

**Key reporting dates:**

- (1) Scrutiny report considered by Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee: 14 September 2004
- (2) Scrutiny report considered by Cabinet: 19 October 2004
- (3) Scrutiny report considered by County Council: 7 December 2004
- (4) Six-monthly report back to Scrutiny Committee: June 2005
- (5) One-year report back to Scrutiny Committee: December 2005

No.	Recommendation	Timescale/deadlines	Responsibility/resources/progress
<b>Staffing and resourcing recommendations</b>			
1	<p>a) Further evidence to be sought on the value and effectiveness of an integrated staffing structure combining the roles of Trading Standards and Fair Trading officers.</p> <p>b) If this suggests that the change is desirable, an integrated staffing structure should be considered for speedy implementation, and</p> <p>c) Pay scales for Fair Trading Officers should be reassessed corporately alongside other posts where the County Council is facing similar difficulties in recruiting staff.</p>	Exercise to be completed by 31/03/05	<p>Accepted</p> <p>a &amp; b) Seek evidence from SETSA colleagues on the value and effectiveness of such schemes. Draft Career Grade Scheme and revised JDs have been prepared. To be approved by TS SMT and PACT. Consultation with Staff and Trade Union to follow prior to implementation.</p> <p>c) Submit FTO/SFTO JDs to the Moderation Panel. Full effects of any proposals to be carefully modelled to ensure justification and affordability etc</p> <p>Responsibility – HOTS/AHOTS</p>
2	Planned IT investment within Trading Standards to improve the quality and efficiency of information gathering and to enable more effective use of the data in Trading Standards	Progress report: June 2005	<p>Accepted</p> <p>Chief Executive's can either use their own budgets or make a business case to the e-government steering group to access</p>

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	strategy development; for example, Trading Standards officers inspecting business premises would benefit from "palm top" real time technology to facilitate data recording and accessing relevant, up-to-date information. All sources of funding for e-government initiatives should be explored to resource this initiative.		funding for ICT enhancements. Palm tops are currently being trialled corporately - trial is progressing well and potential roll out in a couple of months' time. In order to access Flare on-line, would need to discuss with provider building the interface.  Responsibility - HOTS
5	The developments taking place nationally and locally in Trading Standards and particularly the continuing shift from an "enforcement" culture to a primarily "advice and support" operation, require ongoing training and support for Trading Standards staff to be kept under review; the aim should be to ensure that staff are able to develop and maintain the right "people skills", an increasing understanding and positive approach to business together with a continuing practical awareness of the Council's enforcement policy.	31/3/05	Accepted  All front line staff to have received training in 'Customer Care' (or to have had their training refreshed).  Responsibility – AHOTS
17	The post of Advice, Education and Promotion team leader should be created within the Trading Standards team.	31/03/05	Accepted  Submit JD for new post for evaluation. Full effects of proposals to be carefully modelled to ensure affordability as per 1(c) above  Responsibility – HOTS/AHOTS
<b>Meeting targets and measuring performance</b>			
3	Trading Standards should aim to meet, within existing resources, all the minimum standards and 50% of the good practice standards for services to businesses set out in the self assessment exercise.  A plan demonstrating how this will be achieved should be provided to the Executive Member and Audit and Best Value Scrutiny Committee.	1 April 2006  Plan to scrutiny committee at (4).	Accepted  Responsibility – Team Leader, Business Support Team
4	Trading Standards officers should submit a report to Members as soon as practicable detailing the basis on	Full review of progress to	Accepted

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	which the effectiveness of the Approved Trader Scheme will be measured together with associated targets. A full review of progress should be provided to scrutiny after 18 months of operation.	scrutiny at (5).	Responsibility – Team Manager, Business Support
<b>Improving communications</b>			
6	Trading Standards should produce a newsletter for businesses alongside a web based information distribution system to ensure that East Sussex businesses are kept abreast of relevant legislation and local developments such as the Approved Trader Scheme; the aim should be for the newsletter to be self financing using advertising revenue.	First Publication Spring 05	Accepted  Responsibility – Team Manager, Business Support
7	Subject to any statutory prohibitions on disclosure of information extensive use of the Trading Standards' web pages should be made to:  1) extend the “signposting” to enable businesses to access quickly and easily appropriate help and advice;  2) enable access to updated Trading Standards guidance, advice leaflets and newsletter;  3) help businesses better understand the role of Trading Standards and its approach to advice and enforcement;  4) provide details of formal warnings and prosecutions initiated by Trading Standards; and  5) provide details of cases where Trading Standards has determined that the consumer is in the wrong.	tba	Accepted  Introduction of these facilities will have to be timetabled around Web Team's scheduled work plan  Responsibility – HOTS
8	All telephone calls that cannot be answered by Trading Standards should be directed to an answering system that provides for a caller to record a message together with an assurance that an officer will return the call. The recorded outgoing message by the Service should provide the caller	tba	Accepted  Call handling - Access Board chaired by Cllr Tidy will consider as part of roll out of access strategy / distributed hub model - priorities are SSD and Highways. Will also be affected by

