

**Feedback on comments received**

<b>Employee Comments</b>	<b>Response, where necessary</b>
<p>I have been told that the ‘Admin Support’ Post is to be made redundant and the proposal is for Senior Team Members to carry out their own Admin duties. My post contributes to the Development process and I feel that, in addition to the valuable work that I undertake, the post could be enhanced to incorporate more duties. This would save many G Grade hours and would also provide responsibility to ensure efficient management of new and existing housing stock, as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitor planning applications to identify forthcoming developments.</li> <li>• report on the statistics for S106 thresholds.</li> <li>• expand the existing quarterly request for information sent to Registered Providers Grant Funding; HCA, Grant Funding; LA SHG, RSL Subsidy, Developer Subsidy.</li> <li>• set up and populate the Compliance Proforma.</li> <li>• send the details of the estimated completed dates of new rental properties to the Housing Team.</li> <li>• Use the Help to Buy South’s report system to aid compliance work and enhance the information held and its accessibility.</li> <li>• Use the annual update of RP housing stock to check returns for tenure changes i.e. monitor social rent converted to affordable rent, percentages of stair-casing/purchases of shared ownership.</li> </ul>	<p>The proposal is for the Admin Support post to be disestablished and the activities incorporated into the remaining posts. The additional duties would be a small element of the proposed roles. They would also be integral to the roles and could be accommodated within the revised working arrangements. Their inclusion will also ensure that there will be ownership and awareness of all duties and a reduction in the duplication of effort between the roles.</p> <p>It is recognised that many supplementary tasks have been undertaken by the Enabling Assistant. In the absence of resources, further rationalisation and prioritisation will be required to meet both the challenges this represents and also the financial pressures on the Council.</p> <p>Active consideration will be given to redeployment of the postholder into an alternative post.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensuring the information on the website is kept up to date and applying to put information on.</li> </ul>	
<p>Firstly clarity is required in relation to work which will no longer be done by the team or is work that should not be done by the team i.e.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Homelessness operational issues (day to day engagement over rough sleepers).</li> <li>Affordable Home ownership options - customer relations.</li> <li>Working on the implementation of commissioning of Supporting People Services.</li> <li>Cold Weather protocol – (Strategic role is developing policies or protocols not implementing)</li> <li>DV casework (Sanctuary Scheme Referrals).</li> </ul>	<p>The intention of the restructure is to ensure that the team is able to focus on its core functions. Operational activity will be returned to the relevant teams.</p>
<p>The fact that the Homelessness Team Leader will be leaving the organisation provides an opportunity to clarify the Strategic and Operational roles, and ensure that operational issues remain within the remit of the operational team.</p>	<p>Agreed</p>
<p>In relation to the 2 G &amp; F grade positions we note that there is overlap between these roles. The team welcomes a generic approach to working, improving job quality and the ability to manage workloads.</p>	<p>Noted</p>
<p>The overlap would suggest that consideration should be given to the F grade post being a career grade. It is the team's view that a structure with 3 G grade officers provides the best outcome for management of workloads and delivering quality outcomes.</p>	<p>There is a clear differential between the requirements of the roles at Grade F and Grade G. In addition, the proposed resources available at each level are deemed to be sufficient to meet the needs of the service.</p> <p>As such the proposal for a career-graded post at Grade F/G is not supported.</p>

<p>However without reassurances regarding assimilation into these roles staff would support the current proposal with the addition of a career graded post.</p>	<p>All staff at Grade F and G are eligible to be considered for the new posts in the proposed structure and therefore a ring-fenced selection process is warranted.</p> <p>This approach will be kept under review and may be amended, if appropriate, in the light of further developments.</p>
<p>The benefits of using existing staff resources, including background knowledge and understanding of process and partner contacts to create a new structure, in our view outweigh the risks of having to recruit to vacant positions because of redundancies and the risks associated with the recruitment process and also the possibility of need to train and develop new members of staff.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>
<p>The team's view is that there may be an amount of admin to be picked up, that would represent VFM in that higher grade officers would be freed up from these tasks. The team has been unable to ascertain the exact extent of these tasks to date, against no detailed JDs have been provided as yet. However the team feels that it does merits some further consideration, taking the view that these tasks should be stand-alone (i.e. no handovers) and should also not be a task that should be dealt with by another team i.e. Affordable Home ownership queries.</p>	<p>Not supported - see above.</p>

