

Planning Policy Resources: Local Plan Review & Senior Landscape (Ecology) Officer	
Executive Summary	<p>In line with the immediate Local Plan Review project proposal agreed by Cabinet on 9 March 2026, in order to meet the 30 month review timeline as detailed by the government, a review of resources identifies that a further two professional Planning Policy Officers will be required to take the project forward. This report also seeks the reinstatement of the Planning Policy Manager role, with the Team Leader role being deleted from the establishment. These will be supported by recently announced MHCLG New System Plan Funding.</p> <p>In addition, with additional responsibilities imposed upon the Council as the Local Planning Authority through Nutrient Neutrality & Biodiversity Net Gain, the Senior Landscape Officer (Ecology) post requires additional hours which will be funded by a new Biodiversity Net Gain monitoring fee, now being collected from developers.</p>
Options considered	<p>Option 1 Do Nothing (Not Recommended) Option 2 Re-Assign Staff Across the Wider Planning Service (Not Recommended) Option 3 – Managed Growth through the creation of two new planning policy officer posts (1 x Senior Planning Policy Officer and 1 x Planning Policy Officer), replacing the Team Leader role with a Planning Policy Manager post and strengthening the Senior Landscape Officer (Ecology) position (Recommended).</p>
Consultation(s)	Corporate Leadership Team including the S151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer, HR Advisor for Planning and Group Accountant.
Recommendations	In order to deliver the Local Plan Review within the 30-month timeframe, to approve Option Three and progress the immediate appointment of: 1 x Planning Policy Manager (removing the Team Leader role from the establishment), 1 x Senior Planning Policy Officer & 1 x Planning Policy Officer as detailed in the report. Also, approve the additional hours for the Senior Landscape Officer (Ecology) post.
Reasons for recommendations	<p>To ensure the Planning Policy team is appropriately resourced in order to maintain an up-to-date Local Plan, to comply with statutory requirements and to maintain appropriate planning policy guidance for the district.</p> <p>Also, to meet the additional responsibilities imposed upon the Council as the Local Planning Authority through Nutrient Neutrality & Biodiversity Net Gain.</p>
Background papers	Local Plan Review – Cabinet paper 9 March 2026. Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) project proposal 28 April 2026.

Wards affected	All
Cabinet member(s)	Cllr Andrew Brown
Contact Officer	Iain Withington, Planning Policy Manager iain.withington@north-norfolk.gov.uk David Glason, Assistant Director for Planning david.glason@north-norfolk.gov.uk

Links to key documents:	
Corporate Plan:	Delivering and ensuring the Council maintains an up-to-date statutory Local Plan remains a key commitment and component part of the Corporate Plan covering all five themes: Our Greener Future, Developing Our Communities, Meeting Our Housing Need, Investing in Our Local Economy and Infrastructure and A Strong, Responsible & Accountable Council.
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	N/A
Council Policies & Strategies	North Norfolk Local Plan Adopted 17 December 2025.

Corporate Governance:	
Is this a key decision	Yes. This is a departure decision which would be outside of the agreed base budget for Planning Policy and Conservation Design and Landscape, but can be supported by a recently announced Local Plan review Grant from MHCLG and a new Biodiversity Net Gain monitoring fee, now being collected from developers.
Has the public interest test been applied	N/A
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	Cabinet endorsed progression of the Local Plan Review 9 March 2026. CLT endorsed the project proposals and increase in staffing 28 April 2026.

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek Members and Council endorsement for the recruitment of additional qualified staff resource for the Planning Policy team in order to maintain its current functional requirements and to undertake the required additional work stream in association with Local Plan Review. Also, to consider staffing resource to meet the additional responsibilities imposed upon the Council as the Local Planning Authority through Nutrient Neutrality & Biodiversity Net Gain.

