

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel</b>
2.	<b>Date:</b>	<b>21<sup>st</sup> April 2011</b>
3.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Housing &amp; Neighbourhood Service Reviews and New Structures</b>
4.	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Neighbourhoods and Adult Services</b>

### 5. Summary

Neighbourhood services has been faced with a series of policy and financial drivers to review and re-design services to both realise immediate 2010/11 savings and achieve, thereafter, annual savings. The budgetary reduction required to achieve corporate saving targets for 2011/12 ie £1,085,704 has been achieved.

This report describes the progress made in reviewing the structure and functions of the Housing & Neighbourhood services and also highlights the outcomes where implications for service delivery should be noted.

Across all the reviews referenced in the report there have been two main objectives:

- To develop proposals for services which are fit for purpose to meet a changing agenda, and
- To reduce costs to a more sustainable level.

The report describes the outcome of the reviews and the reconfigured structures.

### 6. Recommendations

**That the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel:**

- **Notes the delivery of the required service reviews and the achievement of budgetary savings**
- **Recognises further service reviews will be required to meet ongoing corporate financial pressures.**

## 7. Proposals and Details

All of services falling under the neighbourhood elements of Housing & Neighbourhood Services are faced with significant policy change, and financial restriction. As part of the development of the corporate service and financial planning process for 2011-12 (and beyond) various services have been subject to service reviews. These have included;

- Neighbourhood Investment (contributing to corporate reviews of Regeneration Services, Asset Management and Financial Services)
- Neighbourhood Partnerships
- Food Safety
- Neighbourhood Wardens

Further to this, additional reviews are currently underway or proposed for Locality Services (and the integration of 2010 Rotherham Ltd), Trading Standards and Enviro-crime enforcement.

In addition services will be impacted by other council wide reviews including Management review, Customer Services and Business Administration, which will impact in 2011/12.

The fundamental purpose of these reviews has been to reduce costs, so that the council can reinvest in higher priority services. As far as possible, the reviews have looked to minimise the impact on our customers and communities. In doing this, we need to ensure that we are more than ever focused on core statutory and priority service delivery.

Because most of our costs relate to staff it is inevitable that savings will impact on staffing levels. The reviews in Neighbourhoods resulted in a reduction of 35 posts. This reduced staffing level has been achieved by loss of vacant posts, voluntary severance and/or successful re-employment within the Council via the Talent Pool or by other employers. All reviews have been carried out in consultation with staff and have been guided by Human Resources policies.

A summary of each of the above reviews, and associated implications are shown in Appendix 1. The current organisational structures are provided at Appendix 2.

## 8. Finance

The service reviews required budgetary reduction targets to be achieved. These have been accomplished and associated Cost Centre budgets reduced. The level of saving achieved is shown as follows;

Service Review	Achieved Saving (2011/12)	Further saving (2012/13)
Neighbourhood Investment	£427,704	
Neighbourhood Partnerships	£360,000	
Food Safety	£75,000	£15,000
Neighbourhood Wardens	£223,000	
Total	£1,085,704	£15,000

Significant additional funding will be required to sustain the Neighbourhood Investment Service at its new level post 2011/12. It is anticipated this will be achieved by top slicing future programme funding.

Reviews underway or planned are required to bring a total of £178,000 revenue budget saving over the next two years and an implementation plan to achieve the savings has been developed, agreed and is being closely monitored in delivery. The savings required are as follows;

Service Review	Required Saving (2011/12)	Further saving (2012/13)
Neighbourhood Enforcement	£108,000	£18,000
Trading Standards	£42,000	£10,000
Total	£150,000	£28,000

## 9. Risks and Uncertainties

Each of the service reviews bring their own risks in implementation. These risks are highlighted in Appendix 1 which lay out the implications of the reviews' outcomes.

