

REPORT TO: Housing Committee - 21 March 2005
Personnel Committee - 18 April 2005

REPORT ON: Housing Department - Housing Repairs Centre - Staffing Structure

REPORT BY: Director of Housing and Assistant Chief Executive (Management)

REPORT NO.: 138-2005

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report advises the Committees of the progress of the operation of the Housing Repairs Centre and seeks approval of a revised staffing structure.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Housing Committee approves this report.

2.2 It is recommended that the Personnel Committee approves the following recommendations:-

2.2.1 the deletion of 3 temporary posts of Contact Services Adviser, graded GS3/AP2 (£14,052 - £17,364);

2.2.2 the establishment of one post of Contact Services Adviser, graded GS3/AP2 (£14,052 - £17,364);

2.2.3 recruitment to the post of Contact Services Adviser be restricted to those members of staff currently occupying the temporary posts.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Annual operational costs will continue to be met from the Housing Revenue Account.

3.2 The reduction in staffing will result in a saving of £35,572 per annum, inclusive of employer's costs.

4. SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1. The Housing Repairs Centre opened at the end of March 2004 as part of the implementation of the Repairs Review.
- 6.2. The Housing Repairs Centre successfully provides a link between the Housing Department and Dundee Contract Services Department and enables a more joined up approach to repair reporting and instruction and greater co-ordination between those ordering work and those carrying it out.
- 6.3. The Housing Repairs Centre predominantly deals with telephone enquiries – to request a repair or about the progress of a repair.
- 6.4. At the time of implementation the Personnel Committee at its meeting on 12 January 2004 approved a temporary staff structure to match the expected workload. As agreed with the Trade Unions at the offset, a review of the workload and operations in the period since opening the Centre has been undertaken and a revised structure is proposed.
- 6.5. The current staffing structure consists of a Co-ordinator and 9 Contact Centre Advisors (3 of whom are temporary). Close monitoring of the workloads of the Centre has taken place since opening. The key issues to date have been as follows:
- 6.6. After a slow start workload has built to the point where approximately 60-70% of repairs instructed are via the Housing Repairs Centre. The remainder are processed by Area Housing Offices and include works requiring a pre-inspection or those reported in person by the tenant. The level of repairs initially reported to the Housing Repairs Centre reflects the change in process and as awareness of the service has increased so has the percentage of calls coming to the Centre. The current call based workload, in itself, is not sufficient to justify a complement of 9 Advisors.
- 6.7. Additional duties, suitable to the functions and technology available at the Housing Repairs Centre, have been allocated to the staff over the period since March 2004.

Advisors now arrange appointments for Annual Gas Servicing visits by tradesmen and associated record keeping, and undertake telephone customer satisfaction surveys with tenants who have recently experienced the service to allow us to measure whether the repairs service is operating to the high standards expected.

In addition, the Housing Repairs Centre Advisors now manage the DCS Radio Room operation during the working day thereby freeing up a DCS operative for frontline duties and continuing the joined up working theme as this brings them into direct contact with tradesmen with regard to emergency repairs.

- 6.8. The Housing Repairs Centre now regularly receives approximately 1,300-1,500 telephone calls per week.

In the interests of efficiency, it is felt that the same high level of service could be provided by 7 Advisors without any loss of performance.

The proposed staffing level allows the 8.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m. shift patterns to be efficiently covered while also enabling Housing Repairs Centre staff to carry out other repairs service duties including improving the communication flow between the tenant, Housing and DCS.

- 6.9. It is proposed that a staff structure of a Co-ordinator and 7 Contact Centre Advisors is required to manage the current workload on responsive repairs in addition to the additional duties allocated to date. This staffing level will allow sufficient flexibility to cover the shift patterns required by the Centre's opening hours of 8.00 a.m.– 6.00 p.m. Monday – Friday.

7. **CONSULTATION**

- 7.1. The Chief Executive, all Chief Officers, Dundee Federation of Tenants Association and the Trades Unions have been consulted on the contents of this report.

8. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1. None.

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6 April 2005

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6 April 2005