

# **Restructuring Planning Services**

## **A Proposal Document for Consultation**

## **1. A New Structure for Planning Services**

### **Introduction**

- 1.1 Full Council, 27<sup>th</sup> February 2014 considered and approved Gloucester City Council's Money Plan 2014-19. It articulated that Local Government was and is continuing to face the toughest financial outlook for many decades. The Local Government Finance Settlement had seen unprecedented reductions in formula grant, which would impact on resource availability and the ability of the Council to continue to deliver services without change. The Money Plan forecasts indicated the need for significant efficiency, service transformation and savings targets in each year.

## **2. The Current Structure of Planning Services**

- 2.1 Planning Services within the Council is currently comprised of the following elements:
- i. Development Control
  - ii. Planning Policy
  - iii. Heritage and Conservation
  - iv. Building Control
  - v. Housing Strategy and Enabling

The current service structure is shown at Appendix 1 to this report.

## **3. The Need for Restructuring**

- 3.1 Within the Planning service area, there is a requirement to make savings of £100,000 in 2015/16. This paper proposes how these savings can be made while continuing to deliver high quality services.

## **4. Proposals**

- 4.1 The restructuring proposal is based upon two elements:
- i. Savings
  - ii. Shared services

### **Savings**

#### **Building Control**

- 4.2 The principal cost savings associated with the proposed new service structure relates to the implementation of a shared Building Control service between the City and Stroud District Council (SDC). The new service to be known as the Gloucestershire Building Control Partnership (GBCP) was established on 1 July 2015 and is based in Stroud and Gloucester under the management of the existing SDC Building Control Manager.

- 4.3 The following posts have been deleted:
- i. Principal Structural Engineer (Grade G)
  - ii. Building Control Officer (Grade F)
  - iii. Building Control Trainee (Grade E)
  - iv. Administrative Support Officer (Grade B)
- 4.4 The posts to be retained as part of the shared structure are:
- i. Building Control Manager (Grade I)
  - ii. Principal Building Control Surveyor (Grade H)
  - iii. Building Control Surveyor (Grade G)
- 4.5 Three of the four posts to be deleted as part of the shared service proposal are currently vacant and will not be filled as part of this process. The Administrative Support Officer position will be deleted. A new post, Building Control Surveyor (Grade G) will also be created as part of this proposal.
- 4.6 Both authorities have developed a reputation for the delivery of high quality services to the development industry. The new shared service will provide a greater staff resource to continue the provision of a high quality service while also providing the opportunity to expand the offer to existing and potential clients which will increase income generating potential for both authorities. It is proposed that a new Business Plan for the joint service will be prepared in the near future; this will include a marketing strategy, communications plan and a new dedicated website. The expansion of the service will therefore provide the opportunity to increase income generation for the benefit of both authorities in the long-term.
- 4.7 Roles currently occupied by staff supplied by agencies will be deleted, These positions will be recruited by the new shared service
- 4.8 As a result of the creation of a shared service with Stroud District Council on 1 July, a saving of **£85,736** has been projected for the remainder of financial year 2015/16.

### **Housing Strategy and Enabling**

- 4.9 The team's remit focuses on the delivery of the Council's housing strategy, the assessment of housing needs and partnership with Registered Providers to meet the City's future housing needs. The team also provides a valuable input into the negotiation of section 106 agreements and the Council's Development Plan and is playing a key role in the progression of the Joint Core Strategy and City Plan. However, the recent transfer of housing stock to Gloucester City Homes means that some aspects of the team's work are likely to be reduced in the future.
- 4.10 The proposed structure envisages that one of the SHSEO (Grade G) posts would be deleted. The remaining posts would be transferred to an expanded Planning Policy and Heritage Team (see paragraph 4.17). The

restructured team would continue to provide support in relation to the development of housing policy (in particular, affordable housing) within the JCS and City Plan and to support the Development Control team in the determination of planning applications and the negotiation of section 106 agreements.

