



9th May 2019

Agenda Item:6

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, PLACE AND COMMUNITIES

UPDATE ON KEY TRADING STANDARDS AND COMMUNITIES MATTERS

Purpose of the Report

1. To update the Committee on key Trading Standards and Communities matters, including progress to raise additional income in the Service.

Information

Trading Standards

2. **Knife Crime** - National Trading Standards is calling on retailers to do more to prevent knife crime, after interim findings from a Home Office funded test purchase programme revealed many retailers were selling knives without undertaking appropriate age verification.
3. The programme began in October 2018, and by the end of January, had found a 12% failure rate among retail premises visited. This grew to 50% among online retailers. Retailers who failed the checks included a number of well-known high street and online brands.
4. The national exercise also found that more than 70% of retailers visited do not have theft prevention measures in place in relation to knives.
5. Locally, recent test purchases of knives have been conducted by Nottinghamshire Police. Trading Standards Officers, accompanied by Neighbourhood Policing officers, will be conducting revisits to those premises which failed these test purchases in order to improve systems and procedures to prevent knife sales. A total of 4 shops failed out of 26 inspections, all of which sold knives (as opposed to other bladed articles).
6. Nottinghamshire Police has conducted the test purchases as part of Operation Sceptre, the Government supported national knife crime reduction campaign that has involved 44 Police Forces. Trading Standards will continue to support further work in this area as Operation Sceptre is rolled out again later this year.
7. **Tackling Fraud against the Vulnerable** – “Scam” is a slang term for personal fraud. Mass marketing scams and doorstep crime are the frauds most commonly targeted against the vulnerable. The average age of a scam victim is 75.

8. Over 53% of people over 65, believe they have been targeted by fraud, and the 1 in every 14 of this group with Dementia are even more susceptible. Under the Care Act, financial abuse needs to be considered a safeguarding concern when it affects those with care and support needs.
9. Officers have been working with colleagues from Nottinghamshire Police, District Councils and Adult Social Care to develop a Safer Nottinghamshire Board (SNB) Strategy, "Tackling Fraud against the Vulnerable".
10. The strategy, recently approved by the Board puts an emphasis on coordinated efforts on fraud and scam prevention across all stakeholders and representatives. A "task and finish group" will produce and oversee an action plan, which will improve the way agencies work together.
11. www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk - The County now has 830 "Friends" and 37 registered "Scam Marshalls", placing it third highest nationally for Scam Marshalls (national total is 611). Recent promotion including Neighbourhood Alert messages, a Team Talk item, and promoting the scheme with Nott's Watch neighbourhood watch volunteers has proven effective. .
12. **Victim Care** - officers are working with Victim Care to deliver scams and doorstep crime training, and to generally work more closely together to improve the way we safeguard vulnerable victims.
13. **NottsWatch** - officers have joined forces with NottsWatch and placed an article in their recent newsletter, highlighting the Nominated Neighbour scheme, and other areas of support to prevent residents becoming a victim of doorstep crime.
14. **Hawtonville Day of Action** - Officers worked in partnership with Newark and Sherwood District Council during a day of action at Hawtonville, to help increase awareness of doorstep crime and scams prevention.
15. **Nominated Neighbour** - Trading Standards continue to work with Newark and Sherwood District Council regarding implementing the Nominated Neighbour Scheme in supported living housing complexes that it owns.
16. Officers have been working with Rushcliffe Borough Council regarding implementing a further scheme at another of its supported living complex.
17. **Environmental Weight Restrictions (EWR's)** - Trading Standards and Highways are developing the targeted enforcement programme of the County's EWR's for 2019/20. Heavy goods vehicles using inappropriate routes create serious safety hazards for other road users and pedestrians, as well as significant damage to buildings, roads and bridges.
18. The 2019/20 programme will continue to include a 100% response to all Lorry Watch reports from the community, and a number of targeted enforcement operations.
19. In 2018/19, over 450 Lorry Watch reports were received, up from 400 in 2017/18. Residents can report vehicles suspected of breaching restrictions via the online system on the County Council website.
20. Reported sightings act as useful intelligence to enable officers to target enforcement exercises at locations and at times that cause most concerns to the communities. A number of new restrictions are planned, which will require more intensive initial enforcement to ensure compliance.
21. **Illicit Tobacco** – Officers continue to apprehend those individuals who sell and distribute illicit tobacco products. A warrant was recently executed at a residential address in Mansfield, which

resulted in £9k worth of illicit tobacco being seized, and the home-seller receiving a formal caution for the first time offences

22. Officers are continuing to work with colleagues in Environmental Health and Notts Fire Service to join-up inspections, and use other methods of disruption against businesses that sell illicit tobacco.

