

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Report Title:	Creation of an Economic Development Officer Post
Name of Committee:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	23 October 2023
Report Director:	Chief Officer – Growth and Investment
Portfolio:	Growth and Investment
Ward Relevance:	All
Prior Consultation:	Human Resources, Finance and Performance and Legal and Governance
Contact Officer:	Helen Nightingale - Major Projects and Economic Development Manager
Public or Private:	Public
Report Subject to Call-In:	No
Report En-Bloc:	No
Forward Plan:	Yes
Corporate Priorities:	This report relates to the following priority(ies): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rugby is an environmentally sustainable place, where we work together to reduce and mitigate the effects of climate change. (C) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rugby has a diverse and resilient economy that benefits and enables opportunities for all residents. (E) <input type="checkbox"/> Residents live healthy, independent lives, with the most vulnerable protected. (HC) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rugby Borough Council is a responsible, effective and efficient organisation. (O) Corporate Strategy 2021-2024 <input type="checkbox"/> This report does not specifically relate to any Council priorities but
(C) Climate	
(E) Economy	
(HC) Health and Communities	
(O) Organisation	
Summary:	The purpose of this report is to seek approval for improving the staffing resource within the Major Projects and Economic Development Team. The resource is needed to ensure the Council delivers the aims of its Corporate Strategy along with the Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and the

emerging Economic Strategy to meet the Council's growth, economic and levelling up aspirations.

Financial Implications:

The financial implications are set out in section 4 of this report. Prior to April 2024 the cost of the post will be covered by the UKSPF administration and management fee. From April 2024 the cost of the post will be covered by the proposed uplift in national planning application fees. If there is a small delay in the introduction of the planning fee uplift then the post can also be funded for 24/25 by the UKSPF administration and management fee. The cost of this post is cost neutral.

Risk Management/Health and Safety Implications:

A dedicated strategic risk register is in place for each strand of the Corporate Strategy. Creation of the new post and budget is a key action towards delivering on the corporate strategy priorities. If the new post and budgets are not agreed, there will be an increased likelihood that the Council's corporate strategy objectives, particularly around the economy not being achieved.

Environmental Implications:

None arising directly from this report. However the post holder would focus on engagement with local businesses to encourage promotion of net zero and decarbonisation actions within the individual business environment. More detail is in the Climate Change and Environmental Impact Assessment (Appendix 1).

Legal Implications:

The Council are under an obligation to appoint on merit pursuant to the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

Equality and Diversity:

The posts will be recruited within the Borough Council's Recruitment & Selection procedures. The postholder will work with businesses to encourage them to tackle the barriers to employment from disadvantaged communities by addressing skills, training and other issues that maybe preventing residents from accessing these jobs. More detail is in the Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix 2).

Options:

Option 1

Approve the formation of a new permanent Economic Development Officer post.

Option 2:

Do not approve the formation of a new permanent Economic Development Officer post.

Recommendation:

IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL THAT -

1. a 2023/24 supplementary budget of £10,880 is established for the creation of a new permanent Economic Development Officer post to be funded from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund management and administration 4% be approved; and

2. a permanent budget of £43,530 be created for the permanent Economic Development Officer post to be funded by the planning fee increases from 2024/25 onwards.

Reasons for Recommendation:

To enable the Borough Council to deliver the aims of its Corporate Strategy, Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Economic Strategy and the levelling up agenda.

Cabinet- 23 October 2023

Creation of an Economic Development Officer Post

Public Report of the Chief Officer - Growth and Investment

Recommendation

IT BE RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL THAT -

- (1) a 2023/24 supplementary budget of £10,880 is established for the creation of a new permanent Economic Development Officer post to be funded from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund management and administration 4% be approved; and
- (2) a permanent budget of £43,530 for 2024/25 be created for the permanent Economic Development Officer post to be funded by the planning fee increases from 2024/25 onwards..

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for improving the resources within the Major Projects and Economic Development Team to enable it to deliver the aims of its Corporate Strategy, Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and emerging Economic Strategy as well as the levelling up agenda to meet the Council's growth, economic and levelling up aspirations. Such aims include:

- Encourage and support sustainable economic growth;
- Help businesses thrive and provide jobs for our residents;
- Develop and promote our town centre as a place to live, socialise and work; and
- Nurture and support independent shops

The Council previously approved the creation of a permanent Senior Economic Development Officer and three-year fixed term Senior Economic Development Officer in July 2022, however after two rounds of recruitment the Council has only been able to recruit to the permanent Senior Economic Development officer role.

