

Consultation with Appropriate Chairman and Vice-Chairman for Urgent Action to be Taken Under Standing Order 42

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| To (Chair & Vice Chair): | Cllr Tom Gracey Cllr Chris Howorth |
| Relevant Committee: | Corporate Management Committee |
| Date: | 7 th June 2023 |
| Report Author: | Georgina Pacey |
| Report Title: | Request for approval for an 9 week temporary contract for Graduate Climate Change Officer support over the summer period |
| SO42 Proforma Number: | 1025 |

1. Synopsis of report

On 25th May, a public engagement programme on climate change was approved. This will take place between 1st June and 31st August 2023. In May, a Graduate Climate Change Officer was appointed following a successful recruitment process, however the Council's preferred candidate is not able to start with the Council until 4th September. A temporary contract to employ the 2nd placed candidate in the interview process for a 9 week period over the summer is therefore requested, using the salary allocation from the vacant Energy Manager post.

2. Reasons why this matter cannot wait for a Committee Decision.

(Please state if agreement of Chairman and Vice-Chairman required within 24 hours, and why)

The report deadline for the 22nd June Corporate Management Committee (CMC) has now passed. The next meeting of CMC beyond this is 13th July, beyond the requested start date for this temporary 9 week temporary contract which ideally would commence on 3rd July.

3. Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that a temporary 9 week temporary contract is agreed for a Climate Change Support officer from 3rd July – 1st September to support the summer public engagement programme on climate change using the salary allocated to the vacant Energy Manager post. It is proposed to offer the candidate a part time role for 24.5 hours per week. Based on FTE of £25,524, this equates to a pro rata salary of £16,901 per annum.

4. Context of report

Corporate Leadership Team gave approval in March 2023 for the vacant 22.5 hour a week Energy Manager post within the Climate Change team to be made full time for 24 months for a Graduate Climate Change and Sustainability Officer. The post has been regraded to target a graduate, at a level of pay which is in line with the National Graduate Scheme. This regraded post is due to be taken up from 4th September 2023 following a recent recruitment process.

5. Report and, where applicable, options considered

At Corporate Management Committee on 25th May, a 3 month programme of public engagement on the topic of climate change was approved which will help identify issues and/or barriers that the Council should consider in developing the actions under the behavioural change theme of its Climate Change Action Plan. Engaging the public early in the process will enable officers and members to build a deeper understanding of local preferences, aspirations and needs. This will support the development of policies/actions that are more likely to achieve public buy-in.

It is proposed that a series of online surveys, and a number of focus groups/one-to-one interviews be carried out from 1 June to the end of August 2023 (although the online surveys will only be live for a period of 6 weeks given the additional time that will be needed to analyse the results).

In relation to the focus groups/one to one meetings specifically it is also proposed that a focus group session takes place with local Residents Associations and Neighbourhood Forum representatives. Other voluntary/community groups will also be invited to the session in order to understand the barriers/issues that our communities face in delivering climate change actions, including through the neighbourhood planning process.

In addition, feedback will be sought from Council staff representatives across all business centres at the internal Climate Change Officers Working Group in July. A session will be held as part of this meeting to gain insights into proposed CCAP actions and priorities for delivery, including those that fall under the theme of education, communication and influencing behaviour. Focus group sessions and/or one-to-one interviews, including with members of the Town Centre groups (a mix of local businesses and community representatives) and Egham Chamber of Commerce are also proposed. There are also several opportunities to attend a number of business engagement meetings to discuss barriers/challenges directly with attendees

The Planning Policy and Strategy Manager has recently offered the Graduate Climate Change Officer's role to her preferred choice following a successful recruitment process. However this candidate is unable to take up the role until 4th September due to the final part of their current degree being a 2 month summer placement followed by a reflective report in lieu of a dissertation.

