

**REPORT TO: HOUSING COMMITTEE – 18 JUNE 2001
PERSONNEL AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE –
18TH JUNE 2001**

REPORT ON: ESTATE SUPERVISION OFFICERS

**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL
AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES**

REPORT NO.: 260-2001

1. **PURPOSE**

- 1.1. To seek approval for the establishment of dedicated Estate Supervision Officers within Area Housing Offices.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Housing Committee approves the content of this report.
- 2.2. It is recommended that the Personnel and Management Services Committee approves the following:
- the establishment of six posts of Estate Supervision Officer (ESO), graded AP2, SCP 19-22 (£14,484-£15,717);
- the deletion of six posts of Housing Officer, graded AP2, SCP 19-22 (£14,484-£15,717).

3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1. There are no financial implications arising from this report. ESO's, graded AP2, will be created via the reconfiguration of local Housing Services and will be the result of a redeployment of existing Area Housing Officers graded AP2.

4. **LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. None.

5. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. None.

6. **BACKGROUND**

- 6.1. Current experience shows that tenants and elected members are particularly concerned about the environment in which Council housing sits. The need to address concerns about the physical environment on estates and to provide a more consistent and proactive response to anti social behaviour is paramount if we are to retain the confidence of Council tenants.

The creation of a specialist anti social behaviour team is the subject of a separate report to Housing Committee.

- 6.2. Currently Area Housing Offices provide a wide range of localised generic Housing Services. Included in these is an estate supervision/estate management role which focuses on the visual impact of an area of the failure to keep closes/bin areas clean, issues relating to wheelie bin use and refuse disposal, the condition of gardens, common areas and pathways, and unadopted roads which are, in certain instances, the responsibility of the Housing Department.
- 6.3. At present a lot of effort goes into pursuing those who fail to adhere to their tenancy agreement with respect to environmental issues.

The use of tenancy enforcement measures such as eviction has been considered and, in the vast majority of cases, is seen as a disproportionate response to the problem. That said the persistent failure to clean closes, keep gardens tidy, etc. has a detrimental effect on an area and those living in it. In addition a decline in environmental standards in Council housing estates adversely affects the lettable of properties in these areas and therefore the income stream to Dundee City Council.

- 6.4. It is felt that it would be appropriate to reconfigure our local services to focus more sharply on environmental issues in an effort to meet the rising expectations of residents, address areas where decline is evident and proactively tackle areas where decline in standards may become evident without intervention.

7. **MAIN TEXT**

- 7.1. The proposal to create ESO's to focus on environmental issues formalises an aspect of current area based working which has developed in various locations over the last year. Increasingly, Area Office staff are playing a leading role in the co-ordination of local services, e.g. ECPD, Leisure and Parks, in that they, in response to tenants group/elected member concerns, are instigating walkabouts to establish the quality, frequency and effectiveness of services from the users perspective. Walkabouts in Mill O' Mains, for example, have been well received by residents and highlight the need for co-ordination of local efforts. Because the source of the complaint about standards often comes from tenants/residents Housing staff are often the primary focus of any action plan to improve conditions.
- 7.2. As area based staff it is crucial that the ESO's work closely with Neighbourhood Service Teams to ensure that any duplication between service departments is minimised and the corporate view is acknowledged.
- 7.3. The cornerstone of the Housing Department's environmental strategy will be communal cleaning of tenemental closes/stairs/bins, etc.

As stated above considerable effort is expended on seeking to ensure that residents regularly clean closes, stairs and bin areas. This effort does not always deliver the desired results much to the frustration of residents and staff alike.

To date, successful communal cleaning pilot schemes have been delivered in Lochee and Ardler and it is now proposed to ballot residents across the city on the introduction of a self-financing citywide communal cleaning scheme.

A separate report will come to Committee on the introduction of communal cleaning in due course.

- 7.4. The number of ESO’s required in each housing management area would be determined by the Area Housing Manager subject to the prevailing circumstances in that area but would initially total six posts.

A draft job description and supporting information is provided in Appendix 1.

- 7.5. The introduction of dedicated ESO’s will ensure the co-ordination of local environmental issues. The ESO’s will work closely with the providers of the various services in the area including communal cleaners, Environmental and Consumer Protection Department, Leisure and Parks, Dundee Contract Services, Neighbourhood Resources and Development Department, etc. as well as Tenants Group and Tayside Police. The introduction of Local Repairs Team under the direct supervision of Area Offices would also assist in the maintenance of a high standard of the local physical environment with a quicker response to communal repairs requests. This model will be investigated by the Repairs Service Review Group.

