

## London Borough of Enfield

### Housing Scrutiny Panel

7<sup>th</sup> December 2021

---

#### **Subject: Retention of Staff in Housing Department**

**Cabinet Member: Gina Needs (Social Housing)**

**Executive Director: Sarah Cary**

---

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. For discussion

#### **Relevance to the Council Plan**

2. Good homes in well connected neighbourhoods.
  - a. Supports our new approach to estate renewal, understanding and responding to the needs of tenants and working ever more closely with tenants and leaseholders to build on the strength of our existing communities.
  - b. Restructure designed with the future in mind, planning for the implementation of the emerging social housing regulatory framework and for building safety.
  - c. Cross team approach to support effective collaborative working with the in-house repairs service.
3. A modern council.
  - a. Supports our aim of delivering high quality services which benefit local people and puts our customers and communities at the heart of everything we do.
  - b. Fulfils our commitment to engage with our workforce,
  - c. As an organisation we are committed to engaging with our workforce. As part of our cross-cutting themes of being a modern council, we work towards having an empowered, responsive and happy workforce.

#### **Background**

4. This report has been compiled at the request of Cllr Hockney who wished to have the following matters addressed:
  - a. How has the restructure affected the number of Neighbourhood Officers on the ground?
  - b. Similar question on caretakers
  - c. Update around new board
  - d. Turnover of staff historical / current
  - e. New strategies from HR?

#### **Main Considerations for the Panel**

As you will be aware the Council Housing department recently completed a significant restructure with the aim of creating a service fit for the future. The structure review encompassed the full breadth of the Council Housing teams, recognising the need for change within the context of the broader legislative framework and the opportunities afforded by new ways of working and new more mobile technologies.

In designing the new structure the senior leadership took a broad and holistic approach taking into consideration feedback from residents; the views from the team; looking forward to the responsibilities incumbent in the new regulation regime including the greater role of the Social Housing Regulator and Ombudsman; preparing for the implementation of the Social Housing White Paper as well as reflecting on lessons learnt and challenges associated with the pandemic.

Prior to the restructure there were three neighbourhood teams with a total of 27 Neighbourhood Officer posts. In the new structure the Neighbourhood Officer role has been deleted and we have created 3 new roles with 30 FTE posts

- First Response Officer x 8
- Community Manager x 6
- Resident Relationship Officer x 16

**The First Response Team** are a geographic patch based team and highly visible in uniforms. They are the first point of contact for residents on our estates. Their role is community facing and includes tasks such carrying out home visits to support tenants on repairs and anti-social behaviour issues; conduct estate and block inspections, raise communal repairs and conduct welfare checks with residents.

**The Community Partnerships Team** provide an intensive housing management service across 6 of our most challenging estates. This highly focussed team manage and create strategies to improve the estates facing the greatest crime, anti-social behaviour and deprivation challenges. They also liaise with the Capital Programme and Regeneration teams to ensure residents impacted by these projects are fully supported.

**The Resident Relationship Team** are there to support residents facing the greatest challenges. This team will provide guidance to residents with complex and potentially multi-faceted problems such as domestic violence, hoarding, safeguarding, substance misuse, poor mental health. They will work in partnership with other teams across the council as well as voluntary and statutory agencies

The Resident Relationship Officer will be the single point of contact for that resident, providing support and guidance on tasks associated with independent living, maximising access to benefits to ensure tenancy sustainment, reducing rent arrears and other debt, whilst minimising anti-social behaviour and social isolation.

In addition to these three teams the restructure also created a **Place Improvement Team** to deliver the Council's Resident Led Estate Improvement Programme using data and insight to inform long term community and place based investment priorities.

This team also support on more immediate improvements to the feel of the estates by working through the DVLA for abandoned vehicles, managing the Councils garage sites and estate parking and overseeing the introduction of parking controls through Traffic Management Orders etc.

As part of the restructure the Estate Services team, which includes the caretakers, was moved across to the newly created Repairs & Estates service. There were no other substantive changes to this team with the number of caretakers and senior caretakers remaining unchanged.

As requested, we have looked at turnover of staff from within the Council Housing department, comparing the turnover within Housing with both the Place Directorate and the Council.

	01/09/2020 to 31/08/2021			01/09/2019 to 31/08/2020		
	Average Headcount	No. Leavers	% Turnover	Average Headcount	No. Leavers	% Turnover
Housing	189	20	10.61%	168	11	6.54%
Place	1396	125	8.95%	1104	79	7.16%
Enfield	3591	368	10.25%	2873	264	9.19%

Of the 20 leavers between the 01/09/2021 and 31/08/2021, based on the leaving information recorded:

- 4 were retirements of which 1 was an ill health retirement.
- 12 were resignations, 6 where no reason was given, 3 leaving the profession and 3 leaving LBE for new appointments.
- 4 were redundancies.
- The grades of the leavers varied between Scale 2 and HoS 3.
- The average age of the leavers was 46 with an age span of 20 to 72.
- Of the 20 leavers only 1 was part time.
- 14 of the leavers were male and 6 were female.
- The declared ethnicity of the leavers was as follows; 2 African; 3 any other white; 2 Bangladeshi, British Bangladeshi; 3 British; 4 Caribbean, 2 English; 1 Irish; 1 Other Black & Black British; 2 unknown / refused.
- None of the leavers had a declared disability.

As already referenced the restructure was future facing. The senior leadership team worked effectively with the HR Associate BP analysing key workforce data to build in additional resilience and strength in the workforce.

As a result of our strategic analysis we have built in apprenticeship posts in both Housing Management Services and the Estate and Repairs service. This will enable us to recruit locally and attract new and potentially younger recruits to the service. This has been complemented by creating structures with more visible career progression opportunities.

We also recognise that our previous structures did not overtly support the ethos of grow your own, particularly in more technical roles. In the new structure we have created trainee surveyor roles to try and build pipeline talent and increased opportunity for professional development.

As agreed at Cabinet consultation is currently underway on a new Resident Engagement Strategy which will consider and gain agreement on new further opportunities for engagement, co-design and scrutiny. The Customer Voice – a tenant and leaseholder led group will continue to operate focusing on the needs of social housing tenants. A new Housing Advisory Group has been established to represent the views of all residents in receipt of council housing services including those in private rented housing, temporary accommodation, Enfield Let and Housing Gateway as well as Council tenants and leaseholders. This group looks at the overall housing issues that affect residents.