

REPORT TO: HOUSING, DUNDEE CONTRACT SERVICES AND  
ENVIRONMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE - 23RD MARCH 2009

REPORT ON: RESTRUCTURE OF HOMELESS SERVICES

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

REPORT NO. 90-2009

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1. To propose an interim structure for the delivery of homeless services within the Housing Department.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Committee agree:

- 2.1. The proposed restructure of Homeless Services (outlined in Appendix 2).
- 2.2. The transfer of temporary accommodation property maintenance and rent recovery functions to the Lettings and Rent Recovery Contact Centres at an appropriate date, yet to be determined.
- 2.3. Notes that the Director of Housing and Head of Personnel will progress the necessary establishment changes arising from this report.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. The changes to the Homeless Services staff structure will result in additional costs, including employer's costs, for a full financial year of £141,182. These costs will be met from the budget for Homeless Services within the Housing Revenue Account Budget for 2009/10.

**4. MAIN TEXT**

- 4.1. This restructure is being proposed to support the introduction of the Homeless Strategy 2008-2012 and was informed by the Homeless Services Review Group findings.
- 4.2. The Homeless Services Review Group made a number of observations regarding aspects of service delivery and made several recommendations relating to full integration of homeless services within the Housing Department by transferring housing management functions to relevant District Offices. The overall intention of the Review Group report was to widen access to homeless services by introducing application and advice points at a wider range of Housing Offices, to devolve housing management activities to specialist contact centres and to reshape the Homeless Services Unit to concentrate on the primary tasks of:
- a. Assessment of applications.
  - b. Providing emergency temporary accommodation.
  - c. Prevention of homelessness activity.

- 4.3. The proposed Homeless Services Unit structure will align services to focus on these tasks, but recognises that a number of related activities will also have to be carried out within these service areas. Related tasks include:
- a. Provision of reception services.
  - b. Management of storage facilities.
  - c. Support to residents of temporary accommodation.
  - d. Retained property related tasks for temporary accommodation.
  - e. Rent control of Bed & Breakfast accommodation.
  - f. Financial monitoring.
  - g. Accommodation staff management.
  - h. Health and Safety.
  - i. Strategic service development.
- 4.4. In the long term the reorganisation of homeless service delivery within the Housing Department assumes transfer of the majority of property maintenance and rent recovery functions to District Offices requiring additional resources in both the Lettings Contact Centre and the Rent Recovery Centre. The proposed restructure of Homeless Services is therefore an interim structure with Homeless Services Unit continuing to carry out all the aforementioned functions. Additional resources identified for District Offices have been incorporated into the interim structure and will transfer to the District Offices when they are in a position to accept the transfer of specific homeless services functions.

#### **HOMELESS SERVICES UNIT STRUCTURE OVERVIEW**

- 4.5. The current homeless structure (Appendix 1) does not fulfil the needs of a modern homeless service. The proposed new structure is based on having five teams each focussing on specific areas of service delivery. There will be significant areas of overlap between the teams and communication and inter team working will be vital however the intention of the team structure is to streamline service delivery and re-designate operational responsibilities to improve services to the public. Investment in this structure will also prove beneficial and cost effective with reductions in the use of temporary accommodation and pressure on waiting lists. The teams will consist of:
- a. Homelessness Prevention Team.
  - b. Homelessness Case Assessment/Management Team.
  - c. Temporary Accommodation Team.
  - d. Accommodation Management Team.
  - e. Homeless Strategy Team.

#### **HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION TEAM**

- 4.6. The structure seeks to introduce a preventative approach to service delivery by the creation of a prevention team. The team will operate on both front line service delivery and agency awareness raising/information level. It is the intention that all persons presenting at Lily Walker Centre will be seen by a member of the prevention team in order to assess the situation and look at a housing options approach to resolving the household's housing problem. The team will take a proactive approach to early intervention, providing housing advice on resolving difficulties or sourcing accommodation, signposting to specialist agencies, negotiating with landlords in all sectors where tenancies are threatened, referral into support agencies, legal services, mediation services, money advice, social and health services. The team will also carry out preventative services by delivering housing advice sessions within schools, prisons and other agencies.

- 4.7. Supporting the prevention team, but not directly in the front line will be two service specific teams:
- i. The Case Assessment and Management Team.
  - ii. The Temporary Accommodation Team.

Depending on the findings of initial interview and where homelessness is not preventable the Prevention Team will refer applicants into one or both of these teams.

