

**Report of** Head of Responsive Repairs, Voids and CPM.

**Report to** Director of Resources & Housing

**Date:** 16 August 2019

**Subject: Request to increase capacity within Property and Contracts to deliver the Re-thinking Repairs and a number of other key projects.**

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?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

## 1 Summary of main issues

- 1.1 Property and Contracts (P&C) has a number of projects that need to commence with urgency to deliver key business priorities. The Re-thinking Repairs project specifically will support the aspiration to improve the customer experience and grow the internal service provider, Leeds Building Services, to deliver a repairs service across a greater geographical area. Capacity needs to be created within operational services to enable service input and thereby successful delivery of these projects within timeframes.
- 1.2 The request is to seek approval to generate flexibility within the Property and Contracts division of Housing Leeds by adding capacity to the existing structure through creating more of the same posts.

## 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Director of Resources & Housing approves the request to add ten additional FTE posts to the Property and Contracts structure to enable the successful delivery of the Rethinking Repairs and other business critical service projects.

### 3 Purpose of this report

- 3.1 To seek approval from the Director of Resources & Housing to increase the capacity of staffing resource on the Property and Contracts structure by ten additional FTE posts, to facilitate the successful delivery of the Rethinking Repairs and a number of other business critical projects within the division.
- 3.2 To highlight that the main project, Re-thinking Repairs (RR) project is a significant programme of activity that will result in a transformation to the city wide repairs service. The RR project has been on hold awaiting the allocation of resources, it now needs to commence without further delays. The benefits of this project will be felt by tenants across the city as they experience a higher quality repairs service. It will also better place LBS to deliver its aspiration to increase activity beyond its current boundaries.

### 4 Background information

- 4.1 The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) led 'Rethinking Repairs' project concluded at the end of 2017, it identified a number of key recommendations for LCC in the delivery of its city wide repairs service. Implementation of the CIH recommendations have been placed on hold due to lack of project resource, this matter is now resolved. The next step is to release staff from within delivery teams to ensure that this project is a customer and service led project. Successful delivery of this project will also support the council's ambition to grow Leeds Building services as the improvements it will generate will allow LBS to improve the quality of service offer to the tenant, improve efficiency and VFM.
- 4.2 The scope of activity that will sit within the Re-thinking Repairs programme include the following:
- **Repair Call Handling Review / Redesign** - Redesign the process to ensure the various repair reporting channels bring cohesion and a positive customer experience.
  - **Digital Access** - Implement an effective digital tenant platform for the 24/7 reporting of minor repairs which links to effective self-help information. Manage channel shift to make the most efficient use of resources.
  - **Integrated Repairs Business Process** - Move to a single common citywide repair order raising process. Implement the use of the National Housing Federation Schedule of rates. Review current responsive repair priorities in order to speed up repairs delivery and fall in line with best practice in the sector.
  - **Improved Collection of Customer Satisfaction Data** - Implement an automated system to carry out an increased volume of post repair tenant satisfaction surveys.
  - **Review the Current Responsive Repair to Planned Improvement Process** Review/redesign end to end process. Improve communication with tenants and appropriately align resources.
  - **Implement an Effective Chargeable / Rechargeable Repairs Process** Implement a fair and consistent process across all order raising channels which holds the Council and tenants responsible for their repair responsibilities.
  - **Mobile Working** Equip all repair ordering staff with access to real time repair history through a digital platform and raise repair orders face to face.

- **Business Analysis** - Introduce a monthly suite of analytical reports to measure and evaluate effectiveness of end to end repairs process, link to a flexible investment strategy.
- **Review Client Controls** - Revise key operational procedures to drive service excellence, efficiency and joint working (i.e. No Access procedures, follow-on works, tenant refusals, variations).
- **Robust Interventions for Low & High Frequency Users of the Service**  
Develop a suite of monthly reports which identify low and high frequency users of the service and develop interventions to react to these including targeted visits, disrepair prevention and targeted property MOT's.
- **Improved Quality Assurance Checks**  
Develop a digital platform for storing and reporting the outcomes of quality assurance inspections

