

Appendix B: Information on proposed recruitment from SCH

Background

The implementation of the HRA in April 2018 has brought about significant changes to the delivery of homeless services by SCH on behalf of SMBC. The requirement to provide homelessness services to everyone who is 'eligible' and 'homeless', regardless of 'priority need' and 'intentional homelessness' has resulted in significantly more people being provided with assistance.

The increase in demand, and the wider changes implementation of the HRA have brought about, has necessitated a rethink of our current service delivery model to ensure we have sufficient front line resources and sufficient management capacity to support service delivery and development. This has resulted in immediate cost pressures and concerns about whether SCH can continue to meet service demand and the statutory requirements of the HRA within the existing management fee.

Service pressures

Approaches to SCH Housing Options from those threatened with homelessness have increased significantly, with numbers doubling for the four month period since implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act (see table 1).

Table 1 – Number of approaches since implementation of HRA

Month 2018/19	Number of approaches
April	197
May	190
June	202
July	188
Total	777

We cannot provide direct comparator figures to the above. However, the number of homeless applications that were taken for the same period in 2017 totalled 373 as illustrated below.

Table 2 - Number of homeless applications

Month 2017/18	Homeless applications
April	72
May	115
June	112
July	74
Total	373

In addition, and as the new 'prevention' and 'relief' duties owed each last for 56 days applicants are also being assisted for a longer period, with an obligation to regularly review each case. The initial assessment, takes, on average, two hours to complete; officers are then required to work with applicants to develop a personalised housing plan and continue to review this with the customer which again requires additional time.

Another important factor impacting on service delivery has been the significant increase in the number of people that are presenting in a crisis as 'homeless today'. The total number of crisis cases from HRA implementation to the end of July has been 148. Unfortunately we are unable to provide comparator figures for the same period in 2017/18 as these were not previously recorded. However, it is clear that crisis cases have increased significantly with offices having to deal with many more unplanned presentations with an associated impact on resources. The table below illustrates this on a month by month basis.

Table 3 – Number of Crisis Cases

Month 2018/19	Crisis cases
April	34
May	43
June	38
July	33
Total	148

Finally, the new Government reporting system accompanying the HRA, H-CLIC, (which replaces P1E) requires substantially more data, resulting in additional officer time spent on administration and data input.

These additional service pressures have become a key capacity issue for the Housing Options Team requiring additional front line staff to meet both the increased customer demand and the increased length of time they are now required to spend with customers. A detailed assessment of the tasks undertaken by Housing Officers and Housing Assistants has been undertaken to measure the time their new activities are taking and clearly demonstrating the urgent need for additional staff to deliver the statutory requirements of the HRA.

Management Capacity

Whilst the early focus of HRA implementation has been to respond to immediate front line pressures it is becoming increasingly clear that we need to bolster our management capacity to support both front line delivery and also service development, particularly in relation to preventative homeless activity and to ensure we meet our SLA obligations to SMBC to be '*innovative in terms of service delivery and provision of housing options*'. Additional management capacity will also enable SCH to better support SMBC's wider strategic policy agenda in relation to homelessness. A draft restructure therefore proposes the recruitment of two Homeless Services Manager posts reporting to the current Housing Options Manager.

We have responded to immediate front line pressures through recruitment to an additional two assistants during 2018/19. In addition, we wish to recruit as follows.

Posts	2018 / 2019	2019/20	Total
2 x Homeless Services Manager posts	117,000	117,000	234,000
2 x Housing Options Assistants	(56,480 already approved)	56,480	56,480
2 x Housing Options Officers	78,752	78,752	157,504
Total	195,752	252, 222	447,984

The additional staffing resource will ensure SCH is in a strong position to meet current and anticipated service demand and the statutory requirements of the HRA over the next 2 years. It will also enable SCH to further develop the service offer particularly in relation to preventative homeless activity.