### **Environmental Planning**

- 4.11 The review of the Environmental Planning Team has been jointly developed with the Head of Neighbourhood Services. The Team is currently managed by the Environmental Planning Manager who reports to two Heads of Service.
- 4.12 It is proposed that the two teams (Green Infrastructure Team and the Conservation/Heritage Team) would be restructured to report individually within Neighbourhood Services and Planning Services respectively. Within Planning Services, the members of the Conservation/Heritage Team would be assimilated within a new enlarged Planning Policy and Heritage Team under the management of the Planning Policy and Heritage Manager (see paragraph 4.17). Consequently, this would result in the deletion of the post of Environmental Planning Manager.

### **Development Control**

- 4.13 This restructuring proposal suggests only limited revisions to the current Development Control team. In order to enhance the Council's role to determine planning applications in compliance with increasing national standards, it is proposed to add a small additional staff resource by increasing the Senior Planning Officer posts from 1.55 FTE to 2.0 FTE. The Council has recently secured Government funding for a 12 month period for the post of Principal Planning Officer (Housing Delivery) which will assist the delivery of housing proposals within the City in support of the Council's recently granted Housing Zone status. The availability of these additional staff resources will enable the Development Control service to meet increasing national standards in relation to the determination of planning applications.
- 4.14 There are also minor changes to staffing within the current Business Support function. Within the existing structure, four staff members provide 2.7FTE at Grade C, with an additional 0.3FTE at Grade B. The tasks undertaken by the Grade B position (postal administration and collection) have been transferred to the Central Facilities team so this post will be deleted. Instead, it is proposed that the overall resources allocated to the Grade B position are increased to provide a Senior Administration Officer post at Grade D which would facilitate improved processing of planning applications and two Administration Officer posts at Grade C. It is the intention of this restructure that the reformed Administration team would provide enhanced support across Planning Services, rather than simply to Development Control and Building Control.

- 4.15 The restructure proposal will also incorporate the transfer of the Land Charges Clerk (Grade F) to the Administrative Support team following the recent transfer of the Council's Legal Services to One Legal. The transfer of this position has no additional financial implications.
- 4.16 The resultant revisions to the structure of the Business Support team and the availability of external Government funding for housing delivery mean that the additional staff resources can be provided at only very minimal additional cost (less than £3,000) in 2015/16.

### Planning Policy

- 4.17 The restructure proposes the expansion of the Planning Policy Team to include heritage and housing policy matters. As the role of Planning Policy and Heritage Manager (PP&HM) would oversee an enlarged team, it is proposed that the grade of this post is increased from Grade I to Grade J in parity with the DCM position.
- 4.18 In order to provide additional resource to the Planning Policy team at a particularly important time in the progression of both the Joint Core Strategy and the City Plan, the proposed structure includes the creation of a full-time Principal Planning Officer position (increasing from the current 0.5 FTE) to act as deputy for the proposed PP&HM. In addition, an increase in Senior Planning Officers from 2.08 FTE to 2.5 FTE is also sought to provide additional staff resource. It is proposed that 1.5 FTE posts would be provided on a permanent basis, with the additional 1.0 FTE provided on a 24 month contract to support the preparation of the City Plan.
- 4.19 Currently, the Planning Policy team is supported by two Technicians (Grade D); it is proposed to delete one of these posts.

### Summary of Total Savings

- 4.20 The estimated savings associated with the proposed restructure are summarised in Table 1 below. They assume that the revised structure for Planning Services would be in place in November 2015.

Table 1

Service	2014/15	2015/16
Building Control	114,316	28,580
Housing Strategy and Enabling	184,300	139,782
Environmental Planning	212,860	202,326
Planning Policy	199,016	209,703
Development Control	359,890	362,500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,070,382</b>	<b>942,891</b>
<b>Savings</b>		<b>127,491</b>

<b>Total Proposed Service Costs</b>	<b>£ 942,891</b>
<b>Current Service Employee Budget</b>	<b><u>£1,070,382</u></b>
<b>Saving Achieved</b>	<b>£ 127,491</b>

