

ITEM 21 – APPENDIX P

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 1 APRIL 2014

Title:

REVIEW OF HOUSING SERVICES – EMBEDDING A STRUCTURE THAT DELIVERS A HIGH QUALITY CUSTOMER-FOCUSED HOUSING SERVICE

[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Carole King and Cllr Keith Webster]

[Wards Affected: All]

Note Pursuant to Section 100B(5) of the Local Government Act 1972

Annexes to this report contain exempt information by virtue of which the public is likely to be excluded during the item to which the report relates as specified in paragraph 1 of the revised Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, namely:

1. Information relating to any individual.
-

Summary and purpose:

This report details the proposed arrangements for the Housing Service, which have been developed as a result of reviewing the Housing Service structure agreed in July 2012 in the light of experience. The report confirms the process undertaken to formally consult staff about changes in the structure.

The Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee commented on the proposed arrangements and have endorsed the report's recommendations to the Executive.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities

Affordable Housing is a key priority in the Council's Corporate Plan reflecting both the scale of opportunity available and its central role in improving the quality of life of local people, including some of the most vulnerable within the local community. The proposed changes aspire to provide a first class service to Waverley tenants and residents.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

The Council is committed to meeting the needs of all of its tenants and service users. The equalities implications arising from these arrangements assessed throughout the process through an Equality Impact Assessment and action will be taken in response to any issues identified.

Legal Implications:

The restructure process and these proposals comply with employment law and have been prepared in accordance with the Council's restructuring and redeployment policies.

Financial Implications:

The draft 2014-15 budget includes an initial provision for this restructure of £140,000 and a provision of over £700,000 for staffing costs in the draft capital budgets. The estimated additional costs falling on HRA revenue budgets is £170,000. It is expected that the additional £30,000 will be achieved through vacancy savings in excess of the target but this position will be reported through the budget monitoring process during 2014-15 with the Business Plan revised if necessary.

1. Background

1.1 A new structure for Housing was approved in July 2012 and the new service was launched in September 2012. Over the last twelve months the structure has been regularly reviewed and improvements agreed by Executive. Some of the improvements relate to new posts agreed on a temporary basis pending the next formal review. This report consolidates the agreed changes, seeks to make the temporary posts permanent and building on this, makes further recommendations on the development of the Housing Service. The proposed revised structure (Annexe 1) reflects the significant increase in scale of investment and enables the delivery of the Council's service plan priorities.

2. Reason for reviewing the current arrangements

2.1 Housing Services in Waverley among the very best in the country

The Council expects Waverley's Housing Service, like all Council services, to be among the very best in the country. A service that provides accessible and highly responsive customer-focused services, represents excellent value to local people and delivers the priorities set out in the Housing Service Plan. Affordable Housing is a key priority in the Council's Corporate Plan.

2.2 Responding to new legislation and other external drivers

The Service also needs to respond to significant national drivers for change including a raft of new legislation in terms of tackling anti-social behaviour and tenancy fraud, the introduction of Flexible Tenancies, changes to Right to Buy legislation, Welfare Reform, and the wider Localism agenda, all of which will impact upon Waverley's Housing Service.

2.3 The opportunity of once in a generation investment in Council homes

Historically Waverley's Housing Service has lacked resources to invest in the Council's housing stock. In 2012, the Council agreed a 30-year investment strategy to ensure that all homes meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2014 and that surpluses are invested in new affordable housing and in improving the quality of the existing housing stock. This is a huge opportunity for the Council and one that needs to be led and underpinned by a clear and strong staffing structure. The

increase in investment requires improved financial and quality controls to ensure that value for money is achieved.

2.4 Developing more integrated solutions in partnership with others

The Housing Service has been seeking to do more for those people in greatest need and take a fresh look at how the service can respond better to those groups that draw a disproportionate level of resources from the Council and other public service providers – such as those families with multiple and complex needs. This will involve working much more closely with other service providers in a spirit of partnership, sharing knowledge and expertise and finding ways to better co-ordinate and integrate the Council's approach.

There is also a need to increase the understanding of Waverley's customers, through tenant involvement, participation and scrutiny and maximise the opportunities for the co-design of local services.

2.5 Providing a first class service to Waverley's tenants and residents

To ensure that Waverley's Housing Services is not just "fit for purpose", but aspires to provide a first class responsive service to Council tenants and residents it is necessary to reconsider how best to provide these services including the organisational structure and posts the Council needs to deliver this.