2. Introduction & Background

- 2.1. The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) have advised that North Norfolk District Council is required to bring a new Local Plan forward under the new plan making system. The authority must publish a statutory notice around the intention to commence Local Plan preparation on or before the 30 June 2026 and must commence the 30-month plan preparation period on the 31 October 2026 / Gateway 1 Stage. The process involves significant preparation before these dates with intensive work required upfront around evidence gathering, project management and governance arrangements. A 'Call for Sites', is currently scheduled for June 2026 and a statutory 'Scoping Consultation' inviting feedback on potential content of the Plan. The Scoping Consultation is currently scheduled for w/c 20 July 2026 so as to align with the required timetable giving the Council the best possible chance to align with the mandatory 31 October deadline. This is subject to resource provision as evidence gathering is now front-loaded into the early stages of the plan making system, forming the first phase and informs the subsequent 30 month plan making period. It is recognised that this is a challenging 30-month timetable for delivery. With no Local Plan in place, there is a potential risk of developer challenge through uncontrolled development across the District, especially if not maintaining the 5 Year Housing Land Supply.
- 2.2. Cabinet resolved on the 9 March 2026: 1) To progress the review of the NNDC Local Plan in line with Government expectations and statute requirements. 2) To continue working to inform and influence the future production of a Spatial Development Strategy including engagement and collaborative work through the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework.
- 2.3. A detailed project proposal including initial timelines, budget, governance expectations and project deliverables including expected evidence requirements and minimum staffing resources was endorsed by Corporate Leadership Team on 28 April 2026.
- 2.4. It is recommended that additional officers in the form of one **Senior Planning Policy Officer** and a supporting (but qualified) **Planning Policy Officer** will need to be recruited. The team now needs to be properly resourced to meet the demanding schedule in reviewing the Local Plan which currently comprises of 3.5FTE qualified planning officers, 2.5FTE of which specialise in specific policy areas including policy interpretation and Neighbourhood Planning, while the acting Planning Policy Manager operates across all subjects.
- 2.5. This report also seeks the **reinstatement of the Planning Policy Manager** role to lead the team and deliver the tight programme, with the **Team Leader role being removed from the establishment**. This is deemed to be the appropriate level of resource required to deliver the new Local Plan.
- 2.6. Significant gaps in resource and experience around policy subjects exist which, unless addressed, will manifest and potentially impact on the ability of the Council to meet the expected Local Plan delivery requirements and wider function of the team. It should be noted that the team benefits from an additional project management support officer, 0.5FTE project support and a monitoring officer.
- 2.7. In addition to the further workstream of Local Plan review the team will also work across Norfolk Local Planning Authorities and with statutory organisations to

inform and influence the future production of a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) including further engagement and collaborative work through the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework as well as engaging with Local Government Reorganisation.

- 2.8. It is widely recognised that the Planning system is becoming ever more complex with additional requirements and being subject to numerous legislative changes. This increases pressure on third parties e.g. statutory bodies such as Natural England, Anglian Water, Environment Agency which directly involve the Planning Policy team. The cognitive load now placed on our officers as national front runners with: Local Plan Review and the additional work required to engage with and implement numerous changes in planning legislation as well as the continual emerging updates in national guidance and legislation is the greatest it has ever been.
- 2.9. The **Council is in receipt of £108,474.57 of New System Plan funding**, which forms part of the Governments Plan implementation funding. This funding is provided by MHCLG to support the authority in its commitment to bringing a Local Plan Review forward early in the new plan-making system, to the agreed timelines and milestones¹ helping to ensure good progress is being made. The grant can be spent on activities that support the Plan review and agreed through the grant process namely: preparing or updating the plan evidence base, technical studies, site assessments, consultation or engagement work, hiring additional staff, hiring consultants and training staff.
- 2.10. Whilst it is recommended that this funding is used to support recruitment of additional staff resource, longer term budget provision will have to be provided in future years if the Council are to achieve the agreed and expected timelines and milestones set out above.
- 2.11. It should be noted that cost savings have in the recent past been made with the non-replacement of staff in the team. This was before the Government requirement for an immediate Local Plan review within a 30-month timeframe, hence this review of resources.
- 2.12. In addition, with additional responsibilities imposed upon the Council as the Local Planning Authority through Nutrient Neutrality & Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), the **Senior Landscape Officer (Ecology) post** requires additional hours which will be funded by a **new Biodiversity Net Gain monitoring fee**, now being collected from developers. **This new income stream will cover the increased hours (increasing the existing 0.4FTE to a Full Time role) and is already being generated.** The BNG Monitoring income forecasts are: 2026/27 £60,000 - £100,000 and 2027/28 £40,000 - £80,000. The future funding requirement relates to an additional 0.6FTE on SCP29-33 which is £30,522.77 to £33,796.28 (including on costs).
- 2.13. This post covers a burgeoning specialist area and enables the Local Planning Authority to fulfil its statutory ecological duties.