The Council is progressing with the economic objectives of the Corporate Strategy including the creation of an Economic Strategy now the Senior Economic Development Officer is in post, however a graduate level or less experienced economic development officer is needed to support our Senior Economic Development officer to support and engage with our businesses and encourage inward investment.

Due to the lack of success at recruiting on a fixed term basis approval is sought for the establishment of a permanent Economic Development Officer post which will be funded from existing grants and the uplift in planning fees. The establishment of this post will therefore be cost neutral.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to see approval for the creation of a permanent economic development officer which will improve the capacity of the economic development service to deliver the economic outcomes set out in the Corporate Strategy.
- 1.2 This report provides an update to the economic development resources that formed part of the July 19th, 2022, Council paper setting out proposed resource requirement for Growth and Investment.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council report of the 19th July 2022 sought permission to strengthen the economic development service as part of a wider review of Growth and Investment to ensure the service has the resources to meet the needs of the Council, drive economic growth and implement the changes required for the benefits of the residents of Rugby. It was agreed to form the Major Projects and Economic Development Team comprising two small teams, one focused on delivering some of the Council's major projects and the other focusing on delivering the Council's economic outcomes as set out in the Corporate Strategy.
- 2.2 To deliver an economic development function two economic development officer posts were approved, one permanent and one on a three-year fixed term contract. The latter was to be funded from the UKSPF which is a three-year funding programme of which we are currently in year 2.
- 2.3 The permanent senior economic development officer has been appointed and started in post on the 9 May 2023. This followed a second recruitment exercise earlier in 2023, after a previous unsuccessful attempt to recruit to the two approved posts in the autumn of 2022. These two recruitment exercises have demonstrated that it is a competitive market to secure economic development staff, particularly with the UKSPF and Levelling-Up funds providing a range of good career opportunities for experienced economic development professionals across the country. It is clear that the post needs to be permanent position to allow the Council to compete in this highly competitive market.

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3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SERVICE UPDATE

- 3.1 The key functions of the economic development were set out in the July 19th, 2022, Council paper and have been further updated to reflect the evolving economic landscape and include:

- Lead the production and implementation of the Rugby Economic Strategy by working in partnership with the private sector, voluntary and community groups and other public sector bodies.
- Be the main point of contact for economic development and to provide specialist advice to potential clients and existing businesses, representing the Council on partnerships and networks whose aim is to generate growth in Rugby's economy.
- Lead the diversification of the Rugby economy by attracting inward investment, supporting businesses to innovate and positioning Rugby to take advantage of growth sectors.
- Work proactively with Coventry and Warwickshire Growth Hub, Warwickshire County Council, the Chamber of Commerce and other partners to develop and deliver an effective business support system to ensure that local businesses from micro/start-up businesses to the most strategic companies in the Borough have the benefit of high-quality business support.
- Engage and work with local businesses to ensure that they have access to the most effective package of support to meet their business need.
- Work with public and private sector partners to identify and deliver the opportunities from the UKG approved Local Visitor Economy Partnership for Coventry and Warwickshire.
- Work with schools, college, universities, and the private sector to develop the workforce with the required skills in line with the Economic Strategy.
- Work with partners to develop packages of support to tackle the barriers that prevent residents securing good quality employment and to address economic inequalities in the Borough.
- Ensure that there is an effective portfolio of sites and premises suitable to support business expansion, start-up and inward investment.
- Contribute to the development of the Rugby Town Centre regeneration strategy and implementation.

3.2 It is proposed that the second economic development post be redesignated to a permanent role as there appears to be more success in attracting appropriately qualified candidates with a permanent contract. In addition, it is proposed that the second post be established to attract a new graduate or someone with more limited work experience so that it affords the opportunity to develop the successful candidate in the role. The role will report to the Senior Economic Development Officer.

3.3 The new role would focus on engaging local businesses, attracting inward investment, and working with the partners to ensure that the various packages of support are more effectively targeted to meet business need.

