

## Trading Standards Service

### SERVICE PLAN 2018 - 2020

#### CONTENTS

1. Our Role and Purpose
2. The Key Challenges Facing the Service
3. Current Medium Term Priorities
4. Key Risks
5. Equalities Issues
6. Environmental Issues
7. Service Budget Plans
8. Monitoring Arrangements

#### Appendices:

- a. [Service Plan for the Enforcement of Food and Animal Feed Standards](#)
- b. [Enforcement Programme for Tobacco Products](#)
- c. [Enforcement Programme for Aerosol Paint Products](#)
- d. [Enforcement Policy](#)

## **1. Our Role and Purpose**

The aim of the service is to ensure a fair and safe trading environment which protects the well-being of Leicestershire people and supports legitimate businesses to grow.

The Trading Standards Service is a consumer protection and fair trading enforcement service. It deals with a wide range of criminal and civil laws designed to protect consumers and safeguard legitimate businesses.

The service is part of Regulatory Services. The core functions of the Trading Standards Service are:

### **Business and Consumer Services**

- (i) Ensure compliance with legislation at business premises liable for an inspection including importers and fulfilment houses.
- (ii) Reduce unsafe goods being imported through East Midlands Airport.
- (iii) Provide business advice to support business growth and in particular SMEs within their first 18 months.
- (iv) Protect consumers from unsafe goods.
- (v) Provide a Primary Authority relationship to businesses.
- (vi) To reduce the number of complaints received by identified businesses.
- (vii) Ensure compliance with the sales of age restricted products.

### **Food Chain and Metrology**

- (i) Safeguard the human food chain
- (ii) Help to prevent, control and eradicate disease in farm livestock.
- (iii) Provide a safe environment for those living or working near to where petroleum and explosives are stored.
- (iv) Ensure that farmed livestock welfare standards are maintained.
- (v) Check the safety and legality of animal feed.
- (vi) Provide confidence to businesses and consumers that metrological equipment is accurate and weight indications on products are not misleading.

### **Unfair and Rogue Trading**

- (i) Prevention and detection of rogue trading and take enforcement action to prevent and disrupt illegal trading.
- (ii) Safeguarding vulnerable consumers from financial exploitation.
- (iii) To be the initial contact point within the service, handling and distribution of complaints, enquiries and low level advice/signposting.
- (iv) The gathering and analysis of intelligence.
- (v) Ensuring a reduction in the prevalence of illicit tobacco and alcohol.

## **2. The Key Challenges and Issues Facing the Service:-**

- (i) Ensuring that expenditure and income for the service is within the approved budget allocation and that savings and efficiency targets are met.
- (ii) Responding appropriately to staffing pressures to enable the continued effective operation of the service.
- (iii) Responding to the County Council's Transformation agenda.
- (iv) A reducing budget requires a more 'intelligence led' approach in which the Service focusses on those unfair trading practices which present the highest risk of collective harm to consumers and seek to undermine the economic wellbeing of legitimate businesses. There is a continuing need to balance the available resources between

- preventive strategies, such as providing business advice, and proactive enforcement, for example, tackling rogue traders who seek to prey on vulnerable members of society.
- (v) The service is partly funded by the National Trading Standards Board (NTSB) to undertake market surveillance at East Midlands Airport (EMA) to ensure products imported are safe. EMA is the UK's second busiest cargo airport handling over 320,000 tonnes of flown cargo every year. As detection methods and enforcement processes improve the Service is required to provide a greater enforcement response to prevent unsafe and non-compliant products from entering the market via EMA. The service is currently funded by NTSB for this work, however, funding is reviewed annually and the sustainability of the project remains uncertain.

### **3. Current Medium Term Priorities**

The priorities for the Trading Standards Service have been informed by the Leicestershire County Council's Strategic Plan 2018-22 Which outlines five strategic outcomes;

#### **Strong Economy**

Leicestershire's economy is growing and resilient so that people and businesses can fulfil their potential.

#### **Wellbeing and Opportunity**

The people of Leicestershire have the opportunities and support they need to take control of their health and wellbeing.

#### **Keeping People Safe**

People in Leicestershire are safe and protected from harm.

#### **Great Communities**

Leicestershire communities are thriving and integrated places where people help and support each other and take pride in their local area.

#### **Affordable and Quality Homes**

Leicestershire has a choice of quality homes that people can afford.

The priorities for the Trading Standards Service have also been informed by the National Trading Standards Board and The Trading Standards East Midlands enforcement threats for 2018/9 which are:-

Doorstep crime: Home improvements, Energy and personal goods.

- (i) Doorstep crime: Distance scam.
- (ii) Food fraud.
- (iii) Illicit tobacco and alcohol.
- (iv) Product Safety.
- (v) E-crime.
- (vi) Intellectual property infringement.

Taking into account all of the above priorities, the following are the objectives for the service for 2018/19:-

#### **Objective 1:**

**We will tackle rogue traders who exploit vulnerable consumers and provide support to scam victims and develop a cohesive approach to financial safeguarding.**

We will achieve this by:-

- Committing to the Trading Standards East Midlands Regional Control Strategy for Doorstep Crime, Home improvements, Energy and personal goods.
- Committing to the Trading Standards East Midlands Regional Control Strategy for Distance Scams.
- Working with partner agencies to provide a coordinated approach to financial safeguarding.

We will measure success by:-

- Reporting against the measures given in the respective regional control strategies which includes areas such as the number of victims supported, the number of referrals received from banks and partner agencies and the number of enforcement outcomes.

