

London Boroughs of Brent and Harrow Trading Standards

Joint Advisory Board – 22nd March 2012

Report Number. 04/11 of the Head of Trading Standards

For Information

TITLE OF REPORT: TRADING STANDARDS BUDGET FOR 2012-2013

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report provides Members with the latest information concerning the Trading Standards Budget for 2012-2013 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 2012-13 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 2008/09, the total Trading Standards budget has been reduced by 27%, Brent (30%) and Harrow (25%).

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Brent	£956K	£886K	£886K	£676K
Harrow	£816K	£816K	£828K	£625K
Total	£1,772	£1,702	£1,714	£1,301

4.2 A major organisational review of Brent Council services took place in 2011-12 which resulted in the centralisation of the Trading Standards support officers and the cessation of the civil advice service that was previously offered to Brent and Harrow residents. As a result of this, there was a reduction of £210K (25%) and £203K (25%) in the contribution from both Brent and Harrow Councils respectively. Apart from deleting the civil advice service and centralisation of the support services, the above mentioned savings were achieved through a leaner management structure with greater 'spans of control'. The full implications of the above mentioned restructuring was reported to Members during the Joint Advisory Board meeting on 28th November 2011 (report number 02/11).

- 4.3 The recent restructure led to number of redundancies and redeployments as a result of which the staff complement has reduced from 29.5 FTE to 19.5 FTE, reflecting a 34% reduction in Trading Standards staffing levels.
- 4.3 The new structure was implemented in August 2011 at the same time when the move from Willesden Green to our temporary accommodation in Wembley prior to the impending move to the new Civic Centre in 2013. I am pleased to say that we have managed to secure suitable storage space for our evidence at a nearby location.
- 4.4 As previously stated in my report Number 03/11, it is envisaged that additional savings can be made through the Proceeds of Crime incentivisation scheme which would provide a further reduction in the contribution made by both Brent and Harrow Councils towards the 2011-12 budget. I am pleased to say that as a result of the cases undertaken by our Accredited Financial Investigators, it is highly likely that each borough will receive £25K at the end of this financial year, thereby reducing the respective 2011-12 Brent and Harrow budgets to £651K and £600K. Furthermore, approximately 80% of the total expenditure from the Trading Standards budget is spent on the provision of front line services and therefore, any further reduction in this budget will undoubtedly result in a significant decline in service delivery to the extent that some of our statutory functions will not be fulfilled.

5.0 **Staffing Implications**

- 5.1 Assuming that there are no further reductions in the Trading Standards budget by Brent and Harrow Councils for the financial year 2012-13, the current staffing levels will be maintained. However, as already outlined above it is possible that some frontline activities will have to be reduced.

6.0 **Detail**

- 6.1 For a standstill budget, Brent and Harrow Councils will have to provide a budget of £676,000 and £625,000 respectively for the 2012-13 financial year. This will result in a slight decrease in service delivery due to inflationary costs for goods and services but not as a result of salary increases as there are no plans for pay rises during 2012-13.
- 6.2 The combined Brent and Harrow budget for the Service for 2012-2013 will be £1,301,000. This equates to Brent contributing 51.9% and Harrow contributing 48.1% to the total budget. The overall work output will be as detailed in report 05/11, which appears later on the agenda for this meeting. As stated above, there will be a slight reduction in service delivery with respect to the Brent and Harrow outputs and activities. An even greater amount of re-prioritisation will occur and some services will cease which will invariably result in the Service becoming less proactive and more reactive.

7.0 **Background Information**

- 7.1 2012/2013 Budget File.

Any person wishing to inspect the above should contact N Bilon, Third Floor, 349-357 High, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 6BZ, telephone 020 8937 5500.

NAGENDAR BILON
HEAD OF TRADING STANDARDS