

ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT OF STAFFING RESTRUCTURE

Service

Community Services

Title of policy, function or service

**Housing Value for
Money Review Phase 2**

Lead officer

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People involved with completing the EIA

Housing Service

Type of policy, function or service:

Existing

New/Proposed

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Background

This assessment considers the potential effects, both positive and negative, of the savings proposals resulting from Phase 2 of the Housing Value for Money Review on the people in the groups or with the characteristics protected in the Equalities Act 2010. These are:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender Reassignment
4. Pregnancy and maternity
5. Race
6. Religion or belief
7. Sex (gender)
8. Sexual Orientation
9. Marriage and Civil Partnership

The assessment also considers how we can achieve the positive effects and reduce or mitigate the negatives.

It considers the impact on clients of the service rather than on affected staff which are the subject of a separate analysis being carried out by Human Resources at the request of Trade Union representatives.

What is the Housing Value for Money Review?

The Housing Value for Money Review aims to achieve savings targets of £50,000 in 2011/12 and a further £150,000 in 2012/13.

This is part of the process of Service Prioritisation undertaken by Watford BC in response to a reduction in formula grant of 16.8% in 2011-12 and 12.7% in 2012-13. Across the council, this means that £5 million of savings need to be found.

Savings of this level from Housing Service budgets can only be achieved through a reduction in staffing costs. This in turn will require a fundamental remodelling of the service in order to ensure that essential functions continue, increasing demands can be managed and the appropriate skills and resources are in place to meet current and future challenges on the service. Even without the requirement to make significant savings, the remodelling would have become necessary due to the rapid pace of change in both the operational and strategic context.

Proposals for the resulting restructure in order to achieve Phase 2 savings have

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been identified through in house work with staff and partners and an external health check commissioned from consultants and the Specialist Advisor for Homelessness from the CLG which included service user and stakeholder consultation.

In June 2011, Cabinet approved a set of key principles to be taken into account in the restructure proposals:

- Reductions in staffing resource will be spread across both strategic and operational functions
- The service will seek where possible to reduce management resource in order to maintain an adequate level of front line cover
- The potential for outsourcing or sharing aspects of the service where implementation can be achieved quickly will be considered in order to facilitate management reductions
- Current roles will be reviewed and activities redistributed where necessary to balance workloads within reduced resources
- Impact on vulnerable customers will be considered as an integral part of the review.

Since that time, ongoing review work has identified further key issues which have also shaped the proposals. These recognise the need to:

- Manage demand for housing services more effectively and proactively e.g. get homelessness prevention in place earlier, be a more effective client to our accommodation providers, use our staffing and other resources to best effect
- Achieve a more flexible structure which can respond to changing tasks and peaks in workload and in particular new areas of work which are emerging e.g. private sector leasing
- Achieve a more resilient structure – to get away from cover issues where we have individuals with specialist skills and a number of small teams carrying out different roles necessitating managers for each of these
- Minimise duplication between teams which results in double handling of cases or fragmented activity e.g. homelessness, private sector
- Encourage a more “tenure blind” approach to the different housing options, reinforced by colleagues dealing with social housing and private sector housing within the same teams
- Achieve this within the allocated cost savings.

The key statutory functions in terms of homelessness, the housing register, the homelessness strategy, private sector renewal policy and disabled facilities grants

will continue to be met under the new structure.

It is considered that Phase 2 proposals can be implemented without a detrimental effect on vulnerable service users and the new structure is designed to maximise housing opportunities through a more effective deployment of staffing resources particularly in terms of increasing available supply.

At the same time as implementing the restructure, the service will need to consider new ways of working and changes regarding the housing nominations policy and development of a new Tenancy Strategy in order to respond to emerging pressures and national change brought in by for example the Localism Bill. Significant changes arising from this process will be subject to a specific Equalities Impact Assessment to examine the individual and cumulative impacts over the coming months.

What are the savings proposals?

The proposal is to restructure the service into two main teams of Demand and Supply with an overarching strategic function. This moves away from the current model of four separate teams. All the key functions will be retained so that in summary:

- There will be fewer managers and direct reports to the Housing Section Head
- The majority of roles will become more generic, dealing with both advice and statutory homelessness on the demand side and dealing with both affordable housing and private sector procurement on the supply side
- More roles will incorporate a visiting function to sites or applicants' homes
- Some existing functions currently located within single roles will be split across the demand and supply sides e.g. Rent Deposit Scheme, Housing Register applications and Choice Based Lettings shortlisting
- In the current structure there are 19.93 full time equivalents. In the proposed new structure there are 17 including 14 new roles which will not necessarily match the skills, experience and aspirations of existing staff members.