¹ Acceptance of this funding is based on your authority's commitment to the following milestones:

- 2.14. The Environment Act 2021 introduced new legislation to bring about BNG – a system designed to deliver a 10% net gain in biodiversity as part of the planning process. This process became mandatory for major applications on 12 February 2024 and for minor applications on 2 April 2024. All qualifying development captured by BNG is deemed to have been granted subject to a general biodiversity gain condition to secure the biodiversity gain objective.
- 2.15. The general BNG condition is a pre commencement condition: once planning permission has been granted, developers need to submit a Biodiversity Gain Plan which has to be approved by the planning authority before commencement of the development. Where gains on development sites are deemed ‘significant’, they must also be subject to 30 years management and monitoring, with developers being required to submit periodic management/monitoring reports for Local Planning Authority (LPA) sign off. Failure to comply will be an enforcement issue.
- 2.16. To support the delivery of BNG legislation, the Council’s Senior Ecologist has created processes and trained planning officers to undertake evaluation of Small Site Metrics. Business as usual for them also now involves checking the validity of exemptions, providing validation advice and confirming BNG metrics on applications, reviewing planning applications, checking Statutory Metrics (more complex information completed by ecological consultants) and providing guidance to case officers.
- 2.17. Not all applications will provide on-site habitats. Instead, some opt to purchase units from habitat banks. Where, however, on-site habitats are provided, the LPA will be involved in the onward management of the process ensuring developers monitor and submit periodic reports on these sites.
- 2.18. This legislation has brought a new level of complexity to the planning system and requires a deep understanding of habitats in order to assess net gain. It also has had a significant impact on workloads for planning officers who have had to adapt to the new processes and deal with additional work that the Senior Ecologist no longer has time for: e.g. assessing the BNG small site metrics submitted with applications.
- 2.19. To assist with the management of the BNG process the Council purchased software (Exacom) that connects to the planning system (Uniform) to draw down details of planning applications affected by BNG. This software is not being used to its full extent as the monitoring is time consuming and there is insufficient capacity to do this. Consequently, the system is not being ‘managed’ in a way to future proof the compliance with legislation. This also leads to problems for the Planning Enforcement team who monitor progress and secure compliance in association with the ecologists. Without this specialist knowledge consistently being in place, delays in enforcing breaches and dealing with customers will be inevitable.
- 2.20. Agreements to secure monitoring funds are delivered through Section 106 or Unilateral Undertakings and the money from this income will be used to fund the increased hours for a Full Time post (currently 0.4FTE). The fee is taken as a one-off payment and secured either prior to planning permission being granted or when the pre-commencement condition is being discharged. These fees also cover costs related to software (i.e. Exacom), mileage for site visits (where necessary) and a standard amount towards enforcement (if required).

- 2.21. In addition to all of the new BNG requirements, the Senior Ecologist also now has a significant role in Nutrient Neutrality (NN), introduced by Natural England in 2022. Again, this work is science and process driven and requires officers to assess Nutrient Calculators and carry out Habitats Regulation Assessments to ensure that developments will not add to the nutrient load on the River Wensum and The Broads. As the competent authority in this area, failure to have proper regard to protecting these habitats may result in decisions being subject to legal challenge or even being quashed.
- 2.22. As with BNG, there are also significant ongoing monitoring and enforcement workstreams generated from Nutrient Neutrality. Hence, on-site mitigation measures need to be secured and delivered, whilst off-site purchased credits need to be recorded to ensure proper compliance with the Habitats Regulations. This requires regular liaison with the Council's Legal and Enforcement teams to help in the drawing up of legal agreements and in ensuring subsequent delivery, all of which takes time previously available for other ecological matters.

3 Proposals and Options

3.1 Option One – Do Nothing (Not Recommended)

3.2 **Officers would be asked to undertake a further and significantly increased workload for an extended period.** Whilst Officers would undoubtedly seek to do their best to manage a notable increase in work this is not sustainable. It would inevitably result in officers being over stretched and productivity detrimentally impacted and long term potentially adversely affecting staff and retention. With the current increased workloads officers are already feeling the pressure and progress has been slower than anticipated.

