

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE CABINET</b>
<b>Date:</b>	28 June 2023
<b>Executive Member:</b>	Councillor Denise Ward, Executive Member – Climate Emergency and Environmental Services  Councillor Jaqueline North, First Deputy – Finance, Resources and Transformation
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Emma Varnam, Assistant Director Operations & Neighbourhoods
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>DELIVERY OF A NEW GREATER MANCHESTER BUSINESS COMPLIANCE SERVICE.</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	Funding from the Regulator’s Pioneer Fund (part of the Department for Business & Trade) of £503,728 has been awarded to Tameside Council on behalf of the ten Greater Manchester public protection teams to create a new business compliance service across Greater Manchester, providing business compliance advice covering environmental health, trading standards and licensing.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	That it be DETERMINED that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tameside Council accepts the funding on behalf of the ten Greater Manchester Local Authorities and enters into the Memorandum of Understanding between Tameside Council and the Regulator’s Pioneer Fund (on behalf of the Department for Business &amp; Trade) to support delivery of a new Greater Manchester Business Compliance Service (<b>Appendix 1</b>).</li> <li>2. For Tameside Council to be the Lead Partner and reallocate the funding to each of the other nine Greater Manchester Local Authorities as per the funding agreement (Appendix 2) and with Salford City Council solely for the funding agreement (<b>Appendix 3</b>) to support delivery of a new Greater Manchester Business Compliance Service.</li> <li>3. To enter into the Collaboration Agreement (<b>Appendix 4</b>) with the other nine Greater Manchester Local Authorities to support delivery of a new Greater Manchester Business Compliance Service.</li> </ol>
<b>Corporate Plan:</b>	Accepting the funding offer will mean that we will be in a position to increase resources by recruiting ten new regulatory officers across the ten local authorities to help businesses comply with regulations covering environmental health, trading standards and licensing.
<b>Policy Implications:</b>	The utilisation of this grant will enable Tameside Council and the other nine Greater Manchester public protection teams to increase resources in their teams and create a Greater Manchester Business Compliance, helping businesses comply with complex legislation covering environmental health, trading standards and licensing.
<b>Financial Implications:</b> <b>(Authorised by the statutory Section 151</b>	This report sets out the proposed acceptance of £503,728 from the Regulator’s Pioneer Fund (part of the Department for Business and Trade) on behalf of all ten Greater Manchester Local Authorities. It

**Officer & Chief Finance Officer)**

is then proposed to act as lead partner and, by entering into a Collaboration Agreement with the other authorities, reallocate the funding across the Greater Manchester area to develop a new Greater Manchester Business Compliance Service.

The funding covers the 18 month period 1 October 2023 – 31 March 2025 with recruitment to commence prior to that to ensure staff are in post from 1 October 2023.

The expected breakdown of spend outlined in section 2.4 of this report is:

<b>Spend Area</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Staffing Costs	£0.434m
Training, IT, Mileage, General Overheads	£0.027m
Consultancy	£0.005m
Communications	£0.038m
<b>Total</b>	<b>£0.504m</b>

From the total grant funding available, each of the ten Local Authorities will receive the following:

<b>Spend Area</b>	<b>£</b>
Staffing Costs	£43,392.87
Training, IT, Mileage, General Overheads	£2,700.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>£46,092.87</b>

Although the funding covers a period of 18 months, it is expected that each authority will recruit a member of staff for 2 years. Any additional costs during the 18 months and all costs for the final 6 months will be the responsibility of each individual authority.

In Tameside, the service aim to recruit to the position of Graduate Environmental Health Officer as set out in Schedule 2 of the Collaboration Agreement (**Appendix 4**). This will be subject to separate approval of this new post and successful subsequent recruitment. The table below sets out the expected costs of a Graduate Environmental Health Officer across the full 18 months (broken down by financial year) and the element of Council budget required.

<b>Pay Costs*</b>	<b>23/24</b>	<b>24/25</b>	<b>25/26</b>
Graduate EHO	20,040	42,620	22,618
Funding Available	(14,369)	(29,024)	
<b>Cost to be funded by TMBC</b>	<b>5,671</b>	<b>13,596</b>	<b>22,618</b>
Existing Budget Available***	(65,225)	(65,225)	(65,225)
<b>Budget Remaining</b>	<b>(59,554)</b>	<b>(51,629)</b>	<b>(42,607)</b>

*\*These figures assume an incremental increase and a 3% inflationary increase in both years 2 and 3.*

*\*\*\*There are currently 4 vacant apprentice posts within the Public Protection service. It is proposed that vacancies are held to enable this budget to be utilised to fund the additional costs of the Graduate Environmental Health Officer Post.*

There is no approval nor authority to overspend against the budget set at Council in March 2023. Any pressures arising from this decision or subsequent decisions to recruit to vacant roles must be

constrained with the directorates existing resources.

The proposal currently does not place pressure on the General Fund due to the mitigations, however the directorate does have an efficiency factor budget target that this proposal will make more difficult to achieve.

It is expected that posts recruited to using finite funding sources have their contracts fixed to the funding length, in this case 2 years.

By utilising the funds in the manner proposed the service can expect to obtain the following by way of return on investment:

- Improved consistency and availability of both free regulatory advice and support and an affordable and readily available chargeable business advice service, both to small & medium businesses in GM to ensure compliance and help them grow.
- A reduction in costs to the authority associated with non-compliance and enforcement
- An opportunity to 'grow our own' new officers to regulatory services and in particular the professions of trading standards and environmental health.

This is deemed to generate a value-for-money outcome for the Council.

The service should ensure that information is collected from all 9 authorities in a timely manner to meet reporting requirements from the Regulator's Pioneer Fund. It is expected that any reporting requirements will be detailed in the Memorandum of Understanding, although this has not yet been received.

Payments to partner authorities must be subject to receipt of evidence of expenditure, as set out in the Grant Agreement (**Appendix 2**) and the Collaboration Agreement (**Appendix 4**) and only once the necessary agreements have been signed and returned.

**Legal Implications:**  
**(Authorised by the**  
**Borough Solicitor)**

As outlined in the report, the Council is seeking to accept £503,728 from the Regulator's Pioneer Fund (part of the Department for Business and Trade) on behalf of all ten Greater Manchester Local Authorities. It is then proposing to act as lead authority, to reallocate the funding across the Greater Manchester area to develop a new Greater Manchester Business Compliance Service. A collaboration agreement with the ten authorities sets out the respective roles and responsibilities of the partner authorities in respect of the project. It also acknowledges the obligations on the Council under the MOU with the Department for Business and Trade which the ten authorities are obliged to assist the Council in fulfilling. Funding agreements for staffing costs and a further agreement with Salford City Council in respect of communications support have also been prepared.

The MOU places obligations on the Council in terms of monitoring the project and providing assistance with a final evaluation report and ensuring the Council uses the funding in accordance with the intended project outcomes. Due to the level of the funding, this is a Key Decision in accordance with the Council's Financial

Regulations, Procedures and Guidance.

**Risk Management:**

**Access to Information:** Not Confidential

**Background Information:** The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting, Nick Reddrop, Better Business for All Coordinator:



Telephone: 07895208063



E-mail: [nick.reddrop@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:nick.reddrop@tameside.gov.uk)

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Greater Manchester Regulatory Centre of Excellence was developed in 2017 by the Public Protection Partnership – made up of heads of service from each of the ten Greater Manchester local authorities' public protection teams and Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service. It was created, in part, as a means to join the national Better Business for All programme created by the department previously known as the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.
- 1.2 A Better Business for All coordinator, Nick Reddrop, was appointed in March 2018 and has further developed the Centre of Excellence's flagship offer – primary authority – which enables a business or business organisation to form a long-term, legally recognised partnership with a local authority or fire service to access advice and support about how they can comply most efficiently with regulation. The business pays for the service on a cost-recovery basis.
- 1.3 As of May 2023, the Greater Manchester Regulatory Centre of Excellence has 53 primary authority partnerships, with Greater Manchester regulators providing environmental health, trading standards, licensing and fire safety advice and support to some of Greater Manchester's largest employers including: JD Sports, Pret, Malmaison Hotels, The Trafford Centre, The Works and Manchester United Football Club. Tameside Council's business partners include Findel Education, Graviss UK PVT and HNC Healthy Nutrition Company (also known as MaxiMuscle).
- 1.4 To date, the Greater Manchester Regulatory Centre of Excellence has generated over £350,000 for the local authorities and fire service in delivering over 3500 hours advice and support to businesses.

## **2. THE REGULATOR'S PIONEER FUND**

- 2.1 Greater Manchester's Public Protection Partnership has long-held ambitions to create and deliver a more consistent and readily available business support service for small and medium businesses across Greater Manchester. Therefore, Tameside Council on behalf of the ten Greater Manchester local authorities, submitted a successful application for £503,728 to create a Business Compliance Service. The project will commence from 1 October 2023 and is funded for 18-months; as part of the funding application, all authorities committed to funding the project for a further 6-months after the funding ceases, so the project will last for a total of two-years.
- 2.2 The funding aims to address three key challenges:
  - Lack of consistent and readily available regulatory advice and support to small and medium businesses in Greater Manchester to ensure their compliance and help them grow.
  - Lack of an affordable and readily available cost-recovery advice service for small and medium businesses.
  - Ongoing staff recruitment and retention issues, particularly for professionally qualified officers in trading standards and environmental health.
- 2.3 The funding will be used to build a new, sustainable regulatory business compliance provision fit for the future by providing a reactive and proactive business regulatory support service operating across Greater Manchester. It will specifically target the foundational economy, those businesses that create and distribute goods and service that are relied on for everyday life. This sector includes businesses that environmental health, trading standards and licensing teams already work with every day to assist the businesses' compliance, including: retail, the hospitality sector, tourism and leisure facilities.

2.4 The project funding application outlined funding for the following:

- £433,928 in staff salaries (a total of £43,392.87 per authority over 18-months).
- £27,000 for training, IT, mileage, general overheads (a total of £2700, per authority over 18-months).
- £4,800 for consultancy costs.
- £38,000 for communications – including service (re)branding, website development, creation of videos/other marketing tools.

2.5 In brief, the Business Compliance Service will:

- Recruit one officer to each local authority on a fixed term 2-year contract, part-funded by the Regulator's Pioneer Fund for 18-months. The officer will either be an apprentice level recruit who will undertake the Level 4 Regulatory Compliance Officer apprenticeship or will be an Environmental Health Graduate who will work towards environmental health practitioner status.
- Provide a free signposting one-stop shop for businesses seeking compliance advice and support from Monday to Friday.
- Proactively contact new and existing businesses to check their understanding of what they need to ensure they comply with relevant regulations. They will also target specific businesses in the event of new legislation or targeted campaigns.
- Create mini projects in each local authority that support local business' compliance.
- Create a central Greater Manchester business compliance website holding a repository of self-help documents, guides and videos. Local authority regulatory teams, and eventually the Business Compliance Trainees would be responsible for creating and updating content.
- Business Compliance Trainees would spend the remaining time in their local authority, shadowing and learning from existing experienced and knowledgeable officers.

2.6 A total of £46,092.87 will be available to each local authority to cover staffing costs throughout the funded 18-months project. The final 6-months' salary plus on-costs will need to be funded from each authorities' existing budgets.

2.7 The aim is that job descriptions, person specifications and salaries would be very similar, or ideally the same for each type of post to be advertised. Officers will need to be in post by the project start-date of 1 October 2023.

2.8 Communications support will be provided for the project by Salford City Council communications team and a funding agreement has been prepared (**Appendix 3**). This will include a communications strategy, rebranding, and continued assistance with promotion of the service and its workshops, tools and videos.

2.9 A memorandum of understanding will be in place between the Regulator's Pioneer Fund (on behalf of the Department for Business & Trade) and Tameside Council (Appendix 1). There is also a funding agreement that will be in place for the reallocation of the Regulator's Pioneer Funding from Tameside Council to each of the other nine Greater Manchester local authorities (Appendix 2); with Salford City Council for Communication delivery (Appendix 3); a collaboration agreement (Appendix 4) is also in place which sets out the terms by which the ten local authorities will work together to deliver the Business Compliance Service.

### 3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The pandemic demonstrated the importance of trading standards, environmental health and licensing teams in protecting the public, by enforcing against businesses that don't comply. Throughout the pandemic and as demonstrated in our successful primary authority scheme,

regulators are also an important enabler for business growth, providing them with advice and support on how best to achieve compliance. This, in turn, can boost productivity, provide better working conditions for staff, encourage innovation and reduce non-compliance costs.

- 3.2 This project is crucial in the expansion of our current business compliance support service in Greater Manchester, but also provides a replicable long-term approach to securing the sustainability of the workforce across the region. The project should not therefore be viewed as a one-off project, but rather the first step toward the provision of a long-term business compliance service that also provides sustainability for the workforce. In order to ensure longevity in this approach, the project will transition to a chargeable model for business compliance in the final 6-months with a view to providing some chargeable business advice services, for example a food hygiene pre-inspection visit, alongside the continued free business compliance signposting and advice line and proactive contact of new businesses.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 As set out at the front of the report.