

Handling Organisational Change Organisational Change Assessment

Building Control – Disability Access Advice Service

1. Purpose

- To set out proposals to make changes to the organisation of the Council's Building Control Disability Access Advice Service to deliver budget savings
- To outline the timetable for formal consultation with affected employees and stakeholders and confirm the date of Executive or Administration Committee when the final proposals for the changes will be considered.
- The Departmental Management Team of Environment and Regeneration have given their support for the proposals to be considered for consultation

1.1 Background and context

All public authorities continue to be hit hard by central government spending reductions. Luton is no exception. The priority is to ensure the continued delivery of essential services required by the local community. To achieve this will require the Council, like every other local authority in the country, to undergo radical change.

The objective is to restructure the Council so that it is better placed to deliver good quality services with far less resources. Without this change, the authority will, quite simply, become unsustainable very quickly. Some of the changes that the Council is considering include a move towards more commissioned services, fewer directly employed staff and a greater emphasis on partnership working.

The scale of the spending reductions demanded by the new financial climate has resulted in job losses. This is in spite of strenuous – and effective – measures to reduce non-essential spending which have been undertaken over the last two years. During this period the Council has managed an enforced £36 million budget cut with relatively little damage to frontline services.

In order to deliver further budget cuts by 2016, a wide range of service efficiencies and organisational changes need to be delivered. One inevitable outcome is further reductions in the Council's workforce. In the period September 2010 to September 2012 inclusive, approximately 420 employees left the organisation either by voluntary separation or compulsory redundancy.

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The Council continues to look at possible options to help protect essential services from what could be, by 2016, an enforced budget reduction of as much as a half.

For more information on how the Council is aiming to protect front line services please refer to the council transformation strategy [Luton Together](#).

For employees who do not have access to the Council's intranet but would like to read the Luton Together strategy, please ask your manager for a copy of this document.

The Council is legally obliged to inform and consult, at the earliest opportunity, with the Trades Unions and those employees whose jobs are affected. This consultation will be carried out by service managers who will be advised by HR business managers and their staff.

1.2 Scope

The scope of this employee brief is:

- The service provided by the Council's Disability Access Advisor

1.3 The Current Position

Rolling budget reductions were identified for Building Control in the 2012 round of savings as part of the Authority's response to the government's cuts.

The budget reduction for Building Control in 2014/15 is £50,000.

2. Proposal (s)

We need your feedback about the proposal(s) set out in this document. This is your opportunity to shape the future of the service that we know is of enormous importance and significance to you. Please remember that these are initial proposals only and that the final proposals will only be known once the formal consultation period has ended.

PROPOSAL

The proposals affecting staff is that the Disability Access Advice Service within Building Control is discontinued.

This affects one member of staff

COSTS 2013 / 14

Cost of providing Service	£	38,000
Income derived from the service	£	400
No of income generating service requests		7

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(Note that a further service request received Sep.'13 has the potential to generate an additional £280)

CONTEXT

The Building Control division provides services, to both the public and private sector, principally relating to health and safety in the built environment. The division is predominantly self-financing and competes with the private sector for work.

Budget reductions can expose the Authority to increased risk, an appraisal of the services delivered by Building Control was undertaken to determine which functions presented the least risk to the Council. This approach was based on whether that function is statutory, mandatory, public safety related, self-financing and whether its cessation would lead to an increased risk of litigation.

The outcome of the analysis was that the lowest risk is presented by discontinuing the disability access advice service. This is a discretionary service, which was intended to be self-financing by offering paid-for advice to members of the public, businesses and the Council's departments.

Since its inception (12 May 2011) demand for the service has been low and income has failed to reach a viable amount to maintain the business stream. Whilst the Council is now in a better position to trade there is no indication that there will be sufficient increase in demand for the service and it does not appear likely that the post of Disability Access Adviser will become self-funding.

