



**Haringey** Council

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## Special Corporate Committee

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MONDAY, 19TH DECEMBER, 2011 at 19:00 HRS - CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH ROAD, WOOD GREEN, N22 8LE.

**MEMBERS:** Councillors Amin, Gorrie, Griffith, Jenks, Khan, McNamara, Meehan(Chair), Watson, Whyte and Williams

### **AGENDA**

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE ( IF ANY)**

**2. URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair will consider the admission of any late report in relation to the item shown on the agenda. Please note that under the Council's Constitution – Part 4 Section B paragraph 17 – this being a special meeting of the Corporate Committee no other business shall be considered.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

A member with a personal interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is considered must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.

A member with a personal interest in a matter also has a prejudicial interest in that matter if the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the member's judgment of the public interest **and** if this interest affects their financial position or the financial position of a person or body as described in paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct **and/or** if it relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to them or any person or body described in paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct.

**4. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/QUESTIONS**

To consider any requests received in accordance with Part 4, Section B, Paragraph 29 of the Council's Constitution.

**5. PENSIONS REFORM DCLG CONSULTATION PAPER (PAGES 1 - 8)**

The Committee will be asked to consider a draft response to the DCLG consultation paper of 7<sup>th</sup> October 2011 attached as Appendix 2 to the main report.

**6. ADDENDUM TO THE REPORT ON STAFFING CHANGES - COMMUNITY HOUSING SERVICES (PAGES 9 - 56)**

The Corporate Committee requested an addendum providing information sought on spans of control and workloads.

**7. ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION - BRIEFING ON DEVELOPMENTS (PAGES 57 - 60)**

This report seeks to bring Members up to date on a number of developments in the field of electoral administration including the 2012 Mayoral /GLA Elections, Parliamentary Boundaries, a review of Polling Districts, and the legislative proposal for Individual Electoral Registration (IER).

**8. SHARED SERVICES - EMPLOYMENT PROTOCOLS (PAGES 61 - 72)**

To provide the Committee with progress on the shared service Employment Protocols being developed jointly with the London Borough of Waltham Forest to provide a framework for managing the employment issues that will arise from providing services jointly by two or more London boroughs.

**9. EXEMPT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

To consider any exempt items that are likely to be subject of a motion to exclude the press and public from the meeting as they contains exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972; Para 3 - information relating individuals or to the business or financial affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

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<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Corporate Committee</b> <b>19<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2011</b>	<b>Item number</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Pensions Reform DCLG Consultation Paper</b>		
<b>Report authorised by :</b>	Report of Assistant Chief Executive People and Organisational Development		
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	I M Benson HR Pensions Manager 0208 489 3824 imbenson@haringey.gov.uk		
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>Report for Key/Non Key Decision:</b>		
N/A	N/A		

### 1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1** On 7<sup>th</sup> October 2011 the Department of Communities & Local Government published a consultation paper on proposals to deliver short-term savings in the LGPS (England & Wales). The targeted savings are £900m per annum by 2014-15 equivalent to an average increase in members contributions of 3.2% (3% for the LGPS)
- 1.2** To limit the rise in employee contributions in the short-term, while delivering the required savings, the paper proposes reductions in the rate at which the pension builds up. Two options are offered for consideration.
- 1.3** On 2<sup>nd</sup> November HM Treasury issued a revised offer on the new scheme design (based on the Hutton Report ) due to start in April 2015. Under the Hutton proposals the change from final salary to career average as the basis for calculating benefits and linking retirement age to the State Retirement Age will generate longer term savings to the scheme.
- 1.4** The DCLG proposals; the HM Treasury offer; a summary of the Hutton proposals are set out in **Appendix 1**).



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**1.5** The Council's draft response is to urge withholding an immediate increases in employee contributions and recover cost savings by bringing the reforms proposed by Lord Hutton forward from 2015 to 2014 (**Appendix 2**)

## **2. Cabinet Member Introduction**

N/A

## **3. Recommendations**

**3.1** That the draft response to the DCLG consultation paper of 7<sup>th</sup> October 2011 attached as Appendix 2 to this report is approved.

## **4. Other options considered**

**4.1** There are serious concerns that at a time of pay restraint and inflation, the proposed increase in contributions could lead to a significant level of opt outs. In addition, the proposed options for a rise in the contribution rate and an interim lower rate of pension build up adds a complexity to the scheme which will make it difficult to understand and thereby lead to further opt outs

**4.2** A significant number of opt outs will have the effect of increasing the cost of deficit recovery and could eliminate any cost savings. A serious haemorrhaging of the scheme membership will accelerate the point at which the Fund will experience a negative cash flow. This in turn will have a negative impact on the Council's management of the fund deficit

**4.3** The Council's draft response is attached as Appendix 2. It argues for a delay in applying the increase in employee contributions to avert any significant opt out from the scheme. It also proposes that the government brings forward the proposed Hutton Reforms from April 2015 to April 2014, as a means of achieving the required savings.

## **5. Background information**

**5.1** The proposed increases in LGPS employee contributions of 3% are to be phased in from April 2012. However the Government has accepted that the funded LGPS can be treated differently to the unfunded public sector schemes and can use alternative ways to deliver the savings.

**5.2** Following input from the Local Government Group and the Trade Unions, the DCLG published two main options to deliver the £900m annual savings by 2014-2015. On 2<sup>nd</sup> November the Government announced an improved offer as a basis for negotiation. This offer is conditional upon a settlement being agreed by the end of the year.



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- 5.3** There is wide spread concern that an increase in employee contributions at a time of continuing wage restraint will provoke a significant number of members into opting out of the LGPS. In addition to the damage to long term employees' retirement planning and life cover, increases in the number of opt-outs would accelerate to the point at which benefit payments exceed contribution income. Reaching this point would restrict Pension Funds' investment policies and could lead to employers having to pay in more to recover the deficit. From the Council's position as both an employing body and the administrator of the Haringey Pension Fund neither of these outcomes is desirable.
- 5.4** Although the consultation paper refers to the possibility of a reduction in employer contribution rates, the fund actuary has informally advised that any reduction resulting from the consultation proposals is unlikely, given the deterioration of market conditions since the last valuation.
- 5.5** Option 1 has a phased increase in employee contributions of 1.5% and requires a change from 1/60<sup>th</sup> to 1/64<sup>th</sup> at April 2013 and to 1/65<sup>th</sup> from April 2014 reverting to 1/60<sup>th</sup> from April 2015. Option 2 has a lower phased contribution increase of 1% from April 2013 and a change from 1/60<sup>th</sup> to 1/67<sup>th</sup> at April 2014 reverting to 1/60<sup>th</sup> at April 2015. The consultation document also mentions the option to increase the retirement age .
- 5.6** These proposals put additional strain on scheme administrators required to implement short-term scheme changes. There is also an increase in complexity for members which is unhelpful when there is already much concern about the proposed rise in membership cost and extended retirement ages. There is a danger that this additional complexity will act to further disaffect scheme members and increase the number of those deciding to opt-out.

## **6. Head of Legal Services and Legal Implications**

- 7.1** The statutory consultation being carried out by DCLG is in respect of the Government draft proposals to achieve short term savings of £900m within the LGPS by 2014-15. The recommendations set out in this report must be submitted before the deadline of 6 January 2012.
- 7.2** Members should note that, subject to the outcome of the consultation exercise, the intention is for the proposed amendments to the scheme's regulatory framework to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012

## **7. Equalities and Community Cohesion Comments**

- 7.1** The proposed phased increase in contribution rates has protection for employees earning full-time equivalent pay under of £15000 pa. For the fund as a whole this will benefit approximately 6% of the membership. Setting the protection at this level of pay excludes the remaining largely female part-time staff and other workers at the lower end of the pay spectrum from this protection.



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## **8. Head of Procurement Comments**

N/A.

## **9. Consultation**

The Employees Side have been consulted and their comments are attached as Appendix 3 to this report

## **10. Use of Appendices**

**Appendix 1** is a summary of the DCLG and HM Treasury offers of 7<sup>th</sup> October 2011 and 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2011 respectively together with a summary of the Hutton proposals

**Appendix 2** is the Council's draft response to the DCLG Consultation Paper of 7<sup>th</sup> October 2011

## **11. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

- a. DCLG Consultation Paper 7<sup>th</sup> October 2011
- b. Hymans Robertson Briefing Notes October 2011 and Nov 2011
- c. HM Treasury Statement by Chief Secretary to the Treasury 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov 2011.





## Appendix 1

### DCLG Short-term savings proposals (£900 million) (7<sup>th</sup> October 2011)

#### Option 1 involves:-

- a phased increase in employee contributions (equivalent to 1.5%) (starting in 2012/13) (**Saving £450 million**)
- a change in the current pension accrual rate of 1/60<sup>th</sup> of final pay for each year of service. This would reduce to 1/64<sup>th</sup> for service between April 2013 and March 2014, and to 1/65<sup>th</sup> for each year of service after March 2014<sup>1</sup>. (**Saving £450 million**)

#### Option 2 involves:-

- a phased increase in employee contributions (equivalent to 1.0%) (starting in 2012/13) (£350 million)
- a change in the current pension accrual rate of 1/60<sup>th</sup> of final pay per year of service. This would reduce to 1/67<sup>th</sup> per year of service after March 2014<sup>2</sup>. (£600 million)

There is some additional flexibility available around adjusting the retirement date to build in some element of savings.

#### **HM Treasury Proposal 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2011**

Accrual rate changed from 1/65<sup>th</sup> to 1/60<sup>th</sup> April 2015

Ten year transitional guarantee protecting benefits for those close to retirement from April 2012

Offer conditional on agreement being reached by the end of 2011.

#### **Hutton Reforms from April 2015**

- Retain defined benefit scheme
- Career average revalued earnings (CARE) to replace final salary. Revaluation linked to average earnings increases.
- Existing benefits built up prior to April 2015 to retain link to final salary when benefits taken.
- Benefits to build up at 1/60<sup>th</sup>. This is an increase of 8% on the previously proposed rate of 1/65<sup>th</sup>. Revaluation linked to Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- Retirement age linked to State Pension Age.
- 10 year transitional protection for those close to retirement.

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<sup>1</sup> 1/60<sup>th</sup> from April 2015



## Appendix 2

Dear Mr Crossely

### **Local Government Pension Scheme Consultation on proposed increases to employee contribution rates.**

Thank you for your letter of 7<sup>th</sup> October 2011 inviting the Council to comment on the Government's draft proposals on increased employee contributions rates and changes to scheme accrual rates.

The Council has considered the proposals together with the Chief Secretary to the Treasury's statement of 2<sup>nd</sup> November and our response is as follows:-

There is a growing concern that any increase in contribution rates from April 2012 will lead to many members opting out of the scheme. Calls coming into the Pensions Team from all grades of employees express concern about increases in pension contributions at a time of pay restraint and consumer inflation. These calls mirror the concerns of other local authorities some of which have reportedly experienced an increase in opt outs from the scheme.

There is the danger that any significant reduction in membership will have serious implications for the financial well being of the fund. Informal advice from the fund actuary is that no saving are likely to emerge, in the short term, from the options being put forward in the consultation paper.

Of the two options put forward to mitigate contribution increases in the LGPS, the Council would favour Option 2. This is the least complex of the two options both for members and administration.

The added complexity of short-term accrual rates for members, linked to the proposed increase in employee contributions rate will further act to encourage opt outs from the scheme. We would therefore urge the government to delay any change to contribution rates for April 2012 and bring forward the New Scheme Reforms from April 2015 to April 2014. This will simplify the transition process to the new pension scheme, ensuring that the scheme membership remains stable and afford the opportunity for fund actuaries to build in change costs when the next round of triennial fund valuations are process in April 2013.

Yours sincerely

Cllr G Meehan  
Chair Corporate Committee

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<sup>2</sup> from April 2015



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### **Appendix 3**

#### **UNISON Comments on LGPS Report to Corporate Committee**

These comments are solely from UNISON, as I have not had the opportunity at the deadline of clearing them with the other Constituent Unions. However I believe the views expressed reflect their positions and hope by the date of the Corporate Committee to confirm this

We welcome the recognition in the paper that an increase in Employee contributions would be counter productive. Our members have consistently indicated that such an increase would force many of them to leave the scheme. This would have the effects indicated within the Officers paper, however it would also result in increased poverty at pension age and consequent increased demands upon state support. A survey carried out by UNISON and the PCS across members in public sector schemes indicated up to 50% would either opt out or seriously consider doing so in the event of increased contributions. This was particularly prevalent amongst the lower paid.

It is important to note that the tapered protection on increases would have little or no effect in Haringey. This is because the minimum whole time equivalent income in Haringey is £14,940.00 per year (spinal pt 6) so anyone over this spinal point would potentially be required to make additional contributions

It was the proposed increase in contributions, which played a heavy part in all three constituent Unions of Employeeside securing yes votes of in excess of 75% in favour of strike action. It was however not the sole issue as members also had serious concerns at the potential to be required to work longer and to see reduced pensions as a result of amended accrual rates and/or the introduction of the CARE scheme approach.

However we have grave concerns at the proposal that the Hutton recommendations be implemented in full as a way of resolving the situation.

Firstly it should be noted that the LGPS, along with the other Pension Schemes in the public sector. Was only updated as recently as 2006 (effective dated 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008) It has been the contention of UNISON and other Trade Unions that the changes agreed at that point would have a considerable effect in reducing the ongoing costs of Pension provision. These for example abolished the 85-year rule and brought in a sliding scale of contribution increases as well as changing the way benefits were calculated. It should noted that some of the current short term funding problems in our scheme (which is unique amongst those in the public sector) arise from issues such as the current poor performance of the funds particular in relation to the stock market, the pensions holidays taken in the good years, and the increased demand upon the fund as a result of the need for increased early release caused by government funding cuts.

Secondly the decision of the government to move from RPI to CPI will clearly significantly reduce future pension increases with a subsequent reduction in the financial demands upon the fund.

Hutton's proposals also included the abolition of "Fair Deal for Pensions" the mechanism introduced by the previous Labour government with the intent of protecting public sector workers pensions in the event of outsourcing. The code required the provision of an equivalent pension scheme or admitted body status to the LGPS. The Council previously indicated its support in retention of this approach in a response to a separate consultation



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on its abolition. We would urge the Council to make clear in its response that it continues to support the retention of Fair Deal.

Hutton proposes the introduction of a CARE scheme. UNISON is not in principle opposed to a move from final salary to CARE but it is clear any such scheme would need adjustments in the accrual rate in order to protect current members of the scheme. For example the Civil Service scheme when it was switched to a CARE model introduced an improved accrual rate to help compensate for the change. There is no indication that Hutton proposes any such change in the accrual rate.

The proposal to link normal retirement age to increases in the State retirement age is of concern. We are particularly concerned since in his autumn statement the Chancellor announced the bringing forward of the increase from 66 to 67 to 2028. We are concerned that in many cases workers who are members of our scheme operate in frontline roles which either require a great deal of manual dexterity or involve high levels of stress. This means requiring them to work into their late 60's which will cause a great deal of difficulties.

