

NOT FOR PUBLICATION BY VIRTUE OF PARAGRAPHS 3 & 6 OF SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 (AS AMENDED)**Report of the Director of Legal and Administrative Services****COUNSEL ADVICE****1. Purpose of report**

To seek a revised supplementary revenue estimate to fund the inquiry of Mr Ian McLaren QC and thereby promote the Council's objective of providing high quality services and the aim to strive to continuously improve the quality and level of services.

2. Background

At the cabinet meeting of 14 March 2006 it was resolved to approve a supplementary revenue estimate of £40,000 to fund an inquiry by Mr Ian McLaren QC, Recorder, into the handling of planning applications to build a house at Temple Lake, Nuthall and to secure planning enforcement advice. The inquiry is well underway and a considerable amount of work has already been undertaken. Members and officers of the Council and members of the public have been invited to submit statements and appear before Mr McLaren to give evidence on the subject matter of the inquiry. The estimated costs of the inquiry and producing a report have already been exceeded.

As the inquiry has progressed, further matters have been drawn to Mr McLaren's attention which have required to be pursued and further interviews of witnesses to enable a thorough and comprehensive review to be undertaken. The process has enabled those wanting to submit evidence to do so fully and freely. The costs to complete the inquiry and produce a report have been revised to take account of this additional works and a revised supplementary revenue estimate will therefore be required.

It is anticipated that the results of the inquiry will be a comprehensive analysis of the Council's handling of this matter, recommendations arising from that analysis and advice on the prospects of future enforcement action which will have benefits to this Council far outreaching the individual matter in its ability to deliver high quality services.

3. Financial Implications

There is a balance remaining of £77,346 in revenue contingencies, subject to other reports on this agenda. The cost of the further work needed is £15,000 and a further allocation of funds is therefore required.

Recommendation

The cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that a supplementary revenue estimate of up to £15,000 be approved to cover costs incurred, with funding to be provided from within the Council's revenue contingencies.