

Briefing Note: Consultant Fees for Response to Planning Application – Former Wisley Airfield

Introduction

Since early 2021, the Council has given consideration to committing expenditure for specialist advice to assist in determining its response to the proposed major development of the Former Wisley Airfield (FWA) identified as a strategic site in Guildford Borough Council's Local Plan. It subsequently set up an ear-marked fund to cover anticipated costs; and agreed to work jointly with East Horsley Parish Council (EHPC) splitting the costs of expert advice 50:50. A joint submission will therefore be made.

Council Approvals to Date

In February 2021, Council gave an 'in principle' approval to meet the fees of a traffic consultant for the FWA application with extra work commissioned specifically for West Horsley in relation to the Manor Farm application; minute 21.038 refers. The tender for this work was undertaken by East Horsley PC and TTHC (Mike Hibbert) was appointed.

In April 2022, the Council approved the appointment of a planning consultant, Andy Black, at a daily rate not exceeding £500 for work estimated to take 10 – 15 days (this to include attendance at formal Committees if required); minute 22.065 refers.

WHPC had not, until recently, been advised that an ecological consultant would be required. This proved necessary with EHPC leading the selection process and Ecology by Design, appointed.

EHPC now advise that costs for the expert work required are as follows:

- Traffic Consultant £1000 – 1500
- Planning Consultant £2500 – 3000
- Ecological Consultant £4000 – 5000

It requests WHPC to set a reserve of £5,000 representing the 50:50 split of likely total cost.

WHPC Planning Ear-marked Reserve & Current Budget

The ear-marked fund for Planning currently stands at £9112.25. In addition, the 2022/23 budget for planning is £2,500 against which no financial commitments have so far been incurred. Therefore, there are sufficient approved funds available.

Current Position

Responses to the planning application are required to be submitted before 4th October. A separate item (22.149 a) on the September WHPC agenda provides the draft of the proposed response.

Some financial commitments have been incurred already and it is likely that more evidence will be required and submitted as an addendum. These costs, together with those anticipated, are covered by the earlier approvals and the set-up of the ear-marked fund.

Recommendation

The Council is asked to approve activating the ear-mark reserve for the purposes of specialist advice et al as the WHPC's contribution addressing the Wisley Airfield planning application.