We also believe that the Council should make it explicit in its response that changes to the LGPS should be achieved by negotiation not by dictat. The Trade Union side has entered into negotiations in good faith and believes that the message needs to be sent to Ministers that this Council expects no changes to be imposed upon its employees.

**Seán Fox** Branch Secretary 7<sup>th</sup> December 2011



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<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Corporate Committee</b>	<b>Item Number:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	Addendum to the Report on Staffing Changes - Community Housing Services		
<b>Report Authorised by:</b>	<b>Mun Thong Phung</b>		
<b>Lead Officers:</b>	<b>Phil Harris /Mustafa Ibrahim</b>		
<b>Ward(s) affected: NA</b>	<b>Report for Key/Non Key Decisions: N/A</b>		

### 1. Describe the issue under consideration

The Corporate Committee requested an addendum providing information sought on spans of control and workloads.

### 2. Recommendations

- (a) That the revised establishment and structure of Community Housing Service set out in paragraph 5.4 is agreed.
- (b) That the implementation of the revised structure set out in paragraph 5.7 and Appendix B is agreed, and carried out in accordance with the Council's Restructure Policy.

### 3. Other options considered

These are attached in the main report

### 4. Background information

This is attached in the main report



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**5. Comments of the Chief Finance Officer and financial implications**

These are attached in the main report

**6. Head of Legal Services and legal implications**

These are attached in the main report

**7. Equalities and Community Cohesion Comments**

These are attached in the main report

**8. Head of Procurement Comments**

N/A

**9. Policy Implication**

These are attached in the main report

**10. Use of Appendices**

These are attached in the main report

**11. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

These are attached in the main report

1. **Introduction and Summary**

The proposals for this restructure have been developed over a period of some months and have been carefully assessed to ensure the minimum impact on front line services and on staff. The current proposals are a significant improvement in this respect on the proposals first identified and discussed with Members in June.

It is possible, and indeed very likely, that subject to decisions relating to voluntary redundancy (VR), reduced working hours and ring fences, selection will not be required and compulsory redundancy will be limited to one post, affecting a member of staff who had previously applied for VR. Given this position, and that the savings target can be achieved in this way, alternative savings proposals are unnecessary and potentially extremely disruptive, particularly as they relate to management posts that are needed and further or alternative savings are not needed.

The proposals are closely inter-related and represent a carefully-judged balance. The proposal to reduce 4<sup>th</sup> tier managers assumes that the Head of Housing Needs & Lettings post is filled. Without this, the 4<sup>th</sup> tier posts will have to be retained and a new restructure initiated to permanently re-assign senior management responsibilities. The proposal to reduce Team Leaders depends on the 4<sup>th</sup> tier proposals and also assumes that Seniors are available in the large teams that are being created. Without Seniors, at least one Team Leader post will need to be retained. Extensive consultation with involved staff did not indicate that any such adjustments were supported.

The additional information and analysis of workload volumes set out in this addendum report substantiates the current proposals which, if implemented as a whole, will meet the requirement for budget savings, and do so in a way that mitigates the impact on services and staff as far as possible. The analysis is set out as follows:

**Section 2** shows that current and proposed ratios and spans and control are within the *Rethinking Haringey* guidelines.

**Sections 3 and 4** show that the proposed staffing changes can be implemented without significant increases in workload or impact on service delivery.

**Sections 5 to 8** – respond to Unison comments. There is agreement with Unison on administrative staff and selection is unlikely to be necessary. A detailed response has been provided to Unison's comments on management/senior officer posts and on selection methods. It is confirmed that any selection that is necessary will involve testing, in line with the Council's Restructure Policy.

## 2. Ratio of Management to Staff

The number of managers within the service has reduced steadily with each successive restructure, from 38 in 2009 to the present 27, which will reduce further to 24 with these proposals.

*Rethinking Haringey* envisaged that managers should typically be directly responsible for five to eight staff. In the areas directly affected by this restructure, the position is as follows:

<i>Team/Post</i>	<i>Manager to Staff Ratio - Before</i>	<i>Manager to Staff Ratio - After</i>	<i>Note</i>
Tenancy Support	1 to 6	1 to 10	Merger of teams
Income Recovery	1 to 6 or 7	1 to 10	Merger of teams
Temporary Accommodation Visiting & Lettings	1 to 10	1 to 9	Vacancy deletion
Housing Assessments	1 to 7.5	1 to 6.5	Vacancy deletion
Service Operations Manager	1 to 1	1 to 7	Additional responsibilities

In all case this is within the *Rethinking Haringey* guideline, which acknowledges that the ratio is influenced by the diversity and complexity of occupational groups and their activities.

This is of particular relevance for the assessment of Community Housing Services as a whole, which has a number of managerial roles in professional and specialist areas leading small teams; in these areas, management spans are consequently not typical. These 4th tier roles are:

- ALMO Client Management (1 manager and 2 staff)
- Housing Related Support, formerly Supporting People (1 manager and 2 staff)
- Housing Improvement (Private Sector) Decent Homes enforcement (1 manager and 1 staff)
- Housing Improvement (Private Sector) Frontline (1 manager and 3 staff)

Management spans are necessarily low in these areas, to ensure both effective leadership and accountability and cost-effectiveness. In fact in the Housing Improvement (Private Sector) team, the arrangements above are the result of the removal of an entire tier of management in a previous restructure.

Taking into account these factors, the average for CHS needs to be seen both as a crude average (i.e. a straightforward calculation including all managers) and as an adjusted average, which excludes the specialist managerial posts described above and gives a truer picture. Using this approach, the position before and after the proposed restructure is as follows:

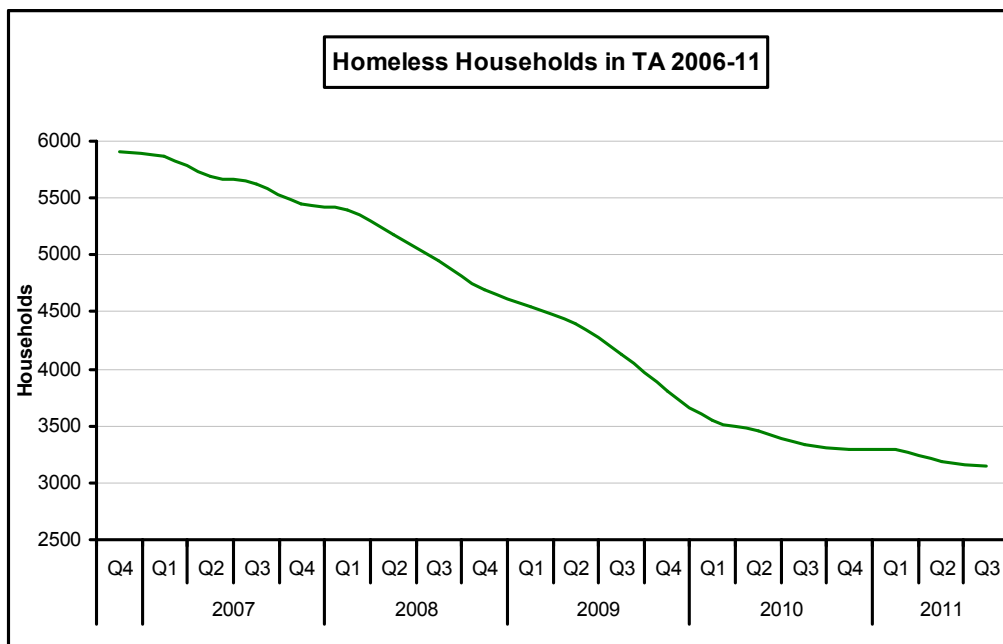


Average No. of Staff Managed	Crude		Adjusted	
	Before	After	Before	After
3 <sup>rd</sup> Tier Managers (Senior Management Team)	4.5	4	4.5	4
4 <sup>th</sup> Tier Managers (Operational Management Team)	3.6	4.2	5.1	6.0
5 <sup>th</sup> Tier Managers (Team Leaders)	7.3	8.9	7.3	8.9
<b>Business Unit Average</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>6.8</b>

Both the crude average and the adjusted average, for the Housing service as a whole, are within the *Rethinking Haringey* guidance i.e. 1 manager to 5-8 staff, and both improve as a result of the proposed restructure. The service is also consistent with the guidance that there should not be more than four layers of staff between the business unit head and operational staff.

### 3. Workload Volumes and Impact – Temporary Accommodation

In order to assess the impact of the restructure on those teams that deal with temporary accommodation (TA), some explanation of numbers and responsibilities is necessary. The trend in relation to the number of households in TA is as follows:



The current number of households in TA stands at 3107 but nearly 30% of the portfolio is managed either by the supplier or a housing association. The functions undertaken by the service (tenancy support, income collection, lettings and visiting) thus relate to up to 2,300 households and properties – this is not an exact number because there are differences between the functions that reflect the different types of TA. The impact of the restructure proposals on these specific roles needs to be assessed in this context.

**(a) Tenancy Support and Income Recovery**

There are currently two tenancy support teams and two income recovery teams, with four team leaders, reporting to two 4<sup>th</sup> tier managers. The proposal is to reduce to one 4<sup>th</sup> tier manager and two team leaders. At 4<sup>th</sup> tier level, the new post will combine responsibility for tenancy support and income recovery but the impact of this increase in responsibility will be mitigated by the transfer of responsibility for TA Visiting & Lettings to another 4<sup>th</sup> tier post. At team leader level, the two posts will maintain the current separation of tenancy support and income recovery by creating larger teams, but this impact will be mitigated by the creation of Senior posts (detailed in section 7 below).

The main workload volume measure for Tenancy Support Officers (TSO) and Income Recovery Officers (IRO) is their patch size i.e. the number of households that they act as the designated officer for. For those types of TA that are common to both functions, patches are aligned between the two functions so that a TSO and IRO operate as a pair for their patch. The impact of the proposals on patch sizes is as follows:

<i>Role</i>	<i>Patch Size - Before</i>	<i>Patch Size - After</i>
Tenancy Support Officer	226	238
Income Recovery Officer	239	251

This small increase is not significant and in any case does not necessarily equate to a workload increase. In practice, TSOs and IROs deal primarily with customers who have particular needs (e.g. repairs, or an arrears plan) and will continue to provide a responsive service to those customers, while other customers will continue to have very little contact with their TSO or IRO.

In addition to responsiveness to customers, the other potential impact is on rent collection and arrears levels. The trend is that collection is declining, from 98.9% a year ago to 97.5% currently. Although staff have reduced in this period, this performance is attributable to housing benefit (HB) changes and delays, the impact of the withdrawal of the Workers' Rebate and to the general economic climate rather than to staff numbers.

The risk to income collection is being mitigated by addressing the main cause of arrears, HB, and focusing on maximising take-up. This has improved from 87% a year ago to 88% currently, and further progress will be made by adjusting the role of Housing Benefit Liaison Officers within the team so that they undertake assessments, speeding up payments and reducing arrears. IROs work increasingly closely with TSOs and Visiting Officers to ensure that all customer contact opportunities (e.g. visits) are maximised so that whichever officer is seeing the customer, any rent issues are discussed. It should also be noted that capacity in the service has improved as a result of significant reductions in sickness absence. The average number of days absence per employee (for the Housing Needs & Lettings service as a whole) was 13.41 two years ago; it is currently 8.09 days.

Our tenancy support and income recovery service seeks to offer good standards of support and responsiveness. For tenancy support, it is difficult to make like-for-like comparisons with other local authorities because of the different

approaches taken and very different volumes of TA. Enfield, for example, deploys different tenancy management roles for different types of TA. For income recovery, Islington has an average patch size of 126, Enfield up to 400, while Newham's average is 461. Nor is there necessarily a direct correlation with the number of TA rent accounts; Islington has only 628, Enfield has 978 while Newham's levels are comparable to Haringey. The proposed patch size of 251 is an appropriate balance in this context.

These factors, and the ongoing work to improve efficiency in the service, mean that the restructure proposals, if agreed in full, will not have a material impact on the service.

**(b) TA Visiting & Lettings**

This team is responsible for identifying and letting appropriate TA for homeless households and for the regular programme of visits to those households, to investigate household circumstances, undertake occupancy checks and discuss housing options. There are currently 5 Lettings Officer posts (PO1) and 4 Visiting Officer posts (PO1); the proposal is to replace a Lettings Officer Post with a Senior (PO2) and to delete a Visiting Officer vacancy. Workload volumes in this team consist of the numbers of lettings and visits completed.

The actual and anticipated volume of lettings is as follows:

	<i>Dec 2010 to Nov 2011</i>	<i>Per Officer</i>	<i>Dec 2011 to Nov 2012 (projected)</i>	<i>Per Officer</i>
TA New Lets	864		900	
TA Transfers	960		750	
Total TA Lets	1824	365	1650	367

The volume of lettings projection is stable as an exceptionally high number of transfers have taken place over the past year because over 200 households were moved in order to reduce the cost of TA. The number of households remaining in relatively expensive TA is much lower now and the volume of transfers will decrease significantly as a result. The proposal to replace an officer post with a Senior post in this team will not have any impact on workloads and performance (the rationale for Seniors is set out in section 7 below).

Visiting Officers typically complete 15-20 visits per week, for all types of TA, except private sector leased (PSLs) properties, which are visited by TSOs. These visits serve multiple purposes, covering occupancy, potential fraud, tailored housing options, bidding for permanent accommodation, rent issues and property-related issues. This approach is also used by TSOs for PSL properties.

For each household in TA to be visited at last once annually, the Visiting team need to undertake 1,900 visits. This excludes visits undertaken by TSOs to PSL properties (a further 1,200 visits). The capacity of the three person Visiting team, based on 17 visits a week for 40 weeks, is over 2,000 visits. The vacant post in this team can therefore be deleted without any impact on the service.

#### 4. **Workload Volumes and Impact – Assessments & Lettings**

##### **(a) Housing Assessments**

This team is responsible for the maintenance of the housing register, including the assessment of applications and the verification of applicants offered permanent housing. The proposal is to delete one post (graded PO1) that is currently vacant.

The number of applicants on the housing register is an obvious volume measure but does not actually indicate workload demands. The main indicators of this are the enquiries and follow-up associated with assessment decisions and the work required to verify applicants and conduct checks before offers of social housing are made. The volumes are set out in the table below:

	<i>Mar 2010 - Feb 2011</i>	<i>Mar 2011 – Nov 2011</i>	<i>Projection to Feb 2012</i>
Housing applications (transfers)	2,755 (326)	1,746 (240)	2,328 (320)
Assessment queries	n/a	3,800	4,500
Verification interviews	540	663	884

Major changes to business processes have taken place in this team which have had a significant bearing on the workload quantified above.

The automation of applications means that officers are spending less time processing paper-based applications and have more time available for verification. The volume of interviews is increasing as a consequence of automation, not because of a workload increase. This is a significant productivity improvement as officers are doing more appropriate, qualitative customer-facing work and far less data entry.

The recent re-registration of existing housing register applicants has had the effect of inflating the volume of assessment queries, but we expect this will reduce as the new Housing Allocations policy and banding system become more established. We also expect that the trend of lower numbers of applications will continue, as potential applicants are taking a more realistic view of their rehousing prospects. This is borne out by re-registration, which has reduced the size of the housing register by more than half.

