

**ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO CABINET MEMBER FOR  
SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS**

1.	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet Member for Safe and Attractive Neighbourhoods</b>
2.	<b>Date:</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> July 2011</b>
3.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>Service Review – Integration of Community Protection Enviro-crime/Enforcement Services</b>
4.	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Neighbourhoods and Adult Services</b>

## **5. Summary**

Proposals for the Council's budget for 2011/12 were agreed at The Cabinet on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February (minute 169 refers). Within the report to Cabinet it recognised that, to deliver the required efficiencies, while maintaining high service standards, needed the service plans on which the Budget was predicated to be actioned by elected Members and officers.

This report describes actions taken to deliver one of the identified areas of saving required by Neighbourhood and Adult Services, that is; the "Integration of envirocrime/enforcement and other enforcement activities". The required level of saving with the re-alignment of this work activity within Safer Neighbourhoods is £108,000.

The saving has been scheduled over two years (in line with the budget requirements) with;

- a £90,000 full year saving for 2011/12 being achieved and budget accordingly reduced, and
- the further £18,000 saving in 2012/13 being already identified

To deliver the required level of saving a service review relating to the Community Protection Enviro-crime/Enforcement Service has been completed and consultation has taken place in accordance with the prescribed process with staff and unions.

The report describes the outcome of the review, implementation plans and confirmation that required budget saving has been achieved.

Subject to Cabinet Member agreement the implementation of these plans will be integrated with the roll out of reconfigured services as part of the re-integration of Council Housing Management.

## **6. Recommendations**

### **That cabinet Member**

- **Recognises, following consultation, the outcome of the review of the integration of enforcement activities within the Safer Neighbourhoods team, and**
- **Notes the consequent achievement of the efficiency savings for 2011/12 and also for 2012/13 where identified plans for the required revenue budget reductions have been made**

## 7. Proposals and Details

### 7.1 Background

In view of the considerable financial challenges faced by the Council, the Cabinet agreed to a series of organisational reviews, one of these is concerned with Enviro-crime and other Community Protection enforcement activities (see Appendix 1). The Cabinet agreed the proposals which included as one of its requirements a saving of £108,000 against this service re-alignment (Minute C169 of 23<sup>rd</sup> February refers).

The integration of enforcement services has been undertaken not only to achieve the required budgetary reduction, but also to ensure that;

- the service continues to be available to those in our community that are most in need of them
- the skills and knowledge capacity of the enforcement team are maximised
- the service is fit for purpose in the light of current and future anticipated demands

It is widely recognised that the work of Enviro-crime team has been well respected within the council, by the general public and with the local media recognising regularly the success of continued enforcement action. Whilst, however, it is a frontline customer facing service which contributes to many of the priorities of the Council, the functions undertaken are largely discretionary and more than ever we need to focus on core statutory and priority service delivery.

In view of the significant pressures facing the Authority and in order to meet corporate expectations the service needs to reduce its costs. Most of the costs in this service relate to staff. Hence the outcome can only be achieved by reducing the number of posts within the service and by also drawing on the flexibility of other enforcement officers and the Neighbourhood Wardens to maintain local enforcement capacity.

The Anti-social Behaviour Officers within Community Protection Unit were not covered by this review with the function being considered as part of the re-integration of the Council housing management services.

### 7.2 Principles

The service has been reviewed and a new operating model proposed which is capable of:

- Delivering an integrated local enforcement service for environmental health concerns of both communities and individuals
- Ensuring the service is responsive, effective and action focussed. Making it easier to get things done.
- Reducing handovers; giving staff the authority, training support and tools to tackle problems at the first point of contact, and not passing customers between council departments/services.
- Promoting a clear approach to those issues the council has a responsibility for, and the thresholds that will be applied to determine services.
- Becoming a critical element of locality based services.

### 7.3 Proposals

The Enviro-crime team comprises of four Enviro-crime Enforcement Officer posts which form part of a complement of 16 fte Enforcement Officers within the Safer Neighbourhoods' Community Protection Unit. A further 7.6 fte Environmental Health Officers take a lead professional role with respect of these functions too.

The overall enforcement team investigate and instigate actions within a legal framework to resolve issues that are fundamental to neighbourhood & environmental quality public safety, and public health protection. The enforcement part of the service investigates and provides appropriate intervention to around 8,000 service requests a year. It also interfaces directly both with other parts of Community Protection (10,000 service requests) and the wider safer neighbourhood partners. The current functions of the Community Protection Unit are shown in Appendix 1.

