

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

17 April 2007

PROPOSED INCREASE TO ESTABLISHMENT – TECHNICAL ASSISTANT, STRATEGIC PLANNING DIVISION

REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Contact Officer: Steve Opacic Tel No: 01962 848101

RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB1328 – Winchester District Local Development Framework - Core Strategy- 11 Oct 2006
CAB1418 – Budget and Council Tax 2007/08 - 13 February 2007

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Strategic Planning Division has commenced work on the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF). This is a major long-term corporate project which will put in place a series of planning policy documents, starting with the LDF 'Core Strategy'. The project planning for this work has identified the need for additional resources and Cabinet has approved a priority growth bid for additional funding. This includes an element for the appointment of a part-time Technical Assistant. This report explains the need for this small increase to the establishment and seeks authority to create the post and make the necessary appointment.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee approves an increase in the Strategic Planning Division's staff establishment of 0.6FTE through the creation of a part-time Technical Officer post at Scale 3.

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STRATEGIC PLANNING DIVISIONREPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVEDETAIL:

- 1 The Council is required to produce a Local Development Framework which will, in due course, replace the Local Plan in setting out planning policies for the District. The Local Development Framework (LDF) will consist of a series of 'Local Development Documents' which will be produced and adopted over several years. The first of these documents is the LDF Core Strategy.
- 2 The Strategic Planning Division produced a project plan for this work in 2006 and this showed that additional resources would be needed to deliver this major project. Much of this concerned additional financial resources to fund specialist consultancy work, public examination of Local Development Documents by an independent Inspector, or public involvement and consultation. However, it was also clear that there would be additional technical work, particularly in terms of organising, running, recording and analysing the considerable public consultation and involvement that is a requirement of the process. This will also include maintaining up to date information on the web site and providing feedback on consultation events
- 3 It was therefore clear that, with several stages of consultation/involvement on a number of documents, there will be a continuous need for some high-level administrative/low level professional support for the Strategic Planning Division. Strategic Planning currently shares one administrative post (Scale 2) with the two other Divisions in the Chief Executive's Unit. There is already concern about the limited administrative support available and there is not, therefore, scope to use this post, even if it were at an appropriate level. The most junior professional posts are Planning Assistants (Scale 4), who are town planning professionals needed to assist with technical planning work. There is, therefore, currently no capacity to undertake the necessary work within the existing establishment.
- 4 Consideration has been given to whether the necessary support can be provided as part of the Chief Executive's Organisational Development proposals. Whilst this may result in some additional administrative support within a larger Policy Group, this will be needed for the additional functions to be brought into the Group (mainly Community Planning) and would be at a more basic administrative level than needed for the LDF work. For this reason, it is not feasible to use existing posts or to combine the proposed new part time post with existing part-posts.
- 5 It is an essential requirement that the relevant public consultation/involvement stages are undertaken properly to ensure that the various LDF documents are found to be 'sound' when tested by an independent Inspector. The need for this additional work was highlighted in a report to Cabinet in October 2006 (CAB1328 – Winchester District Local Development Framework – Core Strategy, see Appendix 4). At that time it was thought that

a full-time officer would be needed. Following additional analysis, a part-time (3 days per week) post is now proposed. A growth bid of £63,000 was approved by Cabinet in February 2007 (CAB1418 Budget and Council Tax 2007/08, see Appendix C), an element of which is intended to provide the budget for this post.

- 6 The cost of the post is likely to be £13,300 (costed at two scp below max Scale 3 x 0.6), including 24% on-costs. (An up lift of 3% has been applied to take account of any cost of living increase applied to salary scales from 1.4.07) This is well within the total growth bid approved by Cabinet. A Job Description and Person Specification have been produced in relation to the post (see Appendix 1). The post has also been reviewed by the Job Evaluation Panel, which has determined that it is a Scale 3 post. This is consistent with the expectation of the Head of Strategic Planning.
- 7 With work now underway on the LDF Core Strategy, the lack of the support that this post would offer is already being felt and it is important that this post is created and filled as soon as possible. With the funding now secured, authority is sought to increase the Strategic Planning Division's staff establishment by the equivalent of 0.6FTE so that the Division can proceed with appointment to the post.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

7.1 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

The Council's key priorities for 2006-09 include several aims which are of direct relevance to the LDF, in particular within the 'homes and jobs' and 'high quality environment' headings.