3.4 The key responsibilities of the new role are:

- Engage with and maintain strong relationships with external business support partners to ensure a coordinated offer of support is available to businesses.
- To work with businesses and partners to find solutions and appropriate packages of support.
- To work with businesses and partners to encourage the promotion of net zero decarbonisation actions within the business environment.
- To work with the Chamber of Commerce and the Growth Hub to identify and support start up and scaling businesses and ensure that all appropriate support is identified to support this business segment.
- To work with relevant partners to ensure that there is an effective Customer Relationship Management system and that regular monitoring reports are produced in line with corporate and programme Key Performance Indicators.
- To support the work to develop an effective inward investment proposition for Rugby including preparing a database of suitable sites and properties.
- Respond pro-actively to new inward investment and business expansion project enquiries with relevant proposals for available properties, key features and benefits of locating in Rugby in order to attract or retain their investment.
- Develop and maintain regular business newsletters and contribute content for relevant channels including for the web, social media and printed publications.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Economic Development Officer has being graded as Grade E which equates to a cost of £43,530 full time per annum. Due to the recruitment process it is expected that the 2023/2024 cost will be £10,880 based on the post holder being in post for 3 months. It is proposed this is managed through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund administration and management fee and then built into the budget setting process for 2024/2025 onwards using the uplift in planning application income expected from 01 April 2024.

- 4.1 The planning application fee increase is currently being debated in the House of Lords and there is a consensus that there should be an increase in planning fees. It has been estimated that the increase in planning fees would generate an extra £330,000 and therefore is proposed to be used to fund the new economic development officer post.

5. OPTIONS AVAILABLE

- 5.1 Taking the above into account, two options are proposed for the consideration of Councillors, namely:

Option 1

To approve the creation of a new permanent Economic Development Officer post for the Major Projects and Economic Development team.

Option 2

To not approve the creation of a new permanent Economic Development Officer post for the Major Projects and Economic Development team.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 It is recommended that the new permanent post detailed in the above report, is approved. This will enable the Council to deliver the aims of its Corporate Strategy, Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and Economic Strategy and the levelling up agenda all to meet the Council's growth, economic and levelling up aspirations.

Name of Meeting: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 23 October 2023

Subject Matter: Creation of a Economic Development Officer Post

Originating Department: Growth and Investment

DO ANY BACKGROUND PAPERS APPLY **YES** **NO**

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Doc No	Title of Document and Hyperlink
1	Council Report 19 th July 2022

The background papers relating to reports on planning applications and which are open to public inspection under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972, consist of the planning applications, referred to in the reports, and all written responses to consultations made by the Local Planning Authority, in connection with those applications.

Exempt information is contained in the following documents:

Doc No	Relevant Paragraph of Schedule 12A

Rugby Borough Council

Climate Change and Environmental Impact Assessment

CONTEXT

In 2019 the UK Parliament set a commitment in law to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Achieving this target will require considerable effort with public bodies, private sector organisations, the third sector and individuals working together to take action. Rugby Borough Council declared a climate emergency in 2019, in doing so committed to:

- To move the Council's operations towards Carbon Neutrality by 2030.
- To establish action to tackle climate change as a key driver of all decision-making.
- To provide community leadership in reducing the impact of Climate Change.
- To take action to mitigate the impact of climate change on a Borough wide basis and beyond, through adaptation.

The Council's Corporate Strategy (2021-2024) [link](#) sets ambitious outcomes in relation to Climate Change. These ambitions must now be progressed through the decisions which the Council makes.

It is therefore important that Rugby Borough Council gives due regard to climate change when making decisions. In the context of the Council's business, Climate Change includes carbon emissions, biodiversity, habitat loss and environmental destruction. When putting forward recommendations for decision, officers must assess how these recommendations are likely to influence our climate change commitments by completing the following Climate Change and Environmental Impact Assessment.

A copy of this Climate Change and Environmental Impact Assessment, including relevant data and information should be forwarded to the Deputy Chief Executive.

If you require help, advice and support to complete the form, please contact Dan Green, Deputy Chief Executive.