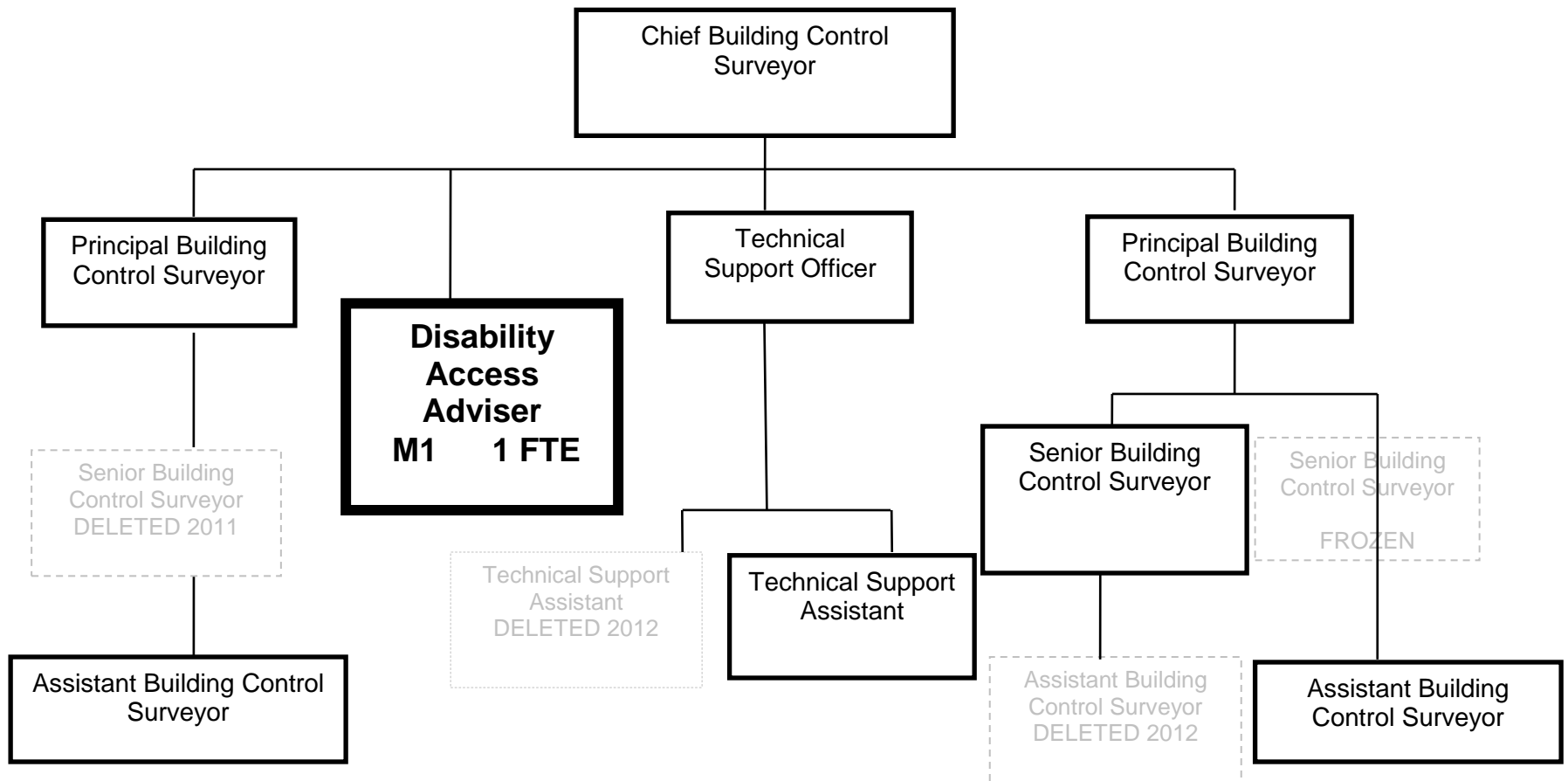
ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

The provision of disability access advice continues to be available to members of the public and local businesses through paid-for services delivered through the National Register of Access Consultants and with reference to the publication Approved Document M available, free, from the planning portal.

Additionally the Council has available other, albeit limited, sources of disability access advice within the Fixed Assets Service and the Building Control division. The Social Justice team provide guidance to the Council on equality policies.

