

## AGENDA

### EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2023

3.30 PM

COUNCIL CHAMBER, FENLAND HALL,  
MARCH

Committee Officer: Linda Albon  
Tel: 01354 622229  
e-mail: memberservices@fenland.gov.uk

- 1 To receive apologies for absence
- 2 Previous minutes (Pages 3 - 6)  
  
To confirm the minutes of the meeting held 6 October 2023.
- 3 To report additional items for consideration which the Chairman deems urgent by virtue of the special circumstances to be now specified.
- 4 To receive members' declaration of any interests under the Local Code of Conduct or any interest under the Code of Conduct on Planning Matters in respect of any item to be discussed at the meeting
- 5 Planning Team Recruitment and Retention - Market Supplement (Pages 7 - 26)

To provide Employment Committee with an updated market supplement scheme to review and agree for new and existing staff in the planning team following discussion and direction from Members at the Employment Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> October.

*The Appendix to this report comprises exempt information – to exclude the public (including the press) from a meeting of a committee it is necessary for the following proposition to be moved and adopted: “that the public be excluded from the meeting for Items which would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined*

*in the paragraphs 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as indicated.”*

6 Items which the Chairman has under Item 3 deemed urgent

Friday, 20 October 2023

Members: Councillor G Christy (Chairman), Councillor Dr H Nawaz (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor J Clark, Councillor Mrs M Davis, Councillor A Gowler and Councillor S Imafidon

## **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE**

**FRIDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2023 - 3.00 PM**



**PRESENT:** Councillor G Christy (Chairman), Councillor Dr H Nawaz (Vice-Chairman), Councillor I Benney, Councillor Mrs M Davis, Councillor A Gowler and Councillor S Imafidon

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:** Sam Anthony (Head of HR and OD), Marie Harley (HR Business Partner), Carol Pilson (Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer) and Linda Albon (Member Services & Governance Officer)

### **EC10/23      PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held 28 July 2023 were approved and signed.

### **EC11/23      CAPABILITY POLICY**

Members considered the Capability Policy report presented by Sam Anthony.

**Proposed by Councillor Benney, seconded by Councillor Davis and AGREED to note the policy and approve the adoption of the revised Capability Policy.**

### **EC12/23      PENSION DISCRETIONS UPDATE**

Members considered the Pension Discretions Update report presented by Marie Harley.

Members make comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Nawaz asked if there is anything more that members need to know, given that this is legislation driven and of no cost to the Council. Marie Harley responded that the driver for change was purely to introduce the option for employees to increase their pension benefits and the only requirement on Fenland District Council is to administer that process. Councillor Nawaz said if the Council is merely facilitating the process for the employee, then he could not see why the recommendations should not be approved.
- Councillor Davis commented that she is personally reaping the benefits from having paid AVCs when working; it is good to facilitate the scheme and she believes this to be a win-win situation all round.
- Councillor Christy agreed with Councillor Davis that this is a good scheme that pays dividends in the future, and he would hope that HR encourage staff to take up this offer, it is an enhancement to the comprehensive set of existing employee benefits.

**Proposed by Councillor Nawaz seconded by Councillor Gowler and AGREED to approve the recommended changes to the discretions statement to be exercised under the LGPS Regulations.**

### **EC13/23      PLANNING TEAM RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION - MARKET SUPPLEMENT**

Members considered the Planning Team Recruitment and Retention – Market Supplement report presented by Carol Pilson.

Carol Pilson apologised for an error at 3.1 of the published report in which the figures quoted, £47,500 in Years 1 and 3, should read £55,000 in Years 1 and 3.

