

City of Westminster

Cabinet Urgency Committee	Date 3 July 2002	Title of Report Department of Community Protection
Classification FOR GENERAL RELEASE		Report of Chief Executive
Wards involved	All	
Policy context	Civic Renewal City Guardian Programme	
Financial Summary	Budgetary provision for the new Community Protection Department will involve transfer of revenue and capital budgets from Environment and Leisure, Planning and Licensing and Transportation and Infrastructure Departments. The costs of the new Department will be contained within approved budgets.	
Officer contact	If you have any queries about this report or wish to inspect any of the background papers please contact Bill Butterfield on 0207 641 1211, e-mail bbutterfield@westminster.gov.uk	

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out proposals for a revision to the departmental and Chief Officer structure of the City Council and recommends the formation of a new Department of Community Protection.
- 1.2 The City Guardian programme, one of the main planks of Civic Renewal, is currently being delivered by two principle enforcement groups within two different departments, Environment & Leisure and Planning and Licensing. There are clear advantages to be gained by bringing these groups together and refocusing their activities to meet the Council's strategic priorities
- 1.3 This report proposes that the present Environmental Health and Trading Standards Service, plus the Enforcement teams from Licensing: and City Standards and Community Safety teams be bought together to form a new Department of Community Protection.
- 1.4 The proposals contained in this report will deliver improved, faster reactive services. They will provide solutions beyond the capacity of existing individual departments. They will enable the City Council to exert greater influence without the demand for additional resources. With the support of the Metropolitan Police, the new department will deliver bolder and more telling enforcement and reassurance agendas than has been the case hitherto.

- 1.5 This report also recommends the deletion of the post of Director of Transportation and Infrastructure as detailed in paragraph 4.6.
- 1.6 This matter requires an urgent decision in order that the new department can be established to provide improved services in line with the Civic Renewal Programme

2. Proposed Decisions

- 2.1 That the creation of a Department of Community Protection and the outline departmental structure attached at appendix A be approved
- 2.2 That the post of Director of Community Protection be created.
- 2.3 That the post of Director of Transportation and Infrastructure (currently vacant) be deleted with immediate effect
- 2.4 That detailed organisational structures for the Department of Community Protection; and revised organisational structures for Planning & Transportation Department and Environment and Leisure Department be prepared as soon as possible and reported to the relevant Cabinet Member along with revised schedules of functions for each Chief Officer.
- 2.5 That appropriate approved budgets from the existing Departments be identified and transferred to the new Department with immediate effect.

3. Background to this report

- 3.1 There is a general perception in the community that crime and disorder are not being tackled effectively. A shortage of a visible police presence together with extensive demands for official presence, reassurance and enforcement, require that the City Council looks again at its role in this area and what can be achieved by better co-ordination and new approaches.
- 3.2 The two main enforcement services within the Council are Environmental Health and Trading Standards and the Enforcement teams plus the Community Safety team in Licensing and City Standards. At present these two groups are managed through different departments and have worked to different Cabinet members.
- 3.3 The City Council has developed productive working relationships with the Metropolitan Police. These include consultation on policy, liaison on specific projects, sharing of some information and intelligence, formal legally required endeavours under the Crime and Disorder Act and all of this has led to some valuable joint action on the streets. A joint police/council team forms the existing Community Safety Team in City Hall. With some justification our partnership with police might be regarded as ground breaking. The new Department of Community Protection provides a perfect and timely opportunity to develop new, exciting and more sustainable joint action with the police to address the priority needs for more informed reassurance and intervention on our streets.

- 3.4 The leadership vision expressed in the City guardian aspect of the Civic Renewal programme and in forming a new Cabinet post responsible for Community Protection, provides an opportunity to create a single department under one Director and responsible to one Cabinet member for the delivery of the majority of the Council's enforcement functions. Increasingly, over the last few years efforts have been made to pull together project groups from different disciplines and to use them to achieve more effective enforcement targeted at a particular area or activity. This approach has proved successful but is always hampered by the differing priorities of different Directorates.
- 3.5 Customer surveys and the results of the best value reviews of Environmental Health and Licensing, point to the need for a quicker reactive service to respond to complaints. In the area of Environmental Health in particular, there has tended to be emphasis put on high quality rather than speed of response. Research has shown that in many cases a quick response from a generic team would be more effective in meeting our customers needs and expectations. There is therefore a need to address this aspiration as well as retaining the expertise necessary to deal with the complex matters that constantly arise in the City.
- 3.6 There is a clear and urgent need to address the challenges that the CSI will bring to "in house teams". A better and more effective procedure for contact with our customers, will require a better more effective response. There will therefore be a need for a partnership approach between the CSI contractor and the Councils enforcement services. A single point of contact and a dedicated quick reaction team would provide the best solution.

