

**COMMITTEE: ADMINISTRATION & REGULATION**

**DATE: Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2014**

**SUBJECT: INTERNALISING BAILIFFS FOR REVENUES AND TRADING SERVICES**

**REPORT BY: HEAD OF REVENUES, BENEFITS AND CUSTOMER SERVICES**

**CONTACT OFFICER: KEVIN STEWART, CHANGE LEADER**

**IMPLICATIONS:**

<b>LEGAL</b>	✓	<b>COMMUNITY SAFETY</b>	
<b>EQUALITIES</b>	✓	<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	
<b>FINANCIAL</b>	✓	<b>CONSULTATIONS</b>	✓
<b>STAFFING</b>	✓	<b>OTHER</b>	

**WARDS AFFECTED: ALL**

---

**PURPOSE**

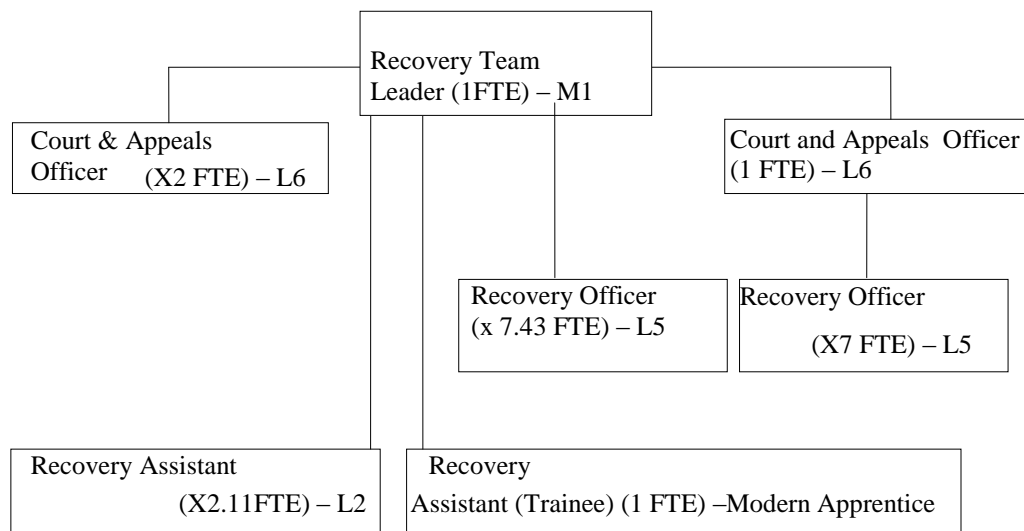
1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the Administration and Regulation Committee to implement the proposed changes to the Income Service in the Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Department, in order to contribute to budget savings and respond to changing service demands.

## **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- Administration and Regulation Committee is recommended to approve the implementation of the proposal set out in paragraphs 12 - 13 of this report.**

## **BACKGROUND**

- A key function of the Revenues Service is to collect both Council Tax and Business Rates debt. The Internalising of Bailiffs for Revenues and Trading Services will bring additional revenue to the Council (in reducing arrears as well as new trading contracts). It is to improve collection and help build on the improvements made to date for the Income Service. It also gives the Council better control over additional costs that can be added to outstanding debt which will help vulnerable debtors who owe the Council money. We are therefore looking to build a structure that supports this although we may need to seek new resources as further contracts are achieved. As a result, some changes to the staffing structure within the Revenues Team are necessary.
- The current structure is:-



## **REPORT**

- New Enforcement Regulations came into force on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2014 and the Executive approval of 10<sup>th</sup> March 2014 gave officers permission to bring the enforcement of Council Tax and Business Rates recovery in house rather than use external bailiffs.

