

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE & COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: 14 July 2015 & 28 July 2015

Report of: Corporate Manager - Legal Services & Assistant Director City Development

Title: Creation of new post.

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

This report seeks approval for the deletion of the vacant part time Conveyancer Post and the creation of a new full time Conveyancer/Planning Solicitor post.

2. Recommendations:

The Executive recommends to Council:

- (a) That post CS05105, Conveyancer, be deleted from the establishment and a new post of Conveyancer and Planning Solicitor to be created with immediate effect.
- (b) That Legal Services budget is increased by £28,900.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

- (a) To enable Legal Services to continue to provide an effective and efficient commercial conveyancing service and
- (b) To respond to the City Development's request for additional legal support on complex planning issues.

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources?

- (a) This proposed approach will enable the existing commercial conveyancing service to be maintained and will increase Legal Services' capacity to deal with City Development need for specialist in-house legal advice.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

The funding, if approved, will be taken from General Fund Balances in 2015-16. The costs will be included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and the impact on the Council's future financial position assessed.

6. What are the legal aspects?

None

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

The monitoring officer is co author of this report and believes the recommendation put forward is the most cost effective way to support the City Development team.

8. Report details:

- (a) The post of Conveyancer CS05105 has been vacant since May 2015 following retirement of the post holder. The post was evaluated as a grade 8 and is a part time permanent position (3 days a week) which is required to deal with the heavy commercial conveyancing work load.
- (b) The volume of legal work generated by City Development is increasing. There have been a number of Judicial Reviews relating to Hill Barton Consortium's consent, Titebarn Link Road and by the Council at Home Farm. Planning appeals at Home Farm, Moor Exchange and Exeter Road have also generated ongoing legal work.
- (c) It is anticipated that the creation of a full time conveyancing and planning solicitor post will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the City Development service. There is a significant synergy in the skills required for conveyancing and planning so it is logical to combine these posts.
- (e) The existing budget for the vacant Grade 8 Conveyancer post is £17,920 including "on costs". A Grade 12 Conveyancing and Planning Solicitor post would cost £46,820 per annum including on costs. This will involve a £28,900 increase to Legal Services budget.

9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

An efficient and effective commercial conveyance service helps support business, economic growth and contributes to a financially well run Council. Legal advice to the City Development service supports the growth agenda and protection of the environment.

10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

The proposal reduces risk posed to the Council by the current very limited Legal resource available to the City Development team.

11. What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, community safety and the environment?

None.

12. Are there any other options?

No other reasonable options. The establishment of a full time Planning Solicitor post would be unnecessary for the work volume. A lower grade post than Grade12 would not provide the necessary level of legal expertise.

Assistant Director City Development

Corporate Manager - Legal Services

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

Contact for enquires: Richard Short or Baan Al-Khafaji
Democratic Services (Committees)
Room 2.3
01392 265275