

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE:	<b>Education and Children's Services</b>
DATE:	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> June 2015</b>
DIRECTOR:	<b>Gayle Gorman</b>
TITLE OF REPORT:	<b>Progress review of Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) Agreement between University of Aberdeen and Aberdeen City Council</b>
REPORT NUMBER:	<b>ECS/15/026</b>
CHECKLIST COMPLETED:	<b>YES</b>

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to inform Committee of progress to date of the Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) between the University of Aberdeen and Aberdeen City Council; (Data Observatory Project).

### **2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

That Committee notes the progress of the project and that an evaluation of the project and options for future developments are reported to Committee by March 2016.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1.1 The value of the contract for the period 2014-2016 is £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 is being met as follows from within the existing Education and Children's Services 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 is responsible for employment functions and provides 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.

#### **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 is undertaken by the University of Aberdeen as the Associate is an employee of the University. The Associate is based within Council premises and complies with all Council policies and the Council, along with the University supervisors, provide 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 has been Disclosure checked as they require access to data held by the Council as part of the research project. Access to data will be 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 work plan 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 An associate was recruited and took up post in June 2014 and the project is closely monitored by a local management committee which meet on a regular basis.
- 5.6 A 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

- 5.7 The project has met all the milestones within the project plan and at this stage 'proof of concept' has been established and a viable beta data observatory has been developed. This initial working observatory will form the basis of further developments and enable the project to be developed across other Departments. A detailed progress report against the project plan is attached (Appendix 1).

## **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 and Children's Service 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 and Children's Service 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 and Children's Service in collaboration with the University of Aberdeen.

## **8. Background Papers**

- Knowledge Transfer Partnership Grant application Part A
- Knowledge Transfer Partnership Grant application Part B
- Minutes of the Local Management Committee

## **9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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