## **Response 1**

### **Housing Strategy and Enabling Service Review**

#### **Response to restructuring proposals**

Firstly clarity is required in relation to work which will no longer be done by the team or is work that should not be done by the team i.e.:

- Homelessness operational issues (day to day engagement over rough sleepers).
- Affordable Home ownership options - customer relations.
- Working on the implementation of commissioning of Supporting People Services.
- Cold Weather protocol – (Strategic role is developing policies or protocols not implementing)
- DV casework (Sanctuary Scheme Referrals).

The fact that the Homelessness Team Leader will be leaving the organisation provides an opportunity to clarify the Strategic and Operational roles, and ensure that operational issues remain within the remit of the operational team.

In relation to the 2 G & F grade positions we note that there is overlap between these roles. The team welcomes a generic approach to working, improving job quality and the ability to manage workloads.

The overlap would suggest that consideration should be given to the F grade post being a career grade. It is the team's view that a structure with 3 G grade officers provides the best outcome for management of workloads and delivering quality outcomes. However without reassurances regarding assimilation into these roles staff would support the current proposal with the addition of a career graded post.

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## Response 2

### HOUSING STRATEGY & ENABLING ASSISTANT

I have been told that the Admin Support Post is to be made redundant and the proposal is for Senior Team Members to carry out their own Admin duties. When it was requested for my position to be moved to a centralised Admin Team a few months ago; my Manager 'argued' that my post was not just basic administration duties. Below gives an outline of how my post contributes to the Development process and also how I feel the Admin post could be enhanced to incorporate more duties within the process that I feel would save many G Grade hours and also provide responsibility to ensure efficient management of new and existing housing stock.

#### TASKS THAT I COMPLETE IN GREEN FONT

#### TASKS OF THE 'G' GRADE ELEMENT IN BLUE

#### TASKS THAT I DO NOT DO AT THE MOMENT BUT COULD FALL WITHIN MY 'REMIT'

### Planning Permissions with Affordable Housing Opportunities

We **monitor planning applications** to identify forthcoming developments. We **negotiate where there is an affordable housing element**. We **have a system that monitors the delivery of affordable homes (Affordable Housing in Gloucester) and these planning applications need reporting alongside the ongoing and completed developments.**

Revised thresholds for S106:

- 5-9 units on a new development site - negotiate 20% Affordable Housing
- 10+ units on a new development site - negotiate a target of 40% Affordable Housing.

To:- Business Improvement Officer – **report stats biannually**

### Development

When Detailed Consent Obtained we get a Planning Layout that shows where the affordable housing has been allocated, plot numbers and house types. **These basic details are transposed onto a Phase Spreadsheet.**

### AH Monitoring

**We send out a quarterly request to developing Registered Providers that includes:** Unit Type, No. of Bedrooms, Unit Sq Meters, Tenure, Address, Building Standards, Code for Sustainable Homes, Lifetime Homes, Wheelchair, Supported Housing, Client Group, Not Started, Under Construction, Anticipated Completion Date, Completion Date. **Grant Funding; HCA, Grant Funding; LA SHG, RSL Subsidy, Developer Subsidy.** For new builds, 1 off acquisitions, conversions, disposals and mortgage rescue.

The above information does not come back 'in one hit'; as the development progresses we are 'fed' the information and **this is then transferred onto our 'Affordable Housing in Gloucester' spreadsheet as the information comes through over the duration of the development with expected dates and completion dates.**

We produce quarterly stats that provide numbers of completed Low Cost Home Ownership, Intermediate Rent, Mortgage Rescue, 1 off acquisitions, New Build Homebuy or Shared Ownership, Social Rent, Affordable Rent,.

### **AH Compliance**

Very often we were not 'given' all of the information requested on the Phase Spreadsheet and this information needs to be 'chased'. For compliance purposes we add onto the Phase Spreadsheet a request for RP's to provide details of a sample of applicants; including earnings and price paid; this evidences the percentage of Open Market Value that the unit was sold at and also confirms that the unit was sold to people 'who could not afford to purchase on the Open Market'.