23. **Regional Investigations Team (RIT)** The Team continues to investigate complex cross border frauds, that impact upon not only Nottinghamshire residents, but further afield.

24. The work of the Team is wholly funded by the National Trading Standards Board (NTSB), and the Board has recently agreed a total of £1.04m for 2019/20. This is split between:

- 3 'legacy' investigations – £716k
- Core Team budget - £320k

25. Further, where tasked investigations develop, and are subsequently identified as having a national (level 3) impact that core team funding is insufficient to address, additional funding can be applied for. It is anticipated that at least one further investigation will be the subject of a bid for additional national funding in year.

26. One of the current operations involves an alleged national energy tariff fraud, listed for a 10-week trial at Nottingham Crown Court, which commenced the 25th March.

27. **Income Progress 2018-19 – Appendix 1.** The progress update is attached as **Appendix 1.**

28. As previously reported, the Service was given a 3 year programme of additional income targets, following engagement in the Authority's Commercial Development Unit process. The targets set were:

Year	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Additional Income Target (£k)	£95k	£107k	£133k

29. As with many new ventures, 2017-18 was more challenging than hoped, and the Service fell short of target by £20k. Further, the temporary nature of some income means that it is variable year to year, so it was known that a proportion of 2017-18 would not continue in 2018-19.

30. For 2018-19, this meant that not only did the Service have to generate new business of £107k, but had to make up the 2017-18 shortfall of £20k, and find £110k to cover 2017-18 income that had ended. The net effect of all these factors was, that at the beginning of the year, the Service needed to find new income of at least £237k.

31. New business advice income alone for 2018-19 in the end totalled £239k. On top of this, the Service had a very successful year from other income streams. At year end, the Service brought in over £180k in excess of target. Once again though, much of this will have been 'one-off' for 2018-19 only.

32. For 2019-20, the Service's strategy remains to explore and develop new services that can be offered to businesses. The development of the comprehensive regulatory support package, in partnership with Rushcliffe Borough Council, is progressing well.

33. **Legal Update – Counterfeit Product - Justin Marriott** – Marriott appeared in the Crown Court in January, charged with the possession of counterfeit electrical items and clothing. He pleaded guilty to the charges. He was sentenced to 7 months in prison (suspended for 2 years) and ordered to undertake 150 hours unpaid work. A proceeds of crime investigation is continuing.
34. **Illicit tobacco – Alans Newsagents** – A trial was listed in Crown Court in March 2018 for 3 defendants charged with offences for supplying counterfeit and dangerous cigarettes from the shop in Beeston. Due to lack of court time, the trial was put back until March 2019. On the first day of trial, the 3 defendants pleaded guilty, and were all given a conditional discharge. If they are later found committing further offences, they may be re sentenced for these offences.
35. **Doorstep Criminal – James Eaton** - he appeared at an initial hearing in the Nottingham Crown Court in June 2018, and entered not guilty pleas. At the trial in January 2019, Eaton pleaded guilty to 7 counts of fraud, and is scheduled to be sentenced in April.
36. **Doorstep Crime** - In a separate case, another defendant has been charged with fraud offences for making false representations to customers about building work he was undertaking. He appeared in Crown Court in November 2018 and pleaded not guilty to 8 counts of fraud. He is listed for trial in June 2019.
37. **Animal Health – Illegal Landing** - A man has been charged with the illegal landing of a puppy in Nottinghamshire. He was due to appear in court in January 2019, but failed to attend, and a bench warrant was issued for his arrest. He is charged with offences under the Rabies Act, and fraud.
38. **Animal Health – Theft and Animal By-products** - A Lincolnshire farmer has been charged with the theft of sheep, offences for animal by product breaches, and also failure to maintain records of movements of his animals. He has pleaded not guilty to the charges, and is due for trial in Crown Court in June 2019.