SECTION 1: OVERVIEW

Portfolio and Service Area	Growth and Investment
Policy/Service/Change being assessed	Major Projects and Economic Development
Is this a new or existing Policy/Service/Change?	New service
If existing policy/service please state date of last assessment	
Ward Specific Impacts	All
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy/service/change and potential impacts	The proposal is to recruit an additional economic development officer who would particularly focus on engagement with local businesses to encourage promotion of net zero and decarbonisation actions within the individual business environment. The post holder would also be involved in delivering the new UKSPF net zero programme which will support businesses in progressing the adoption of processes and business practices to reach net zero targets.
Completed By	Karen Yeomans, Senior Economic Development Officer
Authorised By	Helen Nightingale
Date of Assessment	25 th August 2023

SECTION 2: IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Climate Change and Environmental Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner	Timescales
Energy usage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Post holder will work with partners and businesses to implement actions to consider and adopt alternative energy sources		Growth and Investment	On-going
Fleet usage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Sustainable Transport/Travel (customers and staff)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Post holder will work with partners and businesses to implement actions to adopt to sustainable transport policies and practices		Growth and Investment	On-going
Sustainable procurement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Post holder will work with partners and businesses to implement actions to adopt to sustainable procurement policies and practices.		Growth and Investment	On-going
Community leadership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Post holder will work with partners and businesses to implement actions to adopt to net zero/decarbonisation processes and practices		Growth and Investment	On-going
Biodiversity and habitats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Post holder will work with partners and businesses to implement actions to		Growth and investment	On-going

Appendix 1

Climate Change and Environmental Impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner	Timescales
				reduce the impact of a business on the environment.			
Adaptation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Impact on other providers/partners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Post holder will work with partners and businesses to implement actions to adapt to net zero/decarbonisation processes and practices		Growth and Investment	On-going

SECTION 3: REVIEW

Where a negative impact is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review date	
Key points to be considered through review	
Person responsible for review	
Authorised by	

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EqIA)

Context

1. The Public Sector Equality Duty as set out under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires Rugby Borough Council when making decisions to have due regard to the following:
 - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
 - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
 - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage/civil partnership
 - pregnancy/maternity
 - race
 - religion/belief
 - sex/gender
 - sexual orientation
3. In addition to the above-protected characteristics, you should consider the crosscutting elements of the proposed policy, such as impact on social inequalities and impact on carers who look after older people or people with disabilities as part of this assessment.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document is a tool that enables RBC to test and analyse the nature and impact of what it is currently doing or is planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. The questions will enable you to record your findings.
6. Where the EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. Once completed and signed off the EqIA will be published online.
8. An EqIA must accompany all **Key Decisions** and **Cabinet Reports**.
9. For further information, refer to the EqIA guidance for staff.
10. For advice and support, contact:
Aftab Razzaq
Chief Officer for Legal and Governance
aftab.razzaq@rugby.gov.uk
01788 533521

Equality Impact Assessment

Service Area	Growth and Investment
Policy/Service being assessed	Economic Development
Is this a new or existing policy/service? If existing policy/service please state date of last assessment	New Service
EqlA Review Team – List of members	Nicola Smith, Helen Nightingale, Karen Yeomans
Date of this assessment	25th August 2023
Signature of responsible officer (to be signed after the EqlA has been completed)	Helen Nightingale

A copy of this Equality Impact Assessment report, including relevant data and information to be forwarded to the Chief Officer for Legal and Governance.

Details of Strategy/ Service/ Policy to be analysed

Stage 1 – Scoping and Defining	
(1) Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the Strategy/Service/Policy (or decision)?	The proposal is to employ an additional member of staff whose focus will be to engage and work with local businesses to support their resilience and expansion. This presents an opportunity to encourage businesses to adopt processes and practices to tackle barriers to employment for our residents where there are higher levels of deprivation and to encourage good working practices.
(2) How does it fit with Rugby Borough Council's Corporate priorities and your service area priorities?	The post holder would be part of the economic development service which is core outcome 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To help businesses thrive and provide jobs for our residents. • Promote the borough of Rugby as a place to do business. • Develop and promote our town centre as a place to live, socialise and work.
(3) What are the expected outcomes you are hoping to achieve?	Our businesses are more informed and engaged so that we can influence their actions to create more jobs for local people and that barriers to accessing these jobs by local people are removed.
(4) Does or will the policy or decision affect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers • Employees • Wider community or groups 	The post holder will work with businesses, communities and other partners to ensure a more collaborative approach to tackling barriers to employment.
Stage 2 - Information Gathering	As a minimum you must consider what is known about the population likely to be affected which will support your understanding of the impact of the policy, e.g. service uptake/usage, customer satisfaction surveys, staffing data, performance data, research information (national, regional and local data sources).
(1) What does the information tell you about those groups identified?	Rugby has two wards that are in the highest 20% of deprivation areas in England. ONS data suggests that male residents earn 10% than their counterparts who travel to the Borough to work.