We then set up a **Compliance Proforma** and **Work through the requirements of the section 106** and input the gathered information onto the compliance Proforma to evidence compliance. **Following on we challenge non-compliance i.e. sq meters short of requirement, open market value; Developer sold at 75% instead of 70% of market value.**

### **Allocations**

**Once we have details of the estimated completed dates of new rental properties; we send these onto our Housing Team in order that they can forward plan allocations.**

### **Local Authority Consent when an RP wishes to dispose of Housing Stock**

We would investigate whether it is reasonable to recommend that the RP keeps the property (as all social housing is a valuable resource). Whether they could sell or even give the property over to another RP; otherwise we would need to confirm or reject in writing our consent to the disposal (**final consideration of consent to disposal**).

**The following are some of the other projects and duties that I do/have carried out:**

### **Help to Buy South (Low Cost Home Ownership Agency)**

When an **existing homeowner** wishes to purchase an Affordable Housing property they can only do so with the **support of their Local Authority** (i.e. someone in a relationship breakdown that **could not** get a mortgage on their own to **purchase an open market property** and could not afford to stay in an existing property on their own because the mortgage is too high). **We have developed a system to record and**

process the support for Affordable Housing Applications. We record the applicants details, send them a form that we developed in order to ascertain affordability and if we ascertain that they could not access open market housing; we support the application in writing to the Registered Provider whom they may go on to purchase from.

We are able to log into the Help to Buy South's report system and this could aid our compliance work (this report system was introduced in April 2014 but does have some 'teething problems').

We have had reports that some shared ownership properties that are put onto the Help to Buy South's advertising system are already sold before they go on!

We found a shared ownership property for sale with an estate agent and asked Help to Buy South whether the property had:

- been advertised for 6 weeks with them before it went out to the Estate Agent – "they cannot tell with the system as it is at the moment!"
- Help to Buy said that when RP's sell a property through an Estate Agent ; they take the property off their website and then when the property is sold, RP's then put the property back on the website in order for the sale stats to go through and be reported as an affordable housing 'sale' to the HCA?

Help to Buy South's website is 'split' for people to search for either rented properties or affordable housing options to purchase; however Rent to Homebuy is advertised within the 'rental' section and we feel that this is a product that needs to be either in the purchase search area; or both purchase and rental.

- Rent to Homebuy; details of how the scheme works and costs involved are not very well explained on the site.

There has recently been a case where an elderly lady's shared ownership property is no longer able to meet her housing needs. She has approached the Council whether we would be interested in purchasing her share of the property and we have not received any of her financial details back.

- She only wants to move to a 2 bed property and she would only **qualify** for one bedroom in social housing.

We would recommend one of her options would be to purchase a 2 bed shared ownership property. However, as she needs support with the processes involved – **this could pose a problem 'who' will support this lady to move on to appropriate housing?** (Consideration: this could potentially SAVE a social housing unit for another prospective occupant).

There are MANY issues surrounding Help to Buy; above are just a few examples. On the Help to Buy South website it states **"If you are looking for more options to**

get a step on the property ladder, please contact your Local Authority for information on any local schemes they may offer”.

I have produced – “Gloucester City Affordable Home Ownership Information – A Guide for People who would have difficulty buying a property on the open market” (copy attached).

### **Inquiries from Members of the Public**

Any inquiries would initially come to the Strategy & Enabling Assistant which can become a **time consuming process** i.e. 18 Aug 14: received a call from a man who saw an RP’s sign outside a new development which stated ‘in Partnership with Gloucester City Council’. I then passed on his inquiry to the RP (same day). 28 Aug applicant phoned me back complaining that the RP had not “got back to him”, I sent an email to the RP Development Manager **on my Manager’s instructions** (same day). 1 Sept 14: RP Manager copied me into an email asking his employee to contact the inquirer and update myself: 8<sup>th</sup> Sept 14: no response to date.

### **Local Authority Housing Statistics (an Annual Report to Government)**

Please see the procedural report that I recently produced for a 1:1 session (attached).

