

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Communities and Housing Committee

approval noting

Ref SL/GW

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Housing Management Model

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Executive Summary

The Chief Executive in the 'We Aspire' report to Policy & Resources Committee on 27 September 2018 outlined the future direction for the Council and requested that as part of Phase 2, consideration be given as to how we can link community benefits across the Council and with our partners.

This report presents a review of operational areas across Housing Solutions, which seeks to address the immediate requirement to align services to support the Town Centre regeneration report presented to Committee on 10 May 2018.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Approve the proposal as detailed at paragraphs 2.6 for a new housing management structure reducing the current housing localities from six to four.
- (ii) Approve the further recommendations at paragraphs 2.7 to 2.16 which will lead to a saving in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) of 28K.

Supporting Documents

Council business plan to 2020 This reports supports the delivery of the council's ambition to re-provision the towers and re-generate the town centres.

1. Background

- 1.1 North Lanarkshire has no main town but has in fact 8 distinct and separate town centres located across the authority. All are suffering economic decline as shopping habits change across the county.
 - 1.2 Commitment was given to tackle wider economic and social disparity through long-term, holistic, regeneration and re-invigorate land, buildings and housing and invest in restructuring town centres into mixed use hubs that are viable and sustainable. Housing is a key driver in this. The 8 town centres are;– Airdrie, Bellshill, Coatbridge, Cumbernauld, Kilsyth, Motherwell, Shotts and Wishaw.
 - 1.3 North Lanarkshire Council is the largest Local Authority Social Housing Landlord in Scotland managing an overall housing stock of 36,500 properties. Traditionally we have had one of the lowest housing management costs within Scotland, and these savings of £28,481 will ensure this continues.
 - 1.4 The Council has published ambitious plans to regenerate our communities including our town centres, to demolish our 48 tower blocks along with a number of low demand tenement flats and to build 5000 new council houses. It is essential we have a Housing Management Model that delivers on this ambition.
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2. Report

2.1 Housing Solutions Structure

At present there are 6 main Area Housing Offices, 4 of which have a First Stop Shop (FSS) co-located; Wishaw, Bellshill, Motherwell and Kilsyth. A number of smaller FSS's have reduced opening hours, 10am to 2pm. The two remaining offices, Coatbridge and Airdrie, are in separate buildings from the FSS's.

- 2.2 Enterprise and Housing Resources restructured in 2016, releasing a saving to the HRA at that time of 470K. At that time management of rent arrears and Sheltered Housing was centralised.
- 2.3 Within Area Housing Offices, functional teams provide services for housing allocations, estate management, homelessness, housing support and anti-social. Each Area Housing Office is managed by an Area Manager (NLC15).
- 2.4 Area Housing Office staff are currently progressing the tower re-provisioning programme. Phase 1, with 1750 properties to be demolished within 5 years is ongoing with 18% of properties now empty. Work continues to ensure that Phase 1 of the re-provisioning programme progresses at the required pace.
- 2.5 Within each housing area there are a number of staff located in homeless units, concierge stations, towers and sheltered housing complexes. Each housing office has a Housing Service Manager (NLC12) overseeing the direct operational and service delivery provision of the area.
- 2.6 In order to align Housing Solutions to the Town Centre Regeneration plan it is proposed to create 4 Housing Localities, as opposed to the current 6 Area Housing Offices. The proposal is to set up new locality teams, based on the 8

Town Centres across North Lanarkshire with each new housing locality covering 2 Towns. The proposed new locality model is:

- Kilsyth & Coatbridge
- Airdrie & Cumbernauld
- Motherwell & Bellshill
- Wishaw & Shotts (incl. Salsburgh)

- 2.7 This will result in each locality covering two of North Lanarkshire town centres, while ensuring the identity of each town centre is preserved. It is therefore proposed to delete 2 posts of Area Housing Manager and re-configure and re-designate the remaining 4 posts to Locality Housing Manager (NLC16) to oversee the provision of Housing Services within the new localities. These are key posts driving forward the Council's ambitious town centre regeneration and tower re-provisioning programmes at a locality level. It is proposed that the Business Solution section currently overseeing the strategic developments and performance framework for the former Enterprise and Housing Solutions should be renamed Business Development and Support.
- 2.8 In order to enhance the identity of each individual town within the locality, it is proposed to bring the Sheltered Housing Service back under locality management. It is proposed to review the working pattern of the Senior Sheltered Housing Officers. Sheltered Housing is a main focus for our aging population at a community level, and by managing at a local level again, it will re-establish the service within each individual town. The sheltered service has recently been reviewed and a report was approved by Committee in November 2018 establishing a new model of sheltered plus, retirement and amenity housing.
- 2.9 The impact of Welfare Reform and Universal Credit continues to impact on rent collection and a centralised team ensures focus and knowledge is maximised. The current arrears levels have reached 5 million pounds and is a significant risk for the service. It is proposed therefore to maintain the current structure and for the rents team to remain centralised. Additional resources were approved at the Council meeting on 20th December to try to protect the income stream of the council to mitigate against the impact of Welfare Reform and Universal Credit and to continue to offer support to our tenants exposed to the detrimental impact of the implementation of the Governments Welfare Reforms.
- 2.10 Currently two Housing Operations Managers (NLC14) support the Housing Solutions Manager in the implementation and management of the council's priorities. They have a lead role driving forward improvement in working practices to ensure quality sustainable outcomes for tenants and residents, monitoring contracts, ensuring consistency in practice and maximising performance. It is proposed to create 3 posts to provide a fully integrated housing management service covering each of the new Housing Localities detailed at 2.6 above.
- 2.11 The creation of the four Housing Locality Offices will result in the deletion of 2 Housing Co-ordinators (NLC10).
- 2.12 At present, each area office has an Admin/Finance Officer (NLC7 x 6). With the efficiencies made through I-Trent, and the Employee Service Centre and taking account of the reduction in housing localities from 6 to 4, it is proposed that 2 posts of Admin/Finance Officer are deleted.

