

RECORD OF DECISION MADE UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: *MANAGING DIRECTOR (HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)*

1. DECISION TAKEN

That £127k of the carried forward salary funding (as agreed by Cabinet at their meeting in March) be used as follows:

- HR Higher Level apprentice post £52k (over a period of 22 months)
- New fixed-term (12 months) Corporate Grants Application Officer post, estimated at up to £45k
- Part-time additional elections post up until the parliamentary election, up to £30k

2. DECISION TAKER

Anthony Roche, Managing Director

3. DATE DECISION TAKEN: 7th June 2023

4. REASON FOR DECISION

The Officer Leadership Team was consulted on ways that additional one-off salary funding could be used to support the delivery of Council projects or help create capacity for the ongoing delivery of Council services and projects. These options were determined to be the best ways to deliver those outcomes. More details provided in section 8.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Other capacity issues were considered, which included:

- Issues with recruiting and retaining staff
- Project support
- Property services- to get greater input in to Corporate projects
- Funding for an independent review of the Council's Officer Leadership structure, and ability to deliver future Council priorities

The reasons these were not taken forward is set out in section 8.

The amount allocated to date is less than the full amount available, so it may be that other ideas are taken forward at a later date.

6. CONSULTATION (INCLUDING THE EFFECT ON STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS AND THE PUBLIC)

The Cabinet decision at its meeting in March 2023 was that the use of this carry-forward funding would be delegated to the Managing Director in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader and the Executive Member for Finance and IT. They have therefore been consulted on (and agreed to) this decision.

7. FORWARD PLAN

- 7.1 This decision is not a key Executive decision and has therefore not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

8. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 As part of the Council Budget setting meeting (February 2023) the following resolution was passed: "Council notes the staff resourcing issues that the Council faces, particularly in relation to planning and the strategic implementation of the Local Plan, and notes that Cabinet and the Head of Paid Service will look at options to make use of available resources (such as carry-forward of unspent salary budgets) to support the delivery of key Council functions and priorities."
- 8.2 At the Cabinet meeting in March 2023, as part of the Quarter 3 Revenue budget monitoring report, £300k of staffing underspends were identified. Cabinet agreed that this should be carried forward and also "approve[d] the use of £140k of salary budget carry-forward for additional Service Director capacity for an 18- month period, and that the allocation of the remainder (if needed) will be delegated to the Managing Director (as Head of Paid Service), in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance and IT."
- 8.3 The remainder therefore totalled £160k, and the Council's Officer Leadership Team considered pressures that would affect the ability to deliver Council priorities and projects. The following paragraphs set out what was considered, and why they were prioritised.
- 8.4 HR Higher level apprentice (22-month contract, £52k). As this is a higher-level apprentice post, it would be open to someone who was part qualified. This would create capacity in the HR team to make significant progress on projects that aim to improve recruitment and retention. The plan is that this then makes posts across the Council easier to fill, and therefore help delivery of our services. As a proposal with wider and ongoing benefits, it was supported by Leadership Team.
- 8.5 Corporate Grants Application Officer (fixed-term for an initial period of one year, up to £45k dependent on assessed grade). This post would identify and help apply for grant funding (e.g., from Government, Public Health, Police and Crime Commissioner) to support the delivery of our services and priorities. Existing Officers do not have the capacity to apply for funding, as the process can be complex and/ or administratively intensive (or requiring research) in terms of time and expertise required. This post could become self-funding. Leadership Team noted that the focus would need to be on getting funding for existing projects and priorities or those where we are able to include the cost of external delivery, as there would be no benefit in applying for funding that we then did not have the capacity to deliver. The proposal was supported as it could have ongoing benefits and, if successful, could be self-funding as many grants schemes include an allowance for administration time that could be offset against the costs of the role.
- 8.6 Part-time elections support (estimated at up to £30k). This would be for a 3 day-per-week post from September 2023 up until the next General Election. This reflects the need to:
- Deliver the first District all-out election in May 2024, alongside the Police and Crime Commissioner election and any Town/ Parish elections
 - The potential for a General Election at the same time, or at a similar time (must be by January 2025)
 - Continuing/ new requirements under the Elections Act 2022 in respect to postal, proxy and overseas voters

- Carry out polling district, places and stations review in 2023 (post Local Government Boundary Commission and Parliamentary Boundary Reviews).
- Carry out Business Improvement District (BID) ballots

This was supported by Leadership Team as it is a significant challenge that we need to get right.

