

CABINET

20 MARCH 2012

Title: Improved Housing Management and Environmental Services in Town Centres and Flatted Housing Estates	
Joint Report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Cabinet Member for Environment	
Open Report	For Decision
Wards Affected: All	Key Decision: Yes
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Summary: <p>This report sets out a service improvement programme for Housing Management and Environmental Services in our town centres and areas of mainly high rise housing.</p> <p>The quality and cost effectiveness of our frontline environmental and housing estate management services need to improve. Services such as grounds maintenance, housing repairs and maintenance and street cleaning in some areas of dense social housing and our main shopping areas are not delivered to a consistently high quality.</p> <p>During 2011 two pilot schemes, one in Barking town centre and one in and around the Heath Park Estate in Dagenham, have trialled a new model of service delivery that seeks to join up frontline Housing Management with Environmental Services.</p> <p>These pilots have shown that this type of approach has successfully broken down organisational barriers, made the services more responsive and accountable to local people and most importantly improved the quality and consistency of the service provided.</p> <p>This report proposes to roll out this approach to 4 more areas of the borough and sets out revised staffing proposals for the management of the areas outside of town centres and high rise housing.</p> <p>Members should note that a further report will be submitted to Cabinet early in 2012 to describe proposals to enhance the standard of Housing and Environmental Services in the remaining areas of the borough. The proposals in this report will not reduce the current housing or environmental services budgets held for work in areas outside Flatted Estates and Town Centres.</p>	

Recommendation(s)

The Cabinet is recommended to agree:

- (i) That an integrated Housing Management and Environmental service as described in the report be delivered in the targeted areas broadly outlined in Appendix A, on the understanding that the exact boundaries will be subject to change to reflect operational requirements identified as the model is implemented and developed; and
- (ii) That management commence formal consultations with Unions and staff on the restructuring proposals as detailed in the report.

Reason(s)

These proposals contribute to a number of the Council's overall priorities and in particular address the theme of 'Better together' as well as the priority of being a well run organisation.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The quality and cost effectiveness of our frontline environmental and housing estate management services need to improve. Services such as grounds maintenance, housing repairs and maintenance and street cleaning in some areas of dense social housing and our main shopping areas need to be delivered to a consistently high quality.
- 1.2 Responsiveness to local community and elected member priorities needs to be further developed and in some instances our organisational structures do not make it clear who is responsible for the overall quality of the living environment, or how our tenants and residents can secure improvements in the environmental and housing services that are provided.
- 1.3 A new way of delivering core front line services between Housing and Environmental and Enforcement Services has been tested by means of two pilot schemes during 2011. This new way of working was devised to explore whether an integrated team with the ability to deliver a range of core front line services led by a locality manager with a broad range of responsibilities, could improve service quality, increase accountability, enhance resident involvement and engagement, secure efficiencies and reduce costs.
- 1.4 Two areas of the Borough were chosen to trial the new approach. They were selected because in both areas it is particularly challenging to provide a consistent, high quality service. One was based around the Heath Park Estate in Dagenham, a mainly residential area of dense social housing and the other Barking Town Centre and the surrounding residential areas. Both pilots crossed the boundaries of three wards.
- 1.5 The two pilots have now been fully operational since April 2011. The outcome from the pilots clearly demonstrates that the new model with a locality manager dedicated to a particular area has been successful in enabling officers to take

'ownership' of an area, and that co locating teams and services has enabled a more joined up approach to be taken to problems. This can be seen across all aspects of engagement and enforcement activity as well as anti social behaviour, both internally within the Council and in our partnership working with the Police.

