

COUNCIL

27th JANUARY 2022

Report of the Chief Executive

RESILIENCE, RESOURCES, PRIORITIES

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The report sets out the Chief Executive’s proposals to invest in additional organisational resources in order to ensure that the Council is adequately resourced to deal with existing and future priorities / challenges.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Council acknowledges the current challenges and pressures on organisational resources and capacity.
2. That Council supports the proposals for the restructure of the Electoral and Democratic Services Team as outlined in the report and that the additional net costs of £14,667 be included within the draft budget for 2022/23.
3. That Council support the proposals for the restructure of the Regeneration and Policy Team as outlined in the report and that the costs (to be met from vacant posts and revenue grants unapplied for 2022/23 and 2023/24) of £52,475 be included within the draft budget for 2022/23.
4. That Council approve the staffing resources for Phase 2 of the Digital Transformation Programme and that the costs of £99,523 be included within the draft budget for 2022/23.
5. That subject to the approval of higher empty homes premiums, Council approve the establishment of an Empty Homes Officer post for an initial period of 3 years, and that the costs of £38,260 be included within the draft budget for 2022/23.

WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards

STRATEGIC LINK

The need for the Council to deliver and maintain a sustainable financial plan underpins the District Council’s Corporate Plan. An effective organisational structure that is appropriately resourced and aligned to the delivery of the Council’s priorities helps to deliver the Council’s ambitions and plans for the District as a whole.

1. **BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Council has always prided itself on providing high quality, responsive services that contribute significantly to residents’ well-being and quality of life. However, at a time

when the service demands placed upon the organisation from residents and Members are increasing, it is necessary to evaluate whether the resources currently available are capable of delivering against these rising expectations.

- 1.2 As Head of Paid Service, it is my responsibility to inform Council of the staffing resources required to discharge the functions of the authority. It is also my responsibility to reflect upon the future ambition of the Council and advise whether we have the resources in place to deliver on the collective ambition of the Council.
- 1.3 Since 1st April 2014, the Council has delivered over £2.7m of savings and efficiencies and has fundamentally reviewed its approach to service delivery, most notably in respect of Leisure services, Revenues and Benefits services and Building Control services, in order to deliver a balanced budget every year. This is against a backdrop of increasing demands for services and new service burdens placed upon the organisation.
- 1.4 Throughout this period, there has also been a gradual reduction in organisational headcount which has been necessary in order to deliver balanced budgets whilst seeking to minimise the impact upon our communities. Whilst some of this has been reversed in the last three years with additional investment in some parts of the organisation, there is increasing evidence to indicate that the capacity of the organisation remains stretched in a number of key service areas, which is manifesting itself in increasing and unsustainable workloads and deteriorating mental health and wellbeing. This is evident through individual discussions with employees, increased HR referrals made to the Council's confidential counselling support services and our internal mental health first aiders. As a responsible employer, the District Council cannot ignore these issues and needs to ensure that the organisation not only has the resources necessary to deliver the services required, but that the pressures and expectations placed upon individual members of staff are managed.

2. STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

- 2.1 The role of the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) is to develop and implement the Council's approved policies commensurate with the achievement of the Council's overall aims, objectives and priorities. CLT also discuss key issues affecting the management of the organisation and considers other internal control issues including risk management, performance management, compliance, efficiency and value for money and financial management.
- 2.2 Following the appointment of a new Chief Executive in June 2018, there remains a vacancy in the form of a Corporate Director. The role of the Corporate Director was first established in 2013 in response to an LGA Peer Challenge which identified a lack of strategic capacity to support the delivery of the Council's priorities. At this time, two Corporate Director posts were created with the intention of creating additional capacity at a strategic level, beyond Head of Service level. The role of the Corporate Director was to work with the Chief Executive in taking forward the transformation agenda and to deliver other strategic projects across the organisation.
- 2.3 The organisational structure approved by Council in 2013 and implemented on 1st February 2014 included the Chief Executive, 2 x Corporate Directors and 7 x Heads of Service. These Officers formed a Corporate Leadership Team of 10 highly experienced and skilled staff whose primary responsibility was to organise, manage and deliver the Council's frontline services and strategic priorities.

