

13th Sept 2012**Agenda Item:12****REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR, HIGHWAYS****ESTABLISHMENT OF DRAINAGE OFFICER POSTS****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the approval for the establishment of the two posts of Drainage Officer in the Highway Asset and Flood Risk Management Team.

Information and Advice

2. From 6 April 2012 under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, amendments were introduced which changed Section 23 and 25 of the Land Drainage Act 1991.
3. These changes mean that all consenting and enforcement activities on ordinary watercourses (outside Internal Drainage Board areas) transferred to the County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority from the Environment Agency and District Councils.
4. This means that the County Council is now responsible for consenting for any new culverts or modification to existing culverts, as well as sorting out blockages and problems on ordinary watercourses using these land drainage powers.
5. These powers and functions are particularly relevant in preventing unnecessary flooding by undertaking pro-active watercourse management. The two posts proposed by the report would also be utilised to undertake broader drainage and flooding investigations as part of the wider Flood Risk Management group of staff working for the Flood Risk Manager as shown on the proposed structure chart at Appendix A. The proposed Job Description showing the full range of planned duties for the proposed posts is shown at Appendix B.

Other Options Considered

6. Do Nothing – This would mean that existing staff would need to pick up the new duties and responsibilities, resulting in a reduced service provision in other areas and a reduced focus on land drainage and watercourse management. The DEFRA funding mentioned below is provided in order that Authorities can fulfil the new functions.

Reasons for Recommendations

7. The establishment of the Drainage Officers will minimise the risk to the County Council's reputation and ensure that new Land Drainage duties and powers are being met and exercised.
8. The new posts allow a pro-active approach to watercourse management and reduce the risk of flooding related to blocked watercourses.

Statutory and Policy Implications

9. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

10. The funding for the posts are included in the revenue budget, as part of the DEFRA grant for flood risk management activities.

Implications for service users

11. There will be an improved follow-up response to flooding for land drainage investigations and a more pro-active approach to watercourse management and enforcement, as a result of the creation of these posts.

Human Resource implications (JD 14/08/12)

12. The grading of the posts has been determined through the Council's job evaluation procedure. Recruitment of the post will be in accordance with the County Councils Policies and procedures, including the vacancy protocol.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) It is recommended that two posts of Drainage Officer in the Highway Asset and Flood Risk Management Team be established with immediate effect and the grade for the posts be established through the job evaluation process.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact:

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Constitutional Comments (KK 13/08/12)

13. The Transport and Highways Committee has authority to approve the recommendation set out in this report.

Financial Comments (IC 14/08/12)

14. The Drainage Officer posts will be remunerated at Grade 4 between the levels of £22,484 and £25,510 each (including on costs). Salary cost will be met from DEFRA grant funding.

Background Papers

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Nil

Electoral Division Affected

All