

THE EXECUTIVE

28 JUNE 2005

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT

PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT 2005 / 2006	FOR DECISION
<p>Summary:</p> <p>Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) was introduced by the Government in 2004/04 as a means of providing incentives to local Planning Authorities to improve performance in their Planning Departments. Initially, the Grant was intended to run for three years. The 2004 Spending Review has extended this for a further three years. Achievement of the Grant is based on a number of factors but it is primarily targeted at improvement in Development Control performance.</p> <p>So far the Council has received Planning Development Grant of £151,000 for 2003/04 £451,000 for 2004/05 and the grant provisionally approved by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) for 2005/06 has risen to approximately £695,000, including core funding of £151,000. Apart from the core funding this latest grant funding is not in the Council's current budget and the decision on its inclusion is reserved to the Executive. ODPM requires the 25% of 2005/06 Grant to be spent on Capital projects, there is some discretion in how the remaining funding is split and it is proposed that most of the remainder will be on Revenue related.</p> <p>This report therefore summarises the proposals on how this funding will be spent and seeks approval to spend the total allocation of Planning Delivery Grant of approximately £785,000, including a roll forward of £90,000 from last year's allocation.</p> <p>Ward Affected - None specifically.</p>	
<p>Implications:</p> <p>Financial:</p> <p>As mentioned in the summary the 2005/06 grant has risen to approximately £695,000, 25% of which must be spent on Capital projects.</p> <p>Legal:</p> <p>There are no legal implications.</p> <p>Risk Management:</p> <p>The only claw back provisions on this Grant relate to the District Auditor discovering that local planning authorities have submitted false data in support of Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 109.</p>	

There is also a risk that if funding ceases or reduces the Council will continue to bear the cost of the activity. However, the Council has minimised its exposure to this risk by using PDG to fund mainly one-off activities. Where the risk remains the annual budget process will address the implications.

It is proposed that some of the grant is used to support Development Control in delivering improved results against OPDM Performance Indicator BVPI109 and to also assist strengthen the Council's position on strategic transport initiatives as this could have a direct impact on the Council's future CPA assessment under the Sustainable Communities heading. (see paragraphs 5.4, 5.7 and 5.11)

Social Inclusion and Diversity:

As this report does not concern a new or revised policy there are no specific adverse impacts insofar as this report is concerned.

Crime and Disorder:

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a responsibility on local authorities to consider the crime and disorder implications of any proposals. In relation to this report one of the proposals is specifically targeted at designing out crime in development projects and therefore this funding will assist the Council in achieving improved performance in this area.

Recommendation

The Executive is recommended to agree the spend of the Planning Delivery Grant for 2005 / 2006 on the following:

	04/05 Roll Forward	2005/06	Roll forward to 2006/7	TOTAL
Interim Funding to Planning and Regeneration Reorganisation-	£0	£151,000	£0	£151,000
Heritage and Conservation Officer (recurring cost)	£20,000	£15,000	£0	£35,000
Conservation Projects	£0	£37,500	£12,500	£50,000
Strategic Transport	£0	£25,000	£0	£25,000
Additional Temp DC Post	£0	£30,000	£10,000	£40,000
E-Planning (20% recurring)	£0	£100,000	£0	£100,000
Systems Audit (phase 2)	£0	£10,000	£0	£10,000
Urban Design Programme	£30,000	£7,500	£12,500	£50,000
Sponsorship Of Crime Prevention Design Adviser	£0	£37,500	£12,500	£50,000
Training and Development	£15,000	£15,000	£0	£30,000
RTPI accredited post entry training	£0	£10,000	£0	£10,000
Corporate Environmental Stewardship Programme	£25,000	£12,500	£12,500	£50,000
Held in Reserve for UDC Work	£0	£50,000	£0	£50,000
Corporate Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal	£0	£75,000	£25,000	£100,000

PATH Trainee	£0	£30,000	£0	£30,000
Office Move	£0	£4,000	£0	£4,000
TOTAL	£90,000	£610,000	£85,000	£785,000
Reason				
To assist in achieving the Community Priorities of <i>“Making Barking and Dagenham Cleaner, Greener and Safer”</i> , <i>“Raising General Pride in the Borough”</i> , and <i>“Regenerating the Local Economy”</i> .				
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1. Background

