

Public Document Pack

ADDITIONAL CIRCULATION



To: Councillor Young, Convener; Councillor Forsyth, Vice Convener; and Councillors Allan, Cameron, Crockett, Dickson, Donnelly, Jackie Dunbar, Grant, Laing, McCaig, Milne, Noble, Reynolds and Yuill.

Town House,
ABERDEEN 25 September 2014

FINANCE, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The undernoted items are circulated in connection with the meeting of the **FINANCE, POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE** to be held here in the Town House on **TUESDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2014 at 2.00 pm.**

JANE G. MACEACHRAN
HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

BUSINESS

REQUESTS FOR DEPUTATIONS

- 2.1 Request from Mr John Main on behalf of Torry Heritage Group in relation to item 13.1 on the agenda (Pages 1 - 2)

STAFFING - BUSINESS CASES

- 9.4 Delivery of E-Building Standards (Pages 3 - 8)
- 9.5 Establishment of 2 Application Support Assistants (Pages 9 - 16)
- 9.6 Establishment of 2 Senior Planner Posts and 1 Planner Post (Pages 17 - 24)
- 9.7 Re-grade - Application Support Assistants (Pages 25 - 32)

GENERAL BUSINESS

11.1 Travel Policy, Procedure and Guidance (Pages 33 - 46)

11.6 Phase 3 Restructure - Interim Proposals (Pages 47 - 54)

ITEMS WHICH THE COMMITTEE MAY WISH TO CONSIDER IN PRIVATE

GENERAL BUSINESS

13.1 Disposal - Former Victoria Road School - to follow

Should you require any further information about this agenda, please contact Allison Swanson, tel. (52)2822 or email aswanson@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Request for Deputation

Name:: John Main on behalf of the Torry Heritage Group

Committee: Finance, Policy and Resources Committee – 30th Sept 2014

Agenda Item: 13.1

The action I wish the Council/Committee to take

To work with the community of Torry to retain and restore the two buildings of the former Victoria Road School that makes a unique and irreplaceable example of the granite heritage of Torry. These are community assets with architectural and historic value that can and must be retained for future generations of Torry and Aberdeen to enjoy and use

We will present a petition with 2200+ supporters calling on the City Council to take action for the retention and restoration of the granite heritage of Torry and Aberdeen

Please note that in submitting a deputation your name will be placed in the public domain and recorded in the minute.

Return by email to committeeservices@aberdeencity.gov.uk or by post to:

Head of Legal and Democratic Services
1st Floor
Town House
Broad Street
Aberdeen
AB10 1AQ

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

BUSINESS CASE

COMMITTEE Finance, Policy & Resources

DATE 30 September
2014

LEAD OFFICER Gordon Spence

AUTHOR OF BUSINESS CASE Gordon Spence

NAME(S) OF HR ADVISER(S) CONSULTED Lindsay MacInnes

NAME(S) OF FINANCE PARTNER(S) CONSULTED Susan Gray

TITLE OF BUSINESS CASE Delivery of E-Building Standards

REPORT NUMBER

PURPOSE OF BUSINESS CASE

The primary role of verification under the Building (Scotland) Act 2003 is to issue building warrant approvals and accept completion submissions. The Scottish Government has committed to providing E-Building Standards similar to the previously introduced E-Planning. This will allow customers to submit building warrant applications and fees on-line. Additionally, the system will allow for smarter working by the electronic processing and archiving of applications which are currently processed in paper format. There is an expectation that Councils will engage in this project. The "go-live" date for E-Building Standards is March 2016 – implementation will take place during 2015. There is also an expectation by the Scottish Government that building standards fee income is reinvested in service improvements with performance reported annually to Scottish Ministers.

The implementation of E-Planning resulted in a requirement for additional resources in manpower, hardware and software. An E-Planning Project Manager was appointed and it is intended that this post will be expanded to incorporate E-Building Standards. However, additional resources are required in the form of input from building standards staff and implementation and on-going delivery by administrative staff.

Minor Change Major Change (tick as appropriate)

Reason for choice of category:

The requirement for these posts has already been budgeted for as part of the PBB process and the creation of these posts has no negative impact on other services or organisations.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Committee approve the following:

Establishment of 2 new posts – 1 x Building Standards Officer and, 1 x Application Support Assistant.

Additional resource(s) / change to structure required	Job title(s)	No of jobs
Establishment of permanent job	1 x Building Standards Officer 1 x Application Support Assistant	2
Conversion of fixed term job to permanent status		
Creation of fixed term job		
Extension of fixed term job		
Dis-establishment of permanent job		
Change to Job Title	Former: Revised:	
*Redesign of existing job		

* for a redesign of an existing job there should be reference in the report to the impact of the redesign on the jobholder(s).

BUSINESS CASE

Please do not repeat any information contained in other sections of the report

- 1. With specific reference to anticipated outputs/outcomes, state how the recommendation(s) support corporate objectives e.g. Council's Policy Statement; Vision and Values; Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003; Community Plan; Transformation Programme etc.**

Local Government Act (Scotland) 2003

The provision of E-Building Standards delivers best value, shows continuous improvement and improves performance.

- 2. State how the recommendation(s) support service objectives and plans and/or the achievement of a Statutory Performance Indicator.**

Service objectives are already identified within the How Good is Our Service Plan and can be summarised as:

Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure Priorities

Delivery of Structure Plan and Local Development Plan – ensure that development identified in both these plans is delivered on the ground to meet the economic needs of the City.

Service Improvement / Best Value – ensuring that a quality building standards service with a customer focus is provided that meets the needs of applicants, economic activity and Scottish Government Ministers' aims.

- 3. A) Outline why the new work cannot be undertaken within existing staff resources e.g. by re-distributing resources or curtailing lower priority services.**

There has been a dramatic increase of economic activity in the City within the last two years which is evidenced by the increase in scale of Building Warrant applications received and especially in major developments.

To correctly programme and deliver E-Building Standards, will require technical, building standards input which will detract from delivery of building warrant applications. This would have a direct impact on performance which is monitored both locally and nationally.

OR B) In the case of the redesign of an existing job, outline details of the new tasks being undertaken.

4. Risk Management: What are the consequences of not proceeding with the recommendation(s)?

There is a reputation risk to the Council if E-Building Standards is not delivered timeously. Failure to implement E-Building Standards, or a delay to implementation, also carries the risk of not benefiting from the efficiency gains and improved customer service that the project offers.

5. Risk Assessment: What Health and Safety considerations have been taken into account?

There are no Health & Safety risks.

6. Financial Implications:

Impact on current year's revenue/capital budget:

Job Title	JE Grade	Min Salary*	Max Salary*

*These figures are based on an appointment being made by 01/04/15 Minimum and maximum salary costs also include agreed allowances and 30.3% on costs.

Net Cost	£ 0	Net Saving	£ 0
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Full year impact on revenue/capital budget:

Job Title	JE Grade	Min Salary*	Max Salary*
Building Standards Officer	G13	£39,134	£44,775
Application Support Assistant	G9	£23,616	£26,599

*Minimum and maximum salary costs include agreed allowances and 30.3% on costs (ie National Insurance and employer's pension contributions).

Net Cost	£62,750	Net Saving	£ 0
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Source and amount of revenue/capital budget funding available:

The expenditure will be covered by the increased fee income received through building warrant submissions already agreed through the Priority Based Budgeting process.

Amount of external monies available within the current financial year:

None required.

Amount of external monies available in total:

None

- 7. If the recommendation(s) relate to additional staffing, outline and justify the proposed contractual status of the new employee(s) i.e. 'permanent' or fixed term?**

Permanent – experience from the implementation of E-Planning has indicated that there will be an on-going demand for these resources through implementation and beyond.

- 8. If the recommendation(s) are funded on a time-limited basis from an external source, what is the likelihood of the project continuing beyond the term of funding?**

No applicable

- 9. If the project is likely to continue beyond the term of funding, what steps are being considered in order to finance this extension?**

Not applicable

- 10. In the case of fixed term contracts, state whether this contract is task or event related; outline the proposed exit strategy and detail how potential exit costs will be met.**

Not applicable

11. What accommodation and equipment considerations have been taken into account?

It will be necessary to accommodate the additional staff within the team areas in Marischal College and within the Smarter Working set-up.

