

Committee: Planning, Regulatory & General Licensing Committee

Date of meeting: **10th December 2019**

Report Subject: **PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICES – DISCONTINUATION OF THE COLLABORATION WITH TORFAEN CBC**

Portfolio Holder: **CLLR GARTH COLLIER- ENVIRONMENT**

Report Submitted by: **RICHARD CROOK – CORPORATE DIRECTOR, REGENERATION & COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Report Written by: **DAVID THOMPSON – SERVICE MANAGER, PUBLIC PROTECTION**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state) PRGLC
virtual								10/12/19

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 To provide members of the Committee with information relating to the end of the Public Protection Collaboration, as requested, and the implications for the Licensing Team.

2. Scope and Background

2.1 In 2015, the Authority approved a report recommending the creation of joint Trading Standards & Licensing Services with Torfaen whilst giving permission for wider opportunities for Public Protection to be explored. It was set-up as an informal arrangement against the backdrop (at the time) of likely local government reorganisation and a strong local, regional and national drive for collaborative working.

2.2 In 2016, the Authorities approved the extension of the collaboration to include Environmental Health Services – using the informal mechanisms that had been successful throughout the previous year (focussing on shared management and minimum disruption to front line services) with a view to making the collaboration more formal in the future. During this period, managers worked very hard to successfully deliver programmes of work (including new initiatives), deal with legacy issues and maintain timely and statutory responses to service requests/demand. Managers also worked across two political and performance/service planning regimes, including 2 Licensing Committees

- 2.3 In 2018/19, it became clear that since the local government elections in 2017 (which led to a change in leadership in Torfaen, and, coincided with the appointment of a new Torfaen Chief Officer/Director for the service area that includes Public Protection) there had been a significant shift in thinking and approach to front-line service delivery – from collaboration to in-sourcing (in-house delivery).
- 2.4 At the same time, concerns over capacity/increased demands on service managers, which led to heightened stress levels and resulted in some staff sickness, led senior officers from both Authorities to agree that the collaboration could not continue in its current form with the only options available being to move away from the current arrangement or to a single host arrangement. However, the change in policy direction in Torfaen meant that the only option was the former - to disengage.
- 2.5 This matter and the implications for the Authority were reported to Executive Committee in July 2019. The full report is attached at Appendix 1 along with an extract from the relevant minutes attached at Appendix 2.
- 2.6 The Collaboration ended on 30th November 2019.
- 2.7 **Budgetary Implications – in year.** The Executive Committee (Appendix 1, Section 5) outlined the implications for the 19/20 budget as a result of the end of the Collaboration. The in-year budget pressure is £35,000 and this has been met by reducing the hours of a post in Trading Standards, that worked across both local authorities under the collaboration, and income received by the service as part of an energy efficiency scheme (managed by the Environmental Protection team).
- 2.8 **Budgetary Implications – 20/21** and beyond. The end of the collaboration has created a pressure of £106,000 for Public Protection. Carrying forward the reduction in hours for the Trading Standards post (as indicated above) will enable £18,000 of this pressure to be met. Achieving the remainder is currently under review. Public Protection managers are currently leading on a review of Front Line Enforcement Services that, once concluded, will inform any necessary service change and staffing restructure. Should there be any necessary staffing reductions, these will be dealt with in full consultation with affected staff, trades union and OD support.
- 2.9 **Licensing Team.** Interim changes were made in July with Alison Hughes returning to manage Torfaen services and Lisa Griffin taking over Licensing along with her other duties as Commercial Team Manager. These arrangements will continue until the above review has been completed. This may lead to another change in manager – but this is as yet undecided.
- 2.10 Excluding management, there are 4 No. (3.7 full time equivalent) staff in the Licensing team. Managers do not foresee any other changes/reduction in staff in the Licensing Service as a result of the end of the Public Protection Collaboration.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 Option 1 – That Members note the content of this report

3.2 Option 2 – Not applicable.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 As Appendix 1

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 See Appendix 1

6. **Supporting Evidence**

6.1 *Performance Information and Data*

As Appendix 1.

6.10 *Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)*

As Appendix 1

6.11 *Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)*

As Appendix 1

6.12 *Preventative focus*

As Appendix 1.

6.13 *Collaboration / partnership working*

As Appendix 1.

6.14 *Integration (across service areas)*

As Appendix 1

6.15 *EqlA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)*

As Appendix 1

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

As Appendix 1

8. **Background Documents / Electronic Links**

Appendix 1 – Executive Committee report – July 19

Appendix 2 – Executive Committee Minute Extract – July 19