Members made comments, asked questions and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Christy commented that many local councils use this approach to attract the right candidates and it is a situation that he has discussed at great length with officers.
- Councillor Davis said she supports this request, there have been problems in Planning for some time and they need to be addressed. Planning is a front facing department and if things go wrong it is reputational for the Council, and she is glad the supplement will also be applied to existing staff. Councillor Davis added that a lot of money has been paid in agency fees and reputationally it is not good to be seen to employing so many agency staff.
- Councillor Nawaz said that in essence he supports this, but he would like to know how the market supplement figure was arrived at and if any research has been undertaken to see if that figure is too little or too much. Carol Pilson responded that the precise figure is subjective, however research was undertaken, and a benchmarking table in the report compares salary levels with other local district councils, with senior posts being in the upper quartile by just a small amount. When attracting people to work at the Council, consideration needs to be given to their individual situations and what will entice them from the comfort of their existing roles. Carol Pilson added that the Council has tried but been unable to attract applicants with the existing salaries and benefits on offer without a market supplement and some roles have had little or no response. Despite all the positives that the Council can offer as an organisation in terms of culture and the one team approach along with all the other benefits, this is a competitive market with other councils and agencies. The Council now needs to test the market to see if the right call has been made to attract good quality candidates but whilst using public money responsibly.
- Councillor Nawaz said that he understands then that the figure is subjective but there has been no objective market research and the figure just chosen as what may be an inducement. He asked if anyone had been recruited to the additional planning posts which were approved at the last meeting. Carol Pilson responded that the planning policy roles had not yet been advertised, pending this discussion, so have not yet been tested on the market. However, in terms of evidence, when still in a shared service arrangement with Peterborough, the Council tried to engage agency staff and could not get them. From experience around advertising, the same external factors exist for principal and senior planners, with some of these roles having been advertised for over a year.
- Councillor Benney said he welcomes this but wondered if it goes far enough. He has been saying for a long time that the Council needs to pay more; these are professional people, their expertise is needed, and quality needs to be paid for. Councillor Benney reiterated that the Council needs good quality planners as an investment in its performance; members aspire to see growth and the delivery of new homes but if there is not the planning team to deliver this, then the Council is failing. It is competing in a market where the private sector can offer more money. The Council is currently paying a lot of money for good agency staff, so the quality is out there, but cannot attract them to work full time. Things like golden handshakes are needed, other councils are doing it so he would not say this is a cost, he would say this is an investment to obtain the quality staff required to deliver member aspirations. Therefore, he welcomes this report and if this does not work he would be happy for this committee to revisit the amount being offered.
- Councillor Davis said the Council is in a situation where planners are like hens' teeth; it is difficult to get staff anyway and it has to make Fenland attractive. The Council must look at other ways, not just money, to attract them.
- Councillor Gowler asked if the Council offers relocation packages. Carol Pilson responded that relocation packages are offered over a certain band. It is one of the benefits advertised for these roles as it is an important consideration however it becomes repayable if someone leaves before a certain time.
- Councillor Nawaz said he agreed with the previous comments made by fellow members but going back to his earlier question, will this be enough? As asserted, quality costs money or will

the committee have to revisit this again? Councillor Christy responded that there have been a number of discussions regarding this, there are some views that maybe more should be offered for some of the more senior roles, but he would like to ask, in terms of the recommendation, if the committee agrees with the principal of the market supplement but also his proposal to delegate the amount to the Chairman of the Employment Committee, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Portfolio Holder for Planning. He added that there is sufficient budget available and a massive saving to be had, and as alluded to by Councillor Benney, this is about creating a centre of excellence for planning for Fenland even to the point of potentially creating a source of income. In the first place, the Council has to attract the right people and, having discussed AVCs earlier in the meeting, the Council is starting to put together a very appealing package. Councillor Nawaz thanked Councillor Christy saying that addressed his concern and he would be happy with that arrangement.

**Employment Committee AGREED to the principal of market supplement for new and existing staff in the Planning Team and to delegate to the Chairman of Employment Committee, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Portfolio Holder for Planning to determine the final amount payable through market supplement.**

*This item comprised EXEMPT INFORMATION within Appendix 1 which is not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) but it was not necessary to go into confidential session.*

3.34 pm

Chairman

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<b>Agenda Item No:</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Employment Committee</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>30 October 2023</b>	
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>Planning Team Recruitment and Retention – Updated Market Supplement Report</b>	

This item comprises EXEMPT INFORMATION at Appendix 1 which is not for publication by virtue of Paragraphs 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).]

## **11 Purpose / Summary**

- 1.1 To provide Employment Committee with an updated market supplement scheme to review and agree for new and existing staff in the planning team following discussion and direction from Members at the Employment Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> October.