Although there has been a shift forward, closer working and movement to the taking of wider duties, operationally the current enforcement functions are discharged by officers in distinct "specialist" teams. The principal work activity of the Enviro-crime enforcement team covers the following areas:

- Fly tipping, littering, fly posting and graffiti
- Local community domestic waste disposal
- Waste storage & removal – business premises
- Duty of Care of Waste carriage and disposal

Over the last business year the Enviro-crime team investigated close to a 1,000 reports of fly tipping, waste storage and other environmentally related anti social behaviour with in addition 130 proactive inspections/operations leading to 690 formal warnings and 84 legal proceedings being taken.

To mitigate impact of this service review on both the customer and local communities, an initial review of management and front line support activity in Safer Neighbourhoods has been undertaken. This has identified that 1.5 fte supervision/service support posts can be reduced and this has already been implemented with the posts being removed from the staffing establishment for 2011/12.

The consequence of this means that, as far as possible, front line enforcement activity has been preserved, with the final implementation resulting in the loss of only one Enforcement Officer post in 2011/12 and a further 0.5 fte post in 2012/13.

All of the above loss of posts are accommodated by retirement, voluntary severance or vacancy management.

To compensate for this reduced number of enforcement officer posts it is proposed, with the roll out of the Locality Review, to widen the breadth of enforcement activity by all the Community Protection enforcement officers (Enforcement Officers and Environmental Health Officers) to bring a more holistic working of the team to cover all enforcement themes.

The proposal will also need greater enforcement focus by the Rotherham Wardens – an area of focus already identified from the outcome of the Neighbourhood Warden review and being implemented by the Warden team. Any positive reductions in this service will therefore have a significant impact on the delivery of environmental enforcement.

During the review and, on consideration of consultation response, it was determined that, to ensure the effectiveness of function, Licensing Enforcement would not be integrated into a holistic enforcement role. The alignment of the licensing enforcement function will form part of the considerations of the management review.

#### 7.4 Next Steps

As detailed above, the proposals are deliverable as the loss of posts are accommodated by the retirement and/or voluntary severance of previous post holders with current vacancy management ensuring no requirement for staff to be placed in the Talent Pool or possibly being made redundant.

The two remaining Enforcement Officers currently involved primarily in enviro-crime enforcement activities have been advised of the service change and, following discussion with their Trade Union representative present, are to make the transition to the more holistic Enforcement Officer role. A training/induction plan is being devised to support the change.

It is anticipated that the overall change for the Community Protection enforcement team will take place in line with the implementation of the findings of the Locality Review.

### 8. **Finance**

The existing Enviro-crime service costs £263,000. The general fund provides £196,666 of this cost with the HRA contributing £49,926 and £16,500 being provided from revenue from prosecutions and legal action.

An overall revenue budget saving of £108,000 is required.

In 2011/12 a £90,000 saving has been achieved by the loss of 2.5 fte posts with an additional £5,100 contribution from the Transport nominal (less Council vehicles are required as a consequence if the service change).

In addition, the Council budget setting requires £18,000 to be met from this review for 2012/13. Financial Services concur that this efficiency target can be achieved by the loss of a 0.5 fte post with a further £6,500 being taken from the equipment and publicity nominals.

An implementation plan to achieve the savings across this and 2012/13 has been developed, agreed and is being closely monitored in delivery.

### 9. **Risks and Uncertainties**

The impact of the new service re-alignment has been achieved with minimal impact on the numbers of enforcement staff, and whilst there is reduction in capacity it is believed that the Council's ability to deliver its statutory services will not be compromised.

The delivery does rely on the flexibility of the current team and will require training and the development of knowledge in new enforcement areas for all staff. This will be achieved by a structured training/induction programme and the use of the Performance and Development framework. Concerns raised within the consultative process regarding the balance of the "specialist" and the greater "generalist" job role of officers will be dependant of greater sharing of knowledge & effective use of the Performance & Development Review process.