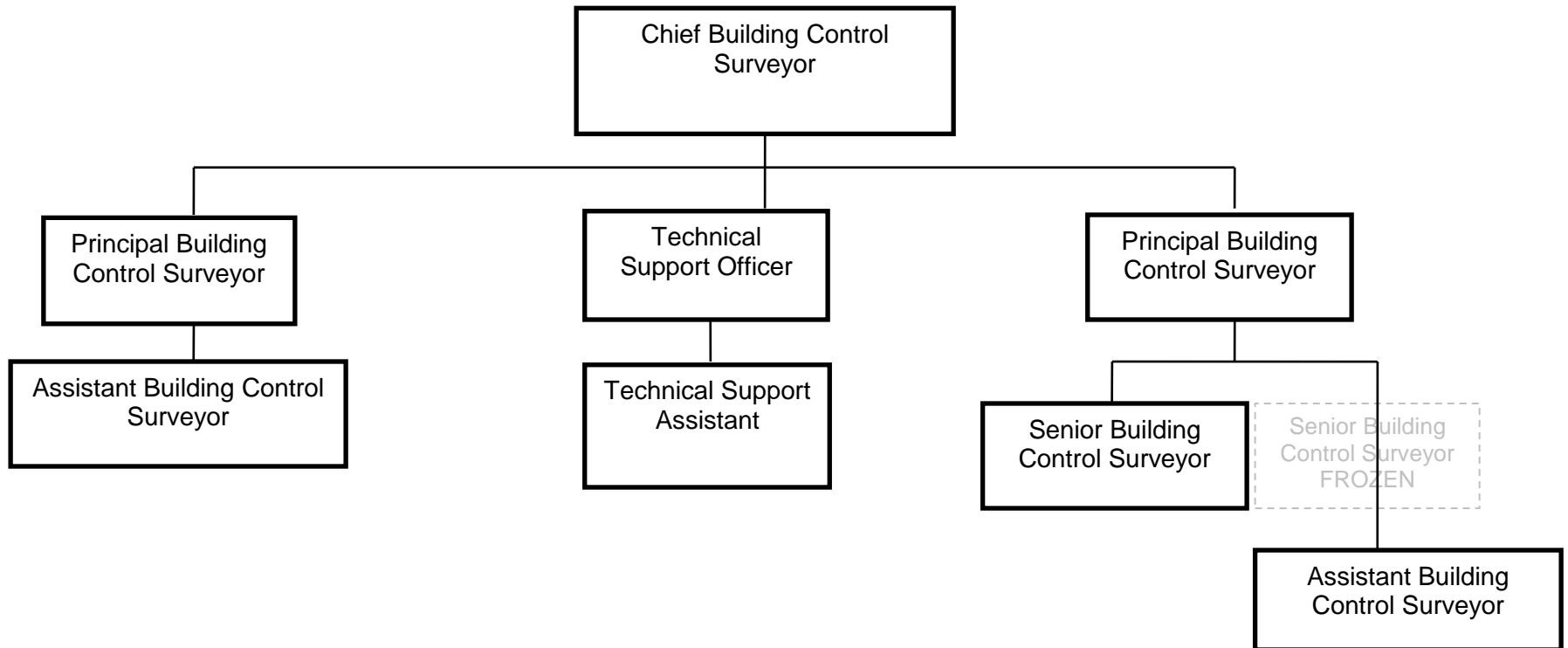
Appendix 2

3. Original structures



Appendix 2

4. Proposed structures



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5. Staff affected by the proposal(s)

Post title	Grade	FTE	Headcount	Vacant
Disability Access Adviser	M1	1	1	No

6. Risks

The risks associated with this proposed course of action have been assessed with the other functions delivered by Building Control and present the authority with the lowest corporate and financial risk.

Any risks to service delivery as a result of these proposals will be mitigated by the availability of other sources of advice:

Access to Council buildings:	The Fixed Assets team
Access to privately owned buildings:	The National Register of Access Consultants
Equalities:	The Social Justice team

Any additional work for the Fixed Assets team or Social Justice team, as a result of this proposal, is not anticipated to be burdensome.

In implementing this proposal the Council is deviating from best practice, however, provided sufficient attention is given to accessible design the Authority's buildings are not likely to lead to immediate claims for discrimination.

Failure to implement a new management structure will result in an overspend on the staffing budget for Building Control from 2014/15.

7. Consultation and next steps

The Council's Handling Organisational Change policy will be used throughout the process.

TU/Management Meeting 10th January 2014

Formal consultation start date 14th January 2014

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Formal consultation end date 12th February 2014

During the period of formal consultation:

- The affected employee will have a **one-to-one** meeting to discuss their individual circumstances and how they are impacted by the proposal. Continual and open dialogue on further suggestions and ideas to arrive at the best proposals for change given the circumstances in which the Council finds itself are encouraged.
- Consultation will include opportunities for key stakeholders to give their comments on the proposal(s).
- Any formal questions raised during the consultation process will receive a formal response
- Comments and views during consultation can be emailed to Stephen Rizzo:
 - email stephen.rizzo@luton.gov.uk
 - Telephone 01582 546324
- A summary will be produced towards the end of consultation.
- Trades Unions will be involved throughout
- We will report to Administration and Regulation Committee on 4th March 2014 with the final service proposals. Subject to the Committee's decision the implementation of changes will commence on the 5th March 2014 and implementation is scheduled to be complete by week commencing 2nd June 2014
- Formal notice of redundancy is likely to be served week commencing 10th March 2014, at the earliest.
- Dismissal will likely take effect week commencing 2nd June 2014, at the earliest.

8. Implementation

Implementation will be in line with the Council's Handling Organisational Change policy.

A draft implementation plan will be developed towards the end of formal consultation, once the final proposal(s) likely to be presented to Committee become clear. The draft plan can be amended at any point, as a result of formal consultation or Committee's decision.

The final implementation plan will be circulated following the publication of Committee's decision. In general, implementation will commence immediately.

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Human Resources will advise on technical/procedural aspects of implementation plans.

9. Contact ICAS

Changing times can sometimes be difficult. Confidential support is available for all employees of the Council from the Independent Counselling and Advisory Service. This service is independent and provides counselling and life management support, which includes legal and financial support. It can be contacted on:

0800 0727072