#### **HOMELESSNESS CASE ASSESSMENT/MANAGEMENT TEAM**

- 4.8. The Case Assessment Team will be comprised of the existing Homeless Persons Officers. Cases referred into the Assessment Team will be those where persons are either homeless or threatened with homelessness and a preventative or housing options approach is unable to respond to the situation. The cases are likely to be high tariff and will require in-depth case management including support assessments, referrals and inter agency liaison. In addition to dealing with all priority applicants the Case Assessment/Management Team will take over responsibility for the provision of advice and assistance to non priority applicants.

#### **TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION TEAM**

- 4.9. Currently the sourcing of temporary accommodation is carried out by the Homeless Persons Officers as part of their generic homelessness duties. Due to demand and the reactive nature of finding emergency temporary accommodation much of the HPO's time is diverted from the assessment and case management functions. In addition temporary accommodation placements tend to be made at the point of crisis and are based on what is available at the time rather than making best use of temporary accommodation and fitting the available placements to the clients' needs. In order to adopt a planned approach to the provision of temporary accommodation and make best use of supported, supervised and unsupervised accommodation, it is proposed that a dedicated temporary accommodation team be set up.
- 4.10. The temporary accommodation team will take referrals from both the Prevention Team and the Case Assessment team where this service is required. The team will be tasked with overseeing DCC temporary accommodation and liaising with partner agencies to identify both emergency placements and planned admissions. The team will be responsible for admissions to temporary accommodation, terminations from temporary accommodation, provision of support to residents including coordination of partner agency support projects, resident discipline matters and coordinating move on from temporary accommodation.
- 4.11. In addition to the above, the team will be responsible for temporary accommodation property maintenance, set up and void control until such time as the property maintenance and void control functions transfer to the Lettings Centre.

#### **SUPERVISED ACCOMMODATION MANAGEMENT TEAM**

- 4.12. The Supervised Accommodation Management Team will carry out related functions to support the service teams and ensure effective supervised accommodation management and income maximisation of temporary accommodation. Currently Homeless Services Unit operates three Supervised Accommodation Units with a further Unit in development.
- 4.13. The Supervised Accommodation Management Team will carry out all supervised accommodation staff supervision and management and will also have responsibility for all health and safety related work across Homeless Services Unit. In addition the Supervised Accommodation Management Team will carry out all rent recovery work in temporary accommodation until full transfer of this function to the Rent Recovery Centre is achieved.

The team will also carry out financial control, budget monitoring, provision of reception services at Lily Walker Centre, monitoring of Bed & Breakfast service level agreements, ordering sundries and supplies, management of storage services and carrying out the retained property functions in supervised accommodation.

### **HOMELESS STRATEGY TEAM**

- 4.14. The Homeless Strategy Team will act as the engine which supports front line teams and drives service development to enable effective and efficient service delivery.
- 4.15. In addition to development, implementation and monitoring of the Homeless Strategy 2008-2012 the Strategy Team will take a lead role in the collation and analysis of statistical information to identify trends and gaps in service provision and will commission and manage partnerships and projects to address these gaps. The Strategy Team will support front line service delivery and will carry out reviews of temporary accommodation to address supply issues, specialist accommodation, temporary accommodation standards, support and move on issues.
- 4.16. In line with the preventative approach the Strategy Team will also have responsibility for further developing and coordinating activity within the voluntary and private rented sectors to increase accommodation options for priority and non priority applicants and will take the lead in developing service pathways and referral routes with a range of agencies who can resolve housing, social and economic problems which otherwise may result in tenancy breakdown. The team will take a lead role in identifying training for Council staff and partner agency staff to raise awareness of homelessness issues and encourage the adoption of a preventative approach by all agencies who encounter persons threatened with homelessness.

### **DISTRICT OFFICE SERVICES**

- 4.17. To improve access to homeless services and encourage earlier intervention and more preventative work to be undertaken, homelessness advice and application services have been introduced at both District Offices. This has been achieved by carrying out training on homelessness for the existing Advice and Information Teams and has not required any additional resource.
- 4.18. Currently all rent recovery activity for temporary accommodation is carried out by Homeless Services Unit staff. To free up resources in homeless service to concentrate on core activities and to standardise rent recovery across all Council properties it is proposed that all rent recovery work, other than Bed & Breakfast, will transfer to the Rent Recovery Centre at the West District Office.
- 4.19. Property maintenance work for temporary accommodation is currently carried out by Homeless Services Unit staff. This task places a considerable burden on Homeless Services Unit staff and detracts from the service's core purpose. In order to reshape homeless service delivery and free up resources to concentrate on core activities it is proposed that the majority of property maintenance functions transfer to the Lettings Contact Centre at the East District Office. Transfer of the property functions to specialist staff will not only enable improved homeless service delivery but will also assist in maximising income in temporary accommodation by reducing void times.