- 1.6 The locality pilots have also illustrated the need for further join up of our frontline teams. In particular housing repairs and maintenance, grounds maintenance, street cleaning and caretaking. Although improvements have been seen in the responsiveness of estate management, more needs to be done to achieve a service that proactively manages the needs and responsibilities of our tenants and residents both within their home and their wider neighbourhood.
- 1.7 The proposals involve a major restructuring of Housing and Neighbourhoods and Environmental and Enforcement Services. New more generic roles will be created and associated training and change management support at all levels of the organisation will also be put in place. In addition it is clear that through more integrated management and a more generic frontline, efficiencies can be achieved across Housing and Environmental services.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 The new way of working brings together a range of Housing and Environmental Services under a single locality manager, and makes that person responsible for the outcomes of all of those services in a particular town centre or flatted area.
- 2.2 The proposal identifies the services that will be directly managed by the locality manager and the more universal or specialist services where he or she will coordinate delivery but will be provided by other areas of the Council, in particular Environment and Enforcement Services.
- 2.3 The six areas where this approach is proposed are set out in **Appendix A**. These areas have been carefully selected and represent areas of higher density housing and our two main shopping areas at the Heathway and Barking Town Centre. This includes areas of council owned housing as well as private and Housing Association owned properties. The boundaries set out provide a guide, however they are will be subject to change to reflect operational and organisational requirements identified on the ground as the model is implemented and developed..
- 2.4 Where it is operationally logical to do so the areas also include areas of low rise housing and smaller shopping parades.
- 2.5 The services to be directly provided under the management of the locality manager are:
 - 1) Environmental and Maintenance Services
 - 2) Housing Estate Management and Environmental Health Enforcement
 - 3) Resident and Tenant Engagement focussing on Housing and Environmental issues.

Environmental and Maintenance Services

- 2.6 In areas such as town centres and on high density housing estates it is particularly challenging, but also of vital importance, to have maintenance and environmental services that are of the highest quality. The look and feel of our town centres can be a significant part of the general reputation of the borough and therefore must be maintained to the highest standards. The services on housing estates are often paid for through tenant and leaseholder service charges and therefore need to be directly accountable to those residents for price and quality.
- 2.7 The services that will be provided through the locality manager are:
- 1) Caretaking: Including all aspects of internal and external cleaning of Council owned housing blocks and estates.
 - 2) Fly tipping and bulk refuse collection: Housing and Neighbourhoods will provide a service to enable the speedy collection and removal of fly tips and bulk refuse.
 - 3) Grounds maintenance: This is the intensive aspects of horticulture on Council Housing Estates and in town centres.
 - 4) Street cleansing: All aspects of local street cleansing.
 - 5) Maintenance of the communal areas of Council owned housing blocks and other local handyman repairs in council properties.

Housing Estate Management and Environmental Health Enforcement

- 2.8 Of equal importance is the work we do with businesses, residents and tenants to support our residents' and investors' right to enjoy their business and home without suffering from antisocial behaviour or environmental crime. Other forms of estate management such as action against subletting or rent arrears and proactive inspections of tenants homes to assess conditions also benefit greatly from working with environmental health staff that are able to use the criminal law to get improvements, but are also able to tackle residents and landlords in privately rented homes.

The services to be directly managed are:

- 1) Housing Estate Management
- 2) Environmental Health and Private Sector Housing (due to the small size of these teams they will be tasked through the Locality Manager but also work on borough wide issues)
- 3) The management of Barking Market.

Resident and Tenant Engagement focussing on Housing and Environmental issues

- 2.9 The third part of the proposal is the work we do with our tenants and residents to listen to their views about the services we provide and then adapt them where gaps are found. This is vitally important so that when problems occur we find solutions with the residents and business owners so that they don't happen again.

On 10 May 2011 Cabinet agreed to put in place a new model of tenant and resident engagement. Two forums, one focussing on the Barking area and the other on Dagenham have been established.

Of vital importance to the success of this model is the work done in the area through the relationship that the locality manager develops with the local Children's Services Multi Agency Locality Team (MALT) manager and Neighbourhood Crime Reduction Coordinator. These officers provide access to the local Metropolitan Police, the broader Teams who support youth diversion and engagement and lead the management and resolution of neighbourhood Crime and Disorder issues.

We know that not everyone, particularly in higher density housing areas, wants to be involved in formal meetings that require a significant time commitment. Therefore the less formal opportunities for engagement that open up through working with the local children's centre staff, existing residents groups or local Community Safety staff/ Police has proven invaluable in the two pilots.

