

28 June 2017

Environment and Enforcement Committee

Enforcement in the Council

Report of: *Phil Ruck, Chief Executive*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Council engages in a variety of Enforcement action across its services.
- 1.2 The purpose of this paper is to propose that a Corporate Enforcement Team (CET) be established, in order that the Council be in an improved position to respond when enforcement activity is required.
- 1.3 It should be made clear that Enforcement activity does not relate to the setting of fees or charges. The establishment of fees or charges being the responsibility of the relevant committee, or statutory instrument.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the committee approve the appointment of a General Manager Corporate Enforcement, in line with Council HR policies and procedures. Such process and appointment to be managed by the Chief Executive.**
- 2.2 **That the Chief Executive and the appointed Group Manager Corporate Enforcement bring back to the September Committee meeting, a workplan for Enforcement Activity.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 Brentwood Borough Council is undergoing a transformation, one that needs to ensure that its structure is constantly reviewed and is aligned with service delivery.

- 3.2 The Council has various enforcement tools ranging from informal approaches and advice through to statutory legal notices, prosecutions, evictions, licence suspensions and revocations. To bring these together in a more cohesive and responsive way would improve practices, generate income in some instances and ensure staff are competent and customer satisfaction is achieved.
- 3.3 Currently, the resources to effect enforcement are spread across many service areas and the Council needs to amend this to reduce the impact of the following:
- Silo working - Evidence of service areas working collaboratively can be improved. There needs to be a consistent approach and greater opportunities to share experiences to enhance the collective experience.
 - Competence - Staff not adequately trained or supported therefore providing an unsatisfactory service to complainants, victims, perpetrators, and partners.
 - Reputational Risk – The Council needs to reduce the risk of criticism for the way in which individual issues are handled, mistakes being made, appropriate action not being taken. All of which lead to poor service delivery, complaints going unanswered, risk assessment not being completed.
- 3.4 The 2017/18 Budget, allowed for the additional cost of this post (as an increment to an existing position holder) together with an increase in enforcement income (£20,000).
- 3.5 A Corporate Enforcement Team (CET) would be a valued resource which would not only improve communication between service areas, improve competence, improve efficiency, reduce pressure on service areas, improve outcomes for staff, victims and perpetrators but have the potential to generate income.
- 3.6 A CET would be established through existing staff without the need to change management structures or individual job roles and responsibilities. There is already a structure in place which could facilitate the way in which the CET is tasked. Where possible the team would be located in close proximity, but would recognise other service commitments/obligations of the members of the CET.

3.7 The CET would cover the following key service areas:

- Community Safety
- Housing
- Environmental Health
- Street Inspections (incorporating early presentation and fly-tipping)
- Planning Enforcement
- CCTV.

3.8 All members of the CET would receive appropriate training, which has already commenced in some areas. They would remain under their current management arrangements but would work closer together with other officers in the CET. Where practicable all Enforcement officers would be located within the same area to facilitate learning.

3.9 The benefits of the CET are as follows:

- a more targeted use of resources,
- better information sharing,
- potential to generate income,
- improved customer service,
- better outcomes for victims,
- more support and development of staff,
- a reduction in Crime, Disorder, ASB and other community safety issues,
- effective partnership working with both internal and external partners,
- Improved fear of crime and community tensions
- reduced reputational risk to the Council

3.10 Key to early success will be Community Safety Accreditation – with officers being able to issue FPNs for a range of offences including Community Safety, Housing, EH, Depot, CCTV, and Community Services.

3.11 The General Manager Corporate Enforcement, would report directly to the Chief Executive.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 To do nothing is not an option and the option proposed provides the best outcome for the Council and its residents.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 The organisation needs to adapt its structure to support changes in circumstances and its aims.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 None.

7. References to Corporate Plan

- 7.1 The vision of Transformation includes an action to improve the Council's structural arrangements, leading to faster, more effective decision-making.

8. Implications

Financial Implications

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- 8.1 The financial implications have been set out in the report. The 2017/18 budget has allowed for any additional costs required, and creating a Corporate Enforcement Team will help reach the projected savings of Enforcement income of £20,000 included in the 2017/18 budget.

Legal Implications

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The setting up of a coordinated team of officers managed by a dedicated manager will greatly improve the effectiveness of enforcement activity and the consistency of instructions to the Council's Legal Service when taking enforcement action. Generally, this will enhance the Council's ability to meet and/or police the relevant statutory standards.

9. Background Papers

- 9.1 None

10. Appendices to this report

None

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