## 10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The Services covered by the reviews referred to in the report contribute to the delivery of the Corporate Plan objectives. These being;

- *Making sure no community is left behind*
- *Helping to create safe and healthy communities*
- *Improving the environment*
- *Ensuring care and protection are available for those people who need it most*

In particular the services:-

- *ensure people feel safe where they live, particularly that Anti-Social behaviour and crime is reduced*
- *help people from different backgrounds get on well together*
- *helps people to live in decent affordable homes*
- *Reduces CO2 emissions in housing*
- *Ensures high quality design that prepares for current and future climate change*
- *Invests in the high quality public realm*
- *Ensures the quality of choice of affordable housing continues to improve*
- *Provides opportunities for local people to access employment on capital investment projects*
- *Targets investment into the most deprived neighbourhoods*

In addition to contributing to the Community Strategy's priority themes of to **Rotherham Safe**, **Rotherham Alive** by ensuring a place where people feel good, are healthy and active, **Rotherham Achieving** by helping to improve the quality of life in the most deprived communities and **Rotherham Proud** by increasing the satisfaction in the local area as a place to live and putting pride in the hearts of our communities.

In addressing the **Rotherham Alive** priorities there is direct linkage to delivering the key Public Health strategic action: Tackling Health Inequalities.

## 11. Background Papers and Consultation

The introduction and implementation of the service reviews have been subject to consultation with affected staff and unions.

- Cabinet Report: Tackling in year budget pressures (C47 of 10.8.10)
- Cabinet Report: Service Review of Neighbourhood Partnership Service (148 of 19.1.11)
- Cabinet Report: Service Review – Neighbourhood Wardens (147 of 19.1.11)
- Cabinet Member for Safe & Attractive Neighbourhoods; Neighbourhood Investment Services Staffing Structure (112 of 21.3.11)

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## Service Reviews

- Neighbourhood Investment
- Neighbourhood Partnerships
- Food Safety
- Neighbourhood Wardens

### 1. Neighbourhood Investment

#### a. Service Review

The review of the Service had been set against the background of the financial challenges faced by the Council in particular the loss of external funding and the significant changes taking place within the housing and regeneration environment both nationally and locally

#### b. Financial Implication

The new structure generates a saving of £427,704 from current expenditure, it also achieves a reduction in the reliance of external funding of £505,452. This reduction is vital as we move into a period of less external grant to support staffing costs.

Looking forward into 2012-13 there is no certainty yet about the level of external investment coming into the team. The team will therefore need to identify during the next 12 months an additional income of approximately £300,000. If it is unable to do this, further staff reductions will be inevitable.

#### c. Staffing Implication

Following the transfer of 5 Neighbourhood Investment Team officers into EDS Corporate Asset Management Team, 3 staff in scope of the ongoing Corporate Finance Review, and staff taking voluntary severance and holding vacancies there remains 24 staff, from a previous total of 41, in the establishment.

It is proposed the new structure will contain 20 posts with 1 of these likely to transfer into another team following the integration of Council Housing Management. There are 2 proposed functional areas; Sustainable Communities and Programme Delivery. These changes will result in a net loss of 13 posts.

Recruitment to the new structure commenced on the 10<sup>th</sup> April 2011.

#### d. Associated Risks

The impact of the new service will reduce capacity in regeneration programme delivery. It will be important to focus resources on delivering against agreed priorities. The danger of spreading resources too thinly will be mitigated by having a local investment programme to work to and sharing this with local communities and partners.

The risk of not being able to attract in sufficient external grant funding in future years to support the delivery team is a real one. To mitigate against this more staff resources have been put into identifying new ways of doing business with the private sector and attracting in new funding.

With regards to the reduction in the number of posts, there may be more than two employees affected by these proposals dependant upon the skills mix required for the new structure.

## e. Service Impact

The service review has provided a new operating model proposed which is capable of:

- Managing the completion of key regeneration schemes
- Developing the business case to initiate new ways of delivering regeneration activity that are less reliant on external grant funding
- Maintaining an up to date local investment plan and housing strategy, which has evidence based priorities and objectives
- Maximising the opportunities to deliver high quality affordable housing
- Making sure our public & private sector housing policies are up to date and relevant to local and national housing reform
- At times working within the Sheffield City Region (SCR) and supporting the work of the newly established SCR Housing and regeneration Board
- Operating with the context of new housing organisation that includes the direct management of Council Housing.

It is not planned for substantial changes to all the types of work performed by Neighbourhood Investment Service. But the service is likely to increase the emphasis on policy, strategy and enabling, whilst reducing the resources on programme delivery until new delivery arrangements increase programme activity. The strategic enabling role will become more critical as we enter into a period of delivery without so much grant support.

