

 <b>Employment Committee</b> <b>15th February 2017</b>		<b>Agenda Item No. 3</b>
<b>Title</b>	Revision to the staffing establishment structure – Housing & Property Services	
<b>For further information about this report please contact</b>	Bill Hunt Deputy Chief Executive 01926 456014 bill.hunt@warwickdc.gov.uk	
<b>Wards of the District directly affected</b>	All	
<b>Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?</b>	No	
<b>Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number</b>	18/9/07 Executive Minute Number 434	
<b>Background Papers</b>	Building on Excellence, report to Executive, Employment Committee and Joint Audit & Resources and Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee 18/9/07; Early retirement of Head of Property Services, report to Employment Committee 25/6/07	

<b>Contrary to the policy framework:</b>	No
<b>Contrary to the budgetary framework:</b>	No
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes
<b>Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)</b>	No
<b>Equality and Sustainability Impact Assessment Undertaken</b>	No

<b>Officer/Councillor Approval</b>		
<b>Officer Approval</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
Deputy Chief Executive		Author
Head of Service		n/a
CMT	2/2/17	
Section 151 Officer	2/2/17	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	2/2/17	Andrew Jones
Finance	2/2/17	Mike Snow
HR	2/2/17	Tracy Dolphin
Portfolio Holder(s)	6/2/17	Councillor Mobbs Councillor Phillips
<b>Consultation &amp; Community Engagement</b>		n/a
<b>Final Decision?</b>		Yes
<b>Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)</b>		

## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals to revise the Council's staffing establishment structure by removing the Assets Team, and the functions it performs, from the existing Housing & Property Services service area and placing this team within the Chief Executive's Office, to be directly managed by the Deputy Chief Executive (BH).
- 1.2 The two remaining teams within the existing Housing & Property Services service area would remain within a renamed Housing Services service area and a new Head of Service would be recruited.

## 2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Employment Committee approves a revision to the existing Council staffing establishment structure to:
  - delete the existing Housing & Property Services service area, as shown at Appendix One, from the establishment structure;
  - delete the post of Head of Housing & Property Services;
  - create a new service area entitled Housing Services;
  - create a new post of Head of Housing Services;
  - expand the remit of the Chief Executive's Office to include the Assets Team, moved from within the existing Housing & Property Services service area in the current establishment structure
  - create the revised Council staffing establishment structure, as set out at Appendix Two
- 2.2 That, subject to 2.1, Employment Committee recommends to Council it updates Part 7 of the Constitution (Management & Portfolio Holder Structure) so that it reflects the approved staffing establishment.

## 3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The existing Housing & Property Services service area, headed by a Head of Housing and Property Services, was created in 2007 following the adoption of a new corporate strategy and establishment staffing structure under a set of proposals known as Building on Excellence. Until that year the Council had operated for 5 years with separate Housing and Property units, each headed by a Head of Service.
- 3.2 The post of Head of Housing & Property Services has been vacant since 1 November 2016. The vacancy, coupled with the previous history of recruitment and retention issues in relation to the post, has prompted a review of the role of the Head of Service and the structure of this key service area. As a result, the Corporate Management Team (CMT) have concluded that a fundamental change of approach is required in terms of the establishment structure and that better service outcomes will be obtained by splitting up the current service area.
- 3.3 The management structure of the existing service area is shown at **Appendix One**. Members will note that within this structure two of the teams are predominantly focussed on the delivery of *people* based services, e.g. services to people needing a new home or to support them to thrive in their current home, and one predominantly delivers *property* based services, e.g. repairs,

maintenance and improvements to both HRA homes and corporate properties and assets.

