

ANGUS COUNCIL

Housing Committee - 26 August 2004

ESTABLISHMENT OF ASSESSMENT OFFICER POSTS

REPORT by DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

ABSTRACT

This report seeks Housing Committee approval to establish three Assessment Officer posts within the Special Needs Section.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended to Members that:-

- three posts of Assessment Officer be established, Grade AP3,
- line management responsibility for the posts should lie initially with the Supported Accommodation Officer, Special Needs to be reviewed after two years

2. BACKGROUND

The current work of the Housing Special Needs Section includes ensuring

- 1) effective and efficient assessment of housing and housing support needs by the joint assessment panels
- 2) that Housing is able to respond to new duties under the Joint Future agenda, particularly the implementation of the Single Shared Assessment
- 3) that Housing is fully involved in the implementation of Supporting People and complies with the regulatory requirements of the Commission for the Regulation of Care for Housing Support Services.

All recipients of Supporting People funded housing support services should have a full assessment of need carried out by or on behalf of the local authority. The Single Shared Assessment process is the appropriate tool for this as it should ensure a holistic and person centred approach to identifying and meeting the needs of vulnerable people.

To date the single shared assessment process has been implemented for older people. The Council is in the process of rolling this out to include all vulnerable people. There are not the resources, skills or experience within the current Housing department staffing structure to contribute effectively to the detailed assessment process. A need has been identified to recruit staff having skills & experience of housing, health and social care.

The creation of these three posts (which will initially be line managed by the Supported Accommodation Officer, see Appendix 1) will ensure that there are locally based staff able to liaise at an appropriate level with a range of agencies to ensure applicants' and tenants' needs are effectively and comprehensively addressed.

3. THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT OFFICERS

The main duties of the Assessment Officers will be to:

1. carry out comprehensive assessments of housing and support needs of all vulnerable housing applicants
2. make decisions on priority for housing or refer for further assessment where necessary
3. make recommendations about suitability of applicants for Short Scottish Secure Tenancies

4. advise on adapted housing and make recommendations regarding suitability of mainstream housing for adaptation
5. provide information and advice on housing and support options to housing applicants and tenants
6. contribute to the implementation of the Joint Future agenda and development of a quality housing and support assessment service.

4. LINKS TO OTHER AREAS

One of the main aims of the Single Shared Assessment process is to reduce duplication and improve the assessment process and service delivery. While the current specialist Housing and Housing Support Needs assessment forms are compatible with Single Shared assessment tools used by other agencies, there is a considerable amount of overlap with the housing application form.

The Common Housing Register working group is reviewing application forms with a view to creating a three-stage process to establish 1) the bricks and mortar / environmental requirements, 2) the homelessness status and 3) the housing support needs of applicants. Stages 1 and 3 will become the specialist housing and housing support assessment tools within the Single Shared Assessment process.

Housing Support Planners within the homelessness and sheltered housing services will use the completed Housing Support Assessment form (stage 3), to inform housing support plans to meet the needs of tenants in receipt of Housing Support Services. Housing Support Planners will agree with tenants the content of the plan, liaise with other agencies to ensure a holistic approach to meeting housing support, health and social care needs of tenants, and monitor and evaluate the housing support outcomes. It is a requirement of the Commission for the Regulation of Care and a condition of Supporting People grant that all recipients of housing support services have in place an effective housing support plan to meet assessed needs.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The associated full year costs amount to £91,860 and are fully detailed in Appendix 2. The costs for 2004/05 will be contained within the service development funding of £73,000. The full year costs for 2005/06 will be built into the budget process

The three Assessment Officers will be based in sheltered housing schemes in Arbroath and Forfar and the ACCESS Office in Brechin. There are some property implications arising from this report, as the provision of suitable office accommodation within sheltered housing will have some minor associated costs.

6. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no Human Rights implications arising from this report.

7. CONSULTATION

In preparing this report the Chief Executive, Personnel Services Manager, Director of Finance, Director of Law & Administration, and Director of Social Work and Health have been consulted.

