

## Decision under Delegated Powers

### Officer Requesting Decision

Alison Simmons - Head of Strategic & Private Sector Housing

### Officer Making the Decision

Geoff Parker - Chief Executive

### Recommendation

To approve the increase in hours of the Housing Officer post (H150) and the recruitment of two full time officers at scale 6 on 12 month fixed term contracts for up to 37 hours per week with effect from the start date of the successful applicant.

The officers carry out the same role as the existing Housing Officers and will report to the Senior Housing Options Officer.

### Reason

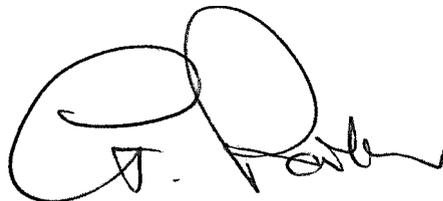
The Council's Housing Options Services has seen a recent increase in demand and temporary accommodation use. The Homelessness Reduction Act is due to be implemented in April 2018. The Act places new duties on Local Authorities in relation to the prevention and relief of homelessness that are expected to lead to a significant initial increase in workloads within the Housing Options team.

### Authority for Decision

Section 8.2, of the Constitution gives delegated authority to Heads of Service, following consultation with the Council's Human Resources team and subject to the decision complying with the Council's existing policies, to make temporary appointments to be held against existing permanent posts or within the overall budget [item 2 (vii) on page 8-3] and subject to the Officer Employment Procedure Rules and to any right of appeal which may be applicable, to undertake staff management, disciplinary and capability matters including dismissal within their Directorate or Service Area [item 2(x) on page 8-3].

### Decision and Date

APPROVED



16 JULY 2017

## Background

The Housing Options Team currently consists of six full time equivalent Housing Officers and one full time equivalent Senior Housing Options Officer.

The Homelessness Reduction Act will bring changes to the definition of homelessness (currently those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness within 28 days are eligible to make a homeless application and the threshold is being increased to 56 days) and a substantial number of new statutory duties such as duties to prevent and relieve homelessness for all groups (regardless of priority need status). The number of homelessness applications received and the amount of casework relating to each individual application are expected to increase significantly.

Major changes to the Housing Options Team's operational processes will be required in advance of the implementation of the new Act in order to ensure the service is adequately prepared.

The addition of two officers within the Housing Options Team will ensure sufficient resilience and front-line resources to manage the increasing workloads associated with the preparation for the implementation of the Act and meet the increased demand following the introduction of the Act.

## Comments from HR

HR Adviser: Anna Cairns (4/7/17)

Once approved the normal recruitment process needs to be followed.

## Financial Implications

A new Flexible Homelessness Support Grant is being provided to replace the previous Temporary Accommodation Management Fund. The new grant for Charnwood has been confirmed as £84,000 in 2017/18 and £89,000 in 2018/19. It is estimated that Charnwood will spend no more than £12,000 on temporary accommodation management costs that were covered under the old fund. The new grant can only be spent on work to prevent or tackle homelessness, but this can include staffing costs.

Local Authorities are due to receive Transitional Funding from the DCLG for a two year period following the enactment of the Homelessness Reduction Act in April 2018, to recognize the new burdens associated with the Act. The exact amounts are due to be confirmed later in 2017, but Charnwood is expected to receive between £50,000 and £70,000 per year from 2018/19.

The costs for two full time officers at the top of scale 6 with essential car user allowance and other on costs for 12 months would be up to £71,600.00. The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant amount that has already been confirmed for 2017/18 is sufficient to cover these costs. The new Transitional Funding that is due to be received in 2018/19 could be put towards costs in 2018/19.

## Risk Management

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Actions Planned
<p>This DD is not agreed and there is insufficient cover within the Housing Options Service to deal with the increase in workloads relating to changes to procedures in the lead up to the act and increased demand following the implementation of the act. This could result in increased temporary accommodation spend, complaints and legal challenges.</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant can be used to cover increased temporary accommodation costs.</p>
<p>It is not possible to recruit to these posts on fixed term contracts.</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>Attempt to recruit agency staff via Matrix (this may have higher cost implications but there is likely to be sufficient budget to cover this for the 12 month period).</p>

Key Decision:

No.

Background Papers:

N/A.