- 2.4 However, less than 12 months after implementation, in January 2015 one of the Corporate Director posts was deleted from the establishment following the retirement of the post-holder and the savings accrued have contributed towards the Council's corporate savings target. The Head of Environmental Services also resigned her position (February 2017) and two departments were merged into one to form the Community and Environmental Services Department. The Corporate Leadership Team was thus reduced by 20% from 10 to 8 with some Heads of Service having extremely broad remits and strategic responsibilities, most notably the Director of Community and Environmental Services and the Director of Regulatory Services.
- 2.5 Since June 2018, the remaining Corporate Director post has remained vacant on the establishment (albeit not included within the 2021/22 revenue budget), thus reducing the strategic capacity of the organisation from 10 (February 2014), to 9 (January 2015), to 8 (February 2017), to 7 (June 2018). The Corporate Leadership Team is, therefore, now having to deliver the Council's services and priorities with 30% less strategic capacity than it had in 2014. Outside day to day service delivery, it is increasingly evident that this is having a direct and tangible impact upon the ability of the organisation to respond to new opportunities and deliver on its own corporate priorities or projects (both internally and externally) as there is no surplus strategic capacity available.
- 2.6 Such a significant reduction in strategic capacity has coincided with the Council undertaking a series of ever more complex, large scale projects including the outsourcing of the Leisure service, a series of strategic service reviews (public convenience provision, Clean and Green service review), the re-tender of the waste and recycling contract, the introduction of an organisational digital transformation programme including the introduction of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and the delivery of large scale regeneration projects (Ashbourne Airfield). Since March 2020, we have also had to deal with the commitments arising from the declaration of a climate emergency in May 2019 and the development / implementation of a strategy and action plan, alongside dealing with the significant impact of a global pandemic with major impacts upon key frontline services.
- 2.7 Whilst nobody could have predicted the Covid-19 pandemic, the impact of dealing with significant service disruptions including the design and implementation of new service delivery models, the implementation of numerous Covid grant schemes (which continues), enforcement of complex and ever changing regulations and the sustained challenges of delivering a waste and recycling service (including the commissioning of an independent review) cannot be understated. Both prior to and throughout the last two years of the Covid-19 pandemic, the current demands placed upon the Corporate Leadership Team and certain senior officers are simply unsustainable with little appreciation of the impact that this is having upon employee wellbeing. There is a limit to what is reasonably possible and certainly in recent times, that limit has been consistently exceeded to the detriment of employee health and wellbeing. This situation cannot become the norm, otherwise the organisation not only risks the health of its employees but also risks losing highly experienced and knowledgeable staff either as a result of early retirement or to other organisations. It is not a sustainable position for the organisation to be in. There needs to be a greater appreciation of officer capacity and resource limitations which includes the personal demands of members placed upon officers, outside of the agreed Council and service priorities.

- 2.8 Similar challenges exist at senior manager level. Due to a number of key functions being delivered by officers in 'singleton' posts e.g. Estates and Facilities, there is often insufficient capacity to respond to members' individual service demands or external demands which lie outside the agreed corporate priorities. It is therefore vitally important that once agreed and set, the priorities of the Council take precedence and are adhered to.
- 2.9 In March, the Council will be considering an updated Medium Term Financial Plan. Whilst financial uncertainty continues to exist beyond 2022/23, if the Council wishes to realise the full extent of its ambitions, maintain a healthy workforce and maximise all available opportunities that exist, it cannot do so without being prepared to invest in additional strategic and organisational capacity.