2.6 Building new homes

The availability of funding has enabled the Council to establish an ambitious Housing Development Programme to deliver 30 new affordable homes per year, that are energy efficient and designed to modern standards, in places where people want to live and will contribute towards meeting the high level of housing need in the borough.

To deliver this ambitious programme, the Council needs to expand and strengthen the Development Team.

3. **Principles of the proposed arrangements**

3.1 A stronger and more effective Housing Service in Waverley needs to be underpinned by a much clearer understanding of the needs and aspirations of the council's customers.

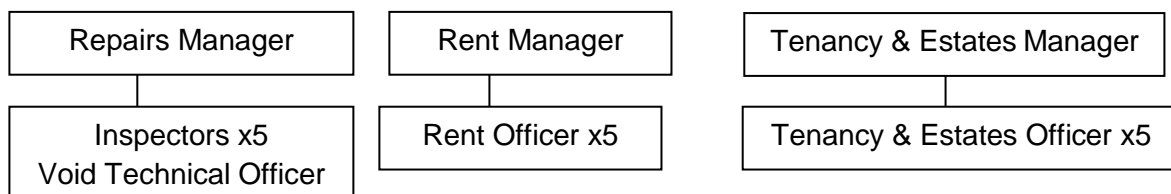
3.2 This greater focus on **understanding the Council's customers** needs to be embedded in the work of each of the teams and will be used to drive further improvements in the design and delivery of the Council's services. For customer facing teams, this will mean more time out on the estates meeting with customers.

3.3 The Council needs to be confident that its Housing Services is striving for the highest standards of performance, benchmarking with the best providers and responding quickly to any signs that performance may not be meeting expectations. To help with this, all customer facing services will be expected to strengthen their **performance management**. This will include preparing either weekly or monthly performance reports setting out progress in terms of the key measures of success relevant to that service.

- 3.4 Local service teams need to better anticipate, not just react, to external challenges impacting on our services. A more **forward looking** and proactive service will help give more time to prepare well for these challenges, as well as scope to position the Council to make the most of new opportunities.
- 3.5 The Council's Housing service will strengthen **individual accountability and empowerment**, enabling every member of staff to feel able to make a positive difference in their area and to feel proud about the contribution they have made. The Housing Service will seek to make it easier for customers to make contact and easier for them to hold the Council to account for the actions staff take on their behalf.
- 3.6 The Council will invest more in the **professional development** of the Council's staff and teams, ensuring that our people have the skills they need to deliver an excellent service. This will include core skills relevant to all teams such as customer service skills.
- 3.7 The Council will continue to work in **partnership** with other agencies and sectors to ensure that the Council's services meet the needs of our tenants and service users, share expertise and look for opportunities to deliver a more integrated and streamlined approach to service delivery.
- 3.8 The Council will strengthen our approach to **contract management**, developing a partnership ethos, clear expectations and robust performance management.
- 3.9 The Council will strengthen the contribution that the Housing Service makes to the development of the Council as a whole, taking a more **active role in corporate groups** and initiatives. The Council will also find more ways to **celebrate our success**, recognising exceptional performance and regularly testing ourselves and the Council's services with the very best in the sector.

4. Services based around geographic areas

- 4.1 A fundamental step change in July 2012 was to make the Housing Service more accessible and accountable to its customers through core services being delivered on a "patch" (geographic area) basis and this has worked well.
- 4.2 It is proposed to update these arrangements for each "patch", having an Inspector (rather than a surveyor), a Tenancy and Estates Officer and a Rent Officer.
- 4.3 The patched based customer facing teams are organised as follows:



A full staff structure for each team is set out in Annexe 1.