## **12 Key Issues**

- 2.1 Employment Committee considered a report at its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> October in regard to the introduction of market supplement for the Planning Team.
- 2.2 The 6<sup>th</sup> October report is appended and should be read in conjunction with this report to remind Members of the detailed reasons that were set out as to why market supplement was being considered for the Planning Team.
- 2.3 At its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> October, Members discussed whether the scheme as presented went far enough in providing for a remuneration package that was going to attract high quality candidates and ensure retention of existing staff.
- 2.4 The original proposal for new staff in regards to market supplement was £5,000 on appointment and a further £5,000 at the 3<sup>rd</sup> year anniversary of appointment. Following feedback from Members and further discussions with the Chairman, the revised proposal for new staff for Members to consider is for a 10% of base salary market supplement to be applied to all existing vacancies in the planning team. The suggested market supplement to be applied to existing staff is contained at confidential appendix 1.
- 2.5 This new proposal represents a saving on the original proposal.

## **3 Recommendations**

- 3.1 To approve the introduction of market supplement payments for new staff within the planning team at a cost of £50,500 in Year 1 and £50,500 in Year 3 dependent on the timing of new starters.
- 3.2 To approve the introduction of market supplement payments for existing staff as set out in Appendix 1.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	N/A
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Dee Laws, Portfolio Holder for Planning Councillor Chris Boden, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance
Report Originator(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Carol Pilson, Corporate Director Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director Nick Harding, Head of Planning
Contact Officer(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Carol Pilson, Corporate Director Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director Nick Harding, Head of Planning Sam Anthony, Head of HR
Background Papers	Employment Committee report and minutes – 6 <sup>th</sup> October

## **1 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES**

- 1.0 The Planning team have several long-standing vacancies across planning, enforcement, tree services, and now within the Local Plan team. Members and Officers have been exploring what other means are available to attract candidates to apply for planning jobs within the Council. Many of these vacancies have been open for a significant period of time and are being covered by agency staff, consultants and Capita at a significant cost to the Council. This is hampering performance in the team due to the turnover of staff and agency staff, and the additional time this takes to manage and administrate.

## **12 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

- 2.1 The Council recognises that set against this very difficult national recruitment landscape, that a step change in our approach needs to be considered to attract candidates to these roles.
- 2.2 Alternative ideas to boost the Council's recruitment campaign includes:



- partnership with the local government press, for example, the Municipal Journal, to market the Council's vacancies in the national press to attract more candidates;
- create a special section on the FDC website to market and promote planning vacancies;
- engage a recruitment consultant to target prospective candidates and proactively introduce them to the FDC vacancies;
- ensure all benefits to working at FDC are proactively advertised including the Council's One Team Culture;
- consider further financial incentives to be attached to these posts in the form of market supplement.

2.3 Market supplement has been introduced by some neighbouring and competing Councils which means that FDC could be now lagging behind in terms of the financial package it offers potential candidates. Market supplement can be characterised as a series of payments on top of salary that is taxed which encourages loyalty to the organisation through staged payments at intervals which are repayable to the Council if a member of staff leaves prior to the agreed period of time coming to an end.

2.4 Recent benchmarking of salaries shows:

<b>Authority</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Salary</b>	<b>Additional Financial incentives</b>
<b>Fenland District Council</b>	Planner	<b>£23,620- £32,020</b>	None at present
	Senior Planner	<b>£32,020 - £46,549</b>	
<b>Local District Council</b>	Planner	<b>£33,864 - £40,167</b>	None at present
	Senior Planner	<b>£40,167 -£43,320</b>	
<b>Local District Council</b>	Planning Officers –		Career graded posts

	Senior Planners	<b>£29,439 - £33,820 / £32,909 - £38,296</b>  <b>£37,261 - £42,503</b>	A two year fixed term market supplement of £4,000
<b>Local District Council</b>	Senior Planners	<b>£38,339 – £43,149</b>	None at present
<b>Local District Council</b>	Planning Officers  Senior Planners	<b>£30,151 - £33,820</b>  <b>£35,411 – £39,493</b>	Golden Hello payments as recruitment incentives for both roles. £2500 upon joining and £2500 after one year service. The payment must be returned if the employee leaves within a year of receiving each payment. New starters only.  Retention payments for existing members of staff generally in senior roles.
<b>Local District Council</b>	Planning Officers  Senior Planners	<b>£29,876 - £34,887 per annum</b>  <b>£34,887 to £39,897 per annum</b>	Based on 4 day working week  15% market supplement is applied to this post.

