

Neighbourhood Services & Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission Report

Date of Scrutiny Commission: 3rd September 2013

Community Services Organisational Review

Assistant City Mayor, Councillor Sarah Russell

Lead director: Liz Blyth

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All wards
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- Report version number: 1

1. Summary

This report sets out the business case for change within the Community Services Section to reflect the changing requirements of the service in line with budget pressures and other developments.

2. Recommendations

The Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission is asked to note the report and provide any comment on the information provided.

3. Background:

The Community Services Section consists of a network of 29 Community Facilities that provide a range of services and activities to meet the needs of local residents and communities. The process of managing and developing these services will empower citizens, provide support and facilitate the development of local groups.

The proposed change reflects:

- The need to establish a changed service structure which reflects the Council's Transforming Neighbourhood Services Project with the emphasis on neighbourhood development co-ordination.
- The need for the service to achieve savings targets agreed in February 2012 within Leicester City Council's budget strategy. The changes planned in this business case will deliver savings of £195,000 p.a. from 2014/15.
- The need to ensure a streamlined and efficient approach to the operation of the network of community centres across the city.
- The intention to realign the management posts within the Service to reflect the six identified areas throughout the City.
- The need for staff to work to job descriptions which are reflective of the service required by the local community and partners.

The proposed changes focus upon:

- Creating a focus on community outcomes
- Empowerment of local, residents, communities and Council employees.

- Building upon the successes of the Saffron and New Parks Neighbourhood Co-ordination Models.
- Maximising efficiency savings across the Council whilst also recognising an opportunity to provide support and build resilience into local neighbourhoods and communities at a time of continuing public sector cuts.
- Providing the community with a single point of access and engagement with the Council
- Action for change being accomplished collectively through effective sharing of information with our partners
- Capacity building, recruitment of and support to community volunteers and the development of innovative approaches to meeting community needs
- Recognition that “one size fits all” model would not be appropriate.

The Transforming Neighbourhood Services Project will change the way front of house services are provided locally through a more joined up approach with Libraries, Environmental Services, Adult Skills and Learning, Customer Services and Housing Services in particular. Other Services and organisations will be involved in varying degrees dependant on the locality in the way that the customer is provided with the service they need.

There is on-going project work to develop seamless service provision from a range of Council providers and this includes the piloting of housing services to residents from the Eyres Monsell Community Centre as well as further joint working with Libraries at the Brite; St.Matthews: Southfields and Fosse Centres.

Building on the existing arrangements in Saffron, New Parks and Braunstone the focus is on changing the Community Services Section from what is currently the management and provision of serviced space, to working outwardly from community centres and becoming a service which leads on Neighbourhood Development. This will be achieved by creating five new management roles of Neighbourhood Development Manager, whose role would incorporate the management of community centres but also, in a far more pro-active way than is currently possible, concentrating on community development and engagement working in partnership with other Council services and external partners.

Some of the successes for the existing arrangements are outlined as follows:

Saffron:

- Establishment of a Board comprising of local residents with public services and voluntary organisations to develop and action a local delivery plan to improve the outcomes of local people.
- Organise Community Events and the Christmas Event 2012 attracted over 1200 local residents, many of whom had not been to a local event.
- Queen’s Jubilee Award winners for their work for the community.
- Developed and delivered a Schools Attendance Project in conjunction with the local schools to improve the attendance of children in the area.
- Established a food bank to support families in need.

New Parks

- Establishment of a Community Panel comprising of local residents with public

services and voluntary organisations to develop and action a local delivery plan to improve the outcomes of local people.

- Developed a range of projects with the involvement of local residents including an allotment project called “Plot 2 Pot” which also included people with learning disabilities; a lunch club run by local residents for vulnerable people in the area; and cooking technique sessions.
- Established a local Volunteer of the Year celebration
- Partnership working with the Ward Councillors and community organisations to organise regular events and activities throughout the year.
- Established local people’s network called “Local Eyes” to communicate information to local residents on a weekly basis.

