

Report of: Chief Officer Housing Management

Report to: Director of Environment and Housing

Date: 16 July 2015

Subject: Graduate Programme Resource Provision - Housing Management

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

1.0 Summary of main issues

1.1 This report seeks approval for the creation of four, two year duration, grade (C1) graduate Project Officers posts within the Housing Leeds, Housing Management Division. To support delivery of projects associated with achievement of the current and future Housing Leeds service objectives of:

- Preventing Homelessness through joint working and effective lettings.
- Reducing relet times
- Maximising rent collection
- Maximising support to tenants impacted by welfare changes
- Annual Tenancy Visits

Project specifics to be determined.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 Approve the creation of 4 x two year, grade (C1) graduate Project Officers within Housing Management Division to support the council's service objectives.

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To seek approval for the creation of four grade (C1) graduate employment opportunities within the Housing Management Division of Housing Leeds, via the councils 'Graduate Programme', running for a period of 2 years. To support effective delivery of the council's Housing Management service objectives of :
- Preventing Homelessness through joint working and effective lettings.
 - Reducing relet times
 - Maximising rent collection
 - Maximising support to tenants impacted by welfare changes
 - Annual Tenancy Visits

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The council's 'Graduate Programme' is a career entry level programme developed as part of the council's wider workforce planning considerations, introduced in part to address identified skills shortages within the council and in recognition of an ageing workforce.
- 2.2 Potential graduates are targeted from Yorkshire universities through an established network of university careers contacts, with the intention of attracting ideally young high caliber applicants with bachelor's degrees or equivalent.
- 2.3 Applicants are initially shortlisted for interview through a series of tests conducted at an early stage assessment centre. This being prior to the successful candidates going forward to a more formal second stage interview and assessment process to establish their suitability for a range of project types within the council.
- 2.4 Successful candidates will have demonstrated a clear understanding of the council and have an ability to adhere to the council values and behavioural expectations. Past experience has highlighted that successful applicants often demonstrate performance capabilities over and above the proposed pay grade offering increased value for money for the local authority.
- 2.5 It is expected that on conclusion of each two year graduate placement, the successful candidates will be in a strong position to apply and be successful in securing alternative employment within Leeds City Council.

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 Graduate Project Officer Requirements

- 3.2 Following significant re-structure of the Housing Management Division during 2014/15 after re-integration of three former ALMO in 2013. Increased emphasis is now being placed upon improving delivery of services and core performance against Service objectives linked with.
- Preventing Homelessness through joint working and effective lettings.
 - Reducing relet times
 - Maximising rent collection
 - Maximising support to tenants impacted by welfare changes
 - Annual Tenancy Visits

- 3.3 Work is continuing to further embed Housing Management Services into the Council by developing joint approaches with both internal and external partners to improve the council's overall effectiveness in delivering services to the residents of Leeds.
- 3.4 Additional service enhancement work across all areas of Housing Management continues to be undertaken to standardise and improve frontline services and performance.
- 3.5 In light of the scope of works still to be undertaken to deliver ongoing enhanced service provision. The availability of the four graduate (C1) Project Officers within the Housing Management Division to support special projects would be considered highly beneficial to the service outcomes.

4.0 Corporate Considerations

- 4.1 The Graduate Programme supports the Council's objective to provide employment opportunities for young persons to enter into the workforce.

4.2 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.2.1 The Trade Unions are supportive of the approach to support young people to find employment within the Council.

4.3 Equality Diversity Cohesion and Integration

- 4.3.1 No issues identified. Equality and Diversity in the Workforce was reported to the Corporate Leadership Team in February 2013. In the age range 16 -25 the Council employs 675 people which is just 4.46% of the overall workforce.

4.4 Council Policies and City Priorities

- 4.4.1 The proposals set out in this report represent a temporary change to the existing structure of Housing Management and therefore approval has been sought through the delegated route.
- 4.4.2 The proposals support the council's aim to be a modern and diverse employer and to develop a leadership role across the city in providing opportunities to support work readiness during a time where job opportunities are reduced.

4.5 Resource and Value for Money

- 4.5.1 Individual graduate annual salary is paid at grade (C1), £24,395p.a (*incl. on-cost*)
- 4.5.2 The four graduate Project Officer posts proposed including on-costs total £97,580 for the first year, and a further £97,580 in year two. Total funding costs of £191,160 for the two year contract period. Funding for this has been identified and will be met through holding posts vacant within Housing Leeds.

4.6 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.6.1 The posts are 2 year fixed term contracts with no eligibility for redeployment and overall cost which do not exceed £250k per annum. As such, there are no legal implications and the decision is not subject to call in.

4.7 Risk Management

4.7.1 No Issues Identified.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Approval for the five graduate posts proposed would better enable the Housing Management Service to deliver the councils housing management corporate objectives.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 Approve the creation of 4 x two year, grade (C1) graduate Project Officers posts within Housing Management Division to support the council's corporate objectives.

7.0 Background

7.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.