Service 'co design' has been successfully piloted through the Barking Town Centre Pilot area and will form part of the initial work of each locality manager. Through this work, the locality manager can quickly develop a reputation for open and honest dialogue about the role of the council, but also the role of businesses, residents and tenants in working together to make their environment a better place to trade or live.

Universal and Specialist Services

- 2.10 These are services that are delivered in a similar format borough wide or are provided by teams that are small and highly skilled, and would therefore be uneconomic or inappropriate to be delivered on a fixed locality basis.

These services include:

- Refuse collection to all properties
- Parks and cemeteries maintenance (including Abbey Green)
- Universal street cleansing and horticulture outside estates and denser areas, and for major roads
- Specialist Environmental Health activity and enforcement
- Parking enforcement and control
- Highways maintenance of adopted and unadopted roads
- Street lighting repair and maintenance
- Housing allocations
- Housing repairs and maintenance services
- Specialist repairs such as lifts and gas safety checks.

- 2.11 These services will not be directly managed, but will be coordinated through the locality manager. In practice this will mean that in flatted estates and town centres the first point of call for our residents and businesses will be this manager.

- 2.12 They will also be responsible for making sure the specialist or universal services work effectively with the directly managed services and work on behalf of our residents to make sure the work gets done.

Areas of low rise housing, industrial estates and smaller shopping areas

- 2.13 It is also acknowledged that the standards of the environmental services outside of flatted estates also need to improve. The Divisional Director of Environmental and Enforcement Services will bring forward proposals to members early in 2012, that will reinvigorate management capacity within environmental services with particular emphasis on a programme of skills development for front line staff, alongside consistent and effective front line supervision and organisation of resources. The proposals in this report will not reduce the current environmental services budgets held for work in areas of low rise housing, industrial estates or shopping areas.

Staffing structures proposed for Flatted Estates and Town Centres.

- 2.14 The proposals in this report require a fundamental reappraisal and restructuring of the current Housing Service, and key areas of Environment and Enforcement. There are a number of core aspects of the structures that need to be addressed and these are set out below. Staff affected by the restructuring will be ring-fenced and given the opportunity for assimilation, redeployment or interview for the new posts under the Council's usual protocols.
- 2.15 The transfer of functions between services will be reflected within both the Divisional Director post for Housing and Neighbourhoods and Divisional Director for Environment and Enforcement.
- 2.16 The Group Manager, locality manager and team manager roles will also need to be developed to meet the requirements of the new model. This will be a major change from the current arrangements.
- 2.17 Members should also be aware that as part of the 2012/13 budget proposals the Divisional Director for Environment and Enforcement will bring forward detailed options to restructure and streamline the Group Manager and Service Manager structure within Environment and Enforcement.
- 2.18 Through the Chief Executives review of policy and performance teams the Corporate Director of Housing and Environment is currently implementing a merger of the Housing and Environment Policy and Performance Team and Housing Business Services Team. With reduced numbers of staff this role will be focussing on supply frontline staff with management information, tracking response times, complaints, with an emphasis on meeting standards set to ensure managers know what is working and what is not. This is essential to ensure that both Housing and Neighbourhoods and Environment and Enforcement have a level of customer service information which both services need to drive up service quality and performance.

Proposed Management Structure

- 2.19 The emphasis of these changes is to keep to a minimum the number of managers that will oversee both the direct management of the locality areas but also the management of the Council Housing Stock in the remainder of the Borough.
- 2.20 We propose to delete the current Area Tenancy Service Managers and Estate Services Managers. These posts will be ring fenced to the Housing and

Neighbourhoods locality manager posts for each of the 6 areas identified in Appendix A, and two further posts will be created to oversee Council Housing Management in the remaining areas of the Borough.