Appendix 2

<p>(2) Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the strategy/ service/policy you want to implement? If yes, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision?</p>	<p>No</p>		
<p>(3) If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary.</p>	<p>Consultation will be part of developing the Rugby economic strategy which it is anticipated to be consulted on in the early part of 2024.</p>		
<p>Stage 3 – Analysis of impact</p>			
<p>(1) <u>Protected Characteristics</u> From your data and consultations is there any positive, adverse or negative impact identified for any particular group, which could amount to discrimination? If yes, identify the groups and how they are affected.</p>	<p>RACE</p>	<p>DISABILITY</p>	<p>GENDER</p>
	<p>MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</p>	<p>AGE</p>	<p>GENDER REASSIGNMENT</p>
	<p>RELIGION/BELIEF</p>	<p>PREGNANCY MATERNITY</p>	<p>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</p>

Appendix 2

<p>(2) <u>Cross cutting themes</u> (a) Are your proposals likely to impact on social inequalities e.g. child poverty, geographically disadvantaged communities? If yes, please explain how?</p> <p>(b) Are your proposals likely to impact on a carer who looks after older people or people with disabilities? If yes, please explain how?</p>	<p>The post holder will work with businesses to encourage them to tackle the barriers to employment from disadvantaged communities by addressing skills, training and other issues that maybe preventing residents from accessing these jobs.</p> <p>No</p>
<p>(3) If there is an adverse impact, can this be justified?</p>	
<p>(4) What actions are going to be taken to reduce or eliminate negative or adverse impact? (This should form part of your action plan under Stage 4.)</p>	
<p>(5) How does the strategy/service/policy contribute to the promotion of equality? If not, what can be done?</p>	<p>The post holder will work with businesses and partners to promote equality through the provision of business support targeted to promote good working practices and tackling barriers to employment.</p>
<p>(6) How does the strategy/service/policy promote good relations between groups? If not, what can be done?</p>	<p>Part of the role of the post holder will be to work with businesses, residents, communities and other public sector partners to ensure a collaborative approach to securing deliverable solutions.</p> <p>HR advice has been sought and RBC policies and procedures will be followed to ensure sensitivity and fairness is applied throughout the recruitment process.</p>

Appendix 2

<p>(7) Are there any obvious barriers to accessing the service? If yes how can they be overcome?</p>	<p>There is much silo working across organisations and the post holder will work with partners to ensure a more collaborative approach. This should improve the accessibility to services as it is intended to make it simpler and more transparent to access the variety of services on offer. There needs to be more engagement, communication, marketing, visibility and collaborative working. Proposals are underway to pilot an innovative approach to address these issues and the post holder will play an important part of the team.</p>
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Appendix 2

<p>Stage 4 – Action Planning, Review and Monitoring</p>																					
<p>If No Further Action is required then go to – Review and Monitoring</p> <p>(1) Action Planning – Specify any changes or improvements that can be made to the service or policy to mitigate or eradicate negative or adverse impact on specific groups, including resource implications.</p>	<p>EqIA Action Plan</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="875 499 1077 531">Action</th> <th data-bbox="1133 499 1323 531">Lead Officer</th> <th data-bbox="1379 499 1547 571">Date for completion</th> <th data-bbox="1626 499 1827 571">Resource requirements</th> <th data-bbox="1872 499 2040 531">Comments</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Action	Lead Officer	Date for completion	Resource requirements	Comments															
Action	Lead Officer	Date for completion	Resource requirements	Comments																	
<p>(2) Review and Monitoring State how and when you will monitor policy and Action Plan</p>	<p>To be reviewed as part of the Rugby economic development plan and action plan which will be finalised in 2024.</p>																				

Please annotate your policy with the following statement:

‘An Equality Impact Assessment on this policy was undertaken on (date of assessment) and will be reviewed on (insert review date).’