Principal work activity will include the following areas:

- Affordable Housing
- Developing new Private Sector Housing delivery tools
- Developing new Public Sector Housing delivery tools
- Having a fit for purpose housing strategy and policies to meet local priorities
- Completing existing regeneration schemes
- Developing new public private partnerships to deliver new regeneration schemes
- Ensuring high quality design standards are met
- Local Investment planning utilising housing market intelligence
- Working with elected members, residents, strategic partners and stakeholders to agreed priorities

Having a smaller team will mean critical decisions will need to be taken about what the service can and cannot be expected to deliver. Further careful consideration will need to be given to funding priorities and the use of strategic assets.

## 2. Neighbourhood Partnerships

### a. Service Review

At the Cabinet meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> August 2010 it was agreed that the Neighbourhood Partnership Service should be reviewed. The review was instigated because, whilst the service has a significant impact on a wide range of council priorities, in itself it is a discretionary service. It was also apparent that the service had a significant number of managerial posts relative to its size and that in view of the considerable financial pressures facing the Authority; the current organisational arrangements were felt to be financially unsustainable.

The review of the Service had been set against the background of the financial challenges faced by the Council in particular the loss of external funding and the significant changes taking place within the housing and regeneration environment both nationally and locally

Changes implemented 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011.

b. Financial Implication

Service previously cost £1.348 million. The restructuring of the Neighbourhood Partnership service created a £360,000 saving. Additional savings have been achieved with the ending of the devolved budgets.

c. Staffing Implication

- Reduction from 3 to 1 Neighbourhood Partnership Manager (post temporary until August/September 2011)
- Reduction from 7 to 3 Area Partnership Managers (APMs)

d. Associated Risks

The review pre-supposes that the Neighbourhood Partnership Service (NPS) will, be assimilated within a wider locality based service. This development will be important in ensuring that we can develop effective streamlined processes.

There is a risk that the size of the geographic areas covered by each of the new teams will be too large to make an effective impact. This will need to be carefully monitored and consideration given to any learning when finalising the locality review.

There is a risk that the service will no longer be able to support wider partnership processes as desired by other departments and organisations. SYPF understand this potential and are also keen to streamline coordination activity to make it more effective, however services delivering wider agendas such as those relating to health, children's services and economic development will also need to take account of the reduced capacity of the NPS service.

e. Service Impact

i. Implications to date

- Services are still to be provided in a reshaped/ reduced format.
- The building block for the NPS remains the seven Area Assembly structure and their associated coordinating groups. The new NPS structure, however, now delivers from three teams, each with its own Area Partnership Manager.
- There are still 7 Area Assembly Teams - Each team has 1 Community Support Officer and 1 Community Involvement Officer.
- Each team will continue to deliver their own Area Plans and hold open public meetings and Co-ordinating Groups. As such each Area Assembly continues to have an Elected Member as Chair and as a Vice Chair.
- Due to a reduction in capacity the number of these and other meetings have and will continue to be reduced.
- Neighbourhood Action Groups ( NAGs) have been reduced from one per Area Assembly to one per SNA. This will lead to a reduction in the number of partnership actions being delivered in a reduced number of priority areas

- Some meetings and workloads have been delegated to Community Involvement Officers ( CIOs) – this has led to a reduction in the number of community meetings attended by CIOs.

## ii. Future implications

Subject to the outcome of other reviews and the reintegration of the management of council housing it may be possible to integrate this service within a wider structure, which could reduce the need for the Neighbourhood Partnership Manager Post. Such changes will require APMs to take on additional workloads and strategic leads. The NPS will be required to undertake further prioritisation of workloads.

Potentially the Area Assembly teams will be based in 3 localities- one per SNA. This will have a minor impact on the visibility of the service. Currently only Rotherham South and Rotherham North are located together. However, this will improve line management and allow greater flexibility for cover due to leave/ sickness/ prioritisation of area specific work.

## **3. Food Safety**

### a. Service Review

In this service area, there has been a need to both reduce costs and improve performance. In December 2010, a proposal was developed for the outsourcing of the majority of food hygiene inspections to a private contracting company. It was expected that this action would realise a saving in the region of £75K for the year 2011/12. This saving would be achieved as a result of a 5 FTE reduction in the number of environmental health officer posts within the food, health & safety team.

However, following consultation on the proposal with staff and Trade Unions, an alternative approach was suggested. This will involve the delivery of the food hygiene inspection programme utilising existing staff and implementing an improved performance management framework. The net savings will be the same as the original proposal. This alternative proposal is currently being piloted within the team.

