

 EXECUTIVE – 9th March 2016		Agenda Item No. 12
Title	Use of Building Control Reserves	
For further information about this report please contact	Tracy Darke	
Wards of the District directly affected	All	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	N/A	
Background Papers	Employment Committee report 16 th Dec 2015	

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	No
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	No
Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken	N/A

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	12/2/16	Chris Elliott/ Bill Hunt
Head of Service	26/2/16	Tracy Darke
CMT	12/2/16	Bill Hunt
Section 151 Officer	12/2/16	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	22/2/16	Andrew Jones
Finance	12/2/16	Gary Walker
Portfolio Holder(s)	23/2/16	Cllr Stephen Cross
Consultation & Community Engagement		
N/A		
Final Decision?		Yes
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to release monies from the Building Control reserve account to fund the engagement of a Marketing Consultant for 6 months, as approved by Employment Committee as part of the recent re-structure of the service and to fund scanning of files.

2. **Recommendation**

- 2.1 That Executive approve the release of a maximum £40,000 from the Building Control Reserve account to fund the provision of marketing consultancy for the new service for a period of up to 6 months, as agreed by Employment Committee on 16th December 2015
- 2.2 That Executive approve the release of a further £9,995 from the Building Control Reserve account to fund the scanning of paper files.

3. **Reasons for the Recommendation**

- 3.1 As part of the recent re-structure of the Building Control Service, a temporary post was approved to provide much needed marketing support from a consultant. There is a gap in this area of expertise in the service and there is a need to brand and promote the service better to increase levels of income. The work will be for a maximum period of six months and the cost will be capped at £40K. This work is likely to include:
- marketing to increase our customer base and win further business,
 - producing improved marketing literature,
 - advising staff on how to produce tender documents that sell the service in a more professional way to maximise its ability to successfully compete against the private sector, who spend considerable amounts of money on producing such documents.
- 3.2 It is not possible to easily quantify the financial benefits immediately, from this investment, but it is reasonable to suggest that if income increases in subsequent years, then the investment has been a contributing factor. It does appear the next essential stage to the success of the business. It should be noted that the service is ring-fenced, and whilst in this current financial year it appears that we will break even, (which is a CiPFA requirement), any potential for additional income through marketing will be put into the reserves to re-cycle back into developing the service. Measures of success are increased or maintained income and levels of new business, providing resilience of service and maintaining choice for customers in the market place.
- 3.3 There are a number of historic files that are required to be scanned in the system for Daventry District. Daventry are part of our joint service and this work is necessary to ensure that our files are held electronically to enable the whole service to work more efficiently, as all officers need access to the historic files from time to time, in particular the Business Support team. Quotations have been received in accordance with the Code of Procurement Practice. A supplier that the Council has previously used has produced the most competitive quote which is capped at £9,995. Therefore, this amount is requested from the Building Control Reserve. It should be noted that Daventry District Council have offered to contribute to the cost in the region of £5K

4. Policy Framework

- 4.1 The scanning proposals meet the Council's ambitions to enable staff to work more flexibly and have records held electronically to ensure easy access for all and to be more robust regarding business continuity. The marketing proposals help to ensure that the service is fit for the future in terms of generating more income and enhance the way we promote the service.

5. Budgetary Framework

- 5.1 The existing Building Control Reserve account is ring-fenced and is required to be recycled back to the service primarily to improve the service. It is considered that the marketing consultant and the scanning works will total £49,995 and falls within the criteria. The current uncommitted balance on the Building Control Reserve is £213,000. As stated above, Daventry District Council have offered to contribute £5K towards the cost of the scanning.

6. Risks

- 6.1 The risk of not having a marketing officer is that we will continue to fall behind on the promotion of the service and it is essential to promote the benefits of our service to attract new income. Furthermore, the scanning of historic files ensures that we can have a robust business continuity plan in terms of having as much of our data held electronically as possible.

7. Alternative Option(s) considered

- 7.1 We have considered doing the marketing in-house within Building Control but this is specialist work and currently we do not have the skills or the capacity to promote and brand the service in a way that competes with the private sector. Carrying out the scanning in-house will take a considerable amount of time and is likely to be more expensive on staff resources.