

**REPORT FOR: TENANTS',
LEASEHOLDERS' &
RESIDENTS'
CONSULTATIVE FORUM**

Date of Meeting: 10 May 2012

Subject: **INFORMATION REPORT –**
Dave Roberts (interim Housing Finance
Business Partner) – outline of role and draft
work plan 2012-13

Responsible Officer: Lynne Pennington, Divisional Director of
Housing Services

Exempt: No

Enclosures: Appendix 1 – Draft Housing Business Plan
outline

Section 1 – Summary

The purpose of this report is to introduce Dave Roberts, who has been appointed as our interim Housing Finance Business Partner for the next year, and to outline his role and draft work plan over the coming year.

FOR INFORMATION

Section 2 – Report

Introduction

1. Dave Roberts has recently commenced work as Housing's new interim Housing Finance Business Partner, reporting to the Divisional Director of Housing.
2. For information purposes, Dave has been working as a Local Authority Housing Finance Consultant since 1999, and since that time he has worked for HACAS, HACAS Chapman Hendy, Tribal and most recently Sector. Prior to becoming a consultant, Dave worked in Local Government for 12 years, the last 8 of which included responsibility for Housing Finance.
3. Dave has worked with Harrow Council in previous years, providing consultancy services and advice in respect of housing finance and business planning.

4.0 Outline role

- 4.1. The key aspects of Dave's role have been agreed as set out below, with the over-arching part of his role being to develop a 30-year Business Plan for Housing. This document will define the services that will be delivered to tenants and residents over the coming years, how those services will be delivered, and how they will be financed.
- 4.2. The Housing Business Plan will comprise both Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Housing General Fund (HGF) elements, but for the purposes of financial modelling these will need to be kept separate due to the different funding and regulatory regimes. These separate elements will, however, be brought together to generate the overall Housing Business Plan.
- 4.3. It is expected that Tenants, Leaseholders and other stakeholders will play a key role in the generation of the initial Housing Business Plan, and in its continued monitoring and development over time.
- 4.4. The HRA element of the business plan will be based on the position following the introduction of self financing, and in producing this Dave will necessarily work closely with the Council's Housing Finance team, as well as the Director and the key members of her team.
- 4.5. As the TLRCF will be aware, HRA self financing is expected to deliver significant savings to the HRA over the next 30 years, and part of Dave's work will involve producing models to determine the extent of the savings likely to arise as result of this, and options for how these savings could be applied.
- 4.6. The outcomes of the Housing Changes Review will impact on both the HRA and HGF business plans, in terms of service delivery, relationships

with customers, increased levels of tenant and resident involvement in housing, and homelessness and the supply of affordable housing. Dave will be working with each of the members of the senior team to help quantify the costs of any new initiatives and/or changes to existing delivery mechanisms, to help ensure that services are providing value for money going forward, to maximise income opportunities within the bounds of affordability, and to advise on the financial aspects of the provision of new affordable housing, including mechanisms for possible funding via HRA revenue streams.

5.0 Draft Work Plan

5.1. A more detailed work plan, including links to the overall Housing Changes plan and budget timetable is currently in production. Given that Dave did not commence work until 2nd April, and has only now met all of the key members of the housing senior team, it has not been possible to complete this in time for this meeting of the TLRCF. Set out below, however, is a brief outline of work intended to be undertaken over the next few months, and which will feed into subsequent meetings of this Forum.

- Draft Rent Strategy – intended for **July** Cabinet – this will highlight some options for rents over the coming years. The intention would be to identify possible ways to maximise rental income whilst still retaining affordability, and would be in respect of both existing properties and any new-build
- Draft Garage and Facility charges report – intended for **July** Cabinet – this would be intended to start this year's debate around appropriate levels of charges for garages and facilities.
- First draft outline business plan - intended for **July** Cabinet – this will comprise the framework for the Business Plan document, with key sections highlighted.
- Further drafts of the business plan will go to subsequent meetings in September and December to ensure that links with the Council's budget-setting timescales are retained.
- To work with the VFM sub-group to determine its future role in the light of Co-Regulation and the increasing role of tenants in scrutinising budgets and the Housing Business Plan.
- To support the Tenants' Scrutiny Panel in respect of financial matters relating to service review, including raising financial awareness where appropriate and providing training in aspects of housing finance.

5.2. This is a condensed version of some the work that will be undertaken over the coming months, and is intended to give you a flavour of the role that Dave has been employed to fulfil and the work that he will be undertaking. A more detailed plan is currently being produced and should be available within the next two weeks, subject to approval.

5.3. Dave is looking forward to working with Tenants, Members, Leaseholders, other residents and the staff of LB Harrow to help develop the Housing Business Plan and to making a contribution towards the Council achieving its Housing Ambitions.

Section 3 – Further Information

6. All relevant information is contained within the report.

Section 4 – Financial Implications

7. Financial matters are integral to the report.

Section 5 – Corporate Priorities

8. The content in this report informs tenants, leaseholders and residents of the role of the new Housing Finance Business Partner and gives a flavour of the type of work he will be engaged in over the next few months and supports the corporate priority of 'united and involved communities' by engaging more effectively with residents.

Name: Roger Hampson	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 25/04/12		

Section 6 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Dave Roberts, Housing Finance Business Partner
Direct 0208 420 9678

Background Papers:
None

**London Borough of Harrow
Housing Business Plan
2012-2042**

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