5. Proposals for individual teams

5.1 Property Services

- 5.1.1 The proposed arrangements clarify the roles and responsibilities for the delivery of the various revenue and capital projects/contracts and incorporates the temporary posts agreed over the last year. The Property Services Teams will be managed by the **Property Services Manager**.
- 5.1.2 The **Responsive Repairs Service** will include the **Customer Services Team, Repairs Manager, Inspectors and Voids Technical Officer** and be key points of contact for customers on all property issues on the telephone or out and about on our estates respectively. The Customer Service Team will provide support for all of the Property Services Teams.
- 5.1.3 The **Planned Works Team** will be responsible for delivering the Decent Homes Programme and cyclical works
- 5.1.4 The **Compliance Team** will ensure health and safety is effectively delivered. It's establishment is partially in response to the HSE Improvement Notice served on the Council in relation to the Council's management of asbestos.
- 5.1.5 The **Asset Management Team** will develop a five year asset management strategy and annual programme of works. Moreover the Team will be responsible for overall budget monitoring and control and to develop expenditure management processes to ensure value for money is delivered for each works programme
- 5.1.6 The **Strategic Projects Team** will primarily deliver the projects funded from the Stock Improvement reserve such as Rolston House refurbishment. They will also work closely with the Development Team to deliver projects funded from both the New Build and Stock Improvement reserves such the Ockford Ridge regeneration project.
- 5.1.7 The **Development Team** will deliver the New Homes programme and work with the Strategic Projects Team as described above. This team will be managed by the Head of Strategic Housing and Delivery.
- 5.1.8 The key roles of the Property Services Manager and the Heads of Service are to ensure the effective coordination of the teams.

5.2 Tenancy and Estates Team

- 5.2.1 To move towards the provision of first class customer services the Tenancy and Estates Team needs to build on the progress made in the last year of being more proactive. To enable the Team to spend more time delivering services on their "patch" it is proposed that greater and more structured administrative support is provided by establishing coordinator roles within the team. The administration staff will also provide support to other landlord services Teams.
- 5.2.2 Two Intervention Officer posts are being established to deal with tenants with complex needs to avoid the Tenancy and Estates Officers becoming too involved in a small number of cases and preventing them providing the wider service including annual tenancy checks.

5.3 Service Development Team

5.3.1 Due to the greater allocation of resources to the management of the front line services over the last year it is envisaged the workload of this Team will focus on performance monitoring and reviewing and updating policies and procedures to ensure the delivery of a first class customer-focused service. It is proposed to delete one of the two Service Development Officer/Special Projects Officer posts (See para 7. below) and rename the team as **Service Improvement Team** to more accurately reflect their role.

5.4 Other Housing Teams

5.4.1 Under these proposals there is no change to the Sheltered Housing Service, the Rents Team, Resident Involvement, Leasehold Management, the Families Team, Private Sector Team or the Housing Options Team. It is proposed to review these teams over the next two years.

6. Posts at Risk

6.1 The proposal is to delete 1 Service Development Officer post and 1 Special Projects Officer. This may result in a potential redundancy. The details are included in (Exempt) Annexes 3 and 4.

7. Summary of Changes

7.1 The main changes to the establishment are summarised below:

Original	Posts	Proposed	Posts
Original Posts (Established)	96	Posts established	96
New Temporary Posts (agreed by Executive for 2013/14 - pending this review)	10	New permanent posts including consolidation of temporary posts in to the establishment	16
		Posts deleted from establishment	-3
Total	106	Total	109

This net increase in posts will provide the capacity required to deliver the 30-year Business Plan and the extensive capital programme. Given that a number of the temporary posts are being provided on an agency basis, it will be significantly more cost effective to employ these skills directly.

Staff Costs 2013/14 estimated outturn	salary cost (£)
96 Establishment	3,237,870
10 Posts - temporary appointed during 2013-14	349,800
106 Total	3,587,670

Staff Budget 2014-15 (excludes annual increments)

96 Establishment (from 2013/14)	3,261,630
8 Consolidated Temporary Posts	282,470
8 New Posts	225,012
3 Deleted Posts	-100,332
109 Total	3,668,780

Additional cost over 2013-14 estimated outturn 81,110

Cost increase compared to original 13-14 budget: 407,160

Establishment Growth

Of which

Capital 236,980

Revenue 170,180

Detailed Staffing Changes

Posts to be deleted

1 Service Development Officer HA04
 1 Special Projects Officer HA11
 1 Support Worker HH11 (vacant)

Permanent posts to be added to the establishment

1 Project Co-ordinator
 1 Project Co-ordinator Ockford Ridge
 1 Development Officer
 1 Team Support Administrator
 3 Inspectors
 1 Clerk of Works
 1 Technical Administrator
 1 Surveyor (Compliance)
 1 Database Support
 1 Quantity Surveyor
 1 Surveyor (Strategic Projects)
 1 Intervention Officer
 1 Co-ordinator
 1 Service Improvement Officer

