



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Personnel Sub-Committee 9 February 2015

Building Control Surveyor - Planning Services

Purpose of report

To make permanent the extension in working hours of a part-time Building Control Surveyor, whose hours were increased from 22 to 30 per week for a six month period commencing on 8 September 2014.

1.0 Background

1.1 The temporary increase in hours of a Building Control Surveyor was introduced in order to assist the section in handling a sustained increase in workload due to the resurgence of the construction industry. In addition recent regulatory changes had added significantly to the complexity of the building control process.

1.2 The building control workload has continued to increase during the last six months with 984 applications being received during 2014 compared to 786 in 2013, an increase of 25%. This is reflected in the income received in connection with building regulation applications, with an amount of £181,956 being received to the end of 2014 compared to £153,717 at year end in 2013. The income received by the section continues to increase year on year with figures of £179,342 for 2012/13 and £207,775 in 2013/4. The income included in the budget for 2014/15 is £220,100 which looks set to be easily exceeded.

2.0 Proposal

2.1 Permission is sought to make the increase in hours permanent.

3.0 Important issues to consider

3.1 The permanent increase in hours will assist in enabling the section to adequately respond to the increasing workload and will increase resilience in the small team of 5 Surveyors.

Further regulatory changes including new controls are proposed for late 2015 which will increase the workload particularly of office based functions significantly.

3.2 This change will enable the section's performance to be maintained.

4.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

4.1 None as the current post holder will be maintaining these hours.

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposal.

6.0 Risk Management

6.1 Ultimately, any failure to determine applications within prescribed time limits would require us to return plan fees and lead to loss of enforcement powers in respect of such applications. Similarly, any failure to inspect certain stages of building work could result in liability issues.

6.2 Any reduction in performance and lack of resilience in this area would also lead to staff morale issues.

7.0 Resource and Financial Implications

7.1 This proposal would be funded out of the building control budget, which, as mentioned previously, is experiencing continuing increases in income and is expected to be in surplus for the coming year. The cost to cover the period between 8 March and the end of the current financial year is £510, whereas the cost for the next financial year would be £7,855.

7.2 It is considered that the benefit of maintaining a good service and retaining work and income will more than cover these costs and that failure to do so risks loss of income. The immediate future for the building control section is one that is likely to attract a considerable amount of new work given the large planning permissions recently granted in respect of both housing and commercial work in the District. In any case the costs of the service are recharged out to customers so there will be no net effect on the public purse.

8.0 Constitutional Implications

8.1 The proposal does not require an amendment to the Council's Constitution.

9.0 Corporate Outcomes

9.1 The proposal helps achieve the corporate outcomes as follows:

- Good Value for Money – by continuing the current high performance of the section, subsequently retaining and attracting income.
- Effective Partnership Working – current relationships with LABC Partner companies will be maintained.
- Effective Management – the proposal illustrates forward thinking in respect of current and future workloads and liabilities.
- High Quality Service Delivery – by continuing to provide a high level of service in a competitive environment.
- Employees and Members with the Right Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours –the current post holder's knowledge and skills would be retained and utilised.

10.0 Recommendation

10.1 The Committee is recommended to permanently increase post 03/524's working hours to 30 per week.

(Reason: to provide sufficient resources to determine building control applications in a timely and efficient manner)

Legal	Power: N/A
	Other considerations: N/A
Background Papers: Vacant Post Evaluation form-May 2014	
Person Originating Report: Malcolm Shepherd Building Control Manager ☎ 01832 742122 ✉ mashepherd@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk	
Date: 9 January 2015	
CFO	MO
	CX