- 1.1 Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) was introduced by the Government in 2003/04 as a means of providing incentives to local Planning Authorities to improve performance in their Planning Departments. Initially, the grant was intended to run for three years. The 2004 Spending Review has extended this for a further three years. Achievement of the Grant is based on a number of factors but it is primarily targeted at improvement in Development Control performance.
- 1.2 In 2004/04, the Council received £151,000. All of this allocation went in to supporting the Planning and Regeneration Best Value review. 2004/05 saw a substantial increase in the allocation of PDG to £451,000. The 2005/06 allocation has risen to approximately £695,000. The final figure is still awaited. The award this year is broken down as follows:

Housing – High Demand	£ 98,639.20
Enterprise Areas	£ 70,000.00
Development Control	£466,149.48
Local Development Scheme*	£ 50,000.00
Total	£694,642.75

*(to be confirmed)

- 1.3 The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has confirmed that it will be possible to carry unspent PDG over into future years and will be issuing further guidance in the future. However, ODPM have also stipulated that 25% of the 2005/06 award must be spent on Capital projects. This amounts to £173,660.

2. Performance Improvements to Date

- 2.1 The first round of PDG was used to fund, on an interim basis, service expansion in the Planning and Transportation Division as part of the Department's medium-term financial strategy. The immediate benefits saw the filling of 10 of the Division's vacancies, including a new Group Manager for Urban Design and a Transportation Group Manager.
- 2.2 Investment in the Development Control Service and the implementation of the Development Control Improvement Plan has seen a dramatic improvement in performance under Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI), particularly the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) critical BV109. Performance has improved between 2003 and 2005 by the following:

BV	02/03	03/04	04/05	Improvement
109a	45.0%	55.0%	60.0%	15.0%
109b	43.0%	54.0%	84.9%	41.9%
109c	69.0%	74.5%	96.3%	27.3%

- 2.3 The Division has also achieved the BV 200a Target of having the Council's Local Development Scheme approved by March 2005.

3. Roll Forward from 2004/05 to 2006/7

- 3.1 £90,000 of PDG was identified in 2004/05 to be rolled forward into this financial year. The table shows those areas of spend identified for roll forward.

Allocation of Planning Delivery Grant 2004/05 and Roll Forward to 2005/06

	2004/05	2005/06	TOTAL
Interim Funding to Planning and Regeneration Reorganisation	£151,000	£0	£151,000
Heritage and Conservation Officer (recurring cost)	£ 15,000	£ 20,000	£35,000
Transport Strategy	£ 50,000	£ 0	£50,000
E-Planning (50% recurring)	£ 40,000	£ 0	£40,000
Systems Audit	£ 30,000	£ 0	£30,000
Urban Design Programme	£ 10,000	£ 30,000	£40,000
Training and Development	£ 15,000	£ 15,000	£30,000
RTPI accredited post entry training	£ 10,000	£ 0	£10,000
Corporate Environmental Stewardship Programme	£ 40,000	£ 25,000	£65,000
TOTAL	£ 361,000	£ 90,000	£451,000

- 3.2 Over the last three years, it has become evident that delays in the notification of PDG awards make it extremely difficult to commence spend much before the end of the first financial quarter in June. Indeed, at the time of writing of this report, the final settlement for 2005/06 is still not known, with the final allocation under the Local Development Framework category is still awaited. This report therefore proposes to roll forward 25% of certain allocations into year 2006/7 to enable spend to take place over a full calendar year.

4. Analysis of 2004/05 Spend

- 4.1 All of the 2004/05 allocation of £451,000 Planning Delivery Grant was spent within the Planning Service, except for the agreed roll forward of £90,000. Some changes were made within specific allocations of grant in order to provide extra resources to support services following delays in the formation of the UDC.

5. Proposed Allocation of Planning Delivery Grant 2005/06

The table below gives the proposed allocation of PDG for 2005/06, including the use of roll forward identified in 2004/05 and proposals to roll forward certain spend into 2006/7. A description of the proposed spend is given later in this section.

	2004/05 Roll Forward	2005/06	Rolled Forward to 2006/07	TOTAL
Interim Funding to Planning and Regeneration Reorganisation	£0	£151,000	£0	£151,000
Heritage and Conservation Officer (recurring cost)	£ 20,000	£15,000	£0	£35,000
Conservation Projects	£0	£37,500	£12,500	£50,000
Strategic Transport	£ 0	£25,000	£0	£25,000
Additional Temp DC Post	£0	£30,000	£10,000	£40,000
E-Planning (20% recurring)	£ 0	£100,000	£0	£100,000
Systems Audit (phase 2)	£ 0	£10,000	£0	£10,000
Urban Design Programme	£ 30,000	£7,500	£12,500	£50,000
Sponsorship Of Crime Prevention Design Adviser	£0	£37,500	£12,500	£50,000
Training and Development	£ 15,000	£15,000	£0	£30,000
RTPI accredited post entry training	£ 0	£10,000	£0	£10,000
Corporate Environmental Stewardship Programme	£ 25,000	£12,500	£12,500	£50,000
Held in Reserve for UDC Work	£0	£50,000	£0	£50,000
Corporate Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal	£0	£75,000	£25,000	£100,000
Path Trainee	£0	£30,000	£0	£30,000
Office Move	£0	£4,000	£0	£4,000
TOTAL	£ 90,000	£610,000	£85,000	£785,000

