

APPENDIX O

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - 2 DECEMBER 2008

Title:

HOUSING OPTIONS SUPPORT OFFICER POST

[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Richard Gates]

[Wards Affected: All]

Summary and purpose:

This report is recommending recruitment to a newly created Housing Options Support Officer post from January 2009 on a fixed term 2.25 year contract funded by Surrey Supporting people.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

The proposed post will support the Improving Lives, Value for Money and Affordable Housing priorities. Improving Lives by supporting vulnerable people to help them sustain their tenancies. Value for Money – post is being funded by Surrey Supporting People and by giving support to tenants to sustain their tenancies the role will help reduce repeat homelessness and the cost this entails. Affordable Housing – the post will contribute to the better management of affordable housing.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

The proposed post will help give support to the vulnerable and therefore help social inclusion and equality.

Resource/Value for Money implications:

Funding from Surrey Supporting People - see Corporate priorities above.

Legal Implications:

The Council has a statutory duty to provide housing advice and assess homelessness.

Background

1. In September 2008, officers took the opportunity of the availability of short term Surrey Supporting People funding to successfully bid for resources to employ a full time Housing Options Support Officer post.

2. The post will provide much needed tenancy support for homeless households the Council is able to place in private rented or temporary accommodation or support to help existing vulnerable tenants sustain their tenancies.
3. The need for such a role has existed for a long time and is highlighted in the Council's first Homelessness Strategy published in 2003 and the recent Homelessness Prevention Strategy of 2008.
4. The role will help promote tenancy sustainment and prevent repeat homelessness. It contributes to the Improving Lives corporate priority of supporting vulnerable people and demonstrates Value for Money as it will be externally funded and tenancy sustainment reduces the costs of repeat homelessness.

Detail

5. Whilst the role will represent an extension of the Council's existing Supporting People funded Mental Health Support contract, the post-holder is likely to be based within the Council's Housing Options team who deal on a day to day basis with people threatened with homelessness.
6. The post will be a fixed term contract from January 2009 to 31 March 2011.
7. In the event that the role is a success and further Supporting People funding is not available from 2011, officers will explore the possibility of whether the role can be mainstreamed into the Housing Options Section through re-directing resources following anticipated retirements over the next couple of years. If this is not achievable, then provision will need to be made for redundancy.
8. The effectiveness of the role will be assessed by the extent to which it increases the Council's performance in preventing homelessness and also by any increase in the number of private rented tenancies that are renewed by the landlords.
9. If the role cannot be renewed, Officers will explore whether there is scope and capacity for existing Housing Options Officers' roles to be adapted to provide a greater element of support to households.

Financial Implications

10. The post will be funded by Surrey Supporting People and the details are summarised below:

	Costs of Housing Options Support Officer post (at current pay rates)				Cumulative Costs
	2008/9 Full Year	2008/9 Part Year	2009/10 Full Year	2010/11 Full Year	
9b (max)	22,497	5,624	22,497	22,497	
National Insurance	1,525	381	1,525	1,525	

Pension	3,712	928	3,712	3,712	
Essential User	1,095	274	1,095	1,095	
Mileage @ 45.8p per mile	458	115	458	458	
	29,287	7,322	29,287	29,287	65,896

Up-front costs

Recruitment

assumed via Jobs Go Public website

otherwise there will be advertising costs

Workstation

500

Computer

420

Redundancy-Statutory scheme (max=3 weeks pay)

1,298

8,242

29,287

30,585

68,114

11. Depending on the experience of the successful applicant, further savings could be achieved if appointed to a lower level in the pay band.
12. Redundancy costs depend on the age of the employee but for contracts of this duration would not exceed 3 weeks pay based on the statutory redundancy calculator. Based on the top pay band this would amount to £1,297.90.

Conclusion

13. Providing tenancy support to vulnerable households under threat of homelessness or for vulnerable households moving to new addresses will play a vital role in continuing the Council's success in preventing homelessness. The role makes an important contribution to the Council's priorities of Improving Lives, Value for Money and Affordable Housing. Securing funding for such an important role from Surrey Supporting People is an excellent achievement and opportunity for Waverley.

Recommendation

It is recommended that a Housing Options Support Officer post be created, as described in the report, to be advertised and recruited to on a fixed term contract to be funded by Surrey Supporting People.

Background Papers (SDCS)

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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