



Trading Standards Joint Advisory Board

Tuesday 3 November 2026 at 6.00 pm

To be held as an online virtual meeting

The press and public are welcome to attend this meeting by viewing the live webcast. The link to view the meeting is available [HERE](#)

Membership:

Members Councillors:	Representing	First alternates Councillors:	Second alternates Councillors:
P.Patel (Lead)	Harrow	Blackman	Harrow
Suresh	Harrow	Greek	Harrow
Halai	Harrow	Murphy-Strachan	Harrow
A.Patel (Lead)	Brent	M Butt	Brent
Dar	Brent	Dixon	Brent
Burn	Brent	Kansagra	Brent

For further information contact:

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Notes for Members - Declarations of Interest:

If a Member is aware they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest* in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent and must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If a Member is aware they have a Personal Interest** in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent.

If the Personal Interest is also a Prejudicial Interest (i.e. it affects a financial position or relates to determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission, or registration) then (unless an exception at 14(2) of the Members Code applies), after disclosing the interest to the meeting the Member must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item, except that they may first make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to the matter, provided that the public are allowed to attend the meeting for those purposes.

***Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:**

- (a) **Employment, etc.** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit gain.
- (b) **Sponsorship** - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of election; including from a trade union.
- (c) **Contracts** - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between the Councillors or their partner (or a body in which one has a beneficial interest) and the council.
- (d) **Land** - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.
- (e) **Licences** - Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.
- (f) **Corporate tenancies** - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which the Councillor or their partner have a beneficial interest.
- (g) **Securities** - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

****Personal Interests:**

The business relates to or affects:

- (a) Anybody of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management, and:

- To which you are appointed by the council;
- which exercises functions of a public nature;
- which is directed is to charitable purposes;
- whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy (including a political party or trade union).

- (b) The interests of a person from whom you have received gifts or hospitality of at least £50 as a member in the municipal year;

or

A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting, to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the electoral ward affected by the decision, the well-being or financial position of:

- You yourself;
- a member of your family or your friend or any person with whom you have a close association or any person or body who employs or has appointed any of these or in whom they have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000, or any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are a director
- any body of a type described in (a) above.

Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Item	Page
1 Election of Chair	
To be appointed from members of the London Borough of Brent for this meeting.	
2 Apologies for Absence and Clarification of Alternate Members	
3 Declarations of Interests	
Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, any relevant personal or disclosable pecuniary interests in the items on this agenda.	
4 Minutes of Previous Meeting	1 - 6
To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 30 June 2026 as a correct record.	
5 Matters Arising	
6 Deputations (if any)	
7 Joint Advisory Board Mid Year Report 2026-27	7 - 10
This report presents a short mid-year update on the Service's performance, highlighting key achievements and challenges.	
8 Joint Advisory Board Report Organised Crime on our High Streets	11 - 16
This report is to inform Members of the increasing presence of serious and organised criminality operating through retail premises on UK high streets and the implications for Brent and Harrow in relation to Trading Standards activity.	
9 Date of Future Meetings	
Members are asked to note the remaining meeting agreed between Brent & Harrow for the 2026-27 Municipal Year as follows:	

- Thursday 4 March 2027 at 6pm to be hosted online by the London Borough of Harrow

10 Any Other Urgent Business

Notice of items to be raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Deputy Director Democratic & Corporate Governance (London Borough of Brent) or their representative before the meeting in accordance with the constitutions of both Councils.



LONDON BOROUGH OF
HARROW

Trading Standards Joint Advisory Board

Minutes

30 June 2026

Present:

Chair: Councillor Pritesh Patel London Borough of Harrow

Councillors:	Chetna Halai	London Borough Of Harrow
	Krishna Suresh	London Borough of Harrow
	George Burn	London Borough of Brent
	Tariq Dar	London Borough of Brent
	Anup Patel	London Borough of Brent

1. Election of Chair

RESOLVED: That Councillor Pritesh Patel (London Borough of Harrow) be elected as Chair for the municipal year 2026-2027.

The Chair thanked former Councillors who had served on the Board prior to the recent election. Particular thanks were given to Councillor Norman Stevenson, who continues at Harrow Council as Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Public Safety, and to former Councillors Krupa Sheth, Stephen Crabb and Daniel Kennelly for their significant contributions to the Board over the years. The Board wished them well.