- 2.13 The service currently has three Senior Estate Officers (SEO) - Locality (NLC7) carrying out locality estate management duties, including the inspection of our low rise properties to ensure fire safety compliance. They supervise a number of Estate Officers within this area, primary duties being litter picking and the removal of discarded household items including fly tipping and the removal of any fire hazard. Each post currently covers two separate geographical areas, (North and Airdrie, Coatbridge and Bellshill, Motherwell and Wishaw). This can result in operational and resource issues to ensure consistency of service provision. Taking account of this along with the new proposed housing management model and the challenges relating to the re-provisioning, it is proposed to increase the SEO - Locality from 3 to 4. The Council currently manages over 1500 shared access tenant closes.
- 2.14 There are currently 6 Senior Estate Officer – Towers (NLC7) who carry out a management and supervisory function across the 48 towers. Two posts cover day time management duties. The remaining four cover out of hours management duties for all towers, and in recent years, this role has evolved to encompass additional duties, such as emergency cover and response to our Sheltered Housing complexes and our Temporary Accommodation Units. In view of their additional duties and responsibilities it is proposed that these four posts are re-configured re-designated to Locality Response Officer at NLC9.
- 2.15 There are 19 Anti-Social Response Officers (ASRO's), NLC7/9 based between Area Offices and the Out of Hours Response Service. It is proposed to retain the posts currently in the night team (5) and the mediation team (2), and it is proposed that these posts will be managed by the Town Centres Activities Community Safety team from 1 April 2019 when TCA transfer to the Housing Solutions team. It is also proposed to move the management of the Anti-Social Day Time Hub and the Public Protection team to TCA forming a new Community Safety Team. The 12 day time ASRO posts will remain within the new Housing Localities.
- 2.16 These proposals form Phase 1 of the Housing Operations restructure, it is envisaged that as the councils digitisation programme realises enhancements to service provision, further changes will be required and it is therefore proposed to remit a further report to Committee at a future date on Phase 2 of the restructure.
- 2.17 The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan was reported to Committee on 14 November 2018, setting out the required changes in temporary accommodation, housing supply and housing support. It is envisaged that a further review of staffing resources will be required in order for this plan to be achieved and this will also be subject to a further report.
- 2.18 Workforce Summary

		Post	Grade	+/-
Para 2.7	delete	Area Manager	NLC 15	-2
Para 2.7	re-designate	Locality Housing Manger	NLC 16	+4
Para 2.10	create	Locality Operations Manager	NLC 14	+3
Para 2.11	delete	Housing Co-ordinator	NLC 10	-2
Para 2.12	delete	Admin Officer	NLC 7	-2
Para 2.13	create	SEO (Locality)	NLC 7	+1
Para 2.14	delete	SEO (Towers)	NLC 7	-4
Para 2.14	re-designate	Locality Response Officer	NLC 9	+4
Para 2.15	delete	ASRO	NLC 7/9	-12
Para 2.15	re-designate	Housing Advisor	NLC 7/9	+12

3. Equality and Diversity

3.1 Fairer Scotland

This proposal does not impact on socio-economic disadvantage.

3.2 Equality Impact Assessment

There is no direct impact.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Impact

The implementation of this structure will realise the delivery of a £28,481 saving.

4.2 HR/Policy/Legislative Impact

The workforce implications are summarised in section 3 of this report.

4.3 Environmental Impact

There is no direct impact.

4.4 Risk Impact

To minimise risk this report has been prepared in consultation with service based Financial Solutions personnel along with HR personnel.

5. Measures of success

- 5.1 The implementation of this structure will place Housing Solutions in a position to realise the council ambition to re-provision the towers and the implementation of the town centre re-generation.
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