## 10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

Enviro-crime enforcement together with other Community Protection based enforcement activity clearly contributes to the Corporate Vision of ensuring;

**“Rotherham is a prosperous place and Rotherham people have choices and opportunities to improve the quality of their lives. Rotherham communities are safe, clean, and green and everyone can enjoy a healthy and active life”**

The service fits within existing strategic priorities in Rotherham. In particular the way we deliver our services directly impact on:

- **Helping to Create Safe and Healthy Communities and;**
- **Improving the Environment.**
- **Making sure no community is left behind**

In particular services are delivered to:-

- *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*
- *support a 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*

The cleanliness of our neighbourhoods remains a priority issue for our communities. The state of the neighbourhood being a key indicator to the vitality and pride of the community. Often such environmental crimes are signals for greater criminal and anti social activity. The Council’s strategy for addressing fly tipping and littering etc is one combining education, responsive cleansing and effective enforcement. The Enviro-crime team has led on latter two of these strategic threads, winning awards and recognition in performance inspections for such educational approaches as the targeted Toxic Campaign and a maintained effective level of enforcement.

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

The services are tailored to deliver not just to the Corporate Plan’s priorities but are focused to work in partnership to make our neighbourhoods and local living environments safer.

## 11. Background Papers and Consultation

The proposals have been subject to consultation with affected staff and unions. The formal one month period of consultation commenced with staff on the 10<sup>th</sup> May. Feedback from the team was assessed and incorporated where appropriate. A listing of issues raised by the team (individually and via a staff meeting) together with a response commentary is shown at Appendix 2.

- Cabinet Report: Tackling in year budget pressures (C69 of 23.2.11)
- Cabinet Report: Service Review – Neighbourhood Wardens (147 of 19.1.11)

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## Community Protection ; Neighbourhood Standards, Quality & Enforcement

### Strategic and operational delivery

- Accumulations of Waste\*
- Air quality & Contaminated Land
- Anti Social Behaviour Enforcement (some activity covered by the review)
- Closed landfill management
- Duty of Care of Waste carriage and disposal\*
- Enviro-crime; education, campaigning and enforcement\*
- Environmental protection\*
- Filthy and Verminous homes\*
- Land use planning assessment\*
- Local Environmental Quality\* ;
  - litter, dog fouling, fly tipping, grafitti, fly posting etc enforcement
- Neighbourhood Wardens (SNT co-located)
- Noise control \*
- Off-road motor vehicle nuisance (some activity covered by the review)
- Pest Control (some activity covered by the review)
- Pollution Control Enforcement\*
- Premises, Taxi etc Licensing enforcement
- Private sector housing enforcement\*
- Statutory nuisance\*
- Stray dog & Dog Warden Service
- Traveller/Gypsy Land Trespass resolution\*

*	Functions affected by the Review
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Feedback Ref. No.	Issue/concern Raised	Response Provided
<p>1. 10/5/11</p>	<p>As your aware the list of areas that we now cover is endless and continues to grow! We are concerned that the breath of knowledge/information that we are required to retain is becoming excessive to the point where no member of staff has specialist knowledge in any area any more. Although the idea of a generic officer may seem appealing as one member of staff 'should' be able to do the work of any other officer in the department I feel that this loss of knowledge/information amongst officers is putting excessive pressure on staff as well as providing the public/businesses etc with a poor service due to potentially being misinformed through lack of knowledge.</p> <p>Is there a reason why we cannot go the other way and specialise officers rather than making everybody generic? I do believe that officers can provide a much better standard and quality of service in this way as they would be fully competent in their area, having confidence in the information/advice that they are providing. The staff we have could possibly be divided up into a small housing team, HMO team, stat nuisance team, permitting team etc. There could also be an option for officers to be rotated into a different area every 12 months or so???</p>	<p>The concerns held do have some merit, however, in advising on the proposals its essential that we go forward to meet some influencing issues. In considering whether we can step up to a wider enforcement function role topics like the ones below spring to mind;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would smaller specialised teams provide the resilience to enable consistent customer service delivery?</li> <li>• Would such teams enable the roll out of locality based working?</li> <li>• Would such teams provide the structure to enable new sub regional working and potential shared services?</li> <li>• Would the efficiency brought by potential multi-factor problems at an address or nearby property?</li> <li>• Would it encourage teams to focus on one issue?</li> <li>• Would customers be passed between the smaller specialist teams?</li> <li>• Would customers actually get a noticeable change in service?</li> <li>• Would customers get potentially multiple contacts?</li> <li>• Would it bring broader work satisfaction across whole of the team?</li> <li>• There is already personal specialist knowledge vested in the team which is sharable but apparently not recognised. Why?</li> <li>• Would it require additional management/supervision support?</li> <li>• Are there areas such as Licensing Enforcement that require focused additional knowledge, more complex legal framework and operational skill mixes which would go beyond the absorbing within the proposals approach?</li> </ul> <p>In considering these, the proposal was swayed to the broader role and especially if that is supported by structured learning &amp; skill development. It should be that individual members of the team have the opportunity (or should have) to develop greater levels of “specialist” knowledge and expertise and this really should underpin advice &amp; leadership on the topic across the wider team. This really is led by the EHO’s professional background and the career progression of Enforcement Officers. The core skills to deliver across the functions remain – the game to be knowledgeable to deliver the service then comes to PDR and personal commitment to learn and share.</p>

