

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

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 Some of these proposals have been confirmed and included in the current proposals while some have been withdrawn. The withdrawn options included the following: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 - (c) Reducing a Housing Benefit Liaison Officer post – withdrawn to protect front line services.
 - (d) Reducing a Payments Officer post – withdrawn to enable the significant new workload associated with Housing Related Support (HRS, formerly Supporting People) to be absorbed.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.

Roles	Grades	Current Permanent Posts	Proposed Permanent Posts
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
total				-4

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
total				-2

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
total				-3

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:

Post	Grade	Proposal
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

Post	Grade	Proposal
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

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

Housing Improvement
Manager (Private Sector)

- 1 x Housing Improvement Co-ordinator [PO5]
- 1 x Senior EHO / HO (Empty Homes) [PO4]
- 1 x Technical Support Officer [PO1]
- 1 x Senior EHO / HO (HMOs) [PO4]**
- 1 x Lead EHO / HO (HMOs) [PO3]
- 5 x Housing Officer / Technical Officer [PO2]
- 1 x Senior EHO / HO (Decent Homes) [PO4]**
- 1 x Housing Officer / Technical Officer [PO2]
- 1 x Senior EHO / HO (Frontline / HHSRS) [PO4]**
- 1 x Lead Officer (Frontline Services) [PO3]
- 2 x Housing Officer / Technical Officer [PO2]
- 1 x Contacts Team Manager [PO6]**
- 2 x Property Inspector (TA) [PO2]
- 2 x Contacts Negotiator (TA) [PO2]
- 1 x HALS Liaison Officer [PO1]
- 1 x Administrative Officer [Sc5]

Housing Improvement (Private Sector) total: **24**

Head of Housing Needs & Lettings

- 1 x Housing Assessments & Lettings Manager [PO8]**
- 1 x Homelessness Team Leader [PO4]**
- 1 x Senior Homelessness Officer [PO2]
- 1 x Administrative Officer [Sc5]
- 5 x Homelessness Officer [PO1]
- 1 x Housing Assessment Team Leader [PO4]**
- 1 x Senior Housing Assessment Officer [PO2]
- 2 x Administrative Officer [Sc5]
- 7.5 x Housing Assessment Officer [PO1]
- 1 x Lettings Team Leader [PO4]**
- 1 x Senior Lettings Officer [PO2]
- 1 x Administrative Officer [Sc5]
- 4 x Lettings Officer [PO1]
- 1 x Supported Housing Lettings Officer [PO1]
- 1 x Reviewing & Service Improvement Officer [PO4]

Total posts: 30.5

Housing Needs & Lettings total: **79.5**

1 x Temporary Accommodation Manager [PO8]

- 1 x TA Visiting & Lettings Team Leader [PO4]**
- 5 x TA Lettings Officer [PO1]
- 4 x Visiting Officer [PO1]
- 1 x Administrative Officer [Sc5]
- 2 x Tenancy Support Team Leader [PO4]**
- 10 x Tenancy Support Officer [PO1]
- 2 x Administrative Officer [Sc5]
- 1 x Hostel Cleaning Team Leader [PO3]**
- 1 x Hostel Cleaning Supervisor [Sc4]
- 5 x Hostel Cleaner [Sc1b]
- 1 x Income Recovery Manager [PO8]**
- 2 x Income Recovery Team Leader [PO4]
- 10 x Income Recovery Officer [PO1]
- 2 x Housing Benefit Assessment Officer [PO1]
- 1 x Administrative Officer [Sc5]

Total posts: 49

Head of Housing Support & Options

- 1 x Housing Advice & Options Manager [PO8]**
- 1 x Housing Advice & Options Team Leader [PO4]**
- 1 x Senior Housing Adviser [PO2]
- 2 x Administrative Officer [Sc5]
- 1 x Housing Benefit Liaison Officer [PO1]
- 1 x Senior Housing Options Caseworker [PO2]
- 7.5 x Housing Options Adviser [PO1]
- 7.5 x Housing Adviser [PO1]
- 1 x Private Sector Lettings Team Leader [PO4]**
- 1 x Senior Private Sector Lettings Officer [PO2]
- 1 x Administrative Officer [Sc5]
- 3 x Private Sector Lettings Officer [PO1]
- 1 x Housing Benefit Liaison Officer [PO1]