3 ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

- 3.1 The 2019 Corporate Peer Challenge identified that the District Council has good, dedicated staff who are well thought of, enjoy working for the Council and are clearly dedicated and passionate about working for Derbyshire Dales. These views are also reflected in the 2021 staff survey with 79% of staff either fairly satisfied or very satisfied with the district council as an employer.
- 3.2 This is particularly encouraging in the context of the last decade or so, where the Council has been streamlining its service delivery and staff numbers have reduced to ensure that frontline services are protected and the books are balanced. However as a consequence, the pressure on staff to do more for less, at all levels within the organisation, continually grows. This is against a backdrop of salary and wage constraints that invariably do not keep pace with the cost of living and being in the part of the public sector family that attracts little public support, unlike the NHS or Police. Given this framework within which the staff and Members are working, it is ever more important to ensure that the organisation uses its capacity wisely. This means that both Members and the public need to be more aware of what an organisation of this size can realistically and financially deliver, particularly in the discretionary service areas. It is also necessary for the Council to be clear about its priorities. On occasions, the prioritisation of resources to ensure the delivery of corporate projects and priority services will reduce the resources available to undertake non-priority work and it is important that this is understood and respected by all.
- 3.3 In regard to organisational capacity, there are a number of areas that require immediate attention.

Electoral and Democratic Services

- 3.4 The Electoral and Democratic Services Team delivers electoral services and supports the democratic machinery of the Council. It currently comprises:
- Electoral and Democratic Services Manager (1.0FTE)
 - Electoral Services Supervisor (1.0FTE)
 - 2x Democratic Liaison Assistants (annualised hours 0.6FTE and 0.5FTE)
 - 2 x Democratic Services Officers (0.6FTE)
 - Committee Assistant (0.15FTE)
- Total : 4.45 FTE

- 3.5 Due to a number of resignations and a retirement in the section, in the last few months the team has been severely depleted with 3.6 FTE vacancies arising. Whilst this situation has been challenging to manage, it has enabled a fundamental review of the staffing structure to be undertaken. At present, it is considered that the team as a whole lacks the capacity needed to deliver an efficient, effective and modern Electoral and Democratic Services function. The current resources are very much focused on the practicalities of dealing with immediate issues rather than having the capacity to carry out many other functions including delivering effective member liaison which can manage pressures elsewhere within the organisation.
- 3.6 CLT have therefore considered and approved a business case which includes the potential to introduce a new Committee Management System with staffing resources better aligned to the demands of Members and the public. The revised structure comprises:
- Electoral and Democratic Services Manager (1.0FTE)
 - Electoral Services Team Leader (1.0FTE)
 - Democratic Services Team Leader (1.0FTE)
 - Democratic Liaison Assistant (0.5FTE)
 - 2 x Democratic Services Assistant (1.0FTE)
 - Democratic Services Officer (0.6 FTE)
- Total : 6.10 FTE
- 3.7 The most significant changes arise in respect of electoral services, due to a number of factors including:
- i) Workloads – as a result of changes to electoral registration and the annual canvass, the workload of the team has increased as has the complexity of the registration process.
 - ii) Business Continuity – Under the current structure, as there is only one full-time employee, there is a lot of reliance on the Electoral Services Supervisor to provide officer cover and act as the “expert” on the Electoral Management system. In the current climate there are concerns that, should the supervisor be unable to work, there is limited capacity to provide cover.
 - iii) Reputation – In recent years the electoral registration and elections service have come under additional scrutiny especially around the area of postal voting. The reputational damage caused by any errors is significant and the risk of errors is increased by underinvestment in the service. There are risk registers in place for both the annual canvass and elections, both of which identify the sudden unexpected loss of key staff as significant. Providing additional support in the team does not eliminate this risk but it does reduce the impact.
 - iv) Encouraging Participation - Additional capacity in the team would allow us to look at initiatives to improve registration and participation levels and to maintain the integrity of the register. This could include developing strategies for targeting households that consistently do not respond to the annual canvass and following up on those who do not respond to invitations to register and promoting participation in general. The revised performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers requires the ERO to produce and deliver a Registration Plan and a Public Engagement Strategy .The current structure does not provide the capacity to carry out this work.

- v) Succession planning – Having another full time team member at a lower grade will help with succession planning should other team members leave.
- vi) Legislative Changes – The Elections Bill includes measures which cannot be supported within the current staffing structure as they will increase the administrative burden of the ERO. These measures include the introduction of voter identification which means that all voters will need to provide voter ID to vote at a polling station. Although it is likely that the legislation allow existing forms of photographic ID to be used there will still be a significant number voters who do not have appropriate ID that will require the ERO to produce and issue ID cards. To spread out the high demand during election periods the team will need to be more proactive during the canvas and at registration to make sure electors have appropriate ID.

