

SUBJECT:	LICENSING SECTION RESTRUCTURE
DIRECTORATE:	SOCIAL CARE, SAFEGUARDING & HEALTH
MEETING: :	CABINET
DATE:	11th January 2017

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To consider the restructuring of the Authority's Licensing section.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 To agree the change in posts as outlined in Appendix 1, namely deletion of existing 'Senior Licensing Officer' (2) and 'Licensing Enforcement Officer' (2) posts, and replacing with 3 'Licensing Officer' posts.

2.2 Head of Public Protection implements the restructure in consultation with affected Officers, Human Resources, SC&H DMT, Finance, etc. as per the Authority's 'Restructure/Service Redesign Protocol'.

3. BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES:

3.1 As part of the budget setting process a modification of the existing Licensing section structure was proposed. The proposed revised structure is provided in Appendix 1. The financial saving was an element of the submitted '2017/18 Budget Proforma' for Public Protection. The proforma was assessed by Social Care & Health DMT, the budget working group (Head of Finance, etc.) and 'People Too', the external advisers, and all were in agreement to take forward this proposal, subject to political approval.

3.2 The Licensing team were consulted on the proposal during a team meeting on 10th November. As per the Authority's policy, their comments have been considered during the two week consultation period from 23rd November to 7th December 2016. These are summarised in 7.1 below.

3.3 The last changes to the Licensing team were introduced as a consequence of the Licencing Act 2003, which was implemented in November 2005. This is now over 11 years ago and therefore an appropriate time to review how the service delivers its' functions. For such a small team, consisting of 5 Officers, the current structure of 3 tiers is deemed excessive, noting the corporate drive towards flatter structures. For simplification, and ease of customer understanding, it is proposed to amalgamate the two existing role types – 'Senior Licensing Officer' and 'Licensing Enforcement Officer' – into one, namely

'Licensing Officer'. The revised 'Licensing Officer' role profile and person specification are provided in Appendix 2. The new post has been job evaluated (on 21st November) and graded at Band G, scale points 29 – 33.

- 3.4 It has been confirmed by Human Resources that the two Senior Licensing Officers will be eligible to 'slot-in' to the revised roles, and the two Licensing Enforcement Officers would be put 'at risk', whereby there's a competitive process between them for the third Licensing Officer post. However, since the team meeting on 10th November, the existing part-time (0.68 FTE) Licensing Enforcement Officer has confirmed he would accept compulsory redundancy. This negates the need for a competitive process for the third post, though an informal interview would be held to establish any skills gaps and support for working at the higher grade position.
- 3.5 The slight drop in capacity, from 4.5 FTE's to 4.0 FTE's, is manageable, with more use of the existing Public Protection support for administrative tasks. It is proposed to assign each Licensing Officer with a geographical area, based on service demand. This will be simpler for colleagues in Community Hubs, Highways and other partners, eg. Gwent Police, to understand, and reflects the area based approach of colleagues in Environmental Health.

4. REASONS:

- 4.1 The 2017/18 budget proforma for Public Protection services identified a recurring minimum annual saving of £6,400, based on existing costs to proposed costs. The initial saving per year would exceed £6,400 while the third post-holder passes through the increments, scale points 29 to 33.
- 4.2 As per comments above in Section 3, this is an appropriate time to modernise the current structure and simplify for the range of Licensing customers – licensees in pubs and clubs, taxi drivers, event organisers, street traders, members of the public, etc.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Annual saving of £6,400, which forms part of the Social Care & Health savings for 2017/18.
- 5.2 The redundancy cost of £8,164 to be absorbed within existing Public Protection budget 2016/17, noting current predicted underspend 16/17 will cover this cost. No additional pension costs are applicable.

6. FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION

- 6.1 The completed 'Future Generations Evaluation' assessment is provided in Appendix 3. The assessment is generally positive, with simplification for members of the public, local businesses and partners. The slight drop in Officer capacity can be mitigated by better use of existing Public Protection support, for the many administrative tasks currently undertaken by the professional, technically trained Officers.

7. CONSULTEES:

7.1 Human resources, Finance, Licensing team, SC&H DMT, SLT, Chair & Vice-chair of Licensing & Regulatory Committee

(no one affected in a Union)

Results of staff consultation – which ran until 7th December 2016 –

- a. Better to separate generalist licensing work from enforcement, eg. if dealing with a premises review, better to have segregation so if acting in ‘responsible authority’ role no conflict of interest when writing the committee report, in a neutral capacity.
- b. There is significant workload, currently shared across 4.5 FTE’s, so the situation will worsen if reducing to 4.0 FTE’s. Paperwork is significant – not just from fixed premises and taxi trade, but also via temporary entertainment events, street trading, etc.
- c. Smaller geographical areas, 2 to 3 across county, would not reduce workloads, and current quality could be compromised.
- d. Opportunity to review number of meetings attended, (could designate who attends more efficiently), and maximising use of Public Protection support team.

Response –

- a. Licensing premises reviews are rare, and the potentially conflicting duties could be split by Principal Licensing Officer acting as the neutral report author, and Licensing Officers acting in the ‘responsible authority’ role.
- b. Noting the significant paperwork involved, transferring much of this work to the existing Support team will ease this burden, releasing capacity to deal with front-line duties.
- c. The drop in Officer capacity is just over 10%, which would be covered by better use of Support. The Support team have the necessary capacity to pick up this element of Licensing work.
- d. Agreed, opportune time to determine which meetings are useful and need attendance, and by whom. As ‘workloads’ main issue raised, suggested (as per FGE evaluation) a review undertaken in 3 months time, to determine whether any problems arising from the change.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

8.1 2017-18 Budget proforma, Public Protection (comprising Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing)

8.2 New Role Profile/Person Specification for Licensing Officer

10. AUTHOR:

David H Jones, Head of Public Protection

11. CONTACT DETAILS: Tel – 01633 64(4101)

Email - davidjones3@monmouthshire.gov.uk