### **GIS - Update of RP Housing Stock (Annual)**

RP’s are asked to update their housing stock details that we hold annually in order to inform the GIS system **We could also use this information to check returns for tenure changes i.e.monitor social rent converted to affordable rent, percentages of stair-casing/purchases of shared ownership.**

### **Partnership Review Meetings – all active RP’s (Annually)**

The administration of these meetings is either carried out by the Enabling Assistant or an Apprentice (if one in post):

- set up dates with Enabling Officers & RP Management
- book meeting rooms
- send RPs’ a template in order for them to respond with any agenda items that they would wish to discuss
- print correspondence in preparation for the meetings
- collate feedback from the meetings i.e. ‘what matters’
- **Further content/attendance**

### **RP Liaison Meetings**

The administration duties involved in booking meetings/handouts and confirming attendance is either carried out by the Enabling Assistant or an Apprentice (if one in post): **Content/attendance**



### **Right Move (Quarterly for Statistics Report)**

We monitor the rental charges section of the Right Move website in order to ascertain how the LHA is fairing with regards percentiles of affordability in various accommodation types i.e. room, 1 bed, 2 beds etc.

### **Statistics**

Various statistics produced on request of Officers

### **Summarising of Government Directives**

Produced to inform team at Team Meetings

### **The Hive**

I designed a Staff Tasks/Business Plan/1:1 Management System that enabled our Staff and Project Meetings to become more purposeful. The Hive is now in its third year and has proved to be an effective management tool.

I also introduced two new columns on our Team Meeting Agendas' to include

- Objective of Agenda Item i.e. to inform, gather info/opinions etc.
- Required Outcome i.e. team decision

### **Managed Lifelink Department and produced Telecare Scoping Report on my return – (approx. 10 months Grade D)**

I managed the Lifelink Service to cover long-term sickness. On my return I produced a report to inform strategy and service developments.

### **Equality Impact Assessments**

I have worked with Enabling Officers and GCC Equality Officer Riki Moody on compiling and structuring Equality Impact Assessments

### **Member of Healthy City Partnership Board (approx 12 months):**

I was a member of the Partnership Board and attempted to initiate a Community Referral Initiative.

### **GEAR Management Committee (8 years)**

I was a member of the Gloucester Emergency Accommodation Resource Management during which time I helped interview new members of staff and was also on their Finance Committee. Unfortunately the GEAR Night Shelter's funding arrangements and sleeping conditions were the reasons why I resigned. I advised the Committee on several issues that I do not feel that they fully grasped (although I understood the reasons why). This was an amicable resignation.

## **Countywide Housing Needs Survey Administration**

I helped with the tendering process for the Consultants and arranged many County-wide meetings in order for agreement of the content. The total costs were £222,000 for which I informed the amounts needed and invoiced the other districts (some split their costs over 2 financial years).

## **Right to Buy**

I kept records of the income generated; in-line with Property Services and GCH (as there have been discrepancies in the past of amounts/numbers) (RTB's will be going over to GCH after stock transfer).

## **Right of First refusal/Private Sector Purchase Requests**

Where GCC have the right of first refusal or we are requested to buy a property; I have carried out a lengthy process and responded to Applicants, Legal, GCH, Property Services regarding decline, purchase, conveyance and budgets in-line with GCC policy (this will be lengthy to explain – as with the development process on pages 1 & 2 and will be going over to GCH after stock transfer).

## **Budgets**

I monitored the Strategy & Enabling budget reporting to the Manager spend and balance on a regular basis. I also raised orders and kept records/receipts and distributed petty cash.

## **Events and Consultations:**

I have helped organise events and produced name badges, attendance sheet, hand-outs, and display information. Both in a public arena and also in a more formal situation; I have also facilitated at events and carried out consultations when requested.

## **Minutes of Meetings** – Various

## **Freedom of Information**

Various FOI's are received and the Admin Assistant will either respond or coordinate and record a response by the appropriate Enabling Officer.

## **Web**

I have contributed to our website in the past but feel that ensuring the information is kept up to date and applying to put information on is not necessarily a G grade Officer's level of work.

## **Empty Homes**

I visited many long-term empty properties and inspected/photo evidenced works carried out. I informed the owners of our powers of Empty Dwelling Management Orders/Compulsory Purchase powers and also informed them of a low cost loan service that was made available to them in a bid to bring their properties back into use. (Grade D)

The above duties are not exhaustive of the work that I have carried out; and many of them will still need to be carried out in the absence of an Admin Assistant.