Redesignated Posts			
H003	1 Database Administrator	→	1 Programme Planner
HF16	1 Health & Safety Officer	→	1 Compliance Manager
HH22	1 Community Housing Officer	→	1 Intervention Officer
H103	1 Team Administrator	→	1 Co-ordinator
H005	1 Team Administrator	→	1 Co-ordinator
HA05b	1 Team Administrator	→	1 Co-ordinator
HF05	1 Surveyor	→	1 Senior Project Co-ordinator

8. Consultation with staff

- 8.1 The timetable for consultation with staff is set out in Annexe 3. Consultation with staff started with a presentation at the monthly housing staff briefing on 19 December 2013, followed by team meetings and individual 1-2-1s to discuss the arrangements in more detail.
- 8.2 Generally the support for the revised Housing Service has been positively received. Two changes have been made as a result of the consultation process:
- A revision has been made to the Responsive Repairs Service to retain the post of Void Technical Officer to ensure the effective void management during a period of change and contribute towards achieving successful outcomes through Project 20.
 - Although the roles of Co-ordinator are managed within the Tenancy & Estates Team, they will provide support to other Landlord Services Teams.
- 8.3 Formal consultation with staff ended on 21 January 2014.

9. Equality Impact Assessment

- 9.1 The Council is committed to meeting the needs of all of its tenants and service users. The proposals contained in this paper are seeking to improve the quality of services by providing a more responsive customer focused service and ensuring that the service is better able to configure its offer around individual needs.
- 9.2 There will also be an opportunity to improve equalities practice through stronger customer insight and performance management. This will help the Housing Service better understand the current and future needs of its tenants and service users including those that are most vulnerable. It will also make it easier for the Council to set targets for improving access and outcomes for key protected and vulnerable groups.
- 9.3 The equalities implications from this restructure will be assessed at each stage in the process through the development of an Equality Impact Assessment and action will be taken in response to any issues identified. The Equality Impact Assessment will form an integral part of the decision making process on the final structure.
- 9.4 At this early stage in the process, a particular focus has been given to ensure that there are a range of opportunities for all staff to have their questions answered and to provide feedback on the proposals.
-

Recommendation

The Executive recommends to the Council that:-

1. the proposals set out in the table at paragraph 7 be agreed;
 2. the establishment be changed to reflect the above proposals;
 3. the new structure takes effect from 1 May 2014; and
 4. the redundancy of postholders HA04 and HA11 be agreed at a cost shown in (Exempt) Annexes 3 and 4. However, redeployment will be the Council's preferred option if at all possible.
-

Background Papers

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

CONTACT OFFICERS:

Name: Hugh Wagstaff

Telephone: 01483 523361

E-mail: hugh.wagstaff@waverley.gov.uk

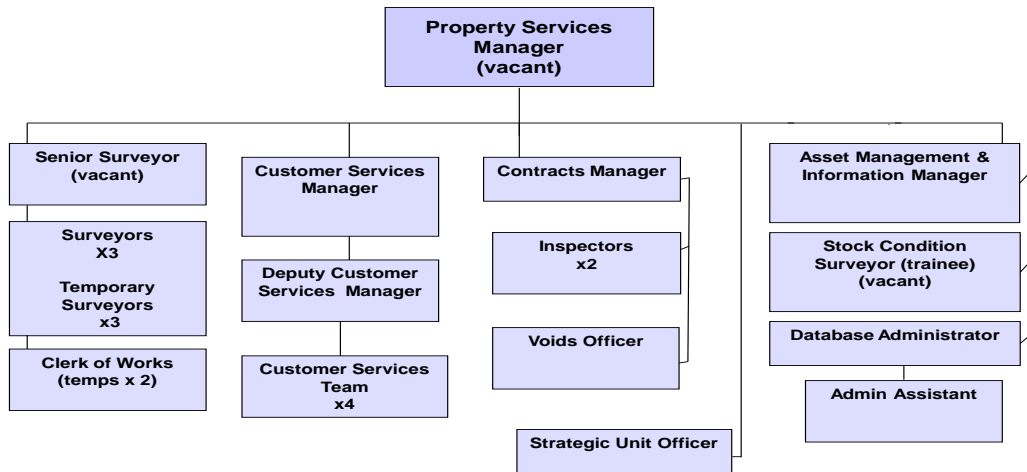
Name: Jane Abraham

Telephone: 01483 523096

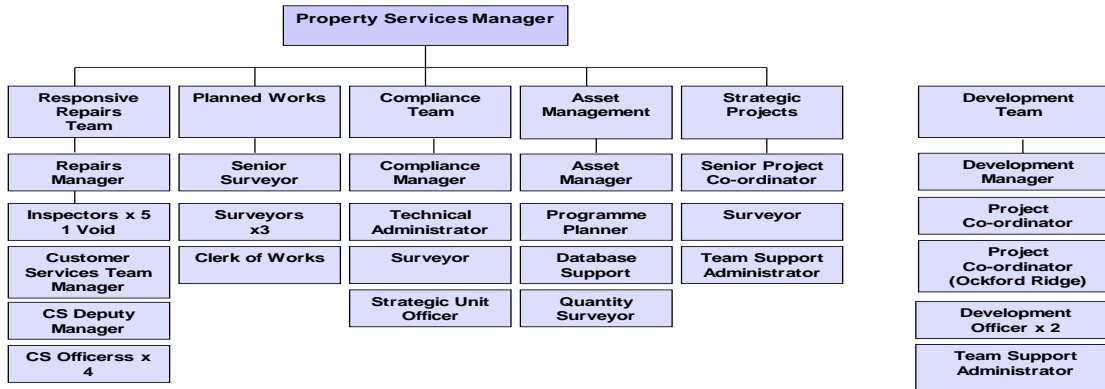
Email: jane.abraham@waverley.gov.uk

Staff Structure (Existing and Proposed)

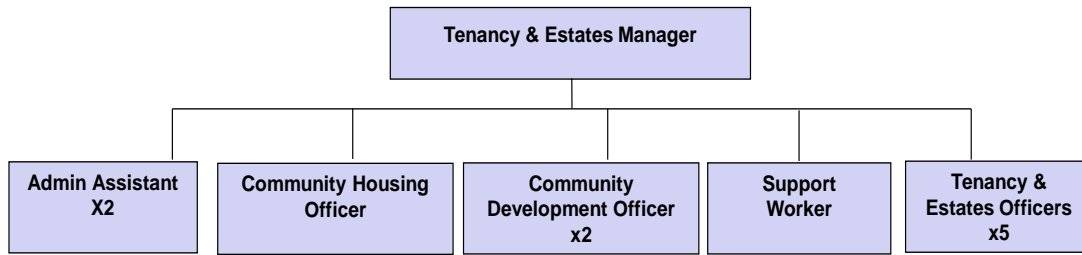
Existing Property Services Team



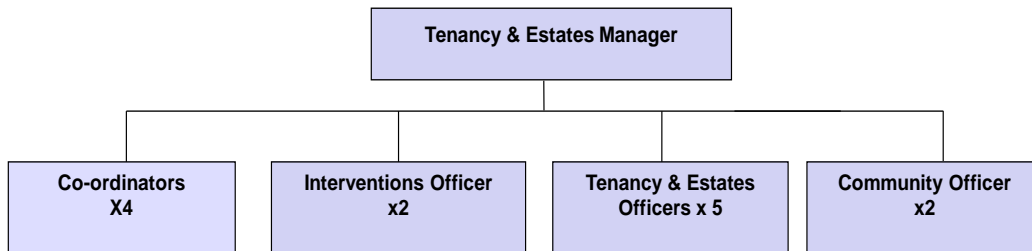
Proposed Property Services Team



Existing Tenancy & Estates Team



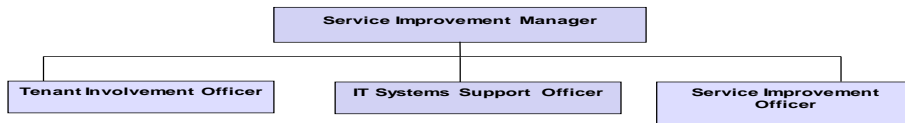
Proposed Tenancy & Estates Team



Service Development Team



Proposed Service Improvement Team



ANNEXE 2

Timetable for consultation

Action	Date
Draft proposals published	19 December
All staff briefing	19 December
Start of formal consultation with staff	19 December
Staff briefings, team meetings, one to ones etc	19 December – 21 January 2014
End of formal consultation with staff	21 January 2014
Consideration by Overview & Scrutiny	17 March 2014
Consideration by Executive	1 April 2014
Consideration by Council	15 April 2014
Final proposals published	16 April 2014
Implementation of new structure	1 May 2014