

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 8 th March 2017
Report Subject	Trading Standards Collaborative Projects
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Waste Strategy, Public Protection and Leisure
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning and Environment)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2013 Trading Standards services across North Wales have been working collaboratively on a variety of different projects and initiatives. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the on-going areas of work, and also to highlight those areas of work where regional partnership working has been found to be notably beneficial.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	The Committee to note and support the contents of the report.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	<u>BACKGROUND TO THE SERVICE</u>
1.01	<p>The main aim of the Flintshire Trading Standards Service is to ensure a safe and fair trading environment in the county. Trading Standards enforces a wide range of national and European laws through both civil law and criminal law processes. In addition to enforcement and regulatory responsibilities, the Service provides advice and information to consumers (in association with the Citizens Advice consumer advice service) and businesses to make them aware of their rights and obligations and to support economic growth.</p>
1.02	<p>The Service has diverse responsibilities which fall under the following broad headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Fraud (including rogue trading activities)▪ Age-restricted sales▪ Animal Health and Welfare▪ Consumer and Business Advice▪ Consumer Product Safety▪ Fair Trading (including weights and measures, descriptions, pricing, consumer credit)▪ Food, Health and Agricultural Standards▪ Licensing and Registration
1.03	<p>These activities compliment the four enforcement priorities established by the Welsh Government, which are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Protecting individuals from harm and promoting health improvement▪ Ensuring the safety and quality of the food chain to minimise risk to human and animal health▪ Promoting a fair and just trading environment for citizens and businesses▪ Improving the local environment to positively influence quality of life and promote sustainability

2.00	FOSTERING A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO SERVICE DELIVERY
2.01	<p>In 2013 the North Wales Heads of Public Protection formulated a work programme that aimed to introduce greater regional consistency and resilience. It was hoped that such an approach would also provide sustainability to services that had reduced in officer numbers due to the challenging financial climate. At the time the expertise possessed by officers in the region was diminishing.</p>
2.02	<p>Trading Standards featured as part of this work programme, and was identified as a service that would benefit from a collaborative approach. The North Wales Heads of Trading Standards (who report into the Heads</p>

	of Public Protection) were tasked with identifying areas of mutual benefit to pursue.
2.03	<p>Successful, project based, work has been delivered over the past three years. Examples of the collaborative projects are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Successfully setting up a regional Buy With Confidence Scheme ▪ Getting all Council run markets across the region to sign up to the 'Real Deal', a scheme to ensure markets are clear of counterfeit goods ▪ Providing a regional service delivery approach to animal feed enforcement ▪ Developed regional animal health contingency plans ▪ Developed a regional Doorstep Crime training pack for delivery to Council Social Services Departments ▪ Tackling the sale of illicit cigarettes and alcohol
2.04	<p>The collaboration projects are annually reviewed. A meeting of the North Wales Heads of Trading Standards Officers was convened in January 2017 to formulate the 2017/18 work programme. A significant change of approach has been the adoption of the Intelligence Operating Model (IOM). This approach is recommended by the Association of Chief Trading Standards (ACTSO) and Welsh Government, which means that locally (and regionally) the priorities of Trading Standards Services' are derived from intelligence received from the public, or through targeted inspections, or from partners.</p>
2.05	<p>Although at the outset in 2013 there was an anticipation that the move towards greater collaboration could result in a more formalised arrangement, this has not materialised. However, the benefits of regional collaboration are tangible. The respective Trading Standards services are able to access a large pool of expertise from across the region. When this approach was first introduced a skills assessment for all staff across the region was undertaken, enabling service managers to identify who was best placed to contribute to certain projects. There have also been cost savings, for example, instead of six separate animal health contingency plans just the one has been developed; also when The Consumer Rights Act came into force the 'Notice of Powers and Rights' form was developed for the region instead of six, savings were also made on the printing costs.</p>
2.06	<p>In terms of future delivery, it is recommended that Flintshire continues to work alongside its regional partners. This will both help improve service resilience and our ability to deal with cross border issues which are now far more prevalent. Issues such as scams, doorstep crime and animal disease are very rarely these days within local authority boundaries, and furthermore given the amount of trade that is now done over the internet, it is important that Trading Standards are structured so that they are able to respond to these threats in the most efficient and effective way.</p>
2.07	<p>The work undertaken by the North Wales Trading Standards Services is also consistent with the ethos of the recently published Local Government White Paper ('Resilient and Renewed Regional Working'). In paragraph 2.3.33 reference is made to the possibility of a regional service. Should this be mandated the implications would need to be explored in greater</p>

	detail; whilst project work lends itself to regionalisation other areas (such as Compliance) require a local delivery.
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3.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
3.01	None as a result of this report.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
4.01	None as a result of this report.