How will the policy support the general Equality Duty to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The savings proposals will still allow adequate capacity within the service to support

the general Equality Duty. The intention has been to preserve adequate frontline cover and strategic resource to maximise opportunities for clients of the service.

How will you put your policy/savings into practice?

Once approved, a separate implementation plan will be put in place and monitored for the Phase 2 activities.

What barriers are there?

The implementation plan will need to take account of the capacity of officers who are experiencing increased pressure on day to day service delivery at present. The proposed structure continues to rely on effective working relationships between internal and external partners and a significant amount of work will need to be undertaken to align our collective resources and working practices to best effect.

What existing information/data do you have?

The following information gives an indication of the profile of Housing Service customers and the issues that need to be considered when assessing the impact of our savings proposals. It is clear that women, BME communities and those with children or who are pregnant as well as those with a disability have particularly high representation in various aspects of our services. A profile of the wider Watford community is included as Appendix A of this document.

Housing services data relating to client profile

During the year from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011 there were **251 households** who were provided with assistance by housing advice and homelessness prevention staff that successfully prevented or relieved homelessness. Of these:

- 40 (16%) were men, 126 (50%) were women, and 85 (34%) were couples
- 1 (<1%) was aged 16 to 17, 47 (19%) were aged 18 to 24, 197 (78%) were aged 25 to 64, and 6 (2%) were 65 or older

Our mid year monitoring information from 1 April 2011 to end of September 2011 shows a comparable analysis except for an increase in the 18 to 24 age group. Out of the **135 households** assisted as above:

- 22 (16%) were men, 71 (53%) were women and 42 (31%) were couples.
- 0 were 16-17, 35 (26%) were aged 18 to 24, 96 (71%) were aged 25 to 64 and 4 (3%) were over 65.

In 2010/11 there were 186 households in mortgage difficulties and threatened with repossession that approached the council.

- Ethnicity data is available for 107 (57%) of these households whose profile is as follows: White 74 (40%), Asian or Asian British 27 (14%), and 6 (3%) Black or

Black British

There were 145 homelessness decisions made during 2010/11 of which 84 (58%) were for White British households and 61 (42%) were BME

117 of these were accepted as being owed the main homelessness statutory duty of which 66 (56%) were White British and 51 (44%) were BME. A further breakdown of these households shows that:

- 5 (3%) were aged 16 or 17, 46 (39%) were 18 to 24, 58 (50%) were 25 to 44, 6 (5%) were 45 to 59, 1 (<1%) was 60 to 64, and 1 (<1%) was 65 to 74. There were none 75 or over.
- The majority either had dependent children (76, 65%) or included a pregnant woman (28, 24%)
- 7 (6%) of households had a member with a mental illness or disability

At 31st October 2011 there were 102 households living in temporary accommodation.

- 80 of the households had children, of which 52 were lone parent families and 28 were couples.
- 22 households did not have children. 12 of these included a pregnant women.

At the 1 November 2011, there were a total of 4,626 households registered on the Housing Register. Of these:

- 53.2% were White British, 35.8% were BME and there were 11% where ethnicity was not stated or not known
- 13% were under 25, 79% were aged 25 to 59 and 8% were over 60
- 44% were male, 56% were female
- Data relating to religion and to sexual orientation is collected, but both questions have large numbers of households that do not provide an answer.
- Religion: Christian 7% Muslim 2% Hindu 0.4% Buddhist 0.09% Jewish 0.17% other/none/do not wish to disclose 14%
- Sexual orientation: Bi-sexual (0.24%), Homosexual 10 (0.2%), Heterosexual (13%), prefer not to say 10%
- Disabled Facilities Grants – the council received 92 referrals in 2010/11, approved 46 grants and 39 adaptations were completed of which 26 (39%) were for clients over 60 and 5 (13%) were for children

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2. Potential effects of proposed policies:

The table below summarises potential positive effects and the groups or characteristics to which they relate:

Potential positive effect	Relevant proposed policy(ies)	Affected group or characteristic	Ways to deliver the positive effect
Increased capacity and expertise to maximise housing supply including within the private rented sector	Restructure	All particularly women, pregnant women and BME applicants	Implementation of the restructure and associated working practices to maximise supply
Earlier homelessness prevention intervention	Restructure	As above	Introducing home visits and continuity of caseworkers from prevention to homelessness application.
Fewer separate points of contact for clients	Restructure	As above	Avoiding double handling of cases through streamlining teams.
More holistic approach to housing options through co-location of teams	Restructure	Disabled applicants	Locate disabled facilities grants officers into wider supply team.