4. The Proposed Department

- 4.1 It is intended that the proposed structure, when finalised, will address the clear need identified above in 2 ways; firstly with an enhanced 24 hour noise and emergency team to deal with all relevant calls outside normal hours and secondly with a multi-disciplinary quick response team organised to respond within one day. It is proposed to develop these teams from the existing but separate teams responsible for noise in E.H., MDT in licensing, the street enforcement group, the market inspectors and part of the reactive team in E.H. and T.S.
- 4.2 Fewer police officers on the beat, poor lighting, dumped cars, discarded needles, graffiti, rubbish and unrepaired damage all add to a sense of unease and insecurity for many sections of the community. Add to this drunkenness, gangs of youths and occasional blatant law breaking and it is not surprising that to some people public space, particularly at night, can appear very menacing.
- 4.3 The Council cannot provide a straightforward replacement for the missing police patrols, but it can, and is, doing much to address the problems mentioned above. Indeed, the introduction of a Flyposting and Graffiti Team as well as other initiatives on poor lighting, abandoned cars, dumped rubbish and needles are already making inroads. A further key objective would be a less intimidating environment with a regular uniformed presence to deter bad behaviour and to report matters requiring attention. The concept of uniformed wardens meets the challenge, but they cannot be effective without the full

support of the police or appropriate council service. Again, the concept of placing the overall warden management in the same group as the quick reaction team will provide that connection.

- 4.4 The Council has many statutory duties to perform under various pieces of legislation but which could be described as performing a consumer, or public protection function. Food, Trading Standards, Health and Safety and Pollution are examples. It is felt appropriate that with one exception no major change takes place in the way the programme of work or the management of these functions are delivered. The exception is the area of Health and Safety. It has become apparent that the work of the team is not as effective as it could be in supporting the Council policies relating to licensed premises. A review of the resources required to deliver an effective Health & Safety programme and demands of the licensing process will be contained in the detailed structure report to follow. However, it is clear that bringing the premises licensing team and the Health & Safety team together will provide an opportunity to address these concerns.
- 4.5 As stated above, this report proposes a realignment of the Council enforcement teams to bring the majority into one department under a new Director. DAC Andy Trotter on behalf of the Metropolitan Police would welcome the formation of the new Department and believes that the proposed arrangements would lead to greater and more effective partnership monitoring to tackle problems in Westminster. These proposals would require organisational changes to the two existing Departments of Environment and Leisure and Planning & Transportation; details of which will be the subject of reports to the relevant Cabinet Member.
- 4.6 The opportunity is also taken to delete the vacant post of Director of Transportation as the existing Director of Planning and Transportation will now continue to direct and manage this element of the Planning and Transportation Department's Services, details of which will also be included in the proposed report to the relevant Cabinet Member.

5 Staffing implications

- 5.1 Only limited staffing consultation has been necessary to date. Team Leaders in the service areas affected have received copies of this report and staff have been invited to comment. No concerns have been raised to date and action will be taken to ensure full consultation takes place when the organisational structures are identified in the next round of reports specified in Para 4.6.
- 5.2 Posts in any new structure will be filled in accordance with agreed personnel policies. Every effort will be made to redeploy affected staff. If however this does not prove possible, they will be declared redundant and paid benefits in accordance with the procedure agreed at Policy & Resources Committee, Appointed Members Panel 29 January 1993 and the Finance and Support Service Committee of 3 February 1997.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The principal purpose of the proposals contained in this report are to set up a new Department to deliver a more efficient and better-targeted enforcement programme. This report sets out the broad structure of the new Department with the intention that no additional resources, beyond those being transferred from the existing services will be required. The Director's post will be funded from the deletion of the existing post of Director of Transportation and Infrastructure. All other costs will be contained within existing approved budgets.
- 6.2 Other posts and responsibilities will be addressed in the subsequent reports. At that time a proper analysis of all the costs associated with new posts accommodation, support services, etc. will be identified and presented.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 Generally, this report proposes a revised organisational structure designed to improve the City Council's performance of a wide range of statutory functions.
- 7.2 More specifically, under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the City Council has a duty:

"to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area"

- 7.3 Clearly the proposals in this report are designed to facilitate better enforcement which will inevitably tend to act as a deterrent to further criminal acts. Accordingly, the proposals in this report are entirely consistent with the above duty.

8. Ward Member Consultation

- 8.1 This report has implications for all wards, and no individual Ward Member consultation has been carried out.

9. Human Rights act 1998

- 9.1 There are no implications arising from this report for the Human Rights act 1998.

10. Conclusion and Proposed Reasons for Decisions

- 10.1 This report sets out proposals for a revision to the departmental and Chief Officer structure of the City Council and recommends the formation of a new Department of Community Protection; the creation of a post of Director of Community Protection, and the deletion of the vacant post of Director of Transportation and Infrastructure.
- 10.2 The proposals contained in this report will deliver improved, faster reactive services. They will provide solutions beyond the capacity of existing individual departments. They will enable the City Council to exert greater influence

without the demand for additional resources. With the support of the Metropolitan Police, the new department will deliver bolder and more telling enforcement and reassurance agendas than has been the case hitherto.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A - Proposed Outline Structure of Department of Community Protection

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

FOR COMPLETION BY CHIEF OFFICER

Decision:.....

Signature:.....

Designation:.....

Date:.....

Time:.....

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY PROTECTION
PROPOSED OUTLINE STRUCTURE