## **Objective 2:**

**We will support the growth of Leicestershire businesses and ensure they are informed and compliant with Trading Standards legislation. We will prioritise our resources to tackle those traders that cause the most harm and detriment to consumers and businesses.**

We will achieve this by:-

- Working with other regulators to achieve best practice and joined up working.
- Provide advice in accordance with our Business Advice Policy.
- Only visiting businesses where there is a need and on a risk assessed basis.
- Tackle unsafe and unfair trading practices that seek to undermine the prosperity and growth of business and enterprise.

We will measure success by:-

- Evaluating the % satisfaction with the Trading Standards Service through regular surveys with businesses.
- The number of interactions with businesses and formal outcomes achieved.

## **Objective 3:**

**We will contribute to the National Trading Standards UK Ports and Borders Project to prevent unsafe and non-compliant products from entering the market via East Midlands Airport.**

We will achieve this by:-

- Contributing to the strategic direction of the project.
- Collaboration with Trading Standards Services across the UK working in partnership with UK Border Force to ensure enforcement resources are allocated to tackling those goods that cause the most significant risk to consumer safety.

We will measure success by -

- Submission and evaluation of statistical returns relating to the identification, analysis and seizure of products.

#### **Objective 4**

**We will undertake our statutory obligations to enforce standards for food and animal feed to maintain the integrity of the food chain. We will ensure that farmed animal welfare standards and disease control measures are maintained throughout the supply chain.**

We will achieve this by -

- Adhering to our separate Service plan for the [Enforcement of Food and Animal Feed Standards](#). This specifies the work we will do in relation to all aspects of undertaking enforcement activities with food and animal feed.

We will measure success by:-

- Reporting against the criteria agreed in the Service Plan which includes areas such as the number of visits undertaken, samples taken and complaints handled.

#### **Objective 5**

**We will reduce the availability of illicit (non duty paid and counterfeit) tobacco and deter the sale of age restricted products e.g. cigarettes and alcohol to underage purchasers.**

We will achieve this by:-

- Conducting intelligence led enforcement activities throughout the supply chain.
- Undertake media campaigns to increase the awareness of the issues around illegal tobacco.
- Adhering to our [Enforcement Programme for Tobacco Products](#).

We will measure success by:

- The number of enforcement activities undertaken and the amount of tobacco seized.
- Monitoring the number of complaints received following media campaigns.
- Analysis of levels of compliance, in particular post.

#### **Objective 6:**

**We will improve service delivery by developing staff in order to maximise flexibility and match changes in the services we provide and the communities we serve.**

We will achieve this by:-

- Ensuring we have appropriately qualified staff to undertake the work.
- Supporting staff to undertake formal qualifications.
- Provide bespoke training and development opportunities for staff in order to meet all the objectives set out above.
- Ensuring that all qualified staff retain their statutory qualification and adopt best practice by providing appropriate continuous professional development opportunities.
- Ensuring staff are empowered to deliver high quality services, enable specialisms to be developed and removal of barriers to undertaking work.
- Adopting the County Council's new stated values which set out the attitudes and approach to work expected of all LCC employees.

We will measure success by:-

- Undertaking customer satisfaction surveys.
- Workforce profiling.

#### 4. Key risks to the service

The following risks are identified in the Regulatory Services Risk register for the Trading Standards Service:-

Identified risk	Current controls/activities
<b>Management of the budget</b> If the service does not spend within budget then it will not be able to meet its target.	Managers manage budget and record any variances.  Take action if budget overspending by deciding how to rectify the situation.  Service to take action if budget overspending by deciding how to rectify the situation.
<b>Deliver competent service</b>  If the service fails to enforce a trading standards case satisfactorily its public protection statutory duty will not be fulfilled.	Competent well trained staff with good management support supplemented with appropriate ICT hard and software.  Monitor procedures, review customer complaints and encourage staff to suggest improvements with a view to reducing the risk by learning from and improving on current experiences.

#### 5. Equalities issues

The County Council recognises the importance of fair treatment (eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation) and promoting equal access to services and employment. For this reason we have committed to maintaining the 'Excellence' level of the Equality Framework for Local Government which will act as a tool to assist us in embedding good equality and diversity practice.

Our main equality objectives are -

- (i) Ensuring that Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments are undertaken and managed and monitored for all service areas. Where an EHRIA is not required, the reasons for this are assessed and understood.
- (ii) That the service works towards meeting the Chief Executive's Departmental Equality Monitoring Targets in particular the service will aim to achieve a fully representative workforce.
- (iii) Ensuring that any changes in legislation or corporate policy are implemented within the Service.
- (iv) Ensuring that due regard has been paid to equality and human rights issues in the decision making process and in undertaking regulatory activities.

## **6. Environmental issues**

Leicestershire County Council is committed to good environmental practice and being one of the best performing county councils in England on environmental issues.

The service will support all environmental targets set for the authority and is monitored against the Chief Executive's departmental targets for:-

- Total waste
- Green Recycling
- Business mileage
- Paper use
- Reduce Computer inactivity

We will achieve this by ensuring that all staff:

- Complete the Environmental Awareness E-learning module.
- Reduce paper usage.
- Manage all PC's to reduce inactive time.
- Reduce business mileage.
- Recycle as much waste as possible within our office.
- Subject to legal considerations the Service will aim to minimise the environmental impact when disposing of forfeited goods.

## **7. Service Budget plans**

The net revenue funding for Trading Standards is £1.4 Million. This does not include 'Support services'. There is no capital allocation for the Trading Standards Service in 208/19.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

Progress with the Service's priorities and objectives will be monitored through progress review meetings of the Service Management Team.

Progress on the Illicit Tobacco Enforcement Plan will be assessed and monitored through quarterly reporting and performance meetings with Public Health.