### **STAFFING**

- 4.20. To achieve the proposals and structure described above additional staffing, regradings, re-designations and transfers will be required. Full details of proposed staffing changes will be reported in an establishment change note.

**5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management.

There are no major issues.

**6. CONSULTATIONS**

- 6.1. The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Assistant Chief Executive, Head of Finance and all other Chief Officers have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

**7. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

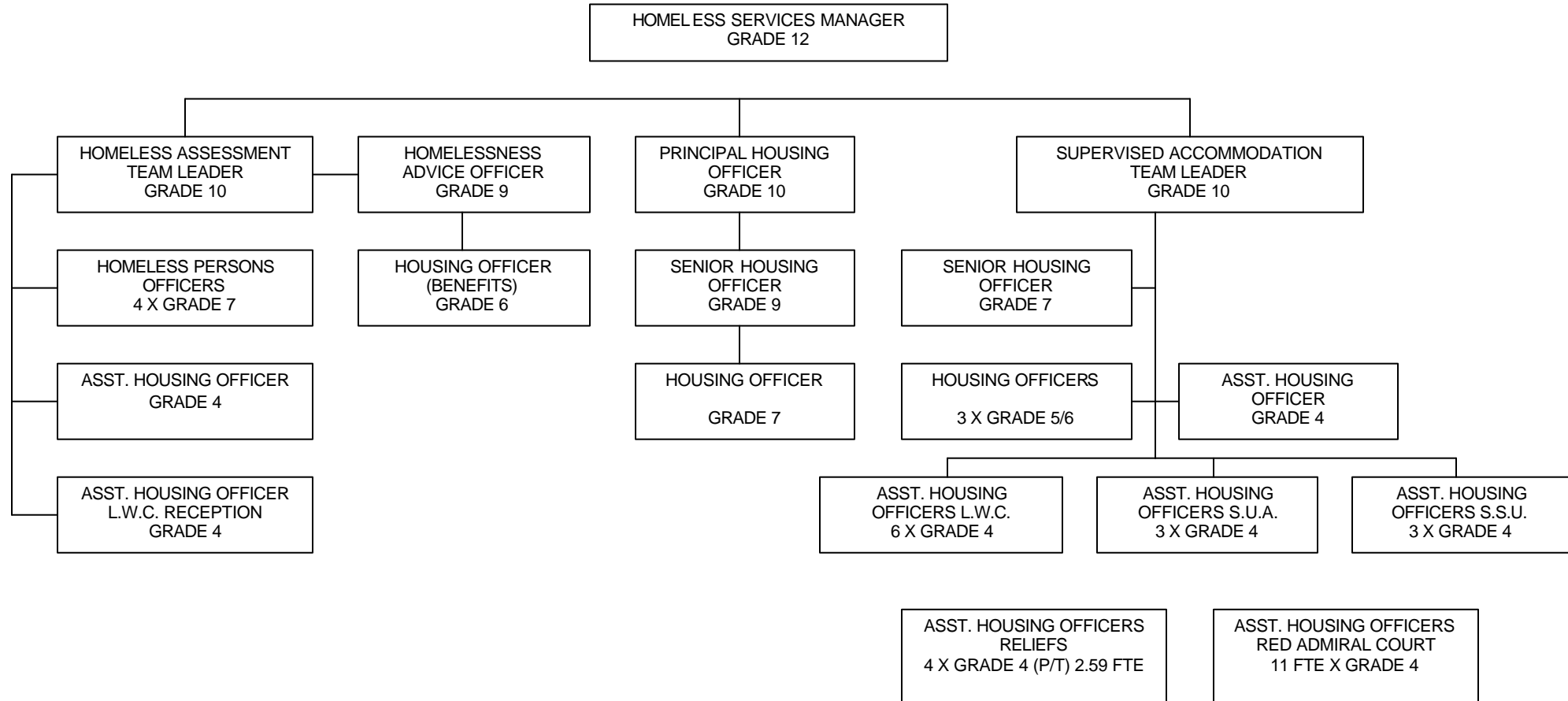
- 7.1. None.

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**FEBRUARY 2009**

**DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL  
HOUSING DEPARTMENT  
HOUSING MANAGEMENT DIVISION - HOMELESS SERVICES UNIT**

**Appendix 1**



**DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL  
HOUSING DEPARTMENT  
HOUSING MANAGEMENT DIVISION - HOMELESS SERVICES UNIT**

**Appendix 2**