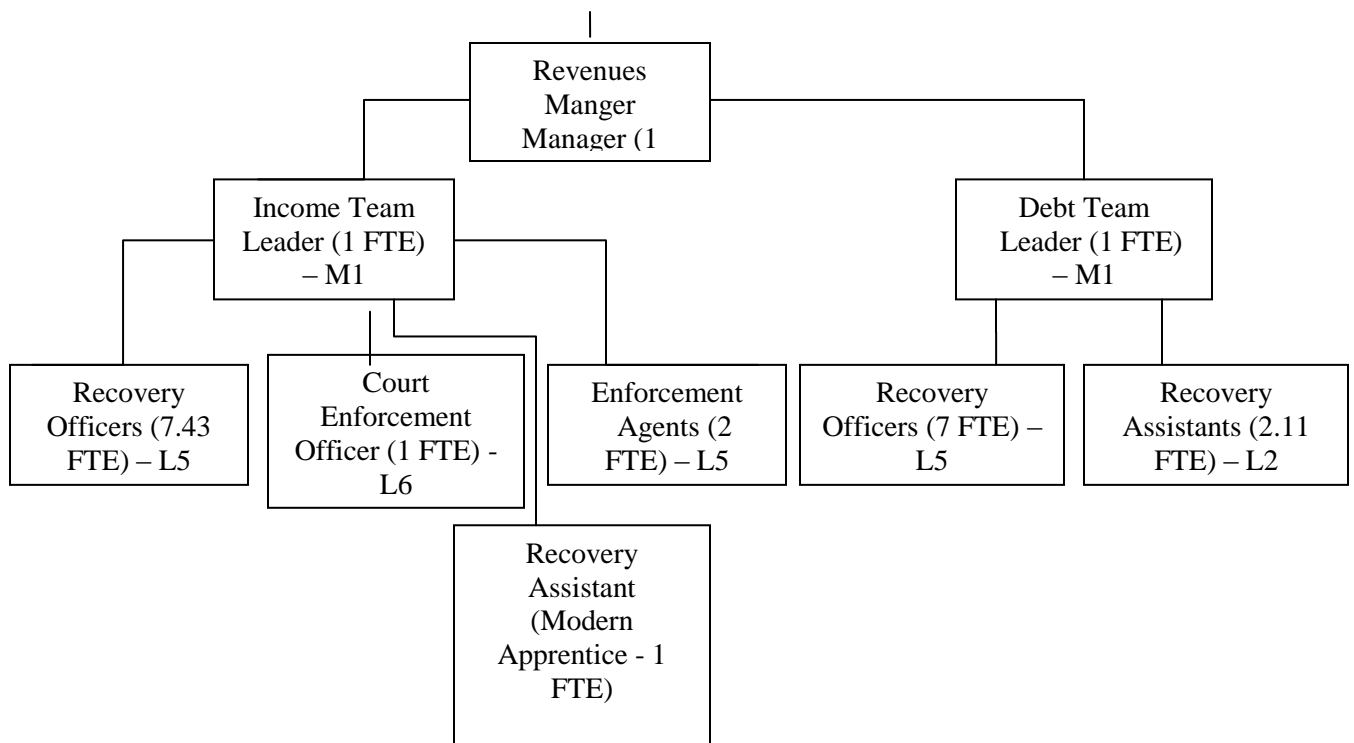
6. In order to internalise debt enforcement and to allow the Council to trade more, some new roles are required alongside some post deletions and revisions to job descriptions. New job descriptions for the Revenues Manager, Income Team Leader, Debt Team Leader and Enforcement Agent posts were written and these were evaluated by the Job Evaluation Panel on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2014.
7. Whilst this report covers both the Internalising of Bailiffs for Revenues and Trading Services the new proposed posts covered in this report are for the Internalising Bailiff project. Further requests will be made as appropriate as the number of trading service contracts are increased.
8. In order to maximise income generation, there are some changes also required to terms and conditions of employment to incorporate some evening working and occasional Saturday morning working.
9. A formal consultation process with all staff within the Revenues Team and the Trade Unions took place between 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> May 2014.
10. No alternative proposals were put forward by affected staff although in the consultation staff suggested that the Debt Enforcement role should include working up to a 50 mile radius from Luton's boundaries.
11. The Council's Organisational Change Procedure continues to be followed throughout this organisation change.

