,500		£ 2,500
Transport Modelling		£ 30,000					£ 15,000			
Green Wedges Evidence										
Annual Housing Land Supply Doc (formerly 5YHLS)										
RAF Scampton Strategic Plan -										

Process / Task	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32	2032-33	2033-34	2034-35
Supplementary Plan?										
Policy Evidence Reports										
Monitoring										
Summary of costs										
Software			£ 21,000	£ 31,600	£ 22,200	£ 22,900	£ 23,600	£ 34,300	£ 25,000	£ 25,800
Staff costs	£ 318,200	£ 327,400	£ 335,600	£ 342,400	£ 349,300	£ 356,300	£ 363,300	£ 370,600	£ 378,000	£ 385,600
Other costs	£ 24,100	£ 25,300	£ 25,900	£ 31,600	£ 26,800	£ 27,700	£ 28,900	£ 29,700	£ 35,600	£ 30,900
10 Year costs										
Total cost	£ 562,300	£ 435,200	£ 445,000	£ 460,600	£ 398,300	£ 509,900	£ 480,800	£ 489,600	£ 501,100	£ 444,800
Total contribution (total)	£ 414,000	£ 435,200	£ 445,000	£ 460,600	£ 398,300	£ 509,900	£ 480,800	£ 499,100	£ 501,100	£ 444,800
Total contribution (per district)	£ 138,000	£ 145,067	£ 148,333	£ 153,533	£ 132,767	£ 169,967	£ 160,267	£ 166,367	£ 167,033	£ 148,267
Reserve level (start of year)	£ 230,000	£ 81,700	£ 81,700	£ 81,700	£ 81,700	£ 81,700	£ 81,700	£ 81,700	£ 81,700	£ 81,700

Appendix 2 – Graphical illustration of costs, contributions and reserve – 5 years 2025/26-2029/30

