

DIRECTORATE OF COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND HOUSING
REPORT NO. EHH1511

Housing Options Resources

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The post of Senior Housing Officer has recently become vacant. This post provides the 'manager of today' function for the Housing Options Team which helps the Team to improve and supports them in their work which includes:

- **Helping homeless people**
- **Prevent homeless**
- **Offering housing options**
- **Securing temporary and permanent accommodation**
- **Assessing applicants for the housing allocation pool**

1.2 The Senior Housing Officer's post also has responsibility for the Council's functions under the Home Finder Scheme. This includes:

- **Advertising social housing properties**
- **Short-listing applicants for accommodation**
- **Dealing with queries from customers and the housing associations**
- **Other duties associated with Home Finder**

1.3 The proposal is to remove the Home Finder tasks from the Senior Housing Officer's post and create a new part time post of 16 hours per week to manage these responsibilities. This will enable the Senior Housing Officer to be more effective in their role and support the team in an environment of increasing demand.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Following a systems thinking review in 2010, the Housing Options Team changed their way of working by prioritising housing applications on a need not want basis.

2.2 The work processes were reviewed and waste removed from the work. Most of the work fitted well into the generic Housing Officers' role. The Home Finder work did not fit naturally within the role and new workflows. A decision was made to place the Home Finder responsibilities with the Senior Housing Officer. Continuous reviews

of the demand from Home Finder show that it does not fit within the Senior role.

2.3 The previous post holder found the demand from the Home Finder duties difficult to manage within the Senior Housing Officer role. It was not possible, despite working closely with the Housing Options Manager, to resolve the demand within the role. The post holder spent a disproportionate time on this administrative task.

2.4 Thought has been given to whether the duties could be performed by an apprentice. The Housing Options Team is a high demand area and training an apprentice every 18 months would affect an already busy Team. There are no future changes likely to mean that the responsibilities will diminish or cease.

2.5 Consideration to placing the duties within the Team; this happens when the Senior Housing Officer is on leave however, this would not work over a longer period. The work is mostly administrative but high-risk if it goes wrong – allocating a property to the wrong person could result in a claim of maladministration.

2.6 Having discussed the Home Finder demand work with the Systems Thinking Analyst, who was involved in the housing system thinking review, they support the need to separate the Home Finder work from the Senior role freeing the post holder to be more effective in their day-to-day work.

3. PROPOSAL

3.1 It is proposed to remove the Home Finder work from the Senior Housing Officer's role and create a part-time role of 16 hours per week. The role would cover three days a week (Monday, Wednesday and Friday). The duties would include:

- **Weekly advertising of vacancies for social housing**
- **Short-listing applicants for accommodation**
- **Dealing with queries from customers and the housing associations**
- **Administering the allocation pool in terms of general house keeping**
- **Having input with lettings plans for new developments**

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

4.1 There would be a financial implication of approximately £10K a year to employ a Housing Allocation Assistant for 16 hours. (G 3 pro rota)

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 This report is seeking approval to recruitment a part time Housing Allocation Assistant.

Qamer Yasin
Head of Environmental Health and Housing

Background papers:

Contacts: Suzannah Hellicar
Housing Options Manager