

Item No. 17.	Classification: Open	Date: 5 December 2023	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Creation of a new senior management post: Assistant Director of Repairs	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Darren Merrill, Council Homes	

FOREWORD: COUNCILLOR DARREN MERRILL, CABINET MEMBER FOR COUNCIL HOMES

As London's largest social landlord, the council manages 55,000 homes. Maintaining these homes to a decent standard and keeping them warm, dry and safe for our residents has always been the starting point for any major works that we undertake. In doing so, it is vitally important that we listen to our residents and adapt and change our approach where required – in particular, to ensure we are meeting the council's commitments to tackle inequality and take positive action to address the climate emergency.

In September 2023, Cabinet approved "A home to be proud of", our approach to improving the council's in-house repairs service and ensuring everyone who lives in a council home can expect a quality repair, completed right first time. This report seeks approval to create a new Assistant Director of Repairs. We are making good progress with our plans to improve the repairs service with resident satisfaction improving month on month. The creation of this new post will ensure we embed and continue these improvements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

1. Approves the creation of a new senior management post, Assistant Director of Repairs

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2. As London's largest social landlord, the council manages 55,000 homes on behalf of tenants and leaseholders, about a third of the homes in Southwark.

3. In 2018, the council brought its housing repairs service in-house. Since this time, the service has benefited from significant investment, resulting in improvements across a range of performance measures, including customer satisfaction and the percentage of repairs completed right first time. However, for a number of reasons – including, critically, the Covid-19 pandemic – progress in transforming the repairs service has been slower than the council anticipated at the time the service was brought in-house.
4. In September 2023, Cabinet approved a report, “A home to be proud of”, which set out plans for improving the repairs service over the next year, including the introduction of four promises to tenants:
 - a quality repair, completed right first time
 - an exceptional customer service
 - your voice will be heard
 - we will invest in your homes and try to prevent problems happening.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. Delivering the planned transformation of the repairs service and achieving the council’s promises to tenants will require dedicated senior officer leadership. For this reason, it is proposed to create a new Assistant Director of Repairs, which will be a grade 17 role that reports into the Director of Asset Management. The Assistant Director of Repairs will be responsible for:
 - leading the council’s repairs service and achieving its intended transformation
 - compliance with statutory obligations set out in the Social Housing (Regulation) Act, Fire Safety Act and Building Safety Act
 - advising the Leader, Cabinet Members, Chief Executive and senior officers on all matters associated with the repair of council homes.
6. Under the council's constitution, the creation of posts at grade 17 and above is a matter reserved for Cabinet.
7. Subject to Cabinet approval of the proposal to create this role, recruitment of a permanent postholder will commence at the earliest opportunity. The council is committed to ensuring recruitment is always open, fair and transparent, and the recruitment process will be managed in line with the council’s established recruitment policy and procedures.

Community, equalities (including socio-economic) and health impacts

Community impact statement

8. The creation of a new Assistant Director of Repairs is an important element of the council's plan to improve the repairs service, which in turn will directly benefit residents.

Equalities (including socio-economic) impact statement

9. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the council has a duty when exercising its functions to have due regard to:
 - the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
 - the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not
 - the need to foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.
10. The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
11. The proposal to create a new Assistant Director of Repairs is not anticipated to adversely impact on any of the duties defined in the Equality Act 2010.

Health impact statement

12. There are no significant health implications arising from the proposal to create a new Assistant Director of Repairs.

Climate change implications

13. There are no significant climate change implications arising from the proposal to create a new Assistant Director of Repairs.

Legal implications

14. Under the council's constitution, the cabinet is responsible for making any decisions regarding the strategic management of the council, including decisions on major reorganisations, major reallocations of functions between departments or chief officers, and the creation of posts at grade 17 or above.

15. This report seeks the cabinet's agreement to the creation of a new senior management post, Assistant Director of Repairs, which is a grade 17 role.

Financial implications

16. The cost of employing an Assistant Director of Repairs will be funded from the existing revenue budget for the repairs service.

Consultation

17. The proposal to create a new Assistant Director of Repairs has been subject to consultation with employees and trade union representatives. This consultation was undertaken in line with the requirements of the council's HR policy framework.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance

18. This report asks the cabinet to approve the creation of a new senior management post, Assistant Director of Repairs, which is a grade 17 role. Approval of the creation of posts at grade 17 and above is a matter reserved to the cabinet under part 3C of the council's constitution.
19. The appointment of an individual to this post is a non-executive function of the council delegated to the chief executive as the head of paid service.
20. The cabinet will need to ensure it considers the public sector equality duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 when making this decision.

Strategic Director of Finance (H&M 23/060)

21. The Strategic Director of Finance notes the proposal to create a new Assistant Director of Repairs. The cost of employing an individual to fill this role (1 FTE @ G17 midpoint, ie. £146,956 at 23/24 pay scales, including on costs) will need to be funded from the existing revenue budget for the repairs service. Given the financial pressures facing the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), the postholder will need to ensure that the improvement plan for the repairs service includes a strong focus on financial management and efficient, cost-effective service delivery to tenants.
22. There are no capital implications in this report.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Document	Held by and Contact
A home to be proud of – the council’s plan for improving its housing repairs service to tenants (Cabinet report, 12 September 2023)	Southwark Council David Hodgson david.hodgson@southwark.gov.uk
Link (please copy and paste into browser): https://modern.gov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s116157/Report%20A%20Home%20to%20be%20Proud%20Of.pdf	

APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Darren Merrill, Council Homes	
Lead Officer	David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director for Children and Adults	
Report Authors	David Hodgson, Director of Asset Management Ben Plant, Director of People and Organisational Development	
Version	Final	
Dated	23 November 2023	
Key Decision?	Yes	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Assistant Chief Executive – Governance and Assurance	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	23 November 2023	