Housing and Environment Locality Managers

- 2.21 These locality managers are central to the success of the new approach. This is an entirely new role and will be the main focus for opening up the dialogue with residents and the business community, but more importantly setting clear expectations of high quality and responsive directly managed and coordinated universal and specialist services and commitment from relevant partners. It is expected that the generic title of locality manager will in practice become the name of the locality in which the manager is based e.g. Marks Gate Manager etc
- 2.22 To deliver this new role the managers must be visible not only to the community but to their staff. They will be a key role model for the values of listening to our customers, learning from mistakes and consistently delivering the service standards that we promise. They will work very closely with the other coordinators and managers of other locally delivered council and partners services such as Neighbourhood Crime Reduction Coordinators and Children's Services MALT team managers.
- 2.23 In order to strengthen this link we propose to fund Neighbourhood Crime Reduction Coordinators, located with our Community Safety and Public Protection teams. This is to ensure that crime and disorder issues that are raised by the Safer Neighbourhood Teams and other local meetings are written into the locality action plans and delivered through coordinated work with the Police, Antisocial Behaviour and Youth Offending Teams. These HRA funded officers will form part of a team who will work across all areas.
- 2.24 Frontline supervisors/ working charge hands will report directly to the locality manager and will organise and manage the front line staff. The locality manager will then directly manage all other members of the team including the joint management of Environmental Health and enforcement staff with managers within Environmental and Enforcement services.

Combined Roles

- 2.25 The current split roles of Estate Services officers and Tenancy Services officers will be combined to create Housing Officers.
- 2.26 These new posts will be supported by a strong development programme so they are better able to take the lead for housing issues within both the combined Flatted Estate Management Structure and in the wider areas of the borough. In particular they will develop enhanced skills around antisocial behaviour, subletting, damage to property, rent arrears and the management of voids.
- 2.27 It is also proposed that the current caretaking, grounds maintenance and street cleaning functions be brought together into a single generic job description to give maximum flexibility within flatted estates and town centres.

- 2.28 The potential structure is included as **Appendix B**. This structure has been used for costing/budgeting purposes and will be subject to change as a result of detailed consultation with staff and TU's etc.

Wider Areas

- 2.29 Alongside the six locality areas, proposals have also been developed for the management of the wider areas of the borough. This includes the creation of a team manager post to provide dedicated housing management for the council housing stock in each of these areas, directly managing the provision of housing services including caretaking. The generic housing officer role will also apply in these areas, together with the enhanced roles and responsibilities around all aspects of housing management. This is aimed at improving the housing service provided and will be combined with the introduction of a working chargehand/supervisor role within the caretaking service.
- 2.30 Environmental services will continue to be provided centrally and the service standard will be maintained and improved in line with the proposals currently being developed for this service area. There will be no reduction of resources or services into these areas as a consequence of these proposals.

Culture change

- 2.31 In addition to the need to manage the overall review process in terms of developing J/Ds, consulting with TU's and staff, formal redundancy processes, ring fenced interviews etc it is recognised that introducing this new way of working will require a specific change management programme. A significant cultural change in roles and responsibilities is needed and this extends beyond staffing to the nature of the relationship between the council and its residents.
- 2.32 In order for staff to play their role in this, the staff involved need to take responsibility for their areas and the issues that residents present, working closely with ward councillors. This also involves developing new relationships with residents with clear roles and responsibilities, and encouragement of residents to take an active role in the services delivered in their communities as well as what residents themselves can do. This involves taking a wider role than traditionally taken, as well as 'owning' issues to completion rather than passing them over to others to deal with.
- 2.33 It is recognised that training and development will be required to ensure that staff have the skills needed to undertake this wider role as well as a programme that supports the new roles, the reasons they are needed, and empowers staff to take responsibility. This then also needs to be supported through clear development and performance management processes, with clear expectations on standards to be achieved.
- 2.34 Bringing together caretaking, grounds maintenance and street cleaning into one role within a joint team will require a significant change management approach to ensure the new roles are embedded and developed to provide the culture change needed to provide flexible and responsive services aimed at excellence.

2.35 A major part of the change will affect specialist and universal environmental services. Environmental services will need to engage and most importantly deliver the standards of quality services agreed with the community. The Divisional Director of Environmental Services will bring to Cabinet proposals for strengthening the model of service delivery within these services.

Customer access

2.36 The staff will be primarily based out of the office and it is important they are publicly visible and contactable by members of the public. The staffing team will be advertised to the community alongside full contact details.

