

# NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL – TUESDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2016

Title of report	<b>SENIOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE</b>
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Purpose of report	To propose the Interim Head of Economic Development post should be made a permanent role in the Council's management structure.
Council priorities	<p>Value for Money</p> <p>Business and Jobs</p> <p>Homes and Communities</p> <p>Building confidence in Coalville</p>
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	Contained within existing budgets in 2016/17. The costs of a permanent post will be incorporated into future revenue budgets.
Link to relevant CAT	All
Risk Management	Creating this post will reduce the risk to the Council of not having strategic knowledge, leadership and specialised capacity within a significant service where expectations and requirements have been significantly increased including the wider growth agenda and the Coalville Project
Equalities Impact Screening	No direct implications
Human Rights	No direct implications
Transformational Government	This post will lead the transformation of the Council's approach and relationship with the business sector
Comments of Head of Paid Service	As author of the report, this report is satisfactory
Comments of Deputy Section 151 Officer	The report is satisfactory.

Comments of Deputy Monitoring Officer	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees	All members of the Corporate Management Team and the recognised Trade Unions have been consulted over the report.
Background papers	<a href="#">North West Leicestershire's Local Growth Plan</a>
Recommendations	<p><b>THAT COUNCIL:</b></p> <p><b>1) APPROVE THE CREATION OF A PERMANENT POST OF HEAD OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b></p> <p><b>2) AUTHORISE THE MONITORING OFFICER TO MAKE ANY CONSEQUENTIAL CHANGES REQUIRED TO THE CONSTITUTION ARISING OUT OF THIS REPORT</b></p>

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Corporate Leadership Team in July 2015, considered the current and future expectations for the resources to support the following new priorities and Government expectations. Firstly in May 2015 the Council determined that building confidence in Coalville was a new Council priority which required additional and experienced resources in regeneration and economic development.
- 1.2 Secondly, responding to the Government's developing priority of growth and support of the business sector. This included an expectation that local councils would provide support to their business community to thrive and be successful for example through offering grants, signposting to other support mechanisms and also seeking to attract match funding for projects. Also the Government set out its intent that the Councils future core funding, across the country, would be linked to and reliant on business rates. Locally, it is important that the right support was provided for businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to enable them to start up, flourish and potentially grow.
- 1.3 Thirdly, there was a need to look at the Council's investment offer when businesses were considering locating within the district including the creation of a one stop service for businesses which included contact with the senior officers to co-ordinate an offer of environmental health, planning, business support and links to external agencies such as Stephenson College for apprentices and other training companies.
- 1.4 Finally, the Head of Planning and Regeneration was preparing the local plan for consideration by Council and the volume/size of major planning applications meant that there was justification to create a new role that could be dedicated to this agenda.
- 1.5 Following consideration of these issues at the Councils Corporate Leadership Team and consultations with the political leadership and key shadow members, the Chief Executive decided to use her delegated powers to create an 18 month contract role as Interim Head of Economic Development from the appointment date of the post holder.

- 1.6 The current incumbent was appointed to the role in October 2015 (contract ceases in March 2017).
- 1.7 In summary the Interim post has been delivering the following since October 2015:

#### Businesses

- Providing strategic leadership in strengthening the Council's business engagement and support, ensuring it is efficient, effective and flexible to the changing needs of businesses.
- Developing a positive and respected working relationship with businesses of all sizes within the District so information and needs are captured at an early stage to enable the council to respond with support, if appropriate.
- Signposting businesses to the Council's full range of support services.

#### Strategic

- Providing leadership to the service in light of the changing national and local expectations for councils to support the business sector.
- Creating policies and plans to ensure delivery of key improvements within the district e.g. shop and front improvement schemes and the Enterprising NWL business grant scheme.
- Providing support to the strategic lead for the Coalville project (currently the Chief Executive) with regard to programme management, direct management of interim staff (i.e. the two community engagement posts) and direct leadership /delivery of key projects. Also supporting the stakeholders' groups, developing positive working relationships with key groups such as the Leicestershire and Leicester Enterprise Partnership (LLEP), Coalville Town Team, Coalville Heritage Society and key asset owners such as the precinct management company.
- Providing leadership and capacity in recognising the heritage within the District to attract new visitors, increase community awareness and also seek external investment funding with other local heritage partners.

#### Management of finances

- Successful and appropriate spending of the Council's allocated reserves for the Coalville project to the satisfaction of the Section 151 Officer and other allocated reserves e.g. shop front improvement scheme.
- Bidding for external funding from sources such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and LLEP funds.