### b. Financial Implication

The saving has been achieved through the loss (through voluntary severance) of 1.0 FTE environmental health officer (saving of £35,557), along with 1.14 FTE vacant environmental health officer posts (saving £39,629). In total, this will generate savings of £75,186.

### c. Staffing Implication

In total, this review has resulted in the loss of 2.14 FTE environmental health officers from the team structure. These losses were achieved without the need for compulsory redundancies.

### d. Associated Risks

Reduction in FTE operational officers will result in a need to reallocate their workload to remaining officers. This increased workload for officers may lead to failure to meet statutory obligations, and / or bring about improvements in hygiene standards within food businesses in Rotherham. This risk will be mitigated by:



- Improved performance management of remaining operational staff
- Inspections allocated and inspected according to risk
- Redirection of resources away from lower risk inspections, to higher risk premises and the introduction of additional enforcement / advice / guidance in relation to lower risk premises.

e. Service Impact

As a result of the review, processes have been put in place within the service to ensure that all food hygiene inspections are undertaken. Whilst this is considered a positive development, it has meant that the resources of the food team have had to be directed towards meeting statutory obligations and addressing issues that have been identified as a corporate priority. Because we need to focus on those things we must do, discretionary areas of work may need to be reduced, or done in different ways.

4. Neighbourhood Wardens

a. Service Review

This is an entirely discretionary service. On the 19<sup>th</sup> February the Cabinet agreed to reduce this service by approximately 30%. This service reduction has been implemented with a selection process underway to reduce the Warden complement from 21 to 14 posts with all 3 supervisor posts also going. However to ensure that there was not an unreasonable management responsibility falling elsewhere, one new professional practice officer post was created.

b. Financial Implication

Prior to the implementation of the review, the service cost £693,431. The restructuring of the Neighbourhood Warden Service achieves a £223,000 saving. The resultant reduced service costing is £470,000.

c. Staffing Implication

The restructuring reduced the service by 9 posts. In addition two Wardens will be transferred and be directly managed by EDS in delivery of Town Centre services. This will help to improve coordinated activity within the town centre.

d. Associated Risks

The impact of the new service re-alignment reduces capacity within frontline service that, whilst not affecting the Council's ability to deliver its statutory services, will be noticeable to local communities and partners in the support and action relating to anti social behaviour and enviro crime within localities.

This review pre-supposes that the Neighbourhood Warden Service will at some future point be assimilated within a wider locality based service. This development will be important in ensuring that we can develop effective streamlined processes.

Reductions in the services' ability to support the range of community meetings previously supported, may result in a reputational risk to the Council which will need to be carefully managed.

e. Service Impact

Neighbourhood Wardens are a part of the response and communication with residents regarding ASB and the quality of their local neighbourhoods. The wardens provide a link for direct reporting and an “on the Street” perspective. In 2010/11 this resulted in 3,855 direct actions being recorded. An indication of outputs brought by the team is listed below.

Fly Tipping identified while on patrols and either removed or referred to Streetpride for collection	725
2010 Estate Management Issues while on patrols	585
Community Engagement activities	499
Responsible Dog Owners scheme vouchers issued while on patrols	360
Defective Street Lighting referrals from patrol observations	268
Dog Fouling in Street – patrol visits following complaints	289
ASB - Nuisance Behaviour interventions	529
Street Litter patrols following complaints	145
Graffiti incident referrals to Streetpride from patrols	199
Rubbish - Domestic Premises	256

The team will still continue to provide the Council’s uniformed visible presence across the borough, but is now most focused on those areas where there is greatest need of environmental and community safety support. Given the identified need and the funding structure underpinning the service this is particularly within the traditional Council estates.

Over recent years there has been a shift towards using wardens for specific functions which would have previously been dealt with by other (more costly) options. For example, the team is the main means of enforcing littering and dog fouling problems, and gain significant environmental management benefits and very positive press coverage from these enforcement actions.

