

REPORT



To: CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE		Subject: TRANSFER OF TENANTS RIGHTS TRANSACTIONS TO PARALEGALS AND OTHER PARALEGAL ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN LEGAL SERVICES
From: HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES		
Date: 7 October 2009	Ref: JM/AT	

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of (1) the successful completion of the transfer of tenants rights transactions from qualified solicitors to paralegal staff; (2) further paralegal arrangements in the Litigation and Advice section of Legal Services; (3) paralegal arrangements within licensing services; (4) other staffing changes in Legal Services and (5) consequential savings.

1. Completion of Transfer of Tenants Rights Transactions to Paralegals

The Best Value Review of Tenants Rights Transactions was presented to Committee on 23 August, 2007. I was authorised to implement the recommendations of the review and in particular to transfer the processing of tenants rights transactions from qualified solicitors to paralegals.

The transfer was completed in September 2008. Thereafter, the staff received formal training in conveyancing and all now hold a paralegal qualification by external examination. There has been a decrease in the number of formal applications to purchase houses largely because of the current economic recession. Although this trend could reverse, the paralegal staff are now being trained in other areas of non commercial conveyancing.

2. Litigation and Advice Paralegals

The Best Value Review of Tenants Rights Transactions presented to Committee on 23 August 2007 authorised the Head of Legal Services to explore the opportunities for further paralegalisation in legal services. The Committee approved the creation of two posts of Paralegal (Litigation and Advice) at its meeting on 6 March 2008. Three further administrative staff are now being trained as paralegals to further relieve solicitors of more routine and less complex work. It is anticipated that the training will be completed by the end of the financial year and it is proposed that three further posts of paralegal (NLC 8) be created in Litigation and Advice services. The 3 existing administrative posts graded at NLC4 will be deleted. A solicitor post will be deleted to fund the salary differentials.

3. Licensing Paralegal

The legal work of qualified solicitors in Licensing has increased in volume and complexity. To relieve them of some of these duties the Licensing Administrative Officer is now dealing with more complex matters and enquiries. The post holder will now require a formal paralegal qualification in licensing to be appointed to the post. The post holder also has managerial responsibility and for supporting the development of ICT systems for licensing. The duties of the post holder have now been re-evaluated to NLC9.

5. Office Systems Centre – revised use of Technology

The increased use of email and improved technology for processing complex legal documentation has reduced the resource required for office support systems (OSC) by Legal Services. The OSC support unit is to be reduced by 0.5 FTE. There is no impact on any existing member of staff.

5. Financial and Other Consequences

The net savings arising from the deletion of a solicitor's post and 3.5 NLC 4 posts after deduction of the costs of the creation of three paralegal posts at NLC8 and the upgrading of the Licensing Administrative Officer post is £17,911.

6. HR Issues

The Head of Human Resources has been consulted on these proposals and has no adverse comment to make.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 It is recommended that the Committee note the staffing changes explained in this report and the consequential savings and remit this report for consideration to the Human Resources Sub-Committee.


June Murray
Head of Legal Services

Members seeking further information on the contents of this report are asked to contact June Murray, Head of Legal Services at extension 2295.