Braunstone

- Establishment of a Board comprising of local residents to develop and action a local delivery plan to improve the outcomes of local people.
- Established local people’s network to communicate information to local residents on a weekly basis and regular community publication celebrating the community successes called Braunstone Alert.
- Supported new and existing community groups to develop and prosper.

This Review outlines the drive for efficiencies in other parts of the Service budget, which will create appropriate development roles and deliver a lean service suitable to meet the needs of each area it is intended for. However to assist in the understanding and development of the support to local communities a number of new posts has been devised that report to the Neighbourhood Development Manager.

The fundamental change is the focus from the community centres to the Neighbourhood Development concept grouped around six areas within the city boundary. The engagement and positive involvement of local residents to shape their neighbourhoods is a key element of the proposal and the skills of staff to deliver this are outlined in the new posts.

The community facilities need to operate differently moving from the existing “one size fits all” approach with Facility Managers and Community Services Officers to a more targeted neighbourhood approach. This includes staff having the ability to work with other Council services which operate in each area. The new posts also have much clearer and more focussed work tasks which link into the Transforming Neighbourhood Services Project.

Planned/Expected Outcomes:

- There will be six defined areas of the city to cover an allocated area (the central area/Castle Ward will be allocated to one NDM) each reporting to the Head of Community Services. The responsible officer for the Fosse Centre will be responsible for Community Centres in the area as outlined above and will report to the Neighbourhood Development Manager (North-West). Although the building is in the Fosse ward there will need to be reference to the Neighbourhood Development Manager (West) and there are cross boundary synergies with New Parks and Beaumont Leys.

- The focus will be on neighbourhood development and community empowerment for local residents based upon the success of the Saffron and New Parks Neighbourhood Coordination initiative to other parts of the city.
- The Management Team will bring key skills to meet and support the Council's Transforming Neighbourhood Services Project. The current initiatives being developed at specific centres will inform the future local service delivery to local residents to access more information and support outside of normal office hours therefore enhancing the service offer to meet the needs of a modern society.
- The redesign of the job description with the emphasis on the community engagement model. This will support proactive partnering arrangements with local active residents to improve their neighbourhoods through activities and events within local community facilities.
- There will be a clear community engagement role for specific staff including support to communities through a recognised volunteering scheme and joint work with other Council Services and other public sector organisations. This element will provide a range of staffing opportunities for the premises support function to a range of community facilities.
- Strong relationships will be built with Library Services, Housing Services, Adult Skills and Learning, Customer Service staff to help identify and meet the needs of local people in an effective manner. Other relationships with internal Council Services and external partners, in particular the Police and the Health Service will be developed on the basis of existing arrangements to enhance the services and activities delivered to local residents.
- The outcomes of the Review will inform the development and objectives of the Transforming Neighbourhood Services Project.

Following a consultation period with the employees affected by the Review and Trade Union Representatives the staffing proposals have been agreed.

The six areas of the city have been identified as outlined in appendix 1.

As previously stated the central area/Castle Ward will be aligned to the South area and the staffing structures are outlined in appendix 2.

It is proposed that the existing Management posts within the Community Services structure be deleted and five Neighbourhood Development Managers will be created; These post holders would have a cross cutting responsibility working with Local Ward Councillors to develop and implement neighbourhood plans based on the identified priorities of local residents and also have a responsibility for the Community Centres within their geographical areas. In addition and working with colleagues from other Divisions and external partners they would have a key role in supporting a joined up approach within neighbourhoods to the delivery of services including housing; environmental services; libraries; adult skills and learning; and community services in the broader sense.