## **5. Next Steps**

- 5.1 The merger of the Council's Building Control service with that of Stroud District Council to form the Gloucester Building Control Partnership was completed on 1 July. The additional resources available through the creation of shared service by both councils will create greater resilience in the longer term.
- 5.2 Within the Housing Strategy and Enabling Team, one of the SHSEO (Grade G) posts will be deleted and the team assimilated within an enhanced Planning Policy and Heritage Team.
- 5.3 Within the Environmental Planning Team, the post of Environmental Planning Manager (Grade I) will be deleted. The Conservation/Heritage Team will be assimilated within an enhanced Planning Policy and Heritage Team.
- 5.4 In the Development Control Team, the number of posts at Senior Planning Officer level (Grade G) is to be increased from 1.55 FTE to 2.0 FTE.
- 5.5 Within Planning Policy, the existing Planning Policy Manager (Grade I) post will be revised to provide the new role of Planning Policy and Heritage Manager (Grade J). The role of Principal Planning Officer (Grade H) will be increased from 0.5 FTE to 1.0 FTE. At Senior Planning Officer level, the number of posts will be increased from 2.05 FTE to 2.5 FTE, one of these posts will be provided on a two year contract.
- 5.6 The Administrative Support team will provide wider support to Planning Services. A new post of Senior Administration Officer (Grade D/E) (subject to job evaluation) will be created, supported by 2.0 FTE Administration Officer positions. This will replace the existing team structure of 2.7 FTE Business Support Officers (Grade C). The Team will also be expanded to include the position of Technician (Grade D). Following the completion of the transfer of Legal Services to new arrangements with OneLegal, the Land Charges Clerk (Grade F) will also be assimilated within the Administrative Support Team.
- 5.7 The impact on individual members of staff is detailed in Appendix 3. These proposals will be subject to formal consultation with all staff and feedback will be welcomed.

## **Job Evaluations**

- 5.7 All of the new or amended roles discussed in this document will be evaluated by a Hay panel. The Hay method of job evaluation continues to be the most widely accepted worldwide. The process of evaluating jobs enables many important applications, such as designing effective organisations; clarifying interdependencies and accountabilities; managing succession and talent; and setting competitive, value-based pay policies.
- 5.8 This rigorous job evaluation process has afforded the Council a common framework and language to more effectively design jobs within the structure that best supports the corporate strategy and plan.

## **New Structure Chart**

See Appendix 2 for the proposed structure chart.

## **6. Overview of the Process**

### **Support**

- 6.1 Any reorganisation can be distressing for those involved and for their colleagues so it is recognised that it will be a difficult time for staff. HR support throughout the process will be provided by Jo Hawkins/Jo Parry. Support of a more general nature will also be provided by the Senior Management Team. Our aim at all times will be to provide clear and timely information for everyone involved and to maintain a close and open dialogue with the Trade Unions throughout.

### **Assimilation**

- 6.2 In line with the Council's Organisational Change policy, where all of the following conditions apply, current post holders will be directly assimilated to the equivalent position in the new structure:
- the job is essentially the same (at least a 60% match), and
  - the grade is the same, and
  - the numbers of posts available is the same or greater than the number of current post holders.

## **Ring-Fencing**

6.3 In line with the Council's Organisational Change policy, employees who do not secure a position in the new structure via direct assimilation will be included in a ring-fence if:

- their posts are deleted, and
- an alternative position or positions are introduced, and
- the employee's grade is the same (or one above / below) as the grade of the new post(s) *or* the employee is at the management tier appropriate to the new post(s).

## **Redeployment**

6.4 Any employee who does not secure a post in the new structure or an ongoing position through transfer, change of working arrangements etc will be given notice of redundancy and simultaneously placed on the redeployment register for the period of their notice.

## **Selection Process**

6.5 There will be a consistent, robust recruitment and selection process for the new posts and current vacancies.

## **Appeals**

6.6 Guidance on how to appeal against any stage of this process can be found in the Council's Organisational Change Document that is available from HR.

## **Implications for those affected**

6.7 We fully appreciate the challenging nature of this process, the anxiety and the uncertainty that may be felt by staff. It is important that we provide help and support throughout this period of change, particularly to those who are directly affected. If any staff would like to be considered for voluntary redundancy or early retirement they should contact Human Resources for an informal discussion. The Council's free, confidential and external counselling service can be contacted on 01452 750586.

6.8 The Council will consider requests for voluntary redundancy or early retirement for the following posts:

- Environmental Planning Manager (Grade I)
- Technician (Grade D)
- Senior Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer (Grade G)

Requests for voluntary redundancy should be received by 30 October. Each request will be considered on a case by case basis and the Council gives no commitment to approving these requests.