3.8 The total additional annual cost of this revised structure (excl. 2021 pay award) is £48,520 including on-costs. Part of this can be off-set by an existing vacancy on the departmental establishment which is no longer required to be filled, leaving a net funding annual shortfall of £14,667 including on-costs. It is requested that Council approve this additional £14,667 in the draft budget for 2022/23.

Regeneration and Policy Services

3.9 Regeneration and Policy service teams have undergone virtually no structural changes since their formation in February 2014. Despite the (then) Council making economic development its top priority, no new staff resources were provided. Similarly, the planning policy team is identical to that of a decade ago. This team was created from a diverse combination of economic development, tourism, corporate policy and planning policy teams from across the organisation. Whilst they have performed well to date, the demands facing both these services are changing and becoming increasingly interlinked, hence the need for review.

3.10 Economic development has been a key priority for the Council for a number of years and is again a key priority identified in the Corporate Plan (2019-2023). Following the adoption of our new Economic Plan, there is a need to invest in strategic capacity to improve the use of housing and employment sites and drive negotiations with developers in order to achieve site delivery.

The October 2019 Corporate Peer Challenge said:

The council should consider its own skills base and investment capability to promote jobs and business growth. The draft economic plan drives an ambitious direction at a time when site delivery and wider economic circumstances are challenging and suitably skilled staff are needed.

Once the new corporate plan priorities have been confirmed, there will be the need to further review capacity and skill requirements to deliver – “step up from enabling to delivery”

3.11 Since the Peer Challenge, and in anticipation of this review, three vacant part-posts have been held on the establishment with their salaries remaining in the revenue budget. The current staff in post total 5.6 FTE permanent and 1.0 FTE temporary employees, as follows:

- Economic Development Team (2.3 FTE)
(plus 1.0 FTE temporary business advisor to March 2022)

Of the 2.3 FTE's, 1.0 FTE is an economic development professional. The remainder comprise two part-time former tourism officers who have worked hard to adapt to more business-focused roles. The current team is skilled at business advice, making and monitoring funding bids and inputting positively to wider economic partnerships

- Planning Policy Team (2.7 FTE)

This comprises 2.2 FTE planning policy professionals, and a 0.5 FTE administration assistant whose principal role is site visits to monitor development completions

- Corporate Policy Team (0.6 FTE)

This is now a single part-time person covering performance management, equalities and consultation.

Taken together, of the 5.6 FTE permanent posts, there are 3.2 FTE staff qualified in relevant planning and regeneration professions. The 1.0 FTE temporary business adviser also has the professional qualification for her role.

3.12 The Corporate Plan 2020-24 includes the following priorities and actions for Regeneration and Policy:

PROSPERITY	
Invest resources in developing key employment sites	Facilitating the development of Ashbourne Business Park and Phase 1 housing at Ashbourne Airfield
	Pursuing funding to unlock employment land at Middleton Road/Cromford Road, Wirksworth
	Prioritising regenerating housing and employment sites
Promote investment to stimulate the economy of our market towns	Initiating a development scheme for the Bakewell Road site, Matlock town centre
	Complete a review of the Derbyshire Dales Local Plan
	Support communities in developing Neighbourhood Plans
Support businesses to encourage productivity, growth, and higher wage jobs in rural and urban locations	Continuing to provide a high quality, free, 1:1 business advice service to small and medium sized businesses
	Launching the Derbyshire Dales Place Branding Initiative
PLACE	
	Preparing and adopting a Supplementary Planning Document on Climate Change
PEOPLE	
	Undertaking an annual online survey of residents to establish customer satisfaction and priorities

