

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education and Children's Services
DATE	24th March 2016
DIRECTOR	Gayle Gorman
TITLE OF REPORT	Evaluation of Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) between University of Aberdeen and Aberdeen City Council.(Data Observatory Project)
REPORT NUMBER:	ECS/16/012
CHECKLIST RECEIVED	Yes

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)

2.1 Committee are asked to:

- I. Note progress and evaluation of the KTP project to date.
- II. Approve the continued partnership arrangements with the University of Aberdeen to develop the Aberdeen City Council Data Observatory and continuing the employment of the KTP Research Associate post, graded at G13.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Continued funding of the Research Associate post will be met from existing service budgets.
- 3.2 The University is responsible for employment functions and provides academic support to the Associate. It 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

It is proposed that the existing agreement between Aberdeen City Council and the University of Aberdeen be extended for the duration of the five year project.

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 already been addressed within the KTP project.

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 recognised that effective performance monitoring, planning and policy decisions require a robust evidence base on which to make decisions for monitoring existing services and future service developments. The Council and its partners recognised that they have all the necessary information; however this is not always readily accessible.

5.2 The Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) enabled the Council and its partners to establish a capability where each and all might have ease of access to specific data currently stored in multiple data banks. This capability was developed through the development of a digital data observatory and contributed to improved collection and use of routine data, and provided information for assessing further needs.

- 5.3 The data observatory facilitated and helped those involved in service delivery and service users' to access and use the information they need. This approach can now be rolled out to other areas of Aberdeen City Council's operations. The observatory enabled access to a comprehensive set of data that provided the basis for an evidence based research approach to inform policy and planning decisions, as illustrated in the case study below:

Case Study DataHub Data

Data from Skills Development Scotland (DataHub data) is incorporated into the Aberdeen City Council data observatory to support young people into positive destinations in Aberdeen City.

- A select group of individuals have full access rights to the DataHub dataset.
 - All lead partners have access to the summary data that does not contain individual's information subject to relevant permissions and data sharing protocols.
 - The data is updated on the first of every month via the Data Observatory and produces a snapshot of the available data on that day, further snapshots may be provided on request and subject to agreement from other partners.
 - At a strategic planning level the information is intended to assist lead partners to plan and assess service provision and need in key geographical and themed areas, using the interactive tools provided on the Data Observatory.
 - At an operational level data can be used to provide staff with additional details about the individuals they are (or are going to be) working with.
 - The DataHub data on the Data Observatory supports research and data teams across the partnership to create much more detailed and frequent analysis. This include for instance: Seasonal trend tracking, or looking at the impact of changes to the local economy on the availability and choice of post school destinations among school leavers.
 - Efficiency saving, (saving time), have been achieved in creating and reports that can be accessed by appropriate staff. 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 At present the Data Observatory delivers the functionality to load, store, analyse and present statistical data. It also provides the ability to

present this data using data visualization tools like charts and maps, which can also be exported for use in reports.

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 The project has met all the milestones within the project plan:

- Established 'proof of concept'
- Developed a viable beta data observatory
- Delivered a live working observatory
- Produced school profiles
- Supported the collection and reporting of pupils wider achievements
- Analysed (0-5 year old) population data (Community health index (chi), in partnership with NHS Grampian)
- Incorporated Insight pupil attainment data (Insight)
- Supported the analysis and operational use of DataHub Data (Skill Development Scotland) – To be used for a national case study

5.7 This initial working observatory will form the basis of further developments and enable the project to be developed and across other services.

5.8 Proposed developments plan

The future development of the project offers the possibility of transforming the way the Council processes and uses data and contributes efficiencies in the process.

5.9 It will make a significant contribution to issues identified in the Education and Children's Services business plan 2016/17. The Data Observatory will:

- Provide a platform for the efficient and effective use of performance data to drive improvement and improve outcomes
- Provide access and analysis to shared systems across the services to enhance and support multi-agency working, and provide robust data.
- Linking to the Integrated Children's Service thematic group to incorporate data into data observatory
- Develop school roll forecasts scenario planning tools
- Provide pupils 0-5 and school pupils population projection analysis

- Linking with social work to provide LAC tracking
- Adult learning provision analysis tools
- Development a performance dash boards with a specific focus on:
 - Raising attainment/closing the gap
 - The Integrated children's services agenda.
- Partnership working with Skills Development Scotland

5.10 Long term development

5.10.1 Contribution to the development of the Regional Data Observatory outlined in the Regional Economic Strategy 'Aberdeen City Council will accommodate a 'regional observatory' that will act as a resource for the North East of Scotland to provide up-to-date evidence to inform both delivery and decision making.'

<http://councilcommittees/documents/s52770/Regional%20Economic%20Strategy.pdf>

5.10.2 A detailed progress report against the project plan is attached along with proposed developments of the Aberdeen City Council Data Observatory (Appendix 1).

6. IMPACT

6.1 Corporate

The purpose of the data observatory 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 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 Aberdeen City Council Data Observatory is ultimately to secure improvements to services and impact positively on all communities across the whole of the City.

6.3 Improved Staff Experience

Staff will, with the appropriate permissions, be able to access data and reports when required reducing the routine data processing time.

6.4 Improved Customer Experience

The planned development of a public facing website will allow the public to access data that is in the public domain via the observatory.

6.5 Improved use of Resources

Savings in relation to standardisation of data collection and analysis avoiding duplication. The data observatory provides a robust evidence base on which to take future policy decisions about service and service delivery.

7. Management of Risk

- 7.1 Risk assessment and project management are key components of this project and have been identified as early stages in the work plan 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

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Kevin Stelfox, Acting Service Manager, Planning, Policy and Research
Tel: 01224 523883
Email: KStelfox@aberdeencity.gov.uk