

REPORT TO Executive

Date of Meeting: 8 November 2016

Report of: Assistant Director Housing

Title: STAFFING WITHIN THE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function? Executive

1. What is the report about?

1.1 This report sets out a proposal to increase the staffing establishment within the Housing Development Team for an additional full time Housing Development Officer on a fixed term contract to 31 October 2017 to assist with the delivery of new affordable housing.

2. Recommendations:

2.1 That the Executive resolve to agree to a temporary increase in the establishment of the Housing Development Team of a Housing Development Officer Grade 8 until 31 October 2017.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

3.1 There has been an additional pull on staffing resources within the Housing Development team due to the secondment of the Housing Development Manager to a new role to consider the viability of setting up a housing development company. In addition to her current role she is also Client Lead for Exeter Active and the Bus Station. The Senior Housing Development Officer is currently acting up to the role of Housing Development Manager. Both secondments are to run until 31 March 2017. From April 2017 the Housing Development Manager will continue in her role as Client Lead for Exeter Active and Bus Station beyond and this creates an ongoing need for additional resources within the Housing Development Team. An additional officer will be required during this period to maintain the Council's work on maximising the delivery of new affordable housing, which continues to be an important element of our overall housing strategy.

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

- 4.1 The temporary post will be a Housing Development Officer on an established Grade 8.
- 4.2 The net overall employee costs for the Housing Development team will not be increased as a result of the temporary Grade 8 Housing Development Officer post. This is because the funding until 31 October 2017 for the post will be met from a combination of savings from carrying a Grade 5 vacancy plus the savings that will arise from not substantially backfilling the Senior Housing Development Officer during the 9 months they act up to the role of the Housing Development Manager.
- 4.3 There is approximately a £35,000 underspend within the Housing Development team staff budget for 2016/17 after factoring in this temporary post. A new temporary full time Grade 8 Housing Development Officer from 1 November 2016 to 31 March 2017 would be covered within the existing budget for 2016/17. The period from 1 April 2017

to 31 October 2017 would also remain within the budgets for the establishment on the basis that the Grade 5 post would remain vacant for the full financial year. The total cost of this post would be £31,397. The split would be:

- 2016/17 - £13,082
- 2017/18 - £18,315

4.3 There are no budget implications, as employee costs will remain within approved budgets in 2016/17 and the proposal does not represent a funding pressure for the 2017/18 budget setting process.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

5.1 On the basis that employee costs of the Housing Development Team in both 2016/17 and 2017/18 will remain within budget for the approved establishment, this raises no financial concerns.

6. What are the legal aspects?

6.1 Please see Monitoring Officer Comments below.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

7.1 This report raises no issues for the Monitoring officer.

8. Report details:

8.1 The report detail has been set out in paragraph 3 of this report.

8.2 The request is to temporarily increase the establishment of the Housing Development Team by one full time Grade 8 Housing Development Officer until 31 October 2017. The cost of this post would be covered within existing budgets as shown within paragraph 4.3 of this report. No additional resources are required. A team structure chart is included within this report to show the current and proposed resources within the team.

8.3 The role of the Housing Development Team is to maximise the delivery of affordable homes and initiatives around improving private sector housing stock across the city. Affordable housing is negotiated with developers on S106 sites to maximise value to the city, including a number of transfers to the Housing Revenue Account. The team is involved in the project management and delivery of new council homes ensuring they are energy efficient and healthy. Alongside the delivery of new affordable housing, the team are also involved in the improvement of standards and access to private sector housing. Part of this work is seeking reduce the number of long term empty properties in the City by establishing cross-departmental working initiatives and at the same time maximising New Homes Bonus income. More recently the team has been involved in additional private sector initiatives including setting up and leading the multi-agency Exeter Private Rental Forum.

8.4 This new post will focus on securing and delivering new affordable housing against the Council's planning policy of 35% on qualifying new development sites. This will include negotiating with developers to agree the affordable housing including dwelling number, size and tenure. The post holder will also be involved in reviewing, assessing and producing viability appraisals to secure affordable housing in line with the Council's planning policy. This post will help to ensure that negotiations on affordable

housing are concluded in a timely manner to help aid the delivery of new housing in the city.

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

9.1 This decision will specifically contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan to secure 600 new homes including affordable housing in the City.

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

10.1 Continuing without this resource would impact on agreeing the affordable housing provision on S106 sites. It would also have a negative impact on the timescale involved in reviewing and assessing viability appraisals. The ability to meet funding deadlines would be affected which could lead to fewer affordable homes being provided in the city and the ability meet the housing need.

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?

11.1 There will be no negative impact as the existing benefits of affordable housing delivery are unaffected by this proposal.

12. Are there any other options?

12.1 There is the option of not creating an additional post, but this is not supported because of the reasons set out elsewhere in this report.

Assistant Director Housing

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

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

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