

Chichester District Council

Full Council (Budget)

27 February 2024

Public Question and Answer Sheet

Question from Simon Oakley:

Over the last few years, this Council has created a number of posts, time limited and funded from reserves. Examples are:

Full Council 28 Jun 2020 - Climate Change Officer, 2 years, £150k;

Cabinet 7 Sep 2021 (following budget amend at Full Council 2 Mar 2021) - Home Energy Efficiency Officer, 2 years, up to £86k; and

Full Council 8 Mar 2022 - Growth and Sustainability Officer, 2 years, £120k and Landscape Officer, 2 years, £112k.

The last two annual Climate Emergency Action Plan reports have also referred to a Specialist Environment Officer.

Could you advise as to the following:

When were the above referenced posts filled;

In the case of the first two, were these posts continued (including under any title change) and if so how were their continuation funded;

In the case of the Mar 2022 created posts, are there plans to continue them and if so how will their continuation be funded; and

In the case of the Specialist Environment Officer Post, when was it created and how is it funded?

Response from Cllr Brown:

Thank you Mr Oakley for your question.

As you know the council, like all other councils from time to time will employ staff on temporary contracts. These may be extended or made permanent depending on how successful they are, and what the council's priorities dictate. By way of example the budget being presented later today incorporates a further extension to the Supporting You team. This has been extended beyond the initial 2 year period as the cost of living crisis continues to impact residents.

However, turning to your specific questions:

The Climate Change Officer, which was actually called the Climate Emergency Officer, was agreed to be funded for an initial 3 years at the full Council meeting on 5

March 2019, rather than 28 June 2020. This post was reviewed, and became a permanently funded post, re-titled Carbon Reduction Project Manager. This decision followed the council's formal process at that time for reviewing discretionary spending, including bids for growth. That process, referred to as the Future Services Framework was carried out by all political groups. The outcome of which was reported to the 24 January 2022 Cabinet and finally approved by Council on 25 January 2022.

The Home Energy Efficiency Officer was also assessed by the Future Services Framework, but was not deemed by that council to be a priority, and so was not progressed further. Again, this was reported to the 24 January 2022 Cabinet meeting.

The Growth and Sustainability Officer was filled in July 2022 on a temporary 2 year contract. Funding for this post has now been incorporated into the 2024-25 budget before Council today. This decision has followed the work of the Budget Review Group. A cross party group set up specifically to oversee the development of the Council's budgets. Again, as with previous reviews all political groups were involved in reaching this conclusion, the outcome of which was reported to the Cabinet meeting last month.

The Landscape Officer was filled in February 2023, for an initial 2 years fixed term contract. The future of this post will be considered during this year as part of a wider review of the Planning service as recommended by the Budget Review Group. The Specialist Environment Officer post was also agreed as part of the recommendations of the 24 January 2022 Cabinet report and approved by Council on 25 January 2022. This was an addition to the council's base budget and so has always been funded permanently.

Finally, I would like to point out that the 24 January 2022 Cabinet meeting was a special meeting of the Cabinet to consider the Future Services Framework which was a Part 2 meeting. The detail of the report was therefore not publicly available. However, Mr Oakley, as you were a member at that time you would have received this report. I appreciate its useful to bring all the information together.