

APPENDIX 2

Proposed restructure of Sheltered Housing Summary of Staff Consultation August 2012

1.0 Introduction

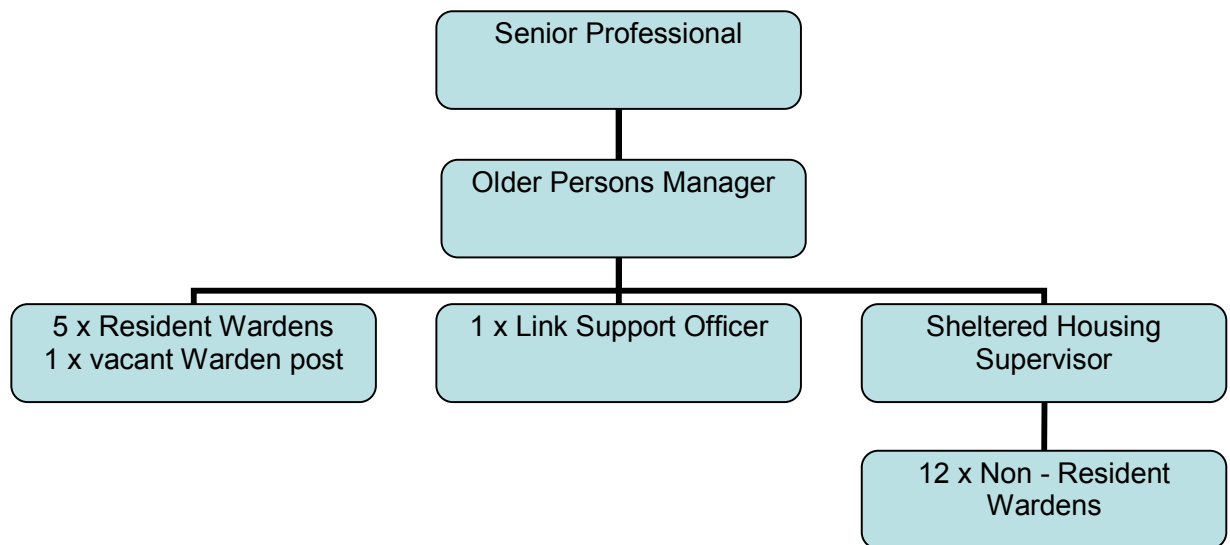
- 1.1 This report provides a summary of staff feedback on the proposed restructure of the Sheltered Housing service and supports the summary of staff feedback contained in the relevant Cabinet report.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The current Sheltered Housing service model has been in place for more than 15 years and has been funded through Supporting People Grant since 2003 (please see sections 4B and 7 of the Cabinet report).
- 2.2 Supporting People Grant (SPG) requirements include achievement of quality standards in support delivery, risk assessments and safeguarding of vulnerable adults, service user involvement etc. These quality standards were not in place prior to the introduction of SPG.
- 2.3 From 2004 to 2010 the Sheltered Housing service was subject to several Supporting People reviews and was assessed as achieving only minimum quality standards. During this period, various improvements were made (for example, in support planning) but these were insufficient to improve overall performance. It was acknowledged that a service review was required and tenants were consulted in this regard in 2007. The Housing Department were able to commit to a formal review of the service in 2010, when a permanent management team had been established and the drive to improve the Sheltered Housing service was committed to the Housing Ambition Plan.
- 2.4 In July 2011, new processes and procedures for delivering the service were implemented and a Supporting People review in late 2011 found that quality had improved significantly.
- 2.5 During efforts to improve service delivery in the first half of 2011 we were aware that a reduction in SPG was likely but this was not confirmed until late 2011.

3.0 Current staffing structure

3.1 A “two-tier” Service has, in effect, been in operation for more than 15 years, with resident and non-resident Wardens working to different Job Descriptions. Resident Wardens provide an on-call service from 5pm to 10pm Monday to Thursday – this facility is not available to Tenants of other schemes. Many Wardens are employed on temporary fixed term contracts and we have several agency staff. The current staffing structure:



3.1.1 The 5 resident Wardens receive rent free accommodation, a salary at grade H6 plus an on call allowance.

3.1.2 Of the 12 Wardens managed by the Sheltered Housing Supervisor, 8 are fixed term Harrow employees (5 of whom have been employed for more than 4 years) and 2 are agency staff. There is 1 secondment and 1 vacant post. These staff receive a salary equivalent to H5 and work 31 hours per week on average.

3.1.3 There are 18 Warden posts. 10 members of staff have permanent employment rights.

4.0 Staff consultation

4.1 Staff away days

- 4.1.1 A staff away day was held in November 2010 to consider service improvement. Staff acknowledged the need for improvement and supported the development of new support delivery processes and a review of the service that would eliminate the current “two-tier” system (resident and non-resident Wardens working different hours, to different terms & conditions and job descriptions).
- 4.1.2 A staff working group was established to review support delivery processes and a new policy, procedure and related pro forma were established. These new processes were introduced to staff at an away day on February 2011, staff training was delivered in March & May 2011 and the new processes piloted from July to December 2011. (As previously stated, a Supporting People review in late 2011 found that quality had improved significantly.) Following feedback from staff and tenants, final processes were implemented in January 2012.
- 4.1.3 New ways of working were also discussed during the November staff away day and staff were keen to extend support services to people living in the community and to be involved in assessments of applicants for Sheltered Housing.
- 4.1.4 A further staff away day was held in June 2011. The drivers for change were established as:
- A need to offer a more personalized service to Tenants (in addition to the new support delivery processes) so that each individual receives the level of support they need when they need it.
 - Expected reductions in Supporting People Grant.
- Staff were keen to get passed the ideas stage and on to a proposal for the future structure of the Service.
- 4.1.5 Issues raised at the first Away Day in November 2010 were voiced again:
- A need to improve continuity, consistency, communication, IT arrangements and team work,
 - A need to bring the community in to our schemes and
 - The potential benefits of a “hub” type model
- 4.1.6 The idea of the “concierge” or “intensive housing management” model was floated. The model is: staffing is separated in to two different functions, housing management and support; creating housing management posts and support posts. (This is model currently proposed.)