2. Welcome and Introduction

The Head of Regulatory Services welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that several new Members were joining the Board for the first time. He explained that the Joint Advisory Board is a statutory body required to

oversee the performance of the Joint Trading Standards Consortium. Brent acts as the lead authority, employing the staff, while Harrow contributes towards the cost of the service. The Board's role is advisory, with a duty to advise the commissioners for both boroughs on the performance of the service.

He confirmed that two reports would be presented that evening, as is customary, and noted that the Board meets three times a year (June, November and March). He encouraged Members to engage with the service throughout their time on the Board, either during meetings or informally with officers outside of meetings.

3. Apologies for Absence and Clarification of Alternate Members

RESOLVED: No apologies for absence were received.

4. Declarations of Interests

RESOLVED: To note that there were none.

5. Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2026 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

6. Matters Arising

RESOLVED: None received.

7. Deputations (if any)

RESOLVED: No requests for deputations had been submitted for the meeting.

8. Trading Standards Annual Report 2025-26

The Senior Regulatory Service Manager advised that the service administers over 250 statutes to maintain a fair and equitable trading environment for consumers and businesses across Brent and Harrow. She noted the shift in trading standards work from high-street enforcement towards online trading, home-based sellers and door-to-door traders.

Staffing: The team comprises 3.5 officers in Brent and 2.5 in Harrow, supported by two accredited financial investigators.

Referrals and Service Requests: The Citizens Advice Consumer Service provides first-tier advice and refers or notifies the service of potential criminal activity. In the last year, 4,355 service requests were received; 1,093 were assessed in Brent and 81 in Harrow, leading to 384 complaints investigated in Brent and 228 in Harrow. The service operates on an intelligence-led, triage basis.

Product Safety: Officers work with partner agencies (e.g. port authorities) on import compliance; one intervention prevented a trader incurring a £20,000 loss through correct labelling.

Illicit Tobacco: A continuing priority area, with inspections carried out at 57 businesses (30 Brent, 27 Harrow), including 11 test purchases (2 resulting in sales). Concealment methods and detection using a sniffer dog were described. Five cases involving seven defendants concluded in court, resulting in £10,800 in fines, £8,200 in costs and £4,400 in victim surcharges.

Letting Agents: Compliance checks on fee transparency, supported by new powers under the Renters' Rights Act, resulted in £13,000 in civil penalties (£4,800 Brent, £8,200 Harrow).

High-Risk Premises: 31 high-risk premises are monitored in Brent and 25 in Harrow, with a recent rise in locksmith-related complaints addressed through trader engagement.

Doorstep Crime and Scams: The service investigates complaints and offers a rapid response where resources allow, distinguishing civil disputes from criminal exploitation.

Underage Sales: Test purchases for age-restricted products resulted in 5 of 33 sales in Brent and 3 of 51 in Harrow, mostly involving vaping products. Prosecutions led to £2,200 in fines and £2,394 in costs.

Business Support: The service supports compliant businesses through Primary Authority partnerships (e.g. IKEA) and a Responsible Trader scheme.

Proceeds of Crime: Confiscation orders totalling £1,726,548 were secured, with 774 production orders served and one restraint order ongoing. Cases included work carried out on behalf of Islington Trading Standards and unauthorised property conversions in Brent.

Staff Recognition: The Team Leader was recognised with a College of Fellows award from the Chartered Trading Standards Institute.

Following the presentation, Members asked questions and held a discussion.

Members asked how online trading is inspected and monitored. The Officer responded that this work, like all enforcement activity, is intelligence-led and relies on complaints and referrals coming in via the Citizens Advice Consumer Service.

Members queried the current position on paan spitting on the high street. The Officer responded that paan-related street fouling is a waste enforcement matter and not something Trading Standards deals with directly. The Officer added that the service does, however, seize unlabelled paan/tobacco-related products were found in shops, as a related but separate enforcement action, and encouraged Members to continue reporting suspected sales locations.

Members asked whether there is a good rate of recovery for fines, surcharges and cost orders, and whether there was scope to impose higher fines than those recorded in the report. The Officer responded that fines are set by magistrates, and that officers provide comparable case precedents given the lack of formal sentencing guidelines for many offences. The Officer confirmed that costs are generally recovered, sometimes over an extended period, citing an example of a £70,000 cost order recovered on the final day of a two-year payment period. The Officer added that costs can be pursued against company directors personally, as well as against companies, for most offences.