## 5 Main issues

- 5.1 The city wide Responsive Repairs service offer extends to c. 54,000 council homes, these teams involved currently undertake high volumes of activity. Annually they manage over 200,000 repairs; 4,000 void turnarounds, and 50,000 service inspections), all teams deal with high levels of stakeholder involvement. Alongside this they are delivering a series of service improvement initiatives leaving insufficient capacity to support the Re-thinking Repairs transformational project and other service projects. The 2018/19 star survey results show that the top priorities for LCC tenants continue to be repairs and maintenance, and overall quality of the home. The Re-thinking repairs project will be key to addressing these expectations.
- 5.2 In order to deliver the Re-thinking Repairs and other key projects successfully, input is required from staff within delivery teams as they have the best understanding of operating systems, service delivery processes, and customer interface. The division has previously tested backfilling through temporary arrangements with limited value, it creates a chain of backfills which in turn creates uncertainty, and arrangements often need to be extended with the effect of destabilising teams. Service delivery staff working on projects will be drawn from across all teams including Planned Works, Commercial and Technical Services (Table A below). Service staff will be selected based on their expertise and knowledge of their respective service areas. Front line staff will also be fully engaged in the project through a series of workshops to enable them to share their experience and views on process/service re-design.
- 5.3 Alongside Re-thinking Repairs there is a forward plan of project activity across P&C, Appendix 1 attached, some projects have commenced, and others are in the pipe line awaiting service resource. A review of resource requirements identifies the need for an additional 10 FTE's, to ensure that staff are not overstretched or placed under undue additional pressure in addition to their core roles. These staff are not designated project staff, they are service delivery experts that are currently deployed in delivery teams across P&C.
- 5.4 The request is to add ten additional permanent posts to the P&C structure to create further capacity to deal with a general ongoing increase in workloads. It enables the division to future proof service delivery teams to respond to both increased BAU and project demands already in the pipeline (outlined in Appendix 1) including the

RR project. When the RR project is concluded service staff will return to their substantive roles as there is sufficient business as usual activity to require this level of staffing resource. As and when required the increase capacity in teams will enable the division to release service delivery staff to support other projects. All additionally created posts will be recruited to in line with LCC Recruitment and Selection policy. Data held by BSC shows that the turnover within P&C is circa 10% of a workforce of 300 (non-LBS) this provides sufficient assurance that staff can be utilised across the wider business in the unlikely event that the forward plan of project activity reduces.

## 5.5 Table A – Resource Requirement

Team/Service area	Post Released from BAU (FTE)	Backfill arrangement	Budget impact (Top of salary scale including on costs)
Responsive Repairs	1 PO6	Permanent	£58,142
Responsive Repairs	1 PO4	Permanent	£51,861
Commercial Team (QS)	1 PO6	Permanent	£58,142
Technical Services	1 PO4	Permanent	£51,861
M&E	2 PO2	Permanent	£88196
Responsive Repairs	1 SO2	Permanent	£39,656
Responsive Repairs	1 SO2	Permanent	£39,656
Voids	1 SO2	Permanent	£39,656
Responsive Repairs	1 C1	Permanent	£29,860
Total	10 FTE posts		£457,030

## 6 Options Appraisal

- 6.1 An options appraisal has been undertaken. A summary of the four options appraised is set out below.
- 6.2 Option 1 Do nothing – no benefits to this option as the service would not improve.
- 6.3 Option 2 Technical/operational staff to contribute to project without backfill – There is no capacity to undertake this transformational project as the service is operating at full capacity.
- 6.4 Option 3 – appoint consultants to provide backfill – Initial discussions have confirmed the type and level of technical and operational resource needed to support service delivery teams is not readily available through this route.
- 6.5 Option 4- Build capacity and resilience into the existing Property and Contracts structure. Utilise a range of recruitment options to increase capacity in existing teams to enable service delivery experts from within services to fully support the delivery of service projects.
- 6.6 Option 4 is the preferred option.

## **7 Corporate Considerations**

### **7.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 7.1.1 There is no identified adverse impact on any communities based on the recommendations set out in this report.
- 7.1.2 Finance have been consulted, the projected costs arising from the recommendations set out in this report have been incorporated into the 5year financial plan. Due to recruitment timeframes at best there will be a part-year effect within the current financial year 2019/20 dependent on when posts are filled.
- 7.1.3 HR have been consulted and will support the service with a recruitment strategy that will enable posts to be backfilled quickly.
- 7.1.4 The Senior Management Team within Property and Contracts has been consulted and is supportive of the recommendations set out in this report.
- 7.1.5 A meeting has been held with the Trade Unions (TU's) to discuss the rationale for recommendations set out in this report, initial feedback has been included in the process. The following areas were addressed through this consultation:
- Commitment that front line staff to be involved in service re-design process
  - Clarification that there is sufficient work for additional staff once the RR project concludes
  - Clarification that additional posts are affordable to the HRA
  - Assurance that the protected characteristics are given proper consideration in the recruitment process.
- 7.1.6 Further to this a copy of the report has been circulated to the Trade Unions for their comments, their feedback has been incorporated into the report.
- 7.1.7 Climate change
- 7.1.8 There is no known adverse impact to the climate change agenda resulting from the recommendations to increase staffing levels as set out in this report.

### **7.2 Equality and Diversity/Cohesion and Integration**

- 7.2.1 An Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration initial screening assessment has been completed and has identified that a full assessment is not required.