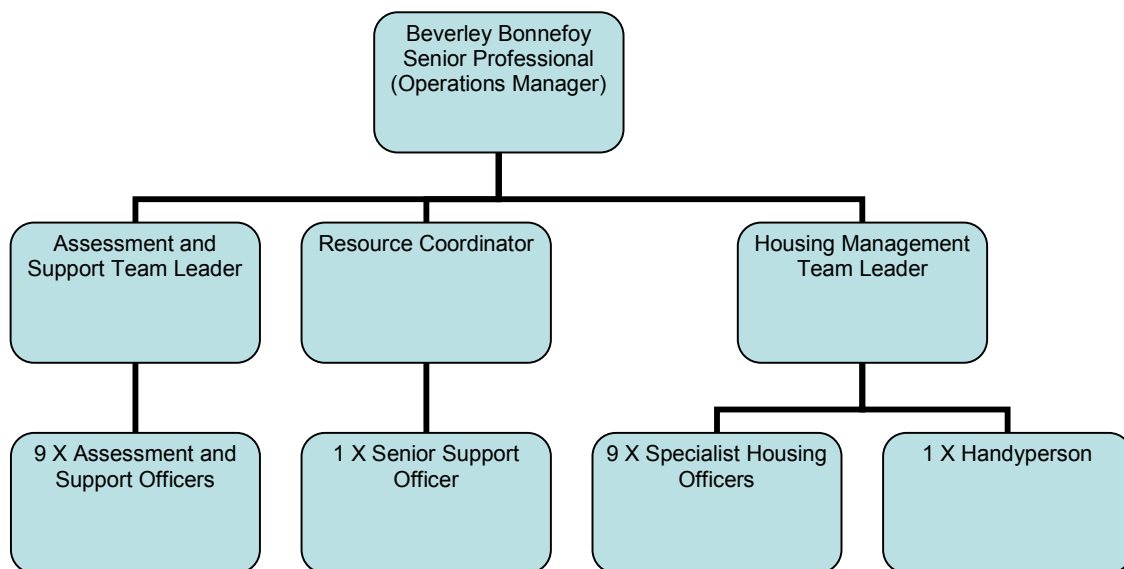
4.1.7 The idea of the new model was positively received by staff. Feedback from group work on the model follows:

Benefits	Issues
Clear job descriptions On site presence Tenant satisfaction More one to one attention Flexibility Tailored service Better results Better value for money More empowering for Tenants Opportunity to develop staff skills More focused staff roles More choice for Tenants "Hub" approach would provide better staff cover and more choice for Tenants	Reduced pay Reduced out of hours service Punctuality of some staff No computers at the moment Job losses Change for Tenants Staff mobility / travel needs Increased risks in lone working Lack of communication between the housing management and support roles Two different roles may divide the Team Co-ordinating communication with external agencies

4.1.8 Following the June 2011 staff away day, managers met with in LB Hammersmith and Fulham to discuss development the new model, continued to liaise with colleagues in Supporting People and Finance and commenced tenant consultation.

4.2 Formal proposal January 2012

4.2.1 On 9th January 2012 we met with Sheltered Housing staff and their union representatives to set out a proposal to restructure the service. The proposed staffing structure follows:



4.2.2 A number of questions / comments were raised at that meeting, including the following:

- Unison asked if staff had been ring-fenced for the new posts or they will be assimilated in to the new posts.

It was explained that we would not know if ring-fencing / assimilation applied until the implementation stage – following closure of formal consultation a job matching exercise will be undertaken which will inform any decisions regarding ring-fencing and assimilation.

- Unison asked if management had considered the possibility of non-resident Wardens claiming rights to accommodation.

It was explained that there were no resident posts in the proposed structure.

- There were a number of questions and comments regarding the draft role profiles, all of which were taken in to consideration in the subsequent final drafts. (NB Including job titles – Assessment and Support Officer became Support Coordinator and Specialist Housing Officer became Scheme Coordinator).
- Staff were also positive about the proposal and the approach that had been taken in gathering staff views and comments on the development of the service.

4.2.3 On 14th February 2012 we met with Helpline staff and their managers to formally discuss the proposal and open the consultation to that department.

4.2.4 During the consultation period which closed on 5th March we received a written response from Unison & the Sheltered Housing team's union representative and a further written response signed by two resident Wardens. Only one member of staff took up the offer of a one to one meeting. A summary of feedback follows.

4.2.5 Feedback from Unison in their letter received 24th January 2012:

	Feedback	Our response
1	All issues impacting on member's terms and conditions of employment had not been recognized.	Negotiations with resident Wardens were continuing – see section 4.
2	The requirement to formally engage to develop the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been denied.	The EqIA is a working document and was in rough form at the time of the meeting on 19 th January, which is why a copy was refused. We sent a working draft of the document to Unison on 14 th February. Working group meetings (including staff, tenant and union reps) were held in March and April 2012.
3	Within the job descriptions no allowance has been made for travelling between sites.	We explained that it is our intention that staff are reimbursed for any reasonable travel costs and that the time taken to travel between sites is considered as work time.
4	Unison has had no formal response from members regarding the job descriptions (with the exception of resident Wardens) and this is solely due to the fact that management have failed to identify what roles individual employees have been ring fenced to – as requested at the outset of consultation.	We explained that it is not possible to determine if ring-fencing applies until Job Descriptions have been evaluated and the job matching exercise has been completed.
5	Request for copy of the user's survey and attendance rates.	Supplied in the EqIA.