Being locally based the ESO’s will be directed by the Area Housing Managers and will be aware of local Housing Service delivery issues and developments.

8. **CONSULTATION**

- 8.1. All Chief Officers, Dundee Federation of Tenants’ Associations and Trade Unions have been consulted on the contents of this report.

9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 9.1. None.

Elaine Zwirlein
DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

Signed _____

Date _____

Jim Petrie
**DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL AND
MANAGEMENT SERVICES**

Signed _____

Date _____

APPENDIX 1**ESTATE SUPERVISION OFFICER****DRAFT JOB DESCRIPTION****1. PURPOSE OF JOB**

- 1.1. In terms of the general environment of the area, monitor, maintain and seek to improve the condition and appearance of the area, especially with regard to all communal areas and public open spaces.
- 1.2. To assist in the co-ordination of the work of the relevant Departments, e.g. ECPD, Leisure and Parks, Planning and Transportation, NRDD etc.
- 1.3. To facilitate the active involvement of local tenants/residents in the condition and appearance of their area.
- 1.4. To link into the work of Neighbourhood Service Teams.

2. MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY AREAS

- 2.1. Monitor, maintain, and improve the condition/appearance of such communal areas as:
 - Closes
 - Landings
 - Front & back areas
 - Bin stores
 - Other open spaces within the area where rubbish, litter and discarded furniture etc have been dumped.
- 2.2. Liaise with Leisure and Parks re the condition of grassed areas, hedges, flowerbeds, shrubs, etc., and ensure remedial action is taken where required and that agreed maintenance contracts are adhered to.
- 2.3. Liaise with ECPD re. litter in the area, rubbish left in the bin stores following refuse collection, special uplift requests, etc.
- 2.4. Establish and maintain, in conjunction with the Tenant Participation Officer for the area, close links and regular contact with local tenant/residents and tenants/residents groups as to the general condition/appearance of the area.
- 2.5. Arrange regular area walkabouts involving representatives from local tenants/residents groups(s), the local elected member, representatives from Leisure and Parks and ECPD to monitor the area.
- 2.6. Establish liaison arrangements with ECPD's Rapid Response Team.

- 2.7. Ensure all tenants are aware of their responsibilities relative to all communal areas.
- 2.8. Take appropriate action to enforce Tenancy Agreement.
- 2.9. Respond to all correspondence relating to the duties of the post
- 2.10. Carry out New Tenant Visits to explain responsibilities relative to communal areas.
- 2.11. Canvass views from tenants/residents as to possible introduction of Communal Cleaning.
- 2.12. In consultation with tenants/residents groups explore any new initiatives for improving the general environment of the area.
- 2.13. Provide regular updates to Team Leader/Area Manager as required.
- 2.14. Maintain and provide performance statistics as required.

APPENDIX 1 (cont/d)

ESTATE SUPERVISION OFFICER

REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

- ❑ The Estates Supervision Officer (ESO) will report to the Team Leader (Estates/Repairs) for day to day supervision and allocation of duties.
- ❑ The ESO will carry out the range of duties as per attached draft Job Description.
- ❑ If an ESO is in his/her area and is approached by a tenant/resident about something not directly related to the work of the ESO then the following procedure is to be adopted:
 - The ESO will take a note of the issue raised. This might be a complaint/repair request/request for advice/comment about the service/arrears query, etc.
 - The ESO will advise the tenant/resident that whilst they do not directly deal with the issue raised they will however ensure that it is passed on to the appropriate officer.
 - Under no circumstances will the ESO advise the tenant/resident that it is nothing to do with them and that they should go to the Area Office and report it themselves.
 - The ESO will then pass the issue in question to either their Team Leader or to the appropriate officer. (N.B. the appropriate officer may not necessarily be located at the Area Office, e.g. an anti-social behaviour issue will have to be reported to the Anti-social Behaviour Unit in Shore Terrace).
 - Whoever it is passed onto will contact the tenant/resident to let them know that the issue is to be dealt with.
- ❑ As the majority of Area Office staff will be involved in specialist teams, communication between the teams will be critically important if our customers are to continue to receive a comprehensive, seamless, quality service.
- ❑ Team Leader briefings with the Area Manager will be an important way of ensuring that each team is as aware, as is practical, of what the other teams are involved in.
- ❑ Staff meetings should also include brief updates from each team as a standard agenda item.
- ❑ ESO's will be expected to be part of the rota providing duty cover within the Office.