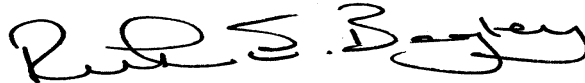


Date of issue: 31<sup>st</sup> May 2011

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>EMPLOYMENT &amp; APPEALS COMMITTEE</b> (Councillors Bains (Chair), Sharif, Coad, Dale-Gough, Dar, A S Dhaliwal, Grewal, Plenty and Stokes)
<b>DATE AND TIME:</b>	WEDNESDAY, 8TH JUNE, 2011 AT 6.30 PM
<b>VENUE:</b>	COMMITTEE ROOM 2, TOWN HALL, BATH ROAD, SLOUGH
<b>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES OFFICER: (for all enquiries)</b>	CATHERINE MEEK  01753 875011

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are requested to attend the above Meeting at the time and date indicated to deal with the business set out in the following agenda.



**RUTH BAGLEY**  
Chief Executive

AGENDA

PART 1

<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>	<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>WARD</u>
	Apologies for absence.		
	<b>CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS</b>		
1.	Declarations of Interest  (Members are reminded of their duty to declare personal and personal prejudicial interests in matters coming before this meeting as set out in the Local Code of Conduct)		

<u>AGENDA ITEM</u>	<u>REPORT TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>	<u>WARD</u>
2.	Minutes of the Meeting held on 15th March 2011	1 - 4	
3.	Appointment of Sub Committees	5 - 8	
<b>SERVICE IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES</b>			
4.	Briefing on Future Key Issues	9 - 36	All
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Changes to Schools Funding (Attachment consultation paper)</li> <li>- Changes to Local Authority Role in Benefit Fraud (Attachment consultation paper)</li> <li>- Strategic HR and PD support (Attachment from People Management Magazine)</li> <li>- Progress on Transactional Services</li> <li>- Outcomes and numbers of Expressions of Interest</li> </ul>		
5.	Housing Futures - Provision of Housing Services Update	37 - 54	All
	The Assistant Director of Housing will attend the meeting. Copies of the reports on this matter that were submitted to the Neighbourhoods and Renewal Scrutiny Panel are attached for information.		
6.	New arrangements for Health and Safety	55 - 60	All
7.	Employee Assistance Programme	61 - 64	All
8.	Update on Outplacement Support	65 - 68	All
9.	Date of Next Meeting - 22nd September 2011		

Press and Public

You are welcome to attend this meeting which is open to the press and public, as an observer. You will however be asked to leave before the Committee considers any items in the Part II agenda. Special facilities may be made available for disabled or non-English speaking persons. Please contact the Democratic Services Officer shown above for further details.

**Employment & Appeals Committee – Meeting held on Tuesday, 15th March, 2011.**

**Present:-** Councillors Bains (Chair), A S Dhaliwal, Dodds and A S Wright

**Also Present:-** Carolyn Cotterell (GMB)

**Apologies for Absence:-** Councillor Long, Qureshi and Stokes

**PART 1**

**20. Minutes of the Meetings held on 22nd September and 11th November 2010**

The Minutes of the meetings held on 22nd September and 11th November 2010 were taken as read and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

Minute 16 – The “Planning for the Future” exercise - Councillor Dodds requested an update on the number of people who were vulnerable outside the Expressions of Interest process. The Chief Executive advised that changes were still happening so exact figures were difficult to assess at this stage. In the region of 70 expressions of interest in voluntary redundancy or retirement had been accepted. The number of posts being deleted was likely to be in the region of 150. The difference between the two figures could be accounted for by posts which had been deleted because they were vacant posts, where a member of staff had been made compulsory redundant and posts where employees had been redeployed. The Chief Executive stressed that the Authority sought to redeploy members of staff wherever possible.

Minute 17 – Senior Management - Councillor Dodds drew attention to the request the Committee had made for a report on the policy of reducing temporary/ interim staff before any changes were made to the permanent frontline staff. It was Councillor Dodds’ view that this policy was not being adopted in all cases and that the Council was keeping temporary staff at the expense of permanent staff. The Chief Executive advised that the Council was using interims in situations where there was likely to be a review of staffing as this was an accepted measure to create flexibility whilst ensuring service provision. The Authority was undertaking a comprehensive review of every long term temporary or interim or consultancy post and the outcome of this review would be available at the end of March. A number of members of the Committee felt that all jobs available at the Council should be ringfenced to existing staff in the belief that with appropriate training anyone could ultimately undertake any post. The Chief Executive advised that if members were able to quote any specific instances where they believed the redeployment policy was not being applied fairly, HR would review those instances. However employees in the redeployment pool were always considered against the eligibility criteria before any post was open to other internal or external recruitment. Some posts however required specialist

## **Employment & Appeals Committee - 15.03.11**

knowledge and lengthy training in order for the member of staff to be effective and provide the level of service required by the Council.

### **21. Budget Savings - Staffing**

The Committee considered a report setting out the decisions that had been taken with regard to budget savings and particularly those affecting staffing. The report set out details of the 'Planning for the Future' exercise that had been undertaken along with the consultations to streamline senior management positions, re-integrate People 1<sup>st</sup> into the Council and identify savings within support services areas.

The report detailed the processes that were in place to assist staff who were at risk of redundancy.

Councillor Dodds indicated her concern that posts were being advertised and that these posts should have been kept pending any other staff who were at risk as part of the consultations that were currently underway. The Assistant Director of Human Resources advised that the unions had been fully involved in ring fencing and matching decisions and that posts that were advertised externally were those where there had been no-one suitable under the redeployment rules.

Whilst it was acknowledged that the Authority could not delay too long in making appointments it was agreed that consideration could be given to all vacancies below a certain level being advertised for a week internally to give staff more opportunity to express an interest in them.

#### **Resolved –**

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That consideration be given to all vacancies below a certain level being advertised internally for one week wherever possible.

### **22. Employee Relations Framework**

The Committee considered a report setting out the current position with regard to the Employee Relations Framework and identifying potential changes for the future. The Council was currently considering how to ensure the best employee relations framework for the future and it had been recognised that it may be advantageous to explore the available options. The project was in its infancy and would be subject to detailed consultation with JTUC and the Employment and Appeals Committee.

Councillor Dodds queried the list of recognised Trade Unions which were part of the Joint Trade Union Committee (JTUC) and the involvement of certain unions in Town Hall issues. The Assistant Director of Human Resources advised that the Unions listed were recognised by the Council historically and the JTUC dealt with things on a consensus basis. The review would pick up

## **Employment & Appeals Committee - 15.03.11**

these matters. An update report would be brought to the future meeting of the Committee.

**Resolved** – That the report be noted.

### **23. Future Key issues**

The Assistant Director of Human Resources advised that this was the first of a series of regular reports to the Committee identifying and informing members of potential future change. The report covered two issues that were likely to have Human Resources and staffing implications for the Council:

- Transactional Services
- Welfare Reform Bill and Universal Credit

With regard to items for future consideration by the Committee the following issues were raised:

- An update on the spend and costs of temporary staff, agency staff and consultants - as this was a matter raised on a regular basis by the committee.
- Role of Local Authority in relation to schools : Policy and Finance
- Public health responsibilities.

**Resolved** – That the report be noted.

### **24. HR Statistics Review**

The Committee considered the HR statistics for Quarter 2 (1<sup>st</sup> July – 30<sup>th</sup> September 2010) and Quarter 3 (1<sup>st</sup> October – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010) including information/trends from exit questionnaires from staff resignations over the last two quarters (July to December 2010).

Members discussed a number of issues including provision of food for staff, stress and the financial pressures some staff may be facing. Members noted that the Council was planning a series of events with regard to financial health to assist staff in difficult period.

### **25. Members Attendance Record**

Noted.

### **26. Date of Next Meeting - 4th April 2011**

It was agreed that the next meeting which had been scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> April 2011 should be cancelled.

Councillor Dodds raised an issue that had been referred to the Committee by the Neighbourhoods and Renewal Scrutiny Panel with regard to the restructuring of the housing service to incorporate former People 1<sup>st</sup> Housing

## **Employment & Appeals Committee - 15.03.11**

Management Teams. It was agreed that this would be submitted to the next scheduled meeting of the Committee and that the Assistant Director Housing would be invited to attend.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.00 pm)



## 5. Supporting Information

### Sub Committees

- 5.1 The Constitution provides for the Employment and Appeals Committee to appoint two main Sub-Committees and seat allocations have been calculated to reflect group membership and statutory proportionality entitlements as follows:

<b>Sub-Committee</b>	<b>Seats</b>	<b>Labour Conservative</b>	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>BILLD</b>
Employment Appeals S/C	3 (+ 9 deputies)	2 (+5)	1(+4)	0
Appeals S/C	5 (+ 5 deputies)	3 (+3)	1 (+1)	1 (+1)

- 5.2 The Constitution also provides for the Committee to establish an Investigating Sub-Committee and Appointments Sub Committee as required in accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules. These Sub-Committees will be appointed if the need should arise.

- 5.3 Nominations have been sought from Political Groups and are set out at Appendix B (To Follow).

### 5.4 **Terms of Reference**

The terms of reference of the Sub-Committees are set out at Appendix A for consideration and agreement by the Committee.

## 6 Appendices

- A - Terms of reference of the Sub-Committees
- B - Nominations from the political groups (To Follow)

## 7 Background Papers

- '1' - Constitution



**Employment and Appeals Committee: Sub-Committee Terms of Reference**

**Employment Appeals Sub-Committee**

To consider and determine appeals against dismissal arising from the Council's Disciplinary Policy & Procedure, Severance Policy and Procedure Guidance and Management of Absence Procedure.

**Appeals Sub-Committee**

1. To determine appeals against refusal by the Local Education Authority of applications for home to school transport which do not fall within the LEA's policy for the provision of such transport.
2. To consider complaints about the school curriculum and collective worship in accordance with Section 23 of the Education Reform Act 1988.
3. To deal with requests for the allocation of accommodation outside the Council's approved policies on referral by the Officers or by three Members of the Council.
  - a) Decisions on Appeals:- To deal with requests:
    - i) against exclusion from various schemes on matters of interpretation or value judgement;
    - ii) against cancellation of applications for false or incomplete information;
    - iii) against rent arrears recovery action and proceedings for possession;
    - iv) in respect of any discretionary housing service provided from time to time not within the established criteria, where special circumstances apply and the Director of Housing and Neighbourhood Services has refused the application;
    - v) against assessments made under the Amenity Points Scheme for housing rents or any other method of rent assessment;
    - vi) against an Officer decision concerning the rehousing of applicants on urgent medical grounds, where in the view of Members the applicant(s) should be dealt with as a priority in the light of the facts of the case, taking into account the agreed definition of guidelines;
    - vii) against determination of improvement grants.
  - b) To deal with unusual matters of day to day management referred by the Director of the Resources and Regeneration or Service Heads for guidance.
4. To hear representations and determine appeals under the statutory provisions relating to nurseries, playgroups, child minders and residential homes.
5. To consider and determine appeals against refusal by the Authority of application for Local Council Tax Discount.
6. To consider and determine appeals in accordance with Section 17(3) of the Health & Social Services and Social Security Adjudication Act 1983.

