

**REPORT TO:**        **Housing Committee - 15th May 2006**  
                          **Personnel Committee – 12th June 2006**

**REPORT ON:**        **Housing Department – Establishment of Lettings and Rent**  
                          **Recovery Contact Centres And Review of Area Housing Office**  
                          **Structure**

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

**REPORT NO.:**        **172-2006**

**1        PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1        The purpose of this report is to set out proposals for establishing Contact Centres for Lettings and Rent Recovery and the resultant restructuring of the Area Housing Offices and the Housing Services Unit.

**2        RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Housing Committee approves the following recommendations:-

- 2.1        The establishment of a Lettings Contact Centre in the new East District Housing Office.
- 2.2        The establishment of a Rent Recovery Contact Centre in the new West District Housing Office.
- 2.3        The Lettings and Rent Recovery Contact Centres to become operational in October 2006 and to be located in the new District Housing Offices as soon as building work is complete.
- 2.4        The Contact Centres to operate as detailed in section 7 of this report.
- 2.5        From October 2006 when the Contact Centres will be operational, the Housing Department will concentrate the delivery of local services from the East and West District Housing Offices.
- 2.6        The closure of the Housing Offices in Crichton Street and Kirkton in October 2006. Services will continue to be delivered via the new East and West District Housing Offices. The cash collection service will no longer be available when the Crichton Street Office closes. However, a city centre cash collection facility will continue to be available from the Finance Department Offices in City Square.

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

- 2.7        The transfer of the investment functions of the Special Needs Service to the Housing Investment Unit and lettings functions of the Special Needs Service to the Lettings Contact Centre.
- 2.8        The transfer of the lettings functions of the Special Needs Service to the Lettings Contact Centre.

- 2.9 The establishment of an Advice and Information Team based in the Reception at 3 Shore Terrace as part of the Housing Services Unit.
- 2.10 The following posts within the Area Housing Offices be deleted:
- (a) 3 posts of Area Housing Manager graded PO12-15 (£35,839 - £38,397)
  - (b) 3 posts of Team Leader graded PO1-4 (£27,038 - £29,348)
  - (c) 2 posts of Team Leader graded AP5 (£24,332 - £26,503)
  - (d) 6 posts of Team Leader graded AP4 (£21,328 - £23,610)
  - (e) 7 posts of Estate Supervision Officer graded AP2 (£16,928 - £18,324)
  - (f) 39 posts of Housing Officer graded AP2 (£16,928 - £18,324)
  - (g) 29.5 posts of Assistant Housing Officer graded GS3 (£14,828 - £15,440)
  - (h) 8 posts of Assistant Housing Officer graded GS1/2 (£10,938 - £14,575)
- 2.11 The following posts within the Applications Team be deleted:
- (a) One post of Housing Applications Co-ordinator graded AP5 (£24,332 - £26,503)
  - (b) 5 posts of Housing Officer graded AP2 (£16,928 - £18,324)
  - (c) 7 posts of Assistant Housing Officer graded GS3 (£14,828 - £15,440)
- 2.12 The following posts within the newly created District Housing Offices be established:
- (a) 2 posts of District Housing Manager graded PO12-15 (£35,839 - £38,397)
  - (b) 2 posts of District Team Leader graded PO1-4 (£27,038 - £29,348)
  - (c) 2 posts of District Supervisor graded AP4 (£21,328 - £23,610)
  - (d) 22 posts of Housing/Advice and Information Officer graded AP2 (£16,928 - £18,324)
  - (e) 12 posts of Advice and Information Assistant graded GS1-3 (£10,938 - £15,440)
  - (f) 2 posts Contact Centre Team Leader graded PO1-4 (£27,038 - £29,348)
  - (g) 2 posts of Contact Centre Supervisor graded AP4 (£21,328 - £23,610)
  - (h) 26 posts of Contact Centre Advisor graded GS3-AP2 (£14,828 - £18,324)
  - (i) 6 temporary posts of Contact Centre Advisor graded GS3-AP2 (£14,828 - £18,324)

