

Report: Update on key trading standards and communities matters.

APPENDIX 1

REPORT ON INCOME PERFORMANCE OF THE TRADING STANDARDS AND COMMUNITIES SERVICE

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide a quarterly update on the progress made by Trading Standards following the Services involvement in the Authority's commercial development programme.
2. This report covers the period up to and including Quarter 1 of 2019-20.

Information and Advice

3. **Cumulative Overall Income** - Previously the Service has reported on figures based only on new commercial activity as these were the areas that had been agreed through the Authority's Commercial Development Programme. Due to the fluctuating nature of the income streams it is believed that reporting on these can produce a confusing picture as the income derived from new commercial activity could potentially be counteracted by previous income streams no longer being available. It is believed that ultimately the figure that is most important to members of this Committee is the cumulative figure for overall income.
4. Subject to confirmation in some instances, we have already provisionally secured commercial income for the year ahead to the value of circa £280k.
5. **Beneficial Packages for SMEs** – During the current climate of financial pressures it can be very difficult for businesses to budget for and access affordable business advice. In order to offer some support to local businesses the Service has come up with discounted packages of business advice that are only open to SMEs based within Nottinghamshire. These packages will not only provide a financial benefit to the businesses but will also provide a consequential benefit to the local economy as it will enable investment and growth
6. **One Stop Regulatory Support** - The collaboration with Rushcliffe Borough Council to provide businesses with single point access to "Primary Authority" (PA) regulatory advice and support across both Trading Standards and Environmental Health continues to develop well. As previously reported, one joint-partnership has been established with a trade association for the pest control industry and we are in discussion with several other organisations that are interested in a concept that is clearly appealing to businesses.
7. The first partnership is acting as a proving ground for the processes of how the combined offer will work in practice. We also are looking to include other regulatory functions in the arrangement and to find a suitable authority in Wales to work with to cater for devolved regulatory responsibilities that impact the businesses that we are working with.

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8. **Business Feedback** – In order to ensure that we are offering the best possible services for the businesses we support, we recently sought feedback from our existing PA partner businesses by means of a questionnaire. Approximately a third of businesses responded. All felt they were getting the appropriate frequency of contact to meet their needs and almost all felt that we delivered the right standard of work. All businesses saw the formal advice that we offer as being a key benefit with almost all seeing our availability when and if they need us and our expertise, as being other main benefits.
9. The questionnaire does however suggest that we can do more to understand the plans businesses have and the commercial issues they face, and we believe this may enable us to further improve our services.
10. **Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS)** – OPSS is a division with the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) which is the government department with responsibility for most Trading Standards legislation. Apart from its responsibility for consumer safety matters, OPSS administers the Primary Authority Partnership (PAP) scheme and is effectively its custodian.
11. Ministers have set an ambitious and challenging target for OPSS to grow the number of organisations that are in a PA partnership. Improving our links to OPSS has seen us benefit from being put forward by OPSS as a suitable potential partner for organisations that are seeking to join PAP.
12. Recent new partnerships include trade associations in the pest control sector (as mentioned above) the construction sector and the kitchen and bathroom installation sector as well as partnerships with individual businesses in the angling and on-line dating sectors. We are also waiting to hear more on potential partnerships in the funeral care sector and retailing.
13. OPSS operates a group for participants in PAP that is attended both by local authorities and businesses. It is intended to enable all parties to share experiences, issues and best practice with the aim to shape the development of the scheme. As a major player in PAP, Nottinghamshire is invited to its meetings. The most recent meeting included a presentation from another authority, that is also strongly committed to the PAP scheme, on that authority's PA charge model. This provided a useful opportunity to validate our charges and the approach that was adopted in our CDU process. OPSS is keen to share understanding in this area as it has concerns that some authorities' PAP charges may not truly reflect their full cost in delivering the service or is in some cases based on arbitrary reference points such as the charges private consultants might levy