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**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Employment & Appeals Committee  
**DATE:** 8th June 2011  
**CONTACT OFFICER:** Julie Evans Strategic Director of Resources  
**(For all enquiries)** (01753) 875301  
**WARD(S):** All

**PART I**

**BACKGROUND PAPERS TO SUPPORT BRIEFING ON FUTURE KEY ISSUES**

1 **Purpose of Report**

Background Papers to support the briefing on Future Key Issues including;

1. A Paper by Local Government Futures on **Consultation on School Funding Reform: Rationale and Principles**
2. A Presentation from the Department for work and Pensions on the **Future for Benefit Fraud Services**
3. Article from People Management Magazine on the Council **Tender for Strategic HR & OD Services**

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Neil Wilcox  
Director of Funding and Research

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# A Consultation on School Funding Reform: Rationale and Principles

April 2011

## Contents

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 On 13 April 2011, the Department for Education (DfE) published its promised consultation on school funding. However, this consultation only represents stage one of a two part process and concentrates on the principles and rationale of the reform of the funding system for schools. The DfE will publish a further consultation, either in late spring or early summer 2011, on the detail taking into account views expressed in response to this initial document.
- 1.2 At the same time, DfE also issued a short consultation on detailed interim proposals for funding academies as, in their view, the current methodology is not sustainable - given the number of new academies being established prior to the possible implementation of wider system reforms.
- 1.3 This briefing note is intended to highlight the main items of note within both consultation papers.

### Key Points

- 1.4 The government wish to move to a national funding formula for schools as soon as possible because:
- It could be applied to all schools, maintained schools, Academies and Free Schools;
  - In their view, schools in similar circumstances, and with similar intakes, should receive similar levels of funding;
  - Funding for deprived pupils would be separately identified and their funding would be transparent i.e. the Pupil Premium;
  - The funding would transparent and simpler therefore easier to understand by schools and parents; and
  - The reformed funding would promote efficiency - although it is not clear from the consultation paper how this would work other than to say that schools would be at the heart of spending decisions.
- 1.5 If implemented, a national funding formula would mean that the funding of schools would no longer reflect local characteristics of the local authority or local area. There is a suggestion in the consultation that the only local factor that the DfE might consider is in the primary phase relating to small schools. This factor would apply to all primary schools.
- 1.6 Another outcome of the introduction of a national funding formula for schools would be that local authorities would no longer need to have teams dealing with schools' finance other than those providing financial services which schools buy back. This also raises the future of Schools Forums if there is no local discretion. Further, if schools are funded through a national formula will local authorities still have to prepare Schemes for Financing Schools, if not who is accountable? Allied to this, the Financial Management Standard in Schools (FMSiS) is being replaced by a much shorter version with a current title of Schools

Financial Value Standard (SFVS). The SFVS requires less policing than its predecessor, as it is mainly a school's self assessment, although the Section 151 Officer still has to sign off an annual statement. No information is given in the consultation paper as to whether the requirement for Section 151 sign-off will continue.

- 1.7 There are two areas of funding that need resolving<sup>1</sup> before the national funding can proceed:
- Funding for high cost pupils including those with Special educational needs; and
  - Early years education.
- 1.8 The success of the move from the current system to a reformed system will be dependent on timing, and transitional arrangements, to ensure there is as little funding turbulence between schools as possible; the DfE would not want a similar funding crisis to occur as that which happened in 2003/04.
- 1.9 The next consultation is promised for late spring/early summer (more likely the latter given the response date to this consultation is 25 May) and this is when, and where, local authorities and schools should expect to see detailed proposals – including, hopefully, the potential financial impacts.

## 2. The Ideal Funding System

- 2.1 The government consider that a school funding system should have certain characteristics, namely:
- **It would distribute money in a fair and logical way** – Schools in similar circumstances and with similar intakes would receive similar levels of funding;
  - **It would distribute extra resources towards pupils that need them most** – This is why the government has introduced the pupil premium;
  - **It would be transparent and easy to understand** – This would enable parents to see clearly why their child's school is funded at a certain level. Transparency would also lead to predictability at the school level;
  - **It would support a diverse range of school provision** – All schools whether they be maintained schools, Academies or Free Schools would operate on a level playing field and new schools and providers would understand their funding base; and
  - **It would provide value for money (VFM) and ensure proper use of public money** – The DfE view is that schools are best placed to make decisions on how to use funding for their pupils.

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<sup>1</sup> DfE do not appear to currently have the answers.



### Key Point

- 2.2 No one would argue that these key elements appear sensible, however it would appear that the funding reform will move towards a more simplistic model which, although, predictable may not be fairer or reflect the local area. Nevertheless, due to the diverse range of school provision envisaged by the government, it is not surprising that the department believes the funding system for schools has to be made more simplistic.

## 3. The Current School Funding System and Its Flaws

- 3.1 The current methodology of “spend plus” for funding schools was started in 2006/07 based on what each authority planned to spend on schools in the financial year 2005/06.
- 3.2 The amount spent in 2005/06 was determined by an assessment of what local authorities needs were at that time (using data becoming out of date) and the amount local authorities chose to spend on schools (which was mainly historical).
- 3.3 As a consequence, the government believes the current funding of schools is based on an assessment which is out of date, and on historical decisions which may no longer reflect local and national priorities. The government consider that current system falls short of the characteristics mentioned in paragraph 2.1 above, in particular:
- **It is opaque and extremely complex** – this is mainly as a result of the historical nature of the current methodology and number of mechanisms in the system that locks up the funding, such as the minimum funding guarantee (MFG);
  - **It is unfair as it leads to schools with similar intakes receiving very different levels of funding** – funding between similar schools can vary greatly without any explainable reason;
  - **It fails to reflect need accurately** – the current funding system does not respond to changes in needs or pupils characteristics readily; and
  - **It does not support the new school system** – with the growth in the number of new academies and the introduction of free schools the current methodology is too complex and not fit for purpose.
- 3.4 The consultation paper poses a number of questions:

- 1. Do you agree with the stated characteristics of an ideal school funding system?**
- 2. Are there further characteristics the system should have?**
- 3. Do you agree with the analysis of how the current system falls short of these**

aims?

**4. Do you agree with the case for reforming the system?**

#### Key Points

- 3.5 It is correct to say the current funding is out of date - much of the underlying data is still based on 1991 census information, historical decisions by local authorities and changes made by government over the years, therefore, it is time for a reassessment of need.
- 3.6 The reason there is a variation across England is that, in most cases, the funding will reflect the decisions of the local area.

## 4 The Pupil Premium

- 4.1 The introduction of the pupil premium in 2010/11 is seen as the first step towards the fair funding of schools as it is clear and transparent in the way it delivers additional funding for every deprived pupil. However, the government believes there is still funding within each local authority formula for deprived pupils which is opaque (e.g. it is unclear how the funding follows the pupil) and varies from local authority to local authority. As a consequence, the government believes that its 'improvements' to the current funding system will enable it to deliver its stated aim of supporting deprived pupils.
- 4.2 The consultation paper poses a number of questions:

**5. Do you agree that the aim of ensuring all deprived pupils get the same level of funding no matter where they live is the right one?**

**6. Do you agree the underlying funding formula needs to change to meet this aim more quickly and effectively?**

#### Key Point

- 4.3 This could indicate that the government may redirect funding for deprived pupils, currently within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), towards the pupil premium; this could be achieved more easily if a national funding formula was introduced.

## 5 A Fair Funding Formula

- 5.1 In the White Paper on school funding reform, the government set out a long term ambition for a fair, national funding formula. A fair funding formula, in their view, would lead to transparent funding to maintained schools and academies. It would give a clear national basis for funding schools and providing funding to meet the needs of different groups of

children; although this does not mean that every school would receive the same level of funding.

- 5.2 A key issue in any reform of the school funding system will be who takes the decision on the level of funding for individual schools. Even within a transparent, overarching national funding formula there could be locally agreed decisions to vary the funding to meet particular circumstances.
- 5.3 The advantages of using a national funding formula to set schools' budgets would, in the government's view, be its transparency; and the guarantee of comparability of funding between individual schools, whether they are in different parts of the country or between maintained schools, Academies and Free Schools in the same local area.
- 5.4 The government appear to maintain that a system that allowed local flexibility, as now, would enable similar schools to receive different levels of funding. It would also raise questions about the funding of Academies and Free Schools as the DfE would have to decide if they should also be affected by local decisions. This could lead to perverse incentives for schools to become Academies or promoters for new Free Schools in areas where funding was more favourable.
- 5.5 The consultation paper poses a number of questions:

**7. Do you think the school funding system should be based on a purely national formula? Or should there be flexibility for local decisions about funding levels?**

**8. If so, should that flexibility be limited, and if so how?**

**9. If there is local flexibility, what should the roles of local authorities, schools and the Schools Forum be in decision making?**

**10. If there is local flexibility for maintained schools, how should Academies and Free Schools be funded?**

#### Key Point

- 5.6 The government obviously had to give a choice in the consultation paper, but it is clear they do not want to carry on with the current system of funding schools. Especially, given the increasing diversity of schools provision – it would appear that the government is trying to avoid funding maintain schools differently to Academies and Free Schools, possibly so that they cannot be accused of favouring the new providers.

## 6 The Role of Local Authorities

- 6.1 Currently the majority of school funding is delegated to individual schools; but some funding is retained by local authorities. There is no set national definition regarding what funding should be delegated and what funding should be retained centrally.
- 6.2 As the government moves towards a national fair funding formula, with or without local flexibility, it will be necessary to have a clear divide between these responsibilities and the funding for them. Every school and local authority would be funded in the same way regarding these responsibilities. Schools are likely to be granted the freedom to operate particular functions through the local authority or otherwise.

### Key Point

- 6.3 If the government proceed with a national funding system for schools, the local authority would have very few responsibilities, with regard to funding schools, other than those services still retained by the local authority and financial responsibility for those services 'bought' by the schools. The question not raised in the consultation paper is what will happen to school forums? Whatever the outcome, a simpler funding methodology is expected to lead to a reduction in administration at the local authority level.

## 7 'High Cost Pupils' including Children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

- 7.1 The government believes a fair funding formula, for mainstream schools, should be able to meet the needs of most pupils - including the majority of children with SEN who are currently educated in mainstream schools. These pupils' needs would be met from the schools' delegated budget as now.
- 7.2 The government recognises that that there are many pupils whose needs are particularly costly to meet, whatever their particular setting, and these High Cost Pupils would not be readily fundable through a formulaic approach. As a consequence, the government appears to recognise that local authorities will need a substantial pot of money for High Cost Pupils outside the fair funding formula.
- 7.3 For the second consultation, DfE intend to work up proposals for how this pot of money will work. However, there are a number of important issues to be addressed, including how to:
- Distinguish between low cost needs covered by the formula and high cost needs;
  - Establish the budget for high cost pupils and divide it among local authorities;
  - Promote personal budgets as promised in the recent Green Paper *Support and aspiration: a new approach to special educational needs and disability*; and

- Whether there is a case for some degree of formulaic funding for high cost providers, while recognising that this will never be able to address all individual needs.

