

ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 11TH NOVEMBER, 2016

UPDATE ON UK GOVERNMENT'S RESEARCH REPORT INTO TRADING STANDARDS SERVICES

To consider and comment on the following issues:

- The findings and recommendations within the report.

Reasons:

- To provide members with an update on the future of trading standards services.

To be referred to the Executive Board / Council for decision: **NO**

Executive Board Member Portfolio Holders:

- Cllr. Jim Jones (Environmental & Public Protection Portfolio Holder)

Directorate: Communities	Designations:	Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses:
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ENVIRONMENTAL & PUBLIC PROTECTION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 11TH NOVEMBER, 2016

UPDATE ON UK GOVERNMENT'S RESEARCH REPORT INTO TRADING STANDARDS SERVICES

On 21st March, the UK Government published a research report - **The Impact of Local Authority Trading Standards in Challenging Times** (Link to the report - https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/420218/bis-15-139-the-impact-of-local-authority-trading-standards-in-challenging-times-r2.pdf)

The research objectives were to:

- examine the benefits and efficiency of trading standards activities
- show how they align with national and local priorities
- show the impact of cuts to funding over recent years

A summary of the findings and recommendations are below.

1. **Painting a clearer picture of the benefits that trading standards work contributes to local and national priorities and its benefits to the public purse.**

Recommendation 1: Local authority trading standards services should devise and roll out more campaigning programmes, ideally with the support of national bodies, to raise the public profile of their work, and particularly of the contribution it makes to local public protection and community safety.

2. **Developing a logic model for trading standards processes.**

Recommendation 2: Given the prevailing uncertainty about the value of routine inspections in trading standards, and the dearth of reliable and comprehensive evidence in this respect, a national project should be commissioned to sample and measure levels of compliance with legislative requirements across the range of trading standards activities. This project might be undertaken in a single week, and ideally would be repeated each year to enable the compilation of a growing data-base of patterns and trends. This would then ensure that the outcomes and impact of trading standards interventions are better understood and that calculations could be made of the benefit-cost ratios for each of the different activities.

3. Developing case studies that describe and estimate the benefits of trading standards services.

Recommendation 3: The Departments for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and for Communities and Local Government (CLG), together with the Trading Standards Institute (TSI) should collaborate on a project to devise a national framework of measures of outcomes and impact covering the range of trading standards activities, and should propose an appropriate framework for data collection and reporting on a national, as well as local, basis.

4. Building an evidence base on the impact of budget cuts to local trading standards services in recent years.

Recommendation 4: Local authorities should plan budget allocations for trading standards departments on the basis of good information as to workloads, performance (efficiency and effectiveness) and the likely outcomes and impact of any proposed changes in provision. Ensuring the availability of such information to all involved in council budget decision-making should be a key responsibility for each chief trading standards officer.

5. Testing the efficiency and effectiveness of trading standards services across England, Scotland and Wales.

Recommendation 5: Local authority trading standards departments should give careful consideration to the advantages and disadvantages of different organisational models for the future of trading standards provision, including shared service arrangements with neighbours, working in wider regional groupings for certain specialist functions, with private sector service providers, or buying in services from other councils/agencies, and other funding options such as making joint appointments and secondments with other agencies. Whatever the favoured model, priority should be given to ensuring that governance arrangements are such as to engage councillors as actively as possible, both in determining the priorities for trading standards and in overseeing their realisation.

6. Identifying any current or future enforcement gaps.

Recommendation 6: Local authority trading standards departments should ensure that the pursuit of corporate performance targets, particularly in the on-going challenging financial times, does not unduly conflict with the important goals of supporting and facilitating professional development, and nurturing commitment among staff through the encouragement of initiative-taking, and the sharing of ideas about how best to promote fair and legal trading and so provide better public protection for all.

Attached to this Summary are documents containing the full report and a response by the WLGA.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Signed: **Robin Staines** Head of Housing & Public Protection

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below:

Signed: **Robin Staines** Head of Housing & Public Protection

1. Local Member(s) – N/A
2. Community / Town Councils – N/A
3. Relevant Partners – N/A
4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations – N/A

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THESE ARE LISTED BELOW.

Title of Document	File Ref No. / Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
The Impact of Local Authority Trading Standards in Challenging Times.	https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/420218/bis-15-139-the-impact-of-local-authority-trading-standards-in-challenging-times-r2.pdf