

Decision under Delegated Powers

Officer Requesting Decision

Katie Moore – Housing Needs Manager

Officer Making the Decision

Alison Simmons – Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing

Recommendation

To approve the recruitment of 1 additional FTE Housing Allocations Officer (H379) for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

To approve the use of the Department for Levelling-Up, Housing Homelessness Prevention Grant for the costs associated with this request.

Reason

To ensure there is sufficient capacity within the Housing Allocations Team to address the backlog of Housing Register application assessments and processing of bidding shortlists for available social housing properties. This will support the achievement of the wider aims of the Housing Needs service, including minimizing property relet times and void rent loss, making the best use of available social housing stock and preventing and relieving homelessness.

Authority for Decision

Part 8, section 8.2.6 of the Constitution gives the Chief Executive authority to agree changes to the establishment, within budget and without major operational disruption or interruption of services or involving a change from direct to indirect provision or vice-versa or other policy implications. This has been sub-delegated to Strategic Directors and Heads of Service in certain circumstances, which this proposal falls within.

Decision and Date



Alison Simmons
Head of Strategic
and Private Sector
Housing

2nd April 2022

Background

The role of the Housing Allocations Team includes the assessment and determination of applications for social housing and the allocation of available social housing properties within Charnwood, including council and registered provider properties.

Due to increased pressures on the Housing Allocations Team and the wider Housing Needs Team associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a backlog of Housing Register application assessments and a backlog of bidding shortlists for available social housing properties.

A temporary increase in hours on the Housing Allocations Officer post will support the team to address these backlogs. This will support the achievement of the wider aims of the Housing Needs service, including minimizing relet times and void rent loss, making the best use of available social housing stock and preventing and relieving homelessness.

Approval was given for the a temporary increase in hours on the Housing Allocations Officer post during 2021-2022. The post was initially filled by a permanent staff member on a secondment. However this staff member retired in October 2021 and attempts to recruit to the post for the remaining period have been unsuccessful. A longer contract period will potentially help to attract more suitable candidates.

The Housing Allocations Team currently consists of:

- 1 x FTE Housing Allocations Team Leader (permanent post)
- 0.6 FTE Housing Allocations Officer (permanent post)
- 1 x FTE Housing Allocations Officer (temporary post funded using the Homelessness Prevention Grant)
- 2.4 x FTE Assistant Housing Officers (permanent posts)
- 1 x FTE Assistant Housing Officers (temporary post funded using the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant / Homelessness Prevention Grant)
- 3.6 x FTE Assistant Housing Officers (temporary posts funded using the COVID-19 Contain Grant).

This request is for the extension of the following temporary post:

- 1 x FTE Housing Allocations Officer up until 31st March 2023 (funded using the Homelessness Prevention Grant).

Comments from HR

HR Adviser: Anna Cairns (23/2/22)

A variation eform will need to be completed for the post holder/s. Please note if the temporary/fixed term contract exceeds 2 years in duration a redundancy payment will need to be paid. Further guidance on this can be given from HR if required.

Financial Implications

Approximately £39,400 is required for the cost of 1 x FTE (37 hours per week) Scale E Housing Options Officer for a period of 12 months.

£577,784 Homelessness Prevention Grant was awarded to Charnwood Borough Council by the Department for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities between 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. A sufficient amount of this grant is still available to cover the costs associated with this request.

Risk Management

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Actions Planned
This DD is not agreed and there is insufficient capacity within the Housing Allocations service. This could result in increased homelessness, temporary accommodation spend, complaints and legal challenges, and increased void rent loss.	Medium	Medium	Offer over-time to existing staff within the Housing Allocations Team (this may have cost implications, but the budget available is likely to be sufficient to cover this).

Key Decision:

No

Background Papers:

DD131 2021

DD184 2021