7.4 The recently published Green Paper posed three specific questions about funding for SEN:

- **Funding for SEN support services** - These are currently managed and funded by local authorities, but funding has also been included for them in the budgets of Academies. DfE need to reach a sustainable, affordable solution for funding SEN support services;
- **Banded funding framework** –DfE propose to explore a national banded framework for funding high-cost provision for children and young people with SEN or who are disabled, in addition to what is normally available in schools. The framework would not, however, determine the financial tariff associated with a particular type of need. This is because it is not the case that any one child with a particular category of need, for example autistic spectrum disorder, will require exactly the same support as another child with the same category of need. DfE consider that any national banded funding framework should continue to allow local leaders the flexibility to determine the levels of funding to be associated with each level and type of provision and, therefore, to put in place personalised packages of support for children, young people and families; and
- **Alignment of funding across the age range** – DfE is also committed to exploring ways in which it can bring about greater alignment of the different funding streams for children and young people with SEN, or who are disabled, from birth to 25.

7.5 The consultation paper poses a number of questions:

**11. How do you think SEN support services might be funded so that schools, Academies, Free Schools and other education providers have access to high quality SEN support services?**

**12. How do you think a national banded funding framework for children and young people with SEN or who are disabled could improve the transparency of funding decisions to parents while continuing to allow for local flexibility?**

**13. How can the different funding arrangements for specialist provision for young people pre-16 and post-16 be aligned more effectively to provide a more consistent approach to support for children and young people with SEN or who are disabled from birth to 25?**

### Key Points

- 7.6 The government will have to define the role of local authorities in respect of SEN; and devise a funding system that suits maintained schools, non-maintained schools, Academies and Free Schools. Inevitably, local authorities will be left with the difficult funding decisions.
- 7.7 Local authorities will welcome the proposal to align the funding arrangements for both pre-16 and post-16, this issue has never been resolved since the inception of the Learning and Skills Council.

## 8 Early Years Funding

- 8.1 It appears the feedback on the implementation of the Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) to the DfE has been mixed. There appears to be greater transparency concerning early education funding, and the introduction of participation funding has, inevitably, brought a greater focus on participation levels. However, there have been some suggestions that formulae used in the EYSFF pathfinders were more complex than perhaps was necessary. Additionally, whilst the EYSFF has increased awareness of tackling disadvantage, the quality of provision and the importance of flexibility, it is not clear how effective funding supplements have been in incentivising providers. There are also differences in funding rates paid to providers across the country - some argue these differences are unfair; others say that they reflect different circumstances in local childcare markets.
- 8.2 If a fair funding formula is introduced for reception to year 11 provision, there will obviously be implications for how free early education funding will operate. The relationship between free early education funding and the fair funding formula, as well as how early education funding is distributed, will need to be clarified.
- 8.3 The consultation paper poses a number of questions:

**14. How successfully has the EYSFF been implemented? How might it be improved?**

**15. How important is an element of local flexibility in free early education funding? What might alternative approaches look like?**

**16. How should we identify the total amount of funding for early years and free early education for three year olds and four year olds not in reception from within the overall amount of 3-16 funding?**

### Key Point

- 8.4 DfE are trying to find a solution regarding how to incorporate EYSFF into a national funding formula, without losing transparency and simplicity, whilst at the same time maintaining the aims of free early education.

## 9 Elements of a Fair Funding Formula

- 9.1 Any school funding formula consists of direct and proxy indicators that attempt to measure the needs of different children. The next consultation will discuss in detail such factors but there are some key principles which the government are seeking views on now.
- 9.2 A school funding formula would be largely based on pupil-led factors but it could also contain factors relating to the characteristics of the school itself. The current government view is that the funding formula should be based on pupil-led characteristics, as they are more supportive to the entry of new providers into the system, with one probable exception – a mechanism to support small schools.
- 9.3 The government is clear that any formula should include a basic per pupil amount for all pupils (this will be higher for secondary pupils than for primary) plus extra funding per deprived child. However, there may be other needs that a formula should take into account. These might include additional funding to recognise different labour costs in different areas (the ‘area cost adjustment’); other geographical factors such as rurality; funding for children for whom English is not their first language; underperforming ethnic groups; other proxy measures for additional or special educational needs; and incentives or rewards for improved performance.
- 9.4 The simpler a formula, the clearer and more easily understandable it will be. That means it should be clearer to parents and schools why they receive the funding they do, and it will be clearer to potential promoters of new schools what funding they will receive. However, a very simple formula may be less accurate at addressing the differing needs of schools and pupils.
- 9.5 The consultation paper poses a number of questions:

**17. Should the formula include only pupil led factors or also school led factors?**

**18. What factors should be included?**

**19. What is the right balance between simplicity and complexity?**

### Key Point

- 9.6 It is clear that a nationally led formula cannot reflect the characteristics of schools in a local area and no doubt local authorities or schools may wish to have some say in their local funding formulae. However, there would have to be a strong case to be made to persuade the government to go down the route of a national formula with some local discretion.

## 10 How should DfE manage the transition to the new Funding System

- 10.1 DfE expect, in implementing a new funding system, there will be a need for significant protection arrangements as some schools will see their budgets decrease and other schools will see the converse. These protection arrangements would likely be a maximum level of reduction in budget per pupil any school would receive each year (a floor); to be paid for by constraining the level of increase any school could receive (a ceiling);
- 10.2 DfE also consider that the more notice they can give schools of changes to their budgets, the more able they will be to cope with those changes. There may, therefore, be a case for setting very tight floors and ceilings in the first years of introduction of a fair funding formula, but to allow greater fluctuations over time with schools notified of these well in advance. For the current Spending Review period at least, DfE expect the pupil premium to operate outside these transitional arrangements, so every school would receive the full value of the premium, clearly in addition to the rest of their budget.
- 10.3 DfE also raise the question of the timing of the introduction of new funding - whether it is appropriate now, during a tight fiscal period; or, as they describe the current funding system as “inequitable in its distribution and inefficient”, is it more important now, than ever, to ensure that the maximum value is gained for every pound spent?
- 10.4 The consultation paper poses a number of questions:

**20. What level of change in budgets per year can schools manage?**

**21. How much time do schools need to plan for changes in their funding?**

**22. When is the right time to start moving towards a fair funding formula?**

### Key Point

- 10.5 There will be inevitably be turbulence in funding levels amongst local authorities and schools, assuming the funding reform is implemented, however the scale of this turbulence will not be known until the autumn at least. Most local authorities work on the basis of a three year implementation when reviewing their local funding formulae, whether this would be long enough in respect of the proposed reforms is unknown until, at least, the autumn once again. It is clear that the government wish to progress funding reform as soon as possible, certainly before the next election in 2015.



## 11 Academies pre-16 Funding: Options for 2012-13 academic year

- 11.1 On 13 April 2011, the government also issued a short consultation on Academies pre-16 funding. The paper notes that the main school funding reform may not be in place for the financial year 2012/13 and they consider, given the increase in the number of academies, the current funding methodology is not sustainable. However, this 'Academies' consultation does not seek to pre-empt the outcome on the main funding reform consultation.
- 11.2 Academy funding, for the academic year 2011/12, will comprise of the following blocks:
- **General Annual Grant** – this is the main element of their funding and is a replication of the local authority funding formula in which the Academy is situated but based on the previous year's local authority's Section 251 budget statement;
  - **Local Authority Central Equivalent Spend Grant (LACESG)** – as independent institutions Academies have to provide some services that the local authority used to deliver and this grant covers those services; it is calculated by the DfE using the local authority's Section 251 budget statement;
  - **Insurance** – Academies on the whole have to pay higher insurance premiums than maintained schools; and
  - **Pupil Premium** – this is additional core funding the same as in maintained schools.
- 11.3 The government consider the current system is complicated and needs reform for the following reasons:
- The process is not transparent;
  - It does not quickly reflect local circumstances;
  - There is risk of error during the duplication process;
  - The process is becoming more difficult with an increasing number of Academies;
  - It is not sustainable; and
  - It is not administratively efficient.
- 11.4 Three main options for funding Academies are proposed:
- **Roll Forward** – The DfE would ensure that per pupil funding amounts are kept level, rolling forward the per pupil budget share figures from the previous year. This does not mean that Academy funding remains the same from year to year as pupil numbers may fluctuate. This is the DfE's preferred option as they believe it to be transparent and maintains comparability to the maintained sector;

- **A fair funding formula for Academies only** - The DfE would run a single funding formula for Academies which could act as a trial for the main funding reform. However, this would mean Academy funding would move significantly away from comparable maintained schools and does not meet the DfE principle that Academies should not have financial advantage or disadvantage; and
- **Local Authority based Calculations** – Local authorities would be asked to calculate Academy budgets using the formulae they already hold. There are timing issues with this option but more importantly Academies as autonomous institutions, would be more reliant on local authority formulae and decisions.

11.5 The DfE are going to review the calculation of the LACSEG to make it simpler and easier to understand.

11.6 The consultation paper poses a number of questions:

- 1. Do you agree with our analysis that the current system is not appropriate to fund an increasing number of Academies in a fair and transparent way?**
- 2. Do you agree with the principles for an alternative method of funding Academies in 2012/13?**
- 3. Are there other aims we should have for the Academy funding system in the absence of cross-system reform, such as a Fair Funding Formula?**
- 4. Do you agree with the broad analysis of how each option might work?**
- 5. Which option do you think is the best way of funding Academies in 2012/13?**
- 6. Are there potential advantages and disadvantages in implementing each option that we have not considered?**
- 7. Local authority central spend equivalent grant (LACSEG)**
- 8. Are there changes you think we should consider to the way the Local Authority Central Spend Equivalent Grant LACSEG is calculated for FY2012/13?**
- 9. What factors would you want us to take into consideration if we were to make changes?**

Key Point

11.7 The government are keen to move to a simpler funding system for Academies, before a national school funding formula is created, because DfE are struggling to cope with the current methodology due to the increase in the number of converter Academies. Hence the

DFE's preferred option would be to ensure that per pupil funding amounts are kept level, rolling forward the per pupil budget share figures from the previous year.

## 12 Next Steps

- 12.1 These consultation papers are the first stage in the government's consultation on changes to the schools funding system. As such, DfE have requested comments on the questions asked in these documents by 25 May 2011, rather than to the usual full 12 week consultation period.
- 12.2 A response form for the 'Rationale and Principles' paper can be downloaded here:  
<http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/School%20Funding%20Reform%20-%20Response%20Form%202.doc>
- 12.3 Completed 'Rationale and Principles' questionnaires and other responses should be sent by e-mail to: [schoolfunding.consultation@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:schoolfunding.consultation@education.gsi.gov.uk) or, by post to:

Ian McVicar  
Funding Policy and Efficiency Team  
4th Floor  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London. SW1P 3BT

- 12.4 A response form for the 'Academies' consultation paper can be downloaded here:  
<http://www.education.gov.uk/consultations/downloadableDocs/Academies%20Funding%20Response%20Form.doc>
- 12.5 Completed 'Academies' questionnaires and other responses should be sent by e-mail to: [AcademiesFunding.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:AcademiesFunding.CONULTATION@education.gsi.gov.uk) or, by post to:

Annie Raw,  
Academy Funding and Finance Team,  
Department for Education,  
Level 3,  
Sanctuary Buildings,  
Great Smith Street,  
London SW1P 3BT.