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The next table summarises potential negative effects and ways in which they can be removed or mitigated:

Potential Negative Effect	Relevant proposed policy(ies)	Affected group or characteristic	Ways to mitigate the negative effect
Reduced capacity to lead proactive partnership work which historically has benefited specific client groups by targeted approaches and leveraging in joint funding.	Restructure	All but particularly disability, race e.g. those with no recourse to public funds.	Ensure gaps in capacity are identified and key workstreams absorbed within roles wherever possible
Changes to working practices may disrupt service delivery until established	Restructure	All	Ensure a detailed implementation plan is developed and well communicated to all affected parties including internal and external parties. Consider whether additional resource may be required for the transitional period.

3. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Have any changes been made to the proposed savings as a result of this assessment?

Equalities issues were already taken into account prior to the restructure proposals being put forward. We have identified the need for a formal monitoring process to be set up to ensure the impacts of these changes are kept under review after implementation and adjustments made as necessary while keeping within the boundaries of the savings identified.

Who have you consulted?

The Value for Money Review process has involved consultation with staff within the Housing Service and other colleagues across the council in addition to interviews with partner agencies, interviews and workshops with officers in other authorities who are also providing a housing function, a briefing for elected members and telephone surveys with service users.

Is further consultation planned?

The implementation phase will include further detailed consultation with staff, colleagues, partners and service users where appropriate.

If you are not in a position to go ahead what actions are you going to take?

In the event that the restructure proposals are not approved or not possible to achieve within the given timescales, alternative options will need to be put forward for approval and implementation.

How are you going to monitor the policy, function or service, how often and who will be responsible?

The performance of the service will continue to be monitored by Housing GMT and the Portfolio Holder for Housing through the quarterly review process every 3 months.

Approved by:

Date:

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The Annual Monitoring Report 2009-10 contains information about the population of Watford, based primarily on the 2001 Census. The extracts below contain information about some of the groups or characteristics covered by the equality duty :

Age and Gender of Population

WATFORD	Total Resident Population	Males	Females
All Ages	79,726	39,227	40,499
0-4	5,117	2,570	2,547
5-9	5,305	2,651	2,654
10-14	5,053	2,585	2,468
15-19	4,380	2,191	2,189
20-24	5,004	2,373	2,631
25-29	7,206	3,556	3,650
30-34	7,528	3,822	3,706
35-39	7,093	3,706	3,387
40-44	5,783	3,032	2,751
45-49	4,807	2,424	2,383
50-54	4,781	2,370	2,411
55-59	3,871	1,985	1,886
60-64	3,249	1,618	1,631
65-69	2,866	1,373	1,493
70-74	2,587	1,168	1,419
75-79	2,177	864	1,313
80-84	1,480	534	946
85-89	936	297	639
90 and over	506	102	404

Source: Office for National Statistics 2001 Census

Watford's population is 49 per cent male and 51 per cent female, broadly in line with

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the male/female ratio in the East of England and across England as a whole.

Watford has a relatively young population, with a significantly larger percentage than the national average of people who are aged 25 to 44 (34.6% in Watford compared with 29.3% of England as a whole). Children under 15, at 19.4%, make up a higher proportion of the population than people aged 60 or over, at 17.3%, which is contrary to the county and national trend. The average age for Watford is 36.7 years as opposed to 38.6 years in England and Wales.

Ethnicity

The non-white proportion of Watford's population has increased from 10% in 1991 to 14% in 2001, which is higher than the national average of 9% and reflects Watford's broad mix of cultures.

People identifying themselves as Asian or Asian British amount to 8.2% in Watford, as compared with 3% overall in Hertfordshire. People identifying as Black or Black British total 2.7% in Watford as compared with 1.2% in Hertfordshire as a whole.

