

COMMITTEE: ADMINISTRATION

DATE: 7TH NOVEMBER 2007

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY COHESION OFFICER -
ESTABLISHMENT OF PERMANENT POST

REPORT BY: INCLUSION AND COHESION MANAGER

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IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL	✓	COMMUNITY SAFETY
EQUALITIES	✓	ENVIRONMENT
FINANCIAL	✓	CONSULTATIONS
STAFFING		OTHER

WARDS AFFECTED: NONE

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's approval to the establishment of a permanent post of Community Cohesion Officer.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. Administration Committee is recommended to approve that the post of Community Cohesion Officer is established on a permanent basis, subject to the inclusion of the funding for the post in the Council's approved budget for 2008/9, and that, if such provision is not made, the post shall not be established.

BACKGROUND

3. The current post of Community Cohesion Policy Officer was established in 2005 on a temporary basis, using Resourcing Transformation funding.

That funding ceases on 31st March 2008. The current postholder has given her notice and leaves the Council on 12th October 2007. It is not seen as feasible to fill the post on a temporary basis, and, therefore, remaining staff, including the report author, and the current chair of the Equality, Inclusion and Cohesion Strategic Group, Mark Turner, will need to take on as much of the workload as is possible. Clearly, this can only be key priority areas, and much work will need to be put on hold for the time being.

REPORT

4. The conditions and circumstances that prevailed in 2005 in relation to community cohesion have not abated with the years; if anything, the expectations of a wide range of stakeholders, including central government and the citizens of Luton, have become more demanding and challenging.
5. In addition, new funding streams from central government are adding increasingly complex and sensitive issues to the work programme of the officer.
6. It is clear that your officers will not be able effectively to deliver on what is a key priority for the Council without a dedicated resource. It is also important to note that the nature of the role has changed from being rooted in policy development to being integral to the delivery of community cohesion initiatives.
7. In order to maintain Luton's highly regarded position at the forefront of cohesion activity, it is important that we are able to compete in the market place, and this is not likely to be possible in what is an increasingly competitive environment unless we are able to offer a permanent position.

PROPOSAL/OPTION

8. If the Committee did not approve the Recommendation it could approve a temporary post, which would be unlikely to attract the calibre of candidate the Council would wish to have in such a key post.
9. Alternatively the Committee could not approve the establishment of the post in any manner, and this would significantly impact on the Council's ability to meet the expectations of a range of stakeholders.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10. There are no legal implications arising from this report and this was agreed by J. Newman on 15 October 2007.

EQUALITIES, INCLUSION AND COHESION IMPLICATIONS

11. This post is integral to delivering the Council's work on promoting community cohesion, and to contributing to closer working between the disciplines of equality, inclusion and cohesion, without which the work of, for example, the Council's Equality, Inclusion and Cohesion Strategic Group would be severely compromised. These implications were agreed by the Head of Equalities on 4th October 2007.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

12. The cost of the post based on 2007/08 estimated pay rates (including employee oncosts) is £37,000 rising to £40,000 at the top of the grade. Whilst Administration Committee may create the post at this stage, the post may only be filled once Executive and Council have approved the budget provision, through the process of setting the Council's overall budget for 2008/9 in February 2008. An early establishment of the post will, however, enable preparatory work to proceed to fill the post at the very earliest opportunity. These implications were agreed by the Finance and Airport Client Manager (Corporate and Customer Services) on 2nd October 2007.