

REPORT TO:	Finance and Management Committee	AGENDA ITEM:10
DATE OF MEETING:	16th October 2014	CATEGORY: DELEGATED/
REPORT FROM:	Director of Community and Planning	OPEN:
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Director of Community and Planning Stuart Batchelor Ext: 5820	DOC:
SUBJECT:	Graduate Planning Officer	REF: SB
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	All	TERMS OF REFERENCE: FM 05

1.0 Recommendations

1.1 To approve the recruitment of a Graduate Planning Officer for a period of 3 years.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To gain Members approval for the recruitment of a Graduate Planning Officer on a 3 year contract to provide capacity and for succession planning within the Planning Service.

3.0 Detail

3.1 As Members are aware the level of work has significantly increased in the Planning Services over the last year. This increased work has been in the form of size, type and number of planning applications received, preparation of the Local Plan Parts One and Two, Building Regulation applications and finally the need to support Planning Appeals. This level of activity is expected to remain constant in the coming months and in the area of Planning Appeals and preparation of Part 2 of the Local Plan and its examination will increase.

3.2 In terms of the capacity of the Planning Service to deal with this workload the staff have applied themselves to the task admirably but it is clear that further capacity is required to ensure that:

- 85% of Planning Applications are dealt with in the statutory time period
- Building Control market share is maintained in the high 80%
- Community Consultation for Part 2 of the Local Plan is fully supported
- Planning Appeals (all types) and the examination are fully prepared for to ensure the Council puts forward its best case.

3.3 It is also the case that one experienced Area Planning Officer has recently retired and it is expected that a further experienced Area Planning Officer will retire in the medium future. Consequently succession planning is an important consideration that has worked well for the Authority previously should be undertaken.

3.4 The proposal is to appoint a Graduate Planning Officer who will be able to provide support across the areas identified above. The post would be based on a 3 year contract and linked to professional development allowing for the achievement of membership of the Royal Town Planning Institute. Whilst it cannot be a certainty it is hoped that the Graduate post will be successful and be employed on a permanent basis when an Area Planning Officer retires/leaves.

4.0 Employment Implications

4.1 The proposed post will be subject to a 3 year contract with a career grade starting at Scale 6 £22,443 through to PO1 which starts at £28,127. Progression will be based upon the achievement of specific targets/qualifications and performance. The grades proposed will be assessed under the Council's agreed procedure. These grades will be subject to the Pay and Grading Review.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 It is proposed to fund the maximum £92,000 (including on costs) cost of the 3 year post through the excess income that will be received above the budget for Planning Income. There will not be an increased cost to the Councils budget for staffing related to this post..

5.2 As at 30th September, income received in 2014/15 totalled just under £600,000 against a total budget of £550,000 for the year. Currently, total income for the year is projected at £1m. Therefore, it is almost certain that at least £92,000 will be generated over and above the budget in 2014/15.

5.3 If the proposal is approved, these resources would be transferred to an earmarked reserve to fund the cost of the post over the 3-year period.

6.0 Corporate Implications

6.1 The Key Performance Indicator for processing planning applications is contained within the Corporate Priority for 'Sustainable Growth and Opportunity' and this post will provide capacity for meeting this performance measure.

7.0 Community Implications

7.1 The efficient and high performance of the Planning Service is very important to the community of South Derbyshire and this proposal helps to ensure that continued service.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 The proposal is an effective way to develop the future workforce within the Planning Service whilst providing much needed capacity at a time of significant workload increase.