Timescales for implementation

2.37 Work to progress the locality model is underway and regular meetings are being held with key Housing, Environment and Enforcement staff, HR, Finance as well as other services. A project plan has been developed which enables progress to be monitored.

2.38 Significant work is required to enable all tasks to be completed. Key stages include:

- Staff and TU consultation on JD's, grades, structure, process and staffing lists
- Assimilation/redeployment/interview processes
- Redundancy process to be put in place
- Training and development arrangements to be put in place
- Location and equipment needs identified
- Budgets and establishment set up
- Go live
- Consultation with residents and staff to be ongoing throughout the process.

2.39 An overview of progress is provided at the regular TU liaison meetings

3 Options Appraisal

3.1 In principle there are a wide number of ways in which these services can be delivered and options include:

Mixed Economy of all services

- This could be through tendering, establishing community interest companies or arms length arrangements. Although this could potentially provide an option, during the early stages of the Locality model, staff particularly in targeted areas will need to adapt and develop their roles. This would be more difficult if the service was provided through an alternative provider.

Do nothing

- This would leave current structures unchanged. This would not enable the benefits of more integrated and locality working to be realised, but would not

prevent initiatives to enable improved management and coordination at a local level.

Alternative locality models and structures

- There are a very wide range of options available in respect of the functions, activities, geographical areas and structures that could be included within the service model for localities. Alternative options have been considered as part of the development of the model and the current proposal reflects a balance between localism and operational manageability, effective management but flatter management tiers, recognising the balance between local and universal services.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 The proposals in this Report build on existing consultation with staff and residents as well as the findings from the pilots. Work with staff and residents has included surveys, workshops as well as video recording of issues as part of the work carried out with 'Us Creates' engagement specialists funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government, to look at how we ensure that we reach the views of the wider community and that our proposals respond to residents priorities.
- 4.2 Developing new ways of engaging with residents has been central to the pilot approach, enabling the Council to develop a 'new' way of working, finding the right ways to engage as well as to develop a shared understanding between the Council and residents in respect of each other's roles and responsibilities. This in turn helps increase capacity and resilience within communities and it is intended will lead in time to greater local resident decision making and control.
- 4.3 The pilots have also enabled new ways of working with partner agencies to be developed including the Police and local businesses. There has also been more integrated work between services including Community Safety, Children's Services and Youth Services.
- 4.4 Formal consultation with residents, staff and Trade Unions has been planned as the proposals in this report include a formal change in management arrangements as well as require a significant restructuring of the service including roles, responsibilities and functions.
- 4.5 The proposals in this report represent a significant change in management arrangements, and therefore will require formal S105 consultation with residents under the requirements of the 1985 Housing Act. This requires that the views of tenants be sought, and that the outcomes of this consultation be taken into account in the final arrangements.
- 4.6 It is proposed that detailed consultation should be carried out with residents as part of these proposals and this will involve consultation with the newly formed resident panels. An Equalities Impact Assessment will also be required to ensure the impacts of the model reflect the needs of all identified equalities groups.

5. Financial Implications

Implications completed by: Jo Moore, Finance Group Manager

- 5.1 The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) currently pays £11.7m for Estates Services across the Borough. This is made up of £8.1m in direct costs for (approximately 175 FTEs), as well as £3.6m in 'recharges' from Environment & Enforcement (E&E) to provide services such as grounds maintenance and cleansing. E&E also hold further budgets to maintain non-housing estate areas such as schools and parks.

Table 1 – Current HRA budgets for Estate services and E&E area services budgets

	HRA Direct costs	HRA Recharges	Total HRA	GF – E&E	Total HRA & GF cost
FTE's	175	n/a	175	255	430
Staffing £'000	5,672	n/a	5,672	9,294	14,966
Other £'000	2,429	3,635	6,064	4,291	10,355
Total £'000	8,101	3,635	11,736	13,585	25,321

- 5.2 As part of the localities proposals members of E&E staff will be directly employed by Housing and therefore their costs (plus a proportion of related non-salary costs) will be borne directly by the HRA which will result in an adjustment to the recharges from E&E. Activities covering areas outside of localities will continue to be paid through the recharge mechanism.
- 5.3 Initial calculations have indicated that there is small pressure of around £11k on the General Fund as a result of the reduction in the recharge not being an exact match to the total amount of the staff and other costs transferring to the HRA.

