

BRECKLAND COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE MARK STOKES TO:

(Author: Lindy Warmer Senior Economic Development Officer.)

GENERAL PURPOSES 21ST JULY 2010

MOVING THETFORD FORWARD DELIVERY TEAM STRUCTURE

1. **Purpose of Report:** This report requests approval for the recruitment of a part time Technical Administrative Officer on a fixed term basis to work with the Growth Programme Manager 3 days per week to facilitate the successful delivery of Thetford Growth Point.

2. **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Council/Committee:

2.1 Agrees to the appointment of an 18 month fixed term part time (3 days per week) Officer as part of the core team to provide technical support for the MTF project and act as the dedicated secretariat for the MTF Board and project delivery groups.

Note: In preparing this report, due regard has been had to equality of opportunity, human rights, prevention of crime and disorder, environmental and risk management considerations as appropriate. Relevant officers have been consulted in relation to any legal, financial or human resources implications and comments received are reflected in the report.

3. **Information, Issues and Options**

3.1 **Background**

3.1.1 In October 2006 Thetford was awarded Growth Point (GP) status. The period to 2021 and beyond will see Thetford and its hinterland become one of the fastest growing areas in the East of England outside of the areas designated in the Sustainable Communities Plan. Thetford Growth Point Status stems from the need to deliver affordable, sustainable housing, to drive the economy forward, to improve the transport framework and to take advantage of natural assets within Breckland. This project needs administrative support to facilitate it's successful delivery and this was initially approved by General Purposes and endorsed by Cabinet (12/02/08) and Full Council (21/02/08). The post which sat with the Planning Directorate subsequently transferred to Capita Symonds following privatisation of the planning service hence the need to revisit Committee.

3.1.2 The current Economic Development MTF team consists of a Growth Programme Manager, a temporary part time Admin and Support Officer, employed on a three month renewable contract basis. These posts are managed and supported by the Head of Economic Development on behalf of the Deputy Chief Executive. Financial support comes from the MTF Funding & Claims Officer within the Finance Team and the Senior Accountant who also provides overall financial assurance for the MTF Programme.

3.1.3 Planning services are currently provided through the Capita Symonds contract via the MTF Planning Policy Officer supported by Development Services Manager and Senior Planning Manager.

- 3.1.4 The Growth Point team handle the day to day programme and project management on behalf of the GP Board and all stakeholders. It is critical that this team has a strong and consistent core of personnel with the appropriate skills and competences and that all the posts are permanent. This will provide a strong platform for pragmatic delivery and ensure quality and continuity is maintained for the full life of the GP programme.
- 3.1.5 Although the above MTF team and support structure functions reasonably well as a result of the commitment of the officers involved it needs to be made more stable through the provision of the part time Technical Administrative Officer core post to support the GP Manager in the day to day delivery of the programme and to provide secretariat services to the Board.

3.2 Issues

- 3.2.1 A report was presented to the Moving Thetford Forward Board at their meeting of the 24th March to recruit and fund the post. The Administrator post was agreed on a suggested grade 10 and the post is fully funded from Moving Thetford Forward grant funding until 30/09/2011. The post has subsequently been to Job Evaluation panel and graded as a 10.
- 3.2.2 By employing someone directly, savings will be made. During the financial year 2009/10 by utilising the services of a temporary member of staff through Staff Call the Council incurred a far greater annual cost of £21,699 for 3 days per week.

3.3 Options

- 3.3.1 Option 1. Members agree to the recruitment of a fixed term part time Technical Administration Officer on Grade 10 to work with the GP Manager and Board to facilitate the successful delivery of the MTF programme.
- 3.3.2 Option 2. Members decline to agree to the recruitment of the post and we continue with the temporary part time Admin and Support Officer, employed via Staff Call on a three month renewable contract basis.

3.4 Reasons for Recommendation(s)

- 3.4.1 Option 1. I recommend that Members agree to this option as it will help to recruit a quality person and give the team the core stability it requires to facilitate the successful delivery of the project. A member of staff having a fixed term of employment to enjoy will be in a better position to engage fully with the project leading to a far more enthusiastic and vibrant member of staff to support and help drive the programme forward.
- Option 2. Albeit this has worked to date it does not provide consistency within the team as the Agency staff cannot possibly become as committed, involved and motivated as would a more permanent member of staff.

4. Risk and Financial Implications

4.1 Risk

- 4.1.1 There are a number of risks around the recruitment of new post applicants with the right skills and talents to successfully deliver the MTF programme. The Growth Programme delivery Manager post which had been vacated by the original incumbent in January 2010 has recently been filled by an extremely knowledgeable Officer. However, wider risks to the successful delivery and management of the MTF programme could occur if the appropriate administrative structure is not put in place.

4.2 Financial

4.2.1 Due to the make up of funding awarded from the Communities and Local Government (CLG) Growth Programme, the budget has from the beginning of the programme been relatively poor in terms of revenue provision. This has created competition between the need for revenue project funding and support for delivery team salaries. Other than additional revenue commitment from the Council currently there have been poor responses from public and private sector MTF partners in providing additional revenue or human resources. With current revenue resources diminishing and uncertainty about future CLG and Partner funding there is now a considerable risk in being able to support core team salaries far beyond March 2011.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications

6. Other Implications

- a) Equalities: None
- b) Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998: None
- c) Section 40, Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006: None
- d) Human Resources: None
- e) Human Rights: None
- f) Other: [e.g. Children's Act 2004] None

7. Alignment to Council Priorities

7.1 The matter raised in this report falls under:

- A safe and healthy environment
- A well planned place to live which encourages vibrant communities
- A prosperous place to live and work

8. Ward/Community Affected

8.1 Thetford and hinterland

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Appendices attached to this report:

Job Profile and Economic Development Structure Chart.

Proforma B