## MARKET SUPPLEMENT

2.5 Market supplement is a recruitment and retention tool that can be employed by the Council in specific circumstances where it is felt that its use may

overcome issues impacting specific services. Following recruitment campaigns against a very difficult national backdrop, it is considered the Council should consider utilising market supplement as an additional tool to try and encourage applicants to apply for permanent posts and to retain existing staff so as not to exacerbate the already chronic staffing situation further.

2.6 Market supplement can be used in our recruitment campaigns to attract new staff as well as be applied to existing staff to retain and protect our investment in these staff and to not lose them to other organisations meaning we have further vacancies to fill and the subsequent training period.

2.7 The Planning team has 11 vacancies which market supplement could be applied to. Based on the proposal within the paper, the market supplement for each post rounded to nearest hundred would be as follows:

Head of Planning (from 30<sup>th</sup> Dec) - £6500

Principal Planner - £5400

Senior Planner x 3 -£4700

Planning Policy Manager- £5700

Planning Policy Officer - £4700

Senior Enforcement Officer- £4100

Enforcement Officer-£3200

Tree Officer-£3600

S106 Monitoring Officer-£3200

2.8 For new starters, market supplement would be a first payment representing 10% of base salary on confirmation of their probationary period at 6 months and then a second payment representing 10% of base salary on the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of their start date with FDC. For existing staff posts and market supplement please see Appendix 1.

2.9 All staff would be required to sign a legal agreement returning the part of the payments should they leave within a defined period, and a sliding scale of repayment incorporated. If the employee refuses to sign the legal agreement, the payment cannot be made.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

2.10 The Council is employing agency staff, consultants and has an arrangement with Capita to fulfil vacant posts which is costing the Council considerably more than a fully staffed permanent team.

- 2.11 If the Planning team was fully staffed with permanently appointed staff the full year cost would be **£1,187,100**. Current budget for 2023/24 is £1,026,760 with a projected cost for 2023/24 of £828,600 based on staff currently in post, a reduction of £198,160 compared with the budget.
- 2.12 The projected cost of the Planning team due to agency staffing in 2023/24 is currently **£648,240** compared with a budget of £91,400, an increase of £556,840.
- 2.13 The total projected cost of the Planning Team (Staff plus agency) for 2023/24 is currently £1,476,840, an increase of £358,680 over the budgeted total cost of £1,118,160.
- 2.14 As Members know, Planning provides income to the Council through government set fees and charges. In 2022/23 financial year, Planning income was £1,252,284 including pre application fees.
- 2.15 The projected income for 2023/24 is £1,050,500 albeit planning income is difficult to predict due to its reliance on the submission of applications. Income to the end of August 2023 was £501,846 including pre-application fees.
- 2.16 Government consulted on an increase in planning fees in recent times which suggested a 35% uplift on fees for major applications and a 25% uplift on all other applications with an annual inflationary increase going forward. The ability to apply these increases was predicated on a certain level of performance within the service. Government have recently announced that this is now being laid before parliament and we await further guidance. This would represent a further source of income.
- 2.17 The financial impact of introducing market supplement for new starters should we be successful in recruiting to all vacant posts would be:

£50,500 in Year 1

£50,500 in Year 3 (subject to application of annual pay awards)

The financial impact of introducing market supplement for existing staff in identified in Appendix 1.

- 2.18 Fulfilling vacancies with alternative staffing solutions is costing the Council **£289,740** above the costs if all establishment posts were fulfilled. Having a settled permanent team with local knowledge will bring benefits in terms of performance as well as financial savings even with market supplement introduced as alternative staffing solutions are expensive, difficult to source, difficult to administer and come with instability as staff can move to other contracts with little notice.

- 2.19 Market supplement can be budgeted for from the Council's General Fund budget.
- 2.20 It should be noted that the Council's overall employment costs will also increase by 25-30% of the additional payments made.
- 2.21 Future payments are subject to annual pay awards.

## **13 CONSULTATION**

- 3.1 The Council's internal staff consultation body have been engaged on this matter.

