

Report of: Colin Moss

Report to: Neil Evans, Director of Resources & Housing

Date: 13th December 2019

Subject: Proposed Restructure to the Health & Housing Service

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input 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

1.0 Summary of main issues

1.1 The Health & Housing (H&H) Service was formed 7 years ago when the Adaptations Agency was transferred from the Environment Department into the Housing Directorate. The Agency at this time consisted of 17 members of staff, mainly surveyors that were ostensibly a service to provide adaptations to the private sector.

1.2 Since 2012, H&H has grown to become 'a one stop shop' providing housing solutions for disabled and vulnerable people regardless of tenure. While the provision of an increasing number of adaptations remains one of the primary functions, the team now incorporates a comprehensive re-housing service for clients that need to re-house to more suitable accommodation due to accessibility issues.

1.3 Over the years new staff have been attached to the structure and the service has become unbalanced without a structured management hierarchy. The lack of structure has now been highlighted due to the increasing demands made on the team as budgets and requests for service have all dramatically increased.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1 The Director is requested to support the following proposals:

- Approve the proposed strengthening of Health & Housing's management structure with the additional cost being primarily funded by grant income as outlined in the report.

3.0 Background information

3.1 The team currently consists of 58 members of staff carrying out a variety of roles that broadly fall into the following groups:

3.2 Surveyors

Surveying properties and providing an 'agency service' for the installation of adaptations. They produce specifications and designs, produce computer generated plans, apply for formal approvals, procure contractors and monitoring works from inception to practical completion.

3.3 Housing Support

Providing the administration behind the processing of applications for adaptations across all tenures. Carrying out legal searches, input data and carry out a wide range of general administration for the whole service.

3.4 Independent Living Staff

The Independent living officers carry out two functions. Firstly to carry out the Government's statutory 'test of resources' (or means test) on private individuals applying for Disabled Facilities Grants and secondly for granting medical priority for individuals who are applying for re-housing through the choice based letting process at the Council.

3.5 Planners

The contract planners order works and monitor/control the progress of all adaptation installations. They liaise closely with the applicants, H&H's surveyors, LBS and our procured contractors.

3.6 Occupational Therapy (OT) team

Consists of 3 grades of qualified OT and support staff. Their primary function is to assess a disabled individual in a prospective new home to ensure it is suitable and safe for occupation by that individual. They also provide a number of other services that includes giving recommendations and advice on the design/layout for new homes and residences.

3.7 Caseworkers

Caseworkers have active case-loads of clients that are looking to re-locate to more suitable properties. The officer provides as much advice, help and support that a particular client requires. This can include searching for properties, bidding, arranging home visits and organising moves. They also operate a range of incentives and moving packages to help promote re-housing.

4.0 Main Issues

4.1 Although the service has increased in staff numbers considerably over the last 8 years, the service is still run by a PO6 service manager and 1 PO4 deputy manager. All other staff work operationally although some of them do have management duties as well. As staff have been absorbed into the service the lines of management and reporting have become unbalanced without a structured management hierarchy.

4.2 The proposed re-structure will provide a service that will cope with the rising demand for adaptations in the private sector while increasing the number of disabled Council tenants that re-house to more suitable accommodation utilising existing adaptations wherever possible.

There are 6.6 FTE new posts proposed: 2 x PO4 managers, 2 x SO2 managers and 2.6 x C1 advisers. See attached proposed structure. All the new posts have been formally graded by Job evaluation.

4.3 The new service will have a PO6 lead manager supported by 3 x PO4 principal officers (1 existing, 2 new posts). Each PO4 principal officer will support the service manager and head up the team working in a specific work streams. They will be named:

- Principal Adaptations Manager. This post will lead the 15 surveyors in the service who primary aim is the installation of adaptations.
- Principal Health Manager. This post will lead the OT team, Independent Living Officers and Caseworkers who primary aim is to facilitate re-housing matching properties to disabled users specific access needs
- Principal Programme Manager. This post will support the Service manager in the managing the H&H's increasing programme of work. This will include the monitoring of a number of budgets and organising the large number of payments throughout the year. The manager will directly manage the contract planners, housing support and the means test teams.

4.4 The restructure is also introducing 2 x SO2 posts. Firstly, the restructure is introducing a second Independent Living Team Leader (ILTL) The service currently has an Independent Living Manager that manages the independent Living Officers who give medical priority to housing applications. It is proposed that the new ILTL will manage the 4 existing caseworkers but will retain some operational caseload work as well. This post will provide a manager which team has lacked in the past and will also add an increase in resource to the team that do valuable work matching disabled applicants to new homes using existing adaptations. It is expected that new IL team leader will work closely with the existing IL team leader and provide a cohesive management team for promoting planned moves jointly supported by the independent living officers and caseworkers.