Overall, the workload in this team is beginning to stabilise and the efficiencies achieved mean there is sufficient capacity for current and anticipated volumes. The current vacancy can be deleted without any impact on this service.

##### **(b) Housing Reviews**

This is a single post responsible for undertaking statutory reviews of decisions relating to homelessness, discharge of duty, housing offers and the housing register. The proposed deletion is part of a long term plan to change the way these reviews are conducted and a 0.5 post in this team was deleted in a previous restructure (October 2010), without any detrimental impact on the

service. Reviews will in future be undertaken by managers, except for homelessness decisions, which will be sent to an external provider.

Review volumes are as follows:

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12 projected (ytd)
Homelessness	135	106	120 (76)
Discharge of Duty	3	11	24 (16)
Housing Offers	117	224	175 (129)
Housing Register	3	3	3 (2)
Total	258	344	322

The volume of reviews of housing offers was inflated in 2010/11 as a result of the introduction of auto-bidding, where residents in TA have bids submitted on their behalf. This is now stabilising and expected to reduce, as are overall review numbers. However this is a demand-led service and fluctuations are possible. The best way to deal with this is to spread the load amongst managers and use an external provider on a flexible basis, which will ensure a cost-effective service and performance within the target time (statutory reviews have to be completed within 56 days).

The proposed deletion of the Review Officer post will not have an adverse impact on the provision of this service and is expected to have benefits other than savings, including better use and development of management capacity.

**5. Administration (in response to Unison point 1)**

It is highly likely that the proposed reduction from 13 admin staff to 10 will be achieved through natural wastage and voluntary reductions in working hours. We have agreed with Unison locally that if we are in a position where a saving of 2.5 posts is achieved in this way and only 0.5 of a post is required, selection will not be appropriate and the saving will be found by other means.

**6. Management Posts**

**(a) Service Operations Manager (in response to Unison point 2)**

This post is not a new post; there is no addition to the structure proposed. This is the existing post of Business Improvement Manager, adjusted to assume responsibility for managing the central administrative pool (shared with another existing managerial post) and to play a more operational role directly influencing service delivery. The post will manage 7 staff and be responsible for:

- Administrative support resources deployed throughout the service;
- Service procedures, forms and work instructions, ensuring clarity, consistency and the removal of unnecessary or duplicated work;
- IT services, driving forward the new Housing IT strategy and managing projects to improve processes, reduce paperwork and increase efficiency;
- Customer satisfaction, engagement and involvement, ensuring that the customer voice informs our service delivery;
- Communications and publications, including the housing web pages and intranet;

- Diversity, ensuring effective monitoring and planning of services so that they are in line with customer needs and that equality impacts are understood;
- Performance management and service improvement, working with service managers to ensure services are as high quality and cost-effective as possible.

It is not feasible or appropriate to share these responsibilities among the reducing number of existing managers. By their nature these areas are “cross-cutting” and require leadership and coordination if the required outcomes are to be achieved, at a time when Support Function Reviews (SFR) have removed resources from the service. In total five posts have been lost as a result of the SFRs.

The provision of effective administrative support with reduced numbers will require centralised management if efficiencies are to be achieved and potential benefits of this new way of working realised. Without this post, we would not be able to manage the administrative team centrally, a change prompted by the corporate decision that the SFR for administration/business support should be implemented by directorates. This proposal, and this adjustment to the managerial post, is the response to that direction.

**(b) Head of Housing Needs & Lettings (in response to Unison point 3)**

The consequences of not having a Head of Housing Needs & Lettings in post are significant and will seriously disrupt both our day to day service provision and our strategic development as a service.

Disruption to services has been minimised by making interim arrangements but this has inhibited the achievement of important Business Plan objectives and other key initiatives, and affected senior managers’ ability to tackle issues and improvements within their substantive and interim areas of responsibility. Specific examples of this, which must be seen in the context of the Localism Act 2011 and other government changes, include:

- Social housing tenure reform, and the preparation and implementation of a Tenancy Strategy;
- Review of the Housing Allocations policy, in accordance with Council priorities;
- Housing Revenue Account self-financing;
- Housing mobility, and the new national home swap scheme;
- Preparation and implementation of the Council’s approach to affordable rents;
- The Council stock options appraisal and future of the ALMO;
- The assumption of responsibility for Housing Related Support (Supporting People) and development of a new strategic commissioning framework.

Work has been and is being done in these areas, but they represent very significant change within a relatively short period. To further reduce management capacity at this time will seriously jeopardise the ability to respond effectively to these challenges and achieve Council priorities. Furthermore, the interim arrangements were designed to be a short term ‘caretaking’ role and are

not sustainable in the medium and long term. For senior managers to be held accountable for delivering fully in their substantive areas, they must be freed up from their additional responsibilities, which means filling the Head of Housing Needs & Lettings post. The post is needed now but it is recognised that further reductions in senior managers are inevitable so recruitment will be on a fixed term for 18 months. Without the post, a permanent reorganisation of senior management responsibilities will be necessary, which means that the timetable for budget savings for 2012/13 will not be achieved.

**7. Senior Operational Posts (in response to Unison point 4)**

These posts are front line operational posts. They are not management posts and are “senior” in the sense that they are lead practitioner posts, graded PO2 in service teams where the operational staff are generally graded PO1. Seniors are expected to undertake front line responsibilities (i.e. dealing directly with customers) equivalent to half of a PO1 post, with the remainder of their time devoted to assisting managers with day to day operational tasks.

Typically this will include:

- Assigning duty responsibilities for planned daily visits and other routine tasks;
- Dealing with any unscheduled customer visits to our offices, or visiting to deal with customer emergencies like floods, fires or serious disrepair;
- Attending evictions;
- Responding to Members’ enquiries, complaints and requests for information;
- Monitoring the regular cycle of visits/inspections and dealing with any issues;
- Weekly hostel inspections, including fire checks;
- Covering absence of any officer, undertaking their visits, case conferences, tenant sign-ups or other commitments.

Team Leaders would be unable to cover this range effectively in the larger teams and the risks associated with this type of work justify the provision of the proposed Senior posts.

Senior posts are already established throughout the structure; this restructure is not seeking to introduce a new role. The Senior posts in the Tenancy Support and TA Lettings teams were deleted in a previous restructure as a budget saving. However the proposed reductions in managerial posts will create large teams and the reinstatement of Senior posts is recommended not only as a means of supporting Team Leaders but also to facilitate front line staff to do their job. The absence of Seniors makes the job of front line PO1 officers in larger teams more difficult, as they will have less access to advice/guidance and cover from Team Leaders, will be diverted from their planned work more frequently and may find themselves working with less of a planned operational structure as Team Leaders attempt to deal with the full range of work required.

It is intended that existing PO1 officers apply for the Senior posts and are successful. To facilitate this, the question of whether these ring fences should be open or closed will be discussed further with local staff representatives.

**8. Selection Methods (in response to Unison views)**

The Council's Restructure Policy, and the associated management guidance, states that for restructures a combination of selection processes will be needed. As well as being in line with the Council's policy, the use of testing is established in the service and does not represent a departure from previous practice.

The main argument for the use of testing is to ensure the best decisions are made in the fairest and most objective way possible. Some staff are strong in interviews, others are not. The widest reasonable range of selection methods is the best way to ensure that all staff are given a fair opportunity and not discriminated against. Decisions on selection for redundancy are not comparable to recruitment decisions. We want to ensure that selection is scrupulously accurate, fair and transparent. Tests provide objective and auditable evidence that selection decisions can be more confidently based on. Relying on interviews alone means the process is more subjective and will unfairly favour more articulate staff.

Specifically on Unison's numbered points:

1. The policy states that testing, along with interviews, is used where work is being organised in a different way, which is the case with administrative staff. The policy is not as prescriptive as Unison is stating.
2. Managers believe that Unison's view that the level of skills required for the administrative role does not justify testing demeans the role. These staff play a vital part in front line service delivery and the importance of selecting the best staff fairly applies to jobs at every level, not just to more senior roles.
3. The role of testing is to enable rounded selection decisions to be made, whether a ring fence is closed or not. The tests used will be fair, proportionate and relevant to the requirements of the job, in line with the Council's policy. We agree with Unison that the posts are not about testing whether staff meet the person specification and there is no suggestion that they do not; the testing is about who meets it most strongly, which is the usual position in a selection where candidates meet the specification and a choice must be made.
4. The reduction referred to in Adults is not relevant as a precedent; the precedents within the housing service are more relevant. The reference to the Technical Support Officer is also not relevant; there was no competition for this post, therefore testing was not used.
5. This comment seems to reflect a misunderstanding of the Council's policy. Interviews and tests will be used, as one element of the four elements specified by the policy, the others being statements of application, appraisal/supervision information and factual information. These are not "additional" selection methods as stated, these are the component parts of the overall management assessment set out in the policy. It would not be "unusual" to have all or some combination of these elements used, it would be normal and reflects previous practice within the service. The use of tests is justified under the Council's Restructure Policy and will be in line with that policy, will be appropriate to the role and proportionate in relation to the grade.



### **Staff Reductions in Community Housing Services**

Over the last three years, CHS has reduced staff to achieve annual savings targets in line with business change and without a significant impact on service performance. These reductions in the permanent staff establishment are as follows:

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total
Manager Posts Deleted (business unit as a whole)	2	7.8*	3	12.8
Other Posts Deleted	16	6.5*	6	28.5
Total Posts Deleted	18	14.3	9	41.3

\* includes 3 managerial and 2 other posts deleted in Support Functions Reviews.

Of the above, the following managerial reductions were/are in the teams affected by this restructure i.e. Temporary Accommodation, Income Recovery and Assessment & Lettings:

	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	Total
Manager Posts Deleted	2	2	3	7

### **Notes**

The 2010/11 restructure was based on:

- The significant reduction in the number of households in TA, from 5,900 in 2007 to about 3,400 at the time of the restructure.
- The high level of homelessness preventions being achieved at the time.

The 2011/12 restructure was a result of the corporate VR programme and Support Functions Reviews.

The present restructure, for 2012/13, is a follow up to *Rethinking Haringey* and the transfer of Housing Related Support (Supporting People) to CHS. As set out in the main report, the restructure is seeking to protect front line services by focusing on managerial, administrative and vacant posts.

The reductions outlined above will achieve total salary savings in excess of £1.5m over the three years.

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**COMMUNITY HOUSING SERVICES RESTRUCTURE – UNISON DEPUTATION TO CORPORATE COMMITTEE 24/11/2011**

We do not believe that it is necessary for management to make the cuts that are proposed in this restructure. We have alternative proposals that we believe could avoid at least some of the cuts having to be made, which would avoid compulsory redundancies and the costs associated with this. These proposals are as follows:

- 1) Management have proposed to cut the admin staff from 13 posts to 10. However, we understand that one of these employees has already found an alternative post, and three staff want to reduce their hours from 36 to 18 hours a week. This would leave 10.5 posts, only half a full time post over management's target. We believe that management should agree to this proposal, as it would;
  - Keep skilled and experienced staff within the service.
  - Avoid compulsory redundancies and the costs of this.
  - Avoid the stress of putting staff through a selection process.

We believe that there may be further scope for reducing the number of staff in this ringfence through alternative opportunities that have become available, but this is not yet certain. If this was the case, then the remaining staff in the team would actually be below management's target of 10 posts. However, if this did not happen, it would not be reasonable to have a selection process to reduce only half a post, particularly when we are proposing other ways that savings could be made, which are below.

- 2) A Service Operations Manager post (PO5) has been created in the restructure. Management should not be creating such a highly graded post when they are trying to make savings, and they should abandon the creation of this post.
- 3) There is a vacant Head of Housing Needs and Lettings post. This has been vacant for some time, so we would question whether it is actually needed. This post could be deleted.
- 4) Management are proposing to delete 4 PO1 posts (1 x Tenancy Support Officer, 1 x Income Recovery Officer, 1 x Lettings Officer and 1 x Visiting Officer – currently vacant). These will be replaced with 3 senior posts (Senior Tenancy Support Officer, Senior Income Recovery Officer and Senior Visiting and Lettings Officer) which will be graded at PO2. This will increase the amount of work that the remaining PO1 staff in each team have to do, at a time when they are already under huge pressure. There will also be the risk of compulsory redundancies, as the PO1 staff are in open ringfences for the senior posts. In addition, the posts will cost more as they are at a higher grade, and they take capacity away from the front line. We believe that the proposal to delete the PO1 posts and create senior posts should be dropped, in order to avoid compulsory redundancies, save money and keep staff at the front line where they are needed.

UNISON also has an issue with the fact that management seem to be proposing to use all available selection methods for each ringfence. We believe that this is excessive and will put staff under unnecessary stress. We have a particular issue with the use of testing for the Service Support Officer posts, which is the new name for Administrative Officers, although the duties have not changed. We object to testing for this post for the following reasons:

- 1) Testing should only be used where there are new jobs or existing jobs that are changing significantly, and the Reorganisation Policy backs this up. This is not the case here.
- 2) The level of skills required for the job do not justify testing.

- 3) It *could* be reasonable to test new staff on computer skills, literacy/numeracy, etc. in order to check that they have the required skills for the post. However, this is a closed ringfence, and the only reason for having a selection process is that there are more people than posts. Management have clearly stated that the tests will be based on the requirements of the person specification. In a closed ringfence, it should be assumed that all staff meet the requirements of the person specification. If they do not, then this should have been taken up before the restructure using the available procedures, including providing support and training. Therefore, we believe that testing of the type that management have proposed is unacceptable in a closed ringfence.
- 4) Admin posts were reduced in Adults earlier this year, and only interviews were used. Also, a staff member in Housing was appointed to a completely new post of Technical Support Officer in the last restructure and did not have to sit a test.
- 5) Interviews are a well-established selection method for situations such as this, and we believe that this should be the method that management use. In order to compromise with management, staff have also said that they would be willing to undergo a management assessment of factual information (supervision/appraisal records, etc.) as an additional selection method, even though it would be unusual to have both this and an interview.

**Chris Taylor**  
**UNISON**  
**22/11/2011**

<b>Report for:</b>	Corporate Committee 24 November 2011	<b>Item number</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	Staffing Changes - Community Housing Services Base Budget Reductions 2012/13		
<b>Report authorised by :</b>	Mun Thong Phung Director of Adult & Housing Services		
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Phil Harris Deputy Director, Community Housing Services x4338 <a href="mailto:phil.harris@haringey.gov.uk">phil.harris@haringey.gov.uk</a>		
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b> N/A	<b>Report for Key/Non Key Decision:</b>		

#### 1. Describe the issue under consideration

This report:

- 1.1 Proposes changes to Community Housing Services' (CHS) staffing structure in order to achieve the base budget savings target for 2012/13.
- 1.2 Seeks the authority to implement the revised structure in accordance with the recommendations made in section 3 below.

#### 2. Cabinet Member Introduction

Not applicable.

#### 3. Recommendations

- (a) That the revised establishment and structure of Community Housing Service set out in paragraph 5.4 is agreed.
- (b) That the implementation of the revised structure set out in paragraph 5.7 and Appendix B is agreed, and carried out in accordance with the Council's Restructure Policy.

