



Report of Chief Officer Housing Management Housing Leeds

Report to Director of Environments and Housing

Significant Operational Decision

Date: 14th August 2014

Subject: Housing Leeds Housing Management Restructure 2014

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To obtain approval to implement Phase 3 of the restructure to develop one simple, smart and effective Housing Management Service for Council Housing in Leeds.

The proposal supports the integration of Housing Management Services fully into Leeds City Council and enables the Service to be an effective component of 'Team Leeds' and the conduit for tenants to all services.

The proposal creates a simple, flexible generic structure to deliver customer focused, proactive and consistent service delivery across the City.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

To obtain approval to implement Phase 3 (PO4 and below) of the restructure of the Housing Management service following the transfer of services into Leeds City Council from the Leeds ALMOs and the ALMO Business Centre Leeds (ABCL).

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The three Leeds ALMOs had developed very different approaches to the delivery of operational housing management services to manage the 57,000 council homes. The existing structures reflect the very different roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, grades and job descriptions across the three organisations as directed through the different priorities and resource allocation. The service models range from a highly specialist service model with really distinct roles to more generic models and roles.

The proposed structure creates a very clear focus on the delivery and development of front line services which focus on the tenant experience and delivery of customer satisfaction. The structure has reduced the number of job descriptions and roles from 118 to 8 core roles to support flexibility and create greater opportunity to effectively manage service demand.

The restructure implementation proposal will integrate the different teams with the aim of delivering a consistent service model and culture of service delivery for the City, which retains and develops best practice.

2.2 At the beginning of October 2013 the housing management function transferred back into Leeds City Council. In December 2013, the Director of Environment and Housing took a decision to implement Phase 1 of a restructure of Housing Leeds (the JNC management structure) which followed arrangements referenced in an Executive Board Report in July 2013. Subsequently Phase 2 of the Housing Management restructure was agreed and implemented in April 2014 completing the senior management structure and recruiting to the PO6 cohort.

3.0 Scope of the Restructure

3.1 The proposed Housing Management Service includes 8 Area Housing Management structures and Neighbourhood Services to manage the 57,000 council homes in the City. The service will be customer-facing delivered through the 26 Local Housing Offices and the One Stop Shops. The proposed service model is generic and focusses on increasing the resource at Housing Officer (C3) and Housing Assistant (B3) to deliver smaller patch sizes to enable staff to deliver a holistic service. Housing Support Services and the Lettings Service will be delivered through the Area Housing Offices to ensure ownership and accountability of allocation and tenancy management. To support the focus on customer and front-line delivery there will be a small reduction in PO3/4 posts as functions have been consolidated.

A significant change in organization and delivery is the delivery of Estate Services and Caretaking, which will be delivered by Environmental Action and covered in that restructure. Anti- Social Behaviour teams will be managed by Community Safety and contract management of grounds maintenance will

be managed by Parks & Countryside within the directorate; effective partnership working will be embedded to ensure seamless and consistent services are delivered to tenants. The Out of Hours Customer Accounts Service which had previously operated within the WNW area of the city is not included within scope.

3.2 Neighbourhood Services will lead and deliver key central functions to ensure consistency, provide the required quality assurance and as well as some significant front-line services, including:

- Income Management
- Lettings & Tenancy Service (including the management of the Leeds Housing register,)
- Tenant & Community Involvement
- Older Peoples Housing Services including the management of Sheltered Housing.

4.0 Main Issues

4.1 A full service restructure is required to develop a customer focused people orientated service which delivers consistency in all geographical areas, eliminates duplication, and introduces customer outcomes which responds to local need. Delivery of the restructure quickly will enable the delivery of organisational stability and ensure housing management is delivered within and in partnership with all Council Services, and ensures service delivery is aligned to the Best Council outcomes and objectives.

This report deals with the Phase 3 the full service restructure including all staff at PO4 and below. Completion of this final phase will enable the organization of all staff and resources on the same basis and create the development one service and one culture.

5.0 Proposed Changes

5.1 The fundamental vision of Housing Management Services is to deliver a people orientated, customer focused service which delivers an effective and consistent service across the City. The Service will deliver a defined outcome based 'tenant offer' which will meet tenant's needs and aspirations.

The Housing Management Operational Structure will support the Council's Area Management arrangements to ensure clarity of governance, decision-making and organisation, and will enable effective partnership and integration of housing management services with other Council services.