- 3.13 With current skills and capacity, the service is well equipped to meet those priorities in the lower part of the table above; but those priorities in the upper part of the table (in bold italics) present significant challenges.
- 3.14 Broadly speaking, there is now a mismatch of skills and capacity against Council priorities, which can be summarised as follows:
- **“Invest resources in developing key employment sites”**. Developing brownfield sites for housing and employment (to take housing pressure off greenfield sites and provide new employment units) which are not being built out by the market, i.e. physical regeneration. These require regeneration skills and experience that the current team does not possess including surveying, design, construction and commercial property. Councils that are actively intervening in regeneration e.g. Chesterfield Borough Council, have invested in dedicated teams with the appropriate skill sets and qualifications.
 - **“Promote investment to stimulate the economy of our market towns”**. Market town regeneration also includes physical regeneration. There is a current target to deliver the Bakewell Road site in Matlock. This is a small (Council owned) and relatively deliverable scheme and is being project managed by the existing team, only because the team is doing no other regeneration work. If Members were to direct the Council to pursue regeneration in other market towns, where we are not landowners, the skills set out above would be required to meet this priority too. The imperative in 2022 is to bid for, and if successful, deliver Levelling Up Funding (of which £20 million is notionally earmarked for regeneration in our district) means this lack of capacity and skills is untenable.
 - **Local Plan**. Whilst the team successfully delivered a Local Plan in 2017, this was with the benefit of three temporary staff and various consultants. It also involved, full time for a period of many months, the then Corporate Director. In order to drive forward and de-risk the delivery of brownfield sites, much of the detailed site work that hitherto might have been undertaken by developers in submitting applications for outline permission should be done by the Council as part of the Local Plan process. This requires a wholly different set of skills to those previously employed. It is in fact a huge opportunity for the Council to masterplan key sites in advance of developers coming forward – but to do so requires knowledge and skills that the current team does not have.
- 3.15 What the service is currently set-up to deliver is traditional economic development (business advice and local marketing), and traditional planning policy (local and neighbourhood plans and SPDs). However this is only part of what is now demanded by the Council. Physical site regeneration has been highlighted by Members in the Corporate Plan and peers as needing improvement, but it is not possible to deliver this with existing resources. There is also a commitment to support businesses to reduce their carbon footprint as per recommendation 10 of the Climate Change Update Report considered on 14th October, but at the moment there is little capacity to actively do this. The new style of regeneration requires the Council to proactively lead work on site development. The resource to manage and to undertake such work does not exist in the current establishment.

3.16 In November 2020, Council adopted an Economic Recovery Plan with three priorities:

- Invest resources in regenerating housing and employment sites
- Re-invest in the Bakewell Road Matlock site
- Re-shape Regeneration Services to drive investment in brownfield and other key housing/employment sites

It also adopted the principle of Council intervention in regenerating brownfield sites for housing and employment, and building such costs into the revenue budget.

3.17 Immediately afterwards, a further Covid-19 national lockdown was imposed and progress on these priorities was rendered impracticable due to the need to divert all available resources onto the administration of numerous business support grant schemes and corporate Covid relief efforts.

3.18 However, this work has now been completed and a business case has been presented and approved by CLT. The proposed new team structure can be summarised as:

Regeneration and Planning Team

- *Regeneration and Planning Manager 1.0 FTE (new post – to lead regeneration linked to local plans)*
- *Regeneration Officer 1.0 FTE (new post – to manage physical site regeneration)*
- *Planning Policy Manager 1.0 (new post – to manage local plans)*
- Senior Planning Policy Officer 0.6FTE
- Planning Policy Officer 0.6 FTE
- Administrative Assistant 0.5 FTE
- Temporary staff to support Local Plan review (e.g. casual & graduate)

Policy and Economic Development Team

- *Policy and Economic Development Manager 1.0FTE (new post – to lead and manage corporate policy team and ED team)*
- Temporary Business Advisor 1.0FTE
- Economic Development & Tourism Officer 0.7FTE
- Economic Development & Tourism Officer 0.6FTE
- Policy Officer 0.6FTE

3.19 Of the four new posts to be created (in italics above), two existing 1.0 FTE posts would be deleted (Policy Manager and Economic Development Manager). Holders of those two deleted posts would be incorporated into the new structure in accordance with the Council's Change Management Policy. The remaining posts (not in italics) are unchanged, and the temporary Local Plan posts do not become part of the establishment.