#### 4. Other options considered

- 4.1 A number of savings options were identified and discussed with Members during June and July 2011. Some of these proposals have been confirmed and included in the current proposals while some have been withdrawn. The withdrawn options included the following:
- (a) Re-modelling of Housing's front line, bringing together functions in different teams including Customer Services. This has been postponed because the lead time for implementation meant that achieving full year savings in 2012/13 is not feasible.
  - (b) Reducing posts involved in the procurement and management of temporary accommodation (TA). This has been revised to protect front line posts while reducing the number of managers.
  - (c) Reducing a Housing Benefit Liaison Officer post – withdrawn to protect front line services.
  - (d) Reducing a Payments Officer post – withdrawn to enable the significant new workload associated with Housing Related Support (HRS, formerly Supporting People) to be absorbed.
- 4.2 Each of the above proposals was carefully considered and assessed as resulting in:
- Reduced ability to procure and renew leases for TA, inspect properties, minimise voids and enforce quality standards, and to process handbacks of expensive or poor quality accommodation;
  - Increased risk of reduced TA rent collection caused by housing benefit issues;
  - Larger patches for tenancy support and income recovery officers, jeopardising customer care and support levels and income collection rates;
  - Reduced ability to monitor and process payments to HRS providers, accurately and on time.

Collectively these proposals were deemed to result in an unacceptably detrimental impact on front line services with significant risks in relation to customers and landlords and to the quality and cost of our services. Alternative savings have been identified that mitigate this impact and risk as far as possible.

## **5. Background information**

- 5.1 In order to achieve the target for base budget reductions in 2012/13, full year savings of £386,000 are required.
- 5.2 These savings are sought in the context of the increasing impact of government policies and other changes that have taken place within the Council. It is likely that demand for housing services will increase, as changes in housing benefit present a significant risk of outward migration from inner London and increased homelessness, with increased competition for the limited supply of good quality TA.

Furthermore, as a result of *Rethinking Haringey*, Support Functions Reviews and local directorate changes, very little non-front line capacity has been retained within CHS. Back office and other non-front line functions are now provided corporately or at directorate level and shared with other Council services, so reducing posts without adversely affecting front line service delivery has become increasingly difficult.

5.3 The proposed restructure therefore achieves the savings target by focusing on vacancies, managerial posts and administrative support posts. The proposed reduction of posts affects the following services:

- Temporary Accommodation
- Income Recovery
- Assessments & Lettings
- Administration

In addition a number of adjustments are being made to roles and reporting lines, affecting posts throughout the service without making reductions or changes to grades.

5.4 The proposal reduces the number of FTE posts from 166.5 to 157.5. These reductions are summarised in the table below.

<b>Roles</b>	<b>Grades</b>	<b>Current Permanent Posts</b>	<b>Proposed Permanent Posts</b>
Income Recovery Manager Temporary Accommodation Manager	PO8	2	1
Tenancy Support Team Leader	PO4	2	1
Income Recovery Team Leader	PO3/PO4	2	1
Senior Tenancy Support Officer	PO2	0	1
Senior Income Recovery Officer	PO2	0	1
Senior TA Visiting & Lettings Officer	PO2	0	1
Tenancy Support Officer	PO1	10	9
Income Recovery Officer	PO1	10	9
TA Lettings Officer	PO1	5	4
TA Visiting Officer	PO1	4	3
Assessments Officer	PO1	7.5	6.5
Housing Review & Service Improvement Officer	PO4	1	0
Administration Officer	Sc5	13	10

The detailed description and rationale for these changes are included in the Consultation Pack, attached as Appendix A (note that the appendices to the pack are not included). A summary

organisation chart showing the current and proposed structure is attached as Appendix B.

5.5 Formal consultation was initiated with staff and trade unions on 29 September 2011 and continued until 31 October 2011. A number of meetings were held with individual staff, with teams and with union representatives in this period. In summary UNISON have commented that:

- They are opposed to cuts and to compulsory redundancies;
- 'Bumping' should be allowed to enable staff not at risk to volunteer for redundancy;
- Ring fences should be closed;
- Testing should not be used for selection;
- Any requests for job sharing and working reduced hours should be supported;
- Non front line posts should be cut rather than front line posts.

UNISON's full formal comments are attached as Appendix C and the management response to these is attached as Appendix D.

5.6 As a result of consultation, a number of actions have been taken and adjustments made to the proposals. One ring fence has been changed from open to closed and others remain under consideration. Further information on the management assessment to be undertaken, in particular the testing relating to administrative staff, has been and will be provided. The role of Seniors is being further discussed and the detail of job descriptions is under review with affected staff and will be agreed before issue of the Final Information Pack, in accordance with the Restructure Policy.

5.7 The net reduction of nine posts will be achieved by the deletion of vacancies, by voluntary redundancy (VR) and, if redeployment efforts are unsuccessful, by compulsory redundancy. Selection for compulsory redundancy will be based on a management assessment and up to four ring fences have been identified for this purpose. A further six ring fences may be required but it is possible that that as a result of VR and ring fenced recruitment, few of these potential ring fences will actually be required. The ring fences and management assessment will be conducted in accordance with the Council's Restructure Policy.



## **6. Comments of the Chief Financial Officer and Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The total savings target for 2012/13 currently stands at £1.586m. This report proposes a restructure that will contribute to that savings target in terms of savings in the salaries budget in the sum of £0.386m. The lead times allow the full year savings to be achieved for the Service.
- 6.2 It is noted that the impact of reductions in staff on performance rates has been factored in to the decisions on posts to be deleted. This will mitigate the risk of, for example, a reduction in income collection rates that lead to a greater loss in income than the savings from the post that has been deleted.

## **7. Head of Legal Services and Legal Implications**

- 7.1 The Head of Legal Services has been consulted on the contents of this report. Consultation with staff and recognised trade unions is an essential part of the responsibilities of an employer in the course of a business re-organisation. The requirement for consultation with employees and their trade union representatives is recognised within the report and its outcome set out in paragraph 5.5.
- 7.2 Due consideration should be given to responses received as a result of the consultation before any final decision is reached concerning the proposals outlined. Further, due consideration must also be given to the authority's public sector equality duty before such a final decision, taking into account the content of the equality impact assessment referred to in paragraph 8.
- 7.3 The detailed arrangements for the selection arrangements for the posts within the new structure must comply with the Council's policies regarding restructuring. The position of employees displaced as a result of the selection processes should be considered under the Council's policies regarding redeployment and redundancy.

## **8. Equalities and Community Cohesion Comments**

- 8.1 A draft Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) was included in the Consultation Pack. This assessment indicates that some of the planned ring fences could disproportionately impact on some staff groups. However this is potentially because there is currently a significant over-representation of women and Black Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME) staff in the service, and because three of the proposed seven ring fences contain only two staff.

- 8.2 The actual impact will not be known until the composition of ring fences is confirmed and the outcome of any selection, taking into account voluntary redundancy, is known. The EqIA will be fully completed at that stage.

## **9. Policy Implications**

- 9.1 The proposals in the report reflect the requirements of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and the direction set out in *Rethinking Haringey*.
- 9.2 The proposals do not have any specific implications for the Council's existing policies, priorities and strategies at this stage. In general staff reductions may increase risk in relation to effective delivery of the Housing Strategy 2009-19 and the draft Homelessness Strategy 2011-14. Service improvement and qualitative change in key areas is being driven in order to maintain service delivery and achievement of our core policies and priorities with reduced staff numbers.

## **10. Use of Appendices**

- 10.1 Appendix A – Detailed description and rationale for proposals, CHS 2012/13 Budget Reductions Consultation Pack (main document only, no appendices).
- 10.2 Appendix B – Summary organisation chart showing the current and the proposed structure.
- 10.3 Appendix C – UNISON comments on the Consultation Pack.
- 10.4 Appendix D – Management response to UNISON comments.

## **11. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

- 11.1 Community Housing Services 2012/13 Budget Reductions and Reduction, Initial Information Pack for Consultation.

## Community Housing Services

### 2012/13 Budget Reductions and Restructure Initial Information Pack for Consultation

#### 1.0 Introduction

This document constitutes the initial information pack issued to employees and trade unions in accordance with the Council's Restructure Policy. A reduction in the base budget for 2012/13 is required and staff reductions, and a restructure, are proposed to meet this target.

#### 2.0 Reasons for the Restructure

##### 2.1 Financial Context

As a result of continued budgetary constraint imposed by central government, all directorates have been required to identify budget savings. For Community Housing Services (CHS), this means a base budget reduction target of £835,850 for 2012/13, in addition to the Pre-Agreed Savings target of £438,000.

##### 2.2 Service Context

Over the last four years, CHS has achieved significant service improvements and seen a number of changes to its services. The restructure required to achieve savings for 2010/11 ("Phase 1") was made possible by the substantial reduction in the number of households in temporary accommodation (TA) and the high level of homelessness preventions being achieved.

The savings target for 2011/12 ("Phase 2") was achieved through a corporate voluntary redundancy (VR) programme which meant that the restructure was mainly concerned with management adjustments necessary to deal with the consequences of VR.

The proposed "Phase 3" reductions for 2012/13 will be implemented in a very different service context, given the likely impact of government policies and other changes that have taken place or will do so within the Council. Although the number of households in TA continues to fall, the rate of reduction is more gradual than was the case so scaling back TA-related functions is not a straightforward option at this stage. The changes in housing benefit present a significant risk of outward migration from inner London and increased homelessness, with increased competition for the limited supply of good quality TA. While the Council and the Service is responding to these challenges, it is likely that demand for housing services will increase and reducing staff in order to achieve budget reductions carries greater risk than was the case in previous restructures.

Coupled with this, internally the Service is in a position where as a result of *Rethinking Haringey*, Support Functions Reviews and local directorate changes, very little non-front line capacity has been retained within CHS.

Back office and other non-front line functions are now provided corporately or at directorate level and shared with other Council services, so reducing posts without adversely affecting front line service delivery has become extremely difficult.

### **3.0 Approach to the Restructure**

#### **3.1 General Principles and Priorities**

Community Housing Services was required to start the process of identifying the additional 2012/13 base budget savings in May 2011. Initial savings proposals were identified by the Senior Management Team (SMT) and agreed in principle by Members; these proposals are included (for information only) in this pack as Appendix A.

Managers have since been assessing and developing the initial proposals, in order to establish an approach to the restructure consistent with the needs of the Service and its customers while achieving the required savings. Managers have sought to:

- (a) Reduce the level of savings to be found from the salaries budget for permanent staff by identifying alternative savings and adjustments to the budget to achieve the required savings
- (b) Minimise the impact of budget reductions on front line services as far as possible, by targeting non-front line functions where possible and by continuing to reduce managerial posts.
- (c) Minimise the impact on permanent staff and the risk of redundancy by:
  - Review of current vacancies and assess the possibility of deleting vacant posts where this can be achieved in line with service needs;
  - Control recruitment of permanent staff to vacant posts in the period leading up to the restructure;
  - Review temporary posts and the use of agency staff and where appropriate, remove base budget provision for such posts;
  - Where practical, fair and in line with the needs of the service, coordinate any VR applications from CHS staff with the restructure process.
- (d) Develop and gain agreement to a separate, alternative approach to the achievement of the Pre-Agreed savings of £438,000 for 2012/13, in order that further staff reductions are not required to achieve this target.

#### **3.2 Required Savings**

In line with the above, savings of £450,000 have been identified that do not require reductions in permanent posts. The restructure is therefore proposed to achieve £386,000, in order that the target for base budget reductions of £835,850 (full year for 2012/13) is met.

### **4.0 Restructure Proposals**

The current and proposed organisation charts are included as Appendices B and C respectively.

#### 4.1 Temporary Accommodation & Income Recovery

The TA and Income Recovery teams will be brought together under a single fourth tier manager. Within this service, the two existing Tenancy Support teams will be merged under a single team leader and the two existing Income Recovery teams will be merged under a single team leader. Both teams will have a new Senior post, replacing an existing officer post.

The TA Visiting & Lettings team will transfer from Temporary Accommodation to the Assessments & Lettings service. Within the team, a Visiting Officer post (PO1) will be deleted and a TA Lettings Officer post (PO1) will be replaced by a Senior TA Visiting & Lettings Officer post (PO2).

The specific posts to be changed within the teams affected are summarised below.

Post	Grade	Current no. of posts	Proposed no. of posts	Change
Temporary Accommodation Manager	PO8	2	1	-1
Income Recovery Manager				
Tenancy Support Team Leader	PO4	2	1	-1
Senior Tenancy Support Officer	PO2	0	1	+1
Tenancy Support Officer	PO1	10	9	-1
Income Recovery Team Leader	PO3	2	1	-1
Senior Income Recovery Officer	PO2	0	1	+1
Income Recovery Officer	PO1	10	9	-1
Senior TA Visiting & Lettings Officer	PO2	0	1	+1
TA Lettings Officer	PO1	5	4	-1
TA Visiting Officer	PO1	4	3	-1
<b>total</b>				<b>-4</b>

The proposal will enable more integrated patch management, with closer working between Tenancy Support Officers (TSO) and Income Recovery Officers (IRO). Front line services are protected by this proposal and the flattening of structures and moving towards higher management/staff ratios is consistent with corporate approaches, as set out in *Rethinking Haringey*.

The deletion of three managerial posts means that an increased management workload will fall on remaining managers and two measures are proposed to assist with this. Firstly, the reintroduction of Senior posts deleted in a previous restructure will provide support to enable the effective management of comparatively large teams.

Seniors will be responsible for a 'half patch' in Tenancy Support and Income Recovery so patch alignment between the two teams will be maintained. Seniors will be responsible for day to day operational tasks and processes and will deputise for the Team Leader. It is expected that the introduction of the

Senior roles will not have a detrimental impact on front line services. In Income Recovery, the Senior post will take responsibility for the formal line management of the Housing Benefit Liaison Officers (HBLO), whose roles are being adjusted (see 4.2 below). These changes are expected to maintain and even improve income collection performance.

Secondly, the transfer of the TA Visiting & Lettings team to Assessments and Lettings will more effectively share management workloads as well as aiming to provide a streamlined service where there is a natural synergy between teams.

The Visiting Officer post has been vacant since January 2011 and the visiting programme has been maintained in that time. It is important to ensure that Visiting Officers maximise their customer-facing time rather than undertake desk-bound work that could be done more appropriate by other staff. The proposals relating to administrative support below (4.4) will facilitate this.

#### **4.2 Housing Benefit Liaison Officer**

The proposal is to retain the existing four posts as currently deployed (i.e. 2 in Income Recovery and 2 in Housing Advice & Options) and to encourage more teamwork between them. The Income Recovery posts will be revised to include assessment responsibility and the job title for these two posts will become Housing Benefit Assessment Officer.

Revising the role in Income Recovery to include Housing Benefit (HB) assessment will enable the team to address the current backlog in assessments undertaken by Benefits & Local Taxation. By making this change, and also including a role in welfare benefits/financial advice, processes and productivity will improve as well as helping to reduce the backlog of cases, some of which are simple cases of change of address/circumstances.

