

Select report type  
Name of Committee

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**Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting**

Audit Committee – 01 November 2024

**Report Title**

Trading Standards Update

**Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?**

No

**Assistant Director Approving Submission of the Report**

Sam Barstow, Assistant Director, Community Safety & Street Scene

**Report Author(s)**

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**Ward(s) Affected**

All

**Report Summary**

This report provides an overview of the Audit activity conducted within the Trading Standards service and provides an overview of the actions taken in order to improve service delivery, in line with the requirement of the Audit Report.

**Recommendations**

That the progress in completing the actions of the Audit is noted.

**List of Appendices Included**

None

**Background Papers**

None

**Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel**

No

**Council Approval Required**

No

**Exempt from the Press and Public**

Yes or No? If yes, use text below.

No

## **Trading Standards Update**

### **1. Background**

- 1.1 The Council's Regulation and Enforcement service area discharges the Council's Trading Standards enforcement and regulatory functions delivering largely statutory obligations over a range of over 300 statutory instruments.
- 1.2 The Trading Standards function was audited between September and December 2023 with a draft report released on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024.
- 1.3 The Trading Standards team, at the time of audit consisted of 2FTE enforcement officers, 0.5 Trading Standards Officers, and 1FTE unqualified Trading Standards Officer, together with a Trading Standards Manager.
- 1.4 The Audit report made thirteen recommendations, with a number of sub clauses, relating largely to evidence storage and procedure, which in total amounted to twenty-six clauses to be actioned.

### **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 The Audit recommendation actions have a completion timeline up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. It is anticipated that all actions will be completed three months ahead of schedule.
- 2.2 Fourteen of the twenty-six clauses recommended for action had been completed by the end of June 2024; by the end of August 2024 only two actions had not been reported as completed, one of which has been completed but has a submission date of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025 (this action relates to six monthly management audits, which are now in place).
- 2.3 The one remaining action to complete relates to processes mapping of procedures, work upon which is currently underway with a completion date of 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024.
- 2.4 Twelve of the recommendations were relatively simple to address through amendments to the existing Evidence Storage Procedure of 2021 which were completed within two weeks of the draft report being released. Staff were consulted during this period before the revised and reviewed procedure was formally released to staff at the end of May 2024.
- 2.5 Whereas provision for audits of evidence storage were previously provided for, an enhanced approach has been implemented which includes Service Manager audits every six months along with quarterly Manager audits.
- 2.6 Staff training in respect of evidence storage has been refreshed and re-emphasised to ensure officers understand fully their responsibilities, through practical application of the procedure.

2.7 All recommendations completed to date have been supported with appropriate evidence and oversight provided prior to sign off on completion.

### **3. Options considered and recommended proposal**

3.1 Further submissions of audit action completions are due on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025, with the final action to be completed already progressing.

3.2 Internal service audits will continue on a quarterly basis by managers and on a six-monthly basis by the Service Manager.

### **4. Consultation on proposal**

4.1 This report does not contain any proposals or decisions and therefore consultation is not required

### **5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision**

5.1 This report does not propose a decision however timelines are highlighted within the narrative provided.

### **6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications (to be written by the relevant Head of Finance and the Head of Procurement on behalf of s151 Officer)**

6.1 This report does not propose a specific decision and therefore there are no direct financial or procurement implications. Work delivered to date has been met by existing service budgets.

### **7. Legal Advice and Implications (to be written by Legal Officer on behalf of Assistant Director Legal Services)**

7.1 This report does not propose a specific decision and therefore there are no direct legal implications.

### **8. Human Resources Advice and Implications**

8.1 This report does not propose a specific decision and therefore there are no direct HR implications.

### **9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults**

9.1 This report does not propose a specific decision and therefore there are no direct implications for Children, Young People or Vulnerable Adults.

### **10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications**

10.1 This report does not propose a specific decision and therefore there are no direct equality issues to consider.

## **11. Implications for CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions and Climate Change**

11.1 This report does not propose a specific decision and therefore there are no direct issues relating to emissions to consider.

## **12. Implications for Partners**

12.1 This report does not propose a specific decision and therefore there are no direct implications for partners.

## **13. Risks and Mitigation**

13.1 This report does not propose a specific decision and therefore there are no additional activities to mitigate risk. The audit process itself and the actions carried out as a result are seeking to mitigate the risks identified within the initial audit report. .

13.2

### **Accountable Officer(s)**

Sam Barstow, Assistant Director, Community Safety & Street Scene