12. HR Comment(s)

13. Legal, Finance or Trades Union Comment(s)

13. Report Author Details

Gordon Spence, Building Standards Manager. 01224 522436. gspence@aberdeencity.gov.uk.

Approved under delegated authority: _____

Date: _____

or

Committee Approval Required

Establishment Control Table

Post(s) to be established	No of posts	Weeks /hours	Job No.	Reports to	Location	Grade	Financial Code	JE No
Post(s) to be disestablished	No of posts	Weeks/hours	Job No.	Reports to	Location	Grade	Financial Code	JE No
Posts (for grade change only)	No of posts	Job no.	Reports to	Location	Old Grade	New Grade	JE No	

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

BUSINESS CASE

COMMITTEE Finance, Policy & Resources **DATE**

LEAD OFFICER Gordon Spence

AUTHOR OF BUSINESS CASE Gordon Spence

NAME(S) OF HR ADVISER(S) CONSULTED Lindsay MacInnes

NAME(S) OF FINANCE PARTNER(S) CONSULTED Susan Gray

TITLE OF BUSINESS CASE Establishment of 2 Application Support Assistants

REPORT NUMBER

PURPOSE OF BUSINESS CASE

The Application Support Team provides the administrative support to the Development Management and Building Standards statutory functions. The team deal with the receipt, validation, lodging, and processing of planning and building warrant applications. Additionally, they are customer facing, engaging customers at reception by telephone and e-mail, providing advice and guidance on the application process and answering general technical enquiries at source.

The timely and efficient processing of applications directly impacts on the performance of the two services which are monitored by both local and national standards and as part of the attainment of Customer Service Excellence. The level of development in the city means that additional capacity is required to ensure that we process applications as quickly as possible and that professional planning and building standards officers are able to focus on the evaluation of applications rather than administrative tasks.

There is an expectation by the Scottish Government that Councils will reinvest fee income from planning and building warrant applications into service improvements with potential penalties imposed if Councils fail to demonstrate a sustained improvement in performance. This business case is therefore to reinvest income in additional administrative support to ensure that the Council does improve our performance in terms of timescales for processing applications (the key indicator being monitored by the Scottish Government).

Minor Change Major Change (tick as appropriate)

Reason for choice of category:

The requirement for these posts has already been budgeted as part of the PBB process and the creation of these posts has no negative impact on other services or organisations.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that approval is given for the establishment of 2 new Application Support Assistants to complement the existing Application Support Team providing support to the Development Management and Building Standards services.

Additional resource(s) / change to structure required	Job title(s)	No of jobs
Establishment of permanent job	Application Support Assistants	2
Conversion of fixed term job to permanent status		
Creation of fixed term job		
Extension of fixed term job		
Dis-establishment of permanent job		
Change to Job Title	Former: Revised:	
*Redesign of existing job		

* for a redesign of an existing job there should be reference in the report to the impact of the redesign on the jobholder(s).

BUSINESS CASE

Please do not repeat any information contained in other sections of the report

- 1. With specific reference to anticipated outputs/outcomes, state how the recommendation(s) support corporate objectives e.g. Council's Policy Statement; Vision and Values; Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003; Community Plan; Transformation Programme etc.**

Strategic Infrastructure Plan Goals

Step Change in Supply of Housing – delivery of housing by private developers, housing associations and local authority led projects – requires the timely delivery of statutory approvals for planning permission and building warrant approval.

Skills and Labour Requirements – delivery of a high quality domestic and commercial built environment boosts economic activity and makes Aberdeen a more attractive place to work and live.

- 2. State how the recommendation(s) support service objectives and plans and/or the achievement of a Statutory Performance Indicator.**

Service objectives are already identified within the How Good is Our Service Plan and can be summarised as:

Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure Priorities

Delivery of Structure Plan and Local Development Plan – ensure that development identified in both these plans is delivered on the ground to meet the economic needs of the City.

Service Improvement / Best Value – ensuring that quality planning and building standards services, with a customer focus, are provided and meet the needs of applicants, economic activity and Scottish Government.

Beyond this, a number of performance indicators are embedded in our Customer Service Excellence status, as well as national performance frameworks for both planning and building standards. Attainment of performance is reliant on an adequately resourced and effective application support team.

3. A) Outline why the new work cannot be undertaken within existing staff resources e.g. by re-distributing resources or curtailing lower priority services.

There has been a dramatic increase in economic activity in the City within the last two years. For example the total value of work the Building Standards team processed in 2012 was £232,622,241 compared with £469,472,914 in 2013, a 200% increase. The value of work is an indicator of the complexity of developments requiring to be verified, which in turn, attracts the need for additional resources. Equally, planning colleagues have seen a marked increase in the number of major planning applications which require additional and more complex consultation processes increasing the workload for the Application Support Team. The first financial quarter of 2014 has shown no reduction in the submission of these types of applications.

OR B) In the case of the redesign of an existing job, outline details of the new tasks being undertaken.

4. Risk Management: What are the consequences of not proceeding with the recommendation(s)?

Underperforming verifiers can in the first instance be audited and face the risk of having verification removed, which is currently a fee income generator for the Council. Within the Planning Performance Framework, Scottish Government has the power to reduce fee income for an underperforming Authority. Clearly, there is a reputation risk to the Council if either of these instances occurs, as well as the potential for developers to invest elsewhere.

5. Risk Assessment: What Health and Safety considerations have been taken into account?

There is a risk that with workloads continuing at the current level staff will begin to suffer from stress related illnesses.

6. Financial Implications:

Impact on current year's revenue/capital budget:

Job Title	JE Grade	Min Salary*	Max Salary*
Application Support Assistant	G9	£11,808	£13,300

*These figures are based on an appointment being made by 01/01/15 Minimum and maximum salary costs also include agreed allowances and 30.3% on costs.

Net Cost	£ 11,808	Net Saving	£ 0
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Full year impact on revenue/capital budget:

Job Title	JE Grade	Min Salary*	Max Salary*
Application Support Assistant	G9	£47,232	£53,198

*Minimum and maximum salary costs include agreed allowances and 30.3% on costs (ie National Insurance and employer's pension contributions).

Net Cost	£47,232	Net Saving	£ 0
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Source and amount of revenue/capital budget funding available:

The expenditure will be covered by the increased fee income received through building warrant submissions already agreed through the Priority Based Budgeting process.

Amount of external monies available within the current financial year:

The expenditure will be covered by the increased fee income received through building warrant submissions already agreed through the Priority Based Budgeting process.

Amount of external monies available in total:

None

7. **If the recommendation(s) relate to additional staffing, outline and justify the proposed contractual status of the new employee(s) i.e. 'permanent' or fixed term?**

Permanent – there is an increase in economic activity which shows no signs of slowing down in the foreseeable future. It is important to meet the demand of this activity with a properly resourced service by re-investing the fee income in service improvements.

8. **If the recommendation(s) are funded on a time-limited basis from an external source, what is the likelihood of the project continuing beyond the term of funding?**

No applicable

9. **If the project is likely to continue beyond the term of funding, what steps are being considered in order to finance this extension?**

Not applicable

10. **In the case of fixed term contracts, state whether this contract is task or event related; outline the proposed exit strategy and detail how potential exit costs will be met.**

Not applicable

11. **What accommodation and equipment considerations have been taken into account?**

It will be necessary to accommodate the additional staff within the Application Support Team in Marischal College and within the Smarter Working set-up.

12. **HR Comment(s)**

13. **Legal, Finance or Trades Union Comment(s)**

13. Report Author Details

Gordon Spence/Daniel Lewis, Building Standards Manager/Development Management Manager.
gspence@aberdeencity.gov.uk/dlewis@aberdeencity.gov.uk. 01224 522436/522250.

Approved under delegated authority: _____

Date: _____

or

Committee Approval Required

Establishment Control Table

Post(s) to be established	No of posts	Weeks /hours	Job No.	Reports to	Location	Grade	Financial Code	JE No
Post(s) to be disestablished	No of posts	Weeks/hours	Job No.	Reports to	Location	Grade	Financial Code	JE No
Posts (for grade change only)	No of posts	Job no.	Reports to	Location	Old Grade	New Grade	JE No	

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

BUSINESS CASE

COMMITTEE Finance, Policy & Resources

DATE 30 September 14

LEAD OFFICER Daniel Lewis

AUTHOR OF BUSINESS CASE Daniel Lewis

NAME(S) OF HR ADVISER(S) CONSULTED Lindsay MacInnes

NAME(S) OF FINANCE PARTNER(S) CONSULTED Susan Gray

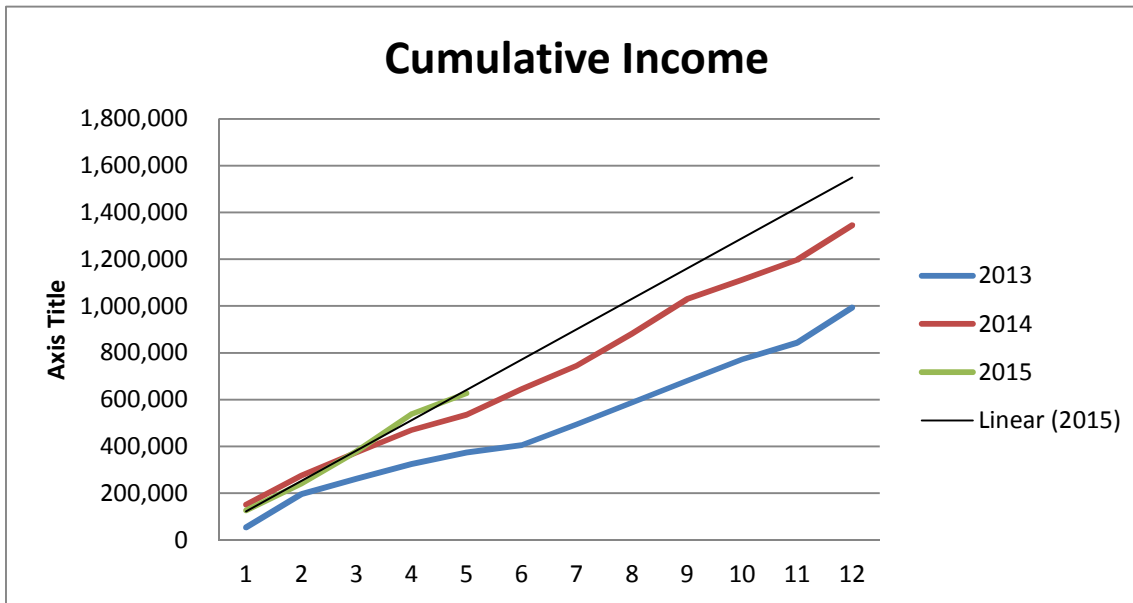
TITLE OF BUSINESS CASE Establishment of 2 Senior Planner Posts and 1 Planner Post

REPORT NUMBER

PURPOSE OF BUSINESS CASE

The Development Management Team handles all planning and other applications for development within the City as well as masterplanning of the full range of land release and brownfield sites with the aim of ensuring that the Council facilitates and creates a future legacy of high quality, economically buoyant and sustainable places for the citizens of Aberdeen.

The team is currently experiencing an unprecedented surge in masterplanning work on local development plan land release sites, as well as increasing numbers of applications – many of them complex and significant and occurring simultaneously. All the evidence indicates that this workload will not diminish in any way in future years and is likely to intensify. The capacity of the existing staff resource has been exceeded and staff can best be described as fire fighting on a day to day basis. The Scottish Government indicated last year that it expected an improvement in the processing times, especially for major applications (which have the maximum economic impact on the wellbeing of the City) and has introduced a penalty clause to be imposed on planning authorities who do not demonstrate a sustained improvement in performance. Unfortunately processing times in the City have flat lined since last year. All efforts have been, and continue to be, made to improve processes and procedures (including a full comprehensive review of administrative structures, systems, processes and procedures) but the evidence shows that this will not be sufficient on its own. Benchmarking with all other Scottish Local Authorities shows a significant comparative shortfall in the staff resource pro rata per application dealt with. At the same time planning application fee income has increased dramatically which provides statistical evidence of the increase in complex and significant applications. See table below.



Much more analysis, evidence and benchmarking data to support the statements above has been done and can be provided if required.

Two new Senior Planner posts and one Planner post are required to cope with the workload. The Scottish Government has stated that it expects planning fee income to be reinvested in improvements to the planning service. The requirement for these posts has already been budgeted as a PBB Budget Option for 2015/16 (Reference EPI_PSD44). The salary of these posts can be paid for out of the increase in planning fee income (a further 5 percent increase in planning fees will come into effect in November - further boosting income).

Minor Change Major Change (tick as appropriate)

Reason for choice of category:

The requirement for these posts has already been budgeted as a PBB Budget Option for 2015/16 (Reference EPI_PSD44). The increase in staff is small compared with the total staff complement of Development Management (44 staff) and the fee income that will be received this year (highly likely to exceed £1.5M).

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that approval is given to create three new posts in the structure constituting 2 Senior Planner positions (in Applications Team) and 1 Planner Position (likely within MDC Team).

Additional resource(s) / change to structure required	Job title(s)	No of jobs
Establishment of permanent job	Senior Planner	2
	Planner	1
Conversion of fixed term job to permanent status		

Creation of fixed term job		
Extension of fixed term job		
Dis-establishment of permanent job		
Change to Job Title	Former: Revised:	
*Redesign of existing job		

* for a redesign of an existing job there should be reference in the report to the impact of the redesign on the jobholder(s).

BUSINESS CASE

Please do not repeat any information contained in other sections of the report

- 1. With specific reference to anticipated outputs/outcomes, state how the recommendation(s) support corporate objectives e.g. Council's Policy Statement; Vision and Values; Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003; Community Plan; Transformation Programme etc.**

Strategic Infrastructure Plan Goals

Step Change in Supply of Housing – delivery of housing by private developers, housing associations and local authority led projects – requires the timely delivery of statutory approvals for planning permission.

Skills and Labour Requirements – delivery of high quality domestic and commercial built environment boosts economic activity and makes Aberdeen a more attractive place to work and live.

- 2. State how the recommendation(s) support service objectives and plans and/or the achievement of a Statutory Performance Indicator.**

Service objectives are already identified within the How Good is Our Service Plan and can be summarised as:

Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure Priorities

Delivery of Structure Plan and Local Development Plan – ensure that development identified in both these plans is delivered on the ground to meet the economic needs of the City.

Service Improvement / Best Value – ensuring that quality planning services, with a customer focus, are provided and meet the needs of applicants, economic activity and Scottish Government.

Beyond this, a number of performance indicators are embedded in our Customer Service Excellence status, as well as national performance frameworks for both planning and building standards. Attainment of performance is reliant on an adequately resourced and effective development management team.

3. A) Outline why the new work cannot be undertaken within existing staff resources e.g. by re-distributing resources or curtailing lower priority services.

There has been a dramatic increase in economic activity in the City within the last two years. Evidence of this is provided by the significant surge in applications and associated fee income (see graph above) which has further increased in the first financial quarter of 2014/15. The value of work is an indicator of the complexity of developments which in turn, attracts the need for additional resources.

OR B) In the case of the redesign of an existing job, outline details of the new tasks being undertaken.

4. Risk Management: What are the consequences of not proceeding with the recommendation(s)?

In January the Regulatory Reform (Scotland) Act introduced powers for the Scottish Government to reduce the level of fees, and consequently fee income, for underperforming Local Authorities. Based on indicators of application processing time, performance in 2013-14 did not improve compared with 2012-13. The evidence (benchmarking etc) indicates that lack of staff resource was a significant contributory factor to this level of performance. There is a risk that the Scottish Government might choose to exercise this power in future years if this situation persists with a significant reputational and financial risk to the Council. There is also a risk that delays in determining planning applications will result in developers investing outwith the City which would undermine the achievement of Council objectives. And time spent dealing with complaints relating to delays could be better spent in determining applications.

5. Risk Assessment: What Health and Safety considerations have been taken into account?

Staff are currently under significant pressure with many working beyond their contracted hours. There is a risk that this pressure could lead to stress related illnesses.

6. Financial Implications:

Impact on current year's revenue/capital budget:

Job Title	JE Grade	Min Salary*	Max Salary*
Senior Planner	G14	£11,200	£12,804
Senior Planner	G14	£11,200	£12,804
Planner	G13	£9,783	£11,193

***These figures are based on an appointment being made by 01/01/15. Minimum and maximum salary costs also include agreed allowances and 30.3% on costs.**

Net Cost	£ 32,183	Net Saving	£ 0
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Full year impact on revenue/capital budget:

Job Title	JE Grade	Min Salary*	Max Salary*
Senior Planner	G14	£44,800	£51,217
Senior Planner	G14	£44,800	£51,217
Planner	G13	£39,134	£44,775

***Minimum and maximum salary costs include agreed allowances and 30.3% on costs (ie National Insurance and employer's pension contributions).**

Net Cost	£128,734	Net Saving	£ 0
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Source and amount of revenue/capital budget funding available:

The expenditure will be covered by the increased fee income received through planning application fees already agreed through the Priority Based Budgeting process.

Amount of external monies available within the current financial year:

The expenditure will be covered by the increased fee income received through planning application fees already agreed through the Priority Based Budgeting process.

Amount of external monies available in total:

None

7. If the recommendation(s) relate to additional staffing, outline and justify the proposed contractual status of the new employee(s) i.e. 'permanent' or fixed term?

Permanent – there is an increase in economic activity which shows no signs of slowing down in the foreseeable future. It is important to meet the demand of this activity with a properly resourced service by re-investing the fee income in service improvements.

8. If the recommendation(s) are funded on a time-limited basis from an external source, what is the likelihood of the project continuing beyond the term of funding?

Not applicable

9. If the project is likely to continue beyond the term of funding, what steps are being considered in order to finance this extension?

Not applicable

10. In the case of fixed term contracts, state whether this contract is task or event related; outline the proposed exit strategy and detail how potential exit costs will be met.

Not applicable

11. What accommodation and equipment considerations have been taken into account?

It will be necessary to accommodate the additional staff within the Development Management team in Marischal College and within the Smarter Working set-up. The team currently operates on a ratio of 6.1 desks per 10 non fixed desk staff members within the Development Management "Zone" of GFN. The additional staff will reduce this ratio to 5.6 desks per non fixed desk staff and consideration will have to be given to accommodating these staff within a 7:10 ratio given the nature of the service requiring close working with colleagues and face-to-face contact with the public.

12. HR Comment(s)

13. Legal, Finance or Trades Union Comment(s)

13. Report Author Details

Daniel Lewis, Development Management Manager
Contact 01224 522250

Approved under delegated authority: _____

Date: _____

or

Committee Approval Required

Establishment Control Table

Post(s) to be established	No of posts	Weeks /hours	Job No.	Reports to	Location	Grade	Financial Code	JE No
Post(s) to be disestablished	No of posts	Weeks/hours	Job No.	Reports to	Location	Grade	Financial Code	JE No
Posts (for grade change only)	No of posts	Job no.	Reports to	Location	Old Grade	New Grade	JE No	

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

BUSINESS CASE

COMMITTEE Finance, Policy & Resources

DATE 30 September 14

LEAD OFFICER Gordon Spence

AUTHOR OF BUSINESS CASE Gordon Spence

NAME(S) OF HR ADVISER(S) CONSULTED Lindsay MacInnes

NAME(S) OF FINANCE PARTNER(S) CONSULTED Susan Gray

TITLE OF BUSINESS CASE Re-grade - Application Support Assistants

REPORT NUMBER

PURPOSE OF BUSINESS CASE

The Application Support Team provides the administrative support to the Development Management and Building Standards statutory functions. The team deal with the receipt, validation, lodging, and processing of planning and building warrant applications. Additionally, they are customer facing, engaging customers at reception by telephone and e-mail, providing advice and guidance on the application process and answering general technical enquiries at source.

The timely and efficient processing of applications directly impacts on the performance of the two services which are monitored by both local and national standards and as part of the attainment of Customer Service Excellence.

The role, remit and responsibilities of application support assistants have changed significantly since the post was last job evaluated as part of the Council-wide Job Evaluation exercise carried out during Single Status Implementation in 2006. There has also been a recognition that the job profile has never adequately reflected the application support assistant role – for instance with regard to the degree of customer facing interaction.

Given the development pressures in the City and the consequent increase in the workload of planning and building standards officers, this business case is to recognise that the team will take on the additional statutory duty and responsibility of the validation of planning applications, therefore freeing up those officers to focus on the professional evaluation of applications. A draft of the Job Profile and job evaluation questionnaire to reflect that change and the customer focus of the job has resulted in the salary grade moving from G8 to mid-point of G9.

Minor Change Major Change (tick as appropriate)

Reason for choice of category:

The re-grading recognises the statutory responsibility of validation, it has been budgeted for by an increase in building warrant and planning fee income and has no negative impact on other services or organisations.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that approval is given for the re-grading of the Application Support Assistant post from G8 to G9.

Additional resource(s) / change to structure required	Job title(s)	No of jobs
Establishment of permanent job		
Conversion of fixed term job to permanent status		
Creation of fixed term job		
Extension of fixed term job		
Dis-establishment of permanent job		
Change to Job Title	Former: Revised:	
*Redesign of existing job	Application Support Assistants	N/A

* for a redesign of an existing job there should be reference in the report to the impact of the redesign on the jobholder(s).

BUSINESS CASE

Please do not repeat any information contained in other sections of the report

- 1. With specific reference to anticipated outputs/outcomes, state how the recommendation(s) support corporate objectives e.g. Council’s Policy Statement; Vision and Values; Local Government (Scotland) Act 2003; Community Plan; Transformation Programme etc.**

Strategic Infrastructure Plan Goals

Step Change in Supply of Housing – delivery of housing by private developers, housing associations and local authority led projects – requires the timely delivery of statutory approvals for planning permission and building warrant approval.

Skills and Labour Requirements – delivery of a high quality domestic and commercial built environment boosts economic activity and makes Aberdeen a more attractive place to work and live.

- 2. State how the recommendation(s) support service objectives and plans and/or the achievement of a Statutory Performance Indicator.**

Service objectives are already identified within the How Good is Our Service Plan and can be summarised as:

Enterprise, Planning & Infrastructure Priorities

Delivery of Structure Plan and Local Development Plan – ensure that development identified in both these plans is delivered on the ground to meet the economic needs of the City.

Service Improvement / Best Value – ensuring that quality planning and building standards services, with a customer focus, are provided and meet the needs of applicants, economic activity and Scottish Government.

Beyond this, a number of performance indicators are embedded in our Customer Service Excellence status, as well as national performance frameworks for both planning and building standards. Attainment of performance is reliant on an adequately resourced and effective application support team.

3. **A) Outline why the new work cannot be undertaken within existing staff resources e.g. by re-distributing resources or curtailing lower priority services.**

OR B) In the case of the redesign of an existing job, outline details of the new tasks being undertaken.

Aberdeen City Council is the only planning service in Scotland that has not centralised the validation of submitted planning and related applications into a small administrative/technical team working closely together as a unit to ensure efficiency, consistency and single point of contact for validation. The current system, which involves checking and hand off of applications at the pre-validation stage between planning officers (working on a rota) and application support assistants is inefficient and time consuming and results in inconsistent advice and validation requirements, and does not make the best use of the skills and experience of planning staff – all of which has a negative effect on customer service and the speed at which applications are processed.

With the foregoing in mind it is seen as essential that the validation function should be consolidated within the administration team. Validation requires a degree of judgement about whether information submitted with an application is sufficient to make an application valid and will require application support assistants to take on additional training and responsibility. Validation is not specifically mentioned in the ASAs current Job Profile and this is corrected in the draft Job Profile.

4. **Risk Management: What are the consequences of not proceeding with the recommendation(s)?**

Within the Planning Performance Framework, Scottish Government has the power to reduce fee income for an underperforming Authority. Currently, the validation process as described above is delaying the processing of planning applications and affecting targets embedded with the Performance Framework. Clearly, there is a reputation risk to the Council if this continues, as well as their being a risk that delays in determining applications result in investment going elsewhere.

5. **Risk Assessment: What Health and Safety considerations have been taken into account?**

There are no additional Health & Safety risks.

6. Financial Implications:

Impact on current year's revenue/capital budget:

Job Title	JE Grade	Min Salary*	Max Salary*
Application Support Assistant	G8 Point 4 to G9 Point 2	£4,136 (11 FTEs)	£4,136(11 FTEs)

*These figures are based on an appointment being made by 01/10/14. Minimum and maximum salary costs also include agreed allowances and 30.3% on costs.

Net Cost	£ 4,136	Net Saving	£ 0
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Full year impact on revenue/capital budget:

Job Title	JE Grade	Min Salary*	Max Salary*
Application Support Assistant	G9 Point 2	£8,272	£8,272

*Minimum and maximum salary costs include agreed allowances and 30.3% on costs (ie National Insurance and employer's pension contributions).

Net Cost	£8,272	Net Saving	£ 0
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Source and amount of revenue/capital budget funding available:

The expenditure will be covered by the increased fee income received through planning and building warrant submissions and as agreed through the PBB process.

Amount of external monies available within the current financial year:

The expenditure will be covered by the increased fee income received planning and building warrant submissions and as agreed through the PBB process.

Amount of external monies available in total:

None

7. If the recommendation(s) relate to additional staffing, outline and justify the proposed contractual status of the new employee(s) i.e. 'permanent' or fixed term?

Not applicable

8. If the recommendation(s) are funded on a time-limited basis from an external source, what is the likelihood of the project continuing beyond the term of funding?

Not applicable

9. If the project is likely to continue beyond the term of funding, what steps are being considered in order to finance this extension?

Not applicable

10. In the case of fixed term contracts, state whether this contract is task or event related; outline the proposed exit strategy and detail how potential exit costs will be met.

Not applicable

11. What accommodation and equipment considerations have been taken into account?

None

12. HR Comment(s)

13. Legal, Finance or Trades Union Comment(s)

13. Report Author Details

Gordon Spence/Daniel Lewis, Building Standards Manager/Development Management Manager.
gspence@aberdeencity.gov.uk/dlewis@aberdeencity.gov.uk. 01224 522436/522250.

Approved under delegated authority: _____

Date:

or

Committee Approval Required

Establishment Control Table

Post(s) to be established	No of posts	Weeks /hours	Job No.	Reports to	Location	Grade	Financial Code	JE No
Post(s) to be disestablished	No of posts	Weeks/hours	Job No.	Reports to	Location	Grade	Financial Code	JE No
Posts (for grade change only)	No of posts	Job no.	Reports to	Location	Old Grade	New Grade	JE No	

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ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Finance, Policy and Resources
DATE	30 September 2014
ACTING DIRECTOR	Ewan Sutherland
TITLE OF REPORT	Travel Policy, Procedure and Guidance
REPORT NUMBER	CG/14/127

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval of the amended Travel policy, which covers the arranging of travel for staff and Elected Members.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:-

- (a) approve the Travel Policy, Procedure and Guidance, appended to this report.
- (b) approve that these come into effect with immediate effect.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are minor implications in producing and distributing the revised policy however the direction and instruction provided therein ensures appropriate use of public funds in the undertaking of Council business.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Services may need to revise the approach being taken to authorisation and approval of travel arrangements and update their monitoring processes to ensure compliance with the revised policy.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 The Council carries out its business both here in the City and away and as such there is a requirement for staff and Elected Members to undertake travel on a frequent basis.
- 5.2 In order to control and manage the costs in relation to travel arrangements a policy on the use of the various modes of transport has been a constant feature of Council's financial regulations and governance framework. Following an internal audit of the travel

arrangements a number of recommendations were made that supported a revision to the policy and refresh of the guidance that is available.

- 5.3 In support of this a new policy has been developed that provides Council staff and Elected Members with clear guidance and procedure to ensure that travel is undertaken in a cost effective and safe way.
- 5.4 The detailed Travel Policy, Procedure and Guidance attached at Appendix A, which is recommended for approval, will be incorporated in to the Financial Regulations.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Jonathan Belford, Corporate Accounting Manager
jbelford@aberdeencity.gov.uk
(52) 2573

Travel Policy, Procedure and Guidance

Purpose and Scope

This policy covers all long-distance and foreign travel undertaken by staff employed by or seconded to the Council. It also covers Elected Members of Aberdeen City Council and any other traveller where Aberdeen City Council funds are used to pay for all or part of the travel.

All financial transactions undertaken by or on behalf of the Council are also subject to the Council's Financial Regulations.

The nature of the travel required by the Council means that some staff and Elected Members travel extensively as a normal and routine part of their work. The purpose of this policy is therefore to ensure that all travel arrangements:

- Satisfy the purpose of travel;
- Demonstrate due regard for the safety and welfare of the traveller; and
- Offer value for money.

Definitions

The following definitions are used in this document.

Long-distance travel means travel outside Aberdeen City Council boundaries.

Foreign Travel means travel outside of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (i.e. outside Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland)

Major travel expenses mean the costs of purchasing flights, train tickets, inter-city buses, car hire, visa costs and accommodation (including breakfast) that should normally be booked in advance.

Minor travel expenses mean the costs of taxis, local buses, car parking, business telephone calls and other incidental items incurred while travelling for business purposes.

Car mileage expenses – expenses paid for travel undertaken by personal vehicle.

Living expenses include the cost of meals, gratuities, drinks, phone calls and similar costs. Those that can and cannot be claimed from the Council are referred to in the relevant section below.

Foreign Travel Float means a sum of money provided in advance of foreign travel that enables travellers to meet minor travel expenses.

Travel Co-ordinator means a person authorised to make bookings for major travel expenses (member of the Corporate Governance Administration Team).

Travel Partner is one or more companies contracted to provide travel services to the Council as organised by the Travel Co-ordinator.

Long-haul flights are those flights (including necessary same-day flight connections) outside Europe.

General Policy – Relevant to all travel

Booking and Approval

The Council will fund approved, ordinary and necessary travel to undertake the business of the Council.

All major travel expenses for long distance travel must be booked by a Travel Co-ordinator. This allows the Council to ensure that this policy is observed, to achieve purchasing economies, to best use the time of staff, and to meet its duty of care to employees.

Travellers are expected to exercise reasonable judgement regarding expenses incurred under this policy and to neither personally gain or lose financially from its implementation.

All long distance travel must be approved in advance by:

The budget holder; and

If the traveller is a member of staff or seconded to the Council - The line manager of the traveller (in the event they are the budget holder then the approval of the one person is sufficient); or

If the traveller is an Elected Member - The Director of the Service Committee that approved the travel, or the Chief Executive.

In addition, all foreign travel must be approved in advance by:

The relevant Service Committee;
The Corporate Management Team; and
The Chief Executive.

In urgent or emergency situations the Chief Executive may approve foreign travel.

The budget holder and line manager may only approve:

The costs that are necessary to perform Council business; and

That those are for situations where the travel is clearly necessary and alternative methods of working (e.g. video conference) would clearly not achieve the necessary business purpose.

In the case of travel applications with a value over £500, the Travel Co-ordinator will contact the approvers once cost is known to ensure the final cost of travel is approved.

Purpose of Travel

Staff and Elected Members travel away from Aberdeen for various reasons and fundamentally the reasons for doing this must be the business objectives of the Council and in fulfilment of its obligations.

The objectives of the Council include the promotion of and participation in the economic development of the City. Further there is an increased focus and emphasis on partnership working, funding generation opportunities (from Europe in particular) and the knowledge and skills that can be obtained from working and meeting with others. These are justifiable purposes for undertaking long distance and foreign travel under this policy.

A full disclosure of the purpose of travel must be made before the travel is approved. This must include information on the time spent on non-Council business, personal travel, recovery time and any other non-Council related activity.

An employee may extend a business trip for personal reasons if approved in accordance with the booking and approval section of this policy. Employees must use the normal holiday application process in addition to the travel application when applying for an extension of a business trip for personal reasons.

Incremental costs relating to extension must be paid for personally. It must be clearly demonstrated that Council business was the primary purpose of the visit. Leave records should be appropriately completed.

Council insurance does not cover claimants for the additional days of any extension of a business trip for personal reasons.

Should the time spent on personal business in any one trip exceed seven days the claimant must contact the Payroll team for guidance on the taxation position of any reimbursement made by the Council.

General Exceptions

In conjunction with the Head of Finance, either the Chief Executive or Head of Human Resources & Organisational Development, may approve requests for upgrades in class of travel, hotel or additional travel expenses where there is a documented health issue relating to the applicant or their family circumstances with corresponding medical advice that justify the additional cost involved in such a decision.

In the event that the traveller is attending an event hosted at a higher standard hotel, or has a business need for a higher standard hotel, then approval in advance is also required from the Chief Executive or Head of Finance.

Evidence of such approvals should be provided to the Travel Co-ordinator at the time of the request for a higher class of travel in advance of the travel taking place.

Travel Insurance and Emergencies

The Council has a travel insurance policy with ACE Europe. The policy number is UKBBBO04443112.

This policy covers all Council employees, Elected Members and relevant representatives of the council for whom the council has accepted responsibility for

travel insurance. The policy covers medical expenses, cancellations, delay, personal effects, etc. while engaged in foreign travel for a business purpose.

Cover is provided for loss of money or personal property and, where expenses are incurred, receipts will be required to support any claim. In the event of theft, the loss should be reported to the police and a copy of their report obtained. Welfare assistance is also provided such as counselling, legal advice, security advice, bereavement advice.

In the event of an emergency the number +44 20 7173 7796 (*businessclass Assistance*) should be contacted immediately, but in any event within 48 hours of any serious accident or illness abroad requiring in patient hospitalisation, extended treatment or alteration to travel arrangements. The number is available 24 hours a day, including weekends and will accept call collect and reverse charge calls.

No arrangements should be made without involving and obtaining the agreement of *businessclass Assistance*.

An information letter and emergency phone numbers will be supplied by the Travel Co-ordinator as part of your travel information.

A copy of the insurance policy is available from the Travel Co-ordinator. Any concerns about the adequacy of this policy should be raised in advance with the Travel Co-ordinator so that these can be checked with the insurers prior to departure.

Safety

If the applicant or approver of the travel application form identifies that there may be a risk to the traveller outside of normal business risk as part of their substantive role, then a risk assessment form should be completed by the traveller.

This will identify, for example, any risk due to the country of location of the visit or due to the nature of activities being undertaken.

This form should be submitted to the Travel Co-ordinator along with the application form.

On receipt of the application, the Travel Co-ordinator will review the application and the risk assessment for relevant health and safety information relevant to the country(ies) being visited.

On receipt of any information from the Travel Co-ordinator, the traveller and their line manager will agree any mitigating action to be taken to minimise risk.

Travellers who may have specific health issues or who are not British Citizens are strongly advised to obtain their own travel advice in relation to the information that will be supplied as a result of these checks as the Travel Co-ordinator will not have access to personal information about each traveller.

Basis of Calculation

HMRC produces tables of subsistence rates that provide a measurable value for different countries and in some cases different cities / regions in countries. These

represent 'moderated' values for each country that HMRC will allow to be 'given' to an individual by an organisation up to which HMRC is not to be taken into account for tax purposes. These tables are broken down into different elements of subsistence to provide a framework that can be used to make calculations and they provide a reasonable basis upon which to base a scheme for individuals travelling abroad.

The Council uses these as the basis for its currency calculations for staff and Elected Members travelling abroad.

Environmental impact of travel

Before booking travel claimants should consider whether the trip is necessary or whether teleconferencing or video conferencing offer a viable alternative.

When arranging travel, the Council encourages claimants to use the mode of travel that results in the least environmental impact, as carbon dioxide from transport, particularly from air and road travel, is a key contributor to climate change.

Where choosing a more environmentally friendly mode of travel results in an increase in costs, the employee must raise this in advance of making any bookings, with their authorising manager.

Policy Relevant to Types of Travel

Air Travel

Generally flights will be booked using the cheapest available Economy class fare (or equivalent), buying tickets with fixed dates where feasible, as these are generally cheaper. However the cost of tickets should be considered in terms of “overall value for money” and factors such as the predictability of travel plans, airline schedules and connection times may mean that a more expensive ticket provides better value for money under a specific set of circumstances.

The Travel Co-ordinator will consult with the applicant regarding appropriate flight time and carrier arrangements and to allow sufficient rest time following the flight. Flight arrangements will be made by the Travel Co-ordinator giving due weight to the three criteria of travel set out in the Purpose and Scope of this document. If the applicant wishes to extend the trip for personal reasons then this should be made clear in advance to the Travel Co-ordinator with any excess cost being agreed to be funded by the applicant.

While the traveller may retain frequent flyer benefits, these must not result in any incremental cost to the Council.

Hotel Accommodation

Hotel accommodation should be booked in a convenient hotel to the business location. The hotel standard will be booked by the Travel Co-ordinator with reference to HMRC guidelines for relevant rates dependent on the location. The Travel Co-ordinator will take advice from the Travel Partner on suitable accommodation options and where appropriate safety advice from the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) will be taken into account when making bookings.

Wherever possible, breakfast should be included in the hotel rate. If this is not possible, the cost of breakfast should be claimed in accordance with guidance on living expenses. In the UK where possible, an evening meal will also be booked.

Upgrades to executive floors / rooms are not acceptable unless the hotel offers them on an entirely complimentary basis (as could be the case for frequent visitors).

Ground Transport

Train travel should be booked in a class equivalent to UK standard class. If the applicant is in possession of a railcard then this should be notified at the time of application in order for the Council to benefit from any relevant discounts.

Hire cars should be booked using a category sufficient for the number of passengers and luggage to be carried. The Travel Co-ordinator will make the necessary arrangements using the relevant Travel Partner. Hire cars should be considered if they are a value for money option to meet the business need. Situations and circumstances where this is of particular relevance are personal safety, travel time, weight of luggage, inaccessibility of the destination by public transport, and the cost of group travel by public transport is excessive.

Taxi use should be restricted to situation where personal safety, travel time, weight of luggage, inaccessibility of destination by public transport, or the cost of group travel by public transport makes a taxi journey clearly necessary.

Buses offer a cost effective means of travel and should be considered as an option for long distance travel. While this is cost effective it is recognised that other factors need to be taken into consideration when deciding what mode of transport to use and therefore it is not a requirement that buses are used.

Mileage Claims

The hire of cars (as referred to in the section above) and use of the Co-Wheels car club (<http://www.co-wheels.org.uk/>) scheme is strongly encouraged.

However, where a traveller has had to use their private car and that is the most cost effective method of ground transport the Council will pay mileage for the actual distance covered as set out in the Council's Travel Expenses procedures

It is the traveller's responsibility to ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy at all times and is taxed and has a current MOT certificate (if an MOT certificate is legally required). Travellers must also ensure that they have a valid driving licence and that they have the relevant business use motor insurance in place at the time of travel. The cost of adding business use onto a personal motor insurance policy cannot be claimed by the traveller.

Mileage claims are made by a Travel and Subsistence Claim form.

Parking, congestion charges, tolls, ferries and other driving-related penalties

Reasonable expenses incurred on parking, congestion charges, tolls and ferries may be claimed in respect of journeys which qualify for the mileage allowances above. Receipts or other documentary evidence should be submitted as part of the claim.

Charges for overnight parking will be paid only when subsistence expenses are payable for the night(s) in question.

Should an employee be liable for clamping or other parking / congestion charge penalty (e.g. because a meeting over runs or due to non-payment of a congestion charge) then reimbursement of the charge will not be made. Similarly, reimbursements will not be made to an employee who receives a fine or other financial penalty relating to an offence committed whilst driving on Council business (e.g. for speeding or for using a hand held mobile phone or similar device). Employees are required to notify the Council of any such offences and penalties.

Policy Relevant to Living Expenses

Foreign Currency Expenses Application

For foreign travel, living expenses will normally be paid by means of a currency application in advance of travel. This will include an allowance for breakfast, lunch and dinner based on HMRC recommended guidelines for the location to be visited. If meals have been booked as part of the travel arrangements, or are provided by the host then the allowance will not be included in the currency payment. In addition, if it has not been possible to pay hotel costs in advance, it will include an allowance for the payment for the hotel. Such expenses are based on the HMRC rate and do not have to be receipted.

It is the responsibility of the traveller to notify the Travel Co-ordinator of meals (or other living expenses) supplied as part of the travel / conference arrangements

The payment will be based on the time the traveller is expected to be based in the foreign location based on 24 hour, 10 hour and 5 hour time periods up to the total expected time away. Calculations will be based on the scheduled time of arrival in the first country outside the United Kingdom of Great Britain (UK) and the scheduled time of departure of the route returning to the UK. Living expenses outside these times will be deemed UK travel and claimed in the normal way (reference Travel and Subsistence Claim Form below).

The currency issued will be in the relevant local currency of the destination country. If more than one country is being visited then this will be identified in the itinerary and a relevant split of currency will be made based on the time spent in each destination.

Foreign Currency Float

In addition to the foreign currency application, the traveller may apply for a float to meet the cost of minor travel expenses. The full value of the Float will required to be accounted for and any balance remaining unspent must be returned to the Travel Co-ordinator within seven days of returning to Aberdeen.

The Foreign Travel Float application should detail the itinerary of the traveller(s) and any specific minor travel expenses that are known and likely to be incurred, e.g. taxis or hospitality. In general a sum of £25 per 24 hours and part thereof will be calculated for minor travel expenses unless there is a clear and demonstrable need to provide a greater value on any particular day.

The currency issued will be in the relevant local currency of the destination country. If more than one country is being visited then this will be identified in the itinerary and a relevant split of currency will be made based on the time spent in each destination.

Travel and Subsistence Claim Form

For UK travel, living expenses will normally be paid by completion of a travel and subsistence claim form after travel has taken place. All such expenses have to be receipted (in the unusual event that no receipt is available full justification / explanation must be given and accepted by the authorising manager).

All Travel and Subsistence Claim Forms must be authorised by the claimant's line manager or other authorised signatory who is senior to the claimant.

Use of Corporate Credit Card

Corporate credit cards are allocated based on the business need of the postholder, and will be offered to staff who have a regular business need to undertake long distance travel.

If the traveller is in possession of a corporate credit card, they may use it in lieu of the foreign currency float, the foreign currency expenses application or instead of the travel and subsistence claim form.

Credit card bills will be monitored and reconciled by the Travel Co-ordinator. Reference must be made to specific guidance on the use of corporate credit cards. Any misuse of the corporate credit card will be referred to the Head of Finance and is subject to the Council's disciplinary policies.

Inadmissible living expenses

Expenses the Council will NOT pay for:

Personal telephone calls, other than to announce safe arrival;
Personal internet access;
Parking fines and traffic offences;
Mini-bar or in-room entertainment;
Newspapers
Clothing or any other items that the traveller may reasonably be expected to bring from home;
Excess luggage costs, unless the traveller is required to travel with significant quantities of business materials or equipment. This should be identified at the time of booking major travel expenses so that the Council can take account of reduced rates for booking this in advance;
Laundry costs and dry-cleaning (except where the period of travel covers more than 5 days);
Membership of airline frequent flyer / loyalty schemes or similar;
Alcoholic drinks, tobacco products, gratuities
Travel Insurance
Equipment, materials or services that should be bought through the normal procurement process e.g. computers, phones.

Any claim that contains an item listed above (or similar) will require explicit approval by the Chief Executive or the Head of Finance. In a travel emergency, the situation may arise where such expenditure may be appropriate.

Miscellaneous

Entertaining and Gift Expenses

The offering and accepting of hospitality is a normal part of working and building business relationships in many of the countries with which the Council engages. If the travel requires business entertaining or presentation of gifts, then:

Any entertainment or gifts provided must be consistent with the image and reputation of the Council as a UK public body that is subject to full public audit;

An expenses claim must be submitted with the name(s) of the beneficiaries, included any staff members in attendance. This will be held with the register of gifts and hospitality; and

The cost must be covered by the approved budget line.

In the event that the traveller is offered hospitality or gifts (other than small business items such as pens, folders, diaries, calendars, etc. with an estimated combined value of less than £30) while undertaking travel, then a full declaration must be made in the Register of Gifts and Hospitality.

Gifts and hospitality must not be offered or accepted in any way that could be construed as a bribe or inducement. Gifts and hospitality should not exceed £200.

Gifts and hospitality should be in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and reference should be made to them for additional guidance.

Travel funded by grant expenditure

Travel costs that are met by grant expenditure are subject to the same policy as all Council travel. The traveller should ensure that the Council maximises the income to the Council in respect of that travel and grant claims are made in a timely and effective way.

Working hours whilst travelling

Staff should ensure that they comply with the Employee Handbook in respect of claiming hours worked whilst travelling.

Monitoring of Expenditure

All major and minor travel expenses are subject to regular checks and performance monitoring information is gathered in respect of expenditure. Reports of expenditure may be presented to the Head of Finance and Corporate Management Team. Attention may be drawn to trip activity of high volume claimants.

From time to time the Council may be required to publish information relating to expenses claimed for instance in response to a Freedom of Information request.

In such cases the Council would normally release information at an aggregate or summary level.

Where a request involves the expenses of Directors, other senior managers and others who it may be possible to identify from the data, those involved will, wherever possible, be given the opportunity to comment in advance on the information likely to be released.

In any other instances where the public interest may favour disclosure the individuals affected would, wherever possible, be given the opportunity to comment on any information likely to be released.

Where copies of receipts or invoices are requested these will be made available as appropriate, taking into account any issues relating to personal data.

Managers' responsibilities regarding authorisation

If you are a manager authorising an expenses claim, you need to keep in mind that the responsibility for checking receipts and sense-checking that the claim is appropriate lies with you. Claims will be processed based on your authorisation but are not re-checked afterwards – subject to audit testing and sampling exercises routinely carried out throughout the year.

Where it is identified by the manager that the claimant has claimed foreign travel expenses these must also be submitted to the Travel Co-ordinator in order to confirm that the claimant has not already received currency to cover the costs either through Foreign Currency Expenses, Foreign Currency Float or the Corporate Credit Card. This must be done before being sent for processing.

A manager cannot authorise their own Travel and Subsistence Claim Forms and similarly cannot authorise their own travel application, foreign currency expenses application, foreign currency float application or similar.

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COMMITTEE	Finance, Policy and Resources
DATE	30 September 2014
ACTING DIRECTOR	Ewan Sutherland
TITLE OF REPORT	Organisational Review (Phase 3) – Corporate Governance
REPORT NUMBER	CG/14/125
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to build on Phases one and two of the corporate restructuring process and to seek the Committee's approval to implement or further develop proposals which will impact specifically on the Corporate Governance Directorate.

In addition, the report will indicate how the Corporate Governance Directorate plans to refocus its support to the other services of the Council following the reconfiguration of the other two (plus one) directorates.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Notes progress in relation to the implementation of approved phase 2 recommendations within Corporate Governance.
- b) Approves the creation of a post of Business Manager within Corporate Governance (Grade 15).
- c) Approves the creation of two posts of Transformation and Improvement Adviser (Grade assessment pending).
- d) Approves the re-designation and re-profiling of a number of posts within the Directorate as set out in this report.
- e) (i) notes the comprehensive review of the ICT function and the significant employee engagement process which has accompanied this review.

- (ii) Delegates power to the Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Governance, in consultation with the Convener and Vice Convener of this Committee, to finalise the review on the understanding that the trade unions and the employees concerned are consulted fully on the proposals and that the final outcome of the review is reported to this Committee at its next meeting.
- f) (i) Notes the intention to modify the structure of the Pensions Section in response to new regulations and to transfer six staff from Revenues and Benefits to Communities, Housing and Infrastructure.
 - (ii) Delegates power to the Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Governance, in consultation with the Convener and Vice Convener of the Committee, to finalise these structural changes on the understanding that the trade unions and the employees concerned are consulted fully on the proposals and that the final outcome of the review is reported to this Committee at its next meeting.
- g) Notes that the various support functions within Corporate Governance have been re-aligned to ensure continued direct professional support to all Directorates.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 All of the proposals contained within this report will be funded from within the approved 14/15 revenue budget for the Corporate Governance Directorate or from projected future savings.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The holder of the proposed post of Business Manager will continue a review into administrative support services within Corporate Governance. That review will determine the support structure below the level of Business Manager.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 At its meeting of 20 August, 2014, the Council approved recommendations in respect of the second phase of the Council's corporate re-structuring programme. The second phase dealt primarily with posts at second tier level and some associated matters. The Council recommended that the Chief Executive and her respective directors report phase three structural proposals (i.e. everything below second tier level) to the appropriate committee within two committee cycles (where possible).

5.2 As Phase 2 resulted in no substantive changes to Corporate Governance's second tier structure, the opportunity was taken to re-align certain functional areas within the directorate and between Corporate Governance and the other directorates. These changes were proposed in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery; better enable Corporate Governance's contribution to the delivery of key Council priorities and ensure adherence to the key principles which underpin the organisational review programme.

