

Bath & North East Somerset Council

DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Veal, Cabinet Member for Communities	
DECISION DATE:	On or after 5th November 2016 (for single Member decision)	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 2906
TITLE:	Charging for Business Advice and Support Services in the Public Protection and Health Improvement Service	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		

1. THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The Public Protection and Health Improvement Service (PP&HI) are seeking to develop sustainable regulatory services where possible. This entails a refocus of priorities and an increased focus on supporting new and existing business and others who may benefit by providing enhanced, charged for advice and support services.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet member is asked to;

- 2.1 Agree to the PP&HI service charging businesses for regulatory advice; pre-application advice and application assistance.
- 2.2 Agree to the PP&HI service charging for training, mentoring and development courses along with enhanced advice and support services across a range of activities including events, active lifestyles and regulatory services.
- 2.3 These will be operated initially as a pilot with a view to building in to the fees and charges setting process in 2017/18 and beyond.

3. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 The approach to introduce charging for Public Protection advice and support, in the style of the Cornwall model, will not impact the net current budget as charges will be made on a cost recovery basis.

4. STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 Localism Act 2011 – the general power of competence enables local authorities to charge for discretionary services and supports innovation. The PP&HI Service has a statutory duty to protect public health which it delivers by its routine inspection, licensing and enforcement regime; this decision aims to expand on this approach by promoting and delivering support for compliant businesses encouraging and enabling them to grow. Section 3 of the Localism Act permits the Local Authority to recover the costs of provision but not to make a profit

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 In common with services across the authority, over the last 5 years the PP&HI Service has seen its budget decrease with a consequent reduction in staffing levels.
- 5.2 In recent years PP&HI have been proactive in looking for solutions to sustain the service. We have been working successfully with North Somerset Council - building resilience in the regulatory services teams through joint working ventures, and already have arrangements in place for joint management of Trading Standards and animal health. We have been proactive in working with colleagues in Economic Development and the other Councils involved with the West of England Devolution bid and instrumental in the promotion of the Better Business for All (BBfA) initiative aimed at supporting business, creating jobs and economic growth.
- 5.3 As part of this process we have been reviewing the work of some of the pathfinder authorities including Cornwall Council. The Cornwall model, supported by Regulatory Delivery (RD) - a department of BEIS - has developed a sustainable operational delivery model for local authorities that supports a new way of working for regulatory services. This focuses on business engagement and support rather than enforcement.
- 5.4 We are working with Cornwall Council along with a small number of other local authorities, to pilot their model prior to wider marketing by Cornwall.
- 5.5 The delivery model includes a number of “charged for” services that businesses can choose. The services are designed:
- i. Predominantly for new businesses - providing them with the best possible start
 - ii. Building trust and good working relationships with the management of new businesses - to help minimise future intervention.

It is important to note that this is not intended to be a trading entity or for the service to generate a profit. The charges made for these services will be sufficient to cover the costs of providing and promoting the services.

- 5.6 The Council already have Professional Indemnity (for financial losses) and Professional Negligence insurance cover in place.

6. RATIONALE

6.1 The pilot enables the authority to offer “charged for” services in relation to a range of new business support and advice including but not limited to:

- i. Advice for new businesses
- ii. Licensing pre-application advice, application assistance and a check and send option. This involves a range of charges depending on the licence and the type of support requested
- iii. Events advice, scheduling and support
- iv. Training, mentoring and development.

7. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 The PP&HI team have already developed a number of income generating options such as entering into Primary Authority Partnerships, promoting the Buy With Confidence and Plus Care schemes and providing services to other authorities, such as the promotion and delivery of the Eat Out Eat Well scheme.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 Section 151 finance officer, Monitoring Officer, Cabinet Member for Community Services,

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

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Background papers	<i>None</i>
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