## **Timetable**

6.9 The proposed timetable is as follows:

Consultation with Staff	w/c 12 October 2015
Consultation with Trade Union	w/c 12 October 2015
Trade Union Consultation meeting	19 October
Employee Forum	21 October
Close of Consultation	30 October 2015
Reviewing Feedback	w/c 2 November 2015
Organisational and Development Committee	25 November 2015
Formation of new team structure	4 January 2016

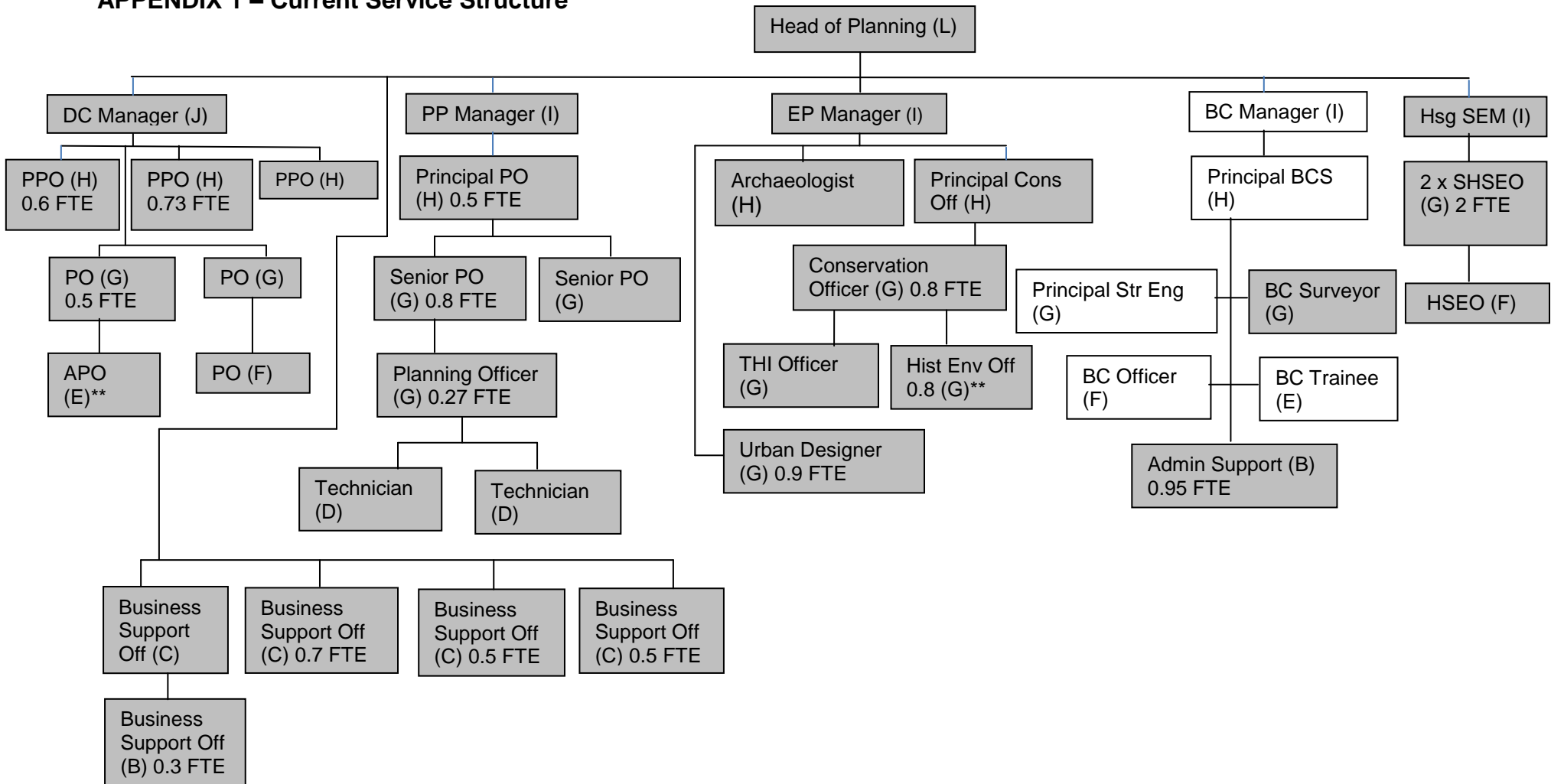
## **7. How to respond**

7.1 This is a meaningful consultation exercise and your views are welcomed on the proposals and the process for filling the proposed new structure.

