

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL AND SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

TRADING STANDARDS JOINT COMMITTEE

DATE: 10 APRIL 2024

**LEAD OFFICER: AMANDA POOLE
ASSISTANT HEAD OF TRADING STANDARDS**

SUBJECT: 2023/24 PERFORMANCE TO MID MARCH

1.0 SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

- 1.1 The Buckinghamshire Council and Surrey County Council Trading Standards Service Joint Committee is asked to note the summary of performance of the service from April 2023 to mid-March 2024 (Annex A).
- 1.2 The information provided shows that the Service is performing well across the range of indicators and is delivering some excellent activity against key performance indicators.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Trading Standards Joint Committee notes the Service's performance.

3.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 3.1 The Joint Committee is required by the Inter Authority Agreement which underpins the service to:
 - a) Ensure effective performance of the Service. This includes reviewing performance by considering performance against the agreed measures.

4.0 PERFORMANCE DETAILS:

- 4.1 The performance of the joint service is measured through key performance indicators agreed by the Joint Committee. The Joint Committee reviews performance at all their meetings. Due to the timing of this Joint Committee meeting, it is not possible to give a full year report, so summary data has been provided to mid-March. A full year report will be provided at the Joint Committee's next meeting.
- 4.2 There are currently no statutory performance indicators for Trading Standards and there is no formal performance benchmarking data available for comparison of the key performance indicators.



- 4.3 The Service contributes data to the “Impacts and Outcomes Framework for Trading Standards” (developed by the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers (ACTSO)) which shows the combined national impact of Trading Standards Services.
- 4.4 The Joint Committee will note that some of the performance indicators for the joint Service have no targets. They are purely indicative of a situation and should be read alongside others to form an overall picture of the work the Service is doing and reacting to which contributes towards the overall priorities (but does not directly control the outcome). Examples of this type of indicator include the number of businesses breaching food legislation or breaching animal health and welfare legislation. This is not directly in our control but we will need to respond to these breaches and will be providing advice which will prevent some breaches from occurring.
- 4.5 **A key Service priority is to protect the most vulnerable, tackling fraudulent, illegal and unfair trading practices.** As part of this the Service seeks to increase the financial impact of our investigations and interventions including with scam victims. To the end of February the financial impact of our interventions related to scams and frauds was over £3.1 million. This is ahead of the £2,878,557 for the full 22-23 year. The report in Annex A summarises other activities in this area.
- 4.6 **Our second key priority is to help businesses to thrive by maintaining a fair trading environment.** Research shows that a positive regulatory environment can contribute significantly to economic development and sustainable growth, improving the openness of markets and creating a less constricted business environment for innovation and entrepreneurship. It can protect compliant businesses by enabling fair competition and promoting a level playing field and provide business with the confidence to invest, grow and create new jobs.¹ Supporting businesses to understand what they need to do to be compliant is a vital part of a positive regulatory environment, ensuring that they can confidently focus their resources in the right areas .
- 4.7 Having seen some turbulence in the business landscape in the early part of the year we have since been affected by the financial situation at Woking Borough Council. Woking BC were a key partner providing Environmental Health advice through our Single Point of Contact Network. Their withdrawal from most of this work has reduced our number of partnerships and we will not reach our target for the year as a consequence.
- 4.8 A new indicator for this year in relation to advice we provide to businesses who we do not have established Primary Authority Partnerships with, looks at the percentage of business enquiries we fully respond to within 10 working days. This has a target of 60% and the indicator is currently green, consistently exceeding the target since April. The target will be increased for next year.
- 4.9 **Improving the health and wellbeing of people and communities is the third key priority for the Service;** this includes tackling the supply of unsafe,

¹ [Regulation and Growth \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

dangerous or age restricted products and working to maintain the integrity of the food chain, including food quality, nutrition, and animal health.

- 4.10 The report in Annex A summarises the activity in this area and there are separate, more in depth, reports to this Joint Committee on activity in relation to vapes and tobacco.

5.0 CONSULTATION:

- 5.1 No external consultation has taken place.

6.0 RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 All significant risks affecting the service (which include items beyond budget and performance) are regularly considered by the management team (two monthly for red and amber risks, 6 monthly for green risks).
- 6.2 Where risks become higher, these are shared with the Trading Standards Board for awareness and discussion.

7.0 FINANCIAL & VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Service has delivered all elements of the original business case.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The 2015 Inter-Authority Agreement provides the legal framework within which the Service operates. As set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report, the Joint Committee is responsible for ensuring the effective management of the Service and maintaining financial oversight. The Service's performance is then subject to scrutiny in the participating authorities in the normal way.
- 8.2 The report makes a number of references to relevant legal processes and proceedings that the Service has been involved in over the last year. There are no other specific legal issues that need to be drawn to the attention of the Committee.

9.0 EQUALITIES & DIVERSITY

- 9.1 The performance being reported will not impact on residents or staff with different protected characteristics, as such an Equality Impact Assessment has not been included.

10.0 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

- 10.1 Performance continues to be reviewed by the Service Management team and by the Joint Service Board.

REPORT DETAILS

Contact Officer(s):

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Mr Steve Ruddy, Head of Trading Standards 01372 371730

Consulted:

Annexes:

Annex A: Performance Summary Report April 2023 – mid March 2024

Sources/background papers:

ENDS