

# **DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Housing Committee - 19 April 2004  
Personnel Committee - 19 April 2004

**REPORT ON:** Housing Department - Regulation and Inspection Support Team

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

**REPORT NO.:** 250-2004

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1. To seek approval for the formation of a Regulation and Inspection Support Team within the Housing Department for the purpose of meeting statutory requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the promotion of the EFQM regime.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. It is recommended the Housing Committee approves the contents of this report.

- 2.2. It is recommended that the Personnel Committee approves:-

the establishment of a post of Principal Housing Officer, graded PO5-8 (£28,570 - £30,812) for a fixed term of 2 years;

the establishment of two posts of Senior Housing Officer, graded AP5 (£22,958 - £25,006) for a fixed term of 2 years.

## **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. The costs of the Regulation and Inspection Support Team can be met through realignment of HRA budgets as a result of the introduction of Supporting People. All costs can be contained within the Housing Revenue Account.

## **4. LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. The Team will ensure the Department complies with housing legislation and relates to the key themes of access to shelter and security.

## **5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- 5.1. The Team will ensure the Department complies with relevant legislation.

## 6. BACKGROUND

- 6.1. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 introduced for the first time, a Single Regulatory Framework enforced by Communities Scotland and incumbent upon all social landlords in Scotland.
- 6.2. Communities Scotland has produced extensive criteria for compliance and will assess local authority housing departments through a series of inspections. A number of local authorities are currently undergoing inspection and preliminary reports are available for one inspection (Council A).
- 6.3. Failing the inspection can lead to Ministers appointing managers to run the Housing Department and to make changes to structure and process to ensure compliance.
- 6.4. The regulation and inspection regime is in addition to the monitoring process applied by the Accounts Commission/Audit Scotland.
- 6.5. For the moment it is unknown when Dundee will be subject to inspection but it is likely to occur within three years.
- 6.6. In the run up to introducing the scheme this Council co-operated with Communities Scotland in trialing parts of the inspection process, i.e. equal opportunities (one of over 100 areas to be assessed). This trial was useful for both parties and while the result was favourable for the Department the inspection highlighted a number of procedural, documentation and training issues which have to be addressed. It was noted that previous EFQM activity within the Department was useful in answering the inspectors' enquiries and that an expansion of such activity could help prepare for any inspection.
- 6.7. Council A is the first Local Authority Landlord to be reported upon. Although generally considered a competent and compliant landlord, Council A has been awarded Grade C for Housing Management, Grade C for Property Management and Grade D for Homelessness (A = Excellent, B = Good, C = Fair, D = Poor). Reports from Council A suggest that although generally compliant with legislation the inspection revealed shortcomings in respect of documentation and process when compared with Communities Scotland assessment criteria. Similar informal reports are received from Council B who are currently under inspection.
- 6.8. This Council's experience in the trial inspection and reports from Councils currently being inspected confirms the need for Councils not only to comply with legislation but also to be to provide extensive documentary evidence of compliance and performance. This documentation is well beyond that necessary for normal operations.
- 6.9. A self assessment exercise utilising the inspection framework used by Communities Scotland has revealed that the Department, while complying with operational legislation, lacks the procedural and training documentation which will be required by the inspectors. This is not a failing on the part of the Department but rather is indication of the degree of regulation and documentation required by Communities Scotland in establishing the new regulatory framework.
- 6.10. At present, the Department has no suitable staffing resource to rectify the situation or to prepare fully for the inspection. To ensure an acceptable result from the inevitable future inspection it is considered a support team (as per 2.1) must be established. The team will allow the Department to prepare for inspection, obtain an acceptable grade.

## 7. REGULATION AND INSPECTION SUPPORT TEAM

The Team will consist of:-

One Principal Housing Officer, PO5-8 (£28,570 - £30,812)

Two Senior Housing Officers, AP5 (£22,958 - £25,006)

All for a fixed period of two years.

During the preparations for inspection the Team may require to call on the assistance of specialist officers from within the Department. In this instance the Director of Housing will ensure sufficient staff are deployed within the affected Sections to maintain service delivery.

## 8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1. The introduction of the Single Regulatory Framework has placed a burden on the Department which did not previously exist or could have been anticipated. To ensure compliance a support team is required. This support team will assist frontline staff and Team Leaders to prepare for Regulation and Inspection and promote the EFQM model of management systems. Supporting frontline staff in this way will promote departmental and staff ownership of policy developed, ensure all staff are aware of and prepared for an inspection while minimising the impact such preparation could have on service delivery.

## 9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1. The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), appropriate Trade Unions, other Chief Officers and Dundee Federation of Tenants Associations have been consulted on this report.

## 10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

Communities Scotland, Regulation and Inspection, Inspection Guidance.

Communities Scotland, Regulation and Inspection, Performance Standards.

Communities Scotland, Regulation and Inspection, Assessing Performance.

Communities Scotland, Pathfinder Inspection Report, Council A.

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12 April 2004

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12 April 2004