**LG Futures**  
**April 2011**

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# Fraud and error: The Future

David Barr  
Department for Work and Pensions

## Why a new strategy?

- Tackling the deficit – first priority to stop leakage of public funds
- Personal interest from Prime Minister
- Exploit new opportunities – best practice in other sectors
- Consistent with 21st Century Welfare
- Levels of fraud and error relatively unchanged in recent years

## An integrated strategy

Our new strategy is based on five elements, focused on preventing fraud and error entering the system in the first place; seeking it out and correcting it where it does exist; and giving out effective punishments to those who do attack the system, deterring others from considering the same course of action

### PREVENT

Stopping fraud and error getting into the system in the first place

### DETECT

Increasing the likelihood of finding incorrect and fraudulent claims

### CORRECT

Quickly putting incorrect cases right, getting back what we're owed

### PUNISH

Strengthening sanctions for those caught

### DETER

Publicise harsh punishments and the high likelihood of being caught

## Universal Credit - simplifying and automating

### **Simplification and automation are key to achieving this reduction:**

- Wide-ranging benefit reform will drive down error through radical simplification of the benefit system, and will reduce vulnerabilities to fraud
- Designing Universal Credit to ensure common causes of fraud and error are not carried forward
- Greater automation of pre-payment checking, using new sources of data and more sophisticated analysis will prevent and identify fraud and error more quickly
- A modern Pay As You Earn system will remove most earnings incorrectness using real-time data
- Sharpen the distinction between fraud and error - a more straightforward set of obligations will provide customers no excuse for not complying, alongside more punitive sanctions for those who do decide to defraud the system



## Key strategy initiatives

- Creation of a single fraud investigation service
- Employing over 200 new fraud investigators
- Creating a new mobile regional taskforce to investigate claims in high risk areas
- Developing an Integrated Risk and Intelligence Service to act as a hub for data analytics
- Introducing tougher one and two strike rules and introducing a three strike sanction
- Abolishing cautions and imposing a minimum penalty of £350
- Introducing a civil penalty of £50 for customer error where we believe the customer has been negligent
- Naming and shaming fraudsters in local areas

## Single Fraud Investigation Service

- To be established 2013
- Will provide a unified organisation for a largely unified customer base
- Will have 200 extra investigators added to combined DWP / local authority / HMRC force
- Will mean greater consistency, impact and efficiency
- Will still have local as well as regional/ national level teams
- Provides opportunity to design and develop a new investigation service built on the best of existing practice and expertise across the welfare fraud community

## Working together

- Work to date has focused on sketching out the broad scope of each of the initiatives set out in the strategy
- In January we met with the Local Authority Associations to share our early thinking and set out our proposed next steps
- Want to involve local authorities in the design and implementation of the new fraud investigation service
- We will continue to work closely with the Associations as we move into the more detailed design and implementation phases
- Recognise your concerns – local authority cutbacks, TUPE, future for non-benefit related fraud investigations etc
- Keen to involve local authority staff in projects – look out for further details

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## Slough Borough Council to outsource HR and OD strategy

### Local authority seeks innovative solutions as it targets back-office savings

Slough Borough Council has put out a tender for strategic HR and OD advice, in an outsourcing arrangement which it says will provide better value for money than having an in-house HR director.

In an unusual move for a local authority, the council is seeking to appoint an organisation that would supply similar level advice as a head of the HR function, in a contract that would initially last up to 2 years.

Kevin Gordon, Slough's Assistant Director of Professional Services who will oversee the contract, said that the plan was part of a search for innovative solutions at a time when the council must make 20 per cent budget cuts to back-office spending.

"We have got to make efficiencies within back-office services and as part of that, we have looked at different sources of HR and OD expertise – whether it makes sense to buy in smaller bits of professional advice rather than hire an in-house head of the HR function," said Gordon. "This happens quite a lot in industry, where SMEs won't have an HR person on site at all. We've decided to go out to tender to ask for proposals from organisations for any innovative ways they have of providing the advice that we need."

He added that while the council would set minimum standards of availability and responsiveness that they were looking for under the contract, it would be up to bidders to outline exactly how they would provide the expertise and that they were open to fresh thinking. Slough also has a separate tender out at the moment for transactional HR services.

"I think a lot of local authorities are either looking at, or already have, shared services but they will only share with another local authority," said Gordon. "They might be missing out. There are big advantages in what we are doing, not just in terms of cost to the taxpayer, but in terms of flexibility and in bringing in private sector know-how that works for other organisations."

The council's in-house HR function, which now consists of 15 people, has reduced in headcount since the spending cuts were announced although Gordon said they had avoided the need to make any compulsory redundancies. The [tender for strategic HR and OD](#) runs until early June and it is intended that the contract would start later in the summer.

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**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Neighbourhoods & Renewal **DATE:** 10<sup>th</sup> February 2011  
Scrutiny Panel

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Neil Aves, Assistant Director, Housing  
**(for all enquiries)** (01753) 875527

**WARD(S):** All

**PART I**  
**FOR INFORMATION AND CONSIDERATION**

**HOUSING FUTURES - PROVISION OF HOUSING SERVICES UPDATE**  
**REPORT**

**1. Purpose of Report**

This report updates Members of the progress to date in developing the new Housing Service by combining the former People 1<sup>st</sup> Housing Management teams with their former SBC strategic housing counterparts and also outlines the next stages and draft timescales anticipated to completion of the project.

**2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Panel is requested to note the progress to date on the Housing Futures project and the proposed workstreams to be undertaken in the coming months to achieve the target go-live date of April 2011

**3. Community Strategy Priorities**

The provision of good quality, inclusive and efficient housing services are fundamental to delivering the Council's community strategy priorities and as such, ongoing, meaningful consultation with staff, tenants and stakeholders is essential in the design of structures and services that will deliver services to meet identified need.

**4. Other Implications**

(a) Financial

There are no financial consequences inherent within this report and the costs associated with the project are being closely monitored by the project board. The proposed structure, having taken account of the 'Planning for the Future' programme will release staff who have chosen to opt for voluntary redundancy or

early retirement and deliver savings to both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. The exact level of savings will not be established until the process of recruitment and redeployment has been completed and the costs of any additional compulsory redundancies become known. Members will be aware that at the outset of the project a commitment was given to tenants that any efficiency savings generated by the return to direct service provision would be reinvested to improve front line services.

#### (b) Risk Management

Since initiating the review of housing management service delivery in January of this year, the project has been managed tightly using Prince II principles and documentation. The project board initially met on a fortnightly basis which increased to weekly as the transfer date approached. Post transfer the Board has reviewed its governance arrangements with the core project team meeting weekly but a wider project team including tenant and staff representatives and otherspecialist staff meeting monthly. This approach has minimised the time spent in meetings and allowed more time to be dedicated to achieving the end result by agreed deadlines. The project board will continue to meet throughout 2010 and into 2011 until such times as the final method of service delivery has been determined and the staff assimilated into the new structure.

#### (c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The TUPE transfer of staff is now complete and has not been challenged by individual staff or trades union representatives. The due diligence process of closing down the People 1<sup>st</sup> company is now complete and was achieved without any significant issues. Face to face meetings were arranged early in the process with the Department for Community and Local Government (CLG) Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) the Audit Commission (AC) and we have now established an ongoing dialogue with the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) to appraise them of the situation in Slough and our proposals for future service delivery to ensure that we remain in accordance with the pseudo-legislative requirements for delivering front line services.

#### (d) Race Relations Amendments Act Implications

The future determination of the delivery method for housing services has been subject to Equalities Impact Assessments for both staff and service users and these have been shared with Trade Union representatives.



## 5. Supporting Information

### Background

- 5.1 Soon after the last report to Panel in December, the second round of staff consultation was completed and as there were no significant responses from staff or trade unions, the proposed structure was formally adopted and the process of populating it with staff was begun. The adopted structure charts are appended to this report at appendix A
- 5.2 The first stage was to hold competitive interviews for staff who were either ring fenced or prior considered for posts in the new structure. To reduce the uncertainty for staff this process was completed by mid December and allowed unsuccessful staff to express interests in the remaining vacant posts which were advertised internally for both Housing staff, staff in other directorates and those already on the redeployment list.
- 5.3 The proposed structure incorporated a significant increase in front line housing officers each responsible for the generic management of a patch of around 650 dwellings, while on the strategic housing side management tiers have been reduced in order to maintain existing levels of front line staff.
- 5.4 As agreed by the Cabinet in September the project continues to be governed by the following principles
- Improve the overall value for money of providing a housing service for Slough residents.
  - Improve customer experience and increase satisfaction levels for tenants, leaseholders and other residents
  - Raise the environmental quality and experience of living on our estates by more effectively joining up and coordinating service provision and achieving consistent standards
  - Develop a new housing function with an operating model that draws from best practice, tenant and staff consultation
  - Maximise resources for community participation whilst responding to and meeting the new TSA national and local standards
  - Maximising resources for dealing with anti-social behaviour issues, ensure more effective co-ordination of cases and complaints, avoiding duplication of effort and achieving value for money
- 5.5 As mentioned in December, the key objectives of this project is to deliver a step change in performance and customer care across the whole organisation and to ensure that all appointments both from internal and external recruitment are in the best interests of the Council, the recruitment process incorporates an assessment centre which is externally

facilitated and tests all applicants against the council's adopted staff and manager competencies through a number of challenging tasks appropriate to the level of the post within the organisation. Applicants who successfully complete the assessment centre are then subject to a technical interview in front of key officers already appointed to the new structure.

5.6 The first task was to appoint interim managers into the Head of Housing Management and Head of Strategic Housing posts in order to oversee the future development and direction of the service. Following the completion of the internal process a further seven applicants had been successful in gaining new posts and this left a remaining 12 posts where external applications were sought through a national advertisement which appeared in Inside Housing on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2011.

- 5.7 the posts advertised were;
- 3 x Area Housing Managers
  - Housing intervention Manager
  - Leasehold Services Manager
  - 5 x Neighbourhood Housing Officers
  - 2 x Tenancy Sustainment Officers

Shortlisting, interview and appointment to these posts is expected to be completed by the end of February but given that any appointees current in employment elsewhere will be required to give two or three months notice it is now apparent that the new structure will not be complete at the point of launch in April. Accordingly officers have worked with colleagues in HR and our partner recruitment agency Pertemps to review over 200 CV's to select suitably qualified and experienced interim staff to ensure that service continuity and the rate of improvement is maintained throughout the transitional period.

5.8 Once the structure has been finalised, a comprehensive training programme will be rolled out for all staff to give them the tools to operate effectively in the new climate. To this end a programme of 'Slough specific' training of NVQ's and Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) accredited qualifications appropriate to each tier of the organisation will be established and professional training will be seen to be the norm rather than the exception amongst competent and motivated staff within the new service. This will also enable employees to develop clear career paths strengthening our ability to retain quality staff and also to 'grow our own' starting with school leavers in tandem to the already successful NVQ's in business administration which the council currently offers.

5.9 Tenants and leaseholders have continued to be updated with progress through the pages of the monthly Housing newsletter which will continue

to be delivered throughout the next financial year. At the same time and as explained elsewhere on this agenda, the service is beginning to move on the new Tenant Services Authority (TSA) regulatory and empowerment. As part of the government's localism agenda they are promoting the concept of dual regulation whereby the housing service will be co-regulated by elected members and the tenants and leaseholders who use the services.

- 5.10 With the completion of the corporate review of office accommodation it was determined that the new Housing Service would relocate in its entirety to The Centre in Farnham Road. The first stage of this was completed on the 17<sup>th</sup> January and the full move of the remaining staff is likely before the end of the financial year. The move will allow both housing management and strategic housing to be co-located as the new service evolves while customer access will continue to be via My Council at Landmark Place.

