

**24 February 2014****Agenda Item: 6****REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR TRANSPORT, PROPERTY &  
ENVIRONMENT****PROPERTY STAFF CONSOLIDATION AND SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL  
CHANGES****Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide Members with information on progress towards achieving planned revenue budget savings connected with the consolidation of property staff within the corporate property group. The report outlines planned service delivery model changes and the trial being undertaken with Children Families and Cultural Services.

**Information and Advice**

2. As part of the submissions for budget savings, the property group identified the opportunity to achieve revenue saving of £250,000 per annum by 2016/17, by consolidating staff from other departments within the property group.
3. It is apparent that outside of the property group there are officers who provide an 'informed client' role for departments. These officers are either qualified property professionals or who have gained experience and knowledge of working on property issues. Their role is generally to provide an interface between the property group and the client department, assisting with general day to day property issues and/or working with the property group in formulating medium term property solutions for their service user.
4. During recent years the property group has been through a period of transition. The latest restructure during the summer of 2013 has provided a multi-professional unit that is able and has demonstrated its ability to provide a full range of property services. As a result the rationale for retaining 'informed client' roles in departments is a resource that cannot be easily justified at a time of severe financial restraint.
5. A trial has commenced with the Children Families and Cultural Services Department to :-
  - a) Identify officers who are providing an 'informed Client' property role.
  - b) Develop a service level agreement with the Client department.
  - c) Assess the officers' current role and consult with them how best their experience may be applied within the property group.
  - d) Establish an action plan for transfer of staff by April 2014.
  - e) Identify risks associated with the proposed transfer.

- f) Review process and apply learning points for the roll out to other departments.
6. With the transfer of the staff will be a transfer of staffing budgets, roles and responsibilities to the property group. In many cases this will mean the traditional roles of departments communicating directly with their end users and external bodies over property issues will be devolved to the property group. While a clearly defined service level agreement will assist in identifying the parameters of what will be transferred there is a recognition that the property group will need to change its service delivery arrangements in order to meet these new requirements.
  7. Following consultation with property managers, staff and relevant service directors, a revised operating model has been developed which is outlined in appendix 1.0. It is important to highlight the proposals do not involve a restructure, instead it builds upon the structure that is now established.
  8. The key elements of the new model are:-  
  
    'Single' Point of Contact: Client departments will be working with one/two officers within the property group to establish and resolve property needs, develop client briefs. These contacts will also be the primary interface with end users and external bodies. The primary purpose of this role is to ensure that there is a single channel of information in-coming to the Group to avoid confusion, duplication of effort and consistency of message. Identified officers will have clear responsibility and accountability for responding to client issues.
  9. The Support Unit - Incoming instructions and information are entered on a central administrative system that will formally clarify any instructions with the client department. At this point any confirmed work will be allocated and work instruction will flow to one of the officers within the service delivery sections. Client departments have access to the administrative system and from this will be able to track the progress of work.
  10. The primary purpose of this element is to consolidate the information flow and seek clarity of instruction. Later on in the process, this unit will produce the performance information that will be used to review progress with the Client.
  11. It is worth highlighting that while the single point of contact officers will be the primary conduit through which issues are raised and resolved, the support unit will form a secondary layer in circumstances when the officers are unavailable or matters need to be escalated.
  12. Group Manager Review - no less than fortnightly the two property group managers will undertake a review with the contact officers and the lead for the support unit, to assess new instructions; on-going work; resolve any issues and consider overall performance. Quarterly, a performance review will be undertaken formally with the client department. The main purpose of this change is to embed a more business orientated approach on the functioning of the Group, with scrutiny and review at a high level with existing team managers taking greater responsibility to manage the continuous improvement of their sections.

13. These changes will involve a significant degree of cultural change from both property and client groups. Measures on the risk register have been identified to mitigate risks associated with this point such as issuing a clear communication brief to staff on the process to be established outlining the reasons for adherence.
14. Once the transfer of staff has been completed there will be a requirement to have a period of time for the delivery model to become established. It is at this point that processes will be reviewed and efficiencies identified to secure the targeted budgetary savings. It is important to note that the submitted budget savings were recorded as high risk in terms of deliverability. However, with the consolidation of property resources there is greater opportunity to deliver savings compared to the current situation.

### **Other Options Considered**

15. The status quo could be retained and measures adopted by Client departments to secure revenue savings through staffing reductions. Due to the relatively small staff numbers involved in each area, the opportunities to achieve efficiencies will be more limited. In addition such an option would mean that departments are being distracted from concentrating on core activities.
16. Alternatively the need for budget savings could be ignored. Given the financial challenges the Authority is facing, this is not considered to be a viable option.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

17. To provide Members with information on progress towards achieving planned revenue budget savings connected with the consolidation of property staff within the corporate property group. In addition, due to the importance of the changes it is highlighted that a further six month progress report is submitted.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

18. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

### **RECOMMENDATION/S**

It is recommended: -

- 1) To note the proposed consolidation of property staff and the development of a new service delivery model; and
- 2) That a further report is presented to members providing an update on progress after six months of operation.

**Jas Hundal**  
**Service Director- Transport, Property & Environment**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact: Andrew Stevens 0115 977 2085**

**Constitutional Comments (SSR 07-02-2014)**

19.The report is for noting purposes only.

**Financial Comments (TR 12-02-2014)**

20.As this report is for noting only, financial comments are not required.

**Background Papers and Published Documents**

21.None.

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

22.Ward(s): n/a  
Member(s): n/a

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