Please send your comments or questions to:

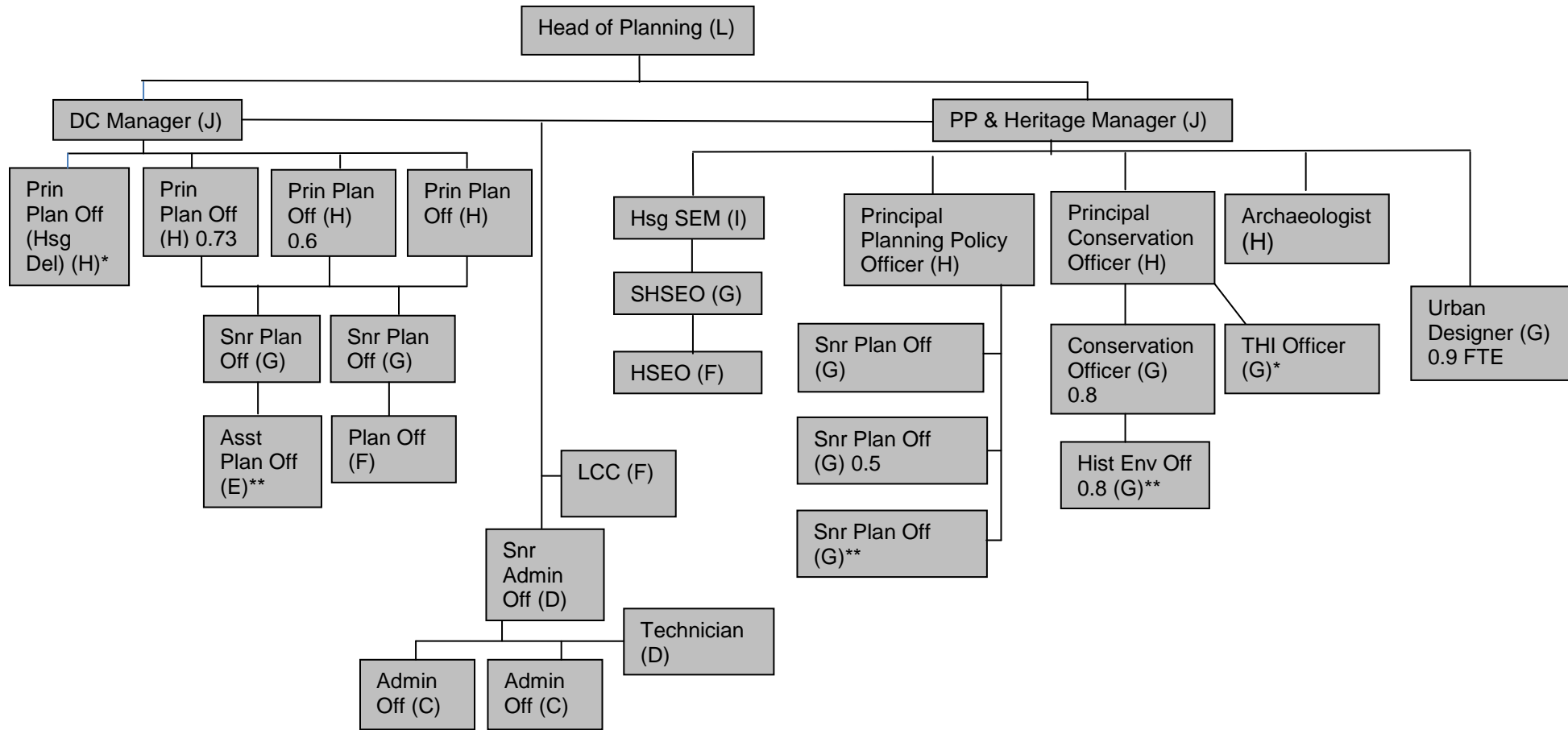
Anthony Wilson, Head of Planning  
Email: [anthony.wilson@gloucester.gov.uk](mailto:anthony.wilson@gloucester.gov.uk)

## APPENDIX 1 – Current Service Structure



NOTE: All posts 1 FTE unless stated. Vacant posts are shown unshaded.

