

Housing Services Structure

Housing Committee Tuesday, 20 June 2023

Report of: Head of Housing

Purpose: For decision

Publication status: Open

Wards affected: All

Executive summary:

As part of the Future Tandridge Programme, a service review of Officer structures across the Housing Service was undertaken.

As a result of the review, a new Officer structure has been implemented across the Housing Service. This was done in tandem with new role profiles being written for each post ensuring resources are deployed in the areas of most need, Officers are clearly aware of their role, responsibility and accountability.

This report supports the Council's priority of: Building a better Council

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Recommendation to Committee:

- A. That Members of this Committee note the new Housing Services structure as set out in appendix A.
 - B. That Members of this Committee recommend to the next Strategy and Resources Committee that, the Community Surveying team be integrated into the Housing Services structure.
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Reason for recommendation:

Members will be aware that the structures implemented through a previous transformation project failed to meet the service requirements for both residents and Officers.

Structures as set out within Appendix A and the proposal to integrate the surveying team within the Housing Services structure, will ensure a more transparent structure for Officers, Members and residents.

New role profiles have been written for all most all roles in the service with an emphasis on customer service and performance management.

Introduction and background

- 1 As part of the Housing Services service review, it was quickly identified that the previous staffing structures were inadequate to provide the delivery of services required to meet resident's needs.
- 2 Structures across the housing team were split into case and specialist roles which lacked clarity on role responsibility, accountability and was very difficult for all to understand.
- 3 As a result, new role profiles and job descriptions have been written and a new structure implemented.

4 Housing Landlord Service

- 4.1 There are several teams within the housing landlord service. Between them they are responsible for the day-to-day management of the tenancies held by residents residing in the Council's housing stock.
- 4.2 These teams, amongst other tasks are responsible for the management of breaches of tenancy which may occur because of anti-social behaviour, non-payment of rent, service charges and other related income, environmental issues such as garden cleanliness and general neighbourhood management. Teams are also responsible for other tenancy related tasks such as successions and assignments.
- 4.3 Following the introduction of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures in April 2023 by the Regulator of Social Housing, a Resident Engagement Manager role has been created. This role is accountable for the delivery of the Tenant and Leaseholder Engagement Strategy and for the collation of satisfaction measures in accordance with the new regulations.

5 Statutory Housing Service

- 5.1 The Housing Needs service is responsible for the delivery of the Council's statutory duties relating to homelessness and property allocations. This team is responsible for the prevention of homelessness within the District where possible, the administration of the Council's Choice Based Lettings Scheme, administration of the housing register and delivery of the various refugee schemes in operation at the current time.
- 5.2 In addition to the housing needs service, the Council is responsible for administering grant and adaption schemes such as the Disabled Facilities Grant scheme and the in-house aids and adaptations work to Council owned properties. This work is managed and overseen by the Grants and Adaptions Manager.

6 Community Surveyors

- 6.1 Under the current structure, Community Surveyors are reporting to the Chief Finance Officer as an interim measure, with other aspects of Assets and Facilities Management.
- 6.2 The Community Surveying team ensures that the Councils assets, including the Councils housing stock, wider buildings and its neighbourhoods are safe, clean, and compliant. This team are knowledgeable across a broad range of technical disciplines and use their detailed knowledge and/or technical skills for inspecting aspects of the physical environment (housing, car parks, park buildings, trees etc.) recommending/specifying the best course of action. Surveyors are trained in efficient contract management and are accountable for performance and contract delivery.
- 6.3 It was initially thought that the surveying team would sit within a combined General Fund and HRA corporate landlord model with asset management, facilities management, and development teams.
- 6.4 Having discussed this approach with both Officers and external stakeholders, it was agreed that a Council-wide corporate landlord model will not provide value for money due to the need for additional management resource required to make the model work. Instead, a corporate landlord model will be pursued within the General Fund, subject to approval by Strategy & Resources Committee.
- 6.5 Given the increased compliance and regulation for the management of the Council's housing stock, the joined-up approach to stock management with other housing led services and the funding allocation from the Housing Revenue Account, it is recommended that the Community Surveying team be integrated into the Housing Services structure.

- 6.6 The team will also use their expertise and knowledge to undertake health and safety compliance management across General Fund assets. This will be undertaken by means of a service level agreement and will be funded from the General Fund.
- 6.7 In preparation for this, new role profiles have been designed with a focus on providing surveying expertise across both Housing Revenue Account and the wider Council General Fund assets, with a key focus on compliance, regulation, and resident satisfaction.

Other options considered

A Housing Leadership Team, made up of senior Officers from within and around the service has been formed to support the continued improvement of the housing service and the services it provides to residents.

Led by the Head of Housing, the Housing leadership team will be accountable for ensuring services are delivered in accordance with the housing service's delivery plan and the Council's corporate plan, ensure performance management in accordance with KPI's, ensure compliance with relevant sector legislation and act as an escalation point for Councillors and residents.

Consultation

As part of the Future Tandridge Programme a formal consultation process was held with all impacted Officers. Officers were given the opportunity to view, comment and challenge the revised structures and amended role profiles in accordance with relevant employment law.

The Head of Housing sought informal views from Officers, external partners and stakeholders to help develop the structures set out in Appendix A.

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

The proposals set out in this report allow the £42k General Fund staffing saving for asset management to be delivered, without taking on additional management resource required by a combined General Fund and HRA corporate landlord team. The General Fund will pay an appropriate amount for the health and safety compliance work delivered by the Community Surveyors team, with roles and responsibilities for this crucial area clearly defined.

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

The proposed restructure will have implications for several Officers in terms of changed roles. Full consultation has been carried out with those Officers who will be affected and all individuals have had an opportunity and were supported to make their views known throughout the process. The legal basis for the new

Housing Services structure is the Council's general power of management of its housing stock in Section 21 of the Housing Act 1985. It is anticipated that the new structure will also assist the Council in complying with the consumer standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing.

Equality

As part of the work undertaken during the staff consultation phase, an equalities impact assessment was completed and returned to HR. This assessment did not identify any equality concerns.

Staff were provided the opportunity for feedback and those placed at risk of redundancy attended meetings with both HR and the Head of Housing.

Climate change

There are no significant environmental / sustainability implications associated with this report.

Appendices

Appendix A – Housing Services Structure Chart

Background papers

None

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