#### **4.3 Assessments & Lettings**

The specific posts to be changed within the teams affected are summarised below.

<i>Post</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Current no. of posts</i>	<i>Proposed no. of posts</i>	<i>Change</i>
Housing Review & Service Improvement Officer	PO4	1	0	-1
Housing Assessment Officer	PO1	7.5	6.5	-1
<b>total</b>				<b>-2</b>

The internal dedicated housing review function will end with the deletion of the Review & Service Improvement Officer post. The number of statutory review requests made to the service has reduced significantly over the past 5 years from 365 in 2006/07 to 223 in 2010/11 and in the first 2 quarters of 2011/12 there have been only 39 such requests (excluding requests made in respect of an offer of accommodation as a result of auto-bidding). The deletion of this post follows the deletion of the previous 0.5 post in the 'Phase 1' restructure.

External review providers will be used when necessary but the potential cost of this would be low and deleting the post will achieve a significant saving. Reviews are already undertaken by other managers within the service and this will continue, with responsibility formally passing to these roles.

For example, the determination of reviews regarding the suitability of an offer of temporary accommodation will be transferred to the TA Visiting & Lettings Team Leader. This proposal is supported by the addition of a Senior to the team, who will be responsible for approving such offers in order to adhere to the legal position as to who can make a review decision. Similar arrangements will be made for review requests in relation to offers of permanent accommodation made in consequence of auto-bidding with Team Leaders and Seniors continuing to play a role.

The deletion of the Housing Assessment Officer post reflects the impact of the new Allocations Policy, introduced in March 2011, the automation of the application form in June 2011 and the re-registration of existing housing register applicants over the period July to October 2011. For example, more than 50% of Band C applicants did not re-register and a similar rate for the current Bands D and E re-registration will mean a significantly smaller housing register. Couple with the benefits of automation, the saving of a post can be made without a significant impact on services and was envisaged in the business case for the new policy.

#### 4.4 Administration

The proposal is to reduce administrative posts from the current thirteen to ten, to manage administrative support as a common pool across the service and to change the job title to Service Support Officer to more accurately reflect responsibilities.

The specific changes are summarised below:

<i>Post</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Current no. of posts</i>	<i>Proposed no. of posts</i>	<i>Change</i>
Administration Officer	Sc5	13	0	-13
Service Support Officer	Sc5	0	10	+10
<b>total</b>				<b>-3</b>

Responsibility for administrative support will be transferred to Commissioned Services (see 4.5 below) who will ensure effective deployment for the service as a whole. As the number of posts is reducing, maintaining an adequate level of support within each service team becomes more difficult. Having multiple line managers inevitably leads to a fragmented approach rather than coordinated management of support capacity, deployed flexibly in accordance with service needs.

The proposal recognises that much of the day-to-day of administrative support is common to all teams and these generic tasks would be more consistently performed under common and more neutral line management. Where

administration is not deemed generic and is unique to particular team, involving particular front line service processes, resources will be deployed as needed to those areas. In practice this will mean that some staff will work on generic support for the whole service, while others will be deployed in specific service teams. However, line management will remain 'central' i.e. outside the service teams for all administrative staff.

The advantages of this approach are:

- More appropriate use of resources, by distinguishing generic administration and clerical work from more specialist front line support;
- Greater flexibility in use of resources;
- Improved ability to cover and share i.e. more than one person will have knowledge of a particular team/function;
- Simplifies current rota arrangements, which have been problematic at times;
- Improved understanding of processes/functions across teams;
- More consistency across teams e.g. in filing, correspondence management;
- Easier to implement service-wide improvements e.g. procedures;
- More variety and job satisfaction for staff;
- Improved career development for staff.

There are a number of details to finalise in relation to this proposal and the consultation period will be used to consider and determine these with the affected staff and managers. One option is to formally differentiate administrative roles, to create a "generic" role and a "specialist" role with distinct job descriptions. A further change could be to introduce grade ranges for differentiated roles, providing both progression opportunities and more appropriate entry points. Managers are keen to hear the views of staff on these matters and the proposal in general.

#### **4.5 Commissioned Services**

The proposal is to revise the current posts of Housing Payments Manager (PO5) and Business Improvement Manager (PO5) to take on new and changed responsibilities. A change to the Systems Support Officer (PO4) post is proposed, to bring it more into line with current priorities and re-focus it as Systems Development Officer.

The specific changes are summarised below:

<b><i>Post</i></b>	<b><i>Grade</i></b>	<b><i>Proposal</i></b>
Housing Payments Manager	PO5	New title: Business Operations & Payments Manager. Adjustment to responsibilities, with revised Job Description
Business Improvement Officer	P05	New title: Service Operations Manager Adjustment to responsibilities, with revised Job Description



<b>Post</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Proposal</b>
Systems Support Officer	PO4	New title: Systems Development Officer Adjustment to responsibilities, with revised Job Description

A number of changes since the previous restructure have necessitated these adjustments. Firstly, as a result of the late decision to exclude the previous Finance Accountant (PO5) post from the Finance Support Functions Review, a post of Housing Payments Manager (PO5) was in the process of being established, to which the incumbent would have been assimilated. This post of Housing Payments Manager has now been broadened, as a result of the changes to administration described in 4.4 above, to become Business Operations & Payments Manager.

Secondly, the Business Improvement Officer post was created in the previous restructure with business support responsibilities that have subsequently been transferred to the Directorate Business Management team. This post has therefore been adjusted accordingly, with important residual responsibilities arising from the various Support Functions Reviews and also assuming responsibility for the increasingly important area of quality management and Information Technology (IT).

The line management of the central administrative pool of ten staff will be shared by these two managers, who will work together closely to ensure effective administrative support is provided to front line services.

Thirdly, a new Housing IT strategy is being developed and significant work is planned on automation and systems procurement. Capacity does not currently exist for the implementation of this critical work, which will have a decisive bearing on our future service delivery, efficiency and ability to realise savings. The new post of Systems Development Officer will assume this responsibility, while retaining higher level system support responsibilities. Lower level support will increasingly be undertaken by the Technical Support Assistant and the Housing Information Team (Homes for Haringey).

#### **4.6 Other Changes Affecting Job Descriptions**

In addition to the proposals set out above, a number of other changes are required that are not included in the ring fence and assimilation arrangements set out in Appendix D. These are:

- (a) The revised job description for Housing Assessments & Lettings Manager, described in 4.1 above and attached as Appendix E.
- (b) The revised job description for Housing Benefit Assessment Officer, described in 4.2 above and attached as Appendix F;

The proposal for Administration Officers will involve a minor adjustment to the responsibilities of existing Senior posts, as line management of administrative staff will be replaced with responsibility for linking with line management to

ensure service needs are met. This change will be the subject of consultation but does not give rise to a re-evaluation of the grade of the Senior posts.

A number of minor factual changes will be made to job descriptions affected but not included in this pack, where this is necessary to reflect changed reporting lines, job titles or team names, or in the case of housing reviews (described in 4.3 above), transferred responsibilities.

## **5.0 Ring Fence and Assimilation Arrangements**

Ring fence arrangements will operate where:

- (a) Existing posts are reduced or deleted, resulting in a number of staff being displaced that exceeds the number of posts available.
- (b) New Senior posts are created, resulting in staff displacement as above.

Both open and closed ring fences will apply as summarised below and detailed in Appendix D. Up to ten ring fences may be required and these will operate in stages, to take into account that the first stage has to be completed before the second begins, and that the composition of ring fences may change. It is possible that not all ten ring fences will be required. The third stage will only be required if an appointment is not made from the open ring fences for the newly-created Senior posts.

For all ring fences, selection will be by Management Assessment in accordance with the Restructure Policy i.e. based on:

- The employee's statement of application (where appropriate)
- Interview and/or testing
- Appraisal and supervision records
- Factual information

### **5.1 Temporary Accommodation Service Manager**

This is a new post, replacing the existing TA Manager and Income Recovery Manager posts. The new job description is included as Appendix G.

An open ring fence will operate for this post, to include the two incumbents.

### **5.2 Tenancy Support Team Leader**

This is a new post, replacing the existing two Team Leader posts. The new job description is included as Appendix H.

A closed ring fence will operate for this post, to include the two incumbents.

### **5.3 Income Recovery Team Leader**

This is a new post, replacing the existing two Team Leader posts. The new job description is included as Appendix I.

An open ring fence will operate for this post, to include the two incumbents.

### **5.4 Senior Tenancy Support Officer**

This is a new post, the job description is included as Appendix J.

An open ring fence will operate for this post, to include all existing Tenancy Support Officers who confirm that they wish to be considered for the Senior post.

If an appointment to the Senior post is not made, a closed ring fence will then operate for the Tenancy Support Officer post, to reduce from the current ten posts to the required nine posts.

### **5.5 Senior Income Recovery Officer**

This is a new post, the job description is included as Appendix K.

The unsuccessful candidate from the Income Recovery Team Leader ring fence will be considered for assimilation to this post.

In the event that an appointment to the Senior post is not made in this way, an open ring fence will operate for this post, to include all existing Income Recovery Officers who confirm that they wish to be considered for the Senior post.

If an appointment to the Senior post is not made, a closed ring fence will then operate for the Income Recovery Officer post, to reduce from the current ten posts to the required nine posts.

### **5.6 Senior TA Visiting and Lettings Officer**

This is a new post, the job description is included as Appendix L.

An open ring fence will operate for this post, to include all existing Visiting Officers and TA Lettings Officers who confirm that they wish to be considered for the Senior post.

If an appointment to the Senior post is not made, a closed ring fence will then operate for the TA Lettings Officer post, to reduce from the current five posts to the required four posts.

### **5.7 Service Support Officer**

This is a new post, replacing the existing Administration Officer post. The new job description is included as Appendix M.

A closed ring fence will operate for this post, to include all existing Administration Officers.

### **5.8 Commissioned Services**

Ring fences will not be required in this team. Assimilation will apply to the revised posts as set out in Appendix D.

The revised job descriptions for the Business Operations & Payments Manager, Service Operations Manager and Systems Development Officer are included as Appendices N, O and P respectively.

## 6.0 Voluntary Redundancy

CHS staff are able to apply for voluntary redundancy using the VR1 form available on Harinet. Applications should be sent to:

[hrpolicy.strategyteam@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:hrpolicy.strategyteam@haringey.gov.uk)

and must be received by Wednesday 19 October 2011.

The teams directly affected by the restructure (i.e. where a reduction in the number of posts is proposed), are evident from section 4.0 above and the ring fences proposed in section 5.0 and Appendix D. Although all applications will be given due consideration, it is unlikely that a redundancy situation will be deemed to have arisen in those teams not directly affected by the restructure. Staff should bear this in mind in considering any application and discuss with their Head of Service where appropriate.

## 7.0 Equalities Implications

A draft Equalities Impact Assessment is included as Appendix Q.

The initial assessment shows that the potential impact of the restructure could be disproportionate in relation to some diversity strands. The restructure process, and in particular the arrangements for management assessment, selection and testing will be designed to ensure that all affected staff are treated fairly and any potential discriminatory aspects are mitigated against.

## 8.0 Provisional Timetable

The provisional timetable for the restructure is as follows:

<i>Process</i>	<i>Start Date</i>	<i>End Date</i>
Issue initial Information Pack	29 September 2011	29 September 2011
Voluntary Redundancy application period	29 September 2011	19 October 2011
Consultation period	29 September 2011	26 October 2011
Finalise proposals and prepare committee report	27 October 2011	11 November 2011
Corporate Committee	21 November 2011	24 November 2011
Issue final Information Pack	25 November 2011	25 November 2011
Management Assessment period	28 November 2011	19 December 2011
Notification of outcome	20 December 2011	20 December 2011
S.151 Officer approval	21 December 2011	13 January 2012
Displaced staff referred to Redeployment Register	16 January 2012	16 January 2012
Issue redundancy notices	16 January 2012	16 January 2012

## 9.0 Communication and Consultation Plan

This initial information pack will be issued to all staff affected by the proposals and to trade union representatives. All CHS staff will be notified of its issue via a same day e-mail communication.

During the formal consultation period:

- (a) Heads of Service will meet with the affected teams at least once and as required;
- (b) Additional LDCC meeting will be convened as required;
- (c) Heads of Service and other managers will attend any regular team meetings scheduled, where appropriate;
- (d) Managers will make themselves available to affected staff members individually or in groups, as required;
- (e) E-mail updates will be issued as necessary to affected staff and trade union representatives.

The outcome of consultation and the final information pack will be issued to all affected staff and to trade union representatives. All CHS staff will be notified of its issue via a same day e-mail communication.

## **Appendices**

- A – Initial Proposals for 2012/13 Savings (for information)
- B - Current Organisation Chart
- C - Proposed Organisation Chart
- D - Proposed Ring Fence Composition and Assimilation
- E – Job Description: Housing Assessments & Lettings Manager
- F – Job Description: Housing Benefit Assessment Officer
- G – Job Description: Temporary Accommodation Service Manager
- H – Job Description: Tenancy Support Team Leader
- I – Job Description: Income Recovery Team Leader
- J – Job Description: Senior Tenancy Support Officer
- K – Job Description: Senior Income Recovery Officer
- L – Job Description: Senior TA Visiting & Lettings Officer
- M – Job Description: Service Support Officer
- N – Job Description: Business Operations & Payments Manager
- O – Job Description: Service Operations Manager
- P – Job Description: Systems Development Officer
- Q – Draft Equalities Impact Assessment
- R – Summary of Posts Affected