The service will be delivered through the 26 Local Housing Offices and One Stop Shops; the office opening times have recently been reviewed to ensure consistency across the City.

In designing the Housing Management Structure, Area Housing Management has been developed to ensure it is co-terminus with the Community Committee boundaries. A template has been developed to ensure clear accountability and responsibility for Area Housing Management through local leadership and dedicated Housing Managers. There is the ability to move resource to effectively respond to the local demand and the operation and patch sizes in addition to property numbers, property types, complexity of stock, and turn over, hotspots have all been considered in designing the structure. Regular evaluation will take place to assess resources and service demands to ensure a responsive customer focussed service is delivered. The generic structure will ensure that there is a holistic customer approach to service delivery with Housing Officers taking accountability for the relationship

with the tenant, and delivering services including assessment of prospective tenants, appropriate lettings and the delivery of a comprehensive housing management service inclusive of tenancy management and management of the rent accounts. The Housing Officer will be supported by some specialist resources to respond to the needs of vulnerable tenants but will be the key conduit of services for that individual. Housing Officers will have a key role in connecting with communities and supporting engagement with partners and across the Council.

The rationale for the Neighbourhood Services structure is to lead and deliver key central functions to ensure consistency, provide the required quality assurance and as well as some significant front-line services.

A key focus of the Housing Management Service is to ensure the service and the Council is extremely well connected into the tenants and residents of the City and aims to create a wide range of opportunities for tenants and residents to be involved and engaged in service delivery at a strategic and a local level. Building on the excellent work undertaken by the ALMO's the new service is developing the Scrutiny function, a review of the Leeds Tenants Federation, development of the 11 Housing Advisory Panels, a specific focussed group for High Rise and support to Tenants and Residents Associations. The comprehensive structure will enable growth and development of this area and a support network to develop new mechanisms of connecting with tenants and communities.

The Older People Housing Service located in Neighbourhood Services delivers Sheltered Housing Services to 130 sheltered housing schemes, with 4123 homes across the City. Bringing together the service will enable us to renew the offer to Older People and ensure effective connections to the council objective of *delivery of better lives programme* and ensuring we review investment in sheltered housing in this context to improve provision.

A primary factor in delivery of effective housing management is consistent and effective housing practice, policy and lettings. Neighbourhood Services will support and provide quality assurance to ensure the lettings process is effective and delivers the statutory duties of the Council; and provides a clear link to the Council House Growth Programme.

Neighbourhood Services will deliver the central income management service to ensure quality assurance, consistency and efficiency in income recovery and specifically the court processes and former tenant arrears. In addition the services will co-ordinate changes and specifically deliver coordination of housing management responses to welfare changes.

The proposed structures are shown at **Appendix A – attached**

The Job Descriptions are attached at **Appendix B – attached**

The Job Descriptions have been evaluated. The generic job description / job family approach is designed to enable flexibility and effective resource utilisation.

- 5.2 The new structure will necessitate changes in roles and a general move to up-skill and place a greater emphasis on responsive housing management functions, to improve customer service and satisfaction and create a consistent service offer across the City.

The table at **Appendix C** shows the changes in the number of staff at different grades within Phase 3 (the final stage) of the restructure.

6.0 Workforce implementation plan

A set of principles have been prepared for the transitional process between existing structures and the new structures detailed in this Report. Those principles are attached as **Appendix D**. With reference to the proposed changes to Terms and Conditions of employment, which have been agreed General Purpose Committee on 29th July 2014, decisions with regard to the workforce implementation plan for this restructure will be made in line with corporate decisions:

6.1 Phase 1 – Slotting

Slotting will be considered in consultation with the Trade Unions.

6.2 Phase 2 – Ring-Fencing

Posts which have not been filled by slotting, because they have changed under the new structure, or where there are more employees than posts, will be allocated via a preferencing and ring fence exercise. Employees for ring fenced posts will be asked to preference for posts and complete a shortened application form prior to taking part in a formal interview process.

6.3 Temporary Roles

Following consultation with the Trade Unions, for this restructure process only, employees who have been employed on a temporary contract for over 2 years will be included in the ring-fence. Temporary employees who have been employed for less than 2 years will be eligible to apply for any vacancies remaining at phase 4 of the process. There are currently 53 people on temporary posts employed within Housing Management (see 6.5 below). Any staff who have been 'acting-up'/in a temporary role for a period of more than 12 months and were selected through a competitive process will be included in relevant ring fence(s) for their current role.