6	Request that the restructure is piloted.	We explained that as stated at our first consultation meeting on 9 th January, any restructure will be piloted. The pilot will be used to improve processes and address any gaps in service.
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4.2.6 The Sheltered Housing team union representative stated that *“around 80% of Sheltered Housing employees are still unsure and moreover concerned about the status of their jobs prior to the commencement of the new service. Some feel that they are not getting a true and accurate detailed picture of their position in regards to what was being said and made to be understood in the beginning of setting up the new service and what is now being implemented.”*

This feedback was surprising given that we had been clear about the idea of restructuring the service in to two teams (one to focus on support and one to focus on housing management) since November 2010. This was clarified at the feedback meeting with staff held on 8th March 2012.

The union representative also provided the following feedback:

	Feedback	Response
1	<i>“Proposal that will be put into place will be challenging with the expectation of meeting the tenants’ needs”</i>	Change can be challenging and we acknowledge that reorganising the service will be more challenging for some of our Tenants. However, with the support of staff, we will manage any reorganisation to ensure that Tenants receive a seamless service.
2	<i>“One of the main considerations has been to provide a service with the tenant at the forefront. At the moment the staff are not happy due to the lack of arrangements for continuing to provide the level of service expected by tenants. This issue must be worked out in all details and address. Otherwise there will be tenant revolt.”</i>	There are many details to be negotiated and decided, however, the proposed reorganisation provides targeted and focused service for Tenants in order to better meet individual needs.

3	<i>"In the new service why is there only one post that does Rounds as both post mainly cover 2 Blocks."</i>	All 9 Assessment and Support Officers undertake daily checks for those Tenants who need them. Some Tenants will choose a weekly check, some will want a phone call and not a visit and many Tenant will completely opt out of these wellbeing checks.
4	<i>"Is the travel allowance/mileage going to be paid for visiting/working in different locations?"</i>	Yes.
5	<i>"We have on different pay scale for a long time with the Res. Wardens on the lowest pay scale. With this new pay scale i.e., H6, will all staffs be on the same spinal point to make it equal? What is the extra cost attached?"</i>	This will be confirmed once the job evaluations have been completed.
6	<i>"Are all staffs going to be permanent?"</i>	All current staff who assume a role in the new structure will be permanent employees.
7	<i>"Currently Staffs are working different hours. In the new service, would all staffs work the same hours – and would staffs allowed to work flexi, as long as the work is completed?"</i>	All staff would be expected to work a 36 hour week. The flexi-time option will be considered.
8	<i>"One Handyman may not be enough for 18 schemes."</i>	Jobs would need to be prioritized.
9	<i>"Would we still be covering our own scheme and adding an additional one or, changing and covering two different schemes all together?"</i>	This would be dependent on the post and the individual and each would be considered on their own merits.
10	<i>"If there's not a maintenance issue then do we not go into work? Not everyone has a repair problem at one time."</i>	All staff are expected to work 36 hours per week. The Specialist Housing Officer is expected to spend most of their time on site (i.e., at a scheme) undertaking aspects of their role as required. This may include Health & Safety checks for example.

11	<i>“How do the tenants benefit from not having a full time manager / Support worker in all day? Has an impact assessment been undertaken?”</i>	Tenants benefit from having access to support and help with housing management issues when they need it. The proposed reorganisation helps to reinforce the fact that Sheltered Schemes are for independent living and are not care homes. There are many occasions when a Warden is absent under the current arrangements, which is why Tenants have access to Helpline for emergencies.
12	<i>“Would there be two staffs (Assessment and Support Officer “ASO” & Specialist Housing Officer “SHO”) in a scheme at the same time?”</i>	Possibly, yes. A Specialist Housing Officer could be on site when an Assessment and Support Officer is visiting a Tenant or when Assessment and Support Officers are running the weekly Support Surgery.
13	<i>“Does flexi work mean less pay – fewer hours?”</i>	No. Flexi-work is a process where staff work within agreed core hours and any agreed additional time is taken off work as agreed with management. For further details see the Flexi Time Scheme Procedure.
14	<i>“Some residents won’t allow a Handyman into their property without the manager there, so what will happen then?”</i>	The Specialist Housing Officer would accompany the Handyperson.
15	<i>“How does the Guest Room work if there’s no one to take the booking, who deals with that?”</i>	There will be staff at Watkins House during office hours from Monday to Friday to take any bookings.
16	<i>“Suppose there is an issue that makes you stay longer over the estimated time slot that you have given yourself to deal with scheme, what happens to your next appointments, knowing that tenants are waiting in for you but you don’t turn up?”</i>	Staff would be expected to use their initiative as they do currently and if the delay is unavoidable, let Tenants know that they will be late to their appointment.