COMMUNITIES

39. **Working with Vulnerable Communities** - At the March meeting, Committee approved the Communities Strategy as the framework for how the Team supports the Council Plan, to achieve “strong and vibrant communities”.
40. As part of this, the Team will be developing new ways to address complex issues and vulnerability. Efforts will be focussed on issues regarding Gypsy, Roma and Travellers; homelessness; migrants; asylum seekers; and people with learning disabilities. These groups are those identified as the most disadvantaged groups by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, sharing similar experiences in relation to work, health and care, education, prisons, and stigma.
41. Accessing public services presents significant challenges for many, with those people and communities, in particular, facing barriers, and being effectively locked out of opportunities. Factors such as socio-economic, deprivation, social invisibility, cultural barriers, stigma and stereotyping all contribute to the problems.
42. The Communities Team is already undertaking some work with partners, including community and voluntary organisations, district councils, the police and faith organisations to develop effective initiatives to support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.
43. Current work includes:
- Working with Community Safety Partnerships to identify the key issues for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, and co-ordinating a County Council response to addressing;

- Co-ordinating a partnership approach to tackling some of the deep rooted challenges for emerging communities, migrants and asylum seekers;
 - Tackling hate crime through co-ordinating partnership approaches, to de-stigmatise 'difference', for example for people with learning disabilities;
 - Working with partners including the District Council's and the voluntary sector to tackle homelessness and its causes; and
 - Refreshing the protocol for managing unauthorised encampments on County Council land.
44. **Neighbourhood Watch – Common Ground** - The Council and NottsWatch are developing a strong partnership. In recognition of the mutually shared vision, both are collaborating to help communities to understand that the solutions needed to their issues, often lie within those local communities.
45. A conference is being hosted by the Council, NottsWatch and Community Organising Notts on 6th July 2019, funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner. It will celebrate the signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding between the 3 parties, which sets out a commitment to work together to build community resilience.
46. The conference is an opportunity to encourage organisations to seek "Common Ground", to establish partnerships, with the aim of truly helping to make Nottinghamshire a great and safe place to live.
47. The event will also celebrate the achievements of some of Nottinghamshire's outstanding residents that are going above and beyond to make Nottinghamshire a great place to live. Certificates will be awarded to residents that have attended Community Organising Training.
48. **Age Friendly Nottinghamshire** – This key community mobilisation initiative focused in the pilot phase on reducing the impact of loneliness on older people. The evaluation from the pilot found that loneliness results in isolation and has negative impacts for people of all ages.
49. When funding for the Age Friendly pilot came to an end, Public Health colleagues decided to fund a broader initiative to reduce loneliness in people of all ages and backgrounds. As such, the Age Friendly name for the initiative no longer reflects the initiative's remit.
50. As such, this initiative's name has now been changed from Age Friendly Nottinghamshire, to Community Friendly Nottinghamshire.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

51. To ensure appropriate political oversight of key Trading Standards and Communities matters.

Statutory and Policy Implications

52. 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.

Crime and Disorder Implications

53. The Service makes significant contributions to reducing crime and disorder as outlined in the information provided in the body.

Human Resource Implications

54. The report contains no additional human resource implications.

Financial Implications

55. The report contains no additional financial implications, with all activity proposed being funded from within the existing service budget.

56. The report sets out the additional income achieved for 2018/19 in appendix 1, and also the 2019/20 National Trading Standards funding to be provided of £1.04m.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Committee:

- 1) Ratifies the updates given regarding key Trading Standards and Communities matters; and
- 2) Ratifies the update given regarding the progress of raising additional income in the Service.

**Derek Highton,
Service Director, Place and Communities**

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Constitutional Comments (KK 25/03/19)

57. The proposals in this report are within the remit of the Communities and Place Committee

Financial Comments (SES 22/03/19)

58. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 53 of the report.

HR Comments (JD 29/3/19)

59. The human resources implications are explicit in the body of the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All