6.4 Phase 3 – Talent Pool

Unfilled posts will be matched to people in the Talent Pool either those displaced through this restructure or from other Council restructures.

6.5 Phase 4 – General Ring-Fencing

At the conclusion of Phase 3, any posts remaining unfilled will be dealt with under an internal open selection process. At this stage, staff not directly affected by this restructuring and generally from within the Council will be eligible to apply. Posts will be filled by the usual range of selection methods.

6.6 Preferencing

As part of the recruitment process all staff will be asked to preference job roles. Staff will also be offered the opportunity to state their preferred location choices. The appointment process will take into account staff preferences both in terms of job roles and location, but preferences will need to be

balanced with the need for continuation of service and promoting a new Housing Leeds culture. Staff's special circumstances will be taken into consideration in making role and job location decisions.

6.7 Training and Development

A comprehensive training and development plan is in development to support staff and ensure effective skills are developed to undertake the generic roles.

7.0 Corporate Considerations

7.1 Consultation and Engagement

7.1.1 These recommendations have been developed by the Housing Management, Management Team, HR and Finance in consultation and with the Trade Unions through a series of formal fortnightly consultation meetings. Further discussions and consultations will be held with this group throughout the implementation phase; and further engagement will be sought from the whole workforce in scope.

7.1.2 The formal service-wide consultation took place during July 2014. The trade unions raised concerns that the B1s and C1s were not being slotted to B3s and C3 posts respectively. Human Resources confirmed that in line with the Recruitment and Selection Policy, it is not possible to slot employees to higher graded posts as it is essential that staff undergo a selection process to ensure that they can meet the requirements of the job.

7.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

7.2.1 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken. This demonstrates that appropriate consideration has been given to equality, diversity, cohesion and integration as part of the development of the restructure proposals.

7.3 Council policies and City Priorities

7.3.1 The proposals within this report support wider aspirations for Leeds set out in the new Leeds Vision, City Priority Plans, Directorate Priorities and Cross Council Priorities.

7.3.2 The proposals support the Best Council objectives of:-

- Ensuring high quality public services; and
- Becoming an efficient and enterprising Council.

7.4 Resources and value for money

7.4.1 The full year cost of the current structure at PO4 level and below with full establishment and including on-costs is £15,341k. The cost of the revised structure is £15,330k again including on-costs, therefore delivering a saving of £11k (see Appendix E for details). The cost of the current structure is based on the rolled over 2013/14 staffing budget and so takes account of some posts remaining unfilled.

7.4.2 In transferring the Environmental Action function from Housing Management to Environmental Action time savings have been made in delivering the service to HRA land – line management time,

complaints handling etc. It has been decided to re-invest this saving into an enhanced Housing Management Service, with smaller Housing Officer Patch sizes.

7.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

The decision being requested in this report is a Significant Operational Decision and as such is not eligible for call in. Powers of delegation to the Director for this decision are contained within the scheme under Part 3 of the Constitution.

There are no significant legal implications associated with this decision. The report contains no information which is considered confidential or exempt as determined by the Access to information Procedure Rules within part 4 of the Constitution.

7.6 Risk Management

Failure to implement the new structure will perpetuate the inconsistencies and inefficiencies that are present with the current service delivery models, leading to differential levels of customer outcomes and satisfaction.

8.0 Conclusions

This proposed structure, is essential to move to a consistent customer focused, people orientated Housing Management Service for Leeds, consolidating and developing the service previously delivered by the ALMOs/ABCL and Strategic Housing structures. It will provide the required clarity, stability and capacity to deliver on future challenges for housing management delivery within the context of wider Council services. The benefits are stated, as are the risks, the approach to further consultation and the approach to implementing the organisational changes.

9.0 Recommendations

To approve the proposed Phase 3 of the service restructure (PO4 & below) for Housing Management (Housing Leeds).

10.0 Background Papers

Appendix A – Housing Management Proposed Structures

Appendix B – Housing Management Proposed Job Descriptions

Appendix C– Current and proposed structure and changes

Appendix D – Principles around the restructure

Appendix E - Financial analysis of proposals