

Agenda Item No. 4(d)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE**

10 September 2020

Report of the Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

**REQUEST FOR CREATION OF TEMPORARY POST OF ENGINEER IN
THE FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT TEAM**

(1) **Purpose of Report** To seek approval to utilise grant funding which is currently under the Sustainable Drainage Budget, transfer this funding into an existing reserve fund, and to use this fund to pay for an additional temporary post of Engineer within the Flood Risk Management Team.

(2) **Information and Analysis** In 2013-15, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) awarded £169,904.90 to the Council in respect of its lead Local Flood Authority function, particularly to assist it in building capacity for taking on the role of statutory consultee for the planning application process, including advice on Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). To date, no expenditure of these grant funds has been necessary.

The funding has been held as a contingency in the case of the Council being subject to legal challenge through the Local Lead Flood Authority role as statutory consultee for planning applications. However, to date, no legal challenge has been made and, following a review of this budget, including consultation with the Director of Legal Services and a risk assessment, it has been determined that the risk is sufficiently low to warrant this funding being utilised for another purpose.

The storms in November 2019 and storms Ciara and Dennis in February 2020, which resulted in extensive flooding across the County, has significantly increased the Flood Risk Teams workload. Government has recently announced investment of £5.2 billion to create around 2,000 new flood and coastal defences to better protect 336,000 properties in England by 2027. The Flood Risk Management Team has put forward a number of additional schemes to be delivered by this date, and in order to ensure success in both obtaining Government grant funding and delivery of these schemes, additional resource within the team is required.

It is proposed that £109,904.90 of the grant funding, which is currently held in the Sustainable Drainage revenue budget, is moved into the existing Flood Management reserve. The funding will be drawn down, to fund an additional temporary engineer within the Flood Risk Team.

The remaining £60,000 from the grant funding will remain in the Sustainable Drainage revenue budget and has already been utilised to support Agency staff within the Flood Risk Team. This additional resource has already been approved to continue until April 2021.

(3) **Financial Considerations** It is proposed to move £109,904.90 of the grant funding, which is currently held in the Flood Risk revenue budget to an existing Flood Management reserve. This will be drawn down to finance the additional temporary post required.

(4) **Legal Considerations** The Director of Legal Services has been consulted in regard to the risk of not having this budget as a contingency to use in potential legal challenges to the Council, from its role as statutory planning consultee. The Director of Legal Services has determined any potential challenges are low risk and is therefore supportive of the proposals detailed.

(5) **Environmental Considerations** The storms in November 2019 and storms Ciara and Dennis in February 2020, which resulted in extensive flooding across the County, has underlined the continued need for the County Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority, to continue its work in delivering flood mitigation solutions for the residents and business of Derbyshire. Given the recent history of flooding across the country, it is clear that these type of flood events are increasing, and given the latest climate change projections, this will continue for many years to come. Additional resources are therefore required within the Flood Risk Management Team to enable the flood risk in Derbyshire to be managed effectively.

(6) **Human Resources Considerations** It is intended to use the funding allocated to this existing reserve, to fund an additional temporary Project Engineer within the Flood Risk Team. There is already 1 Project Engineer within the Flood Risk Team, and this role has been evaluated at Grade 11, which is salary scale points 24 to 27 (£32,032 to £35,187). Given that the post will be funded entirely from the existing reserve (£109,904.90), there is only enough funding to cover the costs for a fixed term of two years. Taking into account on-costs, this would amount to £95,000 over the two year period.

The post would be recruited to in accordance with the Council's Recruitment and Selection procedure.

Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, health, property, social value and transport considerations.

(6) **Key Decision** No.

(7) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(8) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Officer contact details – Richard Ward, extension 35487.

(9) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION** That the Cabinet Member approves the transfer of funding from the Sustainable Drainage Budget to an existing Flood Management reserve, as detailed in the report, to fund an additional temporary post of Engineer within the Flood Risk Management Team at grade 11 for a period of two years.

Tim Gregory
Director – Economy, Transport and Environment