

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

CORPORATE SERVICES CABINET MEMBER

**BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE -
ICT AGENT**

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

1.1 To approve a new fixed-term post of ICT Agent to support the delivery of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme within North Lincolnshire. It is proposed to appoint initially for a fixed term of two years, reviewable thereafter.

1.2 The key points in this report are as follows.

- The BSF programme will provide major investment in secondary school transformation, including ICT.
- Specialist resources are needed to oversee the delivery of the ICT elements of the BSF programme.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.1 The council has secured £89m to rebuild and modernise secondary schools in Scunthorpe via the BSF initiative. The programme is underpinned by a vision to transform learning by combining inspirational buildings and facilities, flexible learning spaces and information and communication technologies (ICT). Learners will access the widest possible range of curriculum resources and environments, made possible with the help of motivated and experienced staff. Each school will build on existing specialisms and will work together to build a wider learning campus for North Lincolnshire.

2.2 The BSF programme includes a major investment in ICT offering the opportunity to create a common digital platform. This allows all secondary and primary schools to take advantage of this major capital investment.

2.3 To support the delivery of this major investment in ICT, specialist additional resources are required in the form of an ICT Agent. The purpose is to operate as an ICT interface agent between all internal and external contracted ICT parties contributing to the delivery of the BSF programme. The function will provide a first point of contact for all ICT related matters with responsibility for ensuring that all expected quality IT services are delivered to time, cost and quality targets. The role is also required to fulfil that of 'Employers Agent' on the £7.4m capital ICT programme aspect of BSF and any associated ICT refresh programme.

3. **OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION**

3.1 The options available for consideration by the Cabinet Member are as follows:

3.1.1 Option 1: Do nothing.

3.1.2 Option 2: Provide the role of ICT Agent from within the council.

3.1.3 Option 3: Provide the role of ICT Agent via external consultants.

4. **ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS**

4.1 Option 2 is considered the best option for the following reasons:

- It utilises expert in-house knowledge of the council's ICT Infrastructure and systems.
- Provides the opportunity to continue engagement with an established network of key internal and external contacts and suppliers, essential for delivering the ICT programme.
- Develops an existing officer while retaining the new skills and knowledge within the authority for the future.
- Guarantees that the role is fulfilled for the duration of the project as an extension to an existing IT Services team.
- Provides the ability to clearly budget and identify/control the cost of the role for the duration of the project.
- Provides the best opportunity to provide the role at optimum value for money.

4.2 Accordingly it is proposed to establish a new post of ICT Agent – Building Schools for the Future. The post will sit within the IT Services Division of Asset Management and Culture with professional line management responsibility to the Head of IT Services. In addition the post will have day to day operational accountability to the BSF Project Director and work as part of the BSF team. It is proposed that the post will initially run for a fixed-term period of two years.

4.3 A job description for the proposed post was prepared and evaluated by Human Resources at grade 10.

4.4 Given the grade of the proposed post, it offers a potentially excellent career development opportunity for an existing member of staff. It is therefore proposed in the first instance to limit the recruitment opportunity to internal members of staff. The service will then seek to back-fill any temporary vacancy thereby created via normal routes.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

5.1 Financial

Employment costs amount to £47,573 per year based upon the mid-point of grade 10 inclusive of 29.5% on costs. Existing budgets in place to enable the delivery of BSF will fully meet these costs.

5.2 Staffing

As above.

5.3 Property & IT

There are no direct property or IT resource implications arising from the proposal.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 - CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

6.1 Adopting the proposal will assist in reducing any risks of failure to successfully deliver the ICT aspects of the BSF programme.

6.2 There are no other direct implications arising from the proposal.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

7.1 Significant consultation has taken place with the council's existing BSF project team on this matter. They support the proposal in full.

7.2 The council's Executive Management Team support the provision of support to BSF from within the council as opposed to via external providers on optimum value for money grounds.

7.3 The relevant Trade Unions were consulted and raised no objection to the proposal.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves the establishment of a new fixed-term (two year) post of ICT Agent – Building Schools for the Future.

8.2 That initially the post is advertised for internal applicants only.

SERVICE DIRECTOR ASSET MANAGEMENT AND CULTURE
SERVICE DIRECTOR TRANSITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Hewson House
Station Road
BRIGG
North Lincolnshire
DN20 8XY
Author: M Oglesby/ P M Williams
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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report: None