

LONDON BOROUGHS OF BRENT AND HARROW
TRADING STANDARDS ADVISORY BOARD – 28th NOVEMBER 2006
REPORT NO. 6/06 FROM the BRENT and HARROW COMMISSIONERS for TRADING
STANDARDS

FOR INFORMATION

TITLE OF REPORT: **TRADING STANDARDS REORGANISATION**

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 This is a joint report from the commissioners for the Trading Standards Service for Brent and Harrow. The report informs Members of a proposal to reorganise the Trading Standards Service and seeks Members comments on the proposal.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Members consider and comment on the proposed reorganisation.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 This reorganisation is being considered largely to address the Gershon report, which recommends all local government authorities produce efficiency savings of 2% per year, and in particular the budget for 2007/8 and beyond. It will also address “single status” issues being introduced right across each council. The reorganisation will produce approximate budgetary savings of £65,369 for the consortium (£36,110 for Brent and £29,259 for Harrow). This is more than the 2% required. The report and conclusions include any necessary redundancy and pensions payments.

4.0 STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The whole of this report concerns the staffing of the Trading Standards Service. The reorganisation affects the management structure of the Service and the customer services team. The principal change is to reduce the middle management team of eight officers to four officers. The enforcement work undertaken from within the management team will be delivered by four new front-line enforcement staff. Within the customer services team the two senior posts are replaced by one and the team are reduced by a further 0.6 full-time equivalent. Any staff not successful in securing posts within the new structure will be subject to Brent Council’s redundancy and redeployment scheme. A maximum of 4.6 full-time equivalent posts are potentially subject to redundancy.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The reorganisation could lead to the possibility of redundancies and hence the statutory requirement to consult with the staff affected and the trade unions.

6.0 DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The restructuring proposals in this report have been subject to screening and officers believe that there are no diversity implications.

7.0 DETAIL

7.1 Approximately 87% of the total budget of the Service comprises the salaries and transport for staff; a further 9.6% of the budget is for support service such as accommodation, telephones, payroll, finance etc. This leaves only 3-4% of the budget for other supplies/services. To provide any required savings, therefore, realistically it is the staffing costs that need to be considered.

7.2 Comparisons between this Service and neighbouring and CIPFA “family” authorities show on face value that the cost of the Service per 1000 population is relatively high. A comparison of outputs however show that the consortium consistently and considerably outperforms other authorities. A study of the management structure within the Service identifies that it appears “top heavy” and should be targeted if staffing costs are to be reduced.

7.3 The pressures facing the Service which have led to these proposals for change are as follows:

- Budget pressures include the need to identify 2% Gershon efficiency savings for year 2007/2008 and the need to meet additional costs relating to HR support, and accommodation.
- The Service is high cost in relation to other similar services provided by London Boroughs, and although outputs are also high the balance between management costs, support costs and the costs of front line service need to be reviewed to ensure continuing value for money.
- Demand is increasing in respect of a number of services including enforcement in relation to the sale of cigarettes, knives and alcohol to children, illegal street trading of pornographic/counterfeit DVD sales, secondhand car sales etc and there is a need to ensure that resources are deployed most effectively.
- There is a need to ensure Brent Council's single status agreement is implemented within Trading Standards.
- There is a need to ensure the Trading Standards input into the Comprehensive Performance Assessment in each Council is maintained at upper threshold level and not adversely affected.
- There is a need to allow proceeds of crime enforcement to be carried out, which will provide substantial income in the future.

7.4 The current staffing structure is attached as appendix 1 to this report. It can be seen that with a total of 34 staff, the middle management team includes eight officers (24%). Although it is recognised that some of these managers have a front-line enforcement role, this ratio is too high. It is therefore appropriate to look at the structure of the management team with a view to a possible reorganisation.

7.5 It is essential that the level of statutory front line service delivery is maintained, indeed further demands are being continually placed on the Service in terms of new legislation and different ways of working that require extra resources. It is also important for the future of the Service that increased income resulting from investigations under the Proceeds of Crime Act is maximised. This area of income, if explored effectively, could, as a minimum, fund at least two enforcement posts within two to three years.

7.6 With the above in mind, it is proposed to reorganise the Service in the following way:

- to evaluate and re-grade the post of Director of Trading Standards,
- to reduce the management team from eight officers to four officers,
- to achieve this by deleting the Deputy Director posts and reducing the number of teams from five to three,
- the three Team Leader posts will be evaluated and re-graded to reflect their new responsibilities,
- the enforcement capacity previously provided from the management team will be provided by four enforcement posts to maintain service delivery at 2006-07 levels,
- to evaluate and re-grade the post of Senior Customer Services Officer to reflect additional duties,
- to reduce the number of Customer Services Officers from 2.6 to two,
- to introduce a Finance and Admin officer post which will also assist the two Customer Services Officers.

7.7 The new proposed structure is attached as appendix 2 to this report. In order to implement this new structure, all the current middle manager posts, with the exception of the post of Director, will need to be deleted. The posts of Director and Senior Customer Services Officer will be job evaluated with new job descriptions. Those staff currently in post as Principal Officers will be ring fenced for interview for the new Team

Leader/ Deputy Director posts. The two Deputy Director postholders will be ring fenced for interview for the newly evaluated Director post and the new Team Leader/Deputy Director posts. The Director will be ring fenced for interview for the newly evaluated Director post. The Customer Services Manager and Senior Customer Services Officer will be ring fenced for interview for the newly evaluated Senior Customer Services Officer post. The Customer Services Officers will be ring fenced for interview for the two Customer Services Officer posts. Any staff in posts which have been deleted and/or not successful at ring fenced interviews will be subject to Brent Council's redundancy and redeployment scheme.

- 7.8 It is anticipated that the reorganisation will produce savings of £65,369 for the consortium; £36,110 for Brent (3.3% savings on required budget for 2007/8) and £29,259 for Harrow (3.4% savings on required budget for 2007/8) per year.
- 7.9 The final structure will ensure the same number of staff on establishment as at present, but four manager posts will be replaced by four frontline staff. Under the present structure, the eight managers in the Middle Management team produce 5600 units of work per year. Under the new structure, the role of the four new managers will be essentially managerial; they will not be tasked with producing front-line enforcement work. Instead four new enforcement officer posts will produce 5600 units of work per year. The restructuring will therefore ensure the number of units of work currently being produced will be maintained and work relating, in particular, to illegal sales to children of alcohol, knives, cigarettes, solvents and spray cans ; illegal street trading in pornographic and counterfeit DVD'S etc; major fraud in selling secondhand cars and rogue traders can be continued. There will be also be scope to ensure extra income awarded under the Proceeds of Crime Act will come to the Service. It is anticipated that this extra income will fund at least two enforcement officer posts after two years. This reorganisation will ensure the Service will be better placed to deal with the demands that are currently placed upon it, will be structured in a more efficient way, forward looking with the ability to generate extra income.
- 7.10 In order to provide the necessary savings required for 2007/8, this reorganisation will need to be implemented by 31st March 2007. The process for staff consultation will need to be completed by mid December at the latest in order to carry out any necessary interviews and notice to be given to any member of staff subject to the Council's redundancy procedure.

8.0 **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

8.1 Details of Documents:-

Trading Standards reorganisation file

Any person wishing to inspect the above should contact Michael Read, Assistant Director, Environment and Culture, Third Floor, Brent House, High Road, Wembley, telephone 020 8937 5302.

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