

Agenda Item No. 4(e)

**DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER - HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE**

**14 June 2018**

Report of the Strategic Director - Economy, Transport and Environment

**ACCEPTANCE OF GOVERNMENT PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT**

- (1) **Purpose of Report**      The purpose of this report is to:
- (i) Seek approval to accept a grant of £100,000 from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Planning Delivery Grant each year for the next two years and to create an earmarked reserve to hold the funds from the Grant until they are expended.
  - (ii) Seek approval to create two, grade 10 posts for a Landscape Architect and Urban Design Officer on a fixed-term basis for two years.

(2) **Information and Analysis**

**Background**

The County Council's Planning Service applied to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Planning Delivery Grant for monies to appoint a Landscape Architect and Urban Design Officer. The purpose of these posts is to provide advice as part of the development control function to all the local planning authorities in Derbyshire, with the exception of Derby City Council, which is a unitary authority, and the Peak District National Park Authority, which has differing development pressures. Notwithstanding this, if either authority requests assistance from the resource then, subject to workload, the request is likely to be looked at favourably.

All local planning authorities need to show due diligence in the determination of a planning application. If they are found to have failed to follow due process or incorrectly interpreted relevant legislation or guidance, then a planning decision could be challenged. At the same time, Derbyshire needs to ensure the best possible development outcomes are delivered to protect the distinct, diverse and attractive landscapes and settlements accommodate growth appropriately so that it continues to be a place where people and businesses want to live, visit and invest.

With increasing frequency, the Council's Conservation, Heritage and Design Service is being asked to assess the impact of complex and major development proposals on the diverse landscape of the County. As part of the Service's restructure and efficiency proposals, the landscape architecture function was reduced from two posts to one. This level of resource is just sufficient to deal with County Council applications as minerals and waste schemes tend to be more landscape intensive. Similarly, the County Council's Conservation, Heritage and Design Service is often asked to give urban design advice to other local planning authorities in Derbyshire, but does not have sufficient capacity to assist to full effect.

The successful grant application and subsequent appointment of one additional Landscape Architect and a further Urban Design Officer will provide much needed capacity to the development control function for the County and borough/district councils. It will assist in the smoother delivery of Derbyshire's growth agenda, particularly with regards to housing, and will help protect and reinforce Derbyshire's distinct, diverse and attractive landscapes and settlements, at least over the next two years.

**(3) Financial Considerations** The Planning Delivery Grant will provide £100,000 per year for two years, totalling £200,000. This will support two, grade 10 officers for 24 months on fixed term contracts and associated employment costs, such as travel and IT.

Due to the recruitment process and likely period of employment, it will be necessary to set up an earmarked reserve so that the grant funding can be held over a 24 month period that does not align with financial years. Therefore, the earmarked reserve will need to be in place until the financial year 2020-21.

**(4) Human Resources Considerations** The two, fixed-term post holders will be based in the County Council's Conservation, Heritage and Design Service. Job profiles are in place and have been evaluated at Grade 10. There is sufficient grant funding to cover the salary of the two posts and associated on-costs. Evaluation of the impact of the additional posts will be undertaken jointly with the borough/district councils, and will inform future discussions on the value of such a resource.

The provisions of the Council's Redundancy, Redeployment, Protection of Earnings and Buy Out of Hours Policy will be implemented at the end of the fixed-term contract and every effort will be made to redeploy the post holders when their fixed-term contracts end. If this is not possible, the post holders will be entitled to receive 12 weeks' notice of redundancy and will be entitled to a redundancy payment where they have two or more years' service.

(5) **Social Value Considerations** The appointments funded through this grant will support the Council's vision and priorities as set out in the Council Plan; specifically to help drive sustainable economic growth in a way that encourages appropriate, attractive investment from which local residents and employers can benefit.

### **Other Considerations**

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, 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** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Officer contact details – Adam Lathbury, extension 39791.

(9) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That the Cabinet Member approves:

- 9.1 The acceptance of a grant of £200,000 over two years from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's Planning Delivery Grant.
- 9.2 The creation of an earmarked reserve to hold the grant funding until it is expended.
- 9.3 The recruitment and selection for the two posts is undertaken in line with the Council's policies and procedures.

**Mike Ashworth**  
**Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment**