

DRAFT SAVINGS PROPOSAL

London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-24

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|-------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|
| Proposal Title: | Restructure of Directorate Management Systems (DMS) & Technical Support Team (TST) | | |
| Reference: | SAV / PLA 010 / 21-22 | Savings Type: | Service transformation |
| Directorate: | Place | Savings Service Area: | Planning and development services |
| Directorate Service: | Planning & Building Control | Strategic Priority Outcome: | 6. People live in good quality and affordable homes and neighbourhoods |
| Lead Officer and Post: | Jennifer Peters, Divisional Director, Planning and Building Control | Lead Member and Portfolio: | Cllr Eve McQuillan & Cllr Mufeedah Bustin, Cabinet Member for Planning and Social Inclusion |

| Financial Impact: | Current Budget 2020-21 | Savings/Income 2021-22 | Savings/Income 2022-23 | Savings/Income 2023-24 | Total Savings/Income |
|-------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Budget (£000) | TBC | (328) | - | - | (328) |

| Staffing Impact (if applicable): | Current 2020-21 | FTE Reductions 2021-22 | FTE Reductions 2022-23 | FTE Reductions 2023-24 | Total FTE Reductions |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Employees (FTE) or state N/A | TBC | (1) | - | - | (1) |

Proposal Summary:

The Directorate Management Systems (DMS) & Technical Support Team (TST) process business planning and building control activity and guiding applications through our processes, for example administering operational functions when readying homes and other properties to be occupied such as Local Land Charge (LLC) searches and Street Naming & Numbering (SN&N).

In reviewing DMS there is an opportunity to introduce closer working with TST as they have closely related aspects of process.

Further opportunities have also emerged from improvements made through investment in digitising key processes in the wider P&BC Division over the last 18 months. For example, the processing of a planning application is now fully digital. No paper files are used, or paper printed off. Less administration and speedier processes.

The restructure proposal presents a new service which retains its statutory functions and offers the support needed to the whole Division, establishing new working structures that should also enable the Division to accommodate and compete for business internally and externally in the future. It begins to set in place structures that should enable us to adapt quickly, retain and accelerate performance in an environment where new national systems for planning and building control are being devised.

The proposal would result in x1 net FTE reduction. However, a total of 23 posts will be deleted with 25 posts needing a new job description so the proposal is a substantial recasting of two service areas.

Revised Provision:

The new **Divisional Support Service** will remain integrated with the Planning & Building Control division as its services are vital to underpin the wider divisional offer but the roles of most of the staff will have changed and expanded with many consequently having new responsibilities. The service will continue to offer the same functions to its users which range from residents to the professional planning and building control and construction industry.

- The proposal will also establish a new *Commercial & Digital Innovation Unit* building on the existing staff expertise in this area to work with ICT and other services to co-ordinate and deliver work across the division and with partners such as the GLA and other Councils to test and potentially introduce Artificial Intelligence (AI) robotics to the assessment of very straightforward planning and other processes. This Unit would also offer some capacity to lead the set up and delivery of processes to commercialise our offer.

Risk and Mitigations:

Key Risks:

- Co-vid and the income base for funding

It is currently difficult to establish a pattern which can help with projecting the financial impact, if at all, of co-vid on the various income streams that underpin this proposal (from planning, building control, local land charges and street naming and numbering). This proposal places some further pressure, considered manageable in a business as usual environment, on these income streams. Any specific amount of shortfall is unknown at this time and may not transpire. It is not considered likely that the overall project would not then be deliverable but clearly with significant calls on income at this time it is a potential risk.

Mitigation

Close financial management at service, divisional and corporate level will continue to monitor carefully these income sources and track service income. Planning, SN&N and LLC are currently monopoly service providers, but BC is operating in a trading environment and so its income is open to competition and more risky. An increase in economic health and construction activity though will most likely feed through to all of these income streams quickly and with multiple income streams it will enable some adjustment to be made between them. If overall income levels are significantly threatened a suite of measures would be proportionately adopted from spending and recruitment freezes to further staff reductions.

Resources and Implementation:

Implementation would be led from within the service. No resources are needed to build up the proposal, however the process will rely on strong support at key times in the process from Human Resources. No feasibility work is needed and the proposal could be delivered following the corporate consultation document requirements by the end of March 2021 in line with adoption for 2021-22.

SAVINGS PROPOSAL – BUDGET EQUALITY ANALYSIS SCREENING TOOL

| Trigger Questions | Yes / No | If Yes – please provide a brief summary of how this impacts on each protected characteristic as identified in the Equalities Act 2010. This will need to be expanded in a full Equality Analysis at full Business Case stage. |
|---|----------|---|
| Does the change reduce resources available to address inequality? | No | |
| Does the change reduce resources available to support vulnerable residents? | No | |
| Does the change involve direct impact on front line services? | No | |
| Changes to a Service | | |
| Does the change alter who is eligible for the service? | No | |
| Does the change alter access to the service? | No | |
| Changes to Staffing | | |
| Does the change involve a reduction in staff? | Yes | Reduction of 1 FTE |
| Does the change involve a redesign of the roles of staff? | Yes | The proposal involves a restructure some posts will be deleted, and other job roles redesigned. |

| Summary: | |
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| To be completed at the end of completing the Screening Tool. | |
| Based on the Screening Tool, will a full EA be required? | Yes |

| Additional Information and Comments: |
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