3.20 The total additional annual cost of this revised structure (excl. 2021 pay award) is £52,475 per annum (including on-costs). The first 2 years of this cost (2022/23 and 2023/24) can be met by a combination of savings on existing vacancies within the approved Regeneration and Policy establishment (£60,331) and Revenue Grants Unapplied held in reserve for additional burdens (£122,113). In year 3 (2024/25) there will be a net additional cost of £35,310 rising to £52,475 in year 4 (2025/26).

- 3.21 It is requested that Council approve these additional costs in the draft budget for 2022/23.

Digital Transformation

- 3.22 At the meeting of Governance and Resources Committee on 30th September 2021, members approved in principle, Phase 2 priorities for the Digital Transformation Programme. In due course, further reports will be presented to Members on the detailed implementation programme to deliver these priorities.
- 3.23 The corporate digital transformation project was originally established in 2019 for a 2 year duration with a potential further year extension, which was ultimately adopted. The primary focus of the project was the implementation of the CRM system and supporting the council in moving to a digital first principle.
- 3.24 In addition to delivering Phase 1 of the corporate transformation projects, the team of two officers have also played a key role in delivering aspects of the District Council's response to the Covid pandemic by providing digital solutions for a wide range of initiatives including gauging business plans for restarting following lockdowns, allowing business to apply digitally for pavement licenses and providing full end to end digital processes to apply, process and pay over 10,000 business grants and test and trace support payments which have resulted in over £37 million worth of payments to be made as fast and efficiently as possible.
- 3.25 The two members of staff who are employed on digital transformation, are employed on fixed term contracts which are due to end in June 2022. In order to progress with Phase 2 of the programme, it will be necessary to extend these contracts for a further 2 year period.
- 3.26 The total additional annual cost of this extension (excl. 2021 pay award) is £99,523 per annum (including on-costs). It is requested that Council approves the inclusion of the additional costs in the draft budget for 2022/23. The salary costs have previously been financed by transfers from the Customer Innovation Reserve. Elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting is a report on revenue budget monitoring, which recommends a transfer of £200,000 to the Customer Innovation Reserve in the current financial year (2021/22). Subject to Members' approval, this will fund the costs of the digital transformation team for the two year contract extension.

Empty Homes Officer

- 3.27 Elsewhere on this agenda, Members are asked to consider the introduction of higher levels of empty homes premiums for properties that have remained unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for more than 5 years. The purpose of the empty homes premium is to act as an incentive for owners to bring empty homes back into use. However, the premium is only one tool available to councils concerned about the number of empty homes within their area. Many councils also employ a dedicated officer whose role is to advise and support owners of empty homes. The officer is expected to help owners to explore options, publicise the premiums, signpost services (e.g. how to engage an estate agent, get planning permission, building control services etc.), produce newsletters, develop strategies to support owners e.g. selling property to the Council and supporting council housing growth, helping to engage private buyers, taking property to auction etc.

- 3.28 Without a dedicated resource the Council lacks the capacity to properly support owners of empty homes. It also increases strain on the Council Tax service in particular. The Council previously employed an Empty Homes Officer using external grant funding. Over a two year period this post had a significant impact on the total number of empty homes but this arrangement came to an end when the grant funding expired.
- 3.29 Subject to the adoption of the higher premiums, it is therefore proposed that the Council reintroduce an Empty Homes Officer for an initial period of 3 years, funded by New Homes Bonus in 2022/23, but thereafter funded by the Derbyshire Dales proportion of the empty homes premium and any additional New Homes Bonus payments received.
- 3.30 The total additional annual cost of this post (excl. 2021 pay award) is £38,260 per annum (incl. on-costs). It is requested that Council approve these additional costs in the draft budget for 2022/23 and for the subsequent 2 years.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 Legal

The Head of Paid Service is required by Section 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to report to Council on proposals concerning the organisation of the Council's staff and appointment and proper management of the Council's staff. The legal risk is therefore assessed as low.

