

SUBJECT: PERMANENT CHANGE TO STAFF STRUCTURE IN PLANNING POLICY: INCREASE BY 0.5FTE

MEETING: Individual Cabinet Member Decision

DATE: 27/08/2015

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: PLANNING POLICY (ENTREPRISE) AFFECTED ALL WARDS AFFECTED

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet Member approval to make a permanent change to the staff structure in the Planning Policy team, by increasing the permanent structure by 0.5FTE.
- 1.2 This post already exists and is occupied, but on a temporary contract expiring in November 2015.
- 1.3 The costs of the proposal are met fully by existing budgets (nil net cost).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the following amendment to the staff structure be approved:

Existing structure

1.0FTE Planning Policy Manager (JC and MD)
 0.5FTE Principal Policy Officer (vacant but MD's substantive post)
 0.5FTE Principal Planning Officer – permanent (RL)
 0.5FTE Principal Planning Officer – temporary to Nov 2015 (RL)
 1.0FTE Senior Planning Officer (SJ)
 1.0FTE Policy Monitoring Officer (JE)
 0.5FTE Admin support (vacant)

Proposed structure

No change
 No change
 Becomes 1.0FTE permanent post
 see above
 No change
 No change
 No change

- 2.2 At present, RL is employed as a Principal Planning Officer on a full time basis, but 0.5FTE of this post is on a temporary basis ending in November 2015. The proposal is to provide this officer with a full time permanent contract (1.0FTE).

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The above temporary arrangement has been ongoing for three years and provides the right level of staff resource for the team. It is worth noting that, while the LDP has been adopted, the team has a significant workload including drafting Supplementary Planning Guidance, undertaking the annual monitoring report (AMR) for the LDP, drafting the Community Infrastructure Levy, and providing general planning policy advice. An LDP review is likely to be necessary within the near future due to an anticipated drop in housing land supply. This will be a significant piece of work.

- 3.2 The ongoing arrangement with a temporary contract provides the post-holder with no long term job security and means MCC is at very real risk of losing an experienced, skilled and valuable officer as permanent job opportunities arise elsewhere. This is not a desirable outcome for MCC and one that is easily avoided.
- 3.3 The current situation effectively creates a tri-partite arrangement with the Manager post job share arrangement, which adds unnecessary complexity and uncertainty. This proposal would resolve that situation.

4. REASONS:

- 4.1 to continue to provide adequate staffing levels to meet the team's significant and corporately important workload, with potential to reduce reliance on external consultants/advisors;
- 4.2 to retain an experienced, skilled and valued member of staff and provide them with stability and job security;
- 4.3 the proposal is cost-neutral.
- 4.4 Other options were considered but discounted:
- a) do nothing: the current temporary contract would end, and MCC would lose a valued employee. Workload capacity would be reduced resulting in greater reliance on external consultants/advisors (and additional expense) and/or work is delayed, with implications for the adoption of CIL and other policy documents and/or delayed LDP review. A replacement part-time officer could be recruited, but with associated delay and cost. There are no advantages to this option and several disadvantages, so this option has been discounted;
 - b) extend the temporary contract: this does not provide the post holder with job security and at best simply delays their inevitable departure, which is not beneficial to MCC or the individual. There is no cost saving in this approach. There are no advantages and several disadvantages, so this option has been discounted.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 As set out above, the proposal will ensure the correct level of staffing resource is retained for current and foreseeable workload.
- 5.2 As set out below, the proposal would be cost neutral, with all additional costs met within existing budgets.
- 5.3 The additional permanent 0.5FTE Principal Officer post would cost £25,276 (including on-costs and assuming a 1% pay award).
- 5.4 The proposal is fully met by existing budgets, with all options considered in terms of the current Manager post job share arrangement:

Option 1: The current Manager job share arrangement continues:

The proposal is fully funded by the budget for MD's substantive post, as the salaries are identical.

The net cost increase is £0 (nil).

Option 2: The current Manager job share arrangement ends:

MD would return to his substantive post, which is fully funded in the existing budget. It is assumed that the Manager post continues to be occupied on a full time basis.

The additional permanent 0.5FTE Principal Officer post would cost £25,276 (including on-costs and assuming a 1% pay award).

This would result in an increase to the total staffing budget of £5,387. This modest increase would be offset by a reduced budget for consultant/external advice.

The net cost increase is £0 (nil).

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 The significant equality impacts identified in the assessment (Appendix 1) are summarised below for members' consideration:
- 6.2 The proposal maintains the employment of a skilled and educated officer, and makes most efficient use of MCC resources by maximising the amount of work that can be undertaken in-house.
- 6.3 The work undertaken by Planning Policy directly relates to promoting and ensuring sustainable development. It is important to ensure this team is adequately resourced, which this proposal seeks to achieve. Full consideration has been given to the financial implications, which are sustainable in the foreseeable future in the context of the challenging financial climate facing Local Authorities.
- 6.4 In terms of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership, the post in question is already occupied. MCC is an equal opportunities employer. Recruitment was undertaken in accordance with HR requirements which ensure no discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics. Any necessary future recruitment would be subject to the same requirements.
- 6.5 The actual impacts from this report's recommendations will not need to be reviewed. The proposal relates to a permanent change to the staff structure of the Planning Policy team. Future recruitment, if needed, would be undertaken in accordance with HR policies in place at that time, which themselves will have been evaluated in terms of equalities impact and sustainability. The staff structure will be reviewed as workloads change or as finances dictate, and any future changes would be subject to their own EqIA and sustainability impact assessment.

7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no implications, positive or negative, for corporate parenting or safeguarding.

8. CONSULTEES:

Cabinet Members

Kellie Beirne, Chief Officer – Enterprise (supports the proposal)

Sue Caswell, People Management Lead (supports the proposal)

Natalie Davies, Accountant (costs can be fully met within the existing budget)

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

10. AUTHOR:

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11. CONTACT DETAILS:

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