

14 September 2015

LGA review of trading standards services

Purpose

For discussion and direction.

Summary

This report informs the Board of an LGA review of trading standards services launched following the Board's discussion at its meeting in June.

Recommendation

That the Board notes the activities outlined and provide direction on the LGA's position.

Action

Officers to progress as directed

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LGA review of trading standards services

Background

1. At its meeting in June, the Board discussed the Chartered Trading Standards Institute's (CTSI) proposal for the creation of strategic trading standards authorities. The discussion indicated significant concern among Board members linked not only to the proposal, but also CTSI's suggestion that central government, rather than councils, should look further at the issue.
2. In response to that discussion and at the agreement of previous lead members, officers have launched a short review of trading standards services. This follows on from our earlier Remodelling Public Protection report, which highlighted the challenges regulatory services are experiencing following cuts to council funding.
3. Government has also recently launched a review of trading standards services. Led jointly by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO), this cross-government review is looking at central government's requirements from trading standards services.
4. This paper provides details of the LGA project and invites the Board's views on key issues.

Outline of review

5. The project will operate on a short task and finish basis and has the following objectives:
 - 5.1. On the basis of political and senior managerial input from across local government, analyse what local government needs from its trading standards service, with reference to both the current state of the service in England and what it can practicably deliver in the context of further funding reductions.
 - 5.2. Subsequently explore and assess the options for the future of the service, with a view to outlining a series of recommended next steps.
6. As part of the research and data gathering stage, we are currently conducting a survey of all trading standards services in order to map resourcing and structures (including National Trading Standards) and reviewing the list of trading standards' statutory duties. This information will be pulled into a report intended to inform two stakeholder group discussions scheduled for October.
7. A list of stakeholder group members is included as an annex to this document. The Board are invited to nominate a representative to take part in the group's discussions.
8. The aim of the workshops is to identify and develop a local government view on the future of trading standards services, including key local service priorities (and conversely, those areas which are not local priorities) and what trading standards can feasibly be expected to deliver following significant resource reductions. This will help inform whether or not the stakeholder group believes there is a need for changes in the way trading

standards services are delivered. It will also inform any discussions with government arising from the conclusions of its review into the service.

9. Following the stakeholder workshops, we will assess progress and identify whether there is scope for further work and discussion. A final report will be published at the end of the review.

Key themes and questions for discussion

10. We would welcome the Board's views on the following issues in particular:

- 10.1. In broad terms, what are the key local priorities for trading standards services? How do these differ between different councils?
- 10.2. Would the Board be concerned if central government's review proposed the removal of some statutory responsibilities that it concludes a) trading standards are not currently fulfilling and b) could be more effectively delivered by other bodies?
- 10.3. What might be the implications of devolution and new governance models on trading standards and other regulatory services?

Trading standards in Wales

11. The review is limited to trading standards services in England, although we are liaising closely with colleagues at WLGA and will share the survey and other findings with them.

Financial implications

12. The review is being supported through normal staff and resource budgets.

Summary note - the future of trading standards services LGA project

Background

In June 2015, the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) published a vision which called for the creation of strategic trading standards authorities, potentially to operate outside of existing local government structures. CTSI argue that the current model of trading standards is 'broken' following significant cuts to trading standards, and called on government to commission detailed work on the future of the service.

The LGA recognises some of the challenges outlined by CTSI, but believes that the starting point for this type of discussion must be the service's activities and the outcomes they contribute to, rather than structures. It also believes that an analysis of this nature should be locally led and reflect the needs of local government as a whole.

Outline and objectives

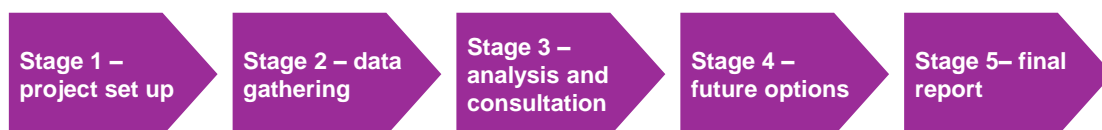
The LGA is therefore launching a piece of work to examine the future of trading standards with the following objectives:

- 1) On the basis of political and senior managerial input from across local government, analyse what local government needs from its trading standards service, with reference to both the current state of the service in England and what it can practicably be expected to deliver in the context of further funding reductions.
- 2) Subsequently explore and assess the options for the future of the service, with a view to outlining a series of recommended next steps to further explore and take forward.

The project will operate on a task and finish basis.

Project activities and outcomes

The project will be structured in the following stages:



Key activities will include:

- Developing a comprehensive picture of the current state of the service, in terms of statutory duties, service activities, resourcing and structures and the key outcomes this supports.
- Seeking the views of councillors and senior local government managers on what local government needs from its trading standards services, including through facilitated discussions and workshops
- Identifying whether there is a consensus view of local government's requirements for the service, and the possible options for delivering this.

The project will run concurrently to BIS's review of how trading standards contributes to competition policy and better regulation, announced in July's [Productivity Plan](#). It is anticipated that the conclusions from the LGA and BIS reviews will be brought together at an appropriate point in the work.

The LGA expects to publish a final report summarising the discussions, outcomes and any planned further activity on the issue.

Submission of views and further information

Although the LGA intends to set up stakeholder groups for this work, we welcome information and views from anyone within the local government community and beyond.

To submit information, or to find out more about this piece of work, please contact the project lead Ellie Greenwood ellie.greenwood@local.gov.uk

Stakeholder group

Name	Representing / Role
TBC	LGA Safer and Stronger Communities Board
Cllr David Burbage	LGA Conservative group (Leader, RB Windsor)
Cllr Paul Convery	LGA Labour group (Exec Member CS, LB Islington)
Cllr Adele Morris	LGA Lib Dem group (LB Southwark)
Cllr Graham Whitham	LGA Independent group (LB Sutton)
Cllr Bronwen Behan	Deputy Leader, Malvern Hills DC / Worcs Regulatory Service
Lord Toby Harris	Chair, National Trading Standards
Nathan Elvery	SSCB CEX rep (CEX LB Croydon)
Robin Tuddenham, Susan Betteridge	SOLACE Rep (Dir of Communities & Service Support, Calderdale) / Lead Officer West Yorkshire Joint Service
Phil Norrey	CEX Devon (CCN)
Richard Flinton	CEX North Yorkshire (CCN)
Steve Robinson	CEX Cheshire West and Chester (CCN)
Diana Terris	CEX Barnsley
Steve Jorden	Exec Director / Head of Paid Service, South Hams / West Devon DC
Mike Hainge	Service Director, Public Realm Milton Keynes
Yvonne Rees	Strategic Director, Customers and Communities Surrey
Richard Webb	ACTSO (Trading Standards and Comm Safety Mgr Oxfordshire)
Stuart Benson	ACTSO (Ass Head Public Protection and Business Support Cornwall)
Rob Gardner	ACTSO (Trading Standards Manager - Lambeth)
Leon Livermore	Chartered Trading Standards Institute - CEX
Melissa Dring	Chartered Trading Standards Institute - Policy Director