5.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
5.01	None as a result of this report.

6.00	APPENDICES
6.01	None.

7.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
7.01	<p>None.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Sian Jones, Public Protection Manager - Community Telephone: 01352 702132 E-mail: Sian-Jones@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p><u>Animal Feed Framework</u></p> <p>As part of the collaborative approach, the North Wales authorities work together to adopt a consistent approach to their statutory duties in respect of animal feed inspection and enforcement duties.</p> <p>Feed business establishments (premises) that manufacture, market, distribute or use animal feeds, including feed additives must be registered with their Trading Standards Service. Local Authorities have a statutory duty to enforce feed law as part of the UK's national official controls, overseen and audited by the Food Standards Agency.</p> <p>Aims and objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensuring that animal feeding stuffs produced, sold, stored or supplied

	<p>and used are safe and wholesome, produced under hygienic conditions; of a satisfactory quality and composition; not adulterated; suitably labelled and advertised; so as to protect the health of the public and animals and the rights/expectations of consumers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing traders and consumers with advice on the hygiene, composition and labelling of animal feed, increasing the awareness of the dangers of contaminated feed, including routes of transmission and methods of prevention. <p>Investigating cases of contaminated animal feeding stuffs and where possible identifying the source of contamination and prevent further spread.</p>
8.02	<p><u>Animal Health and Welfare Framework</u></p> <p>The aim of this Framework is to ensure effective, accountable, consistent and co-ordinated delivery of animal health and welfare services throughout England and Wales.</p> <p>The Framework will encourages better management and improve forward planning.</p> <p>Priority is given to the Critical Control Points (CCPs). The CCPs are the agreed businesses, premises or locations at which controls can be applied resulting in the reduction in risk of the introduction or spread of notifiable disease in England and Wales. The CCPs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Markets, collection centres and assembly centres. ▪ Slaughterhouses ▪ Dealers ▪ High Risk farms ▪ Ports
8.03	<p><u>Buy With Confidence</u></p> <p>The Buy With Confidence scheme was put together by a partnership of Local Authority Trading Standards Services in response to concerns about 'rogue traders'. The scheme provides consumers with a list of businesses which have given their commitment to trading fairly. Every business listed has undergone a series of detailed checks by Trading Standards staff before being approved as a member of the scheme.</p> <p>Buy With Confidence members get:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A public profile on the BuyWithConfidence.gov.uk website ▪ Permission to use the 'Buy With Confidence' Trading Standards Approved logo and wording on their stationery, websites, vehicles etc. ▪ Ongoing support and advice from Trading Standards departments ▪ Membership of a scheme supported and promoted by Trading Standards services. ▪ Benefit from the growing profile of a national reputable trader scheme ▪ Help and mediation from Trading Standards professionals during customer disputes <p>The benefits for the region has been a consistent roll-out of the scheme,</p>

	<p>which has been led by group of officers employed by a number of different local authorities.</p> <p>A regional launch of this initiative is planned for 15th March 2017.</p>
8.04	<p><u>The 'Real Deal'</u></p> <p>In the same way that the North Wales authorities have approached 'Buy With Confidence', their approach to the roll-out of the 'Real Deal' has been similar.</p> <p>The 'Real Deal' campaign is a national markets' charter which sets out key principles for market operators, local authority Trading Standards services, industry and trademark representatives to sign up to and abide by.</p> <p>Signing up to the charter demonstrates an organisation's commitment to safe and fair trading at their local market, and in particular to address counterfeiting.</p> <p>The Real Deal logo may be displayed at venues where the market operator abides by the terms of the national charter and in agreement with their local trading standards service.</p>