Members asked whether anti-social behaviour or crime activity in a particular area might prompt trading standards enforcement action against a business, rather than the reverse. The Officer responded that enforcement can only be taken where an offence falling within the service's remit is identified, such as underage sales; broader ASB or crime linked to a premises would fall to other agencies. The Officer noted that joint "days of action" with police and other partners do take place in areas of concern. The Senior Democratic Services Officer added that Harrow maintains a database of complaint hotspots and holds regular joint days of action with police, enforcement and planning colleagues, and suggested Brent consider a similar approach.

Members queried a discrepancy in the report regarding fireworks licensing figures, noting that numbers were given for Harrow but not Brent. The Officer clarified that fireworks licensing sits with the Licensing Team in Brent, whereas in most authorities, including Harrow, this function sits within Trading Standards.

Members asked whether enforcement activity is reasonably spread across both boroughs, and whether a map of enforcement locations could be included in future reports. The Officer responded that enforcement activity is intelligence-led rather than tied to fixed locations but agreed to look at whether complaint data could be used to map hotspots. The Officer noted that, based on experience across trading standards authorities, the most deprived areas tend to generate proportionately fewer complaints despite having the greatest need, and that resources are targeted accordingly.

Members asked about fraudulent builders who take payment without completing work. The Officer responded that Trading Standards does not deal with civil disputes directly; such matters are triaged via the Citizens Advice Consumer Service, with genuinely criminal matters escalated to the service.

Members asked whether there is any price control in Brent and Harrow. The Officer responded that there is no general price control regime, and that businesses are free to set their own prices provided pricing is not misleading, with the exception of price-gouging controls introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members also asked whether it is legal for households to bring in tobacco for personal domestic use. The Officer responded that the service does not deal with domestic or personal tobacco use, only tobacco sold or stored in quantity

by businesses, and suggested that queries regarding import duty be directed to HMRC.

The Chair asked how much of the £1,726,548 in confiscation orders referenced in the report had actually been recovered, and what financial benefit had been returned to residents. The Officer responded that recovered funds are distributed according to a statutory formula, broadly 50% to the Home Office, 37.5% to the investigating/prosecuting authority, and 12.5% to the courts, and explained that recovery can take place over an extended period, including through enforced sale of assets where restraint orders are in place.

The Chair asked about the most significant current and emerging trading standards threats affecting both boroughs. The Officer explained that the main challenge was limited resources, which restricted the service's capacity to investigate every complaint received. Illicit tobacco remained a key priority due to its increasing links to organised crime and large-scale distribution. The Officer also highlighted the growing sale of unsafe or uncertified goods online, particularly e-scooters and e-bikes fitted with unsafe batteries and chargers, as an emerging concern. In addition, officers identified a new category of children's toy as an emerging area of concern.

The Chair suggested that a business case be developed to support future funding bids for additional resource to address these emerging threats.

The Chair thanked the Trading Standards team for their work over the past year and separately congratulated the Team Leader on his College of Fellows recognition from the Chartered Trading Standards Institute.

RESOLVED: That the Trading Standards Annual Report 2025–26 be noted.

9. Apprentice 2026 Report

The Senior Regulatory Service Manager advised that the Department of Health and Social Care is funding 80 tobacco and vapes apprenticeships nationally, in support of the forthcoming Tobacco and Vapes Act. An initial bid for one of 11 apprenticeships allocated to London was unsuccessful; a subsequent bid for a further 6 apprenticeships allocated to London was successful, securing one apprenticeship for the service.

The apprentice will spend at least 20% of their time on illicit tobacco and vapes work, including test purchasing, inspections, and education/outreach with schools and community groups, while working towards a trading standards qualification. Recruitment has attracted over 42 applicants, with the aim of the successful candidate starting with the September cohort.