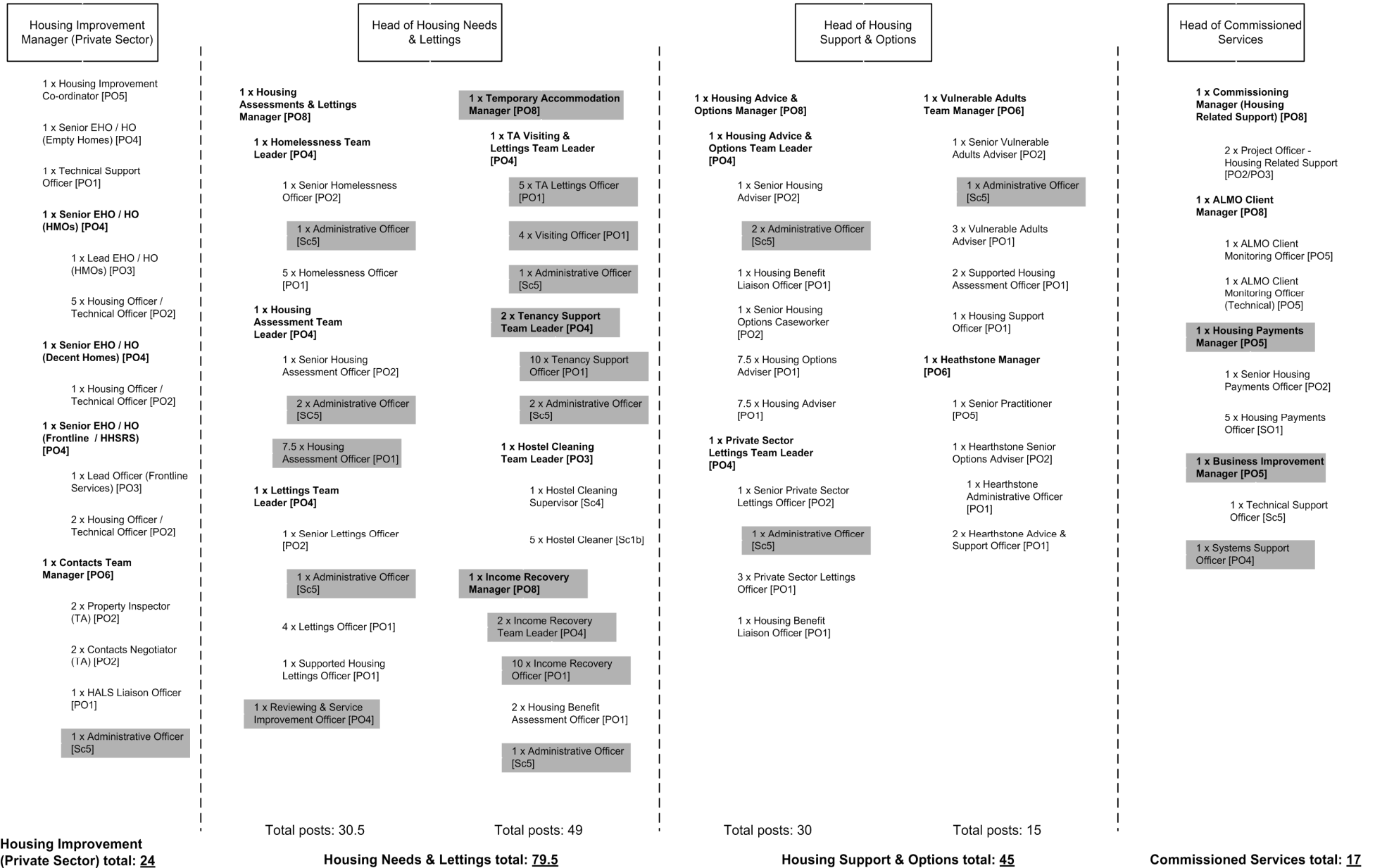
# Community Housing Services

## Adult and Housing Services Directorate

Deputy Director for  
Community Housing  
Services

Affected posts

### Current organisation chart – November 2011



**Community Housing Services total number of posts: 166.5**

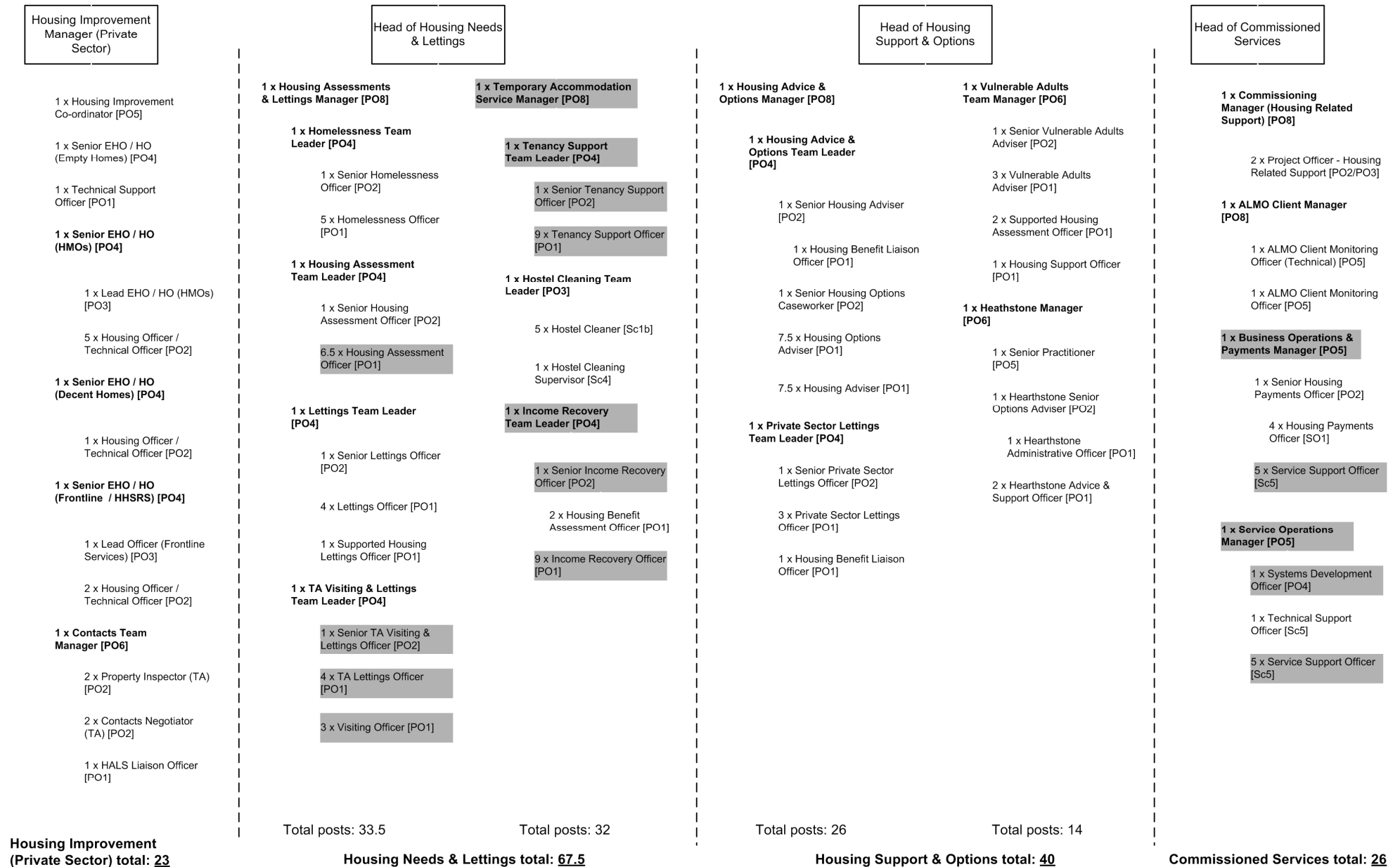
# Community Housing Services

## Adult and Housing Services Directorate

Deputy Director for  
Community Housing  
Services

Affected posts

### Proposed organisation chart – November 2011



**Community Housing Services total number of posts: 157.5**

## **UNISON COMMENTS ON COMMUNITY HOUSING SERVICES RESTRUCTURE**

### **Redundancies and cuts**

As part of this process, UNISON is formally restating its opposition to compulsory redundancies. Management should take all necessary action to ensure that such redundancies do not take place, including looking at requests for flexible working and voluntary reductions in hours. Management have invited requests for voluntary redundancy, which is a positive move. However, they should go beyond this and look at the possibility of bumping; that is, where an employee who is in a post that is not at risk but wants voluntary redundancy is allowed to leave so that someone who is actually at risk can move into the post. This should only be done by agreement, and is obviously subject to the grades being appropriate, a suitable skills match and so on.

We understand that the admin team have collectively expressed an interest in a voluntary reduction in hours so that no (or fewer) compulsory redundancies need to be made in their team. Management need to proactively explore this with those staff to find out if this is a viable option.

With regards to voluntary redundancies, the closing date for applications was 19/10/2011. It would be helpful if management could decide as soon as possible which of these will be agreed, as this may reduce the need for compulsory redundancies, or even make a selection process unnecessary, which would help to alleviate the stress that this situation is causing to staff. We do not need to know the names of the staff for whom VR is agreed; we simply need details of how any agreed requests will affect ringfencing arrangements.

We are also opposed to cuts in services, and object to the deletion of posts in this service, particularly front line staff.

### **Temporary Accommodation and Income Recovery**

Staff have expressed significant concern about the deletion of posts in these teams, and we particularly object to the deletion of the PO1 posts.

Clients who come into the Temporary Accommodation (TA) service may be vulnerable and can have significant problems, including mental health issues, substance misuse, problems with domestic violence and so on. They usually need a high level of support and input; staff informed us that the Chartered Institute of Housing estimated that managing one person in TA is the equivalent of managing three people in permanent accommodation. Also, despite the use of the word "temporary", people can actually be in this type of accommodation for years, and they need support throughout this time; this is intensive, stressful and long term work. This is a team that needs to be properly resourced. Reducing staff and overstressing them can lead to things being missed, and there could be serious consequences arising from this when staff are dealing with vulnerable people.



Management have claimed that the number of households in TA is falling, although they do acknowledge that the reduction is slower than it was. Constraints on the availability of private sector rented housing, along with forthcoming Housing Benefit changes, are likely to lead to an increase in homelessness and therefore an increase in the demand for the services of the TA team. This demand is likely to be very difficult or impossible to meet with reduced staffing. Management do accept that the demands on this service may increase, and acknowledge that reducing staff carries some risk. However, we believe that they are underestimating the level of increase, the effect on the team and the consequent risk.

The number of Tenancy Support Officers has previously been cut from 14 to 10, and the work was simply redistributed to the remaining team members, putting those staff under a huge amount of pressure. The fact that another post is now being cut is a major concern. There is a significant risk that staffing reductions could have serious consequences for the people who use the TA service, due to important issues that may be missed or not adequately addressed as a result of there being insufficient staff to deal with them effectively. Even if the consequences are not quite as serious as this, the increase in patch sizes that will result from this cut will put significant stress on staff and will inevitably lead to a lower quality of service. Management cannot simply keep cutting a service and expect the same amount of work (or even more) to be done to the same standard as before.

Some of the same arguments apply to Income Recovery Officers. This team also lost four workers in a previous restructure, and the work was redistributed to remaining staff, with a similar increase in pressure and stress on them. A further reduction will exacerbate this problem, as staff would then potentially be dealing with an additional 25-30 properties each, which is a significant increase. As stated above, if a post is cut, management will not be able to expect the same level of work to be carried out to the same standard by the remaining staff.

Management have stated that seniors in Tenancy Support and Income Recovery will have responsibility for half a patch in addition to their senior duties. Staff have clearly expressed that they believe that this will be unmanageable. However, if management decide not to proceed with this, then that will mean that a whole patch will have to be redistributed to the remaining PO1 staff, which would also be unmanageable, and would not be an acceptable solution to this matter.

To varying degrees, several clauses in the job descriptions for senior posts are either the same as or similar to the Team Leaders, or have simply had "assist the Team Leader with..." or something similar added. Management need to ensure that seniors are not just used as cheap managers, carrying out the duties of Team Leaders but being paid less. It has been stated in consultation meetings that seniors will not be expected to cover all the duties of Team Leaders when they are on leave, so we expect this to be adhered to.

The two PO8 manager posts in these teams are being merged into one role, in effect doubling the work of the remaining employee. The number of Team Leaders will be reduced from 4 to 2, in addition to the cut in front line staff. Given these facts, we believe that the PO8 post will be unmanageable for one person. This is not because of a lack of capability of anyone who may fill this post; rather, it is because you cannot reasonably expect one person to suddenly do the work of two people, with fewer staff in their team. This could lead to the increased risk of serious consequences for those who use the service.

### **Assessments and Lettings**

Management have proposed to cut the Housing Review and Service Improvement Officer post, and have stated that some of the duties of this post will transfer to the TA Visiting and Lettings Team Leader and also the Senior. Management should be aware that this will have an impact on the ability of the staff in those two posts to carry out their other duties.

With regard to the outsourcing of reviews, please clarify the basis on which it is stated that “the potential cost of this would be low.” Approximately how much do management believe this will cost?

### **Administration**

The proposal is to reduce the number of administrative posts from thirteen to ten; we object to this cut. Management have not provided an explanation for why three posts are being cut. What analysis has been done to establish the amount of work that needs doing, and the number of staff needed to do it? We suspect that no such analysis has been carried out, and that in common with other teams, management will simply expect fewer staff to carry out the same amount of work. Management need to be aware that this will not be possible, and they should ensure that they do not place excessive demands on administrative staff if this cut is implemented. It will also not be acceptable for other staff to be expected to carry out tasks that were previously an admin responsibility, in addition to their own heavy workloads, when they may also be working with reduced resources.

Admin staff always seem to be seen as an “easy” cut to make when there are budget reductions, but their importance to the efficient and effective running of services is often severely underestimated. We are concerned that cutting admin staff is actually a false economy, and that this will actually be detrimental to service provision. Either tasks will not be carried out as quickly, or other staff will end up having to complete tasks that would have previously been carried out by admin staff, leading to delays in their own work.

In their proposals, management appear to be undecided about whether to have a generic admin team, or separate generic and specialist roles with separate job descriptions. It now appears that there will be one generic job description. However, this job description does not contain most of the specialist admin tasks, i.e. those which are specific to particular teams. If there is to be a generic job description, then it needs to include the tasks that staff will be required to do. This does not need to be exhaustive or overly

detailed, but the areas of work involved in the job need to be covered. If these are not included, then staff cannot reasonably be asked to carry out those duties.

If there is a move in future towards having specialist roles, then there will need to be further consultation on this.

Admin staff are currently managed by seniors in different teams. In the new structure, a post is being created that will have responsibility for managing admin staff, so seniors will no longer do this. The supposed benefits of bringing these staff under a single line of management have not been fully explained, particularly as the proposals state that some admin staff will still be deployed within service teams. Seniors have expressed valid concerns that they are being deskilled; they have already had supervision/management of caseworkers taken away from them, and they now face the same process in terms of admin staff. Therefore, we believe that seniors should continue to manage admin staff.

### **Ringfences and Assimilation Arrangements**

Senior Tenancy Support Officer/Senior Income Recovery Officer/Senior TA Visiting and Lettings Officer

All of these posts should be closed ringfences for the affected PO1 staff, for the following reasons:

- 1) This will help to avoid compulsory redundancies, as there will be no need for selection processes to reduce posts at PO1.
- 2) There is only a difference of one grade (PO1 to PO2), which is in line with the Reorganisation Policy.
- 3) Some of the tasks that seniors will have to carry out will be the same as those that the PO1 staff carry out in their current role.

With regard to Income Recovery, we are of the understanding that a request for voluntary redundancy, if agreed, could make a selection process for the Team Leader unnecessary. We would urge management to accept this request, thereby creating an opportunity for an Income Recovery Officer to fill the senior post and avoiding a compulsory redundancy.

### **Income Recovery Team Leader**

We welcome the fact that following our representations, this has now been changed to a closed ringfence.

### **Selection methods**

Management have stated that they will use the following methods of selection for all ringfences:

- 1) Interviews and/or testing
- 2) Appraisal and supervision records
- 3) Factual information

4) Statement of application (where appropriate)

However, we have not been told which methods will be used in which ringfence. This is unacceptable; the method of selection is a key part of the consultation and we have not been given adequate information about this so that we can respond. The wording suggests that there are some ringfences where interviews or tests will be used, rather than both, but we have not been informed of which ringfences this will apply to. We have not been told where management feel it would be “appropriate” to ask for a written statement of application. Also, management have referred to both appraisal and supervision records, and other unspecified “factual information”, with no details of what the latter actually refers to. These points need to be clarified as soon as possible, along with the weighting of each method.

