Business Case – H010 Staff Resources for Housing Systems Team

Runnymede BOROUGH COUNCIL

Project Initiation Stage

Project/Item Title	Enhancements to the Housing Systems Team		Version	1 .0
Corporate Head	Andy Vincent	Service Area	Housing	
Service Committee to Approve Budget	Housing			
Anticipated Cost of Proposal (Capital)		Anticipated Cost Proposal (Revenue)	£135,472 p.a	

To be completed for Projects only (H010)

Type of Project	Staffing Growth	Project Duration	On-going
Proposed Project Start Date	Apr-23	Proposed Project End Date	

Business Case Context

Background

Describe the purpose of the Business Case, what benefits are expected to be delivered or what problem will be solved (What is wrong with the status quo? What are the drivers for change?). Is the scheme a result of legal/statutory requirements or a stakeholder consultation?

Members have approved over £500,000 of expenditure over 5 years to upgrade the Housing IT system, there had been minimal investment for decades and the system was not fit for purpose. There is a huge drive to digitalise of our existing services whilst operational responsibilities imposed by legislation and the Regulator of Social Housing are increasing.   The resources currently within the Housing Business Unit for NEC system support, rent accounting, leaseholder management, service charges and invoice paying are not adequate to support the current business needs and ongoing system maintenance and development. There are a number of single points of failure that present a high risk to the business. This growth bid proposes centralising these functions under a dedicated manager and create additional posts to ensure that all the modules of the NEC Housing system are adequately supported and the financial functions of the department are appropriately managed. The staffing resources have not been increased to support the current business needs and currently there are only resources within the rent accounting function and technical services which have some element of system support within their roles. These are discreet roles with no cross training or cover during absences. These roles are fully subscribed with existing requirements and additional work is being brought into housing for service charges and leaseholders.

Current roles:

Housing Technical Services - Systems Administrator + Technical Assistant

Housing and Neighbourhood Services - Systems Administrator + Technical Assistant

No provision for IT support is made for Housing Solutions

The Housing Service will continue to work in conjunction with Digital Services in relation to large scale module implementations - as with phase 2 of the Housing System Upgrade these will continue to be facilitated by the IT provider (NEC Housing currently).   The Housing Solutions Team has a budgeted post which is currently vacant and with a drop in the number of homeless cases it is proposed to utilise this budget to create a dedicated systems person for the Housing Solutions Service which is implementing 4 new NEC modules which will need support. (Allocations, Choice Based Lettings, Auto bidding and Housing Advice.

Budgeted Posts

Job	Grade	FTE	Post No	Top of salary	Budget inc. 28.5% oncosts
Revenues & Systems Officer	MMA	37	E0065	46,558	59,827
System Administrator	9	37	E0372	34,474	44,299
Technical Assistant	7	23	E0240	27,991	21,873
Revenues & Systems Assistant	7	37	E0066	27,991	35,968
Housing Solutions Officer	10	37	E0055	38,276	49,185
				Current Total Costs	**211,152**

Proposed Posts

Job	Grade	FTE	Post No	Top of salary	Budget (inc. 28.5% oncosts
Revenues & Systems Manager	SMA	37	E0065	61,724	79,315
System Administrator (Allocations)	9/10	37	E0372	38,276	49,185
System Administrator (Rents & Estates)	9/10	37	New post	38,276	49,185
System Administrator (Technical Services)	9/10	37	New Post	38,276	49,185
Systems Assistant	8	37	E0240	31,065	39,919
Systems Assistant	8	37	E0066	31,065	39,919
Systems Assistant	8	37	New Post	31,065	39,919
				Future Total Costs	346,625
			Additional supplementary estimate required		135,473

Strategic Links - relate this Business Case to RBC Corporate Strategies and Corporate Values

Corporate Strategies	Describe how this Business Case meets / contributes to the Corporate Business Plan through each of the Corporate Strategies. *- Delete those not applicable*
Climate Change Strategy *Reducing Carbon emissions from the Council's operations and the wider Runnymede community .*	Housing will have a fully supported On Line offering with most transactions being carried out through an on line account enabling all tenant interactions to be captured and monitored creating service efficiencies to enable an increased level of home visits, resources for our tenant support services and a face to face focus on the increasingly complex client group. An increased use of data to drive service decisions and improvements will enable us to make more efficient use of staffing resources.
Organisational Development Strategy *Enable Officers and Members to perform their duties to the best of their ability and make Runnymede Borough Council the employer of choice for local people.*	
Economic Development Strategy *Ensuring that the Borough continues to be a leading economy in Surrey and the wider sub-region.*	Improved collection of housing charges - service charges, former tenant arrears and recharges will increase the revenue to the service and enable services to tenants to be enhanced. The extensive capital programme will result in a huge increase in charges to leaseholders which will need to be charged and collected.