## **6 Conclusion**

- 6.1 This report demonstrates that the project board has sustained the significant work rate associated with this proposal and has now completed the third stage of the process which was to develop a new integrated structure to deliver future services. The fourth stage will now be to fill the structure with competent and motivated staff who will deliver better services more quickly and more efficiently.

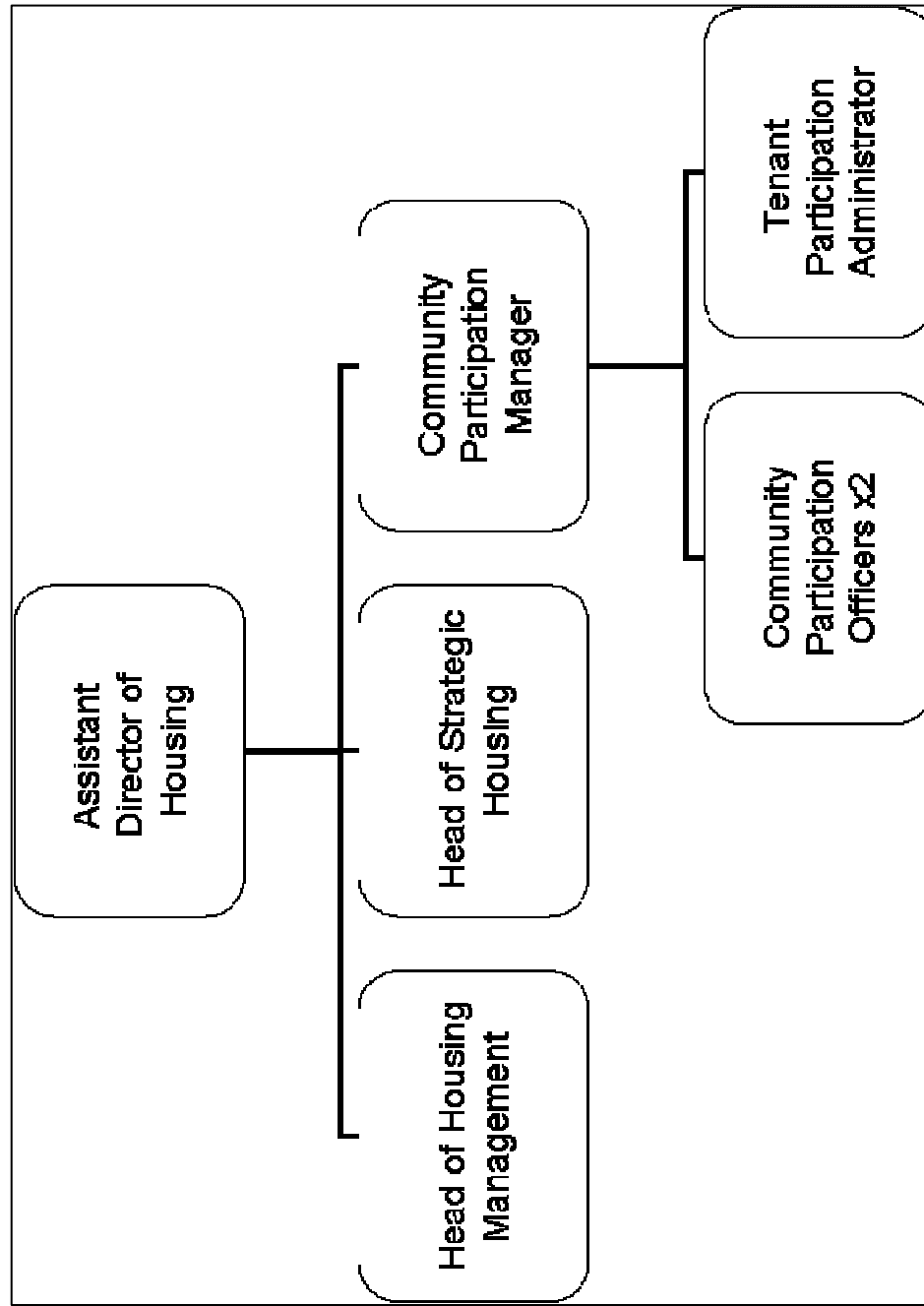
## **7 Appendices**

A – Adopted structure charts for the new Housing service

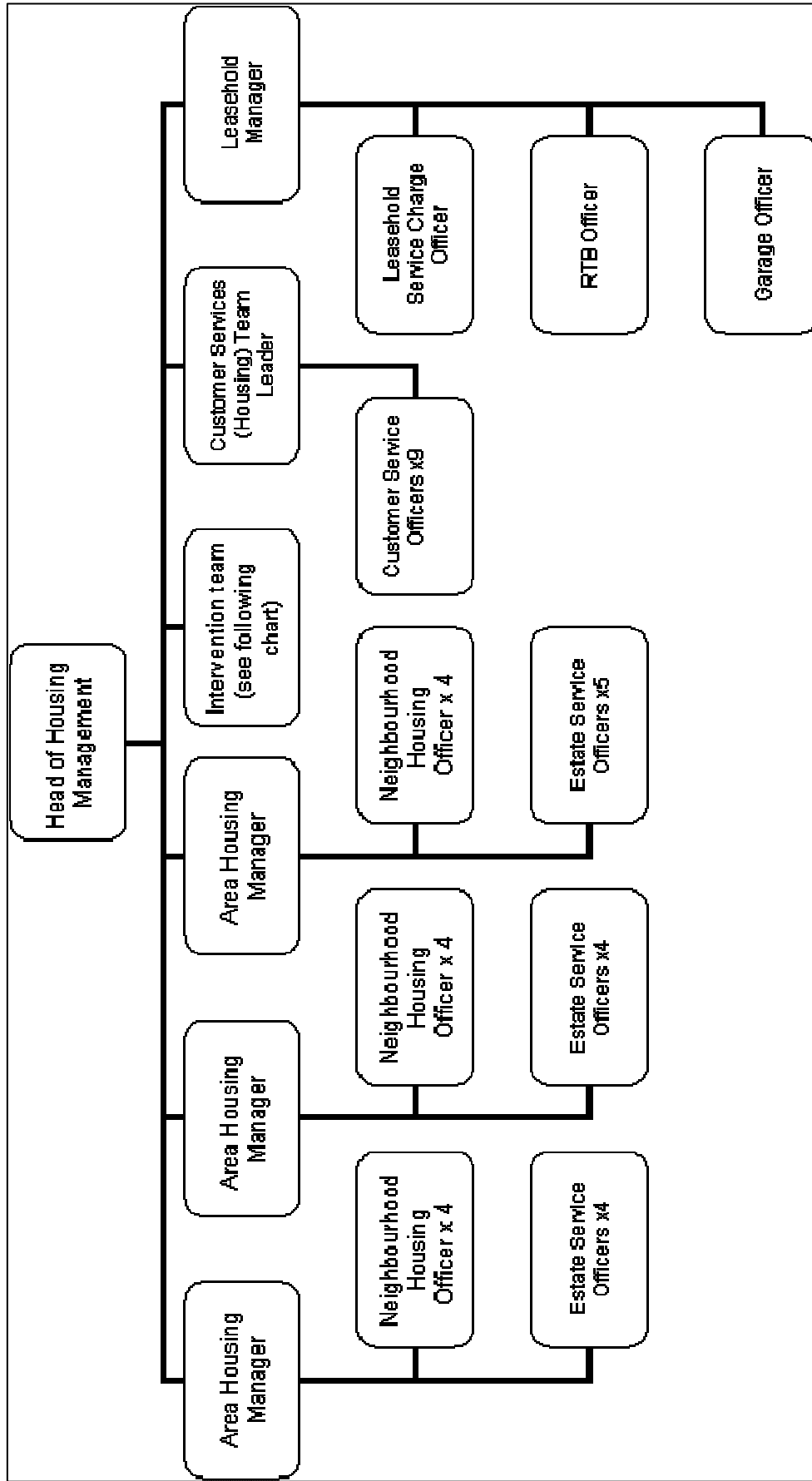
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## APPENDIX A - Proposed structure for new Housing Service