7.2 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The proposed new part-time post is included within a priority growth bid of £63,000 which was approved by Cabinet on 13th February 2007 (CAB1418 – Budget and Council Tax 2007/08). An element of this growth bid was intended to provide the budget for this post. The cost of the post is likely to be £13,300 (costed at two scp below max Scale 3 x 0.6), including 24% on-costs. An uplift of 3% has been applied to take account of any cost of living increase applied to salary scales from 1.4.07.

7.3 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

7.4 None.

7.5 APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 - Job Description and Person Specification.

JOB TITLE: Technical Assistant (Part Time, 3 days per week)

DEPARTMENT: Chief Executive's Unit

POST NUMBER:

GRADE: Scale 3

ACCOUNTABLE TO: Head of Strategic Planning

LOCATION: Guildhall, City Offices or other City Council offices as required

POST OBJECTIVE To provide technical and administrative assistance associated with preparing key policy documents, including the Winchester Local Development Framework and Community Strategy and related consultation/projects.

SPECIFIC TASKS:

1. Organise and maintain processes associated with public consultation that will support preparation of key policy documents, including the Winchester Local Development Framework (LDF) and Community Strategy, including:
 - setting up and maintaining IT databases to administer representations;
 - drafting letters and creating mailshots required to inform consultees of progress;
 - co-ordinating publicity and statutory advertisements;
 - co-ordinating arrangements and work associated with public exhibitions, workshops and consultation exercises and attendance as required.
2. Maintain accurate and up to date information within relevant IT systems including:
 - initial analysis and sorting of public representations and questionnaire responses;
 - inputting data relating to public comments, consultee responses, policy documents and progress, and events;
 - producing reports, mailing lists and data to analyse and utilise the information held to best effect.
3. Undertake research to assist on a range of policy matters as required and provide other support to associated work, as necessary.
4. Organise and take notes of meetings and distribute minutes of meetings and agendas as required.
5. Keep relevant parts of the web site up to date.
6. Deal with members of the public and other external organisations with queries relating areas covered by this post, including use of IT and GIS systems where necessary.
7. Create and maintain an accurate and up to date filing system.
8. Arrange for printing of documents and undertaking basic desk-top publishing work.

10. General Responsibilities

- 10.1 To ensure administrative and financial integrity in activities undertaken and to comply with any Divisional or corporate guidelines in this respect.
- 10.2 To undertake such other duties, as determined by the Head of Strategic Planning commensurate with the grade of the post, the abilities of the post-holder and the general post objective.

Signed

Dated

Version date March 2007

PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE **Technical Assistant**
POST NUMBER:

DEPARTMENT: **Chief Executive's Unit**
DATE: **Jan 2007**

Requirements		Weighting	Assessment Method
Skills	Use of CAPS LDF package to input and retrieve data in a useable form	2	A, I
	Use of Access database to create and manipulate information	2	A, I
	Use of GIS to extract information	2	A, I
Experience	Able to post information on a website	2	A, I
	Able to use basic desk top publishing software	2	A, I
	Able to analyse information and comments in a structured way	3	A, I
	Numerate and literate	3	A, I, Q
	Experience of using a range of IT packages, including databases	3	A, I
	Experience of organising events	3	
	Experience of filing and organising information	3	
	Experience of data inputting	3	
	Experience of dealing with public enquiries	2	
	Experience of drafting short and straight forward documents for a range of audiences	3	
	Experience of working with a range of different people throughout a complex organisation	3	
	Experience of organising meetings, including agenda preparation and taking notes	2	
	Experience with preparing documents for publication	2	
	Data handling, basic statistical analysis or related work	2	A, I
	Personal Qualities	Well organised, accurate, methodical.	3
Good interpersonal skills, telephone manner, flexible and aware of Divisional needs.		3	A, R
Conscientious		3	
Specific Job Requirements	Ability to use IT systems and interrogate data / internet	3	I, T
	Able to travel between Council office sites and to sites / venues	3	A, I
	Understanding of Community Planning and Local Development Framework systems	2	A, I
Qualifications			

<i>Weighting</i>	<i>3 – Essential for the successful performance of the job</i> <i>2 – Desirable but can be achieved through on the job training or experience</i> <i>1 – Useful but not essential for successful performance of the job</i>		
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<i>Assessment</i>					
<i>Application Form</i>	A	<i>Interview</i>	I	<i>Tests</i>	T
<i>References</i>	R	<i>Presentation</i>	P	<i>Evidence of Qualifications</i>	Q