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Empowering the Community Strategy *Evidence Based Decision Making, Listening to residents, Enabling Communities to help themselves and to take control of services or plans for their areas, Working effectively with partner organisations, Dealing with inequalities.*	This supports the Council's Economic Development Strategy, Empowering the Community Strategy, and Organisational Development Strategy.
Health and Wellbeing Strategy *Support the delivery of a range of services and functions to improve outcomes for residents and their quality of life.*	
Corporate Values	**Describe where this Business Case fits in our Corporate Values -** *Delete those not applicable*
People-focussed – *we will put people at the heart of what we do and they will be able to deal with us easily.*	
Passionate – *we will empower our staff to be passionate about all we do.*	
Performance driven – *we will strive for excellence in all we do.*	
Innovative – *we will aim to creatively improve our services and be open to new ways of providing services.*	
Promoting equality and diversity – *we believe in fairness as well as maintaining a diverse workforce so we can draw upon a wide range of views and experiences to meet the changing needs of our communities.*	
Delivering excellent value for money – *we will strive to be as efficient and effective as possible.*	
Collaborative – *we will work together and with others to deliver positive outcomes for our communities.*	
Transparent – *we will be open and honest to all about what we do.*	

List your Business Case Objectives, ensuring they are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely

It is proposed we bring the systems administrators together into one team. It is proposed to add to their functions to administer service charges for tenants and leaseholders within the system - utilising the service charges module designed for that purpose, collection of former tenant arrears, recharges etc

It is proposed to delete a Housing Solutions Officer from the establishment to help fund the recruitment of a Systems Administrator for the Housing Solutions Team.

List the Constraints or Parameters in which this Business Case will operate

This business case assumes all posts within this structure are filled and at the highest salary band.

It should be noted that both systems staff within Housing Technical Services are currently part time - the vacancy within Housing and Neighbourhood Services for a Technical Assistant has been vacant for 8 months

It is therefore not anticipated that the cost to Runnymede Borough Council will be as proposed within this business case

List the Outcomes and Benefits (including efficiency gains) you expect the scheme to achieve

Housing will have a fully supported On Line offering with most transactions being carried out through an on line account enabling all tenant interactions to be captured and monitored creating service efficiencies to enable an increased level of home visits, resources for our tenant support services and a face to face focus on the increasingly complex client group. There is currently no capacity to support tenants with online accounts so in order for these to be rolled out a resource needs to be in place. An increased use of data to drive service decisions and improvements will enable us to make more efficient use of staffing resources.

Improved collection of housing charges - service charges, former tenant arrears and recharges will increase the revenue to the service and enable services to tenants to be enhanced. The extensive capital programme will result in a huge increase in charges to leaseholders which will need to be charged and collected. A high rent collection is essential to fund the service and increased digital transactions will free up more of the Area Housing Manager's time for rent arrears casework.

Appraisal of Business Options (must include evaluation of a 'do nothing' option)

Option 1 (preferred option):
Description
Describe the preferred option and why. Describe the current position and the consequences/reasons that do nothing is not a viable option.

The preferred option is to recruit Housing Systems Staff to support Housing Solutions. If this resource is not increased there is potential for service failure, reduced income and the current investment in the NEC system will not deliver all the potential benefits. Without additional officers the system will be static after each module is implemented with no capacity for continued improvement and introducing new functionality to each module as it is released.

One Housing Solutions Officer post will be deleted to enable this to happen.

The preferred option is also to recruit a Manager for the Housing Systems Team. This service is integral to the work of the whole department and needs to have a strategic and operational lead with the knowledge and capacity to maintain a system that is fit for purpose

There are consequences for the authority of not supporting the Housing Solutions Service. IT systems will not reflect legislation, exposing the authority to the risk of legal challenge.

To accommodate the system not functioning effectively staff resources are being utilised to manually work around the system - making the team less effective and efficient.

