



Report of: Service Manager

Report to: Director of Resources and Housing

Date: 17 July 2017

Subject: Recruitment of C1 Voids Technical Support Officer

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, 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 Housing Leeds started a limited trial of switching void properties to Robin Hood Energy/White Rose Energy in June 2016 and then switched all suitable void properties from October 2016. This process relies on good information flows between RHE and Housing Leeds. The most critical data is the date and end meter reading when one tenancy ends and on tenancy commencement we require tenant information and the start meter reading.
- 1.2 If the team are to continue to deliver the utility function, an additional C1 Technical Support Officer (TSO) is now essential to support the delivery of this process. This post is business critical to deliver the functions required to manage the interface with White Rose Energy and to support new tenants to set up utility agreements. It is also critical in ensuring that the utility process does not delay the tenancy commencement resulting in rent loss, lost days that impact on the overall average re-let and also dissatisfied customers which can lead to complaints.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 The Director of Resources and Housing is asked to approve the additional C1 Void Technical Support Officer post; whose role will be to support the utility function within the delivery of the voids Service in addition to other responsibilities commensurate with the post.

1.0 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To seek approval to recruit an additional C1 Void Technical Support Officer within the Voids Team.

2.0 Background information

- 2.1 Prior to the ALMOs coming back into the Council, they all had their own arrangements in place in terms of dealing with utilities. In the former East ALMO there was a full time designated officer dealing with utilities which came under the housing management structure. In the former West ALMO, utilities was dealt with by the voids and lettings team, 4 full time void administrative roles also supported this function as well as carrying out other administrative tasks. In the former South ALMO, utilities were dealt with by the Service Delivery Team within the Housing Management structure. This team consisted of 3 Void Administrative roles and a Team Leader. Since the ALMO's came back into the council utilities has been carried out by the Voids Team.
- 2.2 Housing Leeds started a limited trial of switching void properties to Robin Hood Energy/White Rose Energy in June 2016 and then switched all suitable void properties from October 2016. This process relies on good information flows between RHE and Housing Leeds. The most critical data is the date and end meter reading when one tenancy ends and on tenancy commencement we require tenant information and the start meter reading. Although this function has been carried out by the Voids Team it has never been properly resourced.

3.0 Issues

- 3.1 As utility switching has now rolled out across the city this is creating additional pressure on the Voids Service which is impacting on performance. The team has for the last 2 months drawn on support from other teams but this is not sustainable.
- 3.2 This post is business critical to deliver the functions required to manage the interface with White Rose Energy and to support new tenants to set up utility agreements. It is also critical in ensuring that the utility process does not delay the tenancy commencement resulting in rent loss, lost days that impact on the overall average re-let and also dissatisfied customers which can lead to complaints.

5.0 Corporate Considerations

5.1 Consultation and Engagement

No consultation required with regards to the post.

5.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

Recruitment will follow Leeds City Council's Recruitment and Selection process.

5.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

Addressing poverty and deprivation is a key priority for the Council. The activities set out in this report support the Best Council Plan and Leeds Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy all of which have a strong focus on addressing debt, maximising income and

moving people and families out of poverty. The government estimates that many UK households could save over £200 per year simply by switching their gas and/or electricity supplier. This is dependent on the household's specific circumstances, however, savings are likely to be greater for those who have either never switched, or who have not switched for a long time.

6.0 Resources and value for money

6.1 The post requiring approval is a 37 hour permanent C1 Technical Officer post. A 16 hour (0.43 FTE) vacant post, which is fully funded for on the Voids structure already exists, this post has been held since 2016. In order to create a 37 hour post the 16 hours will be used to fund part of this post and the remaining 21 hours (0.57 FTE) would need to be funded from property and contracts. Please see below financial impact:

Post	Budget 2017/18	Full Year Projection	Pressure/(Saving)
Existing C1 FTE Technical Support Officer (21 hours)	£28,193(scale point 25)	£15,515	(£12,679)- 2017/18
Proposed C1 FTE Technical Support Officer Post (16 hours)	-	£25,607 (scale point 22)	£12,928 -2018/19

Please note that in 17/18 the pressure would be £2,259 based on the post being filled from September. Then from April 2018/19 onwards the budget pressure would be £12,928, but this will be funded via Property and Contracts.

7.0 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

7.1 There are no legal implications and the decision is not subject to a call in.

8.0 Risk Management

8.1 If recruitment of the C1 position was not approved then there is the risk of delays with the tenancy commencement resulting in rent loss, lost days that impact on the overall average re-let times. In addition to this there could potentially be dissatisfied customers which can lead to complaints, reputational damage of the council due to void switch not taking place in a timely manner.

9.0 Conclusions

9.1 The recruitment of the C1 TSO post will support the delivery of the utilities process and help to provide a consistent service in terms of how utilities are managed across the city. The post will make a positive impact on service delivery.

10.0 Recommendation

10.1 The Director of Resources and Housing is asked to approve the additional C1 Void Technical Support Officer post; whose role will be to support the utility function within the delivery of the voids Service in addition to other responsibilities commensurate with the post.