- 2.13 The following posts be transferred from the existing Area Housing Offices into the newly established District Housing Offices:
- (a) One post of Caretaking Supervisor graded AP3 (£18,840 - £20,673)
  - (b) 4 posts of Tenant Participation Officer graded AP4 (£21,328 - £23,610)
- 2.14 The following posts within the Housing Services Unit be established:
- (a) 1 post Housing Officer (Monitoring) graded AP2 (£16,928 - £18,324)
  - (b) 2 posts of Advice and Information Officer graded AP2 (£16,928 - £18,324)
  - (c) 3 posts of Advice and Information Assistant graded GS1-3 (£10,938 - £15,440)
- 2.15 One post of Housing Services Manager, graded PO12-15 (£35,839 - £38,397), currently a temporary post, be established.
- 2.16 The performance of the Contact Centres will be closely monitored during the first 12 months. All temporary posts within the Contact Centres will be retained until a final review is carried out at the end of 12 months.
- 2.17 Currently there are 115.5 (full time equivalent) staff in the Area Offices and the Applications Team. This will reduce to 87 (full time equivalent) as a result of this restructure and the creation of the Contact Centres.
- 2.18 The report identifies a number of staffing changes. The Department will address these staffing change issues by firstly considering requests for interest of the efficiency of the service retirals. Once done, a matching process will be implemented which may include ringfencing of posts, if necessary. All this will be done in accordance with agreed procedures.

### 3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 It is anticipated that the set up costs for the two Contact Centres will be minimal. This is because the Lettings and Rent Recovery Contact Centres are to be located in the new East and West District Housing Offices. The costs associated with the new build District Offices have already been approved.
- 3.2 All future revenue costs will be met from within the existing Housing Revenue Account.
- 3.3 The structure of the two Contact Centres and the new District Housing Offices will provide an initial saving of £480,697 per annum.

However, it is anticipated that additional efficiency savings will be achieved once the Contact Centres become operational. To allow for this a number of the posts in the initial structure are temporary and these can be deleted following review if appropriate.

Final savings are expected to be in the region of £587,959. The exact amount of final savings will only be known once further discussions on possible interest of efficiency of the service retiral have been concluded.

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

4.1 None.

#### 5 **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None.

#### 6 **BACKGROUND**

6.1 At a meeting of the Housing Committee held on 10 January 2005 approval was given that the Housing Department restructure include the establishment of a Lettings and Rent Contact Centres.

6.2 The Lettings Contact Centre will bring together the application function currently carried out in Shore Terrace and the allocation function currently carried out in the Area Housing Offices. The Rent Recovery Contact Centre, will bring together pursuance of current tenants arrears which is currently carried out in the Area Housing Offices and the pursuance of ex/former tenants arrears which is currently carried out in Shore Terrace.

6.3 Therefore a number of services which are currently delivered from the Area Housing Offices will, in future, be delivered from the Contact Centres. As a result, it will be necessary to restructure the Area Housing Offices to take account of the creation of the Contact Centres.

#### 7 **PROPOSED SERVICE PROVISION**

7.1 This section of the report will detail:

- (a) which services are to be delivered from the Contact Centres and how, and
- (b) which services are to be delivered from the District Housing Offices and how.

##### **Lettings and Rent Recovery Contact Centres**

7.2 Appendix 1 gives details of the functions which are to be carried out in the Lettings Contact Centre and in the Rent Recovery Contact Centre.

7.2.1 Overall responsibility for the day to day supervision of staff and the operation of the Lettings and Rent Recovery Contact Centres rests with the District Housing Manager for the East District Housing office and West District Housing Office respectively.

7.2.2 The Housing Services Manager will be responsible for the strategic management for current and future development of Contact Centre provision.

7.2.3 The day to day operation of the Contact Centres will be the responsibility of the Contact Centre Team Leader, assisted by the Contact Centre Supervisor.