## **14 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 It has been considered to not introduce market supplement and continue to readvertise posts in future, however, this has not brought forward any candidates and we are therefore having to finance expensive alternative staffing solutions. It is therefore felt that an alternative approach is required to improve performance, create a settled, permanent team that can deliver on Member priorities.

## **15 IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Legal Implications**

- 5.2 There are no specific legal implications as regards the specific recommendations contained in this report however the council is under a duty to deliver planning related outcomes within set statutory deadlines and the recommendations are designed to assist in achieving this outcome.

### **5.3 Financial Implications**

- 5.4 The total revenue impact of these proposals is £50,500 in Year 1 and £50,500 in Year 3, depending on when new recruits start with the Council. For existing staff this is set out at appendix 1. This proposal can be funded from the General Fund Revenue Budget which will see savings from no longer needing to use expensive alternative provision.

## **5.5 Equality Implications**

- 5.6 Recruitment and retention difficulties are acute particularly to the Planning service therefore it is felt there is a specific case set out in the paper to introduce market supplement in this service.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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<b>Agenda Item No:</b>	7	
<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Employment Committee</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>6 October 2023</b>	
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>Planning Team Recruitment and Retention – Market Supplement</b>	

This item comprises **EXEMPT INFORMATION** at Appendix 1 which is not for publication by virtue of Paragraphs 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended).]

## **11 Purpose / Summary**

- 1.1 To update on recruitment and retention issues within the planning team and to request approval for the introduction of market supplement for new and existing staff.

## **12 Key Issues**

- 2.1 As updated previously, the recruitment and retention of planners is a difficult national issue, which all Councils are grappling with to ensure their planning teams are fully staffed to ensure planning applications are processed in a timely fashion and to bring growth forward.
- 2.2 Fenland has a good track record of investing in its staff and growing its own planning staff from other areas of the Council's business and also recruiting junior planners who have then gone on to be senior planners thus fulfilling key posts.
- 2.3 However, the turnover of senior staff in the planning team means that our internal workforce development programme has not been able to keep pace with the vacancies that have arisen.
- 2.4 Currently, the Planning Team have vacancies for a Principal Planner, 3 Senior Planners, Senior Enforcement Officer, Enforcement Officer, Tree Officer, and for newly created posts made by this Committee for Planning Policy Manager, Planning Policy Officer and S106 Monitoring Officer.
- 2.5 Recruitment for the Principal and Senior Planning roles have been ongoing for over 12 months with very limited interest in these posts. Similarly, recruitment for the Enforcement posts since they became vacant have yielded appointable candidates who have chosen not to join the Council. We have advertised for the Tree Officer jointly with the Open Spaces Team on two occasions and not found any appointable candidates.
- 2.6 As mentioned, the team has seen several staff members leave over recent times to work in other Councils and to retire. We have not been able to replace those staff with permanent staff due to not being able to recruit. Therefore, there is an increased emphasis on trying to retain existing staff so

the staffing situation within the team does not get worse and potentially compromise the delivery of the service.

- 2.7 Many planners have also joined the private sector in recent years especially becoming agency staff due to the flexibility and generous rates of pay which creates even more competition for a limited pool of skilled planning staff in local government.
- 2.8 The government have recognised this national issue and the Council recently bid to an external funding pot, the Planning Skills Delivery Fund for £75,000 in recognition of our resourcing challenges. The Fund is likely to be highly oversubscribed given many Councils are in a similar position.
- 2.9 Members are aware that performance in relation to Minor and Other applications is currently 71% (against a target of 80%) on the 2 year rolling government performance tracker. If the Council falls below 70%, there is a risk it will be designated by government. The recruitment situation is an aggravating factor in the performance of minor applications due to lack of permanent staff, turnover of agency staff etc, therefore the report recommendations are also supporting an improvement in performance that a settled, permanent staffing team can bring.
- 2.10 The vacancies in Planning, Enforcement and Tree Officer are being covered by agency staff, consultants and through the arrangement the Council has with Capita for the provision of planning officers. These arrangements are costly and far exceed the establishment budget.
- 2.11 Following review of the Council's approach to recruitment and retention of planning and associated staff within that team, it is suggested that a series of new initiatives are brought forward to try and successfully recruit to a series of vacant posts including the introduction of market supplement for new and existing staff.
- 2.12 Other Councils have introduced various remuneration options including market supplement to boost the remuneration offered to planning staff in recognition of the highly competitive nature of the recruitment market in this skilled area.

