

Service and Community Impact Assessment (SCIA)

Front Sheet:

Directorate and Service Area:

Social and Community Services: Trading Standards

What is being assessed:

Review of out of hours activity/testing (16SCS17)

Responsible owner / senior officer:

Richard Webb

Date of assessment:

November 2014

Summary of judgement:

It is proposed that there are changes to Trading Standards non-staffing budgets as follows-

- Increased income resulting from the service managing the South East Regional Intelligence Analyst function.
- Reduced product sampling and testing budgets.
- Reduced overtime budgets (resulting in reduced out of hours and weekend work).

The second and third of these proposed changes will result in some changes to service levels. However, any impact from reduced sampling and testing budgets is likely to be off-set by an increase in sampling and testing activity funded externally and/ or improved targeting of the remaining budgets. Reductions in overtime budgets will reduce out-of-hours and weekend working. However, some out-of-hours and weekend working will continue (only a 33% reduction in budget is proposed) and this remaining activity will be focussed on activities which the greatest potential to protect vulnerable people or protected groups in line with the normal approach to service prioritisation adopted by the service.

No significant negative impacts have been identified through the completion of this Service and Community Impact Assessment.

Detail of Assessment:

Purpose of assessment:

This assessment identifies the potential impact on individuals and communities of proposed changes in Trading Standards non-staffing budgets. These proposed changes are-

- Increased income resulting from the service managing the South East Regional Intelligence Analyst function.
- Reduced product sampling and testing budgets.
- Reduced overtime budgets (resulting in reduced out-of-hours and weekend work).

Social Value

Under the Public Services (Social Value Act) 2012 the Council also has an obligation to consider how the procurement of services contracts with a life value of more than £173,934¹ might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the area affected by the proposed contract, and how it might act to secure this improvement. However, it is best practice to consider social value for all types of contracts, service delivery decisions and new/updated policies. In this context, 'policy' is a general term that could include a strategy, project or contract.

Context / Background:

The Trading Standards Service provides a range of functions linked to enforcing consumer protection legislation. These activities include investigating complaints, inspecting business activities and advising businesses.

The vast majority of the Trading Standards Service's activity takes place within normal office hours. However, some activity has to take place outside normal office hours. Examples of out-of-hours activities follow:

- Testing whether shops illegally sell alcohol to persons under 18 years of age takes place during the afternoon and evening.
- Monitoring livestock markets requires early morning attendance at these markets.
- Some urgent issues require work into the evening or night to resolve, for example when suspects are arrested and taken into custody.
- Monitoring activity at weekend markets.
- Taking witness statements can require work in the evenings when witnesses are available.

¹¹ [EC Procurement Threshold for Services](#)

On occasion, expert analysis or advice is required. Examples of when the service commissions testing or analysis include:

- Food analysis for composition, assessment of the accuracy of nutritional claims or compliance with standards.
- Testing products against standards, for example the testing of toys against safety standards.
- Expert advice on building work including opinion on whether work has been carried out as stated or work was required as may have been claimed.
- Testing of agricultural products (e.g. livestock feed) for composition and to ensure they do not contain banned substances.

Oxfordshire Trading Standards works within a collaborative group of authorities across the South East. This group, Trading Standards South East, works together on areas of shared interest to maximise efficiency and achieve economies of scale. This group now employs an intelligence analyst to help identify and address regional consumer protection problems.

Proposals:

It is proposed that the service's budgets change as follows-

- a) A reduction in overtime budgets from £15k to £10k.
- b) A reduction in sampling and testing budgets of £10k.
- c) An increase in income resulting from Oxfordshire managing the regional intelligence function.

Overtime: A reduction in overtime budgets would necessitate a reduction in out-of-hours and weekend work undertaken. The majority of this work will still continue but changes will be needed. These include reducing out-of-hours attendance at livestock markets and reducing attendance at weekend events. The service has already reduced the amount of age restricted sales test purchasing carried out as a result of a new Code of Practice that restricts this activity.