3.3 This option is not recommended. If this option is chosen, then an immediate review of services undertaken by the planning policy team and its current structure would need to be completed to review resources and the Councils work priorities to align with the workload capacity of the team. This would have financial and reputational implications for the Council in delivering both the statutory Local Plan and the Biodiversity Net Gain and Nutrient Neutrality requirements.

3.4 Option Two – Re-Assign Staffing Across the Wider Planning Service (Not Recommended)

3.5 This option seeks to utilise qualified planners not currently within the Planning Policy team to assist with current and future policy workload.

3.6 Existing job descriptions across the wider Department provide resourcing flexibility. What this would mean is that post holders in the Development Management team could be redeployed to roles within the Planning Policy team (and vice versa). There is currently no spare resource and the Development Management service is itself seeking additional resources, reflecting increased workloads.

3.7 Furthermore, planning policy work is of a specialist nature, and it will not be simply the case of redeployment, officers are expected to have significant grounding and experience in the specialist areas across planning policy in order

to maintain expected levels of productivity to deliver the Local Plan Review to the expected timeline and standards.

- 3.8 This would have financial and reputational implications for the Council in delivering both the statutory Local Plan and the Biodiversity Net Gain and Nutrient Neutrality requirements.

3.9 Option 3 – Managed Growth (Recommended)

- 3.10 This option would see the creation of:

- 1 x Senior Planning Policy Officer (1 FTE)
- 1 x Planning Policy Officer (1 FTE)
- Replacing the Team Leader role with a Planning Policy Manager post
- Strengthening the Senior Landscape Officer (Ecology) position from 0.4FTE to 1FTE

- 3.11 This option would see the creation of two full time and permanent posts. Recruitment into one Senior Planning Policy Officer post will help bring experience and broaden the subject and specialist knowledge required across the team, while a Planning Officer post will provide officer support and increase capacity and resilience across the team.

- 3.12 As covered in paragraph 2.9, the **Council is in receipt of £108,474.57 of New System Plan funding from MHCLG**, which forms part of the Governments Plan implementation funding. It is recommended that this funds the Planning Policy Officer roles in the short term.

- 3.13 As covered in paragraph 2.12, with additional responsibilities imposed upon the Council as the Local Planning Authority through Nutrient Neutrality & Biodiversity Net Gain, the Senior Landscape Officer (Ecology) post requires additional hours which will be **wholly funded by a new Biodiversity Net Gain monitoring fee**, now being collected from developers.

4 Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 Having an adequately resourced Planning Policy team helps the Council to meet all of its Corporate Plan Objectives.

- 4.2 **Our Greener Future** – Ensuring that Officers help protect and enhance the special landscape and ecological value of North Norfolk whilst improving the biodiversity of the district. Strengthening the ability for local communities to deliver on local environmental ambitions and priorities.

- 4.3 **Developing Our Communities** – Through delivery of the statutory Local Plan to guide the future development of the District.

- 4.4 **Meeting our Housing Need** – allocating sites within the Local Plan and delivery of a suite of strategic housing matters. Monitoring of the housing land supply and housing delivery monitoring.

- 4.5 Investing In Our Local Economy & Infrastructure** – undertaking employment land reviews and allocating employment sites in the Local Plan. Working with the Economic Development team to help secure inward investment and to help businesses navigate the planning system in a timely manner. Liaison with key statutory organisations to deliver key infrastructure for strategic developments.

5 Financial and Resource Implications

- 5.1 Preferred Option 3 – Managed Growth will result in an increase to the base budget as set out below.

Proposed Role	Cost per annum
1 x Senior Planning Policy Officer	£57,807 per annum Funded by New System Plan funding in short term
1 x Planning Policy Officer	£50,154 per annum Funded by New System Plan funding in short term
Replacing Team Leader role with Planning Policy Manager post	£9,732 per annum (difference)
Strengthening the Senior Landscape Officer (Ecology) position from 0.4FTE to 1FTE	£32,187 (difference) Funded by BNG monitoring fees
Total 2026/27	£149,880 per annum

