

Bolsover District Council

Employment and Personnel Committee

16 September 2021

Senior Economic Development Officer (Tourism and Visitor Economy)

Report of the Assistant Director of Development and Planning

Classification: This report is public

Report By: Chris Fridlington – Assistant Director of Development and Planning

Contact Officer: Natalie Etches – Business Growth Manager

PURPOSE / SUMMARY

- To seek approval to create a new position of Senior Economic Development Officer (Tourism and Visitor Economy) within the Economic Development Team
 - To recommend to Council for the additional revenue budget associated with the establishment of the new post, including salary and associated on-costs.
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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To approve a new full time permanent post within the Economic Development Team for the role of Senior Economic Development Officer (Tourism and Visitor Economy), subject to Council approving the budget increase required.
2. To recommend to Council a revenue budget increase of £ 41,121 – £46,960 to fund the salary and all associated on costs as a result of establishing this post on the payroll, subject to job evaluation and consistency checks confirming the grade of the post.
3. To delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Development and Planning to complete the recruitment and selection of a suitable candidate, if the post is scored grade 8 or less.

Approved by the Portfolio Holder - Growth / Economic Development - Cllr Liz Smyth
and Portfolio Holder - Leisure and Tourism – Cllr David Downes

IMPLICATIONS

Finance and Risk: Yes No

Details:

The cost for the creation of the post per annum is between £41,121 and £46,960. Whilst this vacancy will not directly generate income / revenue to the council, it will create a positive economic impact for the district's visitor economy through the impact of delivering activities identified in the Tourism Strategy. However, this is a new cost to the medium term financial plan which has a considerable budget shortfall currently predicted for 2024/25 of £3.238m. The risk of not achieving a balanced budget is outlined as a key risk within the Council's Strategic Risk Register.

On Behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection): Yes No

Details:

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On Behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Staffing: Yes No

Details:

This report will create a new full time permanent post within the Economic Development Team.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

DECISION INFORMATION

Decision Information	
<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p>BDC: Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>NEDDC: Revenue - £100,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £250,000 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please indicate which threshold applies</p>	No
<p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</p>	No
District Wards Significantly Affected	District wide delivery
<p>Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Cabinet / Executive <input type="checkbox"/> SAMT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Details: -</p>

Links to Council Ambition (BDC)/Council Plan (NED) priorities or Policy Framework including Climate Change, Equalities, and Economics and Health implications.

The creation of this post in to the Economic Development Team will directly deliver against the priority of 'Promoting the District and working with partners to increase Tourism', as well as directly being responsible for the delivery of the actions set out in the Tourism Strategy and contributing to the team for the delivery of projects and initiatives set out in the Growth Strategy.

REPORT DETAILS

1 **Background** (reasons for bringing the report)

- 1.1 The Council's ambition is to become a dynamic, self-sufficient and flexible Council that delivers excellent services, whilst adapting to local aspirations and acting as the economic and environmental driver for Bolsover District.
- 1.2 Pre-pandemic, a key economic driver of the local economy was the local visitor economy, which generated local spend of just under £140 million and supported around 1700 jobs in 2018 according to the most recent information available from the STEAM tourism database.
- 1.3 The information on this database also shows that overnight visitors spend nearly four times more in the local area than day visitors in 2018, spending over £10million on local accommodation and generated a local economic impact of over £40million. This information also goes some way to showing why

promoting the District and working with partners to increase tourism is a corporate priority.

- 1.4 Inevitably, the pandemic has since disrupted the local visitor economy but there are clear signs that many businesses have 'bounced back' with support from this Council, the easing of restrictions and the increased demand for staycations partly fuelled by multiple lockdowns and partly by the limited availability of foreign holidays.
- 1.5 The challenge for the District now is how best to maintain this trajectory and support the continued growth of the local visitor economy and in particular, increase overnight stays in the interests of meeting local aspirations, supporting local businesses and creating jobs by bringing additional money into the District.
- 1.6 The recently adopted Tourism Strategy goes part way to doing this by taking what was a roadmap to recovery (from the pandemic) and transforming those initial actions into a series of objectives that will support the long term growth of the local visitor economy.
- 1.7 However, a dedicated officer with the relevant skills and experience is required to prioritise these objectives alongside promoting the District, working effectively with partners to increase tourism and drive the local visitor economy beyond what can be achieved with the current establishment.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

- 2.1 The proposal is to establish a new full time post – Senior Economic Development Officer (Tourism and Visitor Economy) – within the Economic Development Team.
- 2.2 The main duties and responsibilities of the post are set out in 'Appendix 1 – Job Description' of this report in the job description. The person specification for the individual we are seeking to fill the vacancy is set out in 'Appendix 2 – Person Specification'.
- 2.3 Whilst the post-holder is expected to establish strong working relationships with both the Leisure and Communications Teams, the role will sit with Economic Development.

3 Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 Within the Economic Development Team, there are currently three Senior Economic Development Officers. Two are for 'Investment and Growth' and one on 'Business Engagement'. One Investment and Growth officer is full time, and the other two officers are both part time (0.5 FTE).
- 3.2 Amongst other things, these officers are responsible for delivering many of the actions set out within the Council's Business Growth Strategy, which is also closely aligned with delivering many of the projects set out in the Council's

Vision Bolsover prospectus. Therefore, there is limited capacity within the team to dedicate to driving the local visitor economy.

- 3.3 The team has also been recently reduced when the temporary contract for the town and tourism officer post expired. This post was held by a 1 x FTE and was funded by reserves. However, over the course of time this post was in place, it was increasingly seen that the dual responsibilities of this post was difficult to manage given that there is some overlap but each area has its own separate and distinctive challenges.
- 3.4 Additionally, the Directorate has been able to absorb some of the town centre work in different service areas partly because it is closely aligned with the implementation of the Local Plan and partly because the town and tourism officer has returned to their substantive post in Planning Policy.
- 3.5 Therefore, there is a greater need to bring in additional capacity to support delivery of the Tourism Strategy and drive the local visitor economy than support the District's town centre. There is also insufficient capacity within the existing Economic Development team to drive the local visitor economy, without compromising delivery of other parts of the Vision Bolsover prospectus and/or other equally important actions set out in the Business Growth Strategy.
- 3.6 Consequently, it is recommended that an additional post focused on tourism and the visitor economy is created because the benefits to the District arising from this post will demonstrably outweigh the cost of the additional salary over time.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 The Senior Economic Development Officer (Business Engagement), is on a temporary Notification of Change (NOC) for reduced hours down to 0.5 FTE. Consideration has been given to using the surplus 0.5 FTE to undertake the duties of the Tourism and Visitor Economy role. However, due to the workload requirements of the Economic Development Team with the delivery of priorities identified in the Growth Strategy and the draft Business Engagement Strategy, the Business Engagement role would need to be kept as a full time job and the surplus 0.5FTE recruited to through a job share arrangement. Therefore the spare capacity of this role isn't available as an option. The Tourism and Visitor Economy role is required as a full time permanent role due to the number of initiatives and priorities identified within the recently adopted Tourism Strategy.
- 4.2 Consideration has been given to doing nothing and not creating and recruiting to the post. This would not cost the Council any money. However, there would be a greater economic cost as the council would not be able to focus on delivering activities which contribute to the growth of the tourism and visitor economy.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Appendix No	Title
1	Job Description
2	Person Specification
Background Papers (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet (NEDDC) or Executive (BDC) you must provide copies of the background papers)	
None	