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	with other sources of information (such as the website) and details of where to send an email if preferred. The resulting telephone messages and emails could then be prioritised efficiently and targeted to an appropriate member of staff.		Consumer Direct. Responsibility – HOTS
<b>Improved working with external agencies</b>			
9	Trading Standards should request Chambers of Commerce and other appropriate organisations to assist with the widespread dissemination of its newsletter and other relevant business guidance and information; if resources permit and it becomes necessary, small grants should be considered for these organisations.	31/03/05	Accepted Responsibility – Team Manager, Business Support
10	Legal and Trading Standards officers should meet with magistrates' associations and magistrates' clerks with a view to increasing magistrates' understanding of issues around Trading Standards cases, in particular the fact that only the most serious offenders are prosecuted. The aim of this dialogue should ultimately be to increase the likelihood of costs being awarded in the Council's favour.	31/03/05	Accepted Seek availability of a slot at the Non-Police Court Users Group  Responsibility – AHOTS / Legal Services
11	The Council should, via the Local Government Association (LGA), highlight to the Lord Chancellor's Department the difficulties caused for enforcement agencies by the unpredictability of the timetabling of court proceedings which can often mean a prosecution case is lost because witnesses cannot or do not attend.	31/12/04	Accepted Responsibility – AHOTS / Legal Services
12	Trading Standards should ensure that its own procedures for handovers to new members of staff in partner agencies are robust by working with all of them to develop agreed handover procedures based upon ongoing, proactive liaison and communications.	31/03/05	Accepted Responsibility – Team Manager, Enforcement
13	Trading Standards should monitor the effectiveness of	To be taken account of in	Accepted

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	working with police through their Operations Coordinators in areas where such posts exist. If the approach proves successful, the Council should proactively campaign for a similar approach in areas where the police have not adopted this approach.	next year's business planning	Responsibility – Team Manager, Enforcement
14	Trading Standards should seek to use the full range of legislative powers and resources available to partner enforcement agencies to increase the effectiveness of enforcement against the most serious offenders.	To be taken account of in next year's business planning	<p>Accepted</p> <p>Collaborative working with partner enforcement agencies already occurs. Such joint working is dependent on the availability of officers from other agencies at mutually convenient times. The effective operation of the co-ordinators referred to in recommendation 13 should assist in more cohesive planning of joint enforcement operations.</p> <p>Responsibility – Team Manager, Enforcement</p>
15	Trading Standards should continue to seek opportunities for closer working with district and borough councils by, for example, undertaking mutual "mystery shopping" exercises to test each others service responsiveness and effectiveness; and seeking to counter the perception by businesses that there is not a consistent and joined up service between Trading Standards and Environment Health authorities.	Ongoing	<p>Accepted</p> <p>As explained to the committee the roles of the two organisations are different when dealing with businesses but, as a recent example of good practice, the 'Buy With Confidence' good trader scheme offers an opportunity for some joint working with (or the need to refer certain matters to) Environmental Health departments (eg Health &amp; safety issues that may be identified at audit). The scope for 'mystery shopping' will be explored but such an exercise may require skills not currently available to the organisations concerned.</p> <p>Responsibility – Team Manager, Business Support</p>
16	<p>Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) in East Sussex should be approached to:</p> <p>1) seek joint funding for promotion of local legislation along the lines of the Kent County Council Act 2001 to improve the ability of Trading Standards and the police to fight crime, and</p>	31/03/05	<p>Accepted</p> <p>1) This recommendation can only be pursued if adequate resources can be secured.</p> <p>2) Approaches will be made to the CDRPs in the current budget round.</p>

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	2) contribute towards the funding of Trading Standards' participation in targeted, joint crime fighting operations with the police.		Responsibility – Team Manager, Enforcement