

 Executive 11th September 2013		Agenda Item No. 11
Title	Recruitment of Major Sites Monitoring Officer	
For further information about this report please contact	Tracy Darke	
Wards of the District directly affected	All	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number		
Background Papers	None	

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	No
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	No
Equality & Sustainability Impact Assessment Undertaken	Not relevant

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	2/9/13	Bill Hunt
Head of Service		Tracy Darke
CMT	2/9/13	
Section 151 Officer	4/9/13	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer		
Finance		Jenny Clayton
Portfolio Holder(s)		Councillor John Hammon
Consultation & Community Engagement		
N/A		
Final Decision?		No
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		
The proposal will need to be reported to Employment Committee in September 2013		

1. **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report is to request the appointment of a Major sites Monitoring Officer who will provide support to the Policy and Development Management service. The post-holder will take forward Strategic development sites ensuring that the planning and negotiating of infrastructure improvements and implementation of Section 106/CIL requirements takes place in a timely and effective way.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Executive authorise the financial cost of the appointment of a Major sites Monitoring Officer for a period of up to 3 years, subject to Employment Committee agreeing that the post is put on the establishment.
- 2.2 That the Executive agree that the Major Monitoring Officer post is financed from the Planning Reserve and any "monitoring fees" received from developers are appropriated to the Planning Reserve.

3. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The post is needed as soon as possible due to the recent influx of planning applications being submitted ahead of the local plan process and to ensure that we have adequate resource in place at this early stage to co-ordinate all the infrastructure provision as a consequence of the applications and mechanisms to draw down the funding at the correct time as the development commence. The request is initially for a three year period, which will then be assessed and reported back to Executive for a decision on whether there is a need to continue with the post thereafter.

4. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 4.1 Infrastructure improvements in the vicinity of major development sites coming forward through the local plan process are essential for existing communities in these areas, as well as the future occupiers of the new development. They will provide sustainable and attractive environments for Warwick district. The post is to provide further support to the service area in taking a strategic and consistent approach and monitoring the sites when development has commenced.
- 4.2 **Fit for the Future** – – The proposal accords with the vision set out in Fit for Future of helping to make Warwick District a great place to live work and visit.

5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 The post will need to be funded 'up front' as the contributions will not be provided until triggers are hit within the S106 agreements. Clearly the developer is not required to pay any contributions until their development commences. It is therefore requested that the post is initially funded through the Planning Reserves (which currently has an unallocated balance of £263,000) and this will then be recovered at a later date. Any fees received from developers towards "monitoring" should be appropriated to the Planning Reserve. The cost of the post for 3 years including on-costs is not likely to exceed £137,247 if evaluated on Grade C, however, is it anticipated that it is more likely to be Grade D (£123,717).

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S) CONSIDERED

- 6.1 The alternative option is to continue with the current level of resource. This would be acceptable if the sites were not coming forward ahead of the local plan process, but this is not the case. The influx of applications makes it essential that this work is dealt with in a strategic and consistent way. Without the additional support to the policy and development management officers dealing with these applications add a lot of pressure on officers in a short space of time to co-ordinate the requirements, particularly when dealing with all the rest of their workload. This potentially may not provide the best outcomes in the longer term and not therefore considered to be the best way forward. Also, developers are required to contribute towards a Monitoring Officer and will expect this work to be done, otherwise they may be able to challenge the request for the contribution.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 As Members will be aware, there have been a number of planning applications submitted for the development of proposed housing sites ahead of the adoption of the new Local Plan, primarily due to the position the authority is in regarding its five year housing supply. Whilst these sites have been identified through the Revised Development strategy which has recently been the subject of consultation, it is important that all the right level of infrastructure is provided when these applications are being considered. There has been a considerable amount of work on infrastructure requirements, but this is very resource intensive, and it is recognised that having an officer dedicated to this work will help to co-ordinate the work being done on each individual application. In addition, a monitoring fee is now being required as each application is submitted for these sites. This is to fund the post to provide the necessary monitoring of the contributions and ensuring that the contributions are directed towards the correct provision of infrastructure work when the development commences.
- 3.2 The application recently approved for the site for 220 dwellings (submitted by Gallaghers) was the first application to provide a monitoring fee which is to be set at 3% up to a maximum of £30K per site. It is expected that the total of all the sites will provide a post for a minimum of 3 years. However, the resource is needed now, which is ahead of the developments taking place and it is requested that the authority funds the post until the contributions are paid.