

NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE JOINT DELIVERY COMMITTEE		Item 10	Page 1
Councils Affected	All	31 st January 2017	
Report Title	JOINT DELIVERY UNIT BUDGET AND CAPACITY FUNDING		

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To outline the current budgetary position and report on the progress in securing various capacity funding streams.

2. INFORMATION

- 2.1 Members will be aware that Adrian Arnold left his role at the JDU at the end of October, to move to a job in Oxford. One of the other secondees into the unit, Andra Stopforth, has also been successful in securing another job, so currently the unit is reliant on the remaining secondee, Jennifer Bell, with the temporary support of Andrew Longley from the Joint Planning Unit, in making progress. The unit also has the services of a highway engineer (Kingsley Cook, who replaces Richard Hall, who also left in September) and a proportion of the time (55%) of the relevant parts of the planning teams within each planning authority.
- 2.2 The officer steering group has considered options in how to replace the vacant roles, but needs further certainty on capacity funding, in terms of both funding and longevity of funding, before feeling able to commit to filling posts. The temporary nature of the funding to date has contributed to the high staff turnover being experienced. Nevertheless, the vacant posts have created some more headroom in the budget, albeit that no funding can be relied upon after April 2017. This can be used to extend the life of the Joint Delivery Unit (JDU) into the financial year 2017-18, pending the award of any finance for that year.
- 2.3 The budget currently looks as follows:-

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		£000,s	£000,s	£000,s	£000,s
Senior Management		0			
JDU Manager	2	53	53		
Project Officer	3	48	22	26	
Seconded Planning Staff	4	193	53	140	
Staff Car Allowance	5	6	4	2	
New Highways Staff	6	36		36	
Health Services Study	7	50		50	
Other Fund Activity listed below	8	219			159
Legal Capacity			2	40	
Viability Testing			5	0	
JPU			-9	11	
Community Engagement			7	0	
Economic Development					
Delivery Plan					
Utilities Study					
Urban Design Studies					
Transport & Highways assessment			-14	13	
Management Accounts				5	
Totals	1	605	123	323	159

	Notes:				
		Budget for period Apr 2016 to June 2017 = £605k(remainder			
		1 of £750k from 15/16 £355k) plus £250k for 17/18			
		2 JDU Manager cost Apr 2016 - October 2016			
		3 Project Officers KBC & BCW			
		Planning Staff KBC Apr 2016 - June 2017 55%. Costs			
		4 estimated for BCW,CBC,ENC staff based on 15/16.			
		5 Staff Transport costs Apr 2016 - June 2017			
		6 Highways commitment = £66k staff less £30k rolling programme refund			
		8 Remaining budget to be used for Legal, Viability, JPU, Design etc			

3. CAPACITY FUNDING

3.1. There are potentially three funding streams which might helpfully support joint working. These are:-

- a) CLG Garden Communities Capacity Funding – the JDU originally secured £750,000 in 2015/16, which was used to establish the unit, commission various studies, provide staffing and develop a work programme. When it became obvious that the award in 2016/17 would be smaller, the decision was taken to eke out the original funds to last part way into 2016/17. In the event, the award in 2016/17 was £250,000. Whilst this has been taken into account in the budget above, it has not yet been paid by CLG, who promised that a payment was due in November. (The original £750,000 was not paid until mid-financial year either). We are therefore close to the point where CLG funding arrives after the point of spending. There is no real indication yet of any commitment in 2017/18, and there is an indication that any funds will be spread around an even larger number of recipients than was the case this year.

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- b) At the time of the award, CLG made us aware that there was a further capacity fund being made available by the Homes and Communities Agency, and this could be a way of supplementing its award. Details of the Large Sites and Housing Zones Capacity Fund were published on 11th November. The fund is of up to £18 million in 2016/17 to develop/build capacity in local authorities/HCA to support delivery of large and complex sites (1500 plus dwellings). A joint North Northamptonshire bid was submitted, setting out what support is needed as a shared resource (within the JPU/JDU) and what is needed within individual Local Planning Authorities LPAs. An award seems unlikely much before the end of the financial year and it is therefore assumed that recipients will be enabled to spend it beyond 31st March 2017.
- c) A third avenue, of more limited general application, is Garden Village funding. ENC has submitted a bid in response to the Government's Locally-Led Garden Villages, Towns and Cities prospectus. Deenethorpe was amongst the schemes announced in early January. Funding for a range of technical support, staff capacity and technical studies was sought and at the time of writing, it was not clear what amount is due. This project is being managed for ENC by the JPU and does not presently fall within the remit of the Joint Delivery Committee. There should however be opportunities for joint working on this project alongside work on the SUEs, for example sharing expertise/knowledge through the JPU/JDU and joint procurement of consultants.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1. The current unsatisfactory and hand-to-mouth funding make it difficult to progress the work of the JDU, since it would be unwise to commit to fill vacant posts (and probably quite difficult to do so in reality) without certainty of funding going forward. There is a need to reconsider the staffing options once the extent of CLG/HCA funding is known, and in the hope that CLG may also have announced a new round by then. The JPU have kindly offered some ongoing support in the meantime, which has been accepted.
- 4.2. A separate paper is on this agenda on options, which have been considered by the officer steering group.