

## NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

### CABINET

## CREATION OF A BUSINESS SUPPORT PROGRAMME TEAM

### 1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1. To approve the establishment of seven new fixed term posts to deliver the Northern Lincolnshire Business Support Programme using external funding from the European Regional Development Fund when approved.

### 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Cabinet Members for Regeneration and Policy and Resources recently approved the delivery of the business support element of the ERDF BDUK bid. The intention is that the North Lincolnshire Broadband programme will offer support to businesses across Northern Lincolnshire. This support programme will focus on small and medium enterprises (SME). The programme will be delivered internally. It will offer 12 hours of free support to over 330 businesses. The aim is to ensure that the opportunities afforded by superfast broadband are maximised.
- 2.2 To fund the business support, the council has bid for £0.9m from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). This forms part of a larger bid. In total the bid is for £5.9m. If successful, the remaining £5m will help develop a new superfast broadband infrastructure across rural Northern Lincolnshire.
- 2.3 A number of activities will form the basis for delivery of the programme.
  - **Initial Engagement Events** – to highlight the benefits of superfast broadband, drawing on local businesses to communicate the commercial benefits. The events will be targeted around supporting businesses to increase revenue, achieve global reach and cost reductions; and improve customer services.
  - **ICT Diagnostic Reviews** – to assess in more detail a particular SME's connection requirements and identify further support requirements.
  - **Seminars and Group Workshops** – enabling SMEs to share best practice, showcase new products and introduce processes with the potential to enhance business growth.
  - **ICT Project Support and Mentoring** – one to one mentoring and advice focussing on the development and implementation of digital commercial strategies for businesses.
  - **Brokerage** – signposting to other business support programmes.

- **Client Follow Up**
- **Web Based Remote Support and Service Website**

2.4 A number of new posts are required to deliver the business support programme. The existing Broadband Project Manager will oversee the delivery of the programme. The existing Project Support Officer will assist in coordinating programme monitoring. The new posts will include a mixture of dedicated ICT resource, business advisors and a short term design role.

### **3 OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

3.1 Option 1 – To create a Broadband Business Support Programme Team consisting of seven members of staff, using external funding. The posts will be fixed term to the end of June 2015. The Senior Designer role will be a 12 month role to the end of June 2014.

3.2 Option 2 – Do nothing.

### **4 ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

4.1 Option 1 is suggested as the preferred option. This option will ensure that the council can successfully deliver a programme of investment to support businesses across Northern Lincolnshire.

4.2 Option 2 is not a viable option. Our existing resources do not have the capacity to deliver the activities required by the programme.

### **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)**

#### **5.1 Financial**

Job descriptions were developed for the posts in question. These were grade by colleagues in Human Resources. The grades for each of the posts are as follows.

- IT Account Manager – Grade 9
- IT Project Coordinator – Grade 8
- IT Technical Officer – Grade 8
- Web Development Officer – Grade 7
- Senior Designer – Grade 7
- Business Advisor (two posts) – Grade 8

The total costs of adding the above posts to the council's staffing establishment amounts to £252,942 per annum. This includes on costs of 29.5%.

European Regional Development Funding monies will meet the full costs of these additional fixed term posts.

## 5.2 Staffing

The Broadband Project Manager will coordinate the business support programme but the new posts will sit within their respective services. The IT posts will report to the IT Business Enhancement Manager. The Business Advisors will report to the Economic Development Manager and the Senior Designer will be based within the Communications Team.

All posts will be two year fixed term posts with the exception of the Senior Designer post which will be 12 months fixed term.

5.3 There are no further resource implications to consider.

## 6 OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACTASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

6.1 Officers have completed an integrated impact assessment for the project. No issues for concern were highlighted.

## 7 OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS DECLARED

7.1 The BDUK Project Board has previously endorsed the proposals for delivering the business support element of the Northern Lincolnshire Broadband Project as described above.

## 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Cabinet approves the creation of the following fixed term posts following ERDF approval.

- IT Account Manager – Grade 9
- IT Project Coordinator – Grade 8
- IT Technical Officer – Grade 8
- Web Development Officer – Grade 7
- Senior Designer – Grade 7
- Business Advisor (two posts) – Grade 8

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**Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:** None