

Item 7

REPORT TO CABINET

11th JANUARY 2007

**JOINT REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE
AND DIRECTOR OF
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP PORTFOLIO

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE ROLE OF TWO SENIOR DEVELOPMENT CONTROL OFFICER POSTS

1 SUMMARY

This report proposes changes to the post specification of two Senior Development Control Officer posts in the Planning and Development Section of the Neighbourhood Services Department. These changes reflect a need to process/consider major planning applications and to comply with PSA6 without direct and immediate access to their line manager.

2 RECOMMENDED

- 2.1 Approve the changes to the Post Specification for Senior Development Control Officers as outlined in Appendix 1
- 2.2 Regrade both posts from PO1 to PO2 to reflect the additional levels of responsibility set out in the amended post specification.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 5 October 2006, Cabinet considered and approved a restructure of the Development Control Team, recognising an increasing workload, the introduction of new legislation and the need to maintain performance in order to meet PSA6 Best Value targets and to maximise Planning Delivery Grant (minute CAB.88/06 refers).
- 3.2 In essence, an additional Senior Development Control Officer's post PO1 was created to replace a vacant and more junior officer's post. Since then the existing Senior Development Control Officer has left her post, creating two vacancies that the service has been unable to fill through the recruitment and selection process.

4 PERFORMANCE

- 4.1 Recent performance within Development Control has declined, particularly in terms of more complex and time consuming major applications. This decline is of such an extent that it will now prove difficult for the Council to meet PSA6 by March 2007.
- 4.2 This has consequently resulted in the Principal Planning Officer and Head of Service spending additional time dealing with planning applications to the detriment of other management and leadership duties.

5 PROPOSAL

- 5.1 An analysis of workloads suggests that in order to meet the increasing demands placed upon the service through major applications and changes in guidance and regulations, more responsibility should be vested in the Senior Development Control Officer requiring postholders to make decisions of substance without regular and ready access to more senior officers.
- 5.2 Additional responsibilities have been considered in accordance with the Council's Job Evaluation Scheme and an adjustment in the grade of Senior Development Control Officer posts is justified from PO1 to PO2.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Human Resources

- 6.1 The proposed changes reflect a change of establishment directly in line with the needs of the service.

Financial Resources

- 6.2 The difference in cost between PO1 and PO2 equates to £6,140 for both posts, which can be accommodated through Planning Delivery Grant and fee generation.

7 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Links to Corporate Objectives

The Development Control Service mainly contributes to the corporate ambition of securing an attractive Borough and also contributes to a healthy and prosperous Borough and stronger communities. This re-organisation is aimed at providing a structure within the service that will allow it to maintain an effective service to deliver its contribution to the corporate ambitions.

7.2 Risk Management

The primary risk facing the service is failure to recruit Senior Development Control Officers and the consequential failure to meet specified service standards. The proposals set out in this report should mitigate this risk.

7.3 Health and Safety Implications

No additional implications have been identified.

7.4 Legal and Constitutional

No implications have been identified.

7.5 Information Communication Technology

There are no specific factors to report.

7.6 Equality and Diversity

There are no specific factors to report.

7.7 Sustainability

No other material considerations have been identified.

7 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None.

8 LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Amended Post Specification for a Senior Development Control Officer.

Contact Officers: G Hall
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Ward(s): All

Key Decision Validation: Not a key decision

Background Papers

Examination by Statutory Officers

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Councils Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Councils S.151 Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix I

Post Specification

Job Title: Senior Development Control Officer

Department: Neighbourhood Services

Section: Planning

Grade: PO2

Responsible to:	Development Control Manager
Responsible for:	Other Development Control Team Staff

To which Business Plan(s) does this post contribute?

Planning Section Business Plan

Main Purpose of Job

The post holder will be a key member of the Development Control Team. You will be MRTPI, qualified in Planning, with proven experience in Development Control and have strong communication and negotiations skills. You would deal with a varied case load of major applications and related development control matters throughout the Borough. The diversity of the area will give you wide ranging experience and the opportunity to develop areas of expertise.

The post holder will assist the Development Control Manager in managing and supervising the Development Control Team, and will deputise in his/her absence. The specific responsibilities may vary over time and will be agreed with the post holder and the Development Control Manager.

Team working is central to the Council's corporate approach to ensure consistency and continued development of the Development Control Service. The post holder will also be expected to work co-operatively with other staff in the Planning Section, the Neighbourhood Services Department and the Council's key partners and stakeholders.

Main duties and responsibilities

Assisting the Development Control Manager in the management and the supervision of the Development Control Team and deputising for the Development Control Manager in his/her absence.

Providing guidance to, and supervising junior members of staff including planning officers, the enforcement officer and administrative staff within the Team.

All work related to Development Control matters from the provisional enquiry stage through to implementation.

Preparing reports and making recommendations on planning and related applications for consideration by the Development Control Committee and by the Development Control Manager under delegated powers and to carry out all necessary consultations and statutory publicity requirements in this respect.

Preparing appeal statements, ensuring appeal procedures are followed, and giving evidence at hearings and inquiries.

Following procedures and performance targets adopted by the Council, the Department, the Section and the Development Control Team.

Representing the Team, Section, Department at meetings, both internal and external, including presenting development control matters at Development Control Committee when required to do so.

Contribute positively to the continuous improvement of the Council's Development Control Service by taking part in the formulation and implementation of Best Value initiatives, developing knowledge and experience, and by keeping abreast of planning law, policy and procedures.

Assist, where appropriate and necessary, with the training and development of other staff and elected Members.

To act as a mentor to less experienced Development Control colleagues as required.

To contribute to the development and implementation of the Service plan for Development Control.

The main duties and responsibilities of the post outlined above cannot fully define all the activities that the post holder will be involved in and may vary without changing the level of responsibility of the post.

The post holder will occasionally be required to carry out duties outside normal office hours.

Completed by: Andrew Farnie Date: September 2006

Position: Development Control Manager

Post Specification

Job Title: Senior Development Control Officer

Department: Neighbourhood Services

Section: Planning

Grade: PO1

Requirements	Essential	Desirable	How Identified
<i>Experience/Knowledge</i>			
4 years post qualification experience	✓		A/T
Experience of managing and supervising staff.		✓	A/T
Practical experience of development control and enforcement processes.	✓		A/T
Able to demonstrate knowledge of planning and enforcement legislation, government advice, circulars and guidance notes and awareness of general issues facing the planning profession.	✓		A/T
<i>Skills</i>			
Ability to undertake diverse workload and to work to tight deadlines.	✓		A/I
Ability to make decisions of substance without ready access to more senior officers.	✓		
Effective interpersonal skills including the ability to deal with a range of customers using the development control service in a sensitive matter.	✓		T/I
Effective written and oral communication skills	✓		A/I
Computer Literate	✓		A/I
<i>Education/ Training</i>			
Educated to Degree Level.	✓		A
Holder of full membership of the R.T.P.I.	✓		A
<i>Personal Attributes</i>			
Diplomacy, tact, influencing and negotiation skills.	✓		I/R
Accuracy and attention to detail, particularly when working to tight deadlines.	✓		R

Ability to work on own initiative as well as part of a team.	✓		A/I
<i>Able to relate well to the public and to professional and other people within the Council and its partner organisations</i>		✓	I/R
<i>Good time management and organisational skills</i>		✓	A/I
Appreciation of the implications of equal opportunities policies for delivering planning services		✓	A/I

A=Application, T=Test, I=Interview, R=References, P=Proof (certificates, etc)

Completed by: Charlie Walton Date: December 2003

Position: Head of Planning Service