Positive feedback from the union representative included the following:

- *Positive proposal, approach, the timescale listening to us*
- *Overall, acceptance way forward*

4.2.7 Written feedback from two resident Wardens is included in the following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) from staff:

1	<p>Q: Why can't we keep the existing structure of one designated Warden per scheme and fund 50% of their salary through Supporting People and 50% through Housing Benefit? <i>(This question was also raised by a Tenant)</i></p> <p>A: This proposal was considered, however, although this arrangement would address cuts in Supporting People funding, continuing with the present staffing structure doesn't address the need to provide Tenants with greater choice or difficulties in covering Warden absence.</p>
2	<p>Q: Has consideration been given to Housing Benefit reform and the effect this will have on proposed funding arrangements?</p> <p>A: We have been working with Finance and Housing Benefit in this regard. The reform to Housing Benefit includes a "cap" on the amount of money that can be claimed for enhanced housing management. There are many supported housing providers who are claiming in excess of £100 per Tenant per week and the Government wants to see these claims reduced. Should we proceed with this proposal the weekly claim per Tenant would be in the region of £15 per week and Housing Benefit have agreed this in principle.</p> <p>Funding streams (Supporting People, Housing Benefit or any other) can never be guaranteed as fixed income and it is likely, particularly given the current financial climate, that funding for Sheltered Housing services and others, will be reduced in years to come.</p>
3	<p>Q: On 5th October 2011 we were told that management would arrange an "away-day" at LB Hammersmith and Fulham so that staff and Tenants could see how the proposed structure works. We would still like this visit to take place.</p> <p>A: We have discussed & agreed this with LBHF but haven't arranged the visits as yet as we have been awaiting the outcome of formal consultation. Once we have considered all of the feedback, if our decision is to go ahead and introduce the proposed structure we will make firm arrangements for the visits to take place.</p>

4	<p>Q: On 5th October we were told that there would be job losses if we continue with the present staffing structure (due to cuts in Supporting People Grant) and that Wardens would need to cover more than one scheme. However, the proposed structure requires staff to cover more than one scheme to avoid job losses.</p> <p>A: The Sheltered Housing Service has continued in it's present form for many years and requires modernization to ensure that it provides the best possible service to Tenants in line with Government requirements, including the Personalisation agenda. The purpose of the proposed restructure isn't just to respond to cuts in Supporting People funding but to provide more choice, and a better service to Tenants.</p> <p>If we did nothing, there would be job losses. We are using the opportunity that the cuts in funding provide to re-shape the way that services are delivered to Tenants, which includes providing them with a choice in who they can speak to about the things they need help with. We have given the example of a male Tenant who needs help to address personal care needs and has no choice but to speak to a female member of staff. But this is only one example of the impact on our Tenants of just one allocated member of staff per scheme.</p>
5	<p>Q: How are the teams to cover lunch breaks and more importantly emergency calls (fire alarms etc)?</p> <p>A: All staff are currently allowed to leave their scheme to take a lunch break so there will be no change in that there will be periods when schemes are unstaffed. In an emergency, Tenants can alert Helpline or call an emergency service and this will not change. Should we introduce the new structure we will also introduce procedures to clarify how the Teams operate and provide Tenants with information such as how to contact staff at Watkins House.</p>
6	<p>Q: No clarification has been given regarding how visits to schemes (by maintenance, hairdressers, guest room tenants etc) will be managed.</p> <p>A: This has been clarified on numerous occasions – responsibility will lie with the Enhanced Housing Management Officer.</p>
7	<p>Q: If teams are to have no involvement with Helpline between the hours of 9 to 5 how would the on / off system work? (When the fire alarm goes off it automatically goes direct to helpline. This is permanently “off-site” 24/7)</p> <p>A: Should the proposed restructure be introduced, staff will “clock in” and “clock out” of work through contact with Watkins House and it is likely that staff will continue to use the on / off system through Helpline when they are on site.</p>

8	<p>Q: Do Helpline call the HUB? Or do they call 999? If a Tenant pulls an alarm whilst a Support or Housing Officer is off site who deals with it? Do Helpline action the call?</p> <p>A: Helpline will contact staff and / or emergency services as appropriate, as they do now.</p>
9	<p>Q: Will Support Coordinators be based at Watkins House and scheduled Housing Officers be based at the schemes Monday to Friday 9 to 5? Or are both Teams to be based at Watkins House?</p> <p>A: All staff will be based at Watkins House but spend most of their time on site. The base will be used to coordinate delivery of the service, it will also provide access to computers & other office equipment and line managers and colleagues.</p>
10	<p>Q: Instead of the proposed home visits to Sheltered Housing applicants would it not be better to provide a floating support service to people who need it and encourage those who need Sheltered Housing to apply?</p> <p>A: The Supporting People Team already fund a floating support service and would not support a duplication of this.</p>
11	<p>Q: Is this feedback going to be considered and acted upon? Or is it just another paper exercise? Over the past year other consultations (i.e., Support Plans, INRAs, Disclaimers etc) never had the feedback that was promised and we know there are still problems. When we wanted to give feedback it was just ignored.</p> <p>A: All feedback from staff, Tenants and other stakeholders such as the Supporting People Team and the Housing Benefit Department will be considered before any changes are made to the way in which the Sheltered Housing service is delivered. If staff feel that their feedback on other matters hasn't been considered then they should contact Samantha Sterling, Zeljka Zorzin, Shahron Shah or Beverley Bonnefoy so that any concerns can be resolved.</p>
12	<p>Q: Many Tenants have opted out of the support service and have signed Support Disclaimers. Tenant's support needs can change over night and very often a Warden will pick up on this. How will we ensure that Tenants don't fall through a gap that may be created by the proposed restructure?</p> <p>A: It's essential that vulnerable Tenants are identified and their needs addressed. We will review current support delivery procedures and processes to ensure that emerging support needs are identified as soon as possible and welcome staff input regarding this. "Gaps" in service were</p>