## Service Improvements

- Restructuring the Business Focus Team, during 2016, to ensure there is clarity, direction and purpose.
- Developing a proposal to transfer the cultural services function (i.e. tourist information, promotion, community/civic events, heritage and arts development) into the scope of this service to enable greater focus on increasing footfall and spend within the district and our market towns.
- Strengthening the Council's co-ordinated offer to the business community through the leadership of the Business Corporate Action Team (CAT)

The following are specific outcomes which have been delivered:

- The Enterprising North West Leicestershire business grant scheme has awarded £402,162 grant since launch and attracted £2,854,724 worth of private sector investment to the district, creating 67 new jobs for local people. CLT and Cabinet are considering a possible extension of this scheme in October 2016.
- The Coalville shop front improvement scheme has so far approved grants of £128,723, funding 5 addresses to complete work, 3 addresses with work in progress and 5 addresses with grants approved and work still to start. The private sector contribution towards the projects underway is about £20,000 (many grants are at the 90% level). Projects in the pipeline bring the total allocated to £207,000 out of the £225,000 reserved by Cabinet. A further £300,000 was allocated to an extension of this scheme in July 2016.
- The Business Focus team has been reorganised with all new posts filled. This team is instrumental in delivering business and Coalville town centre projects within the Building confidence in Coalville programme.
- Significantly improved relationships with Coalville Town Team, Belvoir Centre, Coalville Heritage Society (supporting the Chief Executive) and many other local stakeholders.
- Unsuccessful bid to host Poppies, however generated strong goodwill and strengthened relationships between partners. Plan B in development.
- Effective programme management of the Coalville Project (supporting the Chief Executive) leading to transition into the second phase of delivery. Plus responsibility for delivery of many individual projects (community engagement contract, communications contract, frontage grants for specific properties, heritage projects)

## **2.0 RATIONALE TO CREATE A PERMANENT POST**

In assessing whether the role should be made permanent, consideration has been given to the changing national and local perspectives i.e.:

- The rapidly evolving and developing National policy changes regarding businesses, funding for growth and sources of future investment. This will require advance preparation of local initiatives/projects and also local interpretation on the implications and options available to the Council.
- Economic growth is a key policy area for the current Government. The Council's relationship with and support of the business sector is part of the overall programme of economic growth in the district as set out in the NWL Growth Plan.
- Policies and plans have been put into place in relation to the Council's ambition to develop Coalville and they will require continuing focus and drive to ensure effective delivery e.g. the shop front and frontages scheme.
- The need for specialised leadership, capacity and focus to such a key area for the Council i.e. growth and the business community (over 4,000 businesses) which ranges from large global companies e.g. East Midlands Airport and Amazon through to SMEs including community and social enterprises.
- The increasing role of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership in being a source of funding for initiatives within the District
- The developing programme of work (i.e. skills, planning and economic development) for the newly forming Leicester and Leicestershire Combined Authority
- The need to have evidenced based decision making and also to make applications for inward investment bids, requires the Council to develop local information and statistical intelligence which will demonstrate that funding will achieve a local improvement. The level of data and information for some larger bids can be quite extensive which will require specialist knowledge and awareness of opportunities.
- The need for the Planning service to continue to focus on strategic planning for the area, including the Local Plan and bringing forward major development opportunities in the district. In addition, there will be a need for the planning service to focus on speedy implementation of approved developments and the delivery of essential infrastructure so as to maximise the return both the to area and to the Council.

### **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The Head of Service salary scale is a range between £53,500 and £ 62,344 per annum. With the usual associated on-costs the annual cost to Council of making the post permanent would be a maximum of £84,756. The costs of a permanent post will be continued to be included in the 2017/18 Revenue Budgets, this will not lead to an increase in the base budget as the interim post had already been included in the 2016/17 budget.

- 3.2 For 2016/17 the post has been budgeted for (the current interim post was due to end in March 2017).
- 3.3 This post will play the lead role in attracting external funding into the Council and for the benefit of stakeholders within the District such as small/medium enterprises, local heritage groups and other community enterprises. Therefore the benefit of the post will be over the direct cost to the Council.
- 3.4 Within the next 12 months a review will be undertaken across the Council of other services which predominantly work with businesses and assess whether there is sense in placing these services within the remit of this new post. This may provide savings which could contribute to the overall cost of this post and this will be managed under the Head of Paid Service's delegated powers.
- 3.5 In addition, as referred to above CLT will also be considering in due course whether changes to the planning service are necessary to ensure the service is properly resourced to meet future challenges, particularly around implementation of development and delivery of infrastructure. Any changes that are necessary will be consulted on in the normal way and any additional financial implications will be picked up as part of the annual budget process.
- 3.6 Should this report be approved, consequential changes will be made to the Constitution, by the Monitoring Officer, to ensure that existing delegations reflect the creation of this post.

#### **4.0 CONSULTATIONS**

- 4.1 The proposals have been circulated to all of the Councils recognised Trade Unions, but no responses have been received. The proposals were also circulated to the members of Corporate Management Team, and a response supporting the proposals was received from the current Head of Planning and Regeneration.

#### **5.0 APPOINTMENT TO THE PERMANENT ROLE**

- 5.1 Permanent appointments to posts of this level (Chief Officer) are reserved for the Appointments Committee. If approved as a permanent post the post would be advertised internally to the Council in accordance with the Constitution and a meeting of the Committee would be convened accordingly. The indicative timescale would be as follows:
- Internal advertisement by 14<sup>th</sup> November
  - Closure of applications 28<sup>th</sup> November
  - Appointments panel to meet w/c 12<sup>th</sup> December