<p>2. 10/5/11</p>	<p>Current Enviro-crime Enforcement Officers have Council vans – in the future this will not be the case. What is planned?</p>	<p>It is planned that the current practice of enforcement staff utilising their own vehicles will be maintained. Consequently the two Enforcement Officers will not be allocated a Council van in the future. Given the change to their circumstance it is proposed that a 6 month period will be given in the withdrawal of the current council vehicle to allow for procurement of their own vehicle. Any bulky or dirty equipment/material will be accommodated by a small number of Council vans pooled for team use.</p>
<p>3. 11/5/11</p>	<p>I couldn't understand why we [ASB Officers] seem to have been taken out of the equation. I know that Dave mentioned that we will be coming under Housing, but what does that actually mean? If we are part of 2010's reintegration with the Council, what does that actually entail? Would there be a re-structure and would we have to apply for our posts.</p>	<p>The scoping of the service review that was started yesterday [10/05/11] is specifically around the integration of Enviro-crime and other enforcement work.</p> <p>It was viewed that the ASB Officer role was one that should not be included but rather in the re-structuring that is being developed to bring Council housing management back in-house. Its been proposed (to be considered and determined at The Cabinet meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> June) that all services with close interface with Housing management should be considered in that restructuring - hence, because of the close referral system between Housing Champions and the ASB Officers, its viewed that the service you provide should be included in that process. This will include a consultation of the Housing management proposals following the Cabinet decision.</p> <p>From what Dave was saying on Tuesday [10<sup>th</sup> May] the current thinking is ensure the ASB Officer job role is closer aligned with the new Housing Department – he did say there was no risk to the ASB jobs. From that there wouldn't be a need for any application for jobs as your job would not be substantially changing.</p>
<p>4. 18/5/11</p>	<p><u>Notes from Staff Meeting held 16/05/11</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Clarification needed of what the proposed generic role would encompass. Licensing/off road bikes/ dog wardens/what elements of anti –social behaviour? What would be the different roles of E.H.O`s. and Enforcement staff?</li> <li>2) There was consensus that specialised roles gave better quality of service for the customer as staff would be well trained and experienced in their role rather than knowledge very thinly spread over even more disciplines. Staff can build up expertise and be confident when addressing customer</li> </ol>	<p>The briefing note circulated does give the scope of the functions covered by the re-alignment – in essence it's the current Enviro-crime and Community protection enforcement activity. It does not cover the job role of ASB Officers, Dog wardens, Off Road Biking. Given the feedback and concerns relating the extent of enforcement activity that can be carried out in a "generalist" setting its viewed that Licensing Enforcement, which is a more should now be excluded from the proposal for full integration and this will be reported to elected members accordingly.</p> <p>One of the key issues coming through is that of "generalist" v</p>