## **PROPOSALS**

12. Staff and Trades Unions were consulted on the following proposals:
  - Revisions to the job descriptions for Recovery Officer, Recovery Assistant, Recovery Assistant Trainee and Court and Appeals Officer to incorporate the internalising of enforcement post liability order and an increase in trading services.
  - Changes to the working pattern for these posts to incorporate occasional Saturday morning and evening working.
  - The deletion of the following posts: Recovery Team Leader 1FTE and 2 FTE Court and Appeals Officer.
  - Creation of the following posts: Revenues Manager; Income Team Leader; Debt Team Leader.

- Change of job title for the remaining 1 FTE Court and Appeals Officer to Court Enforcement Officer.
- Create 2 FTE Enforcement Agents, to cover up to 50 miles outside Luton BC 's boundaries
- Create 2 FTE Customer Services Assistants

13. The proposed structure is:



14. If Administration and Regulation Committee agrees to the proposals the new structure will be implemented immediately.

### **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS / INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

15. The Integrated Impact Assessment has been attached to this report. The assessment indicated that there could potentially be a negative impact on one or more employee sharing either race, gender, age or religion/belief characteristics. All other impacts for the remaining characteristics are neutral. The following actions will be taken to mitigate any potential negative impact; ensuring that the Council's Organisational Change Procedure is used in seeking alternative work for the affected employees, affected employees will be considered first for alternative roles within the

new structure via ring-fencing arrangements, affected employees will also be considered for remaining vacancies before release to general redeployment/recruitment. In addition, affected employees will be offered support with application form skills and interview technique to assist them in securing roles within the new structure.

### **STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

16. The proposal to delete 3 FTE posts has the potential to result in 3 compulsory redundancies. Employees potentially at risk will have ring-fenced opportunities to be considered for the new roles in the new structure and if employees are assessed as suitable, compulsory redundancies will either be minimised or negated. There are 17 employees affected by the proposals that will require minor changes to their job descriptions and a variation to their working pattern to incorporate occasional Saturday morning working and evening working. Where minor changes have been made to Job Descriptions and a change to working patterns agreed, a Change of Particulars will be issued to affected staff. It is anticipated that voluntary agreement to these minor changes can be achieved without the need to formally dismiss employees and re-engage them on new terms. At this moment in time, employees have indicated that they are willing to accept the changes.

17. This report has been cleared by Angela Claridge, Head of HR and Monitoring Officer on 11 June 2014.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

18. The estimated full year financial anticipated additional net income of implementing this proposal is £54,000 for 2014/15 and £221,000 per annum thereafter. This income is additional income to the £75,000 that Traded Services – Revenue Solutions is committed to delivering in 2014/15.

19. This report has been cleared by Dave Kempson, Head of Finance on 10 June 2014.

### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

20. The proposals have the potential for 3 compulsory redundancies. In the event that compulsory redundancy is necessary, there is potential for an internal appeal (which would be conducted by Officers) and the Council would also need to deal with any potential employment tribunal proceedings.

21. The proposal has the potential for dismissal and re-engagement for some other Substantial Reason where employees do not accept the revised job description and terms and conditions of employment. There is the possibility for an internal appeal to Members Appeals against dismissal for Some Other Substantial Reason and the Council will also need to deal with any employment tribunal proceedings.
22. Any risks associated with the above will be greatly reduced by strict adherence to the Council's Organisational Change Procedure, employment law and best practice in Human Resources around matters concerning changes affecting employees.
23. This report has been cleared by John Newman, Solicitor in Legal Services on 10 June 2014.

## **APPENDIX**

IIA - Internalising Bailiffs for Revenues and Trading Services

### **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS** **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, SECTION 100D**

There are no background papers in connection with this report.