

24 March 2020

Assistant Director Finance

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO REVENUES STRUCTURE

EXEMPT INFORMATION

Not applicable

PURPOSE

To seek approval from members to revise the Revenues structure by the creation of a new full time post.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members;

- 1. Approve the creation of the full time post of Former Tenant Arrears Officer (Grade D) (initially temporary for 12 months).**
- 2. Endorse the new job title and Revenues structure.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Housing team has not had sufficient capacity/staffing resource to target the recovery of former arrears balances. The Revenues unit has been provided with the budgetary provision (for a Grade D post) to cover the cost of the temporary full-time post to address the recovery of HRA's wide range of former arrears, initially until March 2021 subject to review/impact assessment.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Funding for a Grade D post for a 12 month period has been included within HRA policy changes approved in the 2020/21 MTFS.

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND

There is a risk of lack of resources and knowledge. However transfer of knowledge and skills together with planned training and efficiencies will address this.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

This project has been identified to facilitate a wider corporate approach to the management and administration of debt within the Authority. There is an ongoing Welfare Reform Corporate Project which will also consider the wider Corporate Debt approach and policy.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The priority within Housing has always been to collect current rent arrears and associated current Housing costs. This has meant that for some time now that former arrears have never taken priority which has meant that there has been no proactive management of arrears (and write off of unrecoverable debt) and has resulted in loss of income to the Council. The Housing team has not had sufficient capacity/staffing resource to target the recovery of former arrears balances.

Housing requires the Revenues Department to undertake analysis of current and historical debt. This will include debt types such as former tenant arrears, service charges, recharges for repairs arrears, court costs, private home link arrears, supporting people arrears, garage arrears and sundry debts. As the Revenues Department has the necessary skills and expertise it has been requested that it undertakes this as part of a wider corporate role. It will not include debt relating to Homelessness accommodation, where a review is ongoing.

It is crucial that in these times the collection of Housing and Sundry Income arrears remains at an optimum level. It has proved to be harder to collect as a result of the current economic conditions nationally. Our aim is to ensure that we maintain high collection levels, to ensure that income is maximised into the Authority's Housing Revenue Account and also the General Fund where appropriate. It will also facilitate the proactive management and write off of unrecoverable debt.

The full time post of Former Tenants Arrears Officer (which has been subject to job evaluation) will currently run for 12 months from the postholder's start date and will be subject to a review/impact assessment. They will report to the Senior Revenues Income Assistant.

This proposed alteration is in anticipation of more efficient working practices and processes arising from the collection of corporate debt.

No other posts have been significantly affected.

REPORT AUTHOR

Lynne Pugh, Assistant Director - Finance, tel. 709272
Email lynne-pugh@tamworth.gov.uk

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

APPENDICES

Appendix A shows the proposed new structure of the Revenues Unit.
Appendix B shows the job profile for the post to be approved.