The proposed use of multiple selection methods for all ringfences is excessive, especially where posts are simply being reduced and there is no significant change in duties. We regard the apparent decision to use testing for all ringfences to be a matter of particular concern.

Management have stated in consultation meetings that they are proposing to use testing for the scale 5 Service Support Officer posts – this is simply a new name for the Administrative Officer post, and the job is not changing in any significant way. The only reason for a selection process is that the number of posts is being reduced from 13 to 10. Management have stated that there will be “a number of tests” over a period of time, and have indicated that they will be about subjects including computer skills and literacy/numeracy.

The affected staff have clearly stated their objection to the use of testing, and we share their opposition. We do not believe that it is appropriate to have multiple selection methods for a scale 5 admin post. This is not because such posts are not important, but because selection methods need to be appropriate to the grade and the circumstances. Multiple selection methods are more common for senior management posts, but are excessive for a scale 5 post when the job is not changing significantly, and it seems unfair to put scale 5 staff under this amount of pressure when they are already facing the stress of potentially being made redundant. It is the prospect of having to undergo testing that is causing the majority of staff the most stress. We specifically oppose the use of testing for the following reasons:

- 1) We believe that testing should only be used where there are new jobs, or existing jobs are changing significantly, and that the Reorganisation Policy backs this up.
- 2) We do not believe that the level of skills required justify testing. For example, if an employee has to have in-depth knowledge of the law, it might be reasonable to test that knowledge. That is not the case here.
- 3) Having a number of tests over several days, as we have been told will happen, would certainly be excessive for this level of post.

- 4) Management have stated that likely areas of testing include computer skills and literacy/numeracy, and have referred to the person specification for the role to justify this. The only time when it could be reasonable to test is when checking that new staff have the required levels of ability, e.g. that they can use a computer to the required level, write a letter, etc. This is a closed ringfence, meaning that management guarantee that they will fill all the posts, so it is not reasonable to be asking staff to demonstrate that they meet the requirements of the person specification, as they are already doing the job; the only reason for having a selection process is that there are simply more people than there are posts. Given this, it should be assumed that all staff meet the required standards as detailed in the person specification; if they do not, then this should have been taken up already using the procedures that are available, including providing support and training. A test is something that you pass or fail; in a closed ringfence in a restructure, it is unacceptable for management to be setting tests on skills that staff already have, which they could possibly be deemed to have “failed” and then be made redundant. A restructure is not an opportunity to “weed out” staff that management believe are “weak”, but the proposed use of testing suggests that this may be what is going to happen.
- 5) In a recent restructure in Adults where admin posts were being reduced, only interviews were used. We also believe that a member of staff in Housing was appointed to a completely new post of Technical Support Officer in the last restructure, without having to sit a test. If a test was not appropriate in that situation, then it is certainly not appropriate where staff are applying for their existing jobs because there is a straightforward reduction in posts.

Staff accept that there needs to be a selection process of some kind, and are not refusing to take part in such a process. However, they believe that interviews would be an acceptable method, and they would also be willing to accept some form of management assessment of factual information (supervision/appraisal records, etc). They believe that management should have enough information available from these methods to make a judgement, although it needs to be noted that when posts are simply being reduced, it would be unusual to even have both an interview and a management assessment.

We accept that some staff do not like doing interviews, and feel that they do not perform well in them. However, interviews are a well-established selection method, particularly for restructures within the council, whereas tests, particularly at this grade when there are no changes to the job, are not. Also, this is not just about what staff want, it is about what is the most fair and reasonable way of deciding how to make staffing reductions in these circumstances. Following discussion with staff, we believe that interviews would be the fairest way of doing this.

Management have referred to a precedent of tests being used in previous restructures. However, we believe that this was for higher graded staff in different circumstances, so this is not relevant.

Management have stated that they were planning to provide Skills For Life training for admin staff that may help them with the tests; however, they then said that the union's opposition to tests may "delay" this help being given, and suggested that it may not be provided in time. We have clearly said, and we reiterate, that we are fully supportive of staff receiving training in literacy, numeracy and IT (or any other relevant area) at any time, and we remain so. This is completely separate from any disagreement we have with management on tests. Staff should not be threatened with not being provided with training that they may need in order to try and force us to change a legitimate position on this issue, which is what we believe that management are trying to do here. This is rather unfortunate, given that management have otherwise been very supportive of Skills For Life.

We have suggested that affected employees' anxieties about testing may be alleviated to some extent if they could see examples of the kinds of tests they may be required to do. So far, this has not been agreed by management.

As it stands at the moment, scale 5 admin staff whose jobs are not changing at all could face having to go through every single possible selection method that is available. That is clearly excessive, and is going to put these staff under a huge amount of unnecessary stress. Management have stated that that a wide range of information is needed to ensure accurate and fair decisions. However, using multiple selection methods in this circumstance is at odds with custom and practice in the council and, we believe, with the Reorganisation Policy. We do not believe that using multiple selection methods will lead to decisions that are any more "accurate and fair" than an interview.

### **Alternative proposals**

There are other possible savings that management should consider as alternatives to the cuts that are in the current proposals.

- 1) There is a vacant Head of Housing Needs and Lettings post, which could be deleted. This post has been vacant for some time, therefore we would query whether it is actually needed.
- 2) A Service Operations Manager post (PO5) has been created in the restructure. We would question the appropriateness of creating such a highly graded post when lower graded front line posts are being reduced. Management should give consideration to not going ahead with the creation of this post.

We believe that these alternatives could help to avoid having to make some of the cuts that have been proposed, and could therefore help to avoid

compulsory redundancies. It should be noted that despite the council's commitment to protecting front line services, some of the posts that management are proposing to cut would fall into this category. Therefore, our alternative proposal, which involves cutting posts that are not front line, would be in line with this commitment.

Also, management could look at maximising income as an alternative to having to make budget cuts, particularly taking more action to recover rent arrears.

### **Job descriptions**

#### **Qualifications**

Several person specifications state that a degree, A-Levels or other qualifications are "desirable." Council guidelines on this matter state that qualifications should only be asked for if they are essential. By stating that they are "desirable", management have accepted that they are not "essential", so these requirements should be removed. This may not matter in this restructure, but in any future external recruitment, strong candidates who for some reason have not had the same opportunities in terms of formal education as other people, may be put off applying for jobs they would be very good at if they see that qualifications are required, even if this is stated as only being "desirable."

#### **Senior Tenancy Support Officer**

Point 5 states that the postholder will "provide management and members of the Tenancy Support Team with specialist advice on a wide range of matters (including legislative requirements, case law and good practice)." Please clarify why the postholder will need to be giving specialist advice to managers.

The job description states that the postholder will not be responsible for any staff, but point 6 states that the postholder will "assist the Tenancy Support Team Leader in managing the Tenancy Support Team." Please clarify what "managing" means in this context.

#### **Service Support Officer**

There is no need for point 23, as point 22 covers the pertinent issue – that staff can be required to provide cover for colleagues and also undertake temporary tasks that are consistent with the basic duties/objectives of the post. Point 22 should simply have "appropriate to the grade of the post" added to it.

**Chris Taylor**  
**Assistant Branch Secretary**  
**UNISON**

**31/10/2011**

Community Housing Services  
**2012/12 Budget Reductions and Restructure**

**Management Response to UNISON Comments**

**1. Redundancies**

The desire to avoid compulsory redundancies is shared. Any requests for flexible working or reduced hours made by staff will be given serious consideration.

As we stated in the consultation pack, requests for voluntary redundancy (VR) where a true redundancy situation does not exist (which is what “bumping” constitutes) are unlikely to be agreed. The outcome of VR applications will be determined following Corporate Committee on 24 November 2011 and communicated, along with any revised ring fence arrangements, as soon as possible after that date.

**2. Temporary Accommodation & Income Recovery**

It is recognised that any staffing reduction is a risk. It is accepted that a reduced number of staff cannot do the same volume of work as the previously higher number of staff. There is agreement that demand for services is likely to rise.

This restructure is happening because of the need to achieve the budget reductions. In these circumstances, management is seeking to ensure that the potential impact of staff reductions is minimised, through a range of measures including:

- Reviewing working practices to remove any unnecessary, duplicated or overlapping work;
- Improving procedures to ensure tasks are streamlined and can be carried out more consistently;
- Identifying tasks that could be undertaken more appropriately by other roles within the service or elsewhere;
- Improving the distribution of responsibilities between Tenancy Support and Income Recovery Officers and giving staff the opportunity to cross-skill;
- Over time, increasing automation and improving the use of systems;
- Ensuring that day to day service operations are optimised, by improving management support with the introduction of Senior posts.

UNISON oppose the creation of Senior posts while we favour the proposal because the reduced number of team leaders will be managing large teams and an appropriate level of management support will be required to safeguard service delivery. Seniors are not expected to carry out the full range of the Team Leader’s duties but will provide an appropriate degree of cover in their absence to ensure service continuity. The question of whether Seniors have a “half patch” is still being considered. Regarding the PO8 post, as has already been stated, there is no expectation that a



reduced number of staff can do the same volume of work as a previously higher number of staff.

**3. Assessments & Lettings**

Based on current volumes, the cost of undertaking reviews externally will be in the order of £10,000-£15,000 p.a. A fully on-costed PO4 post is over £50,000 p.a.

**4. Administration**

We do not count how many files are filed, system records updated or enquiries dealt with by each individual member of staff so it is not possible to apply measures of volume to Admin work and no such analysis has been claimed. Analysis of administrative work has been undertaken to identify common and unique tasks.

The importance of administrative support to the service is recognised and the proposed new arrangements aim to ensure a more appropriate and effective deployment of limited resources. UNISON favour keeping Admin staff within individual teams (although a number of Admin staff do not) but this will not make best use of available capacity and is against the prevailing direction within the Council, which is to centralise support functions. Managing the Admin function centrally will ensure resources are deployed in priority areas, provide cross-skilling and job enrichment opportunities for staff and facilitate streamlining of procedures between teams as mutual understanding is improved. A further benefit is that it will facilitate career progression better than the current structure does.

What UNISON describe as indecision is seen as open-mindedness by management. We are keen to hear staff views on how the Admin arrangements should operate but of course managers will ultimately decide. Any specific suggestions in relation to varying to the job description are welcome; to date none have been received. We agree that there will need to be ongoing local consultation on how these roles develop.

UNISON assert that a new post is being created to manage Admin staff; this is not the case and in fact this responsibility is being added to existing management roles, with no impact on the grading of those management posts.

**5. Ring Fences and Assimilation**

The proposed ring fences for the three Senior (PO2) posts in the new Temporary Accommodation service have been designated open because of the change in skills required from the PO1 posts. This is based on the view that the Senior role should have significant responsibility for defined aspects of operational supervision, which is what existing Seniors have told us in the consultation. For the role to have the appropriate profile and standing, it must be seen as distinct from, rather than broadly the same as, the PO1 posts within those teams (in which case closed ring fences would

be applied). The “half patch” question is also relevant to this consideration, and managers are reviewing this.

In relation to selection methods, we are following the Council’s Restructure Policy, which acknowledges that a number of selection processes will be needed and that a combination of the four methods of Management Assessment can be used. We agree that selection methods should be appropriate but this does not mean that “multiple” methods are inappropriate.

The tests that will be used will relate directly to the job and the criteria that will be tested have been made known to affected staff. We are not asking staff to demonstrate that they meet the criteria; we are selecting using the criteria. Ample notice of tests will be given and any necessary adjustments required to enable staff to undertake the tests will be made. Tests will not be over “several days”, there is likely to be two sessions on different days of about an hour each. Our Admin staff are a talented group of people with diverse strengths – we believe that a wider range of assessment methods, including short interviews, is the fairest way to give every member of staff an equal opportunity. The request for sample tests will be re-considered.

The statements made in relation to the provision of Skills for Life training for the Admin staff are inaccurate. Although many of the Admin staff have already benefited from the excellent literacy and numeracy training provided by CHENEL, Management offered (at a very early stage) to work with the College, Trade Unions and the relevant staff to agree on a shorter training programme of two or three sessions, tailored to the individual needs of those Admin officers who have not yet received the Skills for Life training and feel that they would benefit from some additional coaching/training prior to the Management Assessment. Although it is a fact that UNISON’s opposition to Management’s use of tests has delayed those discussions, Management remains confident that any Admin staff who want additional help will still receive it.

**6. Alternative Proposals**

The Head of Housing Needs & Lettings post remained vacant throughout the *Rethinking Haringey* process as a potential redeployment opportunity for displaced staff from elsewhere in the Council. The current interim arrangements are not sustainable and the post is now being recruited to.

The Service Operations Manager post is not a new post; it is a change to the existing Business Improvement Manager post. Significant changes have been made to the post, including the addition of responsibility for managing the centralised Admin arrangements and staff, without an increase to the grade. This post will play a substantial role in front line service delivery.

Maximising income by, for example, improving rent collection is an important priority for the service. However, TA rents are held in the ring

fenced Homelessness budget and under current policy and practice, increasing income to this budget does not mean that reductions to the separate salaries budget can be averted.

7. **Job Descriptions**

Management welcomes these comments. We are happy to discuss this in detail and clarify the wording of individual job descriptions where needed. We agree that use of words like “managing” needs to be unambiguous and will work with local representatives to finalise this.

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**Haringey Council**

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Corporate Committee</b>	<b>Item Number:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Electoral Administration – Briefing on Developments</b>		
<b>Report Authorised by:</b>	<b>Kevin Crompton</b>		
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	<b>George Cooper</b>		
<b>Ward(s) affected: All</b>	<b>Report for Key/Non Key Decisions:</b> <b>Non-key</b>		

### **1. Describe the issue under consideration**

This report seeks to bring members up to date on a number of developments in the field of electoral administration including the 2012 Mayoral /GLA Elections, Parliamentary Boundaries, a review of Polling Districts , and the legislative proposal for Individual Electoral Registration (IER)

### **2. Cabinet Member introduction**

### **3. Recommendations**

That the activities identified herein be noted and that any representations pertaining to the developments identified herein be conveyed to the elections office.

### **4. Other options considered**

N/A

### **5. Background information**



**Haringey Council**

### **Mayor of London / GLA Elections 3 May 2012.**

Preparations and planning are well-underway for these elections under the aegis of the Greater London Returning Officer, John Bennett. The Count is again to be an e-count on the day after polling, and in the case of the Enfield & Haringey and wider North-London areas will again take place at Alexandra Palace. Rob Leak and Kevin Crompton will be Constituency and Borough Returning Officers for the Enfield & Haringey Assembly Constituency and are working in partnership on local plans.

### **Parliamentary Boundary Review – Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011.**

Having originally published its proposals on 13<sup>th</sup> September, the Boundary Committee for England will shortly enter a second, brief phase of consultation ( dates not confirmed but likely early in the new year) in which it publishes on its website any representations received on its initial proposals and invites any further comment thereon. ) If published I hope to apprise the committee of any suggestions received, but of course the key constraint is that, under the terms of the new Act, all seats ( except three) must comply with a requirement to be sized within 5%, electorally, of the average 76, 641 electors. Even though Haringey could still theoretically deserve two seats within its boundaries, as its seats were slightly larger than average, most London Constituencies will, under the proposals, cross Borough Boundaries in order to comply with the 5% threshold and Boroughs cannot be seen in isolation.