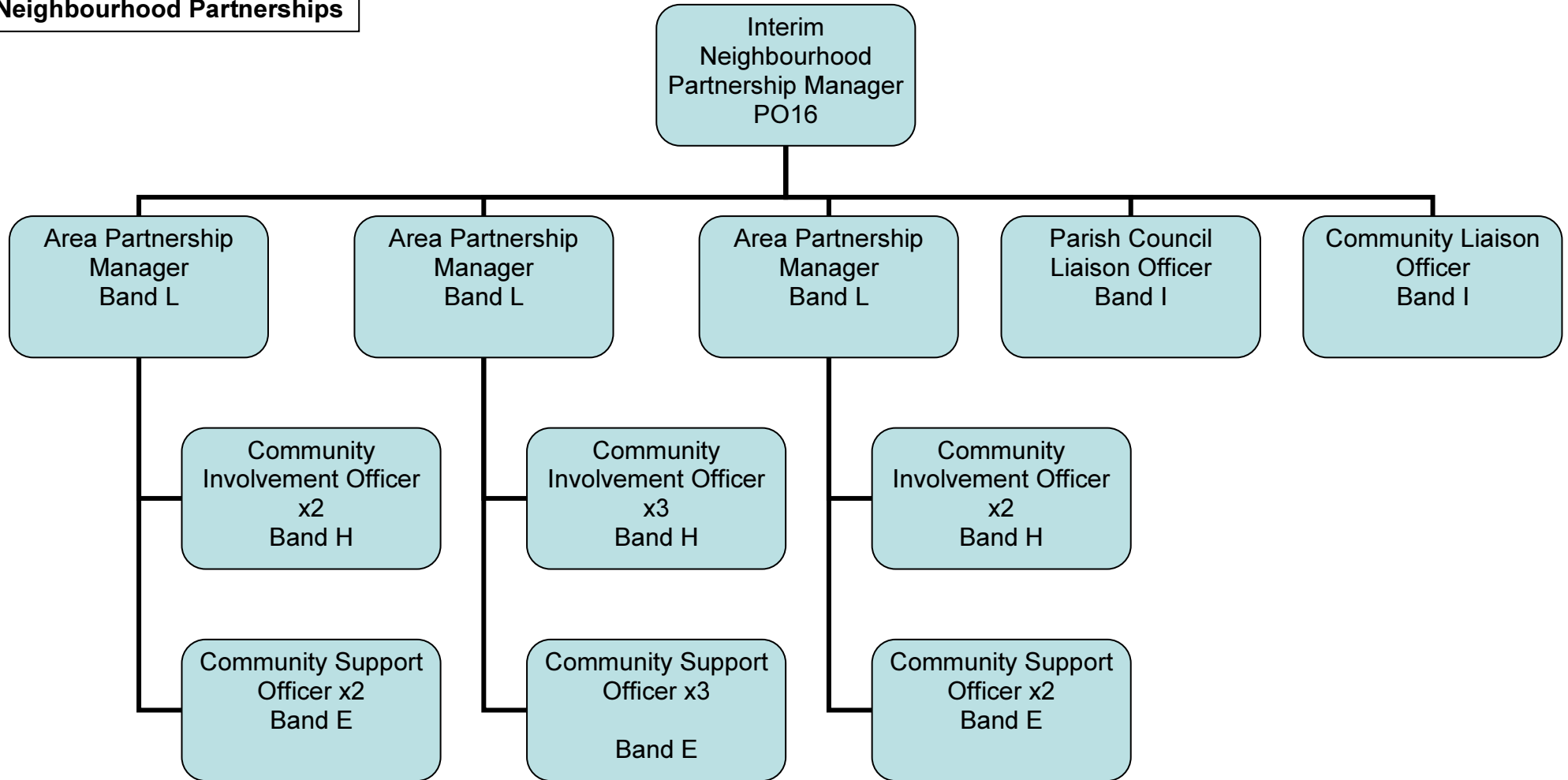
The impact reduces capacity which will be noticeable to local communities and partners. One change that has been introduced is an increased focus on enforcement and especially the issuing of FPNs.

The service often is the seamless and quick solution from a problem being identified eg drug litter to immediate removal leaving a location cleaner and safer. In addition the Wardens also provide critical mass and support to communities and partners in holding people accountable for the actions, this including supervision of regular restorative justice activity with young people.