## APPENDIX 2 –Proposed Service Structure



NOTE: All posts 1.0 FTE unless stated.  
 \* - Funded by external grant support  
 \*\* - Temporary contract

### Appendix 3

#### Proposed structure with individual details

<b>Development Control</b>		
	<b>Current Job Title/(Grade)/(FTE)</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Development Control Manager (J) (1)	No change
	Principal Planning Officer (H) (0.73)	No change
	Principal Planning Officer (H) (0.6)	No change
	Principal Planning Officer (H) (1)	No change
	Principal Planning Officer (H) (1) (Housing Delivery)*	New post (externally funded)
	Senior Planning Officer (G) (1)	No change
	Senior Planning Officer (G) (0.5)	No change
	Senior Planning Officer (G) (0.5)	New post
	Planning Officer (F) (1)	No change
	Assistant Planning Officer (E) (1)**	No change
	Land Charge Clerk (F) (1)	No change. Post transferred from Legal Services
	Senior Administration Officer (D) (1)	New post
	Administration Officer (C) (2)	New posts
	Business Support Officer (C) (1)	Post assimilated
	Business Support Officer (C) (0.5)	Post assimilated
	Business Support Officer (C) (0.5)	Post assimilated
	Business Support Officer (C) (0.7)	Post deleted.
	Business Support Officer (B) (0.3)	Post deleted
<b>Planning Policy</b>		
	<b>Current Job Title/(Grade)/(FTE)</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Planning Policy Manager (I) (1)	Post deleted
	Planning Policy and Heritage Manager (J) (1)	New post
	Principal Planning Officer (H) (0.5)	Post deleted
	Principal Planning Officer (H)	New post
	Senior Planning Officer (G) (0.8)	Ring fenced for Senior Planning Officer 1.5 FTE and 1.0 FTE (24 month contract)
	Senior Planning Officer (G) (1)	Ring fenced for Senior Planning Officer 1.5 FTE and 1.0 FTE (24 month contract)
	Planning Officer (G) (0.27)	Ring fenced for Senior Planning Officer 1.5 FTE and 1.0 FTE (24 month contract)
	Senior Planning Officer (G) (1.5)	New posts
	Senior Planning Officer (G) (1.0)**	New post (24 month contract)
	Technician (D) (2)	One post to be deleted. Ring fenced

<b>Environmental Planning</b>		
	<b>Current Job Title/(Grade)/(FTE)</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Environmental Planning Manager (I) (1)	Post deleted
	Archaeologist (H) (1)	No change
	Principal Conservation Officer (H) (1)	No change
	Conservation Officer (G) (0.8)	No change
	Historic Environment Officer (G) (0.8)**	No change
	Urban Designer (G) (0.9)	No change
	THI Project Officer (G) (1)*	No change (externally funded)
<b>Housing Strategy</b>		
	<b>Current Job Title/(Grade)/(FTE)</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Housing Strategy & Enabling Manager (I) (1)	No change
	Senior Housing Strategy & Enabling Officer (G) (2)	One post to be deleted. Ring fenced.
	Housing Strategy & Enabling Officer (F) (1)	No change
<b>Building Control</b>		
	<b>Current Job Title/(Grade)/(FTE)</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Building Control Manager (I) (1)	Shared with SBC
	Principal Building Control Surveyor (H) (1)	Shared with SBC
	Principal Structural Engineer (G) (1)	Post deleted
	Building Control Surveyor (G) (1)	Shared with SBC
	Building Control Surveyor (G) (1)	Shared with SBC
	Building Control Officer (F) (1)	Post deleted
	Building Control Trainee (E) (1)	Post deleted
	Administration Assistant (B) (0.54)	Post deleted. Ring fenced to Senior Administration Officer (D) and Administration Officer (C)
	Administration Assistant (B) (0.41)	Post deleted.

## **Schedule of Amendments**

Minor revisions to Appendices 1 and 2