



20th November 2012

Agenda Item:XX

REPORT OF GROUP MANAGER, TRADING STANDARDS

APPROVAL TO EXTEND THE CONTRACT OF A TEMPORARY CONTRACTOR TO FURTHER DEVELOP TRADING STANDARDS' PARTNERSHIP APPROACH WITH NOTTINGHAMSHIRE BUSINESSES

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval to extend the contract of a temporary contractor to further develop the Trading Standards Services' income generation work in relation to support to businesses.

Information and Advice

2. Since July 2011 the Trading Standards Service has offered, on a cost recovery basis, support to businesses in excess of that which the authority is required by statute to provide.
3. Primary Authority Partnerships were developed with Nottinghamshire businesses which allow the authority to recover the costs of providing support and provide business with a service tailored to meet their needs. Any advice given by the Service under the scheme is legally binding on other enforcers, providing clarity to the business.
4. There are currently 14 such partnerships with Nottinghamshire based businesses.
5. During July 2012 it became evident that the Service had insufficient senior officer resource to drive its income generation work and particularly the further development of the Primary Authority Partnership scheme.
6. As a result a temporary contractor was employed by the service, employed for a period of 12 weeks between August and November 2012.
7. During this period the contractor has reviewed all Primary Authority and business advice work undertaken by the Service and made recommendations to further embed them within the Service. The work undertaken by the officer has significantly raised the profile of the partnership scheme within the County.
8. This additional officer resource has provided the capacity to engage with more businesses, highlighting the value of the Primary Authority Partnership Scheme. During the 12 week period two further companies have been recruited onto the scheme, which has realised £2,500 income. The contractor is currently in detailed discussions with a further 6 businesses. Should these discussions lead to formal partnerships the estimated income is approximately £5,600.

9. The contractor has challenged and improved internal systems around these partnerships and charged for business advice. The Services' internet pages have also been improved to provide business with clear information on the business support that the Service can offer. The contractor has also explored and recommended new areas for income generation.

Proposal

10. To retain the contractor, working on a 3 day (22.5 hours) per week basis for a further period through to 31st March 2013. The cost to the Service for employing the contractor for this period will be £10,000.
11. This further period will ensure that the Service's approach to Business Support is fully embedded within the Service, its profile is raised further and more Nottinghamshire businesses benefit from bespoke partnership arrangements.

Other Options Considered

12. By not continuing with this contractor we will have to reprioritise the work of our remaining senior officers which will impact upon our ability to fulfil our Service plan objectives.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

13. There is a real risk that without maintaining the current resource that the growth of the partnership scheme will be slow, businesses will not become aware of or receive the full benefits that it affords them. This will impact upon the Services ability to raise income which will in turn reduce resources that the Service can put into tackling the issues that cause the most detriment to Nottinghamshire residents and businesses.

Statutory and Policy Implications

14. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder and users. Where such implications are material, they have been brought out in the text of this report.

Human Resources Implications

15. The human resources implications are contained in the body of the report.

Financial Implications

16. The cost of the contract extension is to be funded from underspends arising from a vacancy in the team.

Recommendation/s

It is recommended that:

- 1) The Committee approves the proposal outlined in this report.

MARK WALKER
Group Manager Trading Standards

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Mark Walker, Group Manager

Tel: (01623) 452070

Email: Mark.walker@nottsc.gov.uk

Constitutional Comments (LMc 15/11/2012)

17. The Community Safety Committee has delegated authority within the Constitution to approve the recommendations in the report.

Financial Comments (TMR 14/011/2012)

18. The financial implications are as contained in the report

Background Papers

None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

CS15