- 7.2.4 To ensure a more flexible and efficient approach, multi functional Contact Centre Advisors will be established and trained to carry out the full range of activities within the responsibility of the Contact Centre.
- 7.2.5 Each Contact Centre is to have a number of dedicated Housing Officers to carry out such tasks as relets, viewings, pre tenancy checks for the Lettings Contact Centre; and arrears visits, serving final reminders and processing abandonments for the Rent Recovery Contact Centre.
- 7.2.6 The opening hours for the Contact Centres will be 8.00 a.m. – 6.00 p.m. Monday – Friday. Staff in the Contact Centres will participate in a flexi time system.
- 7.2.7 The Contact Centres to be reviewed within 12 months of opening.

### **Area Housing Offices**

- 7.3 As two major Area Office functions, i.e. Lettings and Rent Arrears Recovery, will now be delivered from Contact Centres, it is an appropriate time to examine how housing management services are to be delivered.

Providing services locally remains an essential part of the Housing Department's future service delivery strategy. The decision to build two brand new Housing Offices is confirmation of the commitment to continue to provide services locally.

However, it has to be acknowledged that because the housing stock is continuing to decline this will have an effect on the way services are delivered. With the recent significant investment in two purpose built Housing Offices it is now time to concentrate future local housing provision in the new build East and West District Housing Offices. It is proposed to rename these "District" Housing Offices instead of "Area" Housing Offices.

Whilst the Housing Offices in Crichton Street, Maxwelltown and Kirkton will close their tenants will continue to receive a service delivered locally through the new Contact Centres and the East and West District Housing Offices. The cash collection service will no longer be available when the Crichton Street Office closes. However, a cash collection facility will continue to be available from the Finance Department Offices in City Square.

- 7.4 In addition, an Advice and Information Team is to be established and based in the Reception at 3 Shore Terrace. Setting up this Team will ensure that the impact caused by the closure of the Crichton Street Office is kept to a minimum. Those tenants who would have used the Crichton Street Office will be able to access appropriate housing services through the Advice and Information Team. The Advice and Information Team will come under the Housing Services Unit structure.
- 7.5 Employees remaining in the East and West District Housing Offices will focus on Repairs and Maintenance, Estate Supervision, Tenant Participation and Admin/Advice.
- 7.6 Appendix 2 shows the proposed structure for the East District Housing Office and the Lettings Contact Centre.
- 7.7 Appendix 3 shows the proposed structure for the West District Housing Office and the Rent Recovery Contact Centre.

- 7.8 Appendix 4 shows the proposed structure for the part of the Housing Services Unit relevant to this report.
- 7.9 Appendix 5 gives a stock breakdown for the new East and West District Offices.
- 7.10 This report also proposes to transfer the Special Needs Team from its current location within the Housing Services Unit.

With the establishment of the two Contact Centres and the resultant restructure of the existing Area Offices it is now more appropriate, from an operational point of view, for the Special Needs Team to become part of the Housing Investment Unit.

It is suggested that this take place in October 2006 with the opening of the Contact Centres.

### **Dealing with Public Contact and Queries**

- 7.10 The public will be encouraged to make contact with the Contact Centres on all matters related to the applications, allocations and arrears recovery functions. They will also be encouraged to make contact by telephone.
- 7.11 However the public will still be able to contact the District Housing Offices and if they do so their query will be dealt with.
- 7.12 In the first instance every effort will be made to ensure that queries are dealt with at first point of contact in the District Housing Office. If it is not possible to adequately deal with the query in the District Housing Office then the member of the public will be put in contact with the Contact Centre which will be able to deal with the query.
- 7.13 The Reception Area of the new District Housing Offices will be designed to ensure that members of the public will have adequate privacy when dealing with their queries.
- 7.14 Employees in both the District Housing Offices and the Contact Centres will be trained to the highest standards of Customer Care.