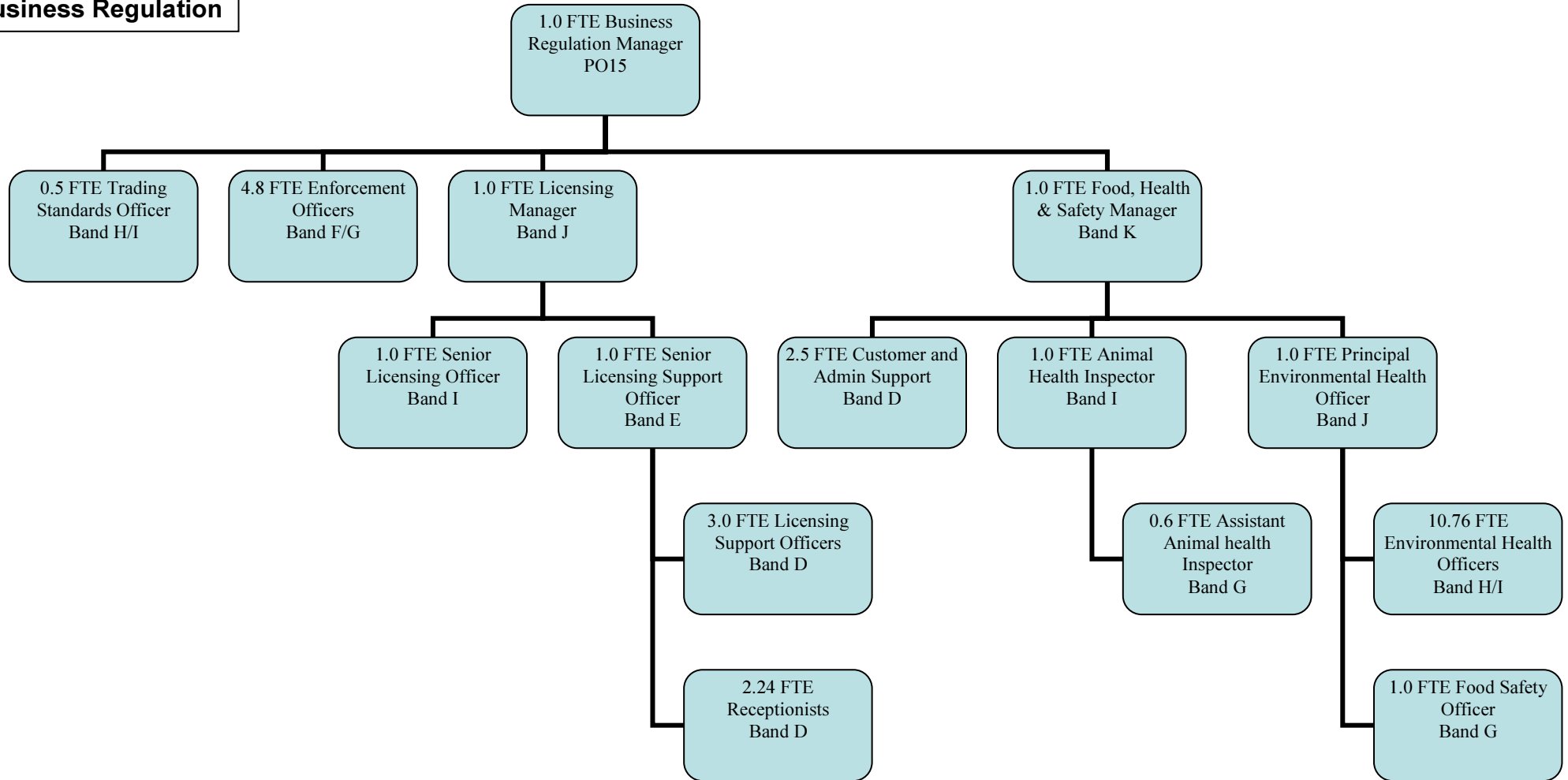
With the reduction in staffing numbers it will be important to prioritise those areas of the borough with the most significant problems. In part this prioritisation will be directed to council estates. But it is intended that Area Coordinating groups will have a role of influence over where patrolling and enforcement activity should be directed.

Again in community safety terms it is also likely to have a significant impact on the borough. It is not clear what capacity SYP would have to absorb the work of the wardens, given the budget reductions that they are facing. It is possible that the early intervention undertaken by wardens seeking to nip problems in the bud will not be replicable by the Force who will need to prioritise resources on the most serious crimes.

**Neighbourhood Partnerships**



# Business Regulation



# Safer Neighbourhoods

