

Special Budget Full Council
8 March 2022
Motions (in the order received)

Submitted by Cllr Jonathan Brown

Employment of Growth & Sustainability Officer

To employ a full time Growth & Sustainability Officer to promote economic growth in the District by supporting local businesses and the creation of local apprenticeships and jobs - all in the context of supporting the Climate Emergency Action Plan.

- 1. Full Time, Two Year role (reviewed in year 2 to determine whether or not to incorporate into the base budget)**
- 2. Working in the Economic Development Team (working closely with the Environment Team)**

Funding for this temporary position to be drawn from reserves:

- Up to a maximum of £60,000**

Commentary

Despite great strides taken to reduce the Council's carbon footprint we have seen little progress towards achieving the our Climate Action Plan's ambitious goals for lowering area-wide carbon emissions.

The direction of national policy on climate change is clear, much of the work that needs to be done is obvious and there is a national shortage of the skills that will be required to carry out home retrofits, vehicle adaptation, etc. There is no reason at all why local businesses should not be able with some help to take on and train those who will be needed to meet national policy goals. There will be further opportunities like the Green Homes Grants and Solar Together for CDC and local businesses to capitalise on – much more so if we are properly organised to make bulk applications, to pool knowledge and to share resources. Officers are already liaising with working groups as part of CDC's Climate Emergency Action Plan, but there is scope to do much more and much more quickly.

CDC has a number of business-promotion initiatives and our Business Contact Officers will give a high priority to 'green growth'. Nevertheless, there is an enormous amount of work to do and CDC can play a leading and coordinating role beyond simply example-setting. The creation of this post would enable us to pro-actively drive the transition of the local economy to a net zero carbon future, including through the delivery of the Climate Action Plan's area-wide targets by:

- Leveraging public spending to unlock government / charitable / private grants and inward investment (in a similar manner to CDC funding to CFT unlocks Arts Council funding which makes a major economic investment in the District).
- Complement the Covid Recovery by supporting businesses and inward investment but focussing upon environmental sustainability.
- Do the groundwork to enable us to propose schemes that might be eligible for Levelling Up / UK Shared Prosperity funding (when the Government announces how this will work).
- Applying for government grants (e.g. for home insulation, renewable energy, etc.) in a proactive, systematic way to get economies of scale; working with local contractors to

give them the confidence they need to invest in these activities e.g. taking on apprentices, buying tools / hiring people who will enable them to bring down the unit cost of doing this sort of work, which we know will be required for many years to come.

- Leading on communications with external partners to promote progress towards our Climate Action Plan targets. i.e. Not with the eco-activists but with the education, health, transport and business sectors, etc. To share best practice, pool resources, apply for grant funding, learn what gaps exist that CDC might be able to help fill, etc.

By the summer of 2022 further information should be available on the level and shape of local support that will be provided to businesses through WSCC's 'Helping SME business prepare for a low carbon economy' project that comes from the West Sussex Economic Recovery Fund 2021-2024. While it will not be possible to apply for funding to support this or any other officer post, having an officer in place who is dedicated to leading the economic changes required will put us in a good position to ensure that Chichester District benefits. While we could wait to see exactly what this project will propose, employing a dedicated officer will enable us to get ahead of the curve and begin working with businesses right away to help make wider changes and to seize grant opportunities that will become available.

While the role will initially be funded from reserves as a pilot, the intention is that some project work will be grant funded and there may be opportunities on a case by case basis to fund some of this admin. from those grants. Furthermore, as local businesses seek to meet their moral and increasingly legal climate change obligations, it is anticipated that CDC will be able to offer consultancy / management / assistance as a commercial service or at least on a 'cost recovery' basis.

Submitted by Cllr Adrian Moss

Employment of Landscaper Officer

To employ a full time Landscape Officer to provide specialist landscape design advice on development management matters and to monitor and manage the discharge of conditions on development sites.

- 1. Full Time Two Year role (reviewed in year 2 to determine whether or not to incorporate into the base budget)**
- 2. Working in the Planning Team**

Funding for this temporary position to be drawn from reserves:

- £56,000**

Commentary

Landscape is increasingly a vital part of the Council's role in protecting and enhancing natural habitats.

This role is to provide a positive support function to the existing Planning teams in Development Management, Enforcement and Planning Policy.

Indicative roles

- To provide specialist landscape design advice to both internal and external customers, relating to the council's statutory and non-statutory planning functions, including the preparation of Landscape Visual Impact Assessments (LVIAs).
- Guidance on master planning the landscape in and between new developments across the District, including but not limited to within and around the Strategic Wildlife Corridors.
- To evaluate design quality of landscape architectural features.
- Assist with Local Plan policies including on landscape impacts, biodiversity net gain, green infrastructure, etc.
- Support Planning officers in negotiation with Developers in the delivery of Council planning policy, including assisting with sustainable transport / active travel work within and between sites.
- Responsible for providing landscape advice on all development management matters, including pre-application enquiries, applications, discharge of conditions, appeals and the monitoring and enforcement of planning conditions.
- Provide landscape reports, statements and evidence and act as an expert witness on representing or advising the council at meetings, appeal hearings, court appearances and public enquiries.
- Undertaking site visits to formulate recommendations, liaising with the relevant planning officer and developers / site promoters.
- Ensuring planning decisions comply with statutory responsibilities related to the protection of landscapes and comply with
 - Local Plan Landscape and Character policy requirements.
 - the Council's Climate Change Action plan and environmental policies.

This role is budgeted at an indicative level of Chichester District Council Grade F post including salary, supplement, National Insurance, Pension and Car Allowance.

The role is expected to reduce the requirement for the use of external consultants employed by the Council at appeals and in the preparation of Planning policy and to mitigate

enforcement costs. As such, this post is expected to result in savings to the Planning Department's Services Budget (which covers professional and consultancy services), which should also be borne in mind when the post is reviewed.