

Report of the Chief Executive

Chief Executive Urgency Powers

1. Purpose of Report

Cabinet is asked to note the exercise of the Chief Executive's urgency powers under chapter 2 Part 1 of the Council's procedure rules within the Constitution.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to NOTE the exercise of the Chief Executive's Urgency Powers, including the approval of a budget of £37,450 per annum to appoint an additional Housing Delivery Trainee post in Capital Works (starting at Grade 6) to be funded from the HRA Capital Programme.

3. Detail

The Council currently employs a single interim Housing Delivery Manager to manage a very substantial and growing affordable housing development pipeline, which includes houses and blocks of flats purchases from the private sector, purchase of former right to buy properties, new-build on our garage sites and purchase of significant affordable housing stock through s106 sites (crematorium land and field farm sites).

There is a very significant workload pressure on one interim Housing Delivery Manager, and the Council needs to ensure that it has the capacity to deliver the pipeline above or it will not meet its housing delivery objectives. Another significant work-stream is linked to the Council's future housing ambition which involves seeking further sites and affordable housing purchase opportunities along with external funding support. These would be difficult to continue to deliver without additional capacity.

The current interim Housing Delivery Manager is nearing retirement and at some point during 2025 will be considering working part-time, hence from a succession planning perspective it is important to recruit two housing delivery trainees at this time to assist with a well-planned transition and evolution towards permanent employees in a housing delivery team.

The current housing delivery approach is maturing and is extremely effective. The Council has become one of the most active housebuilding local authorities in the East Midlands and has gained a stronger visibility with Homes England from whom there is increasing success in attracting grants. There has been much learned from excellent interim employees who have passed on skills and knowledge.

Cabinet recently approved the appointment of just one housing delivery trainee – a career graded post; with the degree training paid by the apprenticeship levy. Interviews were held and two potential appointees have been identified. It is therefore proposed to appointment two trainees instead of one, (one will study quantity surveying and another construction in a built environment). The trainee roles are aligned to the Council's future workforce ambitions, around 'growing our own' and to reduce our reliance on agency/interim staff in skills which are in very high demand.

4. Key Decision

This report is not a key decision as defined under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

5. Updates from Scrutiny

Not Applicable.

6. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

On 9 January 2024, Cabinet approved the creation of a new Housing Delivery Trainee post in Capital Works (starting at Grade 6) at £37,450 per annum including oncosts, to be funded from the HRA Capital Programme.

Similarly, the budgeted salary of the additional Housing Delivery Trainee post at Grade 6 is £29,150 (estimated 2024/25 pay rates), which equates to £37,450 including oncosts. Full provision will need to be made in the establishment budget for 2024/25. Whilst this additional post will be funded through the Capital Programme as 'capital salaries', the associated increase in prudential borrowing costs for the Housing Capital Programme will ultimately be met by the HRA.

The starting salary for this role is Grade 6 but will progress upwards in grades over the course of three levels to demonstrate the professional development gained. The grading at each of the three levels, to be decided by the Job Evaluation Panel, would be based around the following:

- Level 1 is the grade the individual would start on (assumed at Grade 6).
- Level 2 would be achieved once the employee reaches Foundation Degree level and, as a result, the postholder would move up in grading associated with this achievement.
- Level 3 would be attainable when the degree has been completed and, again, the postholder would move up in grading accordingly (subject to Job Evaluation).

7. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

Chapter 2 Part 1 paragraph 24.1 of the Council Procedure Rules in the Council's Constitution states:

In consultation with the Leader of the Council and where possible the Leader of the opposition, the Chief Executive has the power to authorise the taking or carrying out of action, notwithstanding anything in the Council's Procedure Rules, Financial Regulations all other delegations, where they consider that circumstances exist that make it expedient or necessary for action to be taken prior to the time when such action could be approved through the normal Council procedures. A report on such action, and the circumstances justifying the exercise of the delegated powers, shall be made to the next meeting of the Council as appropriate

8. Human Resources Implications

The comments from the Human Resources Manager were as follows:

HR support the proposals and welcome further opportunities to utilise the Apprenticeship Levy.

9. Union Comments

The Union comments were as follows: UNISON agrees to this approach and the recruitment of two Housing Delivery Trainees. These roles will ensure that the Council has the necessary skills and knowledge to support the Housing Delivery Manager role and will be able to carry out this type of work without needing to use potentially expensive interim staff which will save money in the long-term.

10. Climate Change Implications

The climate change implications are contained within the report.

11. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

12. Equality Impact Assessment

Not Applicable.

13. Background Papers

Nil.