

1. SUMMARY

At its meeting on the 14th November 2012 Executive agreed to the appointment of a Sustainability Officer on a 12 month contract. The person appointed to this post has now found a new job and Executive is asked to approve the extension of this arrangement, to allow a 2 year contract for this post.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that, subject to agreement of the post at Employment Committee, the unspent balance on the initial budget (£18,000), be rolled forward into 2014-15 with the residual non-recurrent costs (£18,000 and £36,000) being built into the Medium Term Financial Strategy and included in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 budgets as part of the budget setting process, as explained in section 5 of this report.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The original reasons for appointing a Sustainability Officer were given in the report to Executive, on the 14th November 2012. These reasons remain relevant and the officer appointed had begun to make progress in bringing together a comprehensive corporate approach to Sustainability/Climate Change for the Council.
- 3.2 It is recognised that a weakness of 12 month job contracts is that those appointed often look for other jobs before the end of the contract period, to gain the assurance of longer term prospects. In this case the person appointed to the 12 month contract has found a new job with a longer term contract. It is also better suited his family situation.
- 3.3 In the current circumstances we cannot recommend a permanent appointment, however, a 2 year contract should ensure that a post holder will be in place for sufficient length of time to make significant progress in the development and implementation of the Council's sustainability/climate change strategy.

4. POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 The Council's Fit for the Future programme has 'Embedding Sustainability', including environmental issues, as a cross-cutting theme. Specific priorities include building sustainable homes and developing a low carbon based economy.
- 4.2 The Council's Sustainable Communities Strategy, which is currently being reviewed, has sustainability as a key objective for the Council.

5. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 A figure of £36,000, from the Contingency Budget, was agreed for this post over a 12 month period, to cover salary and on-costs. It is projected that when the existing Postholder leaves, £18,000 of this will have been spent, leaving a balance of £18,000.
- 5.2 The annual cost of the post is £36,000, and the total cost of the 2 year fixed term contract will be £72,000. After taking into account the residual balance as explained in paragraph 5.1, this will leave a shortfall of some £54,000.
- 5.3 It is recommended that the unspent balance on the initial budget (£18,000), be rolled forward into 2014-15 with the residual non-recurrent costs (£18,000 and £36,000) being built into the Medium Term Financial Strategy and included in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 budgets as part of the budget setting process.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 6.1 We could chose not to appoint to this post and to save the money. However, there would be little progress in coordinating the sustainability theme across the Council and in identifying opportunities for funding of carbon reduction and renewable energy schemes to the benefit of the Council and the wider community.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 The report to the 14th November 2012 Executive also referred to HS2 project work being included in this post, albeit a minor aspect of the role. Taking into account the current national status of the HS2 project, officers are considering how best to enable the Council's response. It is therefore proposed to disengage HS2 work from the Sustainability Officer post. A separate proposal will come forward as to how HS2 work will be resourced.