

TO: EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE - 21 DECEMBER 2004

SUBJECT: CHANGE OF POST DESIGNATION – BUILDING CONTROL

FROM: PLANNING AND ENGINEERING

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval for the deletion of Building Control Technician Post N05/025 and its replacement by a Career Grade Building Control Officer post.

2. BACKGROUND

Within the Building Control establishment is a full-time post of Building Control Technician. This post is evaluated at Band G and funding is available within the Group budget for £16,731, scp 20, the top of the grade.

Until recently, the post was occupied by a member of staff who, sadly died in service earlier this year. At that time, the post was occupied on a part-time basis, though funding is available for full-time employment.

A review has been undertaken of the needs of the Building Control Service which has concluded that the service would be better served by the post being occupied by a trainee Building Control Officer on a full-time basis. The reason for this is that with the increasing competition from private Approved Inspectors the service needs to be more proactive and improve its response to the challenge of the competition through targeting the delivery of the core service of handling BC applications in a manner that can compete effectively. In addition, the service is having to take on significant additional responsibilities through new and revised regulations. This will put significant pressure on the delivery of the service.

The most cost effective way of doing this is to bring in a staff resource at the trainee level. This is a relatively low cost approach, and enables us to train an individual through the BC process so that they become increasingly effective in service delivery in the way we want.

A trainee Building Control Officer would be brought in at no higher than the bottom of Band G (£17,335 including employer overheads), and, subject to experience, possibly at Band H. The result would be on initial appointment, no additional salary resource requirement and possibly even a saving. However, the post holder would need to be able to advance through a career grade, eventually arriving at the Band D salary top salary point of £29,100 (overall cost £34,224 including overheads).

It is likely that the advancement through the grades would be likely to take a period of six years, as the appropriate qualifications were achieved, therefore any salary enhancements would be incrementally brought in over a period of time. In view of the financing regime for Building Control, it would be reasonable for these increases and the cost of the necessary training to be met from the surplus otherwise made by the service.

The Building Control service generates significant amounts of fee income. This income generation is governed by government regulations that require the service to at least break even on those activities and the Council sets its charges to comply with those regulations. Since the new fee regime came into operation the service has generated income in excess of the break even position and budget (by at least £50,000 per annum). Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Local Government Association stress the importance of investing surpluses back into the service to improve its quality. In practice therefore the net cost would be zero. The appointment would therefore be highly cost effective.

3. **POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK**

The Building Control Service operates in accordance with the framework set down by government. This requires it to self fund and for surpluses to be invested in improving the service. The service is subject to much external competition and the introduction of additional responsibilities through new and revised regulations. It must be able to respond to these pressures to continue to deliver an effective service. The current proposals should assist in this.

4. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Members approve the proposal detailed in Section 2 of the report.

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HEAD OF PLANNING AND ENGINEERING

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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