- 5.2 As covered in paragraph 2.9, the **Council is in receipt of £108,474.57 of New System Plan funding from MHCLG**, which forms part of the Governments Plan implementation funding. It is recommended that this funds the Planning Policy Officer roles in the short term. However, growth in the Planning Policy base budget will be required in the medium term.
- 5.3 As covered in paragraph 2.12, with additional responsibilities imposed upon the Council as the Local Planning Authority through Nutrient Neutrality & Biodiversity Net Gain, the Senior Landscape Officer (Ecology) post requires additional hours which will be **wholly funded by a new Biodiversity Net Gain monitoring fee**, now being collected from developers. This covers the entirety of the £32,187 cost per annum in the table above.
- 5.4 The production of the last Local Plan cost in the region of approx. £540,000, (excluding staff costs), however this took approximately 9 years. Although much of the evidence base is still required, the process has been streamlined with the expectation of Government that once Gateway 1 is reached the project will be completed within 30 months. Evidence however needs to be proportionate, and it is not expected that all of the adopted evidence base will need to be updated. The new process is however concentrated and will be more staff intensive.
- 5.5 The budget for future Local Plan Review has been funded since 2018/19 by £50,000 increments each year from the Council's planning reserve. This balance, as of 1st April 2026 is £302,433 for the project. The available in-house budget projected to support the Local Plan Review project over the 30 months is

£452,433 (by 1st April 2029) excluding staffing costs but including the continued annual increments from the planning reserve for the next three years.

Comments from the S151 Officer:

The accelerated timetable for renewing the local plan has created a need for establishment growth in Planning Policy of two new roles. New Burdens funding of £108k will support the first year with the Earmarked Planning Reserve (EMR) funding the final year of the Council. The EMR will also fund the incremental cost of re-instating the Planning Policy Manager.

The Senior Landscape Officer establishment growth of 0.6 FTE will need to be offset by Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) fee income. Should that revenue income prove insufficient, it is recommended that any spare capacity be offered to neighbouring Councils that will be superseded by the East Norfolk unitary council.

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 Progressing with Option Three does not give rise to significant legal implications.
- 6.2 A failure to fully resource the team appropriately will impact the Council’s ability to meet its statutory and legal requirements for Local Plan Review.

The Monitoring Officer (or member of the Legal team on behalf of the MO) will complete this section.

The report is before Full Council as it recommends an increase in headcount (establishment). However, it is not anticipated that there will be a significant financial strain.

7 Risks

Risks	Risk detail	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-5	Proximity 1-5
<p><i>What are the initial risks associated with this project?</i></p> <p>Impact: what impact will it have on the project? 5 = catastrophic 1 = negligible</p> <p>Likelihood: how</p>	Plan not completed within the mandatory 30-month timetable - may trigger Secretary of State intervention, loss of control and reputational impact.	4	4-5 (less so if sufficient resources are allocated)	2
	Challenging 30-month timetable for delivery. With no Local Plan in place, potential risk of developer challenge through uncontrolled development across the District if not maintaining the 5 Year Housing Land Supply.	4	4-5 (less so if sufficient resources are allocated)	3

<p><i>likely is this to happen?</i> 5 = very high 1 = very low</p> <p>Proximity: when may this risk occur? 5 = within 6 months 1 = over 15 years</p>	Insufficient progress in the 'getting ready phase' (Gateway 1) - compresses all later stages and increases risk of failure.	5	3	5																								
	Evidence delays due to third party consultants (Gateway 2)	4	2-3	4																								
	Evidence not robust enough to satisfy examiners - leading to Gateway 2/3 failure or examination delays.	4	3	2																								
	National Policy or Guidance changes.	2	2	2																								
	Gateway 2 & 3 failure (for various reasons – dependent on emerging strategy) - with requirement to repeat gateway stages.	4	3	3																								
	Examination pause due to issues emerging too late (e.g. evidence flaws) - leading to timetable delay which is hard to recover from.	4	2	2																								
	Insufficient engagement with/from stakeholders - statutory bodies may object at Gateway stages.	4	2	2																								
	Insufficient capacity to meet growth requirements	5	3	2																								
	Digital planning requirements not met.	3	3	2																								
	Insufficient capacity/staff resource.	5	5	4																								
	LGR / Devolution – impact of reforms and requirements around production of a Spatial Development Strategy (e.g. requirement to align the Local Plan with a higher order strategy).	3	3	3																								
Risk criteria	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Score</th> <th>Impact*</th> <th>Likelihood</th> <th>Timeframe</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>Catastrophic</td> <td>Very High</td> <td>Within 6 months</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Critical</td> <td>High</td> <td>Within 12 months</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Moderate</td> <td>Moderate</td> <td>Within 2 years</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Marginal</td> <td>Low</td> <td>>2 but <15 years</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Negligible</td> <td>Very Low</td> <td>> 15 years</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Score	Impact*	Likelihood	Timeframe	5	Catastrophic	Very High	Within 6 months	4	Critical	High	Within 12 months	3	Moderate	Moderate	Within 2 years	2	Marginal	Low	>2 but <15 years	1	Negligible	Very Low	> 15 years			
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If you wish to include any additional, supporting information, please do so here.	<p>The Government requires the authority to start the new plan-making process, instructing the Council to publish a notice of intention to commence plan-making on 30th June 2026, and to pass Gateway 1 Self-Assessment of readiness to undertake plan-making by 31st October 2026. This is because the newly adopted North Norfolk Local Plan 2024-40 has a housing requirement below 80% of the new national standard housing methodology.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rollout-of-the-new-local-plan-making-system/rollout-of-the-new-local-plan-making-system</p> <p>Undertaking a Plan Review at this time is not without risk, not least because some capacity and expertise of the Planning Policy Team has been lost in the recent past as an immediate Local Plan Review was not envisaged and current demands placed on the service means that it is already operating at capacity.</p>																											