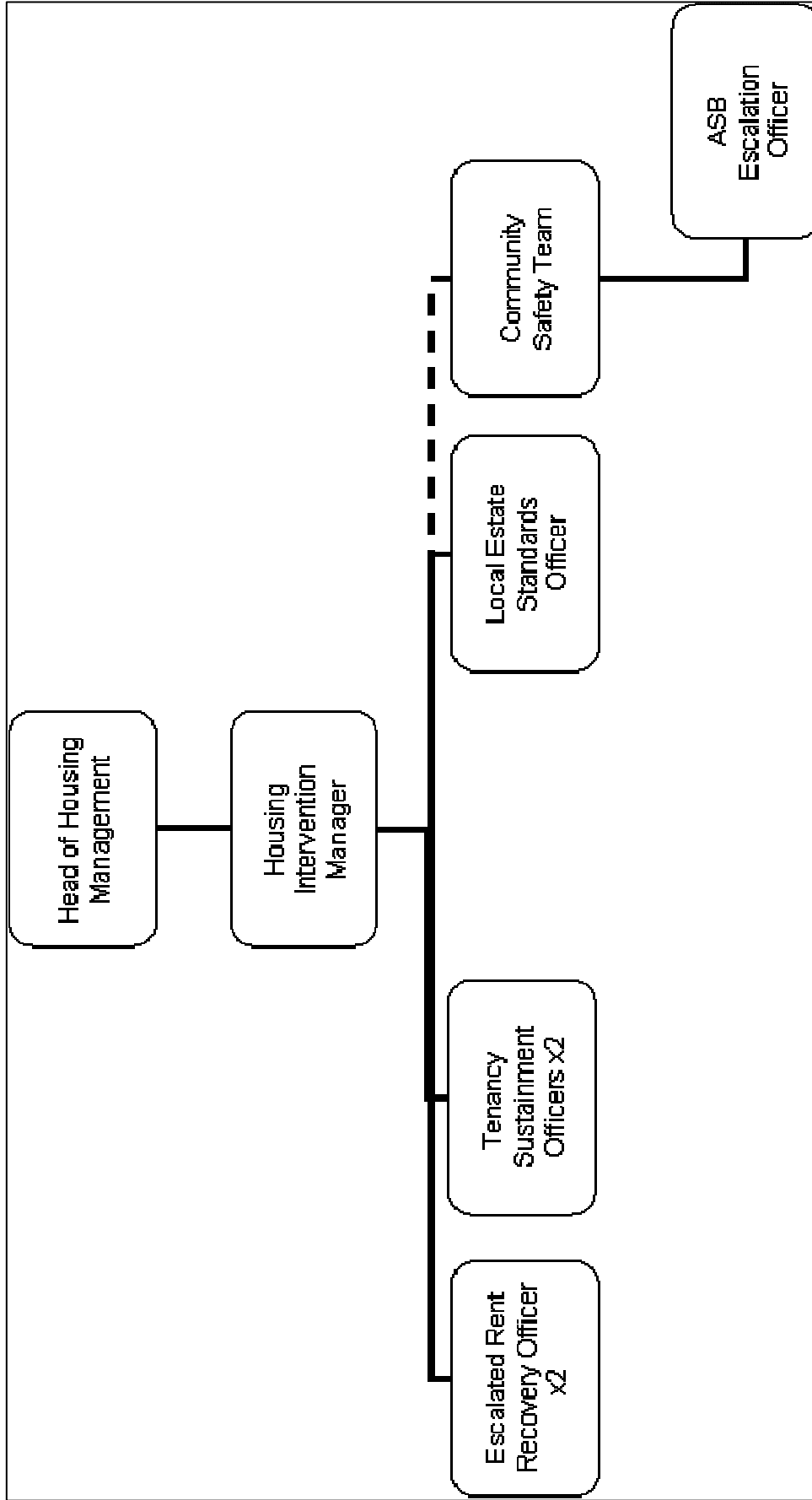
### 1.1 High Level Housing Structure



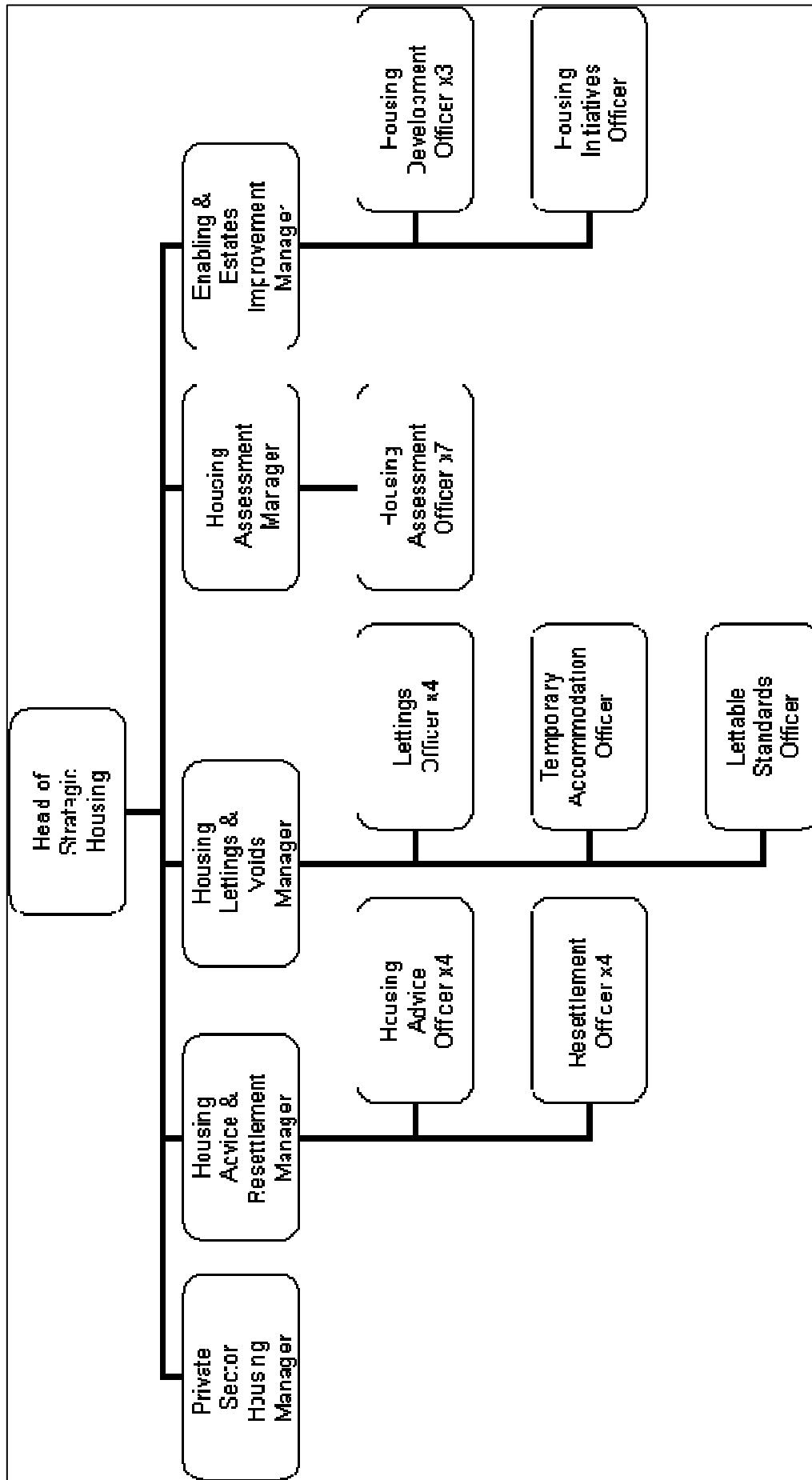
## 1.2 Housing Management Structure



### 1.3 Housing Intervention Team

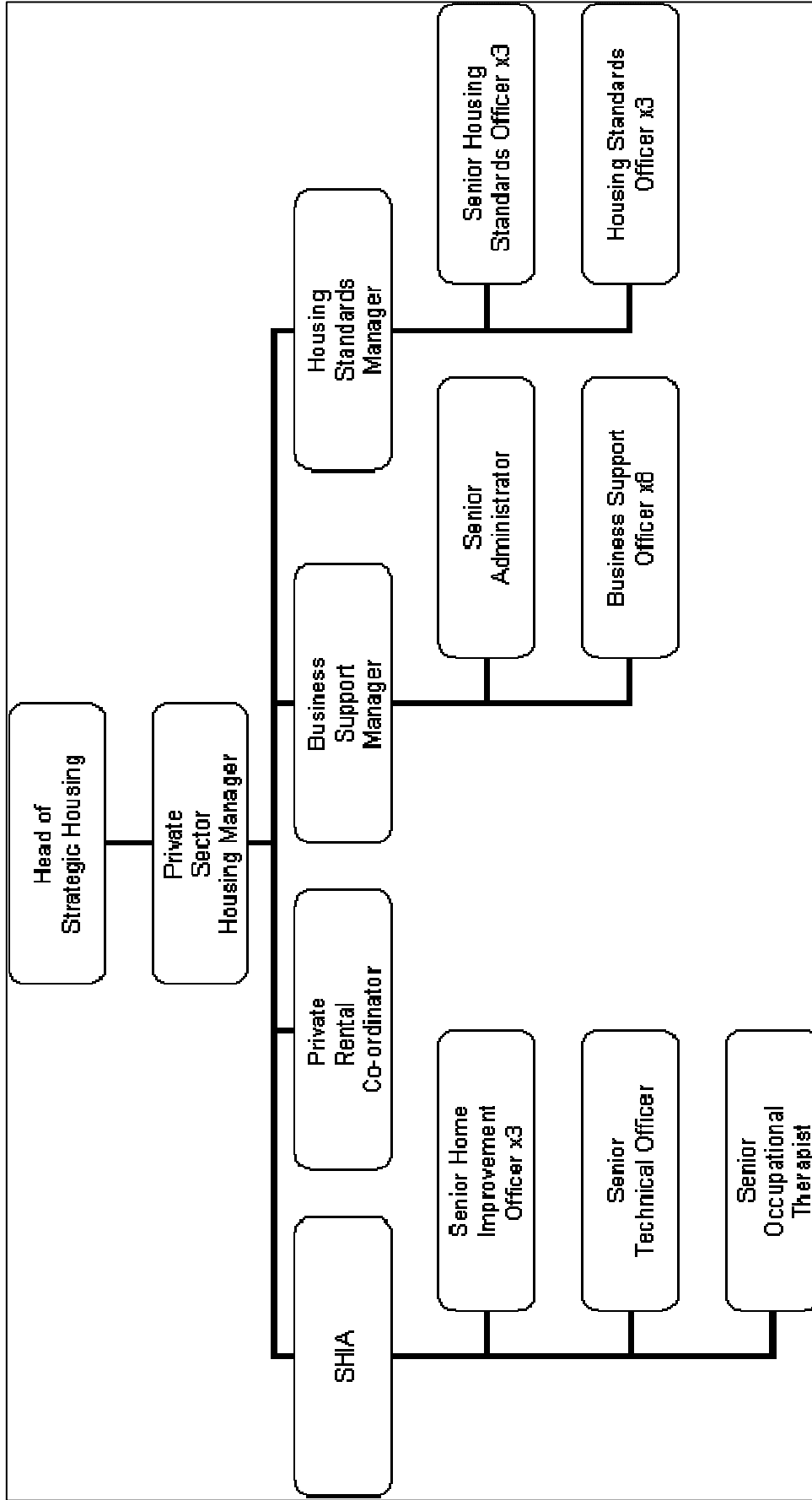


### 1.4 Strategic Housing





## 1.5 Private Sector Housing



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## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Neighbourhoods and Renewal Scrutiny Panel **DATE:** 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2011

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Neil Aves, Assistant Director, Housing  
(For all enquiries) (01753) 875527

**WARD(S):** All

### **PART I** **FOR INFORMATION**

#### **HOUSING FUTURES - PROVISION OF HOUSING SERVICES UPDATE REPORT**

##### **1. Purpose of Report**

This final report updates Members of the progress in developing the new Housing Service by combining the former People 1<sup>st</sup> Housing Management teams with their former SBC strategic housing counterparts.

##### **2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Panel is requested to note the progress to date on the Housing Futures project and that the ongoing improvement of the service will now fall to day to day operational management with the project status being closed down on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011

##### **3. Community Strategy Priorities**

The provision of good quality, inclusive and efficient housing services are fundamental to delivering the Council's community strategy priorities and as such, ongoing, meaningful consultation with staff, tenants and stakeholders is essential in the design of structures and services that will deliver services to meet identified need.

##### **4. Other Implications**

###### **(a) Financial**

There are no financial consequences inherent within this report and the costs associated with the project are being closely monitored by the project board. The proposed structure, having taken account of the 'Planning for the Future' programme will release staff who have chosen to opt for voluntary redundancy or early retirement and deliver savings to both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. The exact level of savings will not be established until the process of recruitment and redeployment has been completed and the costs of

any additional compulsory redundancies become known. Members will be aware that at the outset of the project a commitment was given to tenants that any efficiency savings generated by the return to direct service provision would be reinvested to improve front line services.

(b) Risk Management

Since initiating the review of housing management service delivery in January of last year, the project has been managed tightly using Prince II principles and documentation. The project board initially met on a fortnightly basis which increased to weekly as the transfer date approached. Post transfer the Board reviewed its governance arrangements with the core project team meeting weekly but a wider project team including tenant and staff representatives and otherspecialist staff meeting monthly. This approach has minimised the time spent in meetings and allowed more time to be dedicated to achieving the end result by agreed deadlines. The project board has continued to meet as necessary through 2011 but with the 'go-live' date of 1<sup>st</sup> April approaching the Board can be disbanded with the few remaining issues being managed through normal operational avenues.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The TUPE transfer of staff was completed without a challenge by individual staff or trades union representatives. The due diligence process of closing down the People 1<sup>st</sup> company is now complete and was achieved without any significant issues. Face to face meetings were arranged early in the process with the Department for Community and Local Government (CLG) Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) the Audit Commission (AC) and we are maintaining an ongoing dialogue with the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) to appraise them of the situation in Slough and our proposals for future service delivery to ensure that we remain in accordance with the pseudo-legislative requirements for delivering front line services.

(d) Race Relations Amendments Act Implications

The future determination of the delivery method for housing services has been subject to Equalities Impact Assessments for both staff and service users and these have been shared with Trade Union representatives.