4.2 Financial

The estimated annual salary costs in 2022/23 (including on-costs) of the proposed changes to the structure are estimated as:

- Electoral and Democratic Services - £14,667 (excl. 2021 pay award)
- Regeneration and Policy - £52,475 (excl. 2021 pay award)
- Digital Transformation - £99,523 (excl. 2021 pay award)
- Empty Property Officer - £38,260 (excl. 2021 pay award).

As stated in the report, the above salary costs could be offset as follows:

- **Regeneration and Policy** – The first 2 years of this cost (2022/23 and 2023/24) can be met by a combination of savings on existing vacancies within the approved Regeneration and Policy establishment and a transfer from the Revenue Grants Unapplied Reserve. In year 3 (2024/25) there will be a net additional cost of £35,310 rising to £52,475 in year 4 (2025/26);
- **Digital Transformation** – The salary costs have previously been financed by transfers from the Customer Innovation Reserve. Elsewhere on the agenda for this meeting is a report on revenue budget monitoring, which recommends a transfer of £200,000 to the Customer Innovation Reserve in the current financial year (2021/22). Subject to Members' approval, this will fund the costs of the digital transformation team for the two year contract extension;

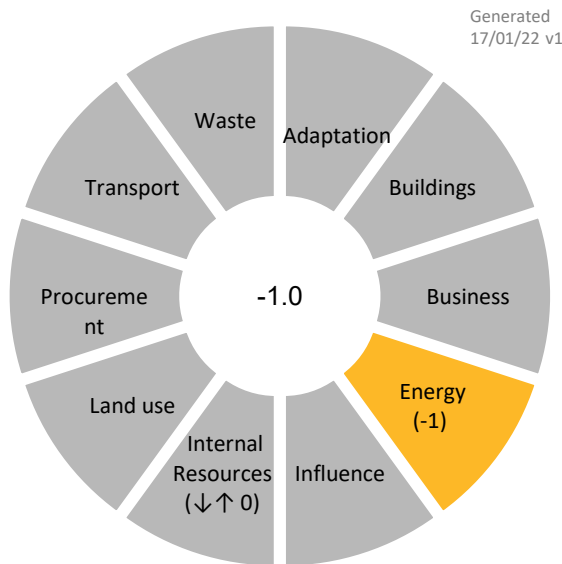
- **Empty Homes Officer** – Funded by New Homes Bonus in 2022/23. In years 2 and 3 (2023/24 and 2024/25) the cost is expected to be funded by Derbyshire Dales District Council's proportion of the empty homes premium and any additional New Homes Bonus payments received. There is a risk that, in achieving the priority of reducing empty homes, the amount received in empty homes premium is reduced, and a further risk that New Homes Bonus is abolished, meaning that these sources of funding are no longer sufficient to cover the salary costs of the empty homes officer. This risk has been mitigated by proposing a 3 year fixed term contract.

Should members approve the changes to the organisation structure recommended in this report, the costs will be included in the draft budget for 2022/23 and an updated Medium Term Financial Plan, both of which will be presented to Council at the budget setting meeting on 3 March 2022.

The financial risks of the report's recommendations are assessed as Medium.

5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In preparing this report the relevant of the following factors has also been considered; prevention of crime and disorder, equalities, environmental, climate change, health, human rights, personnel and property.



DDDC has committed to being a carbon neutral organisation by 2030 (7 years and 11 months away).

A net increase in Council staff has a climate change impact through associated energy demands of a new posts – heating and lighting of the office space for example – however, this is considered minimal. No additional office capacity is required to accommodate the proposed new post holders. There will be a requirement for the new post holders to travel in the course of their work, however this should not be significant due to the nature of the roles, and the Council has some mitigation in place - meetings are routinely held virtually and the Travel and Subsistence Policy encourages environmentally friendly means of travel including using public transport where possible. A net increase in Council staff as recommended will enable the effective delivery of corporate projects and priorities including climate change.

The climate change impacts of creating the new post of 'Empty Homes Officer' are dealt with separately in the relevant report.

6. CONTACT INFORMATION

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7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None