

## Housing Client Review – High Level Project Plan

### 1. Introduction

Following the independent review by consultants Turner and Townsend, the Council has decided to accept the recommended approach in relation to providing better separation between the Housing Client function and the workforce.

This paper outlines the staff resources required to implement this decision, together with a high level project plan and project governance arrangements.

### 2. Establishing a Project Team

Implementing the Council's decision will require the establishment of a Project Team with adequate resources at its disposal.

A 'core' Project Team comprising the following officers is proposed:

Officer	Role
<b>Brendan Cleere</b>	<b>Lead Director and Project Sponsor</b> Responsibilities include overall ownership and direction of project plan and risk register.
<b>James Barra</b>	<b>Project Manager</b> Responsibilities will include development and delivery of project and risk management plan activities, staff communications, liaison with staff and Unison.
<b>HR Advisor - TBC</b>	Responsible for advising on all workforce and employment related issues (e.g. Pensions) and processing related HR activities.
<b>Finance Advisor - TBC</b>	Responsible for advising on all financial aspects of the project.
<b>Meryken Then-Bergh</b>	Project support and administration

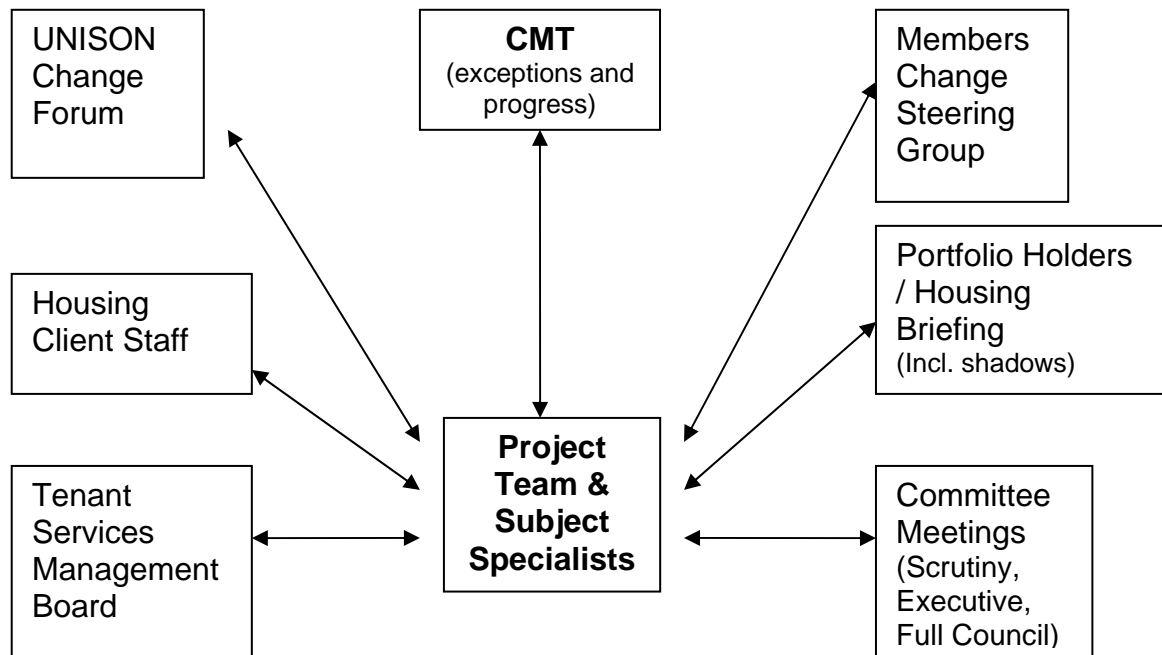
Outside of the core team, a wider pool of 'subject specialists' will be required at key stages in the delivery of the Project Plan, as follows:

- **Housing Manager - Property** – Phil Webb and Property Manager Tim Haynes – as subject experts and current management of function.
- **Housing Services Lead** – Stephen Boland to assist with Landlord service issues and overlap.
- **Richard Sealy** – advice on SWOne implications and overlap with client team.
- **Martin Daly** – for advice on Strategic Housing implications.

### 3. Project Governance Arrangements

A detailed project plan will be developed and overseen by the Project Manager.

Overall project governance arrangements are summarised in the diagram below:



**UNISON Change Forum (UCF)** meets on a monthly basis and will receive regular progress reports from the Project Team. UCF will give views to the Project Team throughout the Project.

**Housing Client Staff** will be informed and involved in the project at all key stages, with all staff briefings taking place as appropriate.