### **3 Recommendations**

- 3.1 To approve the introduction of market supplement payments for new staff within the planning team at a cost of £47,500 in Year 1 and £47,500 in Year 3 dependent on the timing of new starters.
- 3.2 To approve the introduction of market supplement payments for existing staff as set out in Appendix 1.

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	N/A

Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Dee Laws, Portfolio Holder for Planning Councillor Chris Boden, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance
Report Originator(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Carol Pilson, Corporate Director Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director Nick Harding, Head of Planning
Contact Officer(s)	Paul Medd, Chief Executive Carol Pilson, Corporate Director Peter Catchpole, Corporate Director Nick Harding, Head of Planning Sam Anthony, Head of HR
Background Papers	

## **1 BACKGROUND AND INTENDED OUTCOMES**

- 1.0 The Planning team have several long-standing vacancies across planning, enforcement, tree services, and now within the Local Plan team. Members and Officers have been exploring what other means are available to attract candidates to apply for planning jobs within the Council. Many of these vacancies have been open for a significant period of time and are being covered by agency staff, consultants and Capita at a significant cost to the Council. This is hampering performance in the team due to the turnover of staff and agency staff, and the additional time this takes to manage and administrate.

## **12 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION**

- 2.1 The Council recognises that set against this very difficult national recruitment landscape, that a step change in our approach needs to be considered to attract candidates to these roles.
- 2.2 Alternative ideas to boost the Council's recruitment campaign includes:
- partnership with the local government press, for example, the Municipal Journal, to market the Council's vacancies in the national press to attract more candidates;
  - create a special section on the FDC website to market and promote planning vacancies;

- engage a recruitment consultant to target prospective candidates and proactively introduce them to the FDC vacancies;
- ensure all benefits to working at FDC are proactively advertised including the Council's One Team Culture;
- consider further financial incentives to be attached to these posts in the form of market supplement.

2.3 Market supplement has been introduced by some neighbouring and competing Councils which means that FDC could be now lagging behind in terms of the financial package it offers potential candidates. Market supplement can be characterised as a series of payments on top of salary that is taxed which encourages loyalty to the organisation through staged payments at intervals which are repayable to the Council if a member of staff leaves prior to the agreed period of time coming to an end.

2.4 Recent benchmarking of salaries shows:

<b>Authority</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Salary</b>	<b>Additional Financial incentives</b>
<b>Fenland District Council</b>	Planner	<b>£23,620 - £32,020</b>	None at present
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	Senior Planner	<b>£40,167 - £43,320</b>	
<b>Local District Council</b>	Planning Officers –	<b>£29,439 - £33,820 / £32,909 - £38,296</b>	Career graded posts
	Senior Planners	<b>£37,261 - £42,503</b>	A two year fixed term market

			supplement of £4,000
<b>Local District Council</b>	Senior Planners	<b>£38,339 – £43,149</b>	None at present
<b>Local District Council</b>	Planning Officers	<b>£30,151 - £33,820</b>	Golden Hello payments as recruitment incentives for both roles. £2500 upon joining and £2500 after one year service. The payment must be returned if the employee leaves within a year of receiving each payment. New starters only.  Retention payments for existing members of staff generally in senior roles.
	Senior Planners	<b>£35,411 – £39,493</b>	
<b>Local District Council</b>	Planning Officers	<b>£29,876 - £34,887 per annum</b>	Based on 4 day working week
	Senior Planners	<b>£34,887 to £39,897 per annum</b>	15% market supplement is applied to this post.

## MARKET SUPPLEMENT

2.5 Market supplement is a recruitment and retention tool that can be employed by the Council in specific circumstances where it is felt that its use may overcome issues impacting specific services. Following recruitment campaigns against a very difficult national backdrop, it is considered the Council should consider utilising market supplement as an additional tool to try and encourage applicants to apply for permanent posts and to retain existing staff so as not to exacerbate the already chronic staffing situation further.