The Government has introduced an entirely new plan-making system with significant new and emerging legislation and guidance (**much of which is still emerging**). Therefore, the process is being undertaken on an iterative basis.

The Council will be one of the few front runners and as delivery depends on strong collaboration and also resource and capacity of third parties especially those of the statutory bodies to respond at the appropriate time

The process requires the commissioning of a range of evidence from the very beginning of the project and includes staged reviews (Gateway Assessments) which will by their nature be designed to flag issues early in the process and assist with risk management. Strong project, time and resource management is essential from the start.

Risks remain around the capacity/availability of statutory consultees to engage effectively with the Council. This is amplified by the fact that all Norfolk LPAs are on a similar plan-review timeline.

Mitigating Actions

Strong project management, including detailed project plan
Appropriate governance arrangements
Timely staff recruitment and retention
Engagement Plan

Insufficient capacity to meet housing growth requirements

- Undertaking an early Call for Sites
- Working with Norfolk LPAs on Housing Capacity including developing a shared evidence base and collective Site Assessment Methodology.

Digital planning

- Effective scoping and understanding of requirements, and procurement of required resource and alignment with the principles of 'digital first'.

Partnership working

- To ensure effective and timely responses and engagement from other NNDC service areas
- To work with Norfolk Strategic Planning Officers Group on joint approaches and commissioning of joint-evidence where possible.

Workload prioritisation

- Dedicated team focus on plan review and deferral/re-assignment of existing or new workloads where required.

8 Net Zero Target

- 8.1 No assessment has been made against the Council's Net Zero 2030 Strategy & Climate Action Plan, but the sustainable future development of the District is embedded throughout the creation of the Local Plan.

9 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- 9.1 The creation of additional posts does not give rise to implications in relation equality, diversity and inclusion. Recruitment to the posts will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's recruitment processes.

10 Community Safety issues

10.1 The proposals do not give rise to any Community Safety issues

11. Conclusion and Recommendations

In line with the immediate Local Plan Review project proposal agreed by Cabinet on 9 March 2026, in order to meet the 30 month review timeline as detailed by the government, a review of resources identifies that a further two professional Planning Policy Officers will be required to take the project forward together with the reinstatement of the Planning Policy Manager role (with the Team Leader role being deleted from the establishment. These will be necessary to deliver the Local Plan Review and are supported by recently announced MHCLG New System Plan Funding.

In addition, with additional responsibilities imposed upon the Council as the Local Planning Authority through Nutrient Neutrality & Biodiversity Net Gain, the Senior Landscape Officer (Ecology) post requires additional hours which will be funded by a new Biodiversity Net Gain monitoring fee, now being collected from developers.

The Recommendation is to:

APPROVE 'Option Three - Managed Growth' as set out in the report and progress the immediate appointment of: 1 x Planning Policy Manager (removing the Team Leader role from the establishment), 1 x Senior Planning Policy Officer & 1 x Planning Policy Officer as detailed in the report. Also, approve the additional hours for the Senior Landscape Officer (Ecology) post.