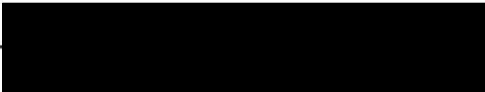

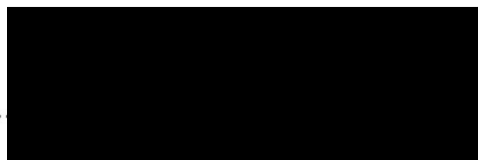
This leaves a gap between 1st June and the end of August when a comprehensive engagement programme with the public and other stakeholders on climate change will be being rolled out across the Borough. It had initially been hoped that the successful candidate would be in post in June to support this engagement process. To bolster resource over this period, it is requested that a 9 week temporary contract is offered to the second highest placed candidate who applied for the Graduate Climate Change Officer's post. This role would commence on 3rd July and would assist in:

- Arranging and delivering focus groups and 1 to 1 interviews with stakeholders about climate change (and writing up any meeting notes),
- Analysing feedback from the Climate Change online survey and producing a report on the findings,
- Carrying out background research on Behavioural Change strategies and commencing work on the production of such a document for Runnymede.

No additional funding would be required for this temporary contract. The existing, and vacant Energy Manager's post still sits within the Climate Change team and will remain as part of the Establishment List until it is replaced (for a temporary period) with the 2 year fixed Graduate Climate Change Officer's Post from 4th September.

6. Policy framework implications

The 'Workforce Planning' section of the Corporate Organisational Development Strategy states that consideration could be given to having internships or more trainee or apprenticeship positions for school or college/university leavers linked to competency-based career grades and a flexible benefits package. The temporary 9 week contract proposed in this report seeks to recruit a University leaver and give him some industry experience, whilst, in return the Council gets the benefit of some additional resource over the summer months which will be a busy period from a Climate Change perspective, and when annual leave commitments in the team are generally high.

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| 7. | <p>Financial and Resource implications (where practicable)</p> <p>As set out in the body of this report, no growth is requested to fund this temporary contract. Instead, it is proposed to use the existing and vacant part time Energy Manager post to fund this temporary contract. Payroll has calculated that the part time salary for 24.5 hours a week for the temporary contract based on FTE £25,524 is $24.5/37ths = £16,901$ per annum.</p> |
| 8. | <p>Legal implications</p> <p>No legal implications identified</p> |
| 9. | <p>Equality implications</p> <p>This 9 week temporary placement for a graduate Climate Change Support Officer would have a positive impact on the protected characteristic of age by allowing a University leaver to get some local authority experience in the area of climate change in a competitive industry.</p> |
| 10. | <p>Other implications (Environmental/Biodiversity/Sustainability must be addressed)</p> <p>In late January 2023, the day to day climate change response of the Council was moved under the management of the Local Plans Manager. Resource from the Planning Policy Team is being used to accelerate the Council's response to climate change. The current focuses of the team are on finalising key elements of the climate change evidence base, developing a policy framework to guide the Council's response to climate change and developing the Council's monitoring and reporting systems. In addition, a key priority of the Local Plans Manager has been the regarding and recruitment of the Graduate Climate Change Officer's post. Whilst the successful post holder will not be starting their employment with the Council until 4th September 2023, the proposal to offer the second placed candidate through the recruitment process a 9 week temporary contract over the summer period will ensure that resource levels remain high for progressing priority pieces of work in the climate change area. Moving forward, the Council's response to climate change in the ways described in this report are anticipated to help the Council meet its 2030 and 2050 net zero commitments contained in its Climate Change Strategy, for the good of the environment.</p> |
| 11. | <p>Background papers</p> <p>None</p> |
| 12. | <p><u>Chief Officer(s) Decision</u></p> <p>Signature of authorised officer </p> <p>I have been consulted and am in agreement with the above</p> <p>Signature(s) and position(s) of other relevant Chief Officer, Corporate Heads or authorised representatives</p> <p></p> <p>NB: this <u>must</u> include the Assistant Chief Executive or his authorised representative where the decision involves expenditure, loss of income, or future implications for budget or financial forecast.</p> |
| 13. | <p><u>Chief Executive's Decision</u></p> <p>Signature of Chief Executive ... </p> <p>I have been consulted and am in agreement with the above</p> |

14. **Chairman and Vice-Chairman Comments**

I concur in the Chief Officer's decision

Signed _____

Date _____

Signed _____

Date _____

I have the following further comments:

[Redacted Signature]

22 JUNE 2023

[Redacted Signature]

June 23rd 2023

The completed copy is to be returned by the Councillors to the Corporate Head of Law and Governance (Democratic Services) who will send a copy to the Chief Officer and report to the relevant Committee for information.