Benefits (comparison to other options considered)
Consider any tangible benefits of the Preferred Option, consider benefits such as income generation, savings, great efficiency, compliance with legislation / industry standards – soft benefits, reputation, residents' satisfaction, perception of Council

There are three key benefits:

An IT system that is legally compliant

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Staff efficiency as the IT system is working in a way which supports them and promotes resident self service

Improvements in income collection performance

Advantages to Service Area (preferred option)	Disadvantages to Service Area (preferred option)
More efficient staff working with an IT system which supports them Greater resident/tenant self service Improvements in collection performance	Cost - although costs can be of set against the advantages

Costs to Organisation (preferred option)	Benefits to Organisation (preferred option)
£135,473 annually	Better self service options Reduction in the threat of legal challenge Enhanced levels of income collection

Resource Requirements
Staffing Appraisal (preferred option):
Outline the expected staffing / resourcing requirements for the preferred option in the table below, think about resources required in your team and others. This should include job titles, number of hours worked and salary.

Existing Staffing	New RBC Staff Requested	New External Staff Requested
	3 posts as set out above	

Add any costs into the financial appraisal table.

FINANCIAL APPRAISAL

Finance Appraisal (preferred option) - To be completed with the Finance Department:
Describe the financial and resource implications of this option. See Financial Appraisal below to capture numbers.
How will it be financed? Is a Supplementary Revenue Estimate required? Can it be resourced via a Virement (including areas other than your own)?
Is there other funding available? Has funding been agreed? Demonstrate how the council can receive a return on investment, whether cashable, cost avoidance or quantifying tangible benefits – **Seek advice from your accountant. Business cases will not be considered by the Chief Executive unless a full financial appraisal has been agreed by the Accountancy Team.**

Explain how the cost estimate has been drawn up e.g. based on the costs of a similar project/item; based on quotes from suppliers etc:	Current staffing costs - although salaries would need to be appraised by HR
Please explain how you have considered the VAT implications of the project/item:	
If this project involves building or refurbishment work within corporate assets has the project/work been consulted on and agreed by the Corporate Head of Strategic Land and Property Assets? Please give details.	This does not involve a corporate asset

CAPITAL COSTS						
Capital Expenditure (specify codes required)	**Year 1 (£)**	**Year 2 (£)**	**Year 3 (£)**	**Year 4 (£)**	**Year 5 (£)**	**Year 6 (£)**
NIL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Capital Expenditure	-	-	-	-	-	-

Capital Income (specify codes required)	**Year 1 (£)**	**Year 2 (£)**	**Year 3 (£)**	**Year 4 (£)**	**Year 5 (£)**	**Year 6 (£)**
NIL	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Capital Income	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net Capital Outlay	-	-	-	-	-	-

REVENUE COSTS						
Revenue Expenditure (specify codes required)	**Year 1 (£)**	**Year 2 (£)**	**Year 3 (£)**	**Year 4 (£)**	**Year 5 (£)**	**Year 6 (£)**
Staffing costs at top of scale including on-costs at 28.5%	**135,473**	**135,473**	**135,473**	**135,473**	**135,473**	**135,473**
Less: Savings to existing budget (Please specify)						
Total Revenue Expenditure	135,473	135,473	135,473	135,473	135,473	135,473

Revenue Income (specify codes required)	**Year 1 (£)**	**Year 2 (£)**	**Year 3 (£)**	**Year 4 (£)**	**Year 5 (£)**	**Year 6 (£)**
No direct income but would support improved collection performance						

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Total Revenue Income	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net change to revenue budgets	135,473	135,473	135,473	135,473	135,473	135,473

Business Case / Risks

Outline the risks (Managerial, Financial, Operational etc.) to RBC if delivering the preferred option. A risk summary only is required here.

Risk Description	Mitigation / Help needed
Not able to recruit to the roles	HR assistance with evaluation of new roles and a campaign around new section opportunities

Impact

Consider the impact of the Business Case on the Organisation / Environment / Technology / Commercialisation / Cultural / HR

Office systems support front line staff to be efficient and effective - commercialisation

Authorisation

Approved by Corporate Head of Finance	Paul French		Date	12/01/2023
Approved by Corporate Leadership Team	YES	Date	19/10/2022	Priority Score	SHOULD
Committee Report to be presented to:		Date		

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