## **8 CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Finance), Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), all Chief Officers and trade unions have been consulted regarding the contents of this report.
- 8.2 The Trade Unions have requested that it be noted that no agreement has, as yet, been reached on a number of issues. Therefore, as part of the continuing consultation process further detailed discussion will be required on the following:
- all and any operational issues associated with the proposed matching process;
  - the new Job Descriptions;
  - redeployment options and access to retraining;

and finally, the Trade Unions wish to reserve the right to argue separately about the proposals for interest of efficiency of the service retirees.

9        **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

9.1       None.

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Director of Housing

10 May 2006

J C Petrie  
Assistant Chief Executive (Management)

10 May 2006

**APPENDIX 1****RENT RECOVERY CONTACT CENTRE**

- All activities carried out by Area Office Arrears Teams in their pursuance of current tenants rent arrears.
- All activities carried out by Rent Accounts in their pursuance of ex tenants and former tenants rent arrears.
- The processing of rent payments by Direct Debit.
- Processing on-line rent payments.
- Carry out arrears visits, deliver final reminders, process abandonments.

**LETTINGS CONTACT CENTRE**

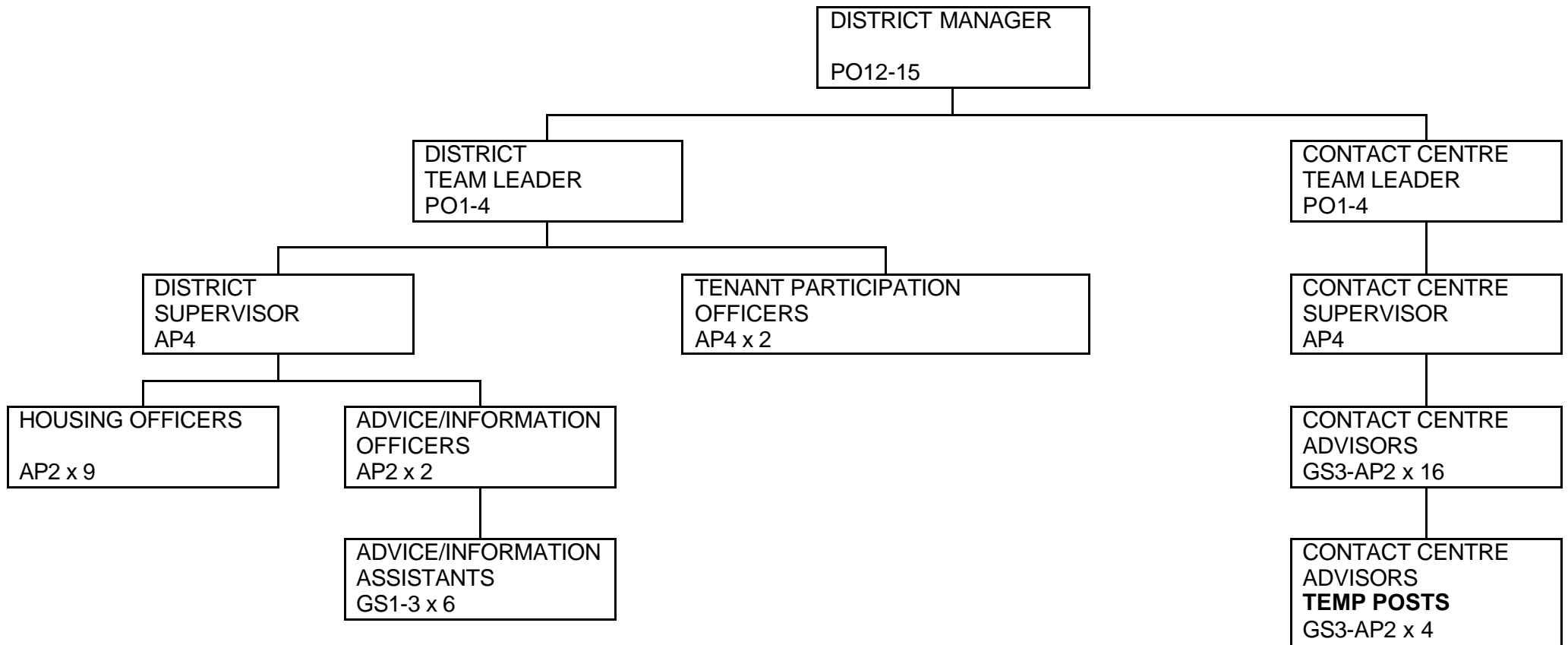
- All activities carried out by the Application Team.
- Processing terminations.
- Carry out relet inspections, viewings and pre tenancy checks.
- Organise District Offices to carry out signings (inc. Mutual Exchanges).
- Manage amended Voids Management System.
- Provision of Advice and Information.
- Administration of the Central Processing Unit for the Common Housing Register.



