

Decision under Delegated Powers

Officer Requesting Decision:

Katie Moore – Head of Strategic Housing

Officer Making Decision:

Rob Mitchell – Chief Executive

Recommendation:

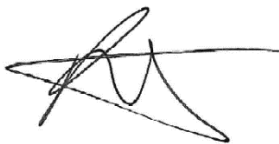
That approval is given for a temporary increase in hours of the H361 Housing Systems Officer post (from 74 hours to 111 hours per week) for the period 1st October 2023 to 31st March 2025.

Reason:

To ensure there is sufficient capacity within the Housing Systems Team for the administration, maintenance and improvement of systems used to support the delivery of the housing services.

Authority for Decision:

Section 8 of the Council Constitution contains authority for the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) 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.

Decision and Date:

Robert Mitchell (he, him, his)
Chief Executive

15th August 2023

Background:

The Housing Systems Team manage the systems that are used to support the delivery of the housing services, provide support to system users and assist with the provision of service performance and management information.

The following housing systems are currently in use:

- Civica – used for the management of housing standards and housing grants cases, such as overcrowding, disrepair, damp and mould, empty homes, disabled facilities grants (adaptations), home repair grants
- Metastreet – used for the management of the housing licensing schemes (mandatory, additional and selective)
- QL – used for the management of council properties, tenancies and related services, such as rents, repairs and support services
- Service Connect – used for management of council property repairs appointments, van stock and material management
- M3 Central – used by council tenants to request repairs
- Home Connections – used for the management of housing advice and homelessness cases, housing register applications, advertisement and allocation of council and registered provider properties

The following systems are due to be implemented within the next 6 months:

- Assure – to be used for the management of all housing standards, housing grants and housing licensing cases (to replace Civica and Metastreet)
- Docuware – to be used for document management relating to tenancy and income services
- Customer portal – to be used by council tenants to self-serve (for example to view their rent account balance, request repairs).

Reviews of many of the housing services are currently being carried out to identify potential service improvements and efficiencies. The need for upgrades / enhancements / improvements to the housing systems used for the delivery / management of some of these services have been identified. In addition, an audit of the QL system was recently carried out, resulting in a recommendation for the migration of the QL servers. Reviews of all of the housing systems and related contracts are due to be carried out within the next 12 to 18 months to ensure they effectively support the delivery of the housing services and provide value for money.

The Housing Systems Team currently consists of the following permanent posts:

- Housing Systems Team Leader (37 hours per week - permanent)
- Housing Systems Officer (74 hours per week - permanent).

A temporary increase in hours of the H361 Housing Systems Officer post (from 74 to 111 hours per week) is recommended to ensure sufficient capacity for the administration, maintenance and improvement of the housing systems, including identification, implementation and testing of upgrades and enhancements to existing systems and/or development of new housing systems.

Comments from Human Resources:

Sally Dobrowolska – 3 August 2023

The temporary increase in hours is agreed as appropriate in line with the reasons outlined in the delegated decision.

Financial Implications:

Approximately £22,000 is required for 37 hours of the H361 Housing Systems Officer post at salary grade E (including on-costs) for 6 months during 2023-2024.

Approximately £44,000 is required for 37 hours of the H361 Housing Systems Officer post at salary grade E (including on-costs) for 12 months during 2024-2025.

These additional costs will be funded as follows:

2023-2024

- £4,400 (20%) general fund – using £1,471.80 of the 2023-2024 homelessness prevention grant, £2,526.20 of the 2018-2019 H-clic data grant and £402.00 of the 2017-2018 homelessness overhauling data grant received from the Department for Levelling-Up Housing and Communities (previously the Department for Communities and Local Government)
- £17,600 (80%) housing revenue – using the 2023-2024 £500,000 housing financing fund.

2024-2025

- £8,800 (20%) general fund – using £8,800 of the overhauling homelessness data grant received from the Department for Levelling-Up Housing and Communities (previously the Department for Communities and Local Government).
- £35,200 (80%) housing revenue – using the 2024-2025 £500,000 housing financing fund.

Risk Management:

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Actions
This request is not agreed, and there is insufficient capacity for the administration, maintenance and development the housing systems.	Medium	Medium	Offer over-time to existing staff within the Housing Systems Team. Offer over-time to existing staff within the housing services impacted by the issues.

This is likely to impact on the delivery of multiple housing services, resulting in increased complaints, legal challenges, negative publicity and reputational damage.			
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Key Decision:

No.

Background Papers:

N/A.