

Proposed intervention - Transforming Regulatory Services (to be led by LACORS)

Background

The majority of LACORS work has been focused on addressing the outcomes of the Hampton Review and the better regulation agenda with further work planned for 2007 on our recruitment and profile raising initiatives. The proposed Transforming Regulatory Services intervention project has three main themes consisting of:

1. Influencing the Hampton and Better Regulation agendas;
2. Raising the profile of regulatory services;
3. Recruitment and retention within regulatory services.

The LACORS project will contribute directly to the 'People and Places' vision through the following work streams and interventions:

1. Redesigning regulatory services for greater effectiveness and efficiency;
2. Local economic development;
3. Addressing the new performance framework.

Themes and priority work streams

1. Redesigning Regulatory Services for greater effectiveness and efficiency

Development of the Home Authority Principle (HAP): HAP started as a voluntary arrangement between authorities focussing on coordinating enforcement action and ensuring that local authorities were not duplicating effort. Work currently underway and planned for 2007 includes:

- Developing and issuing a template home authority agreement for those businesses and local authorities that wish to have formalised arrangements;
- Development of a fast track arbitration process;
- Facilitating regional seminars for local officers on the HAP in autumn 2006;
- Lobbying of the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) to take on a voluntary but binding arbitration role between businesses and local authorities.

Implementing the Large Organisations and Partnership Pilot (LOPP): working with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to test the most effective approach for health and safety regulators to partnership working with large organisations. The objectives of LOPP include presenting a more coherent customer-focused face to large organisations (those with 10,000+ employees), including coordination of inspections, securing improvements in health and safety outcomes and exploring how to use large organisations influence to effect change and improvement more widely.

Lessons learned from the Retail Enforcement Pilot: This DTI sponsored project allows the better joining up of fire safety, environmental health and trading standards inspections on the ground, with officers from one discipline acting as "eyes and ears" for others, where appropriate, to maximise efficiency and reduce the inspection burden. Moving on from the two pilot areas (Bexley and Warwickshire) to five new cluster areas should provide robust outcomes to be properly evaluated so that the focus stays on the areas that deliver benefits to businesses and local authorities; these can then be rolled out further.

2. Local economic development

Work to support the outcomes of the Hampton and Better Regulation agenda so that local business can operate more efficiently while protecting consumer interests and needs. Our work to help councils more effectively tackle rogue traders will help create a more level playing field for competition.

Development and Engagement with the Local Better Regulation Office LBRO:

LACORS will, on behalf of local government, work with the DTI and other agencies to influence the final structure of LBRO and ensure it adds value and not unnecessary bureaucracy to local government regulatory services. LACORS has identified a series of key lobbying points including the retention of key regulatory services within local councils and a risk based approach by regulatory services that focuses enforcement on the businesses that put the public, consumers, workers and the environment at greatest risk, such as in the new Food Standards Agency draft Enforcement Strategy.

***Promoting the HSE Enforcement Strategic Enabling Program (STEP)** is seeking to gain widespread understanding and support for the role of “formal enforcement activities” in promoting sensible standards of health and safety. A significant LACORS/HSE work stream is developing a clearer understanding of who is a “rogue” in relation to health and safety offences.*

***Supporting the Proceeds of Crime Act:** LACORS will help local authorities in their new role of seizing criminal assets under the Act by supporting national networks to share best practice for financial investigation.*

3. Addressing the new performance framework

***Leading the drive for improvement:** The Tavistock Institute research project will allow LACORS to lead a debate about the future of regulation at a local level, particularly in identifying issues around performance improvement in the medium/long term. LACORS will develop a programme to support and drive improvement in local regulatory services as part of the wider local government improvement agenda.*

***The Public Protection Achievement Award:** following the LACORS/DTI/FSA 2006 MJ public protection award, LACORS will be introducing a “Safer communities” category of the LGC (Local Government Chronicle) Sustainable Communities Awards to help raise the profile of regulatory services and promote the link with key policy agendas.*

***Supporting Peer Review:** LACORS has doubled the number of trading standards services undertaking peer review and will support further reviews across other regulatory services and share best practice.*

***Innovation in Recruitment and retention:** LACORS is looking at ways to support recruitment and retention in regulatory services, including development of a forum to allow exemplar authorities test, develop and drive innovative practice across the sector and short courses for aspiring managers from regulatory services to widen their corporate skills.*

Contact Officer: Derek Allen Derek.allen@lacors.gov.uk 0207 665 3850