**APPENDIX 2**

**HOUSING DEPARTMENT**

**HOUSING MANAGEMENT DIVISION – EAST DISTRICT OFFICE / LETTINGS CONTACT CENTRE**

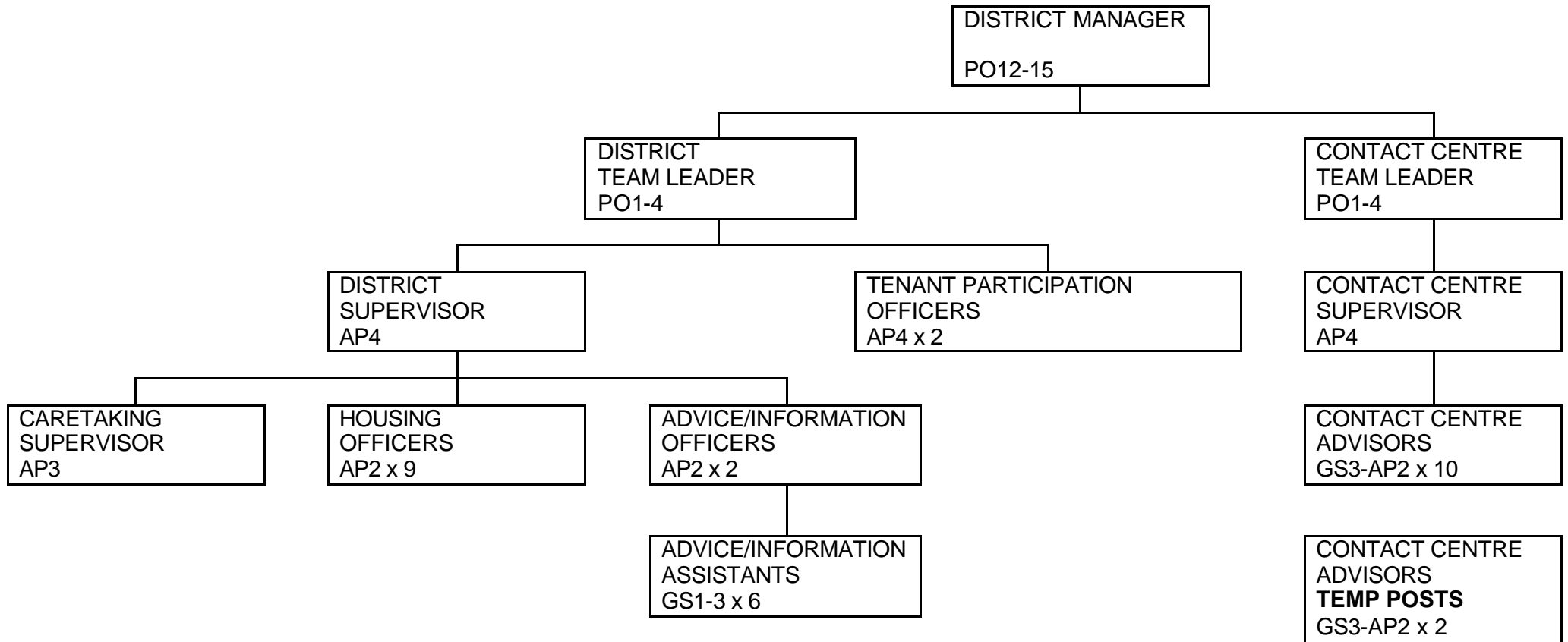


**40 + 4 Temp Posts = 44**

APPENDIX 3

HOUSING DEPARTMENT

HOUSING MANAGEMENT DIVISION – WEST DISTRICT OFFICE / RENT RECOVERY CONTACT CENTRE

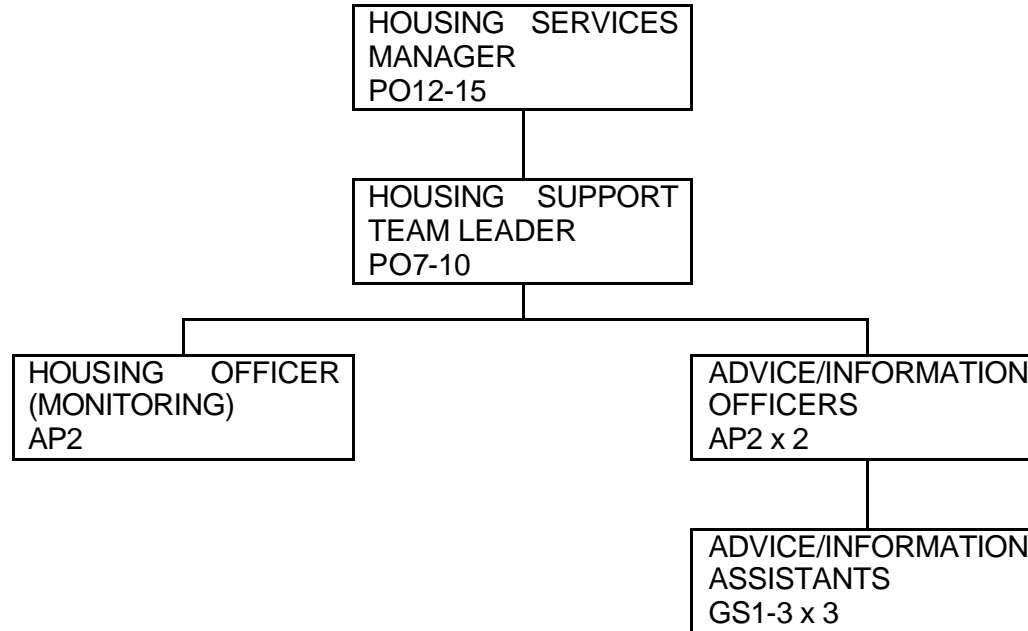


**35 + 2 Temp Posts = 37**

APPENDIX 4

HOUSING DEPARTMENT

HOUSING MANAGEMENT DIVISION – HOUSING SERVICES UNIT



## **APPENDIX 5**

### **WEST DISTRICT HOUSING OFFICE**

Beechwood  
Blackness/Logie  
Camperdown  
City Road  
Dudhope/Lawton  
Dryburgh/Foggyley  
Lochee  
Menzieshill  
Clepington/Coldside  
Hilltown  
West Central

**Total = 7,226**

### **EAST DISTRICT HOUSING OFFICE**

Baluniefield  
Barnhill  
Broughty Ferry  
Craigie  
Craigiebank/Taybank  
Craigie Drive  
Douglas/Angus  
Forthill  
Linlathen  
Mains of Fintry  
Mid Craigie  
Midmill/Happyhillock  
Mill O' Mains  
Whitfield/Longhaugh  
Ardler  
Brackens  
East Central  
Elgin/Granton  
Graham Street  
Kirkton  
St. Marys/West Kirkton  
Trottick

**Total = 7,073**