**Tenant Services Management Board** will provide tenants' input at all key stages of the project.

**CMT** will receive regular updates from the Project Manager and also deal with issues on an 'exceptions' basis.

The **Members Change Steering Group** meets on a monthly basis and will receive high level progress reports from the Lead Director/Project Manager.

**Committee meetings** will take place as required throughout the project, where formal input or decision is required to enable the project to move to the next stage.

#### **4. Project Context – “What we know”.**

a. Budget and consequent staffing cuts in the HRA in order to achieve Decent Homes necessitated closer working relationships between the Housing Client function and the DLO workforce. This has allowed the service to continue and derives some benefits. However, following the independent review by consultants Turner and Townsend of the DLO services the following recommendations were made:

*“ Currently the Asset Management function is managed through the DLO. The Property Manager is responsible for both Building Services as well as Asset Management services. This was established under one structure following the tenant's vote on stock transfer in 2006 and the subsequent need to make substantial annual revenue savings in the housing revenue account.*

*There is acknowledgement that the current structure has afforded some positive characteristics primarily based upon the strong working relationship between client and contractor and the commonality of location. However, Asset Management is usually managed from within the estate management function and not by the Property Maintenance Service.*

*It is our view that the Asset Management function should be separated and placed within a client function role. We consider this recommendation to remain valid whichever option (including Stay As-Is) is selected to deliver services going forward. Our logic here is that we envisage significant financial pressure by way of CR10 and beyond such that value for money and the evidence supporting the delivery of value for money will*

*require a clear separation of duties. It is generally not acceptable for the monitor of value to be the deliverer of the monitored service.”*

- b. In addition the Audit Commission have recently expressed some concern about the current arrangement and in particular the need to be able to demonstrate clear value for money and improving performance by a rigorous Housing Client function and how this influences the activities of the workforce.
- c. Previous cuts in the HRA referred to above have created a significant shortfall in staff capacity in the service, particularly at a supervisory level. The review of the service will seek to address this point. Current management of the service have developed some proposals in relation to this.
- d. There are also a range of temporary staffing arrangements in place in the service that need to be resolved.
- e. The review will initially run in parallel with the wider DLO review, however it will be concluded on a much shorter timeline as a new Housing Client service needs to be in place and fully operational and be able to respond to any of the wider changes taking place in the DLO.
- f. Some staff are currently unclear about which project they need to have regard to as their roles could either fall on the client side or on the workforce (potential contractor) side. Clarity is required as a matter of priority in relation to this point.
- g. There has been a clear way forward identified in relation to the development of a high level Asset Management strategy for the Housing stock. In addition, plans are emerging in relation to developing a new, detailed Asset Management Action Plan for the Housing Stock.
- h. The recent Advice and Assistance visit by the Audit Commission has a number of recommendations in relation to the service that need to be addressed, some urgently. It is anticipated that the Housing Service will be subject to full Audit Commission inspection in the Autumn.

## 5. Scope of Service – Housing Client Responsibilities

The list below outlines the current responsibilities of the service, which are therefore in scope for this project. In addition there are activities currently undertaken by the Landlord Service such as Void Management, where Housing Client may have a role in the future and will therefore be considered as part of this review.

- Repair and maintenance of Council housing assets – planned and responsive (Properties, garages, sewerage treatment works, shops, land).
- Management of Capital investment programme (Properties fit for purpose – Decent Homes, kitchen/bathroom upgrading, doors, windows, roofs).
- Gas servicing
- Electrical testing (17<sup>th</sup> Edition, smoke alarms)
- Asbestos data-base
- Energy Performance certificates
- Health and Safety
- Asset management database
- NROSH
- Satisfaction monitoring
- Right to Buy
- Leasehold management
- Sale of Land
- Rights of access
- Audit Commission requirements

These specific functions involve the following activities and therefore these skills will be required in the new service.

- Assessment of current stock conditions
- Future planning for short, medium and long term asset developments
- Specifying works
- Specifying standards
- Financial planning
- Tendering for work
- Negotiating and agreeing contracts
- Monitoring contracts
- Checking works
- Reporting performance
- Reporting to tenants/customers
- Receiving repairs requests
- Allocating repairs works

**APPENDIX A**

**Housing Client Review – Indicative Project Plan**

No.	Category	Apr10	May10	Jun10	Jul10	Aug10	Sep10	Oct10	Nov10
1	Project Start up								
2	Comms & Engagement								
3	Risk Management								
4	Project Manager to hold staff workshops								
5	Fact finding other LA's /RSL's								
6	Develop proposals/new structure								
7	Staff consultation (including a formal consultation period if required)								
8	Decision making and implementation								