

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AND SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL
JOINT TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE COMMITTEE**

DATE: 2 NOVEMBER 2015

**LEAD OFFICER: STEVE RUDDY
HEAD OF TRADING STANDARDS**

SUBJECT: JOINT SERVICE MID YEAR PERFORMANCE UPDATE

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

The Buckinghamshire County Council and Surrey County Council Trading Standards Service Joint Committee is asked to note the performance of the Service in the first half of the financial year, since April 2016. The report covers performance against seven high level indicators as well as details of performance against the service budget.

The information provided shows that, overall, the Service is performing well and is delivering excellent results against key performance indicators and that it is projected the Service budget will be under spent at outturn, achieving all the savings projected in the Business Case for the shared service and exceeding income generation targets for the year.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Buckinghamshire County Council and Surrey County Joint Trading Standards Service Committee:

- i. notes the Buckinghamshire County Council Joint Trading Standards Service's performance since 1 April 2016; and
- ii. notes the Buckinghamshire County Council Joint Trading Standards Service's financial position.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

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 formally reviewing performance annually by considering performance against the agreed measures and agreeing performance measures for the Service in advance of the start of each financial year; and

- b) maintain financial oversight of the Service and ensure sound financial management.

PERFORMANCE DETAILS:

2. The performance of the joint service is measured through seven key performance indicators which are detailed in the attached Quarter 2 Performance Report.
3. A key priority for the Service is to protect residents from harm and financial loss. In the first half of the year a notable success in relation to this was the use of financial investigation and the Proceeds of Crime Act to obtain £97,650 in compensation for the victims of a rogue landscape gardener. The rogue trader had preyed on elderly and vulnerable victims who were unable to look after their own gardens and, following an investigation by the Service, was convicted of several fraud and money laundering offences in 2015. Customers had complained that queries about price or the standard of work led to threats, verbal abuse and aggression. In one case, a woman in her 90s was charged £24,500 for work worth only £400. In another case, a man was charged £17,000 for work valued at £200.
4. The Service's work to protect and support victims of scams, based on intelligence from the National Scams Team continues to grow. In the first six months of the year this work has led to savings of over £575,000 for elderly and vulnerable residents.
5. The Service's second key priority is to help businesses thrive. Primary Authority Partnerships continue to grow strongly with the focus this year on developing relationships to increase the impact of each partnership.
6. Improving the health and wellbeing of communities is also a key priority for the Service and more detailed analysis of work in this area is given in the Food and Feed Enforcement Plan agenda item.

BUDGET 16/17:

7. It is projected that the budget will be under spent at outturn this year. All of the savings projected in the joint service business plan will be achieved as planned.
8. The projected under-spend is a result of income being ahead of target, and from staff turnover and the challenges in quickly recruiting back to posts that become vacant.

CONSULTATION:

9. The Trading Standards Joint Management Board have been consulted on performance and budget.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:

10. All significant risks affecting the service (which include items beyond budget and performance) are considered by the management team each quarter.

FINANCIAL & VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

11. The Service is delivering all elements of the business case and is not anticipating an overspend in 16/17.
12. The strong foundation created by the shared service will enable it to achieve the additional annual marginal efficiency savings agreed at the March Joint Committee meeting without damaging service delivery.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

13. The Inter-Authority Agreement completed by Buckinghamshire and Surrey County Councils prior to the launch of the Service in April 2015 provides the legal framework within which the Service operates. This is working effectively and there is no current need to amend this in any way. Managers in the Service will continue to keep this under review.
14. In the event that the forecast underspend is realised at the end of this financial year, the surplus monies will be returned to Buckinghamshire and Surrey in accordance with their respective percentage contributions towards the Service's budget for the year.
15. The report makes a number of references to relevant legal processes and proceedings that the Service has been involved in over the last six months and there are no other specific legal issues that need to be drawn to the attention of the Committee.

EQUALITIES & DIVERSITY

16. 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.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

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

Contact Officer(s):

Mrs Amanda Poole, Assistant Head of Trading Standards 01296 388770
Mr Steve Ruddy, Head of Trading Standards 01372 371730

Consulted:

- Phil Dart, Director Communities, Bucks CC
- Yvonne Rees, Strategic Director Customer & Communities, Surrey CC

- David Cogdell - Legal Services, Surrey County Council
- Susan Smyth, Strategic Finance Manager

Annexes:

Annex A: Key Performance Indicators Quarter 2 2016/17

Sources/background papers:

None