Following the presentation, Members asked questions and held a discussion

The Chair asked which authority the apprentice would be employed under and queried what would happen to the post once Department of Health and Social Care funding ends (expected 2028–29), and how the position would be funded thereafter. The Officer responded that, as the Harrow officers sit under

the Brent consortium arrangement, the apprentice would be employed under Brent but would work across both boroughs. On future funding, the Officer responded that the service would look to build a business case for continued funding, potentially linked to public health budgets, once the value of the role had been demonstrated. The Head of Regulatory Services added that the service's clear intention is to retain trained apprentices wherever possible, noting that natural turnover in an ageing workforce may also create opportunities for a permanent position to be found.

The Chair emphasised the importance of establishing a clear route for apprentices to progress into permanent roles as funding allows, given the ageing workforce in the profession. The Officer agreed to do what could be done to support that process.

RESOLVED: That the Tobacco and Vapes Apprenticeship 2026 report be noted.

10. Date of Future Meetings

NOTED the dates for the provisional schedule of meetings agreed between Brent & Harrow for the 2026-27 Municipal Year:

- Tuesday 3 November 2026 at 6pm to be hosted online by the London Borough of Brent
- Thursday 4 March 2027 at 6pm to be hosted online by the London Borough of Harrow

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.00 pm, closed at 7.06 pm).

(Signed)
Councillor Pritesh Patel

**London Boroughs of Brent & Harrow
Trading Standards Joint Advisory Board
3 November 2026
Report from the Senior Service Manager**

FOR INFORMATION

Brent and Harrow Trading Standards Mid-Year Report 2026/27

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a short mid-year update on the Service's performance, highlighting key achievements and challenges.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Joint Advisory Board Members consider the report and make recommendations or comments where appropriate.

3.0 Details

- 3.1 The Trading Standards Service operates on a joint consortium basis between the London Borough of Brent and the London Borough of Harrow, with Brent being the host authority.
- 3.2 The Service carries out the local authority's statutory duties relating to the legislation enforced by a Weights and Measures Authority. As part of the contractual agreement between the two boroughs, an annual report is presented to the Trading Standards Joint Advisory Board.
- 3.3 The Service has produced a mid-year report to provide members with some information about what it has been doing for the first 6 months of this financial year without having to wait until the publication of the annual report.
- 3.4 A copy of the report for the mid-year review is attached as an Appendix for members' information and consideration. Any future work or pending outcome will be reported in full in the Annual report.

4.0 Financial Considerations

- 4.1 The Brent and Harrow Trading Standards Service was provided with an agreed net budget during this period.

5.0 Legal Considerations

- 5.1 The Trading Standards Service acts as a Weights and Measures Authority which is a statutory, local authority function. The Service is responsible for enforcing a

wide range of legislation relating to consumer protection, fair trading, product safety, metrology, and age-restricted sales, to protect residents and support compliant businesses. To deliver these duties, officers are granted specific statutory powers of entry, inspection, and seizure primarily found under the Consumer Rights Act 2015.

6.0 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Considerations

- 6.1 The proposals in this report have been screened to assess their relevance to equality and were found to have no equality implications.

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

- 7.1 There is no requirement to specifically consult Ward Members about this report as it affects all wards across both Boroughs.

8.0 Human Resources Implications

- 8.0 There are no significant staffing implications arising from this report.

Contact Officer

Any person wishing to obtain more information should contact Anu Prashar, Senior Regulatory Service Manager, Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley Middlesex HA9 0FJ. Telephone: (020) 8937 55215, anu.prashar@brent.gov.uk