	<p>identified by LB Hammersmith and Fulham as an issue and they set up a working group to agree recommendations for their new Service structure. We will mirror this before any restructure implemented. We will also pilot any new service for 12 months.</p>
13	<p>Q: The change in Sheltered Housing staffing will also have a direct effect on the Operators at Helpline as we will be receiving more calls than usual because the wardens will not be onsite and available to the tenants as much as they have been. The Specialist Housing Support officers will only be on site for 18 hours per Scheme instead of 36 hours or 25 at present. My understanding is that Helpline has not had clarification as to whether our CAOs will be required to respond and attend any alarm calls that the tenants activate. There is also an issue that Social services issues may be directed through Helpline as the Assessment and Support Officers will be only visiting the schemes, and often only by appointment.</p> <p>A: In the proposed restructure, Sheltered Housing staff will be available during office hours from Monday to Friday and Tenants will be able to contact staff for advice and assistance. If there is an emergency, Tenants can call Helpline as is current practice. As part of the pilot, we will review the levels of calls to Helpline to ensure that the service is being used appropriately and that there aren't any gaps in service.</p>

4.2.8 One member of staff took up the offer to meet with a member of the management team (together with her union representative). The individual was concerned that her post was at risk of redundancy and it was explained that all posts in the existing structure were being deleted and were therefore all at risk of redundancy, but that all staff would either be assimilated in to the new posts or be ring fenced to them.

4.3 Consideration of feedback

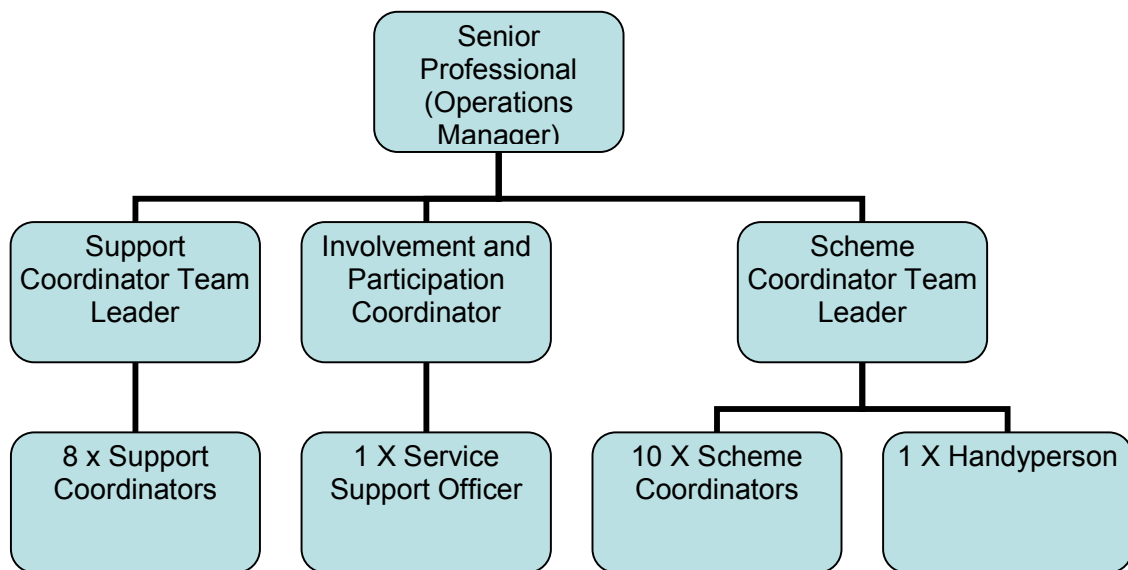
4.3.1 A key concern raised by both staff and tenants was that there should be more fixed, on-site presence at each scheme.

4.3.2 Role Profiles were revised to incorporate feedback from staff and union representatives.

4.3.3 In June 2012 we received confirmation that the annual Supporting People Grant of £502,000 would be reduced by £200,000 over the next 3 years and that funding beyond 2015/16 cannot be guaranteed.

4.4 Formal proposal July 2012

4.4.1 In light of the feedback received from staff & tenants during formal consultation and confirmation regarding funding from the Supporting People Team, we revised the proposed staffing structure and opened a further period of formal consultation from 4th to 18th July 2012. The revised staffing structure follows:



4.4.2 Key changes that remain - as set out in our original proposal – are as follows:

- Creation of two staff Teams – one providing Assessment & Support and the other Housing Management
- The Support Co-ordinators (previously titled Assessment and Support Officers) undertake assessments of applicants to Sheltered Housing and provide a floating support service to Tenants
- The Scheme Co-ordinators (previously titled Specialist Housing Officers) cover more than one scheme
- Workforce increased by 2 posts
- All staff based at Watkins House but spending most of their time at relevant schemes

4.4.3 The key changes to the original proposal are:

- An increase in the number of Scheme Coordinators from 9 to 10

- A decrease in the number of Support Coordinators from 9 to 8
- All 8 Support Coordinator posts to be offered on 2 year Fixed Term Contracts