Ethnic Composition of Resident Population in percentages

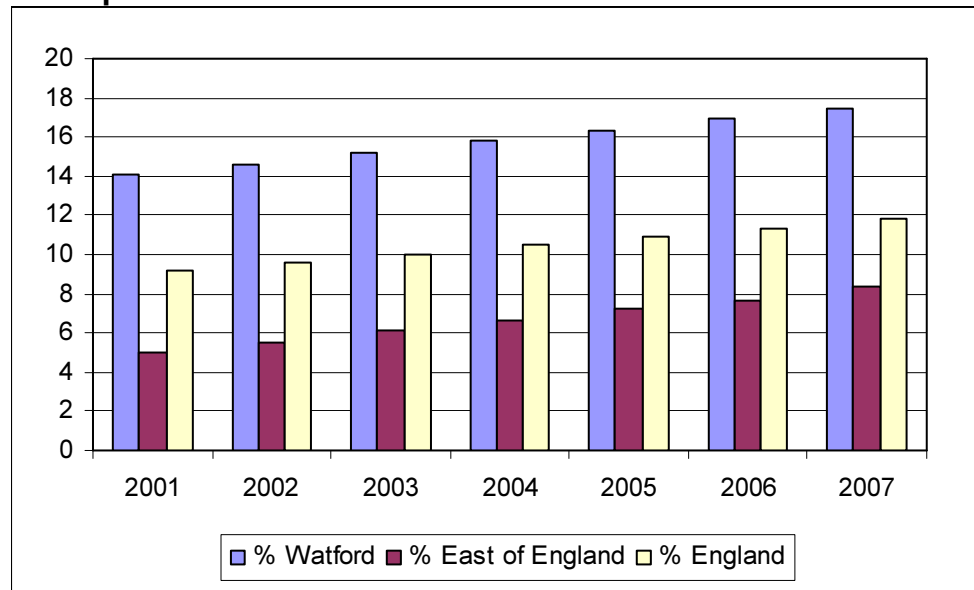
	WATFORD %	HERTS %	ENGLAND %
White	86.0	93.7	90.9
White Irish	2.9	1.7	1.3
Mixed	2.1	1.4	1.3
Asian or Asian British	8.2	3.0	4.6
Indian	2.4	1.6	2.1
Pakistani	4.6	0.7	1.4
Bangladeshi	0.3	0.3	0.6
Other Asian	0.9	0.4	0.5
Black or Black British	2.7	1.2	2.1
Caribbean	1.5	0.6	1.1
African	1.0	0.5	1.0
Other Black	0.2	0.1	0.2
Chinese/Other Ethnic	1.1	0.8	0.9

Source: Figures sourced from Office for National Statistics 2001 Census

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The Office of National Statistics has produced estimates on how ethnicity of the population has changed since the 2001 census and the chart below illustrates the non-white proportion. These are experimental statistics only.

Figure 2: Resident Population Estimates by Ethnic Group (Percentages) Non-white persons



Source: Office for National Statistics estimates updated 14 Sep 2009, compiled by Planning Policy, Watford Borough Council, extracted 27 May 2010.

Disability

The 2001 Census did not ask about disability but 11,321 people stated they had a “limiting long term illness”.

Religious beliefs

Of those who indicated their religion in the 2001 Census, 66.4% indicated a Christian background. The second largest religious group was Muslim, indicated by 6.1%.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

In Watford, the 2001 census shows:

- 47.7% of people aged 16 and over in households were living as a married couple
- 12.1% of people were co-habiting
- 25.4% were single (never having been married)
- 14.9% remaining were not living in a couple, being widowed, divorced, separated or married to somebody not resident in the household

In 2006, 797 marriages took place in Watford and 794 in 2007.

In 2001, 114 people in Watford aged 16 and over (0.18% of 62,145 people) stated that they were living together in a same-sex couple

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The Civil Partnership Act came into force on 5 December 2005 in the UK – the first day couples could give notice of their intention to form a civil partnership. The Act enables same-sex couples, aged 16 or over to obtain legal recognition of their relationship.

Figures show that 116 civil partnerships were formed in Hertfordshire in 2007, 92 in 2008 and 74 in 2009 (the figure for 2009 is provisional).

Pregnancy and maternity

The average completed family size for women born in 1964 in England and Wales and completing their childbearing in 2009 was 1.9 children per woman. This compares with their mothers' generation, represented by woman born in 1937, who had an average of 2.4 children.

The UK has relatively high fertility levels compared with many European countries. The conception rate in England and Wales for 2009 has risen to 80.9 conceptions per 1000 women aged 15-44, from 79.9 in 2008. Between 2008 and 2009 conception rates increased in all age groups apart from those aged under 25.

The under 18 conception rate decreased by 5.9 per cent, from 40.7 conceptions per 1000 women aged 15-17 in 2008 to 38.3 in 2009 (figures for 2009 are provisional).

There has been a long term rise in the proportion of conceptions occurring outside a legal partnership. In 2009 conceptions outside a legal partnership accounted for 57 per cent of all conceptions in England and Wales, whereas it was 42 per cent in 1989.

The under 18 conception rate in Watford for 2007-09 (provisional) was 27 per 1,000 females, higher than the county average of 24.7 per 1,000, but lower than the regional average (31.9 per 1,000) and the national average (40.2 per 1,000) (ONS statistics – rates for 2009 are provisional)

2008 stats at county level	Herts	E of E	England
Percentage of conceptions to all women outside marriage	49%	54%	56.2%
Percentage of conceptions to all women terminated by abortion	19.2%	18.9%	21.9%
Percentage of conceptions o/s marriage leading to maternities	63.7%	66.4%	63.2%
Percentage of conceptions o/s marriage terminated by abortion	32%	29.4%	33.1%

We do not currently have data on sexual orientation or gender reassignment. This is a data gap that will be looked at corporately.