- 3.4 These services are markedly different and each requires different skills, knowledge and aptitudes amongst the staff in the teams delivering them. A management structure that is sufficiently mature and flexible to deal with the potentially competing or contradictory priorities between the needs of the HRA stock and those of the people living within it is also required. This, in turn, means that the Head of Service ideally requires an extensive and broad range of knowledge, crossing over the two disciplines, and a skill set that enables them to understand and manage the challenges this mix of disciplines poses. The learning points from previous recruitment exercises and an examination of the recent history of the strategic and operational management of the service area is the achievement of this necessary balance has proved challenging. If the structure of the service area is unchanged there is a strong possibility that we will again face difficulties in identifying a Head of Service with the necessary skill set to lead an area delivering both people and property based services.
- 3.5 It is, therefore, proposed to split the service area and place the property based services delivered by the existing Assets Team elsewhere in the corporate staffing establishment structure. This would enable the creation of a new Housing Services service area that can focus exclusively on the delivery of the people based services, currently delivered by the remaining two teams (the Sustaining Tenancies and Housing Strategy & Development teams) within the existing service area. The new service area would continue to be headed by a Head of Service post and the postholder would be a member of the Council's Senior Management Team.
- 3.6 The job description and person specification of this new post would reflect the need for the postholder to have significant experience of, and the necessary skill set to deliver, the management of an effective people based service. Market research indicates that most housing providers split service provision between property and people based services suggesting that an increased pool of potential applicants would be available for a role that did not combine the two distinct types of service. An indicative process and timeline for the recruitment of the new Head of Service role is set out at **Appendix Three**. This timetable is currently being reviewed to ensure that any potential impacts arising from the County Council elections in May 2017 are addressed and a final version will be agreed with the Leader, Portfolio Holder and Chair of Employment Committee.
- 3.7 The proposed staffing establishment structure that would be created as a result of the recommendation is shown at **Appendix Two**. This envisages the transfer of the property based services, undertaken by the existing Assets Team, to the Chief Executive's Office where they would be line managed by the Deputy Chief Executive (BH).
- 3.8 The Assets Team would, in future, operate wholly as a customer-focussed corporate support service, providing an effective management service for all the council's properties and assets regardless of their type or which service area owns them. As noted above, this integrated approach to asset management would enable the new Housing Services service area to focus solely on delivering services to the tenants of the HRA homes. The responsibility for the repair and maintenance of those homes would sit with the Assets Team who

would hold the necessary specialist knowledge and manage the budgets and repair contracts to deliver the repair and improvement service for their colleagues in Housing Services. This would rationalise the corporate approach to the management and maintenance of assets, placing the HRA housing service in the same position as all the other property owning service areas.

- 3.9 The Assets Team is currently headed by an Assets Manager, with the post currently being filled by a member of staff on secondment. Subject to the proposed approach being approved the job description and person specification for the post would be amended and a recruitment exercise undertaken to fill the post on a permanent basis. The postholder and the Deputy Chief Executive (BH) would then review the existing structure of the team to determine if any re-design is required to ensure that it effectively delivers the new corporate support service role, with a report on any proposals to amend the structure being brought back to Committee, if appropriate.
- 3.10 With regard to recommendation 2.2 this is required because the Management Structure of the Council is being amended. While the amendments to the establishment are the responsibility of this Committee, Appendix 2 forms part of the Constitution and therefore the Council must approve the revised chart.

#### **4. POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 4.1 The Fit for the Future programme has the three objectives of improving the quality of the range of services offered by the Council whilst achieving value for money and developing people. The recommendation directly supports the programme as the proposals are designed to ensure suitable staffing resources are deployed to deliver an effective *people* based housing service and an integrated and value for money *property* based service to manage and maintain the Council's assets.

#### **5. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 The proposed Head of Housing Services post would be cost neutral with budget provision being available from the deleted Head of Housing & Property Services post.
- 5.2 The revised job description and person specification for the Asset Manager will be reviewed by the HAY Panel. A verbal update on the outcome of this process will be presented to Committee. However, any future changes to the grading of the post recommended by the Panel can be accommodated within existing staffing budgets.

#### **6. RISKS**

- 6.1 The main risk attached to these proposals would be the inability to recruit a suitable candidate for either the Head of Housing Services post or the permanent Asset Manager post.
- 6.2 As explained in paragraph 3.6 it is felt that a suitable 'pool' of candidates will exist for the Head of Service role and that this pool would be larger than if the role were to be advertised in its current format. In the event that the recruitment exercise did not result in an appointment the option exists of

recruiting an interim member of staff while options are again reviewed or another recruitment exercise undertaken.

- 6.3 It is envisaged that a suitable candidate will be identified for the revised Asset Manager role through an internal, or if necessary, external recruitment exercise. If the recruitment exercise was to be unsuccessful interim arrangements would also be considered for this post.

## **7. ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S) CONSIDERED**

- 7.1 The option of retaining the existing structure and the Head of Housing and Property Services post was rejected given the assessment of the past recruitment and retention difficulties and issues of the management of the service that these have created.
- 7.2 The option of not making an appointment and for the Deputy Chief Executive (BH), (or another member of CMT) continuing to directly manage the service area is not sustainable without an adverse impact on the ability of CMT to deliver the wider corporate agenda.
- 7.3 The option of appointing an interim has been considered but not pursued as it was felt that there were a number of immediate issues that needed to be addressed and that these were best handled by a member of staff aware of the histories and sensitivities surrounding them. However, the option of utilising an interim appointment would be a viable option if the recruitment process for either post was not successful.