**5. Supporting Information**  
Background

- 5.1 As the Housing Futures project is now coming to completion, it is proposed that this is the final update report on the specific issue of reintegrating staff and services from People 1<sup>st</sup> into the new Housing Service. While a few issues remain to be resolved these are merely operational and can be accommodated within the new structure which is rapidly becoming populated by new highly competent professional officers.

- 5.2 As an indication of the scale of work undertaken within this project the following issues have now been resolved
- 5.3 **Accommodation** – The corporate review of office accommodation, recommended that the new Housing Service be located at The Centre, Farnham Road. Relocation for the majority of staff occurred in January and once the refurbishment of St Martin’s Place is complete the remaining staff in Housing Needs and Private Sector Housing can be moved from Landmark Place and Airways House respectively to join the team at The Centre.
- 5.4 **Customer Access** – This aspect of the project was also linked to the corporate review of My Council. While the operational base will be at The Centre, face to face customer access will continue to be focused on Landmark Place which, being central is more convenient for the majority of customers and is in an area where people are naturally drawn to for retail purposes. Professional advice and support would be given to the public by staff attending from The Centre on a rota basis. With the creation of a customer service centre within the housing service discussions are continuing across the council to determine whether telephone access will continue to be handled at My Council or whether it would be more efficient to operate this from the Centre alongside the front line staff
- 5.5 **Consultation** - When tenants and leaseholders were originally consulted about the future delivery of housing services over 2,000 responded to the questionnaires and many took the opportunity to highlight service areas which they perceived as needing to be improved. These views were broadly supported by a number of workshops and drop in sessions held last Autumn which highlighted the key concerns to be,
- Anti Social Behaviour
  - Cleanliness and upkeep of estates
  - Access to staff – don’t know who to contact/ they don’t return our calls
  - Communication with leaseholders – they feel under valued and don’t get good information about what they are paying for
  - Mix of tenants in supported housing – de-designation is causing problems.
- 5.6 In response to each of these points, additional front line staff resources have now been introduced taking the number of Neighbourhood Housing Officers from six to twelve as well as a dedicated ASB officer being recruited and seconded to the Council’s Community Safety Team to ensure a joined up approach to tackling ASB issues. Two new posts were created within Leasehold Services to address the specific issues associated with that sector and this will allow greater transparency in how services are costed and deal with concerns that some services are not actually being delivered either in the way that leaseholders want them or in certain cases, at all. The creation of smaller patches (650 homes) for the Neighbourhood Housing Officers together with their generic responsibility for anything that occurs on that patch should

mean that tenants immediately see an improved response rate with officers being 'solution oriented' rather than in the past what appeared to be a culture of passing the buck to someone else. Tenants and leaseholders will in future only need to remember one name and one face to receive a service from Housing rather than the confusing mire that existed previously when different officers dealt with rent accounts, lettings, repairs, ASB, supported housing and arrears.

- 5.7 **Tenant Services Authority (TSA)** – The TSA have expressed concern regarding the development of local offers to tenants in accordance with the legislative timetable and while considerable work and effort was required, the local standards have been adopted along side a new proposal for informed and worthwhile engagement with tenants and leaseholders at the Customer Senate. Volunteer representatives are now being trained to participate in the co-regulation and scrutiny of the service and they will continue to be mentored and shadowed by staff and tenants from the Thames Valley Housing Association training unit until they feel competent to 'fly solo'. This is anticipated to be in October / November 2011.
- 5.8 **TUPE** – on the 1<sup>st</sup> July last year just over 100 staff were TUPE transferred to the Council from People 1<sup>st</sup>. with the process long since completed there have been no challenges to the process from individual staff or their trade union representatives. The project team made efforts to keep all staff consulted throughout the process and once the transfer had been completed all staff were offered an induction course to welcome and introduce them to the Council, it's staff and the services it provides.
- 5.9 **Staff Consultation and Restructuring** – the initial consultation and draft structure was released to staff in October 2010 and following consultation forums and over 40 1-2-1's between affected staff and the Assistant Director of Housing Services a further consultation was released in November which showed considerable changes to the draft structure based directly upon the concerns and responses from staff. The second structure was adopted by the middle of the month and immediately the council's redeployment policy was applied and staff were either confirmed in post or interviewed for alternative posts ensuring that all employees were given the maximum opportunity of securing continuing employment in a chosen work area.
- 5.10 **Recruitment** – Once the internal recruitment process was completed only three staff were left on the council's redeployment list remaining in search of alternative employment. The external advertisement process then began seeking experience staff for ;
- 3 x Area Housing Managers
  - Housing intervention Manager
  - Leasehold Services Manager
  - 5 x Neighbourhood Housing Officers
  - 2 x Tenancy Sustainment Officers

The response to the advertisement was extremely encouraging with a very high caliber of staff keen to join Slough at this time of great change. At the time of writing all manager posts have been filled along with the majority of Housing Officer posts. Within the next 12 weeks the newly recruited staff will join the service and this will enable managers to release the temporary staff currently employed for business continuity purposes. All external candidates shortlisted for interview were also required to attend the Assessment Centre previously used for the redeployment of internal staff and the impressive results obtained demonstrate that all new staff possess the skills, experience and core competencies required to deliver the step change in performance which was required by members and declared as the over riding aim at the outset of this project.

- 5.11 **Planning for the Future** – as part of the Housing Futures project the team were able to entertain requests for early retirement, redundancy or varied working hours from 13 staff. With the deletion of these posts together with those already vacant and not appearing within the new adopted structure, the overall project has delivered an estimated £200,000 saving to the General Fund and over £450,000 to the Housing Revenue Account.

## **6. Conclusion**

This report demonstrates that the project board has sustained the significant work rate associated with this proposal and has now completed the process such that the new integrated Housing Service will be formally launched in a week's time. The Scrutiny Panel or its successor will continue to receive reports as to the performance of the new service through arrangements to scrutinise the effectiveness of Resident Consultation proposals and should the new Customer Senate consider it necessary specific issues of concern will be referred to this panel for further investigation.

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**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Employment & Appeals Committee

**DATE:** 8th June 2011

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Kevin Gordon Assistant Director Professional Services  
**(For all enquiries)** (01753) 875213

**WARD(S):** All

**REPORT TITLE :** **NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR HEALTH & SAFETY MANAGEMENT**

**PART 1**  
**FOR INFORMATION/COMMENT**

1 **Purpose of Report**

To propose a new arrangement for the delivery of Health & Safety support by entering into shared arrangements for a Health & Safety Manager, Policy, Systems and Process with Reading Council and the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead.

2 **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

That the Employment and Appeal Committee notes and considers the proposals.

**Community Strategy Priorities**

A safe workforce and working environment is key to ensuring that staff are equipped to deliver on all the councils community safety priorities

- Celebrating Diversity, Enabling inclusion
- Adding years to Life and Life to years
- Being Safe, Feeling Safe
- A Cleaner, Greener place to live, Work and Play
- Prosperity for All

4 **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

Slough Borough Council will pay Reading Borough Council £22,000 per annum for the provision of the service, . This sum is to include salary and on-costs of the Health and Safety Manager, access to policy , procedures and shared training courses . The salary including on costs for a Health & Safety manager post that this service replaces is between £45– 55k.

(b) Risk Management

This policy framework from Reading places Health & Safety as an integral component of 'Risk Management' which is an underdeveloped area in the council. Some of the savings from the shared services arrangement will be used to train staff, drive further change and help embed the broader framework of risk management within the organisations psyche.

The key operational risk to within the arrangements will be the capacity of the H&S manager and the time spent travelling between three sites. To mitigate this risk an attendance schedule will be developed with the two partner boroughs to ensure travel is kept to a minimum. In addition the H&S manager will have access to Slough IT systems and email remotely.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The mechanism that will be used to access the shared services from Reading will be a section 113 Agreement. The Local Government Act 1972 (s.113) allows a local authority to enter into such an agreement with another local authority to place its officers at the disposal of the other local authority, subject to consultation. The "shared" officer will act to discharge the functions of each local authority, while avoiding the issues associated with TUPE transfers

(d) *Equalities Impact Assessment*

An Initial Screening Assessment has been carried out. The proposal has been determined as having a neutral impact.

(e) Workforce

Following the approval of this approach the Health & Safety team will work to ensure that the new policies and frameworks for Health & Safety are communicated to staff

5 **Supporting Information**

Following the resignation of the council's Health & Safety Manager an opportunity was provided to consider the most cost effective arrangements for how this Health & Safety is managed in the future. The options available were;

- Recruit to the vacant management post
- Consider utilising existing in-house H&S expertise in Environment Services
- Develop shared services arrangements with other local authorities
- External tender, private or public sector provider

An appraisal of these four options considered the potential for savings in financial year 11/12, savings beyond that period and the potential risk of service failure.

Analysis has indicated that shared services arrangements will be the most advantageous to the council. The table in the appendix outlines how this decision has been considered. Explorations have taken place with Reading Council who have provided H&S shared management arrangements in the Royal

Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead for the last twelve months. Feedback from RB Windsor and Maidenhead shows a high level of satisfaction with the new arrangements. They were particularly pleased with policy framework, accompanying guidance and codes of practice that they have adopted from Reading which have a greater emphasis on personal responsibility as well as being practical and accessible.

In RBWM the H&S advisors have been able to spend more time in the field actively assisting managers to make better use of the tools and practical templates. The key to the success in RBWM has been the time invested by the Reading H&S manager in the initial six months of the arrangements. This had included wide dissemination of the new tools and frameworks and briefings and communication with staff and managers. Reading Borough Council's Corporate Health and Safety Manager will manage the day-to-day activities of Slough Borough Council's health and safety service and team.

Reading Borough Council's Corporate Health & Safety Manager will remain an employee of Reading Borough Council and continue to be subject to the Borough Council's terms and conditions of employment.

Slough Borough Council's Health and Safety Advisors will remain as employees of Slough Borough Council and continue to be subject to the Council's terms and conditions of employment.

To revive, simplify and ensure relevancy, the proposed health & safety management system will include a new Health & Safety Policy. The Policy establishes 5 levels of health and safety responsibility. Designed to mirror the normal management arrangements of a Local Authority, it has inbuilt flexibility to cater for local reporting structures.

The new documented systems will assist managers to identify and manage their services health and safety risks. Each Directorate will have its own committee that through an action plan, identifies key risks, sets targets and monitors the performance of service areas. Each Committee will report into the Combined Consultative Forum which will monitor the overall health and safety performance of the Council.

The Borough's Health & Safety Advisors will in effect become part of a larger team that covers half of the County. They will be able share knowledge and best practice with their colleagues in the other partner organisations to improve efficiency and reduce duplication. This will lead to an improved risk management approach in their work by supporting managers to demystify health and safety. By reducing anxiety, managers will be more willing to discuss and resolve local issues, reducing the overall risks to the organisation.

Health and Safety training will also be transformed. A flexible approach where training events can be more easily tailored to delegates needs will be implemented. The tools to support this approach are already being utilised in the other partner organisations and therefore will add to the efficiencies within the proposal.

6 **Comments of Other Committees**

None

7 **Conclusion**

In addition to the cost savings, it is felt that by sharing management arrangements there will be cross-fertilisation of ideas and best practice across the three Boroughs to the benefit of all parties.

