

## Opposition policy costing – 300 new planners – Labour

Description of policy
<p><b>Labour would ‘hire more than 300 new planners across the public sector’.</b> ‘Labour will strengthen planning capacity by hiring more than 300 new planners across the public sector to expedite decisions’ (<i>The Labour Party</i>, <i>The beating heart of our economy: Labour’s plan for small business</i>, 29 November 2023, <a href="#">link</a>).</p> <p><b>Rachel Reeves said Labour would hire 300 more public sector planners.</b> ‘Much of the speech was focused on how Labour would achieve growth in office, with Ms Reeves saying Labour would overhaul planning rules to speed up green energy, battery factories and 5G projects. Under plans announced on Monday, 300 new planners across the public sector would be hired and planning guidance to speed up the process rewritten’ (<i>BBC News</i>, 9 October 2023, <a href="#">link</a>).</p>
Additional policy assumptions
<p>Assumptions made by Special Advisers.</p> <p>Local Authority employees.</p> <p>These would be new permanent employees, employed at Local Authorities, with a linear monthly progression starting in January 2025 to reach 300 planners by 2026/27. This would consist of 60 planners in March 2025, and 300 planners in March 2026.</p> <p>Costings would involve recruitment process, salary, pension contributions, employer contributions for each individual and any other costs associated with hiring 300 more planners, with the same profession and grade composition as the Planning super squad - the new team of leading planners and specialists whose talents will be used across the system to unblock major housing developments.</p>
Additional technical modelling assumptions or judgements required
<p>Assumptions made by officials.</p> <p>We present a range for the wage estimates. For the lower estimate we use the mean value for town planners from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. For the upper estimate, we use the mean wage assumed in the Super Squad costings, using a cost model which has been provided by finance colleagues in the department. We are therefore implicitly assuming that Local Authority and Civil Service planners earn the same amount at equivalent grades. This assumption is made because of a lack of information on LPA planner wages at different grades. We anticipate that the cost would fall towards the upper end of the range. This is because the upper estimate is a better reflection of the policy assumption on grade mix, and intelligence from Planning Officers Society, Public Practice, and RTPI suggests that wages for equivalent grades for planning officers in the civil service and local authorities are broadly comparable. Due to this being set up for FYs 24/25, we have ensured we have used the correct FY calculation, and we have adjusted for wage inflation using the GDP deflator. These figures include administration and ‘on costs’.</p> <p>We assume the average wage, excluding on-costs, is £41-54,000, in 2024-25 prices. This is in line with information from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, the Planning Officers Society, Public Practice, and RTPI surveyed wages for the corresponding grades we’re assuming. On costs are assumed at 37.5% in line with department forecasting, and include hiring and replacement costs. Administration, travel, and subsistence costs are estimated at a further £17,000 per person per annum, in line with the planning super squad cost estimate.</p>

Cost/Revenue to the Exchequer over five years

Note: we assume recruitment in batches of 20 per month, with a linear monthly progression starting in January 2025 to reach 300 planners by 2026/27. This would consist of 60 planners in March 2025, and 300 planners in March 2026.

Figures are presented in millions. We would expect the costs to be towards the upper end of the range given the assumption that the grade mix should be the same as the recent planning super squad announcement.

	DEL (£m)					
	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28
Resource	£ -	£ -	£0.7 - 0.9	£14.2 – 17.6	£22.7 - 28.3	£23.2 – 28.8
Capital						
<b>Total</b>	£ -	£ -	£0.7 - 0.9	£14.2 – 17.6	£22.7 - 28.3	£23.2 – 28.8
Barnett			£0.13-0.17	£2.66-3.30	£4.26-5.31	£4.35-5.40
<b>Total Including Barnett</b>	£ -	£ -	£0.8 - 1.1	£16.9 - 20.9	£27 - 33.6	£27.5 - 34.2

Comparison with current system (if applicable):

The Opposition proposals are for the recruitment of additional planners to be employed by local authorities. Information about the salary costs of local authority planners is not readily available, but we have used a range. The lower end of the range is based on an estimate of local authority planners' costs gleaned for publicly available information as outlined above, and the upper end of the range is based on the costs associated with a new DLUHC programme called the Planning Super Squad. The Planning Super Squad project aims to recruit 20 internal planners into the department. The costs for this form the basis of the methodology used to calculate the figures presented above, with the per annum costs for 2024/25 estimated at £1.8m. Administration and on-costs are included within these figures. The costings are based off a cost model which has been provided to the Planning Super Squad team from finance colleagues.

Other comments (including other Departments consulted):

- This has been prepared by DLUHC.
- The costing assumes all planners are additional to existing plans.
- The costing has not attempted to estimate any broader savings to the public sector, for example from speeding up delivery of planning consents for public sector projects, or any increased income, for example from quicker planning permissions bringing developer contributions forward in time, or from any impact on economic growth and tax receipts.
- The costing has not attempted to estimate any private sector benefits from potential faster planning decisions.

*To be completed by Permanent Secretary's Office*  
Date costing signed off:

14/02/2024

*[If applicable]*  
Date revised costing signed off: