TO: **EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE – 24th January 2007**

SUBJECT: **SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATOR POST**

FROM: **ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, MEMBER SERVICES, PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING AND WASTE MANAGEMENT.**

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1.   PURPOSE OF REPORT

To request the support of Members for the creation of a Systems Administrator Post to be a shared resource between Environmental Health, Licensing and Private Sector Housing and Waste Management.

2.   BACKGROUND

2.1   APP/Civica (formerly known as Flare) is a software system which is being used by the above sections within the Council, to varying extents. In the Licensing team, Premises Licenses are already dealt with on this system and there are plans to extend it to Taxi Licensing and Gambling Act premises. The Corporate Complaints System will also be dealt with through this software. For Environmental Health it will be the sole work management system and they will be the largest user of it. It will also be the main system for Private Sector Housing and is intended to be the system through which the Waste Management contracts will be handled. It is therefore a very important corporate IT system which will enable integration with electronic document management and mobile working etc.

2.2   The system has been partially implemented in Environmental Health and its further utilisation is now dependant on having the support required to adapt it to service needs. This is the case for the other sections and as we move forward with development of corporate electronic initiatives (eg mobile working, electronic document management) there will be a need for ongoing system support of this product to maintain its usability.

2.3   ICT Service's role is to install and support the operation of the system and its integration with corporate IT systems, they are not resourced to support the adaptation to service area needs. However, with such a large system on which important areas of service delivery are dependant, there is a need for additional support to ensure that it is properly developed and maintained. It is essential that this is undertaken by someone with in-depth knowledge of working practices within service areas.

2.4   The limited application of APP/Civica within the Licensing Section has only been possible through the commitment of one member of staff, who undertook this work in addition to his normal duties. This was not a sustainable position and temporary assistance has been brought it. The experience has confirmed the need for a dedicated person who can build up detailed knowledge and

experience of APP/Civica. This member of staff no longer works in the Licensing Section so this resource will not be readily available.

3. SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATOR POST

3.1 The case for this post is supported by each of the Service Areas using the APP/Civica system and the fact that there is not such a post at present has been due to the corporate need to restrict costs. However, it is recognised that failure to effectively implement and manage the APP/Civica system will have serious implications for service delivery in key service areas. The need for this post was also identified in the Project Initiation Document for Flare (APP/Civica).

3.2 It is therefore proposed that Environmental Health, Licensing and Private Sector Housing will resource the funding of a post of Systems Administrator having the main duties as indicated below.

- Coordinate the Flare system structure so that it is consistent across service areas.
- Adapt and modify the software to service needs.
- Ensure that the premises based information is accurately entered and doesn't conflict with the Corporate Land and Property Gazetteer information.
- Regularly check and rectify errors within the data to ensure that there is no interference from one service area's work and other's.
- Provide support to service areas with regard to service specific data entry and training.
- Act as the liaison person with external and internal User Groups.
- Develop new applications within the system for integration with corporate systems, eg electronic document management, mobile working.
- Develop the software in line with legislative and reporting changes imposed by Government or other external agencies, eg Food Standards Agency.

3.3 The majority of funding for the post would come from Environmental Health and will come from savings made by adjusting staff structures within the department, in this financial year. These can be re-invested to assist other service areas. Licensing will be able to apportion some of the License application fee income to this purpose. Private Sector Housing generates income from the Houses in Multiple Occupation license fee and will be able to contribute from this source. In more detail the budgets from which the funding would come would be: -

Environmental Health	4300-1110	Salaries
Member Services	2360-9395	Licensing and Registration
Private Sector Housing	1631-1110	HMO Licensing

3.4 The post is anticipated to be graded at no higher than E1 on the Hay salary scale, though this is yet to be assessed by the Hay Panel. The annual costs would in this case be in the range of scale points 27-30 (£21,588 - £23,952). £3,000 would therefore be funded from Licensing; £3,000 from Private Sector Housing with the remainder, £15,588, coming from Environmental Health.

3.5   The consequences of not providing this post are that the APP/Civica software system will either not be implemented in some areas or will be only partly used. As key front line services are planned to utilise this system it could have a significant effect on key performance results in Licensing, Waste Management (at a time when the new contracts are starting), Environmental Health and Private Sector Housing.

The efficiencies planned corporately through re-alignment of resources (eg Admin Review, Customer Service Centre) can only lead to service improvement through development of IT. Failure to effectively implement APP/Civica would result in corporate IT initiatives not being implemented.

4.   POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK

The post will be funded out of existing budgets and is seen as an efficiency gain by improving service delivery without increasing costs. It is subject to agreement of the Budget Report proposal by Executive on 12th February 2007.

5.   OUTCOME REQUIRED

That the Committee agrees to the creation of a Systems Administrator Post as set out in the above report, subject to agreement of the financial arrangement by Executive.

Richard Hall
Head of Environmental Health

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Areas in District Affected: All
Executive Portfolio Area and Holder: Environment – Cllr Mrs Begg

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