

HOUSING MANAGEMENT

1. Housing Management Services covers a range of activities including: property lettings, void control, dealing with repairs requests, responding to Anti-Social Behaviour, supporting resident involvement and ensuring that rent collection is maximised.
2. The importance of resident involvement to social housing landlords (including Local Authorities who are stock retaining) has moved significantly up the agenda of central government. In April 2010 the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) will be the new regulator for the housing services provided by the Council. The TSA will have in place a new regulatory framework to include statutory requirements of Councils and 14 standards. The standards are expected by the TSA to be set and monitored in conjunction with tenants to ensure accountability and transparency of Council landlord's services.
3. In the current financial situation it is imperative that the Housing Service maximises the income it can collect not only in terms of rent but other debts owed to the Housing Service such as recharges. The service also needs to identify where efficiency savings can be made in terms of management costs and benchmark performance with other providers. This does not currently happen

Staff at risk of redundancy

4. It is proposed that a total of two posts will be deleted and that two posts should be created, one in Housing Management and one in Sheltered Housing. This will allow existing resources to be targeted at improving tenant participation and maximising income.
5. All housing officers (six) will be at risk. It is not anticipated however, that there will be any redundancies arising from this team.

Cost of current structure

£640,000

Cost of new structure

£610,000

Making a total saving of £30,000 all of which is for the HRA

Potential negative impacts of proposed changes

6. The proposed reduction in housing officers leaves the Council with a high property to staff ratio moving from approximately 1:1000 to 1:1300 which would place the council at the high end in terms of comparison with other organisations. For example Ipswich BC have a ratio of 1:600, Cambridge City 1:800 and Stevenage BC a ratio of 1:1000. Although the proposed changes in supported housing working practices will mitigate the increases over time as supported housing officers take on some housing management responsibilities.

Potential positive outcomes of proposed changes

7. The Introduction of a Resident Involvement team leader is critical to taking forward the standards expected by the Tenant Services Authority (TSA). This Post will supervise the work of the three Tenant Participation Officers that will be working primarily in the sheltered housing service.
8. The introduction of the Income and Performance Manager will allow the full integration of the rent section into Housing Service as a key function of the new emerging section will be all aspects of income maximisation in the HRA. This post will build on the success of the temporary post which led on the development of the new voids process which in its first year has increased the income to the HRA by around £80,000 The section will also be able to take on the responsibility of continuous improvement through benchmarking and supporting work to streamline our systems such as ICT. This post will also lead on the implementation of the customer service excellence objective.