

**New posts for Strategy and Investment**Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021

Report of: Head of Service, Strategy and Investment

Report to: Director of Communities, Housing and Environment

Will the decision be open for call in? ☐ Yes ☒ NoDoes the report contain confidential or exempt information? ☐ Yes ☒ No**What is this report about?****Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions**

- The focus on the climate emergency is increasing rapidly given the requirement to act urgently to reduce emissions before we reach a point of no return in terms of climate change.
- Alongside this investment is required in low-cost energy for our residents to reduce fuel poverty.
- To achieve this, it is critical that we deliver a significant number of housing projects such as renewable energy installations and thermal improvement schemes
- As a result, the workload of the team is increasing at a rapid rate, meaning that people are being spread too thinly and that the council cannot take advantage of all opportunities or progress critical projects such as renewables quickly enough.
- The climate emergency is at the heart of this proposal – the increased resource will specifically focus on improving the council's delivery of its net zero ambition.

**Recommendations**

- a) The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment is asked to approve the creation of ten new 15 month Fixed Term contract posts for the Strategy and Investment team to support the delivery of projects that contribute to the council's equipment to tackle the climate emergency agenda.

## Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1.1 The Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 with a commitment to reach net zero by 2030. This is an ambitious target that requires progress to be made at a rapid pace.
- 1.2 The council has been very successful in securing external grant funding to enable delivery and has secured £20 million to support the retrofit of the city's housing stock. This required multiple bids to be submitted in very tight timescales.
- 1.3 In order to reach net zero, there are numerous work streams that need to be progressed in parallel:
- Housing retrofit
  - Renewables development
  - District heating

## What impact will this proposal have?

### Wards Affected:

Have ward members been consulted? ☐ Yes ☒ No

2.1 Currently the team has many competing project deadlines to meet in order to draw down government funding and alleviate funding pressure on the HRA. This means that there is limited resource available to progress schemes such as ground source heat pumps, air source heat pumps, district heating and external wall insulation.

2.2 To provide the team with more capacity, ten additional posts are required:

Proposed Post	No. req	Grade
Planned Works Team Leader	1	PO4
Senior Technical Officer	3	PO2
Quantity Surveyor	1	PO2
Senior HRA Energy Efficiency Officer	1	PO2
Technical Officer	1	SO2
Programme Co-Ordinator	2	SO2
Technical Support Officer	1	C1

2.3 The next 9 years are critical in terms of delivering the net zero ambition and without more capacity the team will not be able to plan how to optimise this period but instead just be focused on the immediate projects. The proposal will enable the necessary progress to be made in the areas outlined above and will be critical in supporting the achievement of our carbon reduction targets.

## What consultation and engagement has taken place?

3.1 Trade unions have been consulted on the proposal and the approach to recruitment will follow LCC recruitment and selection process. In all instances the talent pool will first be checked for any suitable colleagues. Clarification was provided in response to queries in the following two

areas:

- What will happen to staff at the end of the temporary period of appointment.
- Current vacancy position in the service as compared to the 24% vacancy position.

3.2 Finance have been consulted on the availability of funding to support the non-grant funded proportion of the additional staff costs.

### What are the resource implications?

4.1 This proposal is focused on creating ten new posts for the Strategy & Investment team at a total cost of £429,434 per annum, £536,793 for the proposed 15-month period. 50% of this cost will be covered by external funding secured to enable the delivery of projects that help address the climate emergency. The remaining 50% will be funded from staffing savings arising in 2021/22. The recommendation is for growth “more of the same” and to re-establish posts that are longstanding on the structure (Programme Co-Ordinator’s and a Senior HRA Energy Efficiency Officer), these are established and longstanding posts on the structure that were adversely impacted on by the recruitment freeze during the pandemic They were initially left vacant for an extended period of time and then deleted to support the council’s early leavers programme. The increase in workloads requires these posts to be re-instated. The required staffing cost is set out below:

Proposed post	Grade	No. req.	£/post	£/annum	£/contract duration (15 mths)	£/External Funding 50%	£/Pressure on HRA 50%
Planned Works Team Leader	PO4	1	53,255	53,255	66,569	33,284	33,284
Senior Technical Officer	PO2	3	45,278	135,834	169,793	84,896	84,896
Quantity Surveyor	PO2	1	45,278	45,278	56,598	28,299	28,299
Senior HRA Energy Efficiency Officer	PO2	1	45,278	45,278	56,598	28,299	28,299
Technical Officer	SO2	1	40,714	40,714	50,893	25,446	25,446
Programme Co-ordinator	SO2	2	40,714	81,428	101,785	50,893	50,893
Technical Support Officer	C1	1	27,647	27,647	34,559	17,279	17,279
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>429,434</b>	<b>536,793</b>	<b>268,396</b>	<b>268,396</b>

4.2 The service has been successful in securing external funding of £15.2m for three projects, of which £0.33m is for the salaries of staff in Strategy & Investment. Details are provided in the table below and it is proposed that the new posts will be appointed on fixed term contracts funded from these grants secured in 2021/22.

Project	Total Grant Funding (£)	Of which: S&I salaries funding (£)
District Heating Clusters	7,402,351	194,615
TIBB	5,068,759	45,907
Fitting the Future	2,701,332	92,121
<b>Total External Funding</b>	<b>15,172,442</b>	<b>332,643</b>
Funding requirement for posts		268,396
<b>Surplus / (Deficit)</b>		<b>64,247</b>

4.3 We will be submitting a bid for SHDF Wave 1 funding, a total of £160m available, and anticipate further government funding will be available following this. The team will continue to pursue these funding opportunities to enable the long-term future of these additional posts.

### **What are the legal implications?**

5 None

### **What are the key risks and how are they being managed?**

6.1 Due to the volume of work and pace required to meet the strict government funding criteria, the team is currently under significant pressure, with several team members experiencing high levels of stress. The team have been delivering key schemes with a 24% vacancy rate for a prolonged period, staff's wellbeing is being impacted and sickness levels have increased.

- External funding streams generally come with demanding timescales and without additional capacity there is a risk to the successful completion of schemes that support the council's delivery of its net zero ambition. There is a recruitment drive that commenced in January 2021. This remains aligned with current vacancy controls in that the posts prevent significant costs and/or generates significant income.

6.2 We have a blended approach of internal and external appointments with minimal agency support due to the lengthy recruitment process. The recruitment drive will continue to include the proposed additional posts, the current vacancy position is steadily reducing.

### **Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?**

☒ Inclusive Growth

☒ Health and Wellbeing

☒ Climate Emergency

- 6 The proposal directly supports all three of the pillars through stimulating investment, and reducing emissions and carbon relating to the Council's and the City's activities whilst reducing fuel poverty for our tenants.

### **Options, timescales and measuring success**

#### **a) What other options were considered?**

- 7 Supplementing the existing in-house team through securing grant funding represents an excellent option since it enables the additional resource to be integrated into the team but with a reduced budgetary impact for the Council.

#### **b) How will success be measured?**

- 8 Performance against carbon reduction targets.

#### **c) What is the timetable for implementation?**

- 9 Recruitment scheduled for November 2021.

## **Appendices**

- 10 Appendix 1 - S&I existing structure

11 Appendix 2 - S&I proposed structure

## **Background papers**

12 [D52105](#) – District Heating Clusters authority to spend

13 [D54464](#) – District Heating Clusters grant agreement

14 [D50193](#) – TIBB grant agreement

15 [D50203](#) – Fitting the Future grant agreement