<p>complaints or queries. The current proposal is not looking at the best value for the customer. If Staff knowledge is so stretched the quality of service will go inevitably down. If you went to have heart surgery would you want a throat surgeon to operate on you?</p> <p>3) There were concerns that even more job roles and responsibilities would result in deskilling of existing staff.</p> <p>4) Additional training would be required but there is only so much information an individual can be expected to retain and if some skills are used not used very often these become rusty.</p> <p>5) There was concern that by making all enforcement roles generic, it will be easier for these jobs to be the cut in the future. Eg what has happened to the warden service</p> <p>6) There was concern that E.H.O.'s were not currently meeting their statutory roles in terms of:-</p> <p>a) Environmental Permitting (E.P.A. Processes). There was no individual who felt 100% confident on the inspection and permitting of these processes without having to do a lot or revising before going out on site. It is such a specialised role that officers felt that individual training days do little to address the issue. There is no time to build up knowledge or look into non compliant companies that may be operating outside the regulations and may need control, with the subsequent loss of revenue. Most Councils have a specialist officer for this role.</p> <p>b) Houses in Multiple Occupation. Landlords are currently paying for a licence and are not inspected regularly. Also staff are not actively seeking out unlicensed and unregistered HMOs with loss of revenue</p> <p>7) It was felt that the localities changes do not hinder having specialist roles. e.g. You could have one Housing specialist placed in each area.</p>	<p>“specialist” and the concerns, worries and specifics you may hold are understood. The proposals, however, are very much about getting the all round best value for our customers.</p> <p>The picture on the how we go forward and whether we can step up to a wider enforcement function role was covered yesterday in the meeting between GMB, staff representatives and management and views on the matter have been sent through previously (see Feedback item 1 above). The proposals will ensure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• resilience via a larger team resource to enable consistent customer service delivery</li> <li>• an infrastructure in the roll out of locality based working</li> <li>• efficiency by one officer dealing with potential multi-factor problems at an address or nearby property</li> <li>• the team to be outside a silo'd thinking</li> <li>• that customers would not be passed between teams</li> <li>• continuation of current service</li> <li>• a one officer customer contact avoiding pass on of requests</li> <li>• wider job involvement for officers</li> </ul> <p>From discussions its essential that we need to be really clear on the different job roles too between EHOs and the Enforcement Officers has this matter seems to be causing undue worries. Indeed, despite, tremendous customer praise it is apparent that there feels to be a lack of confidence not only in what the team is delivering but in the ability of individual officers within the team. There is already personal specialist knowledge vested in the team which is sharable but apparently not recognised.</p> <p>Its very apparent that from discussions that the PDR process needs to be improved on a lot to enable the confidence, knowledge and competence from everyone to do the job. Prioritisation of the training needs coming from the current round of PDRs will enable the right development opportunities to be resourced from the training budget and in doing so ensure we have a CPD process firmly in place which will build on self learning and other learning and skill development.</p> <p>The idea of locality teams delivering across the functions with individuals taking on specific specialist knowledge and expertise to help</p>
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<p>8) Training was discussed as a major issue.</p> <p>a) Additional roles require additional training. Existing staff feel that training could be improved in their existing roles. The introduction of a CPD system? (E.P.A. permitting/ HIMO Training / Housing Enforcement /Noise measurement)</p> <p>b) It is a concern that there is no money for adequate training. In house training can not always provide the skills/ up to date knowledge needed.</p> <p>9) The issue of whether management would also have the requisite skills knowledge to guide/help staff in all the areas of expertise. No point having specialist managers and generic staff</p> <p>10) It was felt that it was an advantage to have specialist skills and pass on multi- faceted jobs to other colleagues in the department and share knowledge between colleagues. It was felt that it did not happen very often that a job needed different roles.</p> <p>The initial stages of an investigation is where the background work is carried out, passing this on to another officer makes there job a lot easier e.g. Land reg search.</p> <p>11) It would be good to have the option if staff wanted of swapping roles after working for a year in a specialised role as done in other authorities</p> <p>12) It was raised as an issue that the generic role proposal flies in the face of current E.H.O. training at universities where individuals choose their specialism in their final year.</p> <p>13) The new sub regional working agenda would be helped by specialist roles.</p>	<p>advise and mentor others in the team using all tools and powers available is supported.</p> <p>The use of current and developed skills and knowledge within the team, whether “managers” or staff is essential and as said above, there is a role for the development of individual and specialist in-depth knowledge within the broader generalist arena which will help support and advise colleagues in their own development and service delivery.</p> <p>The CIEH have introduced a last year specialism approach in the qualification of Environmental Health Practitioners (EHPs), however, all EHPs (not just EHOs) still have the ability to pursue a generalist route to give a firm grounding in all the key areas of environmental health such as environmental protection, housing and public health. The CIEH recognise in their introduction of the competency framework that EHPs will need to undertake additional learning and development once working. Again in our own PDR process we need to recognise the development of specialist skills and knowledge embedded within our competency framework to provide CPD – the difference being is that we can still have specialists but working within a more generalist delivery service model.</p> <p>The consideration of shared services at a sub regional or within smaller local authority clusters will develop. The key issue, however, is that the use of such delivery methods must bring efficiency and, importantly, be right for Rotherham. The sharing of services has brought efficiencies in “back office” type activity eg Human Resources and Procurement, but at a recent LBRO Shared Services Seminar it was identified that, from practice, efficiencies introduced in front line services tend to be a lot more limited. Shared services will be a topic to be examined further.</p>
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