All activities that the service undertakes outside of normal office hours will continue but some will be reduced. In future, the priorities for overtime will be urgent issues that cannot be postponed, issues that affect vulnerable people or communities and requirements of external bodies (e.g. to meet the DEFRA framework agreement on animal health and welfare).

Sampling and Testing: Sampling and testing will continue but routine sampling work will be reduced. Therefore, the service will commission analysis or expert opinion where required for response to priority issues (e.g. where food chain integrity may be affected) and where necessary for the investigation of complaints that fall within our complaints prioritisation policy. In addition, the service will seek to increase the amount of externally funded testing and analysis that it undertakes (for example, the Food Standards Agency meets some local authority costs for food sampling and the service will use this funding where possible).

Regional Intelligence: The service will be managing the TSSE regional intelligence analyst position. All costs for this function will be met by TSSE and the service will receive some additional funds to off-set management overheads.

Evidence / Intelligence:

Sampling and testing: The service already uses intelligence to target its sampling and testing work on issues where there are grounds to believe that problems exist. Routine sampling or testing on products where there is no intelligence to suggest a problem infrequently results in new issues being identified. There is a significant increase in the use of intelligence to target activity, with regional and national intelligence now being available. Therefore a reduction in routine testing is appropriate.

Overtime: from analysis of the overtime spend of the service it has been identified that it is possible to reduce overtime spending without any significant adverse consequences to service delivery.

Alternatives considered / rejected:

At a time when funding is reducing for Council services it is appropriate that the Council looks to ensure that where Trading Standards resources are deployed it is in those situations where there is the greatest level of risk and potential detriment to the local community.

The service continues to undertake community engagement work, focussed on identifying the needs of vulnerable groups in the community. The service also continues to provide a consumer support services to assist vulnerable people to resolve problems that they are unable to resolve without support. The service also focusses resources on tackling practices targeted at vulnerable groups (e.g. doorstep crime which affects mainly older people). These services are unaffected by this

proposal but in reviewing options to reduce service costs changes to these services were also considered.

Impact Assessment:

We assess the impact of decisions on any relevant community, but with particular emphasis on:

- Groups that share the nine protected characteristics
 - age
 - disability
 - gender reassignment
 - pregnancy and maternity
 - race – this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality
 - religion or belief – this includes lack of belief
 - sex
 - sexual orientation
 - marriage and civil partnership
- Rural communities
- Areas of deprivation

We also assess the impact on:

- Staff
- Other council services
- Other providers of council services
- Any other element which is relevant to the policy or proposed service change

Impact on Individuals and Communities:

The Council will continue to respond to those consumer and business complaints where the Council are the most appropriate body to do so, and where there is a significant level of both harm and urgency.

The Council will focus its limited resources on those issues that have the potential to cause the greatest level of detriment to the local community or to vulnerable people. In doing so, the Council will not only address the individual complaint presented but also the root cause and wider potential harm. These proposals do not affect the Council's response to any issues that affect vulnerable persons or protected groups. They will not have any direct impact on any specific community or group of people.

- Age. No specific impact identified.
- Disability. No specific impact identified.
- Gender reassignment. No specific impact identified.
- Pregnancy and maternity. No specific impact identified.
- Race. No specific impact identified.

- Sex. No specific impact identified.
- Sexual orientation. No specific impact identified.
- Marriage and civil partnership. No specific impact identified.
- Rural communities. No specific impact identified.
- Areas of deprivation. No specific impact identified.

Impact on Staff:

No adverse impact on staff has been identified.

Impact on other Council services:

No specific impact identified.

Impact on providers:

No specific impact identified.

Social Value

If the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 applies to this proposal, please summarise here how you have considered how the contract might improve the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area.

How might the proposal improve the economic well-being of the relevant area?
N/A

How might the proposal improve the environmental well-being of the relevant area?
N/A

Action plan:

Action	By When	Person responsible
Review of impact of any reductions in sampling, testing or overtime work.	September 2015	Richard Webb

Monitoring and review:

Person responsible for assessment: Richard Webb

Version	Date	Notes (eg Initial draft, amended following consultation)
V1	14/11/2014	Initial draft