

17 May 2018**Agenda Item: 9**

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLACE AND COMMUNITIES

CHANGES TO THE TRADING STANDARDS STAFFING STRUCTURE

Purpose of the Report

1. To propose changes to the Trading Standards staffing structure.

Information

2. The Trading Standards & Communities Service has two separate budgets, one relating to Trading Standards and one to Communities. This proposed structure changes relate to the Trading Standards staffing budget structure.
3. As part of the work during the Authority's Commercial Development Unit (CDU) Pilot, a business plan was developed to reduce the net Trading Standards budget by £321k per annum by the end of 2019/20, through income generation. This plan was approved by Policy Committee on 16th November 2016. This plan increased by £145k a commitment from previous budget setting processes to reduce the net Trading Standards budget by a total of £175k during 2017/18 and 2018/19, through income generation.
4. At the 6th January 2015 Community Safety Committee approval was given for the establishment of a temporary project manager post within Trading Standards for a three year period (June 2015 to June 2018) to maximise opportunities to generate income. That post assisted managers with developing the business plan as part of the CDU Pilot and with developing an income generation model for the Service, including the establishment of procedures and creation of marketing materials etc. In year 3 the full £50k cost of that role was required to be found from additional income generated.
5. To assist with continuing the commercial work going forward this report proposes the creation of a permanent (Band C) Principal Trading Standards Officer (Commercial) post within the Service. The role will combine the Trading Standards expertise needed to deliver and support the delivery of expert Trading Standards advice/consultancy services with marketing and commercial abilities to further develop income generation opportunities going forward.
6. The proposal is to convert a recently vacated Level 4 (Band B) Trading Standards Officer role into the new (Band C) Principal Trading Standards Officer role.
7. Moving forward the Service needs sufficient experienced Trading Standards Officer resource to meet the increasingly complex work required to generate this income, such as complex

business advice and consultancy work and specialist food and feed enforcement for other authorities etc. Changing priorities for the Service over recent years has also resulted in the Service taking on more complex, challenging and higher risk investigations requiring experienced and highly qualified Trading Standards Officers to lead them.

8. The Service currently has the following Trading Standards Officers posts:

- 9.4 FTE Level 4 Trading Standards Officers (Band B) (one vacant)
- 9 FTE Level 3 Trading Standards Officers (Band A) (one vacant)
- 6.6 FTE Level 1/2 Trading Standards Officers (Grade 4/5) (three vacant)

9. Nationally there is a recognised shortage of qualified Trading Standards Officers within the profession and it is proving difficult to recruit and retain officers in the Service. A recent recruitment process for two vacant Level 3 Trading Standards Officer roles resulted in only one suitable candidate for the two advertised roles. The Service also currently has a recently vacant Level 4 Trading Standards Officer role.

10. The Service currently has three vacant Level 1/2 Trading Standards Officer posts and the intention is to recruit three apprentices under the new national Regulatory Compliance Officer (RCO) apprenticeship scheme. Having successfully completed the apprenticeship the officers will then train as Trading Standards Officers within the Service under a new amended national Trading Standards Qualification Framework that is being developed.

11. The three apprentices will need professional mentoring and support from Level 4 Trading Standards Officers in the Service during the course of their training. It is important therefore to maintain the same number of Level 4 Trading Standards Officer posts in addition to the new Principal Trading Standards Officer (Commercial) post.

12. In summary therefore this report proposes the following changes to the Trading Standards staffing structure:

- Create a new permanent (Band C) Principal Trading Standards Officer (Commercial) role
- Retain the number of Level 4 (Band B) Trading Standards Officers at 9.4 FTE
- Reduce the number of Level 3 (Band A) Trading Standards Officers from 9 FTE to 8 FTE

The estimated total net additional cost of these proposed changes would be £12,500.

13. In the last few months two Trading Standards Officers have requested a reduction in their working hours to work 34 hours per week in a full time 37 hours per week role, to assist with personal commitments. The estimated total savings to the Service's staffing costs from these flexible working arrangements are £7,600. The remaining balance of £4,900 would be found from additional income generation.

Other Options Considered

14. Consideration has been given to extending the duration of the temporary Project manager role beyond the 3 years.

15. Consideration has been given to re-advertising the remaining vacant Level 3 Trading Standards Officer post.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

16. The commercialisation project to date has identified that moving forward Trading Standards technical knowledge and expertise is needed for this specialist role to be able to sell the full benefits of the commercial offer to businesses and further develop innovative income generating opportunities.
17. Converting a vacant Level 4 Trading Standards Officer role into the Principal Trading Standards Officer (Commercial) post creates a more sustainable solution going forward with limited additional income needed to be generated to cover the costs of the role.
18. The Service is unlikely to be able to successfully recruit to the remaining vacant level 3 TSO role in the immediate future. Additional experienced officer resource is urgently needed to meet the demands upon the Service. An external recruitment process for a Level 4 Trading Standards Officer would be more likely to attract interest from experienced Trading Standards Officers from other authorities.
19. Retaining the level of Level 4 Trading Standards Officer resource will provide the resource needed to mentor and support the three new Level 1 Trading Standards Officers through their RCO apprenticeships and the Trading Standards qualification.

Statutory and Policy Implications

20. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

21. The proposed changes can be met from within the Trading Standards Staffing budget. The estimated additional cost of £12,500 for the proposals is met by recent flexible working requests that have provided an estimated £7,600 savings on salary spends within the Trading Standards staffing budget with the balance of £4,900 to be generated from additional income.

Human Resources Implications

22. To establish a Trading Standards Officer (Commercial) post – indicative grade Band C 1FTE.
To disestablish a Level three Trading Standards Officer post 1FTE.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) It is recommended that the Committee approve the proposed changes to the Trading Standards staffing structure as summarised in paragraph 12.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact: Mark Walker, Group Manager Trading Standards & Community Safety x 72173 or Sarah Houlton, Team Manager Trading Standards & Community Safety x 72460.

Constitutional Comments [KK 30/04/2018]

23. The proposal in this report is within the remit of the Communities and Place Committee.

Financial Comments [RWK 30/04/2018]

24. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 21 of the report.

HR Comments [JP 01/05/2018]

25. The HR implications are set out in the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All