ANU PRASHAR
SENIOR REGULATORY SERVICE MANAGER

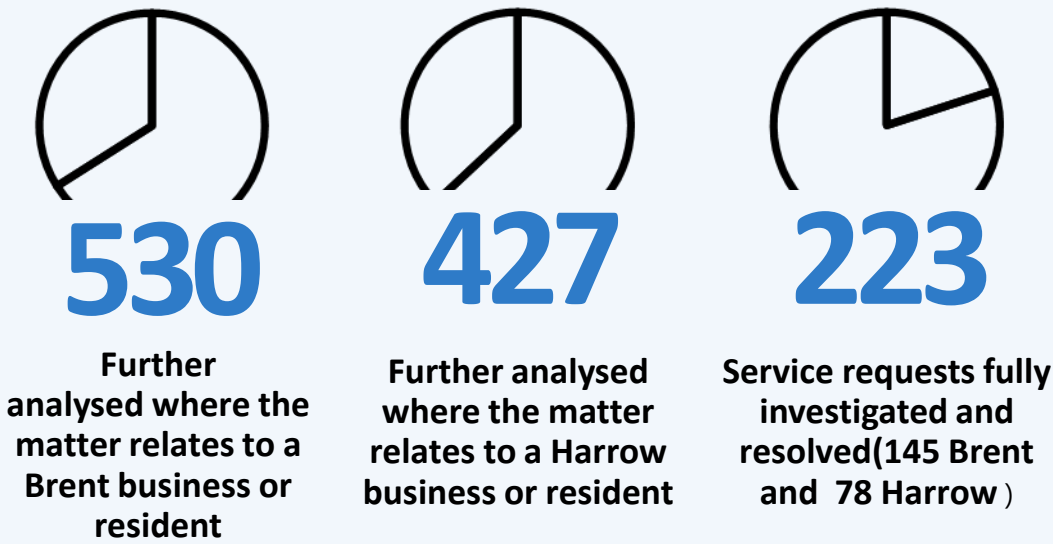
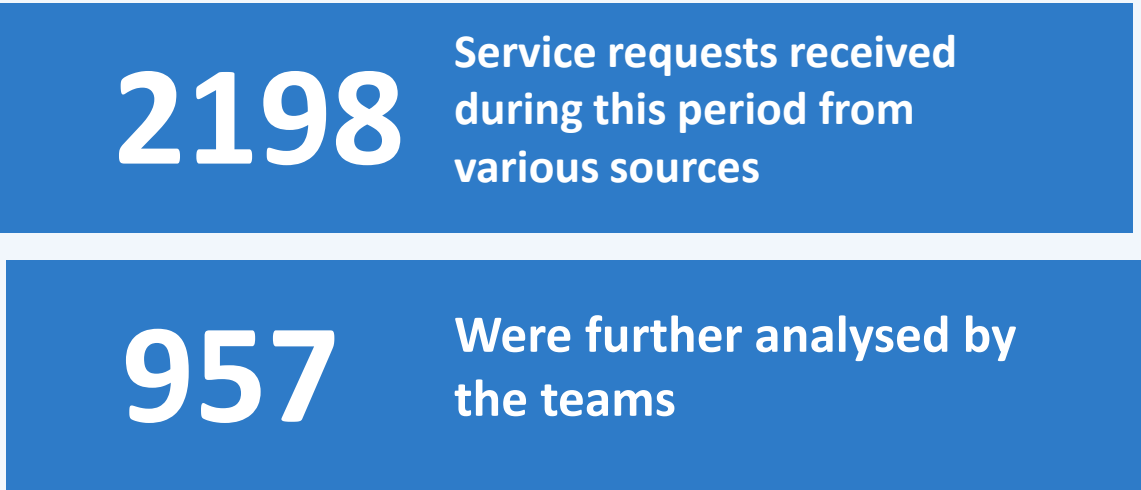
BRENT & HAROW TRADING STANDARDS MID –YEAR REVIEW REPORT 2026/27

The purpose of this report is to provide a mid-year update on the Service’s performance and key achievements, offering a snapshot of activity without waiting for the annual report which follows at year end.

The Service plays a key role in protecting residents and legitimate businesses from harm, financial loss, unsafe products, scams and unfair trading practices, while supporting a safe and confident local economy. Trading Standards also contributes to wider Council priorities, including community safety, safeguarding vulnerable residents, public health and economic resilience. Key areas of work include product safety, illicit and counterfeit goods, age-restricted sales, rogue traders, scams, business compliance and intelligence-led enforcement.

The period began with the loss of an experienced Enforcement Officer to another borough’s Trading Standards and an Assistant Regulatory Services Officer, who secured promotion within Regulatory Services. These departures have unfortunately reduced our staffing capacity, placing additional pressure on remaining officers to maintain service delivery and complete statutory duties. Our current staff numbers consist of 2.37 full time equivalents for both Brent and Harrow. On a positive note, our officers are now supported by two Level 6 Trading Standards apprentices who joined the team in September and, as part of their training, will take on tasks, helping to ease workloads and build future enforcement capacity. Recruitment to the vacant post is also being pursued, although there is a national shortage of experienced Trading Standards Officers and the recruitment market remains very challenging.

The Service receