

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education, Culture and Sport
DATE	27th March 2014
DIRECTOR	Gayle Gorman
TITLE OF REPORT	Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) Agreement between University of Aberdeen and Aberdeen City Council.
REPORT NUMBER:	ECS/14/025
CHECKLIST RECEIVED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to inform Committee of (a) a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) Agreement between the University of Aberdeen and Aberdeen City Council; and (b) the need for a decision to be taken by Officers under Standing Order 1 (6) (b) of the Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contracts and Procurement to exempt Standing Order 1(3) for the expenditure of funds and to approve the contract with the University.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Committee notes the decision of the Chief Executive, the Head of Finance, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Procurement to approve the expenditure of funds detailed in Section 3 and their approval to enter into the contract with the University.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The value of the contract for the period 2014-2016 will be £66,704 with the service supplied through the recruitment of a Knowledge Transfer Partnership Research Associate, in conjunction with Aberdeen University and the UK Technology Strategy Board. The value of £66704 represents ACC's matched contribution to the Technology Strategy Boards grant to Aberdeen University and will be met as follows from within the existing Education, Culture and Sport revenue budgets for Research, Development, Technology and CPD:
- June 2014 – March 2015: £27,793
 - April 2015 – March 2016: £33,355
 - April 2016 – May 2016: £5,556

- 3.2 The University will be responsible for employment functions, will provide academic support to the Associate and will also supply academic and technological solutions in order to develop the project, specifically across three distinct areas of applied research in business, computer science and education. Part of the grant is also at the disposal of the Associate for training and development to be agreed by a local management committee in advance. Aberdeen City Council Education, Culture and Sport Service will be invoiced on a regular basis for its contribution to the project as outlined in the paper.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Legal

Following advice from Legal & Democratic Services and detailed discussions between parties, the terms of the Agreement were re-negotiated and an agreed position reached.

4.2 Resource

The employment of the Research Associate will be undertaken by the University of Aberdeen as the Associate will be an employee of the University. The Associate will be based within Council premises, will comply with all Council policies and the Council, along with the University supervisors, will support and guide the Associate in the practical aspects of the project. Council terms and conditions of employment have been appended to the Associate's University contract of employment. The Associate will be Disclosure checked and may require access to data held by the Council as part of the research project. Access to data will be strictly monitored to ensure that compliance with the Data Protection Act and with the Council's ICT Access and Security Policy

- 4.3 Equipment, sustainability and policy implications are key components of this project and have been identified as stages in the workplan of Research Associate.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 5.1 Aberdeen City Council, in partnership with the University of Aberdeen, the Scottish Government and the UK Technology Strategy Board recognise that effective performance monitoring, planning and policy decisions requires a robust evidence base on which to make decisions for monitoring existing services and future service developments. The Council and its partners recognise that they have all the necessary information; however this is not always easily accessible.

- 5.2 The strategic need for the Knowledge Transfer Partnership is to enable the Council and its partners to establish a capability where each and all might have ease of access to specific data currently stored in huge collections of data banks. This will be in the form of a digital data observatory and will contribute to improved collection and use of routine data, and provide information for assessing further needs. This information will provide the basis for service delivery and developments and support innovations in service delivery.
- 5.3 The data observatory will also facilitate and help those involved in service delivery and service users' access and use the information they need to understand and improve, initially, education, culture and sport within the region. Once established this may be rolled out to other areas of Aberdeen City Council's operations. The observatory will enable access to a comprehensive set of data that can provide the basis for an evidence based research approach that will inform policy and planning decisions, possibly involving all council and service partner's departments at some point in the future. With planners and policy makers able to access all this information with ease, a considerable amount of time and money can be saved during the consultancy phase.
- 5.4 To this end, the Council and its partners were successful in a Knowledge Transfer Partnership funding bid aimed at securing the employment of a Research Associate to complete the above tasks. The Technology Strategy Board agreed on 18 September 2013 the allocation of matched funding over a period of 24 months in order to fund the employment of the Research Associate. Following an initial recruitment exercise, the matched funding was increased to £66,704 in order that candidates who may require the University of Aberdeen to support their visa applications could be considered as part of the recruitment process.
- 5.5 Due to the strict funding deadline, a decision was required urgently in order to maximise the funding opportunity within the agreed window. The offer of funding from the UK Technology Strategy Board was to be withdrawn on 18 March, 2014, and there was insufficient time to report to Committee ahead of this deadline. The exemption was urgently required to meet the exigencies of the Service and was approved by the Chief Executive, the Head of Finance, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Head of Procurement in accordance with Standing Order 1(6)(b).

- 5.6 As the report details, the implications for the Knowledge Transfer project if the exemption had not been granted would have been the withdrawal of the matched funding from the Technology Strategy Board and an inability for either partner to progress the Digital Observatory project. As the project represents considerable opportunities for both the City Council and its partners, including achieving economies of scale at a time when financial constraints are paramount together with the delivery of more effective and efficient, customer-led services, progressing the project was the preferred option for all partners.
- 5.7 Following the approval of expenditure, the Partnership Agreement was signed on behalf of the Council on 7th March 2014. This means that an offer of employment can now be made to the successful candidate for the KTP Research Associate post and the project can commence in June 2014.
- 5.8 The detailed project plan for the Associate includes the following:
- Induction phase including Literature and desk survey
 - Project development plan, critical path network and risk assessment
 - Scoping workshops
 - Development, evaluation and expansion of a viable beta observatory
 - Training & development e.g project management, KTP modules 1-4
 - Project dissemination and close

6. IMPACT

6.1 Corporate

The purpose of the Knowledge Transfer Partnership is to:

- support improvements to the use and effectiveness of our data and management of information;
- maintain compliance with legislative frameworks;
- publication of research papers and the unique development of teaching materials on data mining across three University departments

The Partnership, the first of its kind for Aberdeen City Council, will ensure linkages to performance monitoring as part of the Council's Single Outcome Agreement, the Administration's Policy Statement – Smarter Aberdeen and the Council's Business Plan, together with the Education, Culture and Sport Service's Standards and Quality Improvement Planning process and Integrated Children's Services planning process.

6.2 Public

The purpose of the Knowledge Transfer Partnership is ultimately to secure improvements to services. Improvements in the services provided by Education, Culture and Sport impact positively on all communities across the whole of the City.

7. Management of Risk

Risk assessment and project management are key components of this project and have been identified as early stages in the workplan of Research Associate. The management of risks will be managed by the Education, Culture and Sport Service in collaboration with the University of Aberdeen.

8. Background Papers

- Knowledge Transfer Partnership agreement including Schedule 2
KTP Grant Offer letter
- KTP Standing Order Exemption Memo
- Knowledge Transfer Partnership Grant application Part A
- Knowledge Transfer Partnership Grant application Part B

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Sarah Gear
Service Manager (Policy & Performance)
sagear@aberdeencity.gov.uk
01224 522865