5.3 Taking cognisance of the context described in the preceding paragraph, the opportunity has arisen for Corporate Governance to accelerate its consideration of its Phase 3 proposals. It is considered advantageous to capitalise on this opportunity for a number of reasons. For example, it will enable the anticipated benefits arising from the proposed structural changes to be realised more quickly and (importantly) help reduce the overall timeline for the restructuring process, which is acknowledged to be an anxious period for all employees affected by it (either directly or indirectly).

5.4 Progress in implementing phase 2 proposals

The following proposals were approved by the Council in relation to Phase 2 of the re-structuring process and progress in implementing these proposals is as follows:

<u>Proposal</u>	<u>Progress</u>
(1) To transfer the Insurance Function from Finance to Commercial and Procurement Service.	One post to transfer during week commencing 3 November 2014.
(2) Members enquiries staff (2 posts) to transfer to Customer Services from Legal and Democratic	Staff likely to transfer during week commencing 1 December 2014. Members to be briefed as to new service prior to transfer
(3) Customer Services to take responsibility for a number of customer reception areas that currently report to a variety of other services	Mastrick Customer Access Point (7 posts) – transfer on 1 January 2015; Town House Reception staff (2 posts) – transfer on 1 January 2015; Revenues and Benefits front line staff and Mastrick and Tillydrone (4 posts) will report to Customer Services, likely to transfer on 1 January 2015. Discussions are being held in connection to reporting lines at Kincorth. A Complaints Officer (1 post) will transfer to Customer Services (from Community Planning and Corporate Performance)

	during week commencing 1 December 2014.
(4) Emergency Planning function to transfer from Community, Housing and Infrastructure Service	Staff scheduled to transfer during week commencing 3 November, 2014.
(5) ICT Procurement function (2 staff); Procurement legal advice (3 staff) and Social Care Contracts and Commission Team (8 staff) to transfer to Commercial and Procurement Services	Staff scheduled to transfer during week commencing 3 November, 2014.
(6) Internal Communication function (2 posts) currently in HR; the FOI; Knowledge Management; Research and Web Content functions currently in IT and Customer Services and Performance will transfer to the Office of Chief Executive	Discussions will be held with the Head of Communications, (OCE) once in post, regarding the scope of the functions being transferred and the necessary posts to support those functions.
(7) The Community Planning and Equalities functions (10 staff) will transfer to Community, Housing and Infrastructure Services	Staff scheduled to transfer during week commencing 3 November, 2014.

All staff affected by the aforementioned transfers will be given a minimum of 4 weeks notice in relation to the change of reporting lines and in most cases change of work location.

5.5 Phase 3 Proposals

- (i) **Business Manager (Grade 15):** Unlike the other Directorates, Corporate Governance does not have a post of Business Manager. This is considered to be anomalous and problematic in as much that the post of Business Manager (or equivalent) provides a key coordinating role for many of the key elements of business support required within the Council (e.g. in relation to resource, planning, committee business coordination and Health and Safety coordination). It is considered that the efficiency and effectiveness of Corporate Governance would be enhanced by the creation of this post.

Initially, the postholder would be asked to complete a review of the administrative and support functions within the directorate. It is considered that more efficient use of resources could be

achieved by centralising the Directorate's support functions under the supervisory control of the Business Manager.

This new post would be funded from within the existing CG budgetary provision.

- (ii) **CP&CP Manager:** It is proposed to redesignate the existing Community Planning & Corporate Performance Manager as Performance and Transformation Manager. This is consistent with the agreed Phase II proposal to coordinate and support the Council's internal transformation function from within Corporate Governance.

The postholder will combine responsibility for Corporate Performance matters with coordinating the Council's transformation activity – elements of which will be in direct response to unsatisfactory existing performance standards.

In addition, it is proposed to create two posts of Transformation and Improvement Advisers who would:

- Spread knowledge about and practical experience of improvement science and championing the use of continuous quality improvement approaches techniques as a way of maintaining and improving quality.
- Work with teams to support the implementation of an Improvement Framework, building capacity at a service and team level and collaborating with internal and external stakeholders.
- Support the development of an Improvement Leadership Team to ensure that its time and resource is focused to achieve the biggest gains in quality, efficiency and productivity.

These posts will be grade assessed in due course but will be financed from some of the savings being generated from the alternative delivery model of internal audit services (i.e. using transformational savings to fund a corporate resource to support and sustain future transformational activity).

- (iii) **SIP Programme Manager:** It is proposed to transfer the SIP Programme Manager from the Office of Chief Executive to Corporate Governance.

Effective and robust programme management and governance is essential for the Council to ensure it delivers on its priorities through its programmes of work. At a previous Finance, Policy and Resources Committee, the Programme Management Office was realigned to what is now the Commercial and Procurement Service. The Phase 2 restructuring paper indicated that monitoring of the Strategic Infrastructure Plan (SIP) would also be realigned to this service. The post of Strategic Infrastructure

Plan Programme Manager has therefore been realigned to come under the Head of Commercial and Procurement but will continue to have responsibility for the programme management of the SIP, working closely with CMT and in particular the Director for Communities, Housing and Infrastructure.

Through the SIP and the creation of programme management roles within the structure the Council has started to put in place more robust programme governance and is looking to embed this throughout the organisation. Having this oversight in a centralised function in Corporate Governance assists in this regard.

One of the main advantages of this new alignment is a joined up approach and the ability of services to work more closely to ensure the right levels of support from the Corporate Governance Directorate is in place at the right time. This will help with the delivery of the SIP. Another benefit of aligning SIP monitoring and the role of SIP Programme Manager to the Commercial and Procurement Service is the additional support that can be provided by the PMO, working closely with the SIP Programme Manager.

The aforementioned changes will better enable the delivery of the Council's programmes of work by embedding robust programme governance throughout the Council. All of which improves our ability to deliver on major priorities, such as the SIP.

(iv) **ICT – Restructure of Service**

The Council's ICT Service is critical to both day to day operational service delivery and in underpinning the Council's improvement and transformational plans.

With that significance of role comes significant customer expectation and associated work pressures.

As a consequence of the service having reduced by approximately one third from 2010 until the present time (i.e. 134 posts to 85) with no consequent reduction in demand, satisfaction levels with some of the services provided by ICT are fairly low. At the same time levels of morale and job satisfaction within some parts of the service are correspondingly low.

During the period between March and June 2014, ICT staff attended a series of workshops to identify issues and opportunities for positive change that would benefit both customers and staff. Virtually every staff member participated

Staff inputs were recorded and analysed and a number of work streams were identified for further development including opportunities where changes to the structure would deliver improvements for staff and customers. In addition, the following work streams were identified:

- Strategies
- Structures
- Processes
- Management and Performance
- Communications
- Culture

In view of the critical nature of the service concerned it is considered essential to amend the organisational structure of the service as soon as is practicable. Draft proposals have been drawn up but require refinement and detailed consultation with the staff and trade unions. However, in view of the fact that the Committee will not meet again until 4th December, it is recommended that approval for the structural proposals be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Convener and Vice Convener of Finance, Policy and Resources, on the understanding that the outcome be reported to the Committee at its next meeting and that any significant resource implications be assimilated with the budget proposals for 2015/16.

Full consultation with the trade unions will clearly be undertaken and should they have any significant concerns on the matter then the proposal will be submitted to the December Committee meeting along with the union perspective.

(v) **Finance Structure**

In line with changes to legislation, it is proposed to amend the structure of the Pensions Section. A revised structure will be consulted on with the trade unions in early course. In addition it is proposed to transfer six posts from the Revenues and Benefits Section to the Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Service in view of the current job roles of the individuals concerned. Consultation will be undertaken in due course.

To ensure a timeless implementation of these amendments, it is recommended that power be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Convener and Vice Convener of this Committee to sign off on the amendments concerned, on the understanding that all necessary consultation is undertaken and that the outcome is reported to the December meeting of the Committee.

In addition to the various structural changes recommended, the major internal support functions within Corporate Governance have been

aligned to the new directorate configuration. In particular, the Finance and HR Business Partners and the ICT Account Managers.

6. IMPACT

It is considered that the various proposed changes, in addition to the previously approved changes, will impact positively on the ability of the Corporate Governance Directorate to support the rest of the Council going forward.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

A process of option appraisal was undertaken in relation to the key structural changes proposed and risk analysis formed part of that process.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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