

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

BUSINESS CASE

COMMITTEE Finance, Policy & Resources **DATE**

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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

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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