

Agenda item 6

For decision – Delivering the Resilience work programme during Anna Francis’ sabbatical
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Summary

This report sets out a proposal for how the Resilience work programme will continue to be delivered whilst Anna Francis, Resilience Manager is on sabbatical. The recommendation is to recruit a Resilience Officer on a permanent basis.

Background

Anna Francis, Resilience Manager will shortly be starting her unpaid sabbatical year. The assumption is that she will return in October 2021 to resume her duties.

Councillors will be aware that the current work programme includes work on sustainable transport, promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy generation, waste reduction and the promotion of share and repair. Recently, the Recovery Panels recommended that we put more effort into addressing fuel poverty (especially through a Healthy Homes by Prescription initiative in partnership with CSE and Frome Medical Practice), walking and cycling, local food production and greater promotion of re-use and repair. Some of this work has already started including feasibility and consultation relating to School Street.

In order that we can maintain the momentum in these areas of work, it is vital that the necessary staff resources are in place. Already, Emma Parker, Project Officer, has stepped up from 2.5 days to 3.5 days per week primarily to provide additional capacity to support the School Street project. However, additional resources are needed to deliver other areas of work and to provide the necessary communications support.

Proposal

The proposal is that Anna’s post is kept open in anticipation of her return and alongside that a new Resilience Officer is recruited on a permanent basis to help deliver the projects identified within the work programme. In addition, a plan is being prepared to enhance the capacity of the Marketing & Communications Team which will be presented to councillors at a later date in the context of a review of the work programme and budget for 2020/21.

On Anna’s return next October, this will get us to where we were in March when it was recommended to councillors that a new Resilience Officer be appointed to, amongst other things, help deliver a Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan. Whilst the decisions on that proposal and the adoption of a Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan were deferred, with Anna now temporarily absent on sabbatical, it is important that a second officer is recruited soon to fill the gap in capacity to deliver the Resilience work programme overall.

The recommendation is that we recruit the Resilience Officer at the Project Officer grade of SCP 15-25 (£23,541 – £29,577). The officer will work alongside Emma Parker and will report

to the Deputy Town Clerk who will provide strategic direction. Making this post both permanent and full-time will help to ensure that we have the best chance of recruiting an individual of the appropriate calibre.

This initiative will be financed utilising the Resilience Manager's current salary allocation.

Recommendations

1. Establish a new permanent post of Resilience Officer at Grade SCP 15-25 with the new postholder reporting to the Deputy Town Clerk whilst Anna Francis is on sabbatical
2. Delegate authority to the Deputy Town Clerk to develop an appropriate job description and person specification and proceed with recruitment immediately