The post of Community Engagement Officer will be introduced to support the Neighbourhood Development Manager in an area to engage with individuals and groups to develop neighbourhoods through a range of interventions including establishing new groups to provide activities in community centres. The emphasis for the Service is the "Getting Involved" initiative which outlines the different methods local residents can be involved as a group leader of a community activity; community volunteer including key holding; and the operations of a community facility through governance arrangements. The Officer will also provide support to groups and organisations to become self-sustainable and vital and assist in funding applications to successful conclusions.

Community engagement and empowerment is at the heart of the new arrangements for the Section building on existing practice especially around Neighbourhood Boards, Community Panels and Community Associations. The development of partnering arrangements and protocols for the community will be essential elements of the work of Neighbourhood Development Managers with the emphasis on specific skills to achieve desired outcomes. The notion of a flexible approach to the local communities across the city will be crucial to negotiate and deliver timely services and activities. Individual resident engagement and involvement will be an important factor and the support given by the workforce will be instrumental in the success of the new arrangements. It has been acknowledged that community volunteers have been a vital part of local community life concentrated around community centres.

A Volunteering Scheme has been developed within Community Services and the volunteering roles played have been recognised formally and in some cases have led to the securing of permanent employment. It is also recognised that supporting volunteers is initially very intensive through training and induction sessions. The Community Engagement Officer will be responsible for the supervision and development of designated volunteers to ensure the overall volunteering scheme is viable and sustainable. Volunteers will have the opportunity to experience a range of tasks including leading groups, supporting community events and key holding arrangements at designated sites.

The community associations and management groups have played an important part in shaping the neighbourhoods and communities over many years in various ways. The introduction of partnering agreements has enabled the community associations and more recently management groups to have a more formal framework to engage with the Council. This is a continuation of the Getting Involved initiative and this will be rolled out to other areas of the city.

The establishment of a Community Centres Operations Officer will be responsible for large and medium buildings in the designated area to ensure that the centre is safe and welcoming with excellent customer service, in house support to the groups and organisations that operated from the site; meet the health and safety requirement and performance targets set. In large buildings there will be Community Centre Operations Officer and the posts of Operations Development Technician and Community Services Officers whose main duties would be the day to day function of running the building. A Community Services Officer will be assigned to medium sized buildings to assist the operations of the centre.

The creation of an Operations Development Officer and three Operations Development Technicians will have a city wide brief for the small buildings and will also act as relief to operational matters as they arise. The role of the Technician will be to operate the Access Control Scheme by inducting the key holder in the operation of the Scheme; the safe use of the building; and provide a Premise Management function.

The Community Services currently operates three sports facilities with sports halls at St. Matthews and Southfields Sports Hall and a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) at the Braunstone Grove. It is proposed to introduce a Sports Activity Co-ordinator post for the sites at the Braunstone MUGA and St. Matthews Centre to develop a programme of sports activities. There would be the provision of sports coaches to be used to deliver the different sports as appropriate for the environment. Community Services will continue to operate the Southfields Sports Hall in the short term however it is proposed that the sports hall is transferred to the Sports Services Section in the medium term.

There will be a central support team whose functions include commercial development; resource development; and service improvement.

The staffing proposals consists of the following number of posts:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Neighbourhood Development Manager | 5 full time equivalents |
| Community Engagement Officer | 11 full time equivalents |
| Sports Activity Coordinator | 2 full time equivalents |
| Community Centre Operations Officer | 4 full time equivalents |
| Community Services Officer | 27 full time equivalents |
| Operations Development Officer | 1 full time equivalents |
| Operations Development Technician | 7 full time equivalents |
| Commercial Development Officer | 1 full time equivalents |
| Resource Development Officer | 1 full time equivalents |
| Service Improvement Officer | 1 full time equivalents |

The proposed 27 fte of Community Services Officers equates to 999 hours per week and the four Operations Development Technicians assigned to the Centre Operations Officers equates to 148 hours giving a total of 1147 hours per week across the City.

The post filling exercise will be carried out through September and October with a full implementation in November 2013.

4. Details of Scrutiny

Reported to Scrutiny Commission meeting on 3rd September 2013

5. Financial, legal and other implications

5.1 Financial implications

The savings of £195,000 p.a. to be delivered from 2014/15 by the changes set out in this report would contribute to the savings target for Community Services agreed by the Council in February 2012.

Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, City Development and Neighbourhoods & Corporate resources, ext. 29 7390

5.2 Legal implications

The Council's organisational review process has been followed throughout the Review.

5.3 Equality Impact Assessment

An EIA on the staffing implications has been carried out in accordance with review procedures.

5.4 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

None.

6. Background information and other papers:

None

7. Summary of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Map of City indicating the Local Policing Units

Appendix 2 – New Staffing Structures for the areas across the city

8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

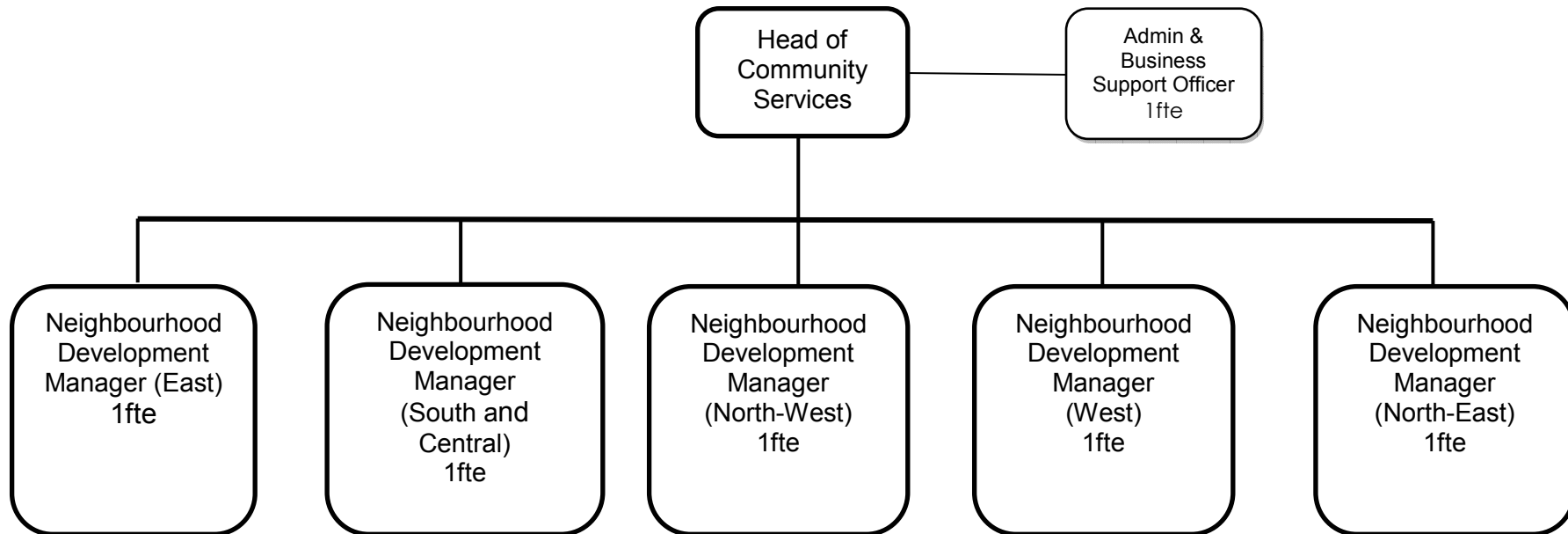
9. Is this a “key decision”?

No

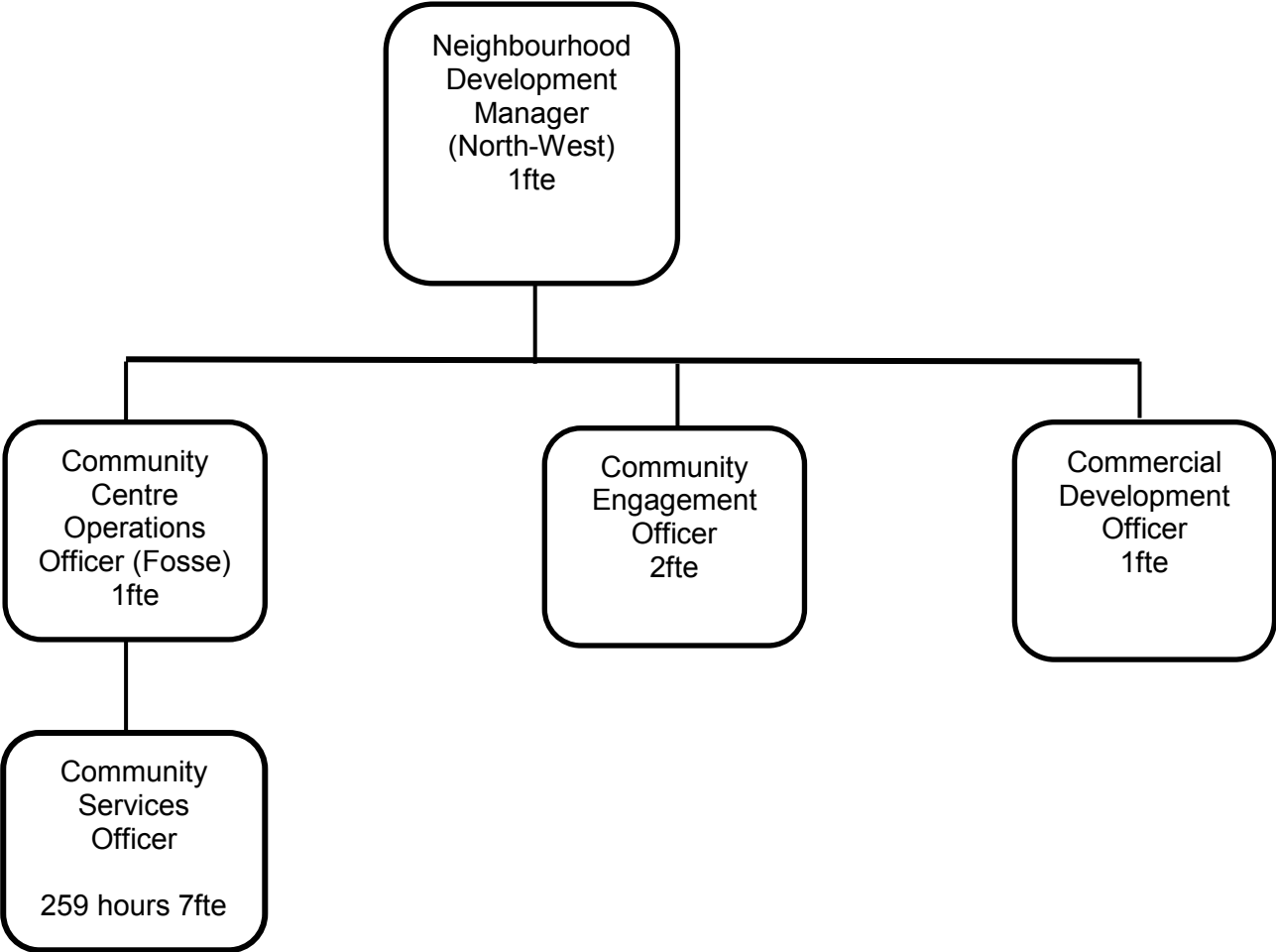
Map of City indicating the 6 areas



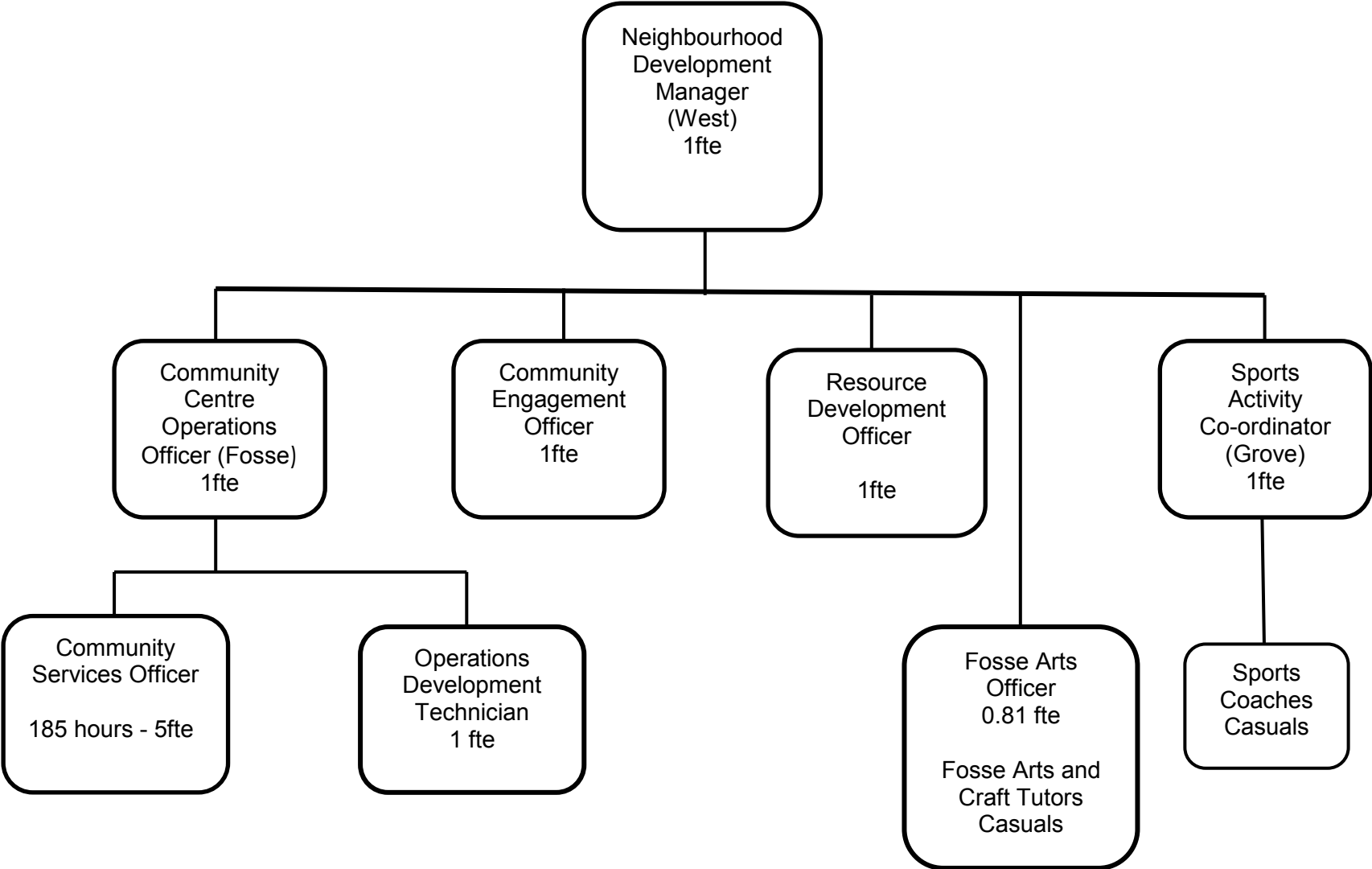
Proposed Staffing Structure



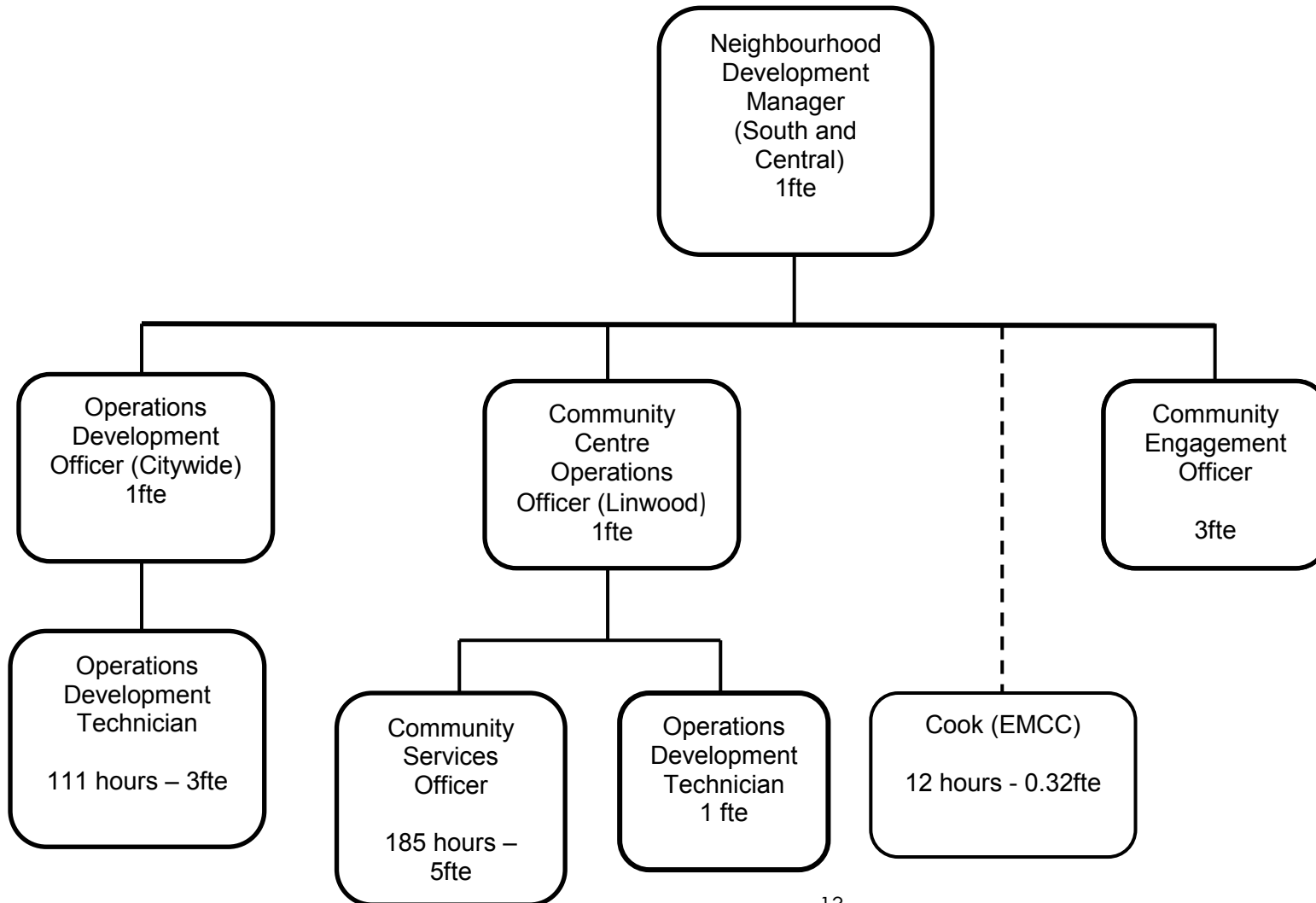
Proposed Structure for NORTH-WEST



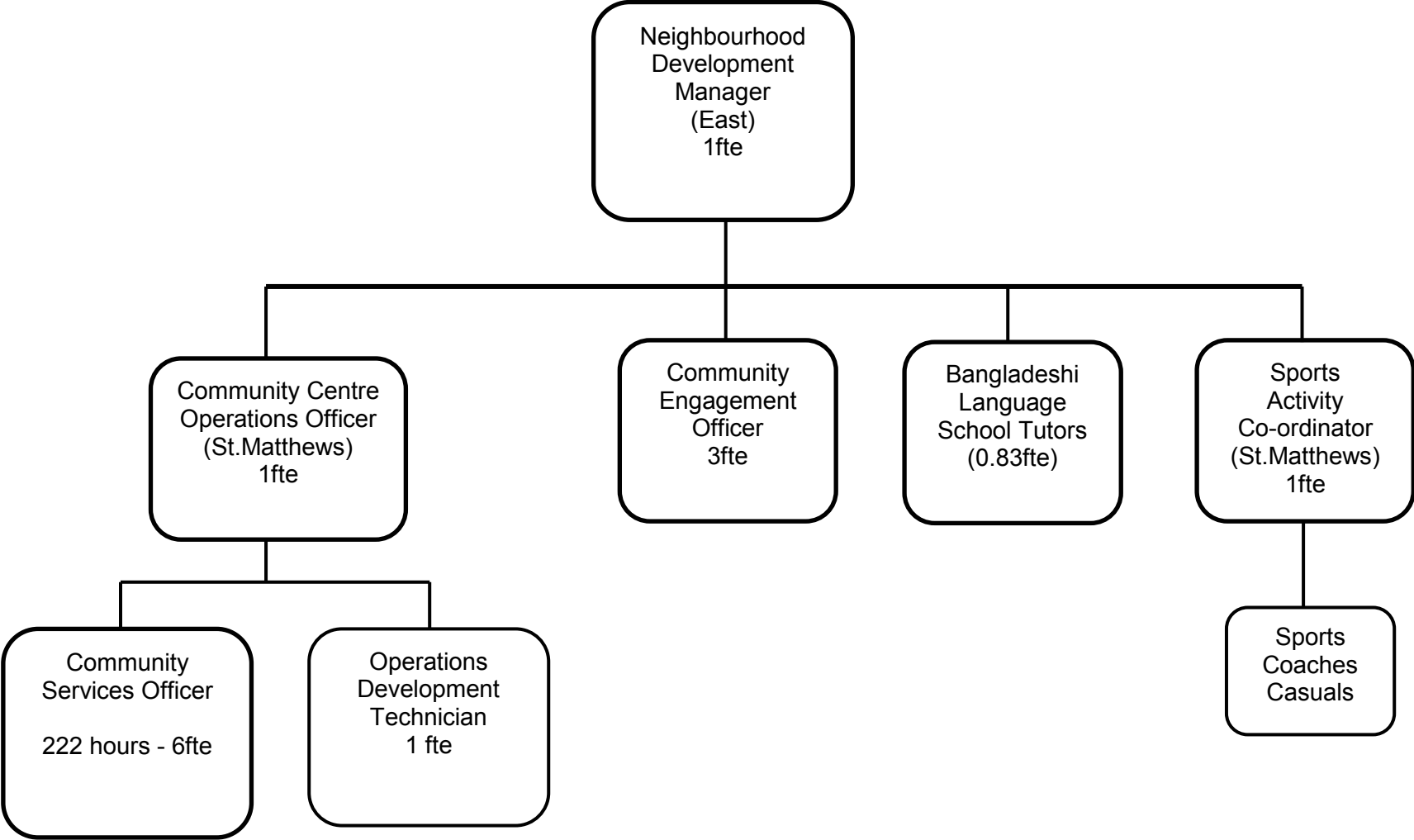
Proposed Structure for WEST



Proposed Structure for SOUTH and CENTRAL



Proposed Structure for EAST



Proposed Structure for NORTH-EAST