### **7.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan**

- 7.3.1 The services included in this report support Leeds city councils ambition and Best Council Plan for Leeds to be a compassionate and caring city that tackles poverty and reduces inequality through the provision of safe and well maintained homes to council tenants (including some to the most vulnerable citizens of Leeds).

### **7.4 Resources and value for money**

- 7.4.1 The anticipated additional annual cost of the recommendations set out in this report is c£457,030 as the proposal is for permanent additional growth to structure this is a reoccurring cost to the HRA budget.

7.4.2 Staff recruited to additional posts will be permanent staff on the P&C structure they will be fully funded through the HRA and afforded the same protection as existing staff on the P&C structure.

## **8. Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

8.1 This is a significant operational decision. There are no known legal implications arising from this report.

8.1.2 There are no grounds for treating the contents of this report as confidential under LCC's Access to Information Rules.

## **8.2 Risk Management**

8.2.1 There is no risk of challenge from the market associated with the recommendations set out in this report.

8.2.2 There is significant risk of reputational risk to the council if service projects are delayed further due to inadequate resourcing. Re-thinking repairs will impact on the city wide repairs service offer to c. 54,000 households. The repairs service attracts high levels of elected member interest and this would be intensified in the event of any service disruption generated through insufficient resourcing.

8.2.3 Any further delays in delivering the Re-thinking Repairs projects will have a detrimental impact on the aspiration to grow Leeds Building Services in April 2021.

8.2.4 Failure to deliver other key projects set out in Appendix A will prevent Property and Contracts from delivering its vision and key service priorities.

## **9 Conclusions**

9.1 The recommendations set out in this report are required to enable successful delivery of the Re-thinking Repairs and other key projects as set out in Appendix 1 Table A. Any further delays to increasing capacity within the P&C structure will impact on delivery timeframes.

## **10 Recommendations**

10.1 It is recommended that the Director of Resources & Housing approves the request to add ten additional FTE posts to the Property and Contracts structure to enable the successful delivery of the Rethinking Repairs and other key projects.

## **11 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

11.1 None.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Appendix 1 Table A – Property and Contracts Forward Plan of Activity

Project / Activity	Summary	Timeframe	Resource Impact
Re-thinking Repairs	Business change project to review the end to end repairs process city wide including improving the customer interface.	June 2019	High
Re-thinking Voids	Business change project to review the end to end voids process.	June 2021	High
LBS Growth	Support LBS growth strategy - improved service delivery and higher customer satisfaction.	May 2019	High
Reducing Disrepair	Maintain fast response increase volume of claims– mitigate impact of the implementation of the H(FfHH) Act March 2020.	Ongoing from May 2019	High
Civica Project	Housing IT and Business Change Project to develop and implement new Housing IT systems All operational staff will be released to undertake user testing and training	Ongoing	High
Disrepair Procurement	Re-procurement of 2 x contracts covering 3 areas of the city. Supports priority for reduction in disrepair claims and reducing costs paid to 3 <sup>rd</sup> party solicitors.	May 2019 – Dec 2020	High
Digitisation of P&C	Business Change project – review/amend service processes and implement amended structures.	Ongoing – June 2020	Medium
Technology Enhancement	Actively contribute to projects such as GovTech, 100% Connectivity, web-content review, mobile working.	Ongoing – June 2021	Medium
Domestic Gas Servicing	Develop strategy for re-procurement of domestic gas servicing contracts to serve c.46,000 council homes	Aug 2019 – June 2021	Medium
District Heating Clusters	Develop and implement x6 biomass district heating schemes to high rise properties city wide	From Apr 2019	Medium
High-Rise Condition/Investment Review	Programme of structural and condition surveys to external elements to all High-Rise blocks to determine long term investment need and carry out options appraisal.		Medium
Electrical Infrastructure review	Development and implementation of heating solution to 46 high rise properties across the city.	From Apr 2019	Medium
Electrical Infrastructure Review (2)	Work with Northern Powergrid replace electrical rising mains across HL high rise stock	From Sept 2018	Medium
Enhanced voids standard	Design / implementation of enhanced lettable standard across city wide portfolio.	From June 2019	Managed
LBS Improvement	P&C wide to support the LBS Improvement Board outcomes / deliverables.	Jan 2017 – ongoing	Managed
Leeds Pipes	Develop processes/operational requirement plans - maintenance of Leeds Pipes project	Ongoing March 2022	Managed
Council Housing Growth and Extra Care 2	Support the delivery of the CHG programme through development of Output Specification / ongoing technical support to project team.	Ongoing	Managed
Investment Strategy	Development of an updated investment strategy to include current priorities such as customer satisfaction and climate change/carbon reduction.	Commenced	Managed

\*High – significant impact on service delivery requires additional staff - \*Medium – risk to service delivery requires some additional resourcing - \* Managed - Utilise existing resource

