



AGENDA ITEM: 6(j)

CABINET: 16 June 2015

Report of: Assistant Director Housing & Regeneration/Transformation Manager

Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Wynn/Councillor Patterson

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**SUBJECT: ORGANISATIONAL RE-ENGINEERING – HOUSING SERVICES
(RESPONSE MAINTENANCE AND VOID MAINTENANCE SERVICES)
MANAGEMENT REPORT**

Wards affected: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To consider the findings and recommendations for savings and service improvements contained within the attached Organisational Re-Engineering – Housing Services (Response Maintenance and Void Maintenance Services) Management Report (see Appendix 1).

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the recommendations for service improvements contained within the Management Report attached at Appendix 1 to be agreed.

2.2 That the Assistant Director of Housing and Regeneration and Transformation Manager be given delegated authority to take action in connection with implementing the recommendations referred to at 2.1 above, subject to any additional resource requirements being agreed via the usual budget process.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 As referred to within the Business Plan, OR is an essential tool in helping to deliver savings and efficiencies for the authority in a planned and co-ordinated way. Clearly, there is the continued need for the authority to:-

- Secure tangible year on year savings and efficiencies, within both front and back office.
- Promote greater accessibility for all citizens by migrating services and the associated workload to 'front of house' i.e. to the website; to the Contact Centre; and face to face via the Customer Service Points (CSP) / Mobile working, thus improving service delivery from the customers' point of view.
- Encourage staff ownership and promote the work undertaken on innovation/maximising the use of new technology, especially at a time of overall budget reduction.
- Deliver more streamlined and customer centric services through harnessing the latest technology, thus maximising customer satisfaction levels in line with increasing citizen expectations.

3.2 This is the twelfth OR project the authority has undertaken, having completed similar exercises within the areas of Council Tax; Travel Concessions; Property Services; Street Scene; the corporate implementation of EDM; Environmental Health; Private Sector Housing; Sheltered Housing, Planning Services, Landlord Services and Legal & Democracy Services.

3.3 The project's main focus was to help Housing & Regeneration achieve their vision "*To be a top performing Landlord in an economically vibrant West Lancashire*". It would do this by generating service efficiencies and any savings resulting from this can then be reinvested within the service to support delivery of this vision.

3.4 The review commenced in September 2014 and looked at the Response Maintenance and Voids Maintenance Services. The attached report (Appendix 1) provides comprehensive details of the findings and subsequent recommendations for service improvements. We would particularly draw Members attention to the Executive Summary which gives a useful overview of the Project.

4.0 HIGH LEVEL FINDINGS / RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE REVIEW

4.1 Some of the key recommendations include:

- **Change the current Response Maintenance/Void Maintenance works Contracts to a "Price per property" model.** There are high levels of duplication within current processes, which often creates additional work for both the Repairs Support team, Response Maintenance Surveyors, Void Surveyors and Customer Services. This is due to the high number of 'Schedule of Rates' items which at times makes it difficult to diagnose a repair correctly. By changing the current model to a 'price per property' method this would remove this element of work completely.
- **Restructure the teams to create a Generic Response Maintenance/Void Maintenance team.** This would enable better planning of resources with Surveyors managing their own geographical areas for both Response Maintenance and Void Maintenance work.
- **Further promote and develop customer access.** Improve the level and quality of information that tenants can access at first point of contact i.e. via the Council's website/Customer Services.

- **Streamline ICT Systems to further automate processes.** An example of this is mobile working for Surveyors.

5.0 SAVINGS/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Based on the work that has been completed to date it has been estimated that a cashable saving of £71,400 could be achieved in a full year from the staffing restructure as highlighted in Section 7.0 of the Management Report attached at Appendix 1. The exact value of saving will be dependent on the detailed staffing structure that will be produced in due course as set out below in paragraph 5.2. This will then be reinvested into the Housing Revenue Account to help achieve the Services' vision.
- 5.2 There are a number of areas where additional investment may be required in order to improve service delivery and/or create greater efficiency. Whilst these costs can be met from any savings from the review and within existing Housing Revenue budgets wherever possible, any additional expenditure will be reported to Members for authorisation where appropriate and in order to agree there is a valid business case. However, the OR Manager has engaged with BTLS and Housing Service Development team during the review in order to confirm, in principle, that all of the recommendations requiring ICT development are achievable. In order to obtain detailed costings for each recommendation and to satisfy a business case for each initiative, Service Managers will continue to work closely with BTLS to produce a detailed Action plan.
- 5.3 Members may recall a recent review being completed within Housing and Regenerations Landlords Services section during 2014/15. This review identified a number of ICT improvements for example; the creation of a Customer sign in on the Councils Website, further develop/integrate Housings QL database system and Front Offices Customer Relations Management system, introduction of Mobile Working for Housing Officers. A number of recommendations contained within this review are therefore an extension of Landlord Services review and so the foundations for this work are already scheduled to be completed within the Landlord Services Implementation programme.

6.0 HR IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 As highlighted in Section 5.2 of the Management Report attached at Appendix 1, the Assistant Director of Housing and Regeneration will produce a detailed staffing structure in conjunction with the HR Advisor prior to the implementation of the proposed restructure. This will be subject to the normal consultation arrangements and redeployment considerations as appropriate.
- 6.2 Any staffing implications will be managed in accordance with the Council's redundancy and redeployment policy.

7.0 IMPLEMENTATION

- 7.1 There are a number of recommendations within the report, which require ICT development and for this reason it's estimated that the implementation will take approximately 9 months. However, this will be done over managed stages, each representing a practical approach for delivering the proposed service

improvements within a realistic timescale. The Property Services Manager will lead the implementation team to deliver the agreed recommendations and Members will be kept apprised of this work as it progresses.

8.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

8.1 OR has helped to generate savings for the authority, whilst simultaneously driving up quality of services.

9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

9.1 Risk assessments have been conducted throughout the project. Any potential risks are identified within each section of the Management Report attached at Appendix 1.

Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached as an Appendix 2 to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Organisational Re-Engineering – Housing Services (Response Maintenance and Voids Maintenance Services) Management Report (inc. Appendices)

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 3: Minute of the Landlord Services Committee (Cabinet Working Group) held on 11 June 2015 (to follow)