### **Polling District Review.**

The Electoral Commission requires local arrangements to be made for periodic reviews of polling districts ( as distinct from Wards) and after a long period of stability in these it would be timely to undertake this. Polling Districts are not fixed units of geography but are defined mainly by proximity to a polling place. I do not envisage any major change as existing polling stations seem to be working generally well but it may be worthwhile to look again at such issues as the mobile stations, which, are relatively expensive to operate. Public views will be sought and any views of the committee and elected members will clearly be welcome.

There is currently no requirement for a Ward review ( the timetable for these is set nationally) and the Wards in Haringey remain remarkably well-balanced in terms of electoral size.

### **Individual Electoral Registration**

A principle advanced by both the previous and present Governments, the idea would be that the autumn annual canvass of households – in which one person can effectively register fellow householders or family members giving little more than name and nationality – would be replaced by a system in which each individual



## Haringey Council

would take responsibility for registration, albeit on a more voluntary basis, but with a higher standard of proof of identity, such as a National Insurance number ( NINO) and date of birth.

Already in place in Northern Ireland, the system represented a transformation in the methodology of registration. Though not necessarily a bad thing in itself, the particular concern amongst London Administrators is that, unless heavily incentivised in new ways, registration could fall very sharply at least at first as it initially did in Northern Ireland. London requires considerable levels of doorstep canvassing to maintain accurate registers but it is felt that whilst it may be possible to obtain names on a doorstep, obtaining NINOs and dates of birth would be much more challenging. Nor is this likely to be a cost-saving measure overall.

Government has established an Electoral Registration Transformation Team ( ERTT) within the Cabinet Office to produce the scheme and prepare the legislation and a number of London Borough Election Offices ( including Haringey ) have invited officers of that team to spend first-hand time at the front line of registration.

The draft scheme envisages a timetable in which 2013 sees the last canvass by current means but a “carry over” of names from an essentially hybrid canvass in 2014 to protect from any deleterious effects on the scheduled 2015 elections.

There is concern, however, that the full effects of more onerous registration requirements may not be worked out in time for the elections of the 2016-2020 particularly in the context of the more frequent Parliamentary Boundary Reviews.

However the final details emerge, the cost, data handling and above all accessibility implications of IER should not be underestimated. This will be a considerable focus of our work in electoral administration over the next several years.

### **6. Comments of the Chief Finance Officer and financial implications**

N/A at this stage

### **7. Head of Legal Services and legal implications**

N/A at this stage

### **8. Equalities and Community Cohesion Comments**

N/A at this stage

### **9. Head of Procurement Comments**



**Haringey Council**  
N/A

**10. Policy Implication**

N/A

**11. Use of Appendices**

N/A

**12. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

Open Report.





**Haringey Council**

<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Corporate Committee</b>	<b>Item Number:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Shared Services – Employment Protocols</b>		
<b>Report Authorised by:</b>	<b>Stuart Young, Assistant Chief Executive</b>		
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	<b>Steve Davies, Head of Human Resources</b>		
<b>Ward(s) affected: ALL</b>	<b>Report for Key/ Non Key Decisions: Non Key Decision</b>		

#### **1. Describe the issue under consideration**

To provide the committee with progress on the shared service Employment Protocols being developed jointly with the London Borough of Waltham Forest to provide a framework for managing the employment issues that will arise from providing services jointly by two or more London boroughs.

#### **2. Cabinet Member introduction**

Not applicable

#### **3. Recommendations**

To note the report and attached Employment Protocols framework. A further report together with finalised Employment Protocols will be put before the committee following consultation with the unions.

#### **4. Other options considered**

Not applicable.



**Haringey** Council

## **5. Background information**

Haringey and Waltham Forest Councils entered into a Memorandum of Understanding in November 2010. The agreement was that we would treat each other as preferred partners in any consideration of shared service operations.

A number of shared service projects are planned in a number of phases. Some of the projects involve shared procurement/commissioning exercises. Others will involve staffing reorganisations. An example is the Economic Regeneration reorganisation previously considered by the committee and Regulatory Services due to come before the committee.

In the course of managing these restructures officers from both councils have been working to understand the employment issues and differences within each borough to provide a standard framework or 'protocol' for managing and handling the employment issues for similar shared service operations going forward.

Officers have started consultation engagement with the unions to better inform the protocols with the aim to develop a set protocols that the unions endorse.

Attached as Appendix A is a draft document that outlines the principles for managing shared services from an employment perspective.

## **6. Comments of the Chief Finance Officer and financial implications**

As clearly stated in the report, the protocols set out in Appendix A are currently in draft form and are likely to change following the engagement with stakeholders. The consultation and work culminating in the finally agreed protocols is currently expected to be met from existing resources.

Any financial implications arising from the final protocols will be set out in the report back to committee.

## **7. Head of Legal Services and legal implications**

The Head of Legal Services has been consulted on the content of this report which is for noting and has no specific comment.

## **8. Equalities and Community Cohesion Comments**

Equalities considerations will be factored into the Employment Protocols as these are developed.

## **9. Comments**



**Haringey Council**

Not applicable

#### **10. Head of Procurement Comments**

Not applicable

#### **11. Policy Implications**

The protocols are being developed to provide a pathway and framework for managing the differences between the employment policies of two employers. Although there are no direct changes proposed to either employers employment policies as a result of these protocols, when shared service arrangements have been working successfully for a period of time it would make sense to consider a closer alignment of the employment policies to assist in the management of shared services.

#### **12. Use of Appendices**

Appendix A – Draft Employment Protocols for Shared Services

#### **13. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**

No documents that require to be listed were used in the preparation of this report.

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## London Borough's of Haringey and Waltham Forest

### Employment Protocols for Shared Services

#### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 These Employment protocols provide a framework for managing the different issues that will arise from providing services jointly by two or more organisations. It is assumed that separate protocols covering finance and governance/legal arrangements will be developed to sit alongside these protocols to deal with issues such as delegated authorities, differing financial pressures - the impact these might have on a partnership, termination of arrangement etc.
- 1.2 The framework has been drawn up specifically to take account of the relationship between the London Boroughs of Haringey and Waltham Forest. A set of employment protocols in more detail are being developed and consulted on with unions.
- 1.3 These protocols cannot deliver joint HR procedures for partnership. However it is important that there is a joint and agreed approach to the way each partnership is approached to ensure clarity fairness and equity. This could for example, include an agreement around ringfences being conducted across boroughs for new post in the partnership, and joint panels for restructuring purposes.

#### 2 Types of Partnership Models

The framework assumes one of three types of partnerships (also see appendix A):

##### 2.1 Shared Working:

Follow common/ collaborative framework for service delivery and service priorities. Staff remain employed by their own authority providing similar services but can benefit by sharing best practice and processes, joint learning and development initiatives, joint procurement or entering into same framework etc. The aim would be to have a joint service statement and monitoring arrangements.

##### 2.2 Shared Service:

One borough leads or provides the management and possibly the bulk of the rest of the service. The secondary borough will second their staff to the lead borough. Secondments may take a variety of forms but the basic premise is that the staff remain employed by their respective borough. In some situations staff may be offered the choice to transfer to the lead borough and / or recruitment to resulting vacancies may automatically transfer to the lead borough. Staff may be co-located and provide a degree of cover for each other.

**2.3 Service Provider:**

One borough provides the service with staff transferring to the lead borough under TUPE arrangements with the other Borough retaining an appropriate client function. Staff likely to be co-located although depending on the service may retain a presence in client borough.

**Note: *The protocols do not cover*** situations where outsourcing of services is required, or where TUPE applies or where an employee led mutual service (social enterprise) is set up

**3 Governance/Decision Making:**

3.1 Separate protocols will cover governance and decision making arrangements that will apply in relation to partnership working.

**4 Rationale/ Outline Business Case (OBC)**

**4.1 Decision Making on Model:**

See section 2 and appendix A

**4.2 Opportunities/Drivers that will influence the chosen model:**

- Strengths/Weaknesses on either side including PIs, findings from inspections/reviews; skills and abilities of staff; robustness of business systems in place
- Benefits to service provision
- Infrastructure including: Technology, Accommodation, Location Assets
- Geography/Demography
- Savings/Budget Imperative/ relative financial health, forthcoming retendering exercises
- The need to address audit/other inspection recommendations
- Desire to keep in-house services
- Statutory requirements around a particular service
- Key post vacancies

**4.3 Who is involved in decision making**

- Members
- Borough management teams
- Both sides' Finance and HR
- TUs and staff
- Where a service to residents is involved an appropriate consultation exercise will need to be undertaken

**5. Decision making process**

- A joint body for key decisions on set up and working arrangements for the service
- Appoint leads from each authority

- Needs a level of joint scrutiny to ensure vested interests are not being protected from either side

## **6 Communication with staff**

- 6.1 It is important that there is a transparent and consistent decision making process when deciding on a model and it is suggested that a template is developed that can be used to support business cases for any forthcoming shared arrangements. This will help to avoid a mismatch of communication between boroughs which can lead to concern being raised on the part of staff.
- 6.2 The trade unions have expressed concern about the general lack of information that has been provided to them to date and we have now set up bi- monthly meetings with the trade unions from both Waltham Forest and Haringey so that they can be updated on progress on the various projects that are developing. However to ensure that a more consistent approach is taken there should be a joint approach to communications built into the OBC and Project Initiation Document (PID) so that there is one consistent message sent to both sides in a co-ordinated fashion. The level of formality and frequency will depend on the size and complexity of the partnership under consideration and so each communications plan will need to meet the needs of the particular circumstances.
- 6.3 Clearly there will need to be a communications plan covering members, services users, and other services which will work with the new partnership etc. but this does not form part of the employment protocols.

## **7. Ways of working in partnership**

- 7.1 These broadly fall into either:
- matters relating to the setting up of the partnership; or
  - arrangements that need to be in place for when the partnership is up and running.
- 7.2 Clearly where the Service Provider is the chosen delivery model the usual requirement around TUPE transfers will apply and the lead authority will become the employer of staff. As noted above there will need to be a communications plan in place so that staff and unions are kept informed of developments.
- 7.3 For both the shared working and shared services models where there will be staff employed in both boroughs there should be a joint restructuring report and consultation period, together with agreed and consistent organisation structures, with appropriate resource levels and posts in both authorities as determined by service usage. It may also be the case that one authority

undertakes a particular part of the service for both organisations in which case posts may not exist in both organisations.

- 7.4 Each authority will have to consult its own staff and unions about the proposed restructure but the authorities should evaluate responses to consultation and alternatives proposals put forward together.
- 7.5 Equality impact assessments (EqIA) will be produced by each relevant employer, but cross referencing of impact, consultation and mitigation will need to be undertaken to ensure fairness.
- 7.6 The restructuring processes for both organisations broadly build on legal requirements with a few differences. It is suggested that the authorities' process regarding issuing of notice, redeployment and redundancy payments are retained and not specifically affected by the partnership as the employing authority will remain the employer. However the approach to consultation and job matching will need to be uniform.
- 7.7 Shared working model**  
There will need to be a joint management board to over see all aspects of the partnership, including HR issues. Broadly the host authority will apply its own HR policies and procedures to its staff. However, where there may be an impact on employee relations/ contracts within the partner borough, this will need to be done through the joint management board.
- 7.8 Shared service model**  
It is recognised that in delivering services for another borough that it is important that working relationships with other teams or services are developed and built on. Therefore the manager(s) of the service will need to be part of partner boroughs project/ functional management team meetings as and when they arise. These arrangements should ideally be outlined in the Memo of Understanding/ Service Level Agreement, but if not then appropriate notice and detail of such arrangements should be given when known.
- 7.9 Shared managers**  
Where a manager has responsibility for delivering services in another borough the appropriate delegated authorisations must be specified in that borough's constitution to ensure that any management decisions are enacted in the duly authorised way on behalf of the borough receiving the service.

It is important that the manager providing the service should be clear where actions requiring committee decision need to be reported within each borough.

#### **7.10 Management spans of control principles**



The recommend principle for the design of services outlines that Managers should typically be directly responsible for around eight staff and, ideally, no less than five. This ratio will depend on the diversity and complexity of the occupational groups and activities and nature of services provided. It is possible to manage larger groups than eight members of staff, especially in areas with more standard ways of working e.g. customer service, but it should be borne in mind that the effectiveness of management can start to break down.

Layers of management should be added/retained only where there is evidence of absolute need. As a guide there should not be more than four layers of staff between business unit head/Assistant Director and operational staff.

#### **7.11 Equal time split**

In relation to secondments where it is clear that post holders are covering roles with responsibilities for work in both boroughs it is assumed that a 50/50 time split will broadly take place unless otherwise specified in the MoU/ SLA. If there is a departure from this arrangement (say 10% or more) for a period of time (e.g. more than a month) there will need to be discussions involving both boroughs to understand the situation, reasons and what action is appropriate to resolve the difference.

- 7.12 It is acknowledged that there will be occasions where the time focus will predominantly be on one borough because of a situation/ issue, but this should be identified to the partner borough as soon as it is practical with an estimate of the time and likely duration.

#### **7.13 Business Planning**

The service will need to feed in/ contribute as appropriate to the Business planning cycle of the partner boroughs. This should be outlined in the MOU/ SLA.

In addition the business continuity plans for the service must be clearly specified and notified to the partner borough(s).

#### **7.14 Performance Management and Reporting**

Appropriate reporting of measures of service delivery will be agreed with the partner borough(s). This will include the frequency of reporting.

Ideally, the partners will agree the same measures to minimise the time and effort on production of these but it is recognised that there may be some performance measures that are required differently for one borough or the frequency of reporting may be different. The reasons for different measures should be justified.

#### **7.15 Secondment agreements**

Two separate secondment agreements will be drawn up to cover two different arrangements.

- A - Secondment agreement to deal with situations where the employee is doing work predominantly in the other borough.
- B - Secondment agreement where the employee is doing work for both boroughs, usually on an equal basis, or on an agreed time split.

- 

Draft

Haringey and Waltham Forest Shared Services – Employment Protocols Matrix

Partner Arrangement	Employment Arrangement	Governance Arrangement	Recruitment Arrangement
<p><b>Shared Working</b> Follow common/ collaborative frameworks for service delivery</p>	<p><b>Employee remains</b> with own employer including management arrangements</p>	<p><b>Memo of Understanding (MOU)</b></p>	<p><b>Own borough arrangements remain</b></p>
<p><b>Shared Service</b> One borough leads or provides the bulk of the service</p>	<p><b>Secondment of staff</b> Lead borough responsible for the management of staff</p>	<p><b>MOU / Service Level Agreement (SLA)</b></p>	<p><b>Joint Employment Protocols</b></p>
<p><b>Service Provider</b> One borough provides the service</p>	<p><b>TUPE</b> Staff transferred from other employer retaining their old contract</p>	<p><b>Contract</b></p>	<p><b>Providers employment practices apart from TUPE staff</b></p>

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