

Report of Development Manager Parks and Countryside

Report to Director of Environment and Housing

Date: 30/07/15

Subject: The creation of two posts to support with the delivery of Environmental Improvement Programme.

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. In June 2014, Executive Board agreed to allocate £3m of Housing Revenue Account funds to deliver Environmental Improvement projects to improve the quality of the Council's housing estates.
2. In total 82 schemes, with an estimated cost total of £3.5M, are to be delivered utilising the £3M funding plus a significant contribution from the capital programme of £0.5M with further funding identified to support with delivery costs.
3. This report highlights the business case supporting the recruitment of two additional posts, on a fixed term contract basis, within the Parks and Countryside service to enable the design and technical development of 39 projects included within the environmental improvement programme.

Recommendations

4. The Director of Environment and Housing is requested to approve the appointment of two additional members of staff within the Parks and Countryside service to support in the technical development and design of 39 projects, which have a financial value of £1.6m, under the environmental improvement programme.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report provides background on the environmental improvement programme and the range of projects proposed for construction under this scheme. The report highlights the role of the Parks and Countryside Service as the recognised internal service provider for the construction of the significant majority of the schemes and the potential for this role to be extended to include design and technical services on 39 of the schemes proposed for delivery. In order to ensure business continuity, it will be necessary to recruit two additional staff members to support in this process. Approval is being sought for the establishment of these posts and the recruitment of staff to these posts on a fixed term contract basis.

2 Background information

- 2.1 In June 2014, Executive Board agreed to allocate £3m of Housing Revenue Account funds to deliver Environmental Improvement projects to improve the quality of the Council's housing estates.
- 2.2 In total 82 schemes, with an estimated cost total of £3.5M, are to be delivered utilising the £3M funding plus a significant contribution from the capital programme of £0.5M with further funding to support with delivery costs.
- 2.3 Schemes to be developed under this funding programme can be broadly separated into 5 categories which are parking, waste, play, community safety and landscaping. For the significant majority of work proposed under this scheme, the Parks and Countryside service is ideally skilled to undertake construction. As the recognised internal service provider, the Parks and Countryside service is able to undertake this role without the need for procurement and in line with council's contract procedure rules.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Working in partnership with colleagues across Environments and Housing, the Parks and Countryside service have supported in the development of an overall programme for EIP and its constituent schemes. In order to make swift and continued progress in line with this programme, it necessary that design and technical development work is accelerated and that further capacity is identified for the delivery of this function. The expertise exists within the Parks and Countryside service to support in this process.
- 3.2 In total 39 schemes, with a value £1.6m, have been identified where the potential exists for the Parks and Countryside service to undertake a design and technical development role, in addition to carrying out construction. Where necessary, this would include leading on applications for planning consent and other approvals as necessary.
- 3.3 Whilst the expertise and skills set exists within the Parks and Countryside service to undertake this function, there is a deficit in capacity and additional resources would be needed to support in managing the additional work generated. Furthermore, the recruitment of additional staff would be necessary to ensure

business continuity in the delivery of other income generating works that existing technical staff are undertaking.

3.4 It is anticipated that the resource required in facilitating the technical development and design function for the £1.6m of schemes identified under the Environmental Improvement Programme would be £60k in 2015/16 and a further £62k in 2016/17.

3.5 This funding would be used to fund two posts where the principle function would be to develop projects under this programme. These posts would include the following and both would be on a fixed term contact basis determined by the EIP programme;

- SO1 Landscape Architect.
- SO1 Project Officer

3.5.1 It is proposed that funding for these posts would be made available from identified resource within the programme delivery fund (£250K) which was allocated to Property & Contracts project resources.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.6 Consultation and Engagement

4.6.1 The principle of developing schemes under the Environmental Improvement Programme has been subject to extensive discussion with executive and ward members. Projects that have been included as part of this programme emerged following extensive local discussions which will continue through the design process.

4.7 Council policies and City Priorities

4.7.1 The new posts introduced and proposed under this report will be recruited in line with Council policy and current legislation.

4.7.2 The delivery of projects that will be enabled by this recruitment will deliver against the Best Council Plan 2014-17 outcomes of:

- Improving the quality of life for our residents;
- Supporting Child Friendly Leeds through provision of effective play facilities;
- Achieving the savings and efficiencies required to continue to deliver frontline services by supporting the objective of dealing effectively with the city's waste.

4.8 Resources and value for money

4.8.1 The funding for these posts will be made available from the Environmental Improvement Programme development fund.

4.9 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.9.1 These proposals are in line with Council policy and current legislation.

4.10 Risk Management

4.10.1 No significant risks have been identified associated with this report.

5 Recommendations

6 The Director of Environment and Housing is requested to approve the appointment of two additional members of staff within the Parks and Countryside service to support in the technical development and design of 39 projects, which have a financial value of £1.6m, under the environmental improvement programme.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.