Total posts: 30

Housing Support & Options total: **45**

Head of Commissioned Services

- 1 x Vulnerable Adults Team Manager [PO6]**
- 1 x Senior Vulnerable Adults Adviser [PO2]
- 1 x Administrative Officer [Sc5]
- 3 x Vulnerable Adults Adviser [PO1]
- 2 x Supported Housing Assessment Officer [PO1]
- 1 x Housing Support Officer [PO1]
- 1 x Heathstone Manager [PO6]**
- 1 x Senior Practitioner [PO5]
- 1 x Hearthstone Senior Options Adviser [PO2]
- 1 x Hearthstone Administrative Officer [PO1]
- 2 x Hearthstone Advice & Support Officer [PO1]

Total posts: 15

Commissioned Services total: **17**

Community Housing Services total number of posts: 166.5

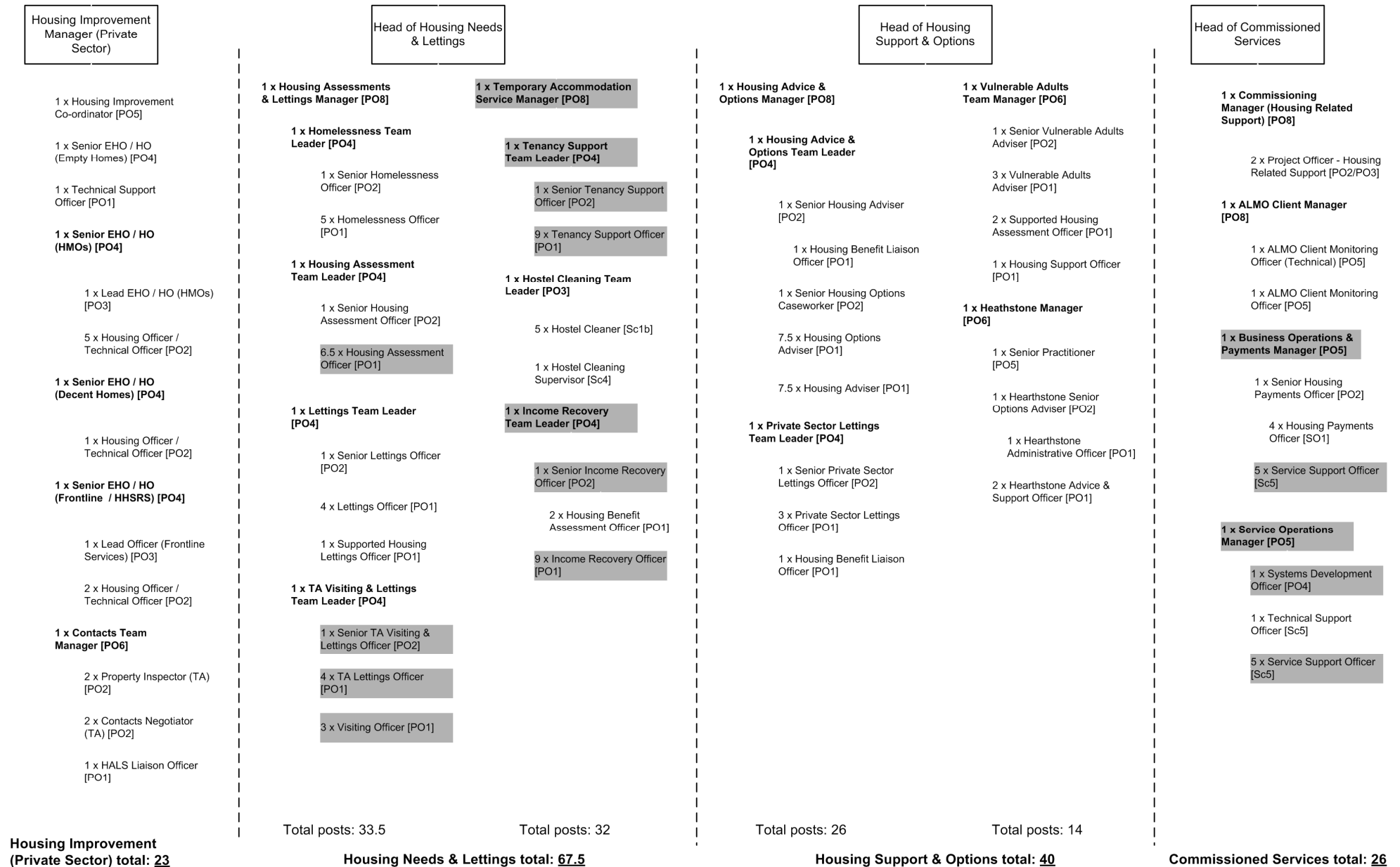
Community Housing Services

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.