

**London Boroughs of Brent and Harrow  
Trading Standards Advisory Board  
22 March 2010**

**Report from the Head of Trading Standards**

FOR INFORMATION

**Trading Standards Budget for 2010/2011**

**1.0 Summary**

1.1 This report provides Members with the latest information concerning the Trading Standards Budget for 2010/2011 together with the implications on service delivery.

**2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 That Members consider this report and comment where appropriate.

**3.0 Financial Considerations**

3.1 The whole report relates to the finance of the Trading Standards Service.

3.2 Although this report does not itself have financial implications, it reflects the position of the Trading Standards budget for 2010-11 following the budget making process in both Brent and Harrow Councils.

**4.0 Background**

4.1 Over the past four years both Brent and Harrow Councils have reduced the amount that they provide for the provision of Trading Standards services in their respective boroughs (see table below). Since 2006/07 the total budget has been reduced by 10%.

	<b>2006/07</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
<b>Brent</b>	£1,041K	£963K	£956K	£886K
<b>Harrow</b>	£844K	£816K	£816K	£816K
<b>Total</b>	£1,885K	£1,779K	£1,772	£1,702

4.2 A major organisational review of the Trading Standards Service in 2006/07 resulted in the loss of four management posts and created a much leaner staffing structure.

Following annual budget cuts thereafter (see above), there has been a repeated deletion of posts with the result that there are five fewer FTE posts now than there were at the beginning of 2007/08. This represents a reduction in staff complement of 15%, which has had a dramatic effect on a relatively small workforce. Meanwhile other efficiency measures have been introduced which have produced a Service that now spends 67% of its financial resources on the provision of its frontline services. This figure is supported by both the recent Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) survey that Brent Council commissioned and the 2007/08 CIPFA statistics.

## 5.0 **Staffing Implications**

- 5.1 As a result of the budget provided by Brent and Harrow for the 2010-11 financial year the current staffing levels will be maintained but it is possible that some frontline services may have to be reduced or cut.

## 6.0 **Detail**

- 6.1 At the Trading Standards Advisory Board meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009, Members considered report No.03/09 concerning the Trading Standards budget for 2010/2011. In the discussion which followed, concerns were raised by Members regarding the detrimental impact that a budget reduction could have on the Service. The Board noted that Trading Standards was operating an excellent service and that a reduction in budget could seriously affect the Service's ability to continue to provide such a high standard of service for the residents of Brent and Harrow. However, it was also recognised that due to the financial climate, budgets in all service areas were under considerable strain and that reductions may be unavoidable. It was suggested by a member of the Board that the Chair may wish to write a letter to the relevant committees asking them to take into account the previous budget cuts when considering the future funding of the Trading Standards Services in their respective boroughs.
- 6.2 Brent is providing a total budget of £886,000 for the 2010-11 financial year. However, during 2009-10, they provided an identical amount of £886,000, the net effect of which is a 'cash freeze' which means that there was no increase for inflation or for staff salaries.
- 6.3 For the 2010-11 financial year, Harrow is providing a budget of £828,000, which represents an inflationary increase of 1.5% from the previous year's contribution of £816,000.
- 6.4 The combined Brent and Harrow budget for the Service for 2010-2011 will be £1,714,000. This equates to Brent contributing 51.7% and Harrow contributing 48.3% to the total budget. The overall work output will be as detailed in report 05/09, which appears later on the agenda for this meeting. As a result of this, there will be a slight reduction in service delivery with respect to the Brent outputs and it is not envisaged that there will be any reduction in service delivery for Harrow. An even greater amount of re-prioritisation will occur with some realignment of activities which will invariably mean that we, as a Service, will become less proactive and more reactive.

## 7.0 **Background Information**

7.1 2010/2011 Budget File.

Any person wishing to inspect the above should contact N Bilon, First Floor, 249 Willesden Lane, London NW2 5JH, telephone 020 8937 5500.

NAGENDAR BILON  
HEAD OF TRADING STANDARDS