

**Manchester City Council
Report for Information**

Report to: Overview and Scrutiny Human Resources Subgroup - 6 July 2010

Report of: Director of Neighbourhood Services

Subject: Private Sector Housing Review

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:

- 1.1 To outline the transformation journey through which Private Sector Housing implemented a significantly improved service model. This model places the business in a much better position to deliver on Manchester's Community and Neighbourhood Strategies and provides the customer with a quality service.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Private Sector Housing (PSH) was transferred to the Neighbourhood Services Directorate following a re-alignment of strategic portfolios which were approved by Personnel Committee in July 2008.
- 2.2 At this meeting Personnel Committee also granted delegated authority to review and implement any subsequent revised management arrangements and structures which would be necessary to support the strategic re-alignment.
- 2.3 The former Assistant Director (Housing Investment) was given the responsibility of Acting Head of Private Sector Housing to lead and manage the service at the point it transferred across to the Neighbourhood Services Directorate. This was pending consideration of a further realignment of the service with a proposal to review arrangements within a six months timescale.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW SERVICE MODEL

- 3.1 Following a value for money review of the service in January 2009, the Department of Transformation was commissioned to deliver a blueprint setting out a new model for how PSH would need to be delivered over the next three years, together with an analysis of the impact of the change on the service, its staff and, most importantly, its customers.
- 3.2 A Project Board chaired by the Director of Neighbourhood Services was set up to make key decisions on the future of the service, and to oversee the development and delivery of the new model. Membership of the board included the Assistant Director of Strategic Neighbourhood Delivery, the Head of Private Sector Housing, DOT Project leads, Corporate Personnel and Finance, and key stakeholders from Capital Programmes and Regeneration.

- 3.3 Prior to the development of the blueprint, a number of scoping workshops were undertaken with Senior Managers within the service to determine what the core business offer for the future should be. This was followed by a full service analysis to capture the 'as is' position of the service.
- 3.4 The Trade Unions were informed at the outset that the service was subject to a major review and a series of meetings were arranged in order to communicate and consult on all aspects of change throughout the duration of the process.

4 ENGAGEMENT OF STAFF

- 4.1 In order to harness full engagement of the staff and get them to buy in to develop the new delivery model, employees from within the service were seconded to work alongside the Project Team in the Department of Transformation. In addition, Change Champions were identified from a range of employees to help shape the new structure and to deliver key messages on change to the workforce.
- 4.2 As part of the data capture analysis a meeting was held with every team across the service to identify key activities, current working arrangements, processes used to deliver tasks and record information, legislative governance, performance targets and funding targets etc.
- 4.3 Focus groups were also arranged involving all levels of staff, to identify what they felt was good about their current working practices. What worked, what didn't and where they felt there were inefficiencies which needed to be addressed.
- 4.4 All of the information captured across the service was taken forward into a 'to be' workshop which included a cross section of senior managers, change champions and stakeholders. The objective of this workshop was to develop a functional service model which would deliver an improved service in consideration of the data provided and which aligned to the strengths of PSH in meeting its objectives.

5. THE BLUEPRINT

- 5.1 At the outcome of the workshop, two service option models were identified as best placed to deliver the new service. Both of these were taken back to the Project Board for further discussion, where it was agreed that elements of each could be combined to produce the most effective service model for the future.
- 5.2 The blueprint for the new service was also developed to help PSH meet the targets set out in the Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement for housing. It took into account the direction of travel in Neighbourhood Services, the decline in Housing Market Renewal funding and the resulting need to do more with less.

6. DEVELOPING THE STRUCTURE

- 6.1 In order to drive forward the change process to achieve a vision of integrated working and neighbourhood priorities, a new post of Head of Private Sector housing was established in July 2009 and subsequently advertised. An external appointment was made to this position and the new Head of Service commenced employment with the Council on 1 March 2010.
- 6.2 During the period leading up to the new Head of Service being in place the Acting Head of Private Sector Housing continued to manage the service and remained a member of the Project board.
- 6.3 The new model which was endorsed by the Project board was subsequently shared with team managers and change champions and further workshop was arranged to challenge the model and to look at developing roles that were needed to deliver the new streamlined service and carry out the new functions. Numbers of staff needed to deliver the service were arrived at using the data available on activity and looking at the maximum and minimum numbers of staff needed per function to deliver increased outputs.
- 6.4 The final structure resulted in the reduction of posts from 175 to 126.5 (see appendix 1).

7. CONSULTATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

- 7.1 The new structure and roles were conveyed to the trade union and staff at a staff communication event on 12 November 2009. A timeline was also drawn up to determine key dates and tasks for the implementation of the new service.
- 7.2 The pre-arranged Trade Union meetings were utilised to discuss the impact on staff and to look at measures which could be put in place to support staff and to ensure that the transition of the service ran as smoothly as possible. These included a regular communication bulletin, dedicated website and email in box for staff to post their questions confidentially, frequently asked questions and answers, which were regularly updated and a dedicated HR contact
- 7.3 A communication was sent out to staff at the commencement of each period of consultation giving clear start and finish dates and informing them of the points of contact for directing queries. Change Champions were also available to talk to staff throughout the consultation process and to help explain how the new structure would work.

8. RECRUITMENT

- 8.1 To ensure that a consistent and transparent recruitment approach was adopted the interview panels were made up of managers with the appropriate level of understanding of the roles and clear expectations of the skills and competencies required.

- 8.2 Interview training was arranged for all staff prior to the start of the recruitment process.
- 8.3 Recruitment to the senior posts took place throughout December and January and included a competency based interview and a range of stakeholder panel, case study and presentational assessments.
- 8.4 The remainder of recruitment to positions below this level took place during February and March.

9. IMPACT ON STAFF

- 9.1 At the end of the recruitment episode there were a total of 57 for deployment across the Council. The deployment of these staff has been managed through a collaboration of Service Managers and the Central Resourcing Group within HR. With limited posts available across the Council, there has been an intensely focused approach to obtaining placements and opportunities which match the skills set of the staff.
- 9.2 The current position on the impact of staff is that 35 remain to be placed in permanent roles. All of these are currently in temporary placements across Council services. Since April 23 staff have been placed in permanent alternative employment and 3 have left the authority through voluntary early retirement/voluntary severance.

10 THE FUTURE

- 10.1 The new service has been up and running since April 2010, and there is now a new team in place for access through one single contact point for residents.
- 10.2 There is an ongoing review of existing policies within the service in order to ensure that we are in a position to effectively meet the service demands of the future.
- 10.3 Detailed training plans are now in place for all staff within the new service so that we can continue, through appraisal and performance management, to invest in the skills set and culture that we need to provide improved services and better outcomes for our customers for the future.

