

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – JOBS, ECONOMY AND
TRANSPORT**

10 September 2013

Report of the Acting Strategic Director – Environmental Services

FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT – TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

(1) **Purpose of the Report** To seek approval to offer a work placement to a student as part of a fixed two year training agreement, developed by the Environment Agency and University of West England (in conjunction with the Institute of Civil Engineers) and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), whilst studying for a foundation degree in River and Coastal Engineering.

(2) **Information and Analysis** The introduction of the Flood and Water Management Act, in April 2010, placed new responsibilities on the County Council with regard to Flood and Water Management. These new duties arose as a result of the Pitt Review into the flooding incidents of 2007 and 2009. To ensure that the engineering industry is able to meet the demands of this new legislation and its ongoing commencements, the Environment Agency provides a training scheme, offering students the opportunity to study for a foundation degree in River and Coastal Engineering whilst gaining valuable practical experience in the workplace

The County Council has accepted two students over the last three years which has proven to be a great success in helping the Council deliver its new responsibilities. Whilst one student gained employment through the Peak District National Park – Moors for the Future Project, the other has secured a position as a Technician within the Flood Risk Management Team and the Council is reaping the rewards of its investment.

The Environment Agency has again approached Derbyshire County Council and asked if it is possible to offer a further placement commencing in September 2013. A student has been identified, interviewed by a member of the Flood Risk Management Team, and would be an acceptable addition to the team.

The Training Course will take the form of a two year work placement including block release to attend lectures at University. The student will be expected to

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complete course-work and sit examinations over the two years of the training course. Students who successfully complete the course will be awarded a Foundation Degree in River and Coastal Engineering.

The Council will provide the Student with the opportunity to gain experience within a work place setting. There is no commitment to employ the trainee after the two year training period and this period is covered by a Training Agreement between the student, Environment Agency and the Council.

By offering this opportunity, the County Council will be providing a learning opportunity for the individual recruited under the scheme. Flood risk management is becoming an increasingly important issue with regard to environmental impact and concerns.

(3) **Financial Considerations** The graduate will receive an annual training allowance of £12,000 per annum. Under the terms of the training agreement, Derbyshire County Council will contribute 50% - £6,000 in 12 monthly instalments and DEFRA will pay the other 50% (administered by the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency will also administer the payment of the university fees, accommodation and certain other expenses.

Derbyshire County Council's contribution of £12,000 over the two years can be met from the Water Management Reserve.

(4) **Legal Considerations** The training agreement will be between the student and the County Council, and it is specified that it is not intended to become a contract of employment.

(5) **Human Resources Considerations** The student will be engaged under a two year training agreement, as developed by the Environment Agency, whilst following the training course. It is not proposed that the training agreement will create a contract of employment between the trainee and the County Council, and there is no obligation on the Council to offer the trainee a post on successful completion of the course.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, environmental, health, property and transport considerations.

(6) **Key Decision** No.

(7) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(8) **Background Papers** None. Officer contact details – Steve Mead, extension 38577.

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(9) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION** That the Cabinet Member approves the offer of a "placement" for an Environment Agency student under the terms of the training agreement for a two year period.

Mike Ashworth
Acting Strategic Director – Environmental Services