

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE

04/11/2014

Title:

BUILDING CONTROL - CHANGE TO ESTABLISHMENT

[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Brian Adams]

[Wards Affected: All]

Summary and purpose:

This report recommends a change in the staffing establishment to appoint a new Business Manager for the Building Control team.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

A successful Building Control function provides Value for Money to the Council while protecting the Environment, ensuring that Residents' homes are safe and energy efficient.

Financial Implications:

The revisions to the establishment provide a small cost saving. The appointment of a Business Manager should maximise income generating opportunities. Government guidelines are for the Building Control service to break-even and the proposals should ensure that this is achieved on a sustainable basis.

Legal Implications:

There are no specific legal implications.

Introduction

1. The building control function is a statutory service that enforces minimum standards of design, construction, accessibility, safety, energy efficiency, carbon emissions and other features of buildings, particularly during the construction phase. It sits within the Planning Service.
2. Unlike other statutory services operated by local authorities, it is subject to competition from the private sector. Householders, architects and builders can choose to obtain the necessary certificates of compliance with the building regulations from a local authority or from an Approved Inspector.
3. Local authorities are required to fix their charges with the aim of covering the costs of running the trading account for the service, but are not permitted to make surpluses from the operation. In addition, local authorities have a number of statutory duties, including inspecting dangerous structures and ensuring compliance with aspects of health and safety legislation that are undertaken by building control officers on behalf of the Council and are non fee-earning.

4. The consequence of this commercial environment a significant amount of work (of the order of 20-25%) has now moved to the private sector, affecting the Council's ability to operate a cost-effective service. In response to these changes, alongside a desire to ensure that the service is not a burden on the Council's resources, posts have been reduced. This, in turn, has resulted in other challenges, relating to the management and performance of the service.
5. In June 2014, Fortismere Associates were appointed by Waverley Borough Council to undertake a review of the building control service to address the above issues. They reported in September 2014 and set out a number of recommendations.
6. The key components of the recommendations are:
 1. Create a vision for the service with a clearly articulated set of goals, objectives and service standards;
 2. Identify a champion for the service who will:
 - manage the performance of individuals;
 - gather the management information necessary to assess its current performance and the costs associated with delivering different elements;
 - make the case for investment in IT to enable enhanced efficiency and electronic working;
 - prepare a business plan that includes detailed financial forecasts;
 - promote the service to existing and potential customers;
 - develop a customer charter;
 - ensure that the service directly contributes to the delivery of corporate objectives.
 3. Use the opportunities presented by the recent office move and vacancies to restructure the team, provide much closer integration with other planning service functions and introduce new methods of working.
7. Key to the success of the team is the appointment of a Business Manager to be responsible for the operational direction of the team. This is a new post replacing the Building Control Manager post which has been vacant for two years and for which funding has been removed. The funding of the new post can be met from the deletion of a principal surveyor post which is currently vacant following the retirement in July of the previous post holder. It is not essential that the post holder is a building control professional though some knowledge of the building industry would be preferable. The key skills needed are performance management, business planning and marketing.

Budget implications				
Job Title	Salary	NI	Pension	Total
Principal Building Control Surveyor	£ 46,890.00	£ 4,240.00	£ 7,737.00	£ 58,867.00
To be replaced by				
Business Manager	£ 44,825.00	£ 4,126.00	£ 7,396.00	£ 56,347.00

8. The staffing structure of the team will be finalised in consultation with the Business Manager when appointed.

Conclusion

9. The Council's Building Control service faces unique pressures. The creation of a Business Manager post provides the opportunity to set out a clear vision for the service, provide long term resilience and financial stability while maximising the benefits to the Council of having access to skilled building construction professionals.

Recommendation

It is recommended to the Council that the staffing establishment be amended to create the post of Business Manager and delete one Principal Surveyor post.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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