

EXETER CITY COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

18 SEPTEMBER 2007

HOUSING ASSISTANT POST (CE06101)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To agree to make the post of Housing Assistant within the Housing Services Unit permanent.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE POST

- 2.1 The Housing Assistant post (CE06101), together with its budgetary provision, remained vacant within the Housing Unit structure for a number of years.
- 2.2 A review of workloads within the Tenancy Services Section was undertaken last year following the implementation of the Council's new Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and the Neighbourhood Management Policy. Both of these initiatives involve increased activity for Housing Estate Officers and result in them spending more time on their estates undertaking inspections and working with residents and other agencies to develop solutions for the problems that occur. To support these changes it was important that the team had sufficient support in terms of:
- dealing with tenant enquires as they come into the office, (answering enquiries when possible, logging phone calls, letters etc)
 - keeping estate inspection records up-to-date,
 - ensuring action from inspections is reported and actioned – ie reporting work to other sections of the Council, raising works orders, liaising with external agencies etc.
 - sending the relevant standard letters to tenants as instructed by the Estate Officer, maintaining records on the anti-social behaviour database and helping with accurate record keeping etc.
 - recording and monitoring the use of Incident Diary Sheets
 - maintaining the Tenancy Services procedure manual
 - reporting on contractor performance, cleansing, grounds maintenance and Signpost Services
- 2.3 All of the above duties assist in freeing up Estate Officer time to allow them to deal more directly with our tenants and be more visible on our estates.
- 2.4 As a result of this review it was agreed to fill this vacant post on a temporary basis for one year and to monitor its effectiveness in assisting with the implementation of these two important initiatives.

3. CURRENT PROGRESS

- 3.1 Officers believe that during the year that this post has been filled the level of support and assistance to the Estate Officers has steadily increased and the responsiveness to

tenants has improved. Indeed, the level of administrative work required in order to fully implement the new policies has far exceeded original expectations. In particular sending and monitoring warning letters, logging and reporting on cases of anti social behaviour using the new IT system, logging the results of neighbourhood inspections, ordering and chasing work etc has been an essential part of the post's everyday role.

- 3.2 Anti Social Behaviour casework continues to increase as more action is taken against perpetrators. This has produced a considerable amount of paper work that requires copying, collating and exhibiting for court action, a very important but time consuming exercise which has been made considerably easier by this appointment. There is also evidence to show that the increased support to the Estate Officers and Anti Social Behaviour Case Manager has enabled them to spend more time on their estates and to focus on the more urgent issues.
- 3.4 Telephone services to tenants have also improved as the post holder answers calls on behalf of the Estate Officers when they are out of the office. This ensures accurate messages are taken and requests passed to the right person.
- 3.5 The post holder has also developed a range of IT and paper systems to better monitor activity of the team and the work that they generate.
- 3.6 In conclusion, it is evident that the placing of this post within the Tenancy Services Team has had a beneficial impact on the effectiveness of the team and increased the level of work undertaken by the team.

4. PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Given the contribution this post has made to the Tenancy Services section in terms of support and assistance, and to the improvement in services to tenants in general it is recommended that this post be made permanent.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Budgetary provision already existed for this post therefore there is no effect on the Housing Revenue Account as a result of this recommendation.

6. RECOMMENDED

- (1) that Executive approves that the post of Housing Assistant (CE06101) is made permanent from 25 September 2007.

HEAD OF HOUSING SERVICES

S:LP/Committee/907EXEC2
21.8.070

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:

None