

## **BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

### **Report of the Executive Member for the Economic and Housing Portfolio to the**

**CABINET: 12 May 2009**

**(Author: Anita Brennan – Strategic Housing Manager)**

#### **Permission to Appoint to Externally Funded Post of Housing Access Improvement and Development Officer**

##### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To seek permission to appoint to the externally funded post of 'Housing Access Improvement and Development Officer'.

##### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 It is recommended that external funding from Norfolk County Council Adult Social Services and Norfolk Supporting People be used to temporarily appoint a 'Housing Access Improvement and Development Officer' for a 2 year fixed term to deliver the outcomes identified in the 'Housing Strategy for people with a physical and sensory impairment 2008'.

**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 Supporting People is a national programme to fund and ensure cost effective and reliable housing support services. In Norfolk, the Supporting People programme is run by a partnership of organisations which includes all of the local and district authorities, health, probation and voluntary and statutory housing support providers. The main objective is to sustain, develop and improve good quality housing support services which help people who are vulnerable or who have a disability to live as independently as possible in their own communities.
- 3.1.2 Under the Norfolk Supporting People Framework, each Local Authority has taken the lead for developing services for a particular group of clients/customers. Breckland Council has taken the lead for the County on addressing the housing and support needs of people with a physical or sensory impairment. As part of this role, Breckland lead the development in 2008 of a strategy to address the housing needs of this group. Breckland Council formally adopted the strategy in September 2008.
- 3.1.3 Following completion of the Strategy, funding has been made available by Norfolk Supporting People and Norfolk Adult Social Services to recruit to a post to ensure effective implementation of the resultant recommendations. A dedicated officer will focus action on delivering the priorities agreed in the 2008 strategy and will report to a multi-agency steering group made up of statutory, voluntary and service user organisations.

## Issues

- 3.2.1 Norfolk Social Services and Supporting People have committed £18k and £24k per annum respectively for a two year period. Please see attached Proforma B. Breckland Council is not required to make a financial contribution to the post moreover an 'in kind' contribution in respect of the management of the individual. All on costs to Breckland associated with hosting the post (such as car allowances, redundancy etc) will be covered by the external funding provided.
- 3.2.2 A number of similar short term single client group focused posts covering Norfolk have already been created, namely for the offender and learning difficulty client groups. Tangible improvements in the range and nature of services provided to service users in these client groups can be evidenced by creation of these targeted posts. The profile of the individual agenda has also been raised and the potential to attract alternative external funding increased.
- 3.2.3 The Job Description and Person Specification and proposed salary scale are concomitant with existing posts across Norfolk; the salary grade reflects the calibre of the individual we are seeking to recruit and the responsibilities of the post holder.
- 3.2.4 Although the post is hosted and thus managed by Breckland Council, the post holder will in effect spend approximately 30% of their time located with the Norfolk Supporting People Team based at Vantage House in Norwich. This split location is to ensure the post works in partnership across the housing, health and social care agenda's by maintaining key Norfolk wide relationships and avoiding a 'silo mentality'.
- 3.2.5 The appointment is for 2 years only as the funding is time limited and because it is anticipated that at the end of this period the post holder will have delivered against the priorities of the strategy, including the setting up of a multi agency steering group to provide the ongoing impetus and focus for improvement.

## 3.3 Options

- 3.3.1 The options are;
- To approve the creation of a temporary post
- Not to approve the creation of a temporary post

## 3.4 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.4.1 General Purposes Committee at their meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> April resolved that subject to the funding being approved, a temporary Housing Access Improvement and Development Officer, for a fixed term period of two years be appointed.
- 3.4.2 The risks of not recruiting are as follows:
- Failure to deliver the recommendations of the Physical and Sensory Disability Strategy
  - Reputational damage with other key Norfolk partners in the statutory and voluntary and service user sector
  - Failure to deliver key outcomes for vulnerable client group
  - Failure to capitalise on funding and accommodation opportunities for this client group, impacting on delivery against LAA indicators 151 and 152.
  - Missed opportunity to demonstrate our contribution to the wider Comprehensive Community Assessment agenda.

#### **4. Risk and Financial Implications**

##### 4.1 Risk

4.1.1 I have completed the Risk Management questionnaire and can confirm that risk has been given careful consideration, and that there are no significant risks identified associated with the information in this report.

##### 4.2 Financial

4.2.1 There are no financial implications to Breckland from this report. The recruitment to this post is restricted to available external budget resources provided. Please see Proforma B

#### **5. Legal Implications**

- a) Equalities: Has an Equalities Impact Assessment been conducted? Not in relation to this specific matter. The consideration of such matters is implicit however within the process of working to reduce housing inequalities for specific client groups such as the physically and sensory impaired.
- b) Section 17, Crime & Disorder Act 1998:
- c) Section 40, Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006: None
- d) Human Resources: None
- e) Human Rights: Whilst there are no human rights implications to this report, the Council does have legal obligations to ensure that in seeking to meet the housing needs of all its residents, including those with a physical or sensory impairment, that it has due regard to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and reflect the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- f) Other: [e.g. Children's Act 2004] None in respect of this particular report, however the Strategy considers the housing needs of both young people and their parents in the context of the Disability Discrimination Act and the Children's Act.

#### **7. Alignment to Council Priorities**

7.1 The matter raised in this report falls within the following Council priorities:

- Building Safer and Stronger communities
- Prosperous Communities
- Your Council, Your services

#### **8. Ward/Community Affected**

8.1 Whole district

##### Background Papers

Strategy to address the Housing and Support Needs of people with a physical or sensory impairment.

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Key Decision Status (Executive Decisions only):

Non-Key decision. Not on Forward Plan.