



East
Northamptonshire
Council

Personnel Sub-Committee 9 February 2015

Development Control Officer - Planning Services

Purpose of report

To delete a Planning Technician post in the Development Control Section and create an additional Development Control Officer in its place.

1.0 Background

1.1 The Development Control section of Planning Services currently comprises:

- 1 x Planning Development Manager
- 2 x Principal Development Control Officers
- 2 x Senior Development Control Officers
- 3 x Development Control Officers
- 5 x Planning Technicians
- 2 x Enforcement Officers

1.2 One Development Control Officer has been on maternity leave for the past year, and one Technician has been acting up as Development Control Officer to cover the post. It has now been agreed that the person on maternity leave will return in February on 60% of full time hours. This will release 40% of the full time salary, a saving of £13,253 in 2015/16.

1.3 The ongoing Business Process Re-engineering process in Planning Services has identified some administrative efficiency savings which have been put in place and the last year has demonstrated that the section can now operate with four technicians. A further role would be required to support the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy but this is not imminent.

1.4 Development control has received an additional £387,000 in fee income over the budgeted amount in 2014/15 due to an increase in workload. With the increase in development control workload the additional Development Control Officer resource has proved invaluable and it is proposed to consolidate this within the section by converting a Planning Technician post into a Development Control Officer post with the additional funding now available..

2.0 Proposal

2.1 Permission is sought to delete a Planning Technician post in the Development Control Section and create an additional Development Control Officer post in its place.

3.0 Important issues to consider

3.1 The additional Development Control Officer proposed will assist in enabling the section to respond adequately to the increasing workload and the increasingly stringent targets being set by government to avoid designation as a poorly performing authority. This change will enable the section's performance to be maintained.

4.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

4.1 None

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 planning applications within prescribed time limits would make the council vulnerable to designation as a poorly performing authority. This would enable applicants to by-pass the council and submit applications direct to the Planning Inspectorate with the council reduced to the status of a consultee.

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 from the spare resources freed up by the reduced hours of one Development Control Officer:

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| Saving from reduction in hours of one DCO | £13,253 |
| Saving from deletion of Planning Technician | £26,473 |
| Cost of new DCO at bottom of scale | £30,439 |
| Cost of new DCO at top of scale | £35,501 |

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| Overall Saving if DCO at bottom of scale | £9,287 |
| Overall Saving if DCO at top of scale | £4,225 |

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.
 - 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.
 - Employees and Members with the Right Knowledge, Skills and Behaviours – the knowledge and skills of existing staff would be retained and utilised.

10.0 Recommendation

10.1 The Committee is recommended to delete a Planning Technician post in the Development Control Section and create an additional Development Control Officer in its place.

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

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| Legal | Power: N/A | | | | |
| | Other considerations: N/A | | | | |
| Background Papers: None | | | | | |
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| Date: 9 January 2015 | | | | | |
| CFO | | MO | | CX | |