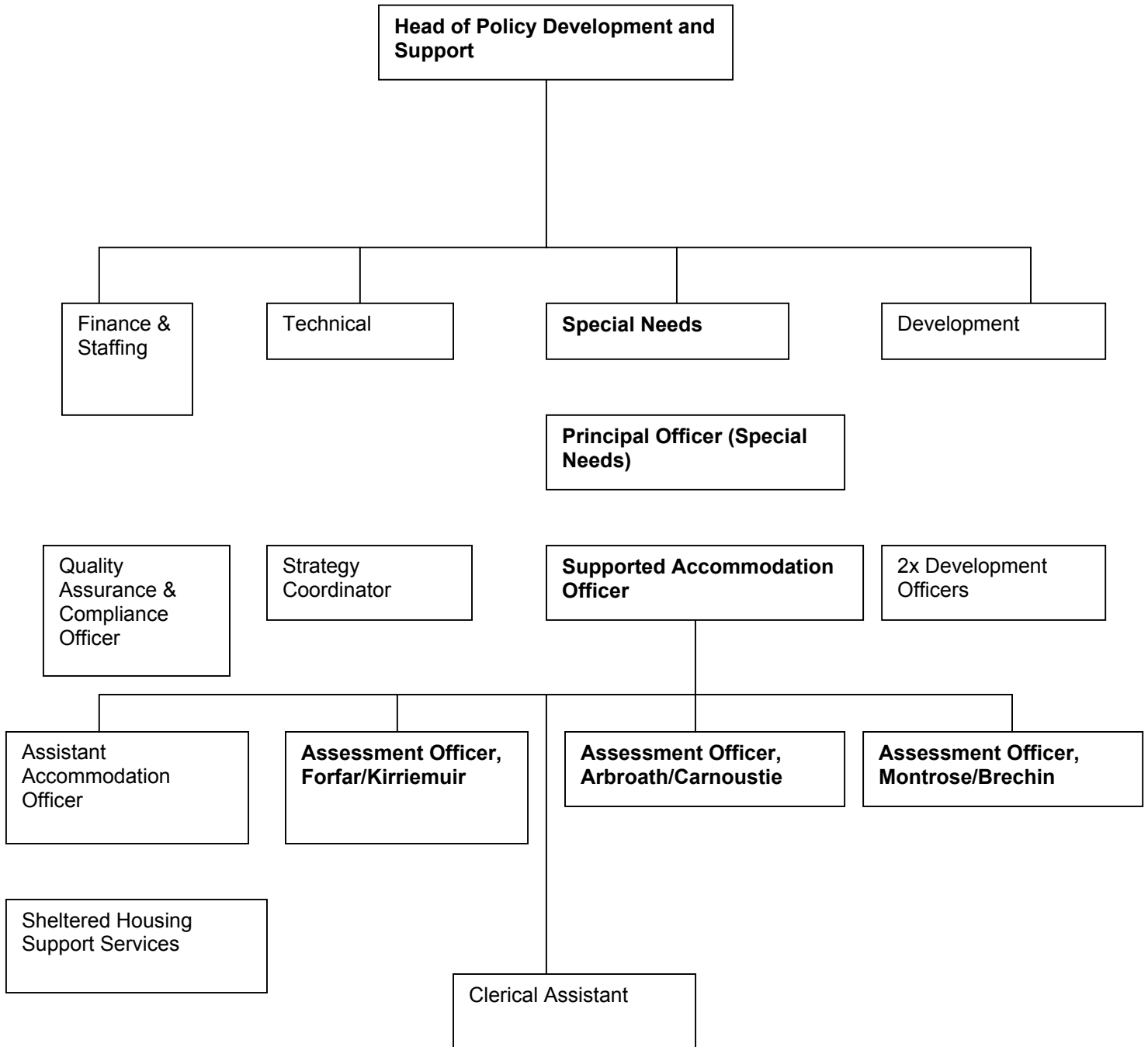
8. CONCLUSION

The creation of three Assessment Officer posts will ensure that Housing can continue to respond effectively and efficiently to existing and future obligations relating to special needs and joint working across agencies. The post holders will play an important role in promoting

transparency and consistency in the decision making process which will allow better targeting of resources. The provision of information and advice to housing applicants and tenants will help service users make informed choices about how their needs can be best met.

Ron Ashton
Director of Housing

Note:- No background papers, as defined by Section 50d of the Local Government (Scotland) Act (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to a material extent in preparing this report:



Appendix 2:

FULL YEAR COSTS

Costs

Recurring costs

3 Assessment Officers (Housing) AP3:

£68,943

Travel & subsistence:

£12,400

Central Support / Admin Costs:

£ 4,814

Start Up costs

Office:

£ 1,683

IT:

£ 4,020

TOTAL

£91,860

2004-05 COSTS (assuming staff in post by November 2004)

Recurring costs

3 Assessment Officers (Housing) AP3:

£28,726

Travel & subsistence:

£ 5,167

Central Support / Admin Costs:

£ 2,006

Start Up costs

Office:

£ 1,683

IT:

£ 4,020

TOTAL

£41,602