4.5 The second post is new and has been prompted by the dramatic rise in H&H's financial programme. The post holder will support the Principal Programme Manager to monitor and manage the service's budgets. This post will also have direct management of the Housing Support team and be in charge of the Independent Living Officers that carry out the Government's test of financial resources.

4.6 Following the period of consultation with H&H staff, a number of communications were received regarding the huge increase in the level of enquiries and preliminary assessments that need completing for the Independent Living team and the Occupational Therapy team. This current workload is being completed by 3 members of staff from Leeds Housing Options that had informally been re-deployed into H&H to 'plug a hole'. It was felt that these positions needed to be added to the structure (2 FTEs x advisers to the Independent living team and 0.6 FTE adviser to the OT team).

4.7 Following previous re-structures within the directorate it is proposed to ring fence the PO4 and SO2 new posts to staff working within H&H. However, the new Independent Living adviser posts (C1) should be advertised Council wide as there aren't the numbers of relevant graded staff within H&H to provide competition for the posts. The re-deployed staff will have to return to their substantive posts in LHO as they have not been

competitively interviewed for these posts. However, this widened ring fence will enable the existing staff to re-apply for their positions should they wish to do so.

4.8 It is also proposed that should a Senior OT apply for one of the available PO4 posts and is successful, their post would be re-advertised as a Community OT. The 4 FTE senior OT posts were transferred from Property and Contracts a number of years ago and the reduction of one senior OT would fit nicely into the OT team structure based on the 3 geographical teams that cover the city. This would also make a financial saving on the HRA but not compromise the efficiency of the OT team.

4.9 To keep in line with the other teams/services within the directorate the following job titles have been altered:

Principal Independent Living Manager to Principal Adaptations Manager
Independent Living Team Manager to Independent Living Team Leader
Technical Officers to Senior Surveyors. See below.

In September 2016, a number of staff were transferred from Property & Contracts into Health & Housing. Five of these officers were technical officers who were transferred into the surveying team to join their new colleagues that are titled, Senior Surveyors. All the surveyors work to same job description and salary grade. Therefore, it is proposed to re-name the technical officers as Senior Surveyors so all the surveyors in the team have the same job title.

4.10 The new posts will support the team to develop on a number of fronts:

To effectively manage the increasing budget for adaptations

In the last 4 years the Government has dramatically increased the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding to local authorities across England. In 2016/17 the national budget was increased by 79% from £220 million to £394 million and in 2019/20 is now over £500 million.

In Leeds this year, the private budget is £9.17 million and the public budget (HRA) is currently projected to spend at £7.3 million.

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Aging and Older People has just published its report (July 2019) around 'Decent homes and Accessibility'. It has a number of recommendations of which one is to continue the increase in funding for DFGs to improve delivery and reduce waiting times.

One of the new SO2 posts will specifically be utilised to support the effective management of the ever increasing adaptations programme.

4.11 **To effectively manage the increasing number of referrals for adaptations**

With an ageing population and the promotion of independent living being a pivotal strategy for the Council, it is accepted nationally and locally that the level of requests for adaptations will continue to rise.

This can be highlighted by the numbers of referrals for major adaptations received from Adults/Children's Social Care over the last 2 years.

Date	Non-Urgent
Nov 17 – Mar 18	277
Nov 18 – Mar 19	481 percentage increase 74%

Date	Urgent
Feb 18 – Mar 18	30
Feb 19 – Mar 19	81 percentage increase 170%

It is vital that H&H have a structured service to cope with the increasing demands on the service. Over recent years the service has developed and improved its processing of adaptations enabling the existing staff to cope with the increasing numbers of requests for service across all of its work streams.

4.12 **To increase the numbers of disabled tenants that re-house to properties containing existing adaptations**

With pressures on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), it has never been more important to ensure that disabled Council tenants that require adaptations are re-housed into homes, in their current community, where the required adaptations already exist. It is also necessary to reduce the numbers of adaptations that are removed from properties on the change-over of tenants.

The re-housing aspect of Health & Housing is another vital aspect of our work and the figures below show the numbers of request for service and the financial savings made.

	2018/19
Total Number of Housing OT Referrals	2,499
Number which are from Lettings	2,206
Number of customers rehoused by the OT team (lettings referrals)	700
Additional customers rehoused via other routes - refugee/homelessness	30
Number which were already adapted properties	580
Overall Cost Savings from re-use of adapted properties	£3,592,651

These figures show that the Council makes on average a saving of just over £6,000 (£6,194) every time the service re-houses a disabled person into a property containing adaptations.

The introduction of a second Independent Living Manager will specialise in providing housing solutions in homelessness and hospital discharge while managing the caseworkers to support the work they do.

