

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE
COMMITTEE

Agenda Item	16
Report No	PDI 50/14

5 NOVEMBER 2014

TRADING STANDARDS ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW 2013/14

Report by Director of Development & Infrastructure Service

Summary

This report provides Members with the opportunity to review and approve the work of the Council's Trading Standards team during 2013/14. The regulation and enforcement of Trading Standards assists the Council deliver Programme commitments supporting the economy and stronger, safer communities. Committee is invited to consider the Trading Standards Annual Performance Review 2013/2014 against the previously approved Operational Plan for the service and to approve the report.

1. Background

- 1.1 Part of the Development & Infrastructure Service, the primary function of the Trading Standards team is to fulfil the Council's statutory duties under various pieces of consumer protection and trading standards legislation to ensure that trade in the Highlands is carried out in accordance with relevant statutory requirements and in so doing to protect the safety and economic interests of consumers and businesses.
- 1.2 Performance against the annual Operational Plan previously agreed by Committee is measured by way of an annual performance review document.
- 1.3 In addition to satisfying Service Plan commitments, the review document provides the link between Trading Standards regulatory and advisory activities during 2013/14; Scottish Government and Highland Council agreed outcomes, along with the Council's statutory duties.

2. Performance and Other Indicators

- 2.1 Effectively measuring the performance of any regulatory body does not easily lend itself to the use of quantitative numerical indicators. The few remaining performance indicators fail to measure any tangible outcomes, or the overall impact, community and commercial benefits of the work Trading Standards does.

- 2.2 The absence of any meaningful performance indicators for Trading Standards services was identified by Audit Scotland in their "[Protecting Consumers](#)"¹ report published in January 2013, which was the subject of a separate report to the [TECS Committee in May 2013](#)².
- 2.3 Since then, the Trading Standards Scotland team that is now established within COSLA has been tasked with, amongst other things, undertaking a strategic review of Trading Standards, to include the establishment of national service standards and appropriate performance measures. The first stage of this Strategic Review is due to be reported to the COSLA Task Group in November this year.
- 2.4 Until the output from the strategic review can be agreed and implemented, the annual performance review provides Members with the best possible overview of the projects, initiatives, case work and where reasonable to do so, the outcomes and impacts that can be attributed to the work undertaken. Members can therefore assess the work of the Trading Standards team against the [2013/14 Operational Plan](#)³ that was approved by the then TECS Committee in March 2013.
- 2.5 Some use is made of indicators within the annual review document. These do not measure classic quantitative performance, but provide an indication of workload; what is going on in the external commercial and community environment; and support decisions made in prioritising our work. For ease of reference many of the indicators used within the review document have also been tabulated separately in one section at the end.

3. Annual Performance Review 2012/13

- 3.1 The Annual Performance Review document is available online at the following link [Trading Standards Annual Performance Review 2013/14](#)⁴. A limited number of hard copies are also available in the Members' Lounge.
- 3.2 As there is a very short time between the publication of the review document and the Committee meeting, it is not possible to present a summary of the review document here. The Council's Trading Standards Manager will be in attendance at Committee and will summarise the review document for Members.

4. Resource implications

- 4.1 There are no additional resource implications arising from this report

5. Fit with the Programme for the Highland Council 2012 – 2017

¹ http://www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/docs/local/2013/nr_130131_protecting_consumers.pdf

² <http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/23576/item12tec4513pdf>

³ <http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/23500/item15tec2913pdf>

⁴ www.highland.gov.uk/tsperformance

5.1 The work of the Trading Standards team assists the Council deliver Programme commitments supporting the economy and safer communities.

6. Fit with the single Outcome Agreement

6.1 The work of the Trading Standards team assists the Council deliver commitments linked to the economy and safer, stronger communities.

7. Other implications

7.1 There are no legal implications arising as a direct result of this report.

7.2 There are no equality implications arising as a direct result of this report.

7.3 There are no climate change implications arising as a direct result of this report.

7.4 There are no risk implications arising as a direct result of this report.

7.5 There are no Gaelic implications arising as a direct result of this report.

7.6 There are no rural implications arising from this report.

Recommendation

Committee is invited to consider the Trading Standards Annual Performance Review 2013/2014 against the previously approved Operational Plan for the service and to approve the report.

Designation: Director of Development and Infrastructure

Date: 13th October 2014

Author: Gordon Robb, Trading Standards Manager

Background Papers:

1. Trading Standards Annual Performance Review 2013/2014
2. Trading Standards Operational Plan 2013/2014