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APPENDIX A

COMMITTEE: **TENANT CONSULTATIVE**

DATE: **21st February 2007**

SUBJECT: **Housing Landlord Management Arrangements**

REPORT BY: **Trevor Morrow**

CONTACT OFFICER: **Trevor Morrow**

IMPLICATIONS:

LEGAL	**COMMUNITY SAFETY**
EQUALITIES	**ENVIRONMENT**
FINANCIAL	**CONSULTATIONS**
STAFFING ✓	**OTHER**

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

PURPOSE

To feedback to the TCC on the new management structure for Housing Landlord Services.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Tenant Consultative Committee is recommended to note the report.

BACKGROUND

1. The Service Excellence Project is about positioning Luton as one of the most modern housing services within the country. In order to achieve this the management structure of the service has been reshaped to reflect how a modern

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housing service operates. The Head of Housing Landlord Services agreed to feedback on how things were going.

REPORT

2. The Management team for Housing Landlord Service was reshaped to create the following roles:

- Asset Manager (Housing Landlord)
- Business Development Manager
- Housing Manager

3.These roles have been filled and the management team is now at full compliment and settling down. The three managers have distinct focus:

4.The Asset Manager's priorities are to deliver the capital and investment programmes for Decent Homes, build the reputation and work stream for Building Works Division and create an integrated repairs function.

5. The last few months have been incredibly busy, with the retirement of the Building Works Manager, increased focus on improving costs and efficiency and negotiations on future contracts. Also the continued inability to recruit a suitable replacement for the BWD manager has increased pressures.

6. The Business Development Manager's priorities are to restructure the staffing, implement the new computer system and deliver service improvement through improvements in policy and procedure. Key also to this role is the enhancement of strategic consultation with customers through improved tenant and leaseholder participation.

7. Work on these areas continues at a pace and we hope to have staff slotted into their new roles by late April. The IT implementation team are working well in partnership with IBS and we are learning a great deal from the processes from other authorities. The first of a series of focus groups has been held which is the subject of a TCC report to this committee.

8. The Housing Manager's priorities are to build the Income Management and Tenancy Management teams, to reduce rent arrears and improve voids and allocations turnaround times. The role of the two teams is explained below.

Role of the Income Management Team

9. The income management team will consist of:

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- Income Manager
- 3 Senior Income Officers
- 11 Income Officers
- 4 Income Assistants

10. The main role will be to maximise the income through

- Current tenant rent and service charges
- Leaseholder service charges, ground rent and other charges
- Former Tenant Arrears
- Home Content Insurance
- Potentially rechargeable repairs

11. The income team will be primarily office based with the Senior Housing Officers (discussed below) carrying out a majority of visits. This will ensure that Senior Housing Officers are kept aware of their tenancies and also to maximise the effectiveness of the Income Officers.

12. The Income Officers will work on a patch basis and their main role will be proactively preventing rent arrears through the sign up process, through early contact with customers and ensuring we have good working relationships with the Housing Benefit service, debt and welfare benefit advice agencies, with early sing posting of customers to these specialist agencies.

13. There will be a need to take legal action against tenants for debts and the income team will be responsible for this. However, we will aim to keep this to a minimum through the proactive early arrears work.

14. There will be clear performance monitoring in place that will enable us to identify problems and to demonstrate improvements to the service.

15. The new IT system will be key to driving through improvements, in terms of both rent collected and customer focus. This will enable us to eliminate most of the inherent inefficiencies in the current service.

Tenancy Management Team

16. The tenancy management team will consist of:

- Tenancy Manager
- 9 Senior Housing Officers
- 2 Housing Officers

17. The Senior Housing Officers will work on a patch basis so customers have one point of contact for tenancy issues. However, the new IT system will allow clear notes to be kept of all issues and points of contact to allow other officers to pick up on individual issues as and when necessary.

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18. The team will be responsible for :

- Developing and supporting local Tenants and Residents Associations
- Ensuring services to our estates are meeting the needs of customers
- Undertaking estate inspections
- Enforcing tenancy conditions
- Dealing with low level ASB and nuisance
- Working with customers to improve their living environments
- Developing customer involvement
- Work closely with partners to ensure a holistic approach to estate and tenancy management, including
    - Social Behaviour team
    - Social Services
    - Contractors
    - Police
    - Other council departments

The team will be the 'face' of the housing service.

Joint responsibilities

19. The income, allocation and tenancy management teams will be jointly responsible for running the front desk services at the area offices. This will provide a fact-to-face point of contact for customers to deal with queries and to make appointments for customers to see their Senior Housing Officer and Maintenance Inspectors.

PROPOSAL/OPTION

That the Tenant Consultative Committee note the new management structure and the progress made on developing the service.

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None

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None