4.13 **To cope with the increasing demand for partnership working with internal and external agencies around promoting independent living**

In the last few years the requests for the service to have a positive input into numerous forums has increased greatly. The promotion of independent living and care of the elderly and frail in our communities features in all relevant Council strategies, policies and plans. The introduction of a number of principal graded officers will allow the service to fully commit to all requests for attendance at relevant forums/meetings and form useful working partnerships with agencies within but also external to the Council.

4.14 **To introduce a structured management hierarchy**

The introduction of 3 structured work areas based around the installation of adaptations, promotion of re-housing and monitoring H&H's financial programme will provide a structure that will allow the service to continue growing and cope with the increase in demand over the next 5 years. The new structure will also provide a more balanced service that will offer job posts for a number of existing staff and provide future development opportunities that haven't previously existed.

4.15 **The restructure will make savings to the general fund and the HRA and be funded from the capital grant budget.**

The total additional net staffing resource being invested into the Health and Housing services is estimated at £253k. Existing staffing costs in the service are £1.82m with the proposed restructure being £2.07m.

The funding for the enhanced structure will primarily come from additional charges to the DFG of around £326k, meaning there is no significant impact on the general fund revenue budget. There will be some savings to the general fund revenue budget of (£32k) and the HRA (£41k)

The restructure will also facilitate a simplification of the accounting and monitoring of the costs of the service; all staff will be budgeted for in the general fund with an appropriate charge to the HRA for those staff working directly on public schemes. The general fund staff costs will be funded by the DFG.

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This year's capital allocation for DFG from MHCLG has risen by 8% and all indications are that this sum will be increased next year, although formal notification of grant level has yet to be received from MHCLG. However, over the previous 4 years all local authorities have been given an extra windfall payment around November/December which is also very likely to recur. Leeds windfall money last year (2018/19) equated to an extra £844K.

It is imperative that H&H have a structured service so the increasing demands on the service can be met in forthcoming years.

5.0 **Corporate considerations**

5.1 **Consultation and engagement**

The principle of the re-structure is that no staff would be adversely affected by the structure proposal and specifically that no existing member of staff would be displaced through the structure proposal. HR confirmed that this was the case, that there were no officers within the Talent Pool with the skills/expertise to carry out a management roles within Health & Housing and, in the event that this did occur, sufficient posts would be created to ensure there was a post for all affected staff at their substantive grade.

A meeting took place on 23rd September 2019 with the Health & Housing manager, Chief Officer, Housing Management and Councillor Coupar. The H&H manager explained the rationale behind the proposed re-structure and received positive comments from Cllr Coupar who gave her approval to proceed.

The H&H Manager and Senior HR manager met with a number of trade unions on 17th October 2019 followed by a full staff meeting with union representation on 13th November 2019. There have been a number of smaller meetings since with staff and unions to examine some individual issues.

A consequence of the staff meeting and subsequent manager meetings has resulted in the introduction of the C1 Independent Living Adviser posts to cover the large increase in referrals for independent living and OT assessments.

There has been other union enquiries concerning some individual positions which have been made clear. It is also noted that there is currently a job evaluation enquiry made by the senior surveyors that is progressing although not part of this re-structure. If any alterations to pay levels are identified, they will be implemented regardless to this re-structure. All other members of H&H staff that wish to challenge their job evaluation have been advised accordingly by HR.

Officers applying for the proposed posts would be expected to submit a maximum two page expression of interest setting out the post(s) they wished to apply for.

5.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

An Equality Impact Assessment has been appended to the report. The promotion of independent living remains one of the Council's highest priorities in the Health & Wellbeing agenda. The proposals for the H&H service will give a more balanced structure that will be able to respond more effectively to the increasing demand of requests for service to provide housing solutions for disabled people in Leeds.

5.3 Council policies and best council plan

The promotion of independent living lies at the heart of Leeds City Council's Best Council Plan aspirations. Health and Well-being is one of the key drivers for this plan.

5.4 Resources and value for money

The structure proposal will be funded from the increasing capital programme from Central Government's DFG budget via the Better Care Fund. Every indication is that this money will continue rise further in the next few years to meet the rising need for adaptations and appropriate accommodation to house an ageing population.

The net increase in staff costs of £253k will be met through a combination of increased charges to a grant funded capital scheme £326k, offset by savings in revenue budgets in the HRA and general fund of £73k.

5.5 Legal Implications, access to information and call in

The proposal represents a significant operational decision and therefore is not eligible for call-in.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 It is vital this re-structure is approved to ensure the service is in a position to meet the increasing demand on the service now and in the next 5 years in such a growth area of important work.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 The Director is requested to support the following proposals:

- Approve the proposed strengthening of Health & Housing's management structure with the additional cost being primarily funded by grant income as outlined in the report.

8.0 Background documents¹

8.1 Proposed new H&H structure map

8.2 Equality Impact Assessment.

8.3 DDN

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.