

# Decision under Delegated Powers

## Officer Requesting Decision

Katie Moore – Housing Needs Manager

## Officer Making the Decision

Alison Simmons - Head of Strategic & Private Sector Housing

## Recommendation

To approve the permanent increase in hours of the Housing Options Officer post (H150) by 37 hours (from 222 to 259 hours), with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018. This post is in cost centre J009 at scale 6 (SCP 26-28) and reports to the Senior Housing Options Officer post (M090).

To approve the implementation of the 2018/19 budget service pressure, approved by Council on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2018, for the costs associated with this request.

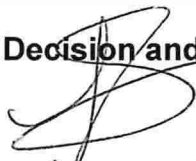
## Reason

The Council's Housing Options Service has seen a recent increase in caseloads and temporary accommodation use. The Homelessness Reduction Act is due to be implemented on 3<sup>rd</sup> 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

The Constitution gives delegated authority to the Chief Executive to agree changes to the establishment, within budget and without major service or policy implications, affecting no more than five posts (irrespective of their post number) in any single case. This has been sub-delegated to Heads of Services in certain circumstances, which this case falls within.

**Decision and Date** 29th March 2018



Alison Simmons  
Head of Strategic and  
Private Sector Housing

## Background

The Housing Options Team currently consists of 6 x permanent full time equivalent Housing Officers and 1 x permanent 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 able to make a homeless application and this threshold is being increased to 56 days) and a substantial number of new statutory duties such as duties to assess support needs, develop personalized housing plans, and 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 are being made in order to ensure the service is adequately prepared for these changes and the new duties can be fulfilled.

The addition of 1 permanent Housing Options Officer within the Housing Options Team will help to ensure sufficient resilience and front-line resources to manage the increasing workloads associated with the Homelessness Reduction Act.

### Comments from HR

HR Adviser: Anna Cairns (13/3/18)

The normal recruitment process should be followed.

### Financial Implications

Ongoing service pressures from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 of £33,200 for the cost of an officer and £1,400 for an essential car user allowance were approved by Council on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

### Risk Management

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Actions Planned
This DD is not agreed and there is insufficient cover within the Housing Options Service to deal with the increase in workloads relating to the Homelessness Reduction Act. This could result in increased temporary accommodation spend, complaints and legal challenges.	Medium	Medium	The Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and New Burdens Funding can be used to cover increased temporary accommodation costs.
It is not possible to recruit to this post on a permanent contract.	Low	Medium	Attempt to recruit agency staff via Matrix (this may have higher cost implications but there is likely to be sufficient budget to cover this).

Key Decision: No.

Background Papers: None.