Table 2 - Revised HRA locality (HRA and GF) budgets

	HRA Direct localities	HRA non-specific locality	Costs transferred to HRA from E&E	Total HRA budget for Localities	E&E Gen Fund	Total HRA and GF for localities
FTE's	116	32	43	191	9	200
Staffing £'000	3,597	1,208	1,171	5,976	269	6,245
Other £'000	715	160	207	1,082	97	1,179
Total £'000	4,312	1,368	1,378	7,058	366	7,424

- 5.4 The second column in Table 2 is the direct costs of the six specific localities, whilst the third column represents the costs of the two generic localities referred to as East and West. Column four represents the cost of the posts now transferring over

from E&E to be directly managed within the HRA and the fifth column shows the costs of staff transferring to localities but fulfilling wider General Fund activities rather than HRA. These will continue to be funded from the E&E budget.

Table 3 - Other area budgets outside of localities

	HRA Special projects	HRA Recharges for areas outside of localities	GF Area services	Total
FTE	27	n/a	203	230
Budget £'000	2,348	2,242	13,231	17,909

- 5.5 From the tables above it can be seen that the total budgets for localities and other areas (in Tables 2 and 3) amount to £25.33m, which when adjusted for the £11k recharge change, is equal to the original budget of £25.321m.
- 5.6 The E&E budgets show a net pressure of £11k as mentioned above. In addition part of its current budget (£366k) will be specific to the locality area. It will retain the remaining budget of £13.231m for non-locality work.
- 5.7 Although the overall costs to the HRA remain unchanged there is an impact on the amount of the costs rechargeable as service charges. For example, the cost of caretaking can be recovered via tenant service charges whereas the cost of EHOs is not recoverable under current policy. The impact from the proposed structure has been estimated at a reduction in costs, recoverable as a service charge, of approximately £49k but it is proposed that this will be managed within HRA budgets.
- 5.8 Paragraph 5.7 refers to services which have been removed from core rents and charged separately. This was done to make the costs of these services more transparent but it also allowed the Council to benefit from around £4.6m of reduced DWP subsidy loss. This was because it enabled the Council to reduce core rents to that below the DWP 'limit' rent. The regulations in respect of service charges require that any recovery from tenants and leaseholders is limited to full cost of providing that service.
- 5.9 At present service charges are apportioned on a generic basis to any resident benefitting from that service. Proposals are currently being considered to find a more targeted method of apportionment but this will subject to a separate Cabinet report.
- 5.10 Any redundancy and/or training costs arising from the implementation of this report are to be met from the HRA.
- 5.11 As a result of the transfer of E&E operational staff to Housing, there is likely to be a saving on managerial roles within E&E budgets but these reductions are still to be determined.
- 5.12 Finance is represented on the Localities project board and the financial implications are continually updated in conjunction with other board members, as the project progresses.

6 Legal Implications

Implications completed by: Paul Field, Senior Lawyer

- 6.1 The proposals will lead to significant change in the way services are delivered and this will have an impact on the community, many of the Council's Partners, its Housing and Environment and Enforcement workforce and other stakeholders. This will require consultation and consideration of the impact the changes may have on groups particularly the more vulnerable and difficult to reach groups such as for example the travelling community or those persons in private letting accommodation. An Equalities Impact Assessment will be necessary to ensure compliance with the expectations of an inclusive service. Furthermore responsibilities such as well being, health and reduction of crime and disorder duties will need to be taken into account in terms of the delivery of services and again consultation will be required with the stakeholders affected.
- 6.2 As observed in the main body of the report where the project has an impact on the service to tenants and leaseholders they will need to be consulted and if the charging regime in terms of rent for tenants and service charges will vary (which is likely) then notice will need to be given. It is likely that the Tenancy Conditions will need to be reviewed to accurately reflect the changes.
- 6.3 The changes proposed in the report will harmonise with the revisions to the Housing Repairs and Maintenance contracts as agreed by Cabinet in August 2011.
- 6.4 The report identifies the staffing changes the project envisages, as is usual in a restructure the Council's agreed processes for consultation with unions and staff must be followed and proper consideration be given to providing training and assimilation to staff affected by the changes.