- 2.6 Market supplement can be used in our recruitment campaigns to attract new staff as well as be applied to existing staff to retain and protect our investment in these staff and to not lose them to other organisations meaning we have further vacancies to fill and the subsequent training period.
- 2.7 The Planning team has 11 vacancies which market supplement could be applied to:
- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| Head of Planning (from 30 <sup>th</sup> Dec) | Principal Planner       |
| Senior Planner x 3                           | Planning Policy Manager |
| Planning Policy Officer                      |                         |
| Senior Enforcement Officer                   | Enforcement Officer     |
| Tree Officer                                 | S106 Monitoring Officer |
- 2.8 For new starters, market supplement would be a first payment of £5,000 in first month of starting employment at FDC and then a second payment made of £5,000 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of their start date with FDC. For existing staff posts and market supplement please see Appendix 1.
- 2.9 All staff would be required to sign a legal agreement returning the part of the payments should they leave within a defined period, and a sliding scale of repayment incorporated. If the employee refuses to sign the legal agreement, the payment cannot be made.

## FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 2.10 The Council is employing agency staff, consultants and has an arrangement with Capita to fulfil vacant posts which is costing the Council considerably more than a fully staffed permanent team.
- 2.11 If the Planning team was fully staffed with permanently appointed staff the full year cost would be **£1,187,100**. Current budget for 2023/24 is £1,026,760 with a projected cost for 2023/24 of £828,600 based on staff currently in post, a reduction of £198,160 compared with the budget.
- 2.12 The projected cost of the Planning team due to agency staffing in 2023/24 is currently **£648,240** compared with a budget of £91,400, an increase of £556,840.
- 2.13 The total projected cost of the Planning Team (Staff plus agency) for 2023/24 is currently £1,476,840, an increase of £358,680 over the budgeted total cost of £1,118,160.

- 2.14 As Members know, Planning provides income to the Council through government set fees and charges. In 2022/23 financial year, Planning income was £1,252,284 including pre application fees.
- 2.15 The projected income for 2023/24 is £1,050,500 albeit planning income is difficult to predict due to its reliance on the submission of applications. Income to the end of August 2023 was £501,846 including pre-application fees.
- 2.16 Government consulted on an increase in planning fees in recent times which suggested a 35% uplift on fees for major applications and a 25% uplift on all other applications with an annual inflationary increase going forward. The ability to apply these increases was predicated on a certain level of performance within the service. Government have recently announced that this is now being laid before parliament and we await further guidance. This would represent a further source of income.
- 2.17 The financial impact of introducing market supplement for new starters should we be successful in recruiting to all vacant posts would be:

£55,000 in Year 1

£55,000 in Year 3

The financial impact of introducing market supplement for existing staff in identified in Appendix 1.

- 2.18 Fulfilling vacancies with alternative staffing solutions is costing the Council **£289,740** above the costs if all establishment posts were fulfilled. Having a settled permanent team with local knowledge will bring benefits in terms of performance as well as financial savings even with market supplement introduced as alternative staffing solutions are expensive, difficult to source, difficult to administer and come with instability as staff can move to other contracts with little notice.
- 2.19 Market supplement can be budgeted for from the Council's General Fund budget.

## 13 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The Council's internal staff consultation body have been engaged on this matter.

## **14 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 4.1 It has been considered to not introduce market supplement and continue to readvertise posts in future, however, this has not brought forward any candidates and we are therefore having to finance expensive alternative staffing solutions. It is therefore felt that an alternative approach is required to improve performance, create a settled, permanent team that can deliver on Member priorities.

## **15 IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Legal Implications**

- 5.2 There are no specific legal implications as regards the specific recommendations contained in this report however the council is under a duty to deliver planning related outcomes within set statutory deadlines and the recommendations are designed to assist in achieving this outcome.

### **5.3 Financial Implications**

- 5.4 The total revenue impact of these proposals is £55,000 in Year 1 and £55,000 in Year 3, depending on when new recruits start with the Council. For existing staff this is set out at appendix 1. This proposal can be funded from the General Fund Revenue Budget which will see savings from no longer needing to use expensive alternative provision.

### **5.5 Equality Implications**

- 5.6 Recruitment and retention difficulties are acute particularly to the Planning service therefore it is felt there is a specific case set out in the paper to introduce market supplement in this service.



By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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