

Report of	Record of	Date
Director (Planning and Development) (Introduced by Executive Member (Economic Development and Public Service Reform))	Executive Member Decision	04/11/2022

Appointment of Agency staff for support of the Local Plan

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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Purpose of the Report

- To gain agreement to the extension of agency support for the Central Lancashire Local Plan until the end of the calendar year (31.12.2022)

Recommendations

- To approve the extension of the contract for Edward Broadhead via Park Avenue until the end of December 2022 at a cost of £16k.

Reasons for recommendations

- Need for continued support to progress the document to Preferred Options.

Other options considered and rejected

- To look to backfill the vacant posts. This is still the plan, but the previous recruitments have been unsuccessful. The Councils are considering a new recruitment drive looking at replacing the 2 vacant officer posts with a single higher-level officer. However, a recruitment drive at this time will not fill the vacant posts this calendar year, therefore we need to continue existing support until that process can commence.

Corporate priorities

- The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	A strong local economy
Clean, safe and healthy communities	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area

Background to the report

6. Agency support for the local Plan has been in place since May 2021 to backfill the vacant posts on the team. Initially this was 2 officers, but was reduced to one from end of October 2021, with Edward Broadhead being retained.

Local Plan Resourcing

7. The central Local Plan team are without 2 vacant posts and have been since April 2021. Agency support was sought to backfill the posts which became vacant following a move of one officer into DM and one to an external council. A recruitment drive followed late 2021 but resulted in no suitable applicants.
8. At that time, it was agreed that Edward's contract should be continued to provide support to the team whilst the Councils consider their options.
9. Support has been provided via the Home Teams, but additional capacity in the Central Team is still to be backfilled. The Councils are now looking at the level of support required to ensure that the new staff brought in have the skills to assist on plan making, and have the necessary experience needed. As such the councils are considering a further recruitment looking at a single higher-level officer to replace the vacant planning officer posts, with each Council also continuing to provide support where possible.
10. However, the recruitment process will take time, and to ensure capacity on the team as we move towards preferred options, it is proposed to extend Edward's contract until the end of the calendar year for a period of 3 months for October, November and December at a cost of £16k.
11. Edward has worked on the plan for over 12 months now and is therefore well placed to continue to provide this support. He has also been leading on work required to review and update the strategic flood risk assessment and can continue to assist the councils to ensure the updated approach meets the national guidance changes introduced in August 2022.

Climate change and air quality

12. The work noted in this report has an overall positive impact on the Council's Carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council.
13. In particular the report impacts on the following activities:
 - a. **net carbon zero by 2030,**
 - b. **energy use / renewable energy sources**
 - c. **waste and the use of single use plastics,**
 - d. **sustainable forms of transport,**
 - e. **air quality,**
 - f. **flooding risks,**
 - g. **green areas and biodiversity.**
14. The local Plan will be subject to a full integrated appraisal which will assess its impacts in detail on the above. The plan will introduce policies which will assist the council in meeting its targets on carbon emissions and on addressing the issues of climate change.

Equality and diversity

15. This report itself will have no implications on equality and diversity. The support being procured is to assist on the Local Plan which will be accompanied by an equality impact assessment.

Risk

16. The key risk is not meeting the reporting deadline for Full Councils this year, as such the Councils are seeking to out as much support as necessary in place to ensure we meet this.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

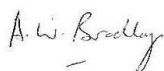
17. The additional cost of the extension of the post of £16k will be a pressure on the directorate budget for 2022/23 which will be managed as part of the Council's normal monthly budget monitoring process and reported through to Executive Cabinet each quarter.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

18. There are no legal concerns with this report. A waiver of Contract Procedure Rules has been obtained in accordance with our normal procedures.

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Following careful consideration and assessment of the contents of this report, I approve the recommendation(s) contained in Paragraph 2 of the report in accordance with my delegated power to make executive decisions.



Councillor Alistair Bradley
Executive Member for Economic Development and Public Service Reform Dated 04.11.22

This decision will come into force and may be implemented five working days after its publication date, subject to being called in in accordance with the Council's Constitution.