

**DIRECTORATE OF COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & HOUSING
REPORT NO. EHH1606**

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY – BUSINESS SUPPORT CONTRACTS

PURPOSE

- To seek Cabinet approval for the Council to enter in to contracts to the value of up to £10,000 providing regulatory advice and support to businesses.

BACKGROUND

- With the outlook for public services continuing to look challenging, the Council's 8 Point Plan seeks to provide for a sustainable financial future. Within this, the Income Generation strand provides the opportunity to explore the commercialisation of some Council services, whilst continuing to serve the Council's purpose.
- Recently the Food/Health and Safety team, on behalf of the Council, has explored commercial opportunities arising from business regulatory support and advice. Officers will continue to provide advice and support to businesses in the Borough around regulatory matters, but increasingly businesses are seeking extended advice and support which offers the opportunity for cost recovery.
- The Council are seeking to enter into voluntary arrangements by contract with businesses who are willing to contribute to the costs of the additional advice and support provided to them. This work can be undertaken under the "spare capacity rule" and is a shadowing activity to assess whether a trading arrangement should be entered into in the future.
- This pilot work has been considered by the Council's Internal Audit team who have reviewed the arrangements for ensuring that the regulatory roles of the Council are not compromised. Effectively, a "glass wall" will be assured between adviser and regulator functions, similar to that already provided for in the Council's Licensing functions. In order to provide the basis for these business agreements, a contract arrangement has been developed.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- The general power of competence under the Localism Act 2011 gives the Council power to enter into such arrangements to provide discretionary services on a cost recovery basis.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- The service will be provided within existing resources with the potential to recover up to £10,000 of officer time in the first year pilot.

RECOMMENDATION

- It is recommended that Cabinet authorises the Head of Environmental Health and Housing to enter into contracts up to the value of £10,000 to provide regulatory advice to businesses.

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