

Report of: Head of Housing Contracts Property and Contracts, Housing Leeds

Report to: Director of Environments and Housing; Administrative Decision

Date: 27th October 2015

Subject: Property & Contracts Disrepair Resources

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 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Disrepair Team is requesting approval to create eight twelve month temporary contracts in order to transfer agency posts into temporary contracts.
- 1.2 One of these Contracts will be at PO4, four at PO2 and three will be at C1.
- 1.3 A copy of the structure is attached as Appendix A which identifies both the permanent and temporary posts
- 1.4 The PO4 role is an additional post that is required to take overall responsibility for the case management process.
- 1.5 The four PO2 roles will be surveyors who will undertake surveying duties which were previously outsourced and undertaken through NPS. The change to these arrangements are due to a number of performance issues that have been raised directly with NPS but without success.

- 1.6 These new arrangements will allow greater control over the case management process, leading to an increase in the number of cases cleared.
- 1.7 The C1 roles will be Contract Liaison Officers who will assist in the implementation of the revised management processes in the service.
- 1.8 The overall impact of these proposals will improve the ongoing management of these resources and allow greater control over the flexible deployment of resources while also reducing costs by £157k in 2015/16 and £217k in 2016/17.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Director of Environment and Housing is asked to approve the revised structure within the Disrepair Team and agree to the recruitment of the additional resources identified within this report on 12month temporary contracts. .

3.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Disrepair Team has seven members of staff who are currently employed through comensura and are therefore on agency contracts.
- 3.2 In order to meet the changes in the way the service is delivered and anticipated demand profile it is proposed to convert these posts to eight temporary 12 month contracts.

4.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 4.1 The Disrepair Team has reviewed all processes and procedures and implemented a revised performance management process
- 4.2 The Surveying and Expert Witness duties will be provided by four in house surveyors.
- 4.3 Three Contract Liaison Officers are required to undertake duties either not previously undertaken or have previously been carried out by either legal or NPS partners.
- 4.4 The Disrepair Team is currently supported by a PO4 Project Manager who has been seconded on a short term secondment from Leeds Building Services. These arrangements are due to come to an end and it is proposed to extend the requirements of this post for a further 12mths. .
- 4.5 Initially all 8 of these temporary posts will be referred through the Managing Workforce Change team and if no successful candidates are identified the posts will be advertised internally in the first instance, then externally if no suitable internal candidates are identified.

5.0 MAIN ISSUES

5.1 The Disrepair service has been using NPS to undertake the surveying activities in relation to Expert Witness, claim assessment and on site works monitoring.

5.2 The Council has decided to end its relationship with NPS for this service due to performance matters and in order to take greater control over the full Disrepair case management process.

5.3 The Disrepair Team has implemented new processes and procedures to improve the case management process and ensure timely processes and clearing of cases.

5.4 The Disrepair Team has been supported by a PO4 Manager who has moved from Leeds Building Services on a short term secondment. It is proposed to formalise this role in to the team for a twelve month period.

5.5 In order to facilitate these changes the Disrepair team need the following roles to be established within the team on temporary 12 month fixed term contracts.

- 3 Contract Liaison Officers grade C1
- 4 Building Surveyors grade PO2
- 1 Project Manager (Construction) grade PO4

5.6 The change will produce an anticipated reduction in cost of £157k on fees paid to NPS in 2015/16. (see Appendix B for breakdown)

5.7 Project Deliverables

5.7.1 The key deliverables are to provide eight temporary employment contracts, to enhance the effective management of the claims process and complying with the Department directive to remove agency working and ensuring effective continual service delivery.

5.7.2 The additional posts will support the changes made to both the surveying and claims process and provide focused input in to the action plan, directed towards pre-emptive action to reduce the claim count.

5.8 Constraints

5.8.1 The Disrepair Service is a reactive one as we do not have any control on the number of claims brought against LCC. The activity of certain "claim farmer" solicitors over the past 18 months has seen a dramatic increase in actual number of claims the Team has had to deal with. This has had a knock on effect to not only the Disrepair Team but also to our internal partners in Legal Services.

5.8.2 At present the number of claims is constant and therefore any loss of resource to the Team will have a substantial negative impact.

5.8.3 The processes and procedures within the team have been redesigned and their implementation has started to see performance improvements in reducing the level of outstanding cases.

5.8.4 In order to maintain this progress the revised resource levels are required.

6.0 BENEFITS TO THE SERVICE

6.1 The additional posts will provide the following benefits to the service

- Increase in capacity to perform roles previously carried out by internal and external partners
- Improved quality and process with enhanced performance management
- Facilitate an increase in the number of claims settled enabling the team to meet its targets for 2015/16
- Reduction in cost of the service due to migration of surveying service from NPS to the Council
- The proposal will save the Council £157k that would otherwise be paid to NPS.

7.0 CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 Consultation and Engagement

7.1.1 The recommendations have been developed by Head of Housing Contracts in consultation with the Senior Management and Legal Teams supporting the process.

7.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

7.2.1 The Equality Impact Assessment is enclosed within this report as Appendix C.

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

7.5 These proposals will deliver an overall reduction in staffing costs as these proposals will transfer existing agency expenditure to fund temporary posts will a further saving of £157k by terminating the current arrangements for surveying resources to be employed through NPS.

7.6 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

7.6.1 The decision being requested in this Report is an Administrative 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.

7.6.2 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.

7.7 Risk Management

7.8 Failure to adequately resource the Disrepair Team will prevent the team meeting the Disrepair Protocol periods and efficiently managing the caseload, incurring additional cost to the Council.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The creation of the eight roles will facilitate improved quality and performance management and greater control in the case management process

8.2 The changes to the process and procedures will reduce costs by £157k in 2015/16 and £217k in 16/17

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The Director of Environment and Housing is asked to approve the revised structure within the Disrepair Team and agree to the recruitment of the additional resources identified within this report on 12 month temporary contracts. .