5.1 Interim Funding to Planning and Regeneration reorganisation - £151,000

This was the figure included in reports previously submitted to the Executive covering the costs of the restructure.

5.2 Heritage Conservation Officer - £35,000

Heritage is seen as an increasingly important component of Urban Design and the delivery of Sustainable Communities. In London, English Heritage used to fund a number of posts within local planning departments. However, they have now abandoned this funding. CABE have no permanent consultancy to offer.

A post of Heritage Officer was identified in the new Planning and Transportation Division as part of the Regeneration Best Value review. It was agreed at that time that this post would not be filled until external funding opportunities had been explored. However, the Executive held on 14 September 2004, agreed to fund this post through PDG while alternative resources were sought.

5.3 Conservation Projects - £50,000

A number of conservation projects have been identified within the Division's Balanced Scorecard. These include the compilation of a database of historic assets, the production of Action Plans and programmes for the production of Management Plans and the roll out of physical improvements to historic buildings and conservation areas. PDG will be used to commence these programmes. Most of this work will require the appointment of specialist consultants.

5.4 Transport Strategy - £25,000

This reflects one of the key outcomes of the Regeneration Best Value Review. To be effective in promoting regeneration in the Thames Gateway, the Council must improve its capacity in lobbying for key strategic transportation initiatives. A new group of officers has been established within the Division and a group manager appointed. The PDG will be used to strengthen the Council's position on strategic transport initiatives. This could have a direct impact on the Council's future CPA assessment under the Sustainable Communities heading.

5.5 Additional Temporary Development Control post - £40,000

This post is being sought specifically to support the Council's Regeneration programme. During the next year, a large number of major applications are expected to be submitted, particularly in Barking Town Centre. Because of the current crisis in Planning recruitment, it will not be possible to make appointments on temporary contracts. It is proposed to make an appointment on an Agency contract.

5.6 E-Planning (Data Administration) - £100,000

This PDG has been identified to secure improved computer hardware and software to support the Division's E-Planning service. Funds will also be used to continue the scanning of current and old planning and Building Control documents and the employment of a full time scanning officer (hence the 20% recurring).

5.7 Systems Audit (Phase 2) £10,000

Phase 1 spend identified actions to be taken to gain ISO 9001 Accreditation within the Division. This PDG will be used to fund the implementation of recommended changes, as necessary, to Development Control processes, including administration. This is designed to improve the speed of decision making in Development Control and, hence, produce tangible improvements in BVPI 109 (a-c).

5.8 Urban Design Programme - £50,000

This reflects one of the key outcomes of the Regeneration Best Value Review. To be effective in promoting regeneration in the Borough and in the Thames Gateway, the Council must improve its capacity in Urban Design. A new group of officers has been established within the Division and a group manager appointed. The PDG will be used to support major Regeneration projects in Barking Town Centre and London Riverside and to produce, publish and publicise an Urban Design Strategy for the Borough, for training and capacity building for Officers and Councillors. This is also reflected in the new planning BVPI "Quality of Service Checklist" and could have a direct impact on the Council's future CPA assessment under the Sustainable Communities heading

5.9 Sponsorship of a Crime Prevention Design Adviser - £50,000

Following from the, highly successful, Designing Out Crime conference, held at Eastbury Manor House on 20 April 2005, initial discussions have been held with the Metropolitan Police with a view to the Council sponsoring a permanent Crime Prevention Design Adviser. The post would be employed by the police but located within the Planning and Transportation Division. Sponsorship would be on an annual basis and costs quoted include on-costs. The person appointed would assist the Borough in designing out crime from the outset, both in terms of individual development proposals and in the context of major master plans, etc. The post could also provide an advisory service to the public and other Council Departments.

5.10 Training and Development (including RTPI Accredited training) - £40,000

Town Planning is currently going through the biggest shake-up since the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act. The introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Sustainable Communities Plan reflects a major shift in thinking for national and local Government. This, coupled with a recruitment crisis within the planning profession, leads to the need for greatly enhanced training requirements for both Officers and Councillors.

