

PEOPLE COMMITTEE

20th JUNE 2018

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

HOUSING OFFICER RESOURCE PROPOSAL

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To set out the proposal for the recruitment of a Housing Officer resource within the People Directorate, ensuring vital functions of the Council, regarding tenancies and estate management are sustained at the required resource level.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To approve the recruitment of two housing officers subject to Place Committee authorisation
- 2.2 To approve the role outline and approve the budgetary commitment outlined in the report
- 2.3 Acknowledge the complimentary nature of the Housing Officer resource with the new Neighbourhood Support Officer resource, providing a comprehensive tenancy and community management service

3.0 KEY ISSUES

3.1 Housing and tenancy management at Melton Borough Council

Housing management within local authorities usually has two facets designed to manage the physical environment in which tenants live and the behaviours and actions and contractual agreements of the Council tenants. At Melton Borough Council, the split is as follows :

- Management of the physical resource (Housing and Commercial Asset Management, Growth and Regeneration)
- Tenancy management (Housing Welfare and Safer Communities Team, People and Communities Directorate)

Typically, the two facets effectively manage their own remits without regular cause to affect each other. However it is also acknowledged that the two remits are intrinsically linked to each other. For example, the quality of housing, and the impact it has on tenants is directly affected by the behaviours of the tenants regarding aspects of noise, nuisance, waste, use of communal areas etc.

Recent incidents regarding the build up of waste in communal areas alongside longstanding issues regarding access to buildings, has highlighted one such area for additional resource, with inspections and subsequent action involving tenants falling to differing departments and officers within the Council.

The Council has previously focused upon the case management of tenancies, working with individual residents to improve their circumstance, without the remit to address wider, community based or property centred concerns. The management of tenancies is currently held within the Customer Service and Intensive Housing Management Service, with officers working closely with residents as they begin their tenancies. This support for new tenants ceases at the 12 month point, unless issues remain. This therefore impairs the Council's ability regarding the:

- Early identification of issues
- Identifying the appropriate support for tenants
- Enforcement of tenancy breaches
- Identification of housing repair and estate management issues
- Ability to ensure compliance to regulations, e.g. Gas Safety, by tenants

4.0 What would a Housing Officer role involve?

The Housing Officer role would report to the Senior Housing Officer within the People Directorate, and be responsible for management and maintenance of a Melton Borough Council owned properties across the Borough, in accordance with the organisation's policies and procedures. The role would also contribute to the performance of the Housing team, through compliance rates, tenancy sustainment and rental income receipts.

Typical responsibilities of a Housing Officer within Melton Borough Council would be:

- To minimise rent arrears
- To identify and deal with breaches of tenancy/leasehold agreements, including rent and service charge arrears, nuisance, harassment and misuse of property
- To identify cases of abandoned tenancies, squatters and unauthorised occupiers
- Prepare cases for Court action and represent the Organisation at Court and at evictions
- To deal with rent setting and payments, succession and mutual exchanges
- To carry out regular estate inspections
- Assist in the completion of new tenancy documentation
- To ensure prompt and appropriate responses to resident enquiries
- To encourage and support tenants'/residents' groups and attend meetings as required
- To refer tenants to appropriate sources of benefits and welfare advice
- To contribute to the compliance of tenants to regulations such as fire safety, gas safety etc.

5.0 Why is the new resource needed?

The recruitment of two FTE Housing Officers is proposed to enable the more comprehensive management of the 1800 Council owned properties in the Borough, overseeing both the tenant and asset aspects of housing management. Each officer would be responsible for a 'patch' or allocation of properties, and

would link in with supporting officers to ensure the appropriate action was taken in regard to properties and tenants.

This resource would have a direct and immediate impact on the Council's ability to react to and deal with issues such as fire safety, ASB, disrepair, community engagement etc. The Housing Officers would also work closely with the Case Management capability within the People Directorate, with the ability to engage the appropriate services to assist residents and to provide a robust and capable resource to ensure tenants are suitably supported according to their needs beyond the first 12 months of their tenure.

6.0 Financial Implications

Two Full Time Equivalent Band 8 permanent Housing Officers requires a growth in the HRA commitment of £69,680. The posts would be fully costed to the HRA as 100% of the capacity of the roles would be focused upon MBC housing stock and tenants.

The proposed growth against the Housing Revenue Account is set against the backdrop of the proposed updated HRA Business Plan, ensuring sustainable future HRA spend against predicted income levels. The Business Plan review will be undertaken in 2018/19.

It is therefore proposed that the proposed Housing Officer roles will be reviewed once the HRA Business Plan is finalised to ensure long term affordability of the officer resource. This review will identify the long term resource levels required to sustain the housing management facility and the subsequent value and additional capacity created by the roles.

6.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None identified

7.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 As stated within Section 6.0

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS

8.1 None identified

9.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY

9.1 None identified

10.0 EQUALITIES

10.1 None identified

11.0 RISKS

11.1 Probability



Very High A				
High B				
Significant C				
Low D		1		
Very Low E				
Almost Impossible F				
	IV Neg- ligible	III Marg- inal	II Critical	I Catast- rophic

Impact →

Risk No.	Description
1	Risk regarding the affordability of the additional posts as a result of the updated HRA Business Plan

12.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

12.1 No direct implications have been identified.

13.0 CONSULTATION

13.1 None identified

14.0 WARDS AFFECTED

14.1 All wards are affected.

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Date: June 2018