4.4.4 At the meeting to open formal consultation on 4th July 2012 we received the following feedback:

	Question / comment	Response
1	Unison asked if the Council's proposed changes to staff Terms and Conditions of Employment had been taken in to consideration.	The proposed changes hadn't yet been agreed.
2	Unison asked if the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) identified any groups of staff who would be adversely affected by the proposal.	The identification of the adverse impact on the 5 Resident Wardens remain in the EqIA. Further, that the EqIA will remain a working draft until feedback from this period of formal consultation is included and the document is provided to Cabinet.
3	GMB asked if an updated version of the EqIA was available.	A copy was sent by email to GMB and Unison the next day.
4	Unison asked if they would have an opportunity to contribute to the report to Cabinet.	A summary of formal consultation will be included in the report.
5	A member of staff asked if staff will have to apply for their jobs.	We cannot comment on implementation at this stage but that this was a possibility.
6	Unison asked if redundancy payments for the 2 year Fixed Term contracts were being considered.	Redundancy payments will not apply as the contracts will be for an explicit 2 year period.
7	Unison suggested that these contracts be reviewed 6 months prior to end date.	This was agreed.
8	A member of agency staff asked if she'd be able to apply for a job.	The procedure is that agency staff who have been in place for more than 12 weeks can apply for positions that become available to all Council employees.
9	What is the employment status of agency staff who have been in place for more than 4 years?	Agency staff who have been in place for more than 12 weeks can apply for positions that become available to all Council employees.

10	What is the employment status of temps who have been in place for more than 4 years?	Staff on temporary contracts (as opposed to agency staff) for more than 4 years would have permanent employment rights and therefore be treated in the same way as permanent Council staff.
11	A member of staff asked if she would have to apply for a Support Coordinator post – ie a 2 year Fixed Term Contract.	We explained that if there was a process whereby staff had to apply for the available positions, this might be possible but that implementation had not been decided.
12	A member of staff commented that the Role Profile for Scheme Coordinator includes a responsibility for taking money for guest room bookings and social activities and that this contradicted Supporting People guidance.	These responsibilities needed to be included because there have to be arrangements in place for Scheme Coordinators (funded through Housing Benefit) to collect funds in advance of other mechanisms being put in place. Further, the Role Profiles are final and cannot be amended.
13	What about cover arrangements for absent staff? How will the service cope if a number of staff are away on leave or off sick?	The current staffing structure is reliant on agency staff whereas the proposed structure is not. Under the proposed structure staff would cover each other but there may still be periods when we'd need agency staff – such as during significant levels of absence.
14	A member of staff commented that the proposed restructure would result in more work for Helpline staff.	We explained that it's likely that there may be more calls to Helpline during the first few months of any changes to the service and that this will need to be monitored. Sheltered Housing and Helpline will agree how the monitoring should be undertaken. There is also an issue with managing Tenant's expectations that the Sheltered Housing Service will address so that Tenants know what service they can expect to receive. Further, the proposed restructure provides more frontline staffing hours which will enable to deal more effectively with the day to day issues currently being reported to Helpline as emergencies.

15	Unison asked if Flexi Time could be considered.	This was agreed.
16	A member of staff and Unison commented that arrangements for the Pilot need to be clarified.	Agreed. This will be developed through consultation with the Helpline service.
17	Members of staff asked about the continuance of daily rounds.	Any tenant who needs a daily visit (weekdays or weekends) will continue to receive one but that the practice of "rounds" would cease as many tenants were unhappy with these arrangements.
18	Members of staff commented on use of pull chords when staff were not on site and asked how this would work in practice.	We explained that Helpline would decide on how to respond to an emergency call – it may be appropriate for them to call the Hub and will therefore not result in Helpline staff having to visit the Tenant. Use of the Hub should reduce Helpline staff visiting tenants unnecessarily. Michael explained that current handsets would allow staff to answer emergency calls from one scheme while they are on site at another.
19	A member of staff asked when the service would go live.	If approved by Cabinet, it's likely that the new service would go live in the New Year.
20	There were many questions related to operational details (such as provision of master keys).	We explained that these details were not available at the moment but would be developed with staff. Each team – support & housing management – will have comprehensive operational manuals prior to any changes being implemented.

4.4.5 No further feedback was submitted during the consultation period.

4.4.6 We met again with staff on 25th July 2012 to present our final proposal (as set out in our report to Cabinet) and the following points were raised:

	Question / comment	Response
1	Unison pointed out that according to the Agency Worker's Directive agency staff can apply for internal vacancies from the first day of their placement and not after 12 weeks as stated at the meeting held on 4 th July 2012.	HR later confirmed Unison's advice to be correct.
2	Has the employment status of staff on temporary contracts had been confirmed?	It had been confirmed that Sheltered Housing's temporary staff who had been employed on temporary contracts for 4 years or more now had permanent employment rights and would be issued with a permanent contract.
3	How were these temporary contracts offered?	These staff had worked as and when staff for the Council's Workline service before being offered temporary contracts.
4	Is there any feedback on development of the Pilot?	As discussed at the last meeting, the arrangements for the Pilot or 12 Month Review Period would be developed in consultation with staff and union representatives <u>if</u> the proposal was approved by Cabinet. Further, that the intention was to "iron out" any operational issues and not to amend the staffing structure during the rolling review and therefore, on reflection, using the term "pilot" may be misleading.
5	Is there a firm date for implementation?	There isn't a firm date as yet but any new service will be implemented in the new year and before the end of this financial year (ie end of March 2013).
6	Unison asked if the identification of an adverse impact of the proposal on the 5 resident Wardens remained in the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and if it was noted that they would also be affected by the overall modernisation of terms and conditions.	The identification of the adverse impact of the restructure on the 5 Resident Wardens remained in the draft EqIA - any effect of the modernisation of terms and conditions would be added to the draft once a decision is reached after 10 th August.

7	Unison asked if staff would be reimbursed for travel costs in the new structure.	Staff will receive any car allowances that they qualified for and travel costs such as bus fares would be reimbursed as appropriate. Further, that staff would be able to organise their appointment diaries to avoid unnecessary travel.
8	Unison asked if the expense of staff having to buy car insurance had been taken in to consideration.	There would be no change in that staff would not be expected to use their cars to transport tenants and that if staff chose to use their cars for work then they would need to ensure that they have the appropriate car insurance – as they need to now.
9	A member of staff stated that the new arrangements of having staff based at Watkins House wouldn't work in terms of responding to emergency calls if staff were having to travel by bus.	Helpline would respond to emergency calls just as they do now and all Helpline staff have cars.
10	Unison requested a copy of the draft Cabinet report.	A copy of the report cannot be provide until it is published. Unison were invited to submit comments.
11	How soon after applying for a new job would we receive a new contract?	In that situation, successful applicants would receive an amended contract and that this would be issued when the structure was implemented.
12	Are any jobs safe?	All posts in the existing Sheltered Housing staffing structure are deleted and at risk of redundancy.
13	Members of staff commented that this was a very stressful situation for staff, particularly because the process had been so long. What reassurance can management offer during this stressful time?	We acknowledged that this is very stressful for staff but that some reassurance could be gained from the fact that this exercise has always been openly and transparently about improving the service for tenants and staff – and, the fact that it has never been about reducing the number of frontline posts. We highlighted that the EAP programme can be accessed by employees for further support if needed.

14	If staff have to apply for the new posts, when would the interviews take place? And what would happen if staff were unsuccessful at interview?	We cannot confirm as yet how any new structure would be implemented in terms of whether there would be assimilation to posts, ring fencing etc but could confirm that the Protocol for Managing Change applies. But, if staff have to apply for jobs that interviews could be arranged within a few weeks and if staff are unsuccessful at interview they would be placed in the redeployment pool this would be explained further at the implementation stage.
15	A resident Warden asked – if I don't get a job at all, could I lose my home?	The implications of not getting a job in terms of the tenancy agreement would be discussed in the future with the affected staff
16	Will interview panels take the nerves of applicants in to consideration?	Yes.
17	Will jobs be open to job sharing?	Yes, just as they are now.
18	Will staff receive redundancy payments or will TUPE apply when the new structure is implemented?	All staff are at risk of redundancy there are several process that would need to be undertaken ie possible assimilation, ring fencing, interviews, looking for redeployment before we would consider redundancy. TUPE does not apply.

5.0 Negotiations with Resident Wardens

- 5.1 On 10th January we met with resident Wardens and their Unison representative to discuss the effects of the proposed reorganisation on their terms and conditions.
- 5.2 It was explained that there are no resident posts in the new structure and that the emergency call-out hours (5pm to 10pm, Monday to Thursday) would no longer be paid for in the new structure. (This call-out is duplicated by the Helpline service who will continue to respond to emergencies in the new structure.)
- 5.3 It was also explained that resident staff can remain in their accommodation if they wish, but that rent will be payable and phased in over 18 months.

- 5.4 Staff said that they had been anxious that they would lose their homes. It was explained that there was no intention to remove staff from their homes.
- 5.5 Staff asked if there would be a change to their current (service) tenancy and were advised that these would be changed to non secure tenancies (in line with current arrangements for resident Wardens on retirement).
- 5.6 Unison advised that resident Wardens were asking for a buy out, and without an agreement on this staff would be supported to take the matter to Industrial Tribunal on grounds of dismissal from original Terms and Conditions.
- 5.7 A further meeting with resident Wardens and their Unison representative was held on 19th January 2012. It was explained that an assessment of the financial impact of the proposed reorganization on resident Wardens could not be undertaken until Job Descriptions were formally evaluated and pay scales agreed. Further, that as resident Wardens are valued members of staff, they will be treated fairly and the Council will mitigate any negative financial impact they experience as a result of any restructure.
- 5.8 A further meeting with resident Wardens and their Unison representative was held on 28th February 2012 where staff were issued with letters offering cash lump sums in mitigation for losing rent free tenancies. (These offers totalled £12,663, the highest offer being £3,400 and the lowest being £1,409). Unison advised that the lump sums were insufficient and did not include recompense for losing on-call payments.
- 5.9 We wrote to staff again on 5th March 2012 offering cash lump sums again but with additional recompense for loss of on-call payments. This raised the overall total to £23,358 (the highest offer being £3,400 and the lowest being £4,097).
- 5.10 We met with Unison on 5th March 2012 where they advised that the offers were unfair because they were not in line with offers made some years ago to Caretakers and that the Warden's Terms and Conditions should mirror those of the Caretakers. It was explained that no comparison could be made because Caretaker's Terms & Conditions were different (e.g., Caretakers receive secure tenancies in exchange for being on call for 7 days between 4pm and 8am Mon to Fri and 24 hours per day on weekends on a rota basis whereas resident Wardens receive a service tenancy for Monday to Thursday call out between 5pm and 10pm.)

- 5.11 Unison advised they would seek legal advice. It was agreed that staff would be given until close on Monday 19 March 2012 to confirm whether or not they would accept the offers made to them.
- 5.12 Unison requested an extension to the deadline of 19th March and we met again on 14th May 2012. At that meeting Unison advised that their position is that the resident Wardens should continue to receive rent free accommodation.

6.0 Current position regarding resident Wardens

- 6.1 Our position is that Cabinet is being asked to approve a new model of service delivery. If agreed, the implementation of the restructure will be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Protocol for Managing Change and will involve further consultation with staff and unions. Further, negotiations with resident Wardens will continue until an agreement is reached; the Terms and Conditions of these 5 employees are not an issue for Cabinet.