- 8.7 Funding for additional payments to recruit and retain staff in hard-to-fill roles. It is expected that where roles are hard-to-fill there will be spare salary budget (as will tend to be long gaps between someone leaving and a suitable replacement starting), and therefore this salary budget should be used to fund any additional recruitment or retention payments (in line with the HR policy).
- 8.8 Funding for agency staffing in hard-to-recruit areas. This reflects that agency staffing is more expensive than a permanent employee. However Leadership Team felt that this was only a short-term fix, and that (where agency cover is necessary) the additional cost should be reported as part of the budget monitoring process to ensure transparency.
- 8.9 Leadership Team agreed that large projects could benefit from additional project management support. However, for two of our current large procurement projects (waste and leisure) we have identified additional funding that helps provide that capacity. There will be peaks and troughs in relation to the need for project support. It was decided that rather than having a specific role, we needed to get better at determining the amount of project management needed for each project and include the costs of additional capacity where it is needed (as part of the budget process). That then helps to highlight the true costs of the projects that we undertake.
- 8.10 A few Service Areas identified that they would like Property Services to provide additional support, particularly with new projects. Two big problems are the complexity of some of our buildings (especially the Town Hall and Museum) and identifying contractors that are willing to take on work for us. The Property Services team are in the process of bedding-in a new compliance contract, which may help with access to more contractors. Overall it was determined that there was no easy (or cost efficient) way of getting more capacity in the team on a short-term basis. So it was decided that this was an area that we needed to monitor, but no action at the moment.
- 8.11 Part of the Cabinet decision (at the March meeting) was additional capacity at Service Director level for 18 months. This helps get through a peak in work related to strategic planning issues. However we need to consider the extent to which that work may be ongoing, any other emerging Council priorities, and how we deliver them. This would be best done from an independent, outside perspective. This idea was supported in principle by Leadership Team, but there is a need to develop a more detailed scope and seek quotes. This may therefore be taken forward at a later date.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. The principle of the budget carry-forward was agreed by Council at the budget meeting in February. As part of the Quarter 3 Revenue Budget monitoring report (Cabinet- March 2023), the following was resolved:

“That Cabinet approves the use of £140k of salary budget carry-forward for additional Service Director capacity for an 18- month period, and that the allocation of the remainder (if needed) will be delegated to the Managing Director (as Head of Paid Service), in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance and IT.”

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. The funding that was agreed to be carried forward by Cabinet came from staffing underspends in 2022/23 and totalled £300k. Following this decision, a total of £267k has been allocated, leaving £33k remaining. This will either be allocated at a later date, or reported as an underspend and be added to the General Fund balance.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Resourcing is a specific risk identified in the Council Delivery Plan. Capacity is also identified as a risk against a number of specific projects. This additional capacity aims to try and reduce those risks, and therefore the support the delivery of Council projects and priorities. However it must be noted that there are still significant resourcing risks, particularly in areas where there are hard-to-fill posts.
- 11.2 For the additional elections post, there is a clear link between the funding and creating additional capacity to deliver the intended project.
- 11.3 The HR higher-level apprentice post is intended to create capacity to deliver various projects. There is uncertainty as to the extent to which those projects will fix the recruitment and retention issues that we face, as levels of pay will still be a significant factor in determining where someone chooses to work.
- 11.4 It is not known whether the Grants Officer will be successful in bidding for additional funding. That risk has been acknowledged and is why this is a 12-month fixed-term post.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 12.2 There are no known equalities implications arising from this decision.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The Social Value Act and “go local” policy do not apply to this decision.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1. There are no known specific Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to this decision. The Grants Officer may be successful at bidding for funding that enables the delivery of projects related to the Council’s climate change strategy.

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 These are covered throughout this report. It is, however, also of note that there will generally be issues regarding holiday entitlement and carry forward post covid in addition to ongoing yearly entitlement (which such carry forward generally having to return to pre-covid levels) for 2024 onwards. This means that capacity to deliver service as well additional projects in many areas, is extremely limited.

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 16.1 None, other than the reports and resolutions mentioned above.

17. APPENDICES

17.1 None

NOTIFICATION DATE

Date sent to all Members, put on website and appears in MIS – Committee, Member & Scrutiny Services can confirm this with you,



Signature of Executive Member Consulted... ..

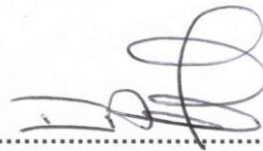
Date7th June 2023.....

Signature of Executive Member Consulted



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Date7th June 2023.....



Signature of Executive Member Consulted

Date7th June 2023.....



Signature of Decision Taker

Please Note: that unless urgency provisions apply EXECUTIVE decisions cannot be implemented until 5 clear working days have elapsed after the decision has been taken to allow for scrutiny call-in.

Call-in does not apply to NON-EXECUTIVE DECISIONS