

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:** C-054-2010/11  
**Date of meeting:** 31 January 2011



**Portfolio:** Safer & Greener.  
**Subject:** Planning & Economic Development - District Development Fund Carry Forward to 2011/12.  
**Responsible Officer:** Kassandra Polyzoides (01992 564119).  
**Democratic Services Officer:** Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- (1) That the carry forward of District Development Funding in the sum of £10,000 to 2011/12 for the continuation of the Technical Support Officer (Conservation) post be approved; and
- (2) That further District Development Funding previously approved in the sum of £10,390 be offered as a revenue saving for 2011/12.

### **Executive Summary:**

It was requested that all District Development Fund (DDF) amounts for which a decision had been made prior to 2008/9 where submitted for consideration by Members. The sum of £10,000 requested for carry over to 2011/12 is to cover staff salary costs, specifically in the Conservation team to extend the Technical Support Officer post to Nov/Dec 2011.

The current Conservation Officer will be retiring in February 2011. The £10,000 requested to be carried over to 2011/12 for the Technical Support Officer post is in addition to approximately £7,000 DDF already allocated to this post for 11/12, which would allow for key work to continue until Nov/Dec 2011.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

To allow for the retention of the Technical Support Officer post (Conservation) until Nov/Dec 2011 to enable key statutory work to be continued.

### **Other Options for Action:**

- To find alternative sources of funding. The alternative for the amounts suggested is CSB funding, a request that would put additional demand on existing budgets. External sources of funding are unlikely to be available for the identified needs in the shorter term.
- To not further extend the Technical Support Officer post when the existing DDF allocation runs out

**Report:**

1. As of mid December 2010 there has been a recruitment freeze on external recruitment to all vacant posts with the exception for posts that:

- (a) have implications for health and safety;
- (b) demonstrate that they generate surplus income; or
- (c) are externally funded.

**£10,000 for Technical Support Officer (Conservation)**

2. A technical support officer has been in post since July 2010 at Grade 5. The work that the postholder has assisted on includes developing and delivering Conservation Area, Management Plans and Character Appraisals, with great progress having been made. Namely, the three Loughton Character Appraisals and Management Plans, York Hill, Staples Road and Baldwin Hill have all been progressed and are being completed. The Copped Hall documents are also being progressed satisfactorily. In addition to these tasks the Technical Support Officer has taken on customer support functions, answering general enquiries and providing advice to the public. Furthermore the role also assists in statutory work that the service delivers, such as Development Control application site visits which are considerably detailed and time consuming. This has had a positive impact on the Conservation Officers workload allowing for more efficient, working and task delivery.

3. The current Conservation Officer will be retiring in February 2011. The £10,000 requested to be carried over to 2011/12 for the technical support post is in addition to approximately £7,000 DDF being carried over from 10/11 which had been allocated for this post. The total sum, will allow the post holder to remain in post until November/December 2011 and continue key work in the Conservation team, in what is anticipated to be a challenging period for service and project delivery.

4. A further DDF item regarding the funding of the Town Centre Officer post has been submitted as part of the preceding report: Town Centres Officer Post/Future management of Town Centres.

**Resource Implications:**

Staff retention during a key period enabling the delivery of statutory work, especially in relation to Conservation Area Planning application advice to Development Control and customer pre application advice.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

N/A.

**Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

N/A.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

Within Planning & Economic Development and Finance Officers.

**Background Papers:**

N/A.

**Impact Assessments:**

Risk Management

Assessment of the impact on service delivery of the current Conservation Officer retiring. It was concluded that it was important to have an interim arrangement to continue with the delivery of key tasks.

Equality and Diversity:

It is not considered that there are any specific equalities issues.

*Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications?* No

*Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken?* No

*What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?*  
None.

*How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?*  
N/A.