However, for information:

- 6.2 Unison's current position is as follows:
- 6.2.1 The wardens who receive rent free allowances in their contract of employment should retain this contractual element. This is solely due to the fact that a mobility clause is within the contract allowing them to be disseminated to any other area within Harrow Borough. They have also agreed to a buy out of the call out implied term.
- 6.2.2 Unison has sought legal advice regarding this matter, and our position is supported by the fact that this change is not required and does not hinder in any way the delivery of the proposed new service.
- 6.2.3 Unison is prepared to enter litigation on two grounds first a unilateral change to their terms and conditions, secondly this affects only 6 women workers against their male colleagues. There is also the age aspect that our 6 members are in their twilight years. These two grounds are both identified within the nine protected characteristics identified within the Equalities Act 2010 Age and Sex.
- 6.2.4 As stated to the team previously Unison will vigorously challenge this matter which is in our opinion discriminatory. The removal or non removal of this implied term will have no impact on service delivery, therefore purely financial, of course this coupled with the proposed wage reduction; will not be viewed favourably in any future legal case especially when our members have acted more than reasonable in regards to this matter which

has seen an agreement to remove the call out implied term in their current contract on a buy out condition.

6.3 Our position is:

6.3.1 The resident wardens have service tenancies "for the better performance of their duties." Their place of work is the sheltered housing scheme on which they live.

6.3.2 If the council allows the resident wardens to remain in the properties and work across other schemes then they will no longer need to reside at the premises "for the better performance of their duties" and they would become secure tenants with a right to buy. This also has implications for the designation of the whole scheme. This can be resolved by offering non secure tenancies.

6.3.3 It has been the council's practice to rehouse resident wardens/caretakers if they retire or are made redundant. This has been done on the basis of over occupancy of one bedroom. The Housing Allocations Policy puts ex-service tenants in Band A.

6.3.4 The current proposals will be deleting the existing posts and creating a new structure. If a resident warden does not obtain a post in the new structure, then they will be redundant and will be eligible to be rehoused and they would have to pay rent. They do not have a right to have their old terms bought out. This has simply been offered, as an incentive to a smooth transition and a gesture of good will.

6.3.5 It poses the question as to whether resident wardens should remain in their current properties which they may be under occupying and which in some cases could be used for a family. Their contracts say that if they accept non service tenancy employment they are not entitled to be rehoused. Therefore offering them a non-secure tenancy is an improvement for the wardens.

6.3.6 This leaves the issue of whether they should pay rent for the non-secure tenancies. We cannot justify providing rent free accommodation for two reasons. Firstly, the accommodation will not be occupied for the better performance of duties. Secondly, if allowed, the Council would be open to Equal Pay claims from other employees (not just Sheltered Housing staff) who work for the Council but do not receive rent free accommodation – indeed, Unison have alerted us to this.

6.3.7 The question of age discrimination raised by Unison is irrelevant.

7.0 Summary

- 7.1 Preliminary consultation with Sheltered Housing staff was undertaken between October 2010 and December 2011 in order to obtain ideas and suggestions for service improvement. Mechanisms included 3 staff away days. (Sheltered Housing managers liaised with Helpline managers from July to Dec 2011.)
- 7.2 Formal consultation with Sheltered Housing & Helpline staff and Unison & GMB on our original proposal commenced in January 2012 and closed in March 2012.
- 7.3 Following feedback on the original proposal we amended the proposal and entered a further period of formal consultation from 4th to 18th July with Sheltered Housing & Helpline staff and Unison & GMB.
- 7.4 A majority of the feedback received has been submitted by the 5 resident staff who are concerned about the effect of the changes on their terms and conditions and share the concerns of tenants as described below:

- The potential loss to tenants of their designated Warden.

We have explained that, depending on whether existing staff fill the new roles, most tenants would continue to see their existing Warden, either in their capacity of Scheme Coordinator or Support Coordinator and that in addition, tenants would also be able to see other members of staff if they choose to. The Supporting People Older People's sub group has also confirmed that some tenants who may feel unhappy with the current service find it difficult to express themselves.

Whilst each scheme may not have a designated individual warden, individual tenants would still have access to a designated scheme co-ordinator and also access to a support co-ordinator who is best placed to support their individual needs. This should provide a more enhanced flexible service.

- Reduced staff presence at each scheme.

There will actually be an increase in frontline staffing hours. Currently, because Supporting People funding is insufficient, we typically provide 553 frontline hours per week (office hours, Monday to Friday). Under the proposed structure this will increase to 648 hours – the equivalent of more than 2.5 full time posts.

- Our ability to identify and meet the needs of the most vulnerable / suddenly vulnerable.

New Support Delivery mechanisms introduced in 2011 are aimed at identifying and meeting the support needs of tenants. These mechanisms, along with each tenant's individual support needs, will be reviewed prior to any changes being implemented.

- Access to the service for tenants who speak a language other than English.

Access to staff who speak a language other than English will be improved because Support Coordinators will float across the schemes. We will also ensure that all tenants are able to telephone the office at Watkins House.

- 7.5 We have endeavoured to address these concerns and reassure tenants and staff. However, it is perhaps inevitable that some will continue to be anxious about any changes to the service and we are mindful of this.
- 7.6 There will be a transitional period of 3 months, during which the new structure would be phased in and individual support needs reviewed; a 12 month Review Period to enable us to review and improve operational arrangements; Establishment of service improvement working group involving tenants and staff to seek regular engagement with service users.
- 7.7 Resident Wardens have been offered compensation on the basis they agree to a change to their terms and conditions in relation to rent free service tenancies and on call payments. Instead of service tenancies, the former resident wardens will be offered a non-secure tenancy. Negotiations will continue should this proposal be approved.