5.11 Corporate Environmental Stewardship Programme - £50,000

These programmes and outputs all reflect the work of the Sustainable Development Group and, in particular, the promotion of environmental sustainability within the Sustainable Communities and Regeneration agendas. These programmes are designed to raise awareness of the sustainability agenda within the Council, the region and, most importantly, within the community. There are strong ties here to the Community Priority of Making Barking and Dagenham Cleaner, Greener, Safer, with links to both education and environmental management. This could also have a positive impact on the Council's future CPA under the Sustainable Communities heading.

5.12 Held in Reserve for UDC Work - £50,000

At the meeting of the Executive held on 8 March 2005, consideration was given to the planning powers of the new Thames Gateway UDC and the proposed Service Level Agreement to be entered into between the Council and the UDC. The report recommended that Officers negotiate with the UDC to seek the recovery of costs but noted that if this were not possible, costs should be met from PDG. Discussions have not yet been held with the UDC so this block of PDG is held in reserve pending the outcome of future discussions.

5.13 Corporate Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal - £100,000

In June 2004 the European Directive 2001/42/EC came into force, which requires all plans and documents which have a significant impact on the environment, or have land use implications to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). In the UK the Sustainability Appraisal (SA), which incorporates the SEA process, was developed as part of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004), which requires that all planning documents must undertake an SA to ensure that the environmental, economic and social aspects of all planning policies are taken into account. The ODPM estimated that the average costs for a SA of the Local Development Documents will be approximately £100,000. This costing included data gathering and monitoring, public consultation, prediction modelling, and implementation of the findings.

The Council produces many documents which have either town planning implications, land use issues and, or an environmental impact, such as the Housing Strategy and key regeneration documents. Thus the Council will be required to undertake either SA's or SEA's of several key documents, to ensure that they can be implemented. It is envisaged that the Sustainable Development Group of the Planning and Transportation Division, should become a centre of excellence for the Council and would project manage all the SA's or SEA's that the Council is required to do.

This allocation of PDG will be used to establish a corporate data base, to provide training and capacity building and to initiate SEA's in the Planning Division.

5.14 PATH Trainee - £30,000

The Division currently employs a trainee planner under the PATH programme to encourage more graduates from black and minority ethnic backgrounds into the planning profession. This post is currently located in the policy team of the Sustainable Development Group. The location of the post presents a dilemma. Ideally, the post should be rotated throughout the Division in order to give the trainee maximum experience of all aspects of the service. However, the policy group are under increasing pressure to deliver the new Local Development Framework (LDF) and the loss of the post to other groups would cause workload pressures. It is therefore proposed to create an additional post, of a similar grade, in the policy group, to enable the PATH trainees to move more freely around the Division.

5.15 Office Move - £4,000

A small residual balance of £4,000 will be used to assist the Division's relocation back to the Town Hall in the Autumn of 2005.

6. Use of Capital

6.1 The Planning and Transportation Division is primarily a Revenue based service, with the majority of the Division's resources being spent on salaries. The rules for this year's PDG allocation require 25% to be spent on Capital works. This 25% amounts to £173,660.

6.2 In order to accommodate this Capital spend, it is proposed to capitalise two of the proposed projects, the additional DC post and additional support in Urban Design. These areas of spend relate directly to Regeneration projects being undertaken in the Town Centre (spread across all of the Town Centre projects). In total, this amounts to £90,000. The balance, of £83,660 will consist of £80,000 of IT hardware, which it is also proposed to capitalise and £4,000 of works to the Divisions new office accommodation. This will require reference to the CPMO.

7. Consultation

The following Lead Members have been consulted and are either happy with the proposals or have raised no objections.

Officers

Finance

Alexander Anderson, Head of Finance (DRE)

Lead Members

Community Development and Safety Portfolio, Councillor Geddes

Environment and Sustainability, Councillor McKenzie,

Regeneration, Councillor Kallar.

Adult Social Services and Lifelong Learning Portfolio includes (Financial Planning), Councillor Bramley.

Background Papers

- Executive Minute 46, 8 July 2003. Re: Planning Delivery Grant 2003/04.
- Executive Report and Minute 121, 14 September 2004.
- Executive Report and Minute 288, 17 February 2004. Re: Regenerating the Local Economy - Cross Cutting Best Value Review.
- European Directive 2001/42/EC.
- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004).
- Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) BV109 (www.ODPM.gov.uk).