8 **Appendices Attached**

Analysis of Options

Option	How it would work	Potential to save 20% of costs in 11- 12	Potential for further savings in later years	Risks/Potential of service failure	Comments
Recruit to vacant management post	Reconfigure team roles and appoint a manager , potentially reduce number of H&S advisor from 2 to 1	<b>Achievable</b>	<b>Unlikely</b> - as team would be at minimum capacity and fee earning potential from schools would be placed at risk	<b>Low</b> - Service levels to council could be maintained with just two members of staff if efficiencies were introduced	
Consider utilising existing in-house H&S expertise in Environmental Services	Number of models could be considered. Responsibility for H&S could move to Environmental Services minus the 20% savings - the post could then be incorporated into the EH team structure. Alternatively SLA for either management of the function or overall delivery could be arranged with Professional Services.	<b>Not Achievable</b> Team Leader role would still be required	<b>Not known</b> – need to determine if synergy between external regulatory role of EH and in-house H&S advisory and operational services exists and the potential efficiencies created by joining them together.	<b>Medium</b> Some time required for EH to get up to speed  Concern going forward would be that internal H&S support may be marginalised as costs pressures on the primary regulatory function of EH occur in Financial years 12- 13	Initial feasibility discussion has taken place with Ginny De Haan
Develop shared services arrangements with other LA's	Arrangements already exist between Reading and RBWM who share a single H&S manager both currently achieve savings of circa £25k – 30k pa. Section s	<b>Achievable</b>	<b>High</b> Mirror processes , policies and working practices will exist in LA's Potential for full shared services unit shared between Reading, RBWM , saving achievable by	<b>Low</b>  Management of service would continue with existing H&S advisors with shared manager	

			reduction in H&S advisors		
External tender , private or public sector provider	Private or Public provider is contracted to provide the full H&S service offer to the council. Provider selected through competitive tendering exercise	<b>Achievable</b>	<b>Low</b>  Difficult to identify further efficiencies that could be achieved by private provider given the relatively small overall contract value approx 80k pa although public provider may be able to reduce costs through integration with their existing unit	<b>High</b>  Time taken for private sector provider to get up to speed  Potential efficiencies in future years may be at the cost of reduced service levels.	Investigation into this approach with other authorities has not provided any examples of where this has been successful

**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Employment & Appeals Committee

**DATE:** 8th June 2011

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Julie Bell HR Business Partner  
**(For all enquiries)** (01753) 875611

**WARD(S):** All

**PART I**  
**DECISION**

1 **Purpose of Report**

To update members of the Employment & Appeals committee on the new arrangements for provision of employee assistance and counselling support to staff

2 **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

- Members to note the changes made in how this service is delivered
- Members to request an annual report to help determine the effectiveness of the new service. Report to cover usage, feedback from staff where available and any other issues.

3 **Community Strategy Priorities**

Staff remain the council's most important asset, a stable and motivated workforce is critical to achieving all of the community strategy priorities.

- Celebrating Diversity, Enabling inclusion
- Adding years to Life and Life to years
- Being Safe, Feeling Safe
- A Cleaner, Greener place to live, Work and Play
- Prosperity for All

4 **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

In common with other Council support services, Human Resources have made 20% efficiency savings over the last 12 months. As part of the councils planning for the future exercise both of the part time employee counsellors requested voluntary redundancy. This has enabled the council to consider more cost effective approaches to providing this vital support service to its staff. The annual subscription for the employee assistance telephone and counselling support is approximately £15k - 20k this compares to a total cost of the two part time employee counsellors of £48,000.

(b) Risk Management

None

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

None

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

As part of the contract management arrangements with the supplier of the 24 helpline and counselling support, statistics on usage of the service area are provided. Once sufficient volume has been achieved the HR Business partners who monitor the contract will be analysing this usage figures to determine if any groups of staff are underrepresented.

(e) Workforce

This report covers the workforce implications of these changes. Changes to the arrangements for staff support have been communicated to staff through the council's grapevine newsletters, all user email and information attached to every staff member's payslip at the start of the contract in April. A web page has also been set up on SBCInsite providing full contact details, information on the services provided and a link to their website.

## 5 Supporting Information

The council has entered into a contract with PPC Worldwide for the provision of an Employee assistance programme. The service is split into two elements a 24 Hour, 365 days helpline and a counselling service. The 24 hour helpline deals with a range of personal and work-related issues including;

- Counselling over the telephone for issues such as relationship problems, coping with change, managing stress and pressure and bereavement
- Legal advice
- Budgeting and debt management assistance
- UK Citizens' Advice services e.g. consumer issues
- Manager consultation service.

The service is available to all council employees and is accessed by employees' at work or home through a dedicated helpline and website using a unique Slough Employee login.

The counselling service is initially offered over the telephone, where an assessment or triage is undertaken to determine if the employee would benefit from more in-depth face to face counselling. The counselling supplied by the new service is based on a solution focused approach, enabling employees to regain or maintain control of their lives. All face to face counselling appointments take place within a 30 mile radius of the employee's home and are conducted by appropriately qualified counsellors who are all members of the British Association for counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP).



## 6 **Comments of Other Committees**

None

## 7 **Conclusion**

The new arrangements for Employee Assistance will provide a number of benefits for employees over the previous service provided by the in-house Employee Counsellors. These are:-

- A more accessible service for staff members within a cost base that is more in tune with contemporary employee support, used by other organisations in the Public and Commercial sector.
- The staff will be able to access the service anytime they wish, not just during working hours.
- If employees are concerned about confidentiality by discussing their issues with someone in the office, they can be assured this service is totally of site and provided by a totally independent service from the Council.
- Staff will also have immediate access to experts in the legal and financial fields rather than having to wait to be referred to the appropriate body, which sometimes may have incurred them an extra cost.
- The EAP provider also provides access to all employees to their Health & Wellbeing website, which is also updated regular with any key issues of the month, e.g. they recently had articles, advice columns on Stress Management for Stress Awareness week.
- Those staff on long term sick will have the ability to access face to face counselling closer to home.

## 8 **Appendices Attached**

Information and Publicity for Staff on the Employee Assistance Programme



## PPC. Providers of your EAP and Experts at Making Life Easier.

### **No matter when and how often you need help or information, the EAP is here to help.**

Slough Borough Council is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for our employees; an environment in which employees feel supported and motivated to work to the best of their ability. Yet, like most organisations in the UK today, we have to flex and change to meet today's economic and social challenges. Change presents us all with challenges and opportunities. Some of us may view the possibilities created by change as exciting and stimulating, whilst others may be quite daunted, even wary of what the future may hold.

It's at times like this that we could all do with some extra support. For this reason Slough Borough Council are introducing the Employee Assistance Programme, (EAP), provided by PPC, to help make life easier for all our employees. The EAP, is core to our commitment of support to our employees at this time and beyond; it is available free of charge 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

We all benefit from good advice, help and support at various stages throughout our lives. The EAP is a confidential, professional and impartial service which provides expert advice, invaluable information, specialist counselling and support at any time, day or night., either over the telephone or on line.

The EAP will help you prepare for, and cope successfully with life's events - the things that could, potentially, cause you to become distracted, anxious and increase your stress levels. Such as:

- \* Changes at Work
- \* Relationships
- \* Having Children
- \* Returning to Work
- \* Retirement Issues
- \* Moving Location
- \* Staying Healthy
- \* Managing Money
- \* Responsibilities at Work

Many of these key events are an inevitable part of everyday life. PPC are experts at identifying them, planning for them, and knowing how to deal with them, helping you to stay happy, healthy, and fully focused on life and work.

### **And helping in times of crisis.**

Some events are less easy to predict, such as a bereavement or serious illness. PPC is available to provide expert, practical assistance and fully trained emotional support to help you through these difficult times.

### **The right help at the right time.**

We're available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, online or on the phone. We aim to answer your questions immediately, or refer you to the most appropriate advisor, counsellor, or source of information, including legal, financial, consumer and personal - all completely confidentially.

Call **0800 282 193** any time  
or visit [www.ppconline.info](http://www.ppconline.info) username: **slough** password: **council**

**SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Employment & Appeals Committee

**DATE:** 8th June 2011

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Kevin Gordon Assistant Director Professional Services  
**(For all enquiries)** (01753) 875213

**WARD(S):** All

**PART I**  
**FOR INFORMATION/COMMENT**

**UPDATE ON OUTPLACEMENT SUPPORT**

1 **Purpose of Report**

To update members on the arrangements in place to support staff who have been made redundant in accessing skills and knowledge to assist them in finding alternative employment. The report also contains an update of the support provided to staff who are retiring.

2 **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

- Members to note the contents of this report
- Members to request future reports and continue to monitor the level of support and help being given to staff

3 **Community Strategy Priorities**

As many of our staff live within Slough, it is important that the Council takes steps to minimise the effects of job losses in line with the Sustainable Community Strategy objectives of 'Achieving Prosperity for All'

4 **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

As part of the Planning for the Future exercise, Chief Officers Management Team identified a budget of £20k to fund outplacement support.

(b) **Risk Management**

None

(c) **Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications**

None

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

Initial analysis of take up of outplacement support indicates that is reflective of the Councils staff demographic and is balanced in relation to gender and ethnicity.

(e) Workforce

This report covers the workforce implications of outplacement provision. The availability of the support has been communicated to staff through an individual letter, which is attached to this report as an appendix.

5 **Supporting Information**

There are three types of support offered to individuals who have received notification that their employment with the council is ending.

Access to E-learning courses on Career Planning, CV's and job hunting

Access to taught sessions provided internally through the Information Advice and Guidance team (IAG) based at The Thomas Grey Centre. Course include

- 1:1 career advice
- Interview techniques – 1:1s and small group sessions
- Clinics on welfare benefits and independent financial advice
- Information on local vacancies
- Advice on transferable skills
- Skills analysis for profession matching
- Action planning
- Job search techniques including awareness of social media
- Job clubs
- Business startup advice
- STEPS Programme to promote self confidence

Access to funds for specialist skills and knowledge

We recognise that some staff may require specialist advice and guidance that we are unable to provide within the council, so staff made redundant also have the opportunity to apply for funding to assist with external personal development and career planning.

This option is targeted at staff that are being made redundant and are actively looking for a new role. The council contributes a maximum of £500 per person for support that has clear benefits to helping them secure a new job and that cannot be provided internally. Each application is assessed too ensure that the request is suitable, will genuinely assist the employee to find new work and is value for money for the council An analysis of requests to date indicates that they fall into four areas;

- Update of technical skills to enable people to return to work in the private sector
- Skills and qualification to allow people to set as self employed and start their own business.
- Increasing their professional qualifications to make them more marketable and current in the workplace.
- Development of skills in coaching and consultancy

The take up of all three options is shown in the table

E -Learning	IAG at The Thomas Grey Centre	£500 for specialist skills and knowledge development
	13	14 (Cost to the council £6212)

### Retirement Seminars

The council also has provided a Retirement seminar to inform those staff moving into retirement on key legal, money and personal matters and help them adjust to this significant change in lifestyle. This seminar was run by an external organisation with specialist skills and knowledge.

### 6 **Comments of Other Committees**

None

### 7 **Conclusion**

It is important that the Council takes some responsibility for employee's future employment and well being. The measures that the council takes as a 'good employer' are recognised and acknowledged by the staff that remain in the organisation and prospective employees.

The Council is a large employer in the town, involved in strategic partnerships that support employment, skills and the local economy, therefore support for people at risk of unemployment is crucial.

### 8 **Appendices Attached**

None

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