7. Other Implications

7.1 Risk management

There are a number of risks associated with these proposals and some of the key risks and mitigations are set out below:

7.1.1 Staff concerns at restructuring

- This will be mitigated through clear communications and engagement with staff throughout the process

7.1.2 Delays in meeting timescales

- This will be mitigated through having a clear project plan which is regularly monitored and reviewed

7.1.3 Affordability of new structures and savings proposals

- This will be mitigated by ensuring robust financial modelling of new structures. The modelling and indicative structures developed have identified savings of approx £105k to the General Fund as a result of combining supervisory roles

across services. However it is recognised that there are a number of uncertainties associated with a major change initiative of this nature, and therefore these predicted savings are currently identified to provide a transitional fund as part of this change process. It is therefore anticipated that savings will accrue in future years from these proposals.

7.1.4 Quality of service does not meet expectations

- This will be mitigated through activity based costing to ensure accurate profile of activities and schedules, skills based job descriptions and progression arrangements as well as through detailed training and development programmes.

7.1.5 Poor Budgetary Control.

- This will be mitigated by a clear resource plan for each area. The Group Manager will act as overall budget holder and will be able to shift resource to meet emerging priorities within the councils financial rules. This will ensure the budget is managed effectively, but that we are also able to adapt our approach to meet the overall needs of the community.

7.2 Contractual issues

7.2.1 The re-commissioning of the Housing Repairs and Maintenance arrangements will dovetail with the approach of local handyman services for council properties suggested through this report.

7.3 Staffing Issues

7.3.1 There are significant staffing implications arising from this Report and there will need to be consultation with staff and Trade Unions throughout this process.

7.4 Customer Impact

7.4.1 The focus of the project is to improve local management for business and residents as well as encourage greater participation and engagement with and by communities. We expect this will have a positive benefit for all areas of the community.

7.4.2 The proposals will give the Council and its partners the opportunity to develop better relationships with the community at a very localised level. The service should become directly responsive to that community's needs. It is felt that this approach will support cohesion and help develop a sense of neighbourliness which will have a positive impact on key groups, particular older and more vulnerable community members.

7.4.3 Equalities Impact Assessments will accompany the production of each action plan.

7.5 Safeguarding Children

7.5.1 The model involves close working with Children's Services to ensure an integrated approach to service delivery.

7.5.2 As the model will require close working with communities the Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk will be an important part of service delivery. All staff will be subject to the appropriate level of checks and training will be provided in this area of work.

7.6 Health Issues

7.6.1 Whilst the improved service to localities is not directly focused on health, the approach mooted, which brings greater opportunity for early problem resolution, will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of residents. For example, a well maintained safe environment will contribute to residents' perceptions of safety and their willingness to use available facilities.

7.7 Crime and Disorder Issues

7.7.1 The Crime and Disorder Act places a responsibility on the Council as a 'responsible authority' to give consideration to the prevention and reduction of crime and disorder, including crime affecting the environment, in terms of all its policy planning and service delivery.

7.7.2 In addition consultation tells us that anti social behaviour is a key concern for residents. This is therefore a priority area within locality management. The increased integration and coordination of services together with a greater emphasis on this role for staff is intended to ensure this area continues to be effectively addressed.

7.7.3 The model allows for even greater working with the Police at a neighbourhood level and the tasking of police resources to areas of greatest concern. This will build on the agreed policing proposals enabling cooperative working to tackle areas of concern.

7.7.4 The proposal to fund two new Neighbourhood Crime Reduction Coordinators to work specifically on crime and disorder issues will substantially benefit the work to support residents feeling safe in their homes and businesses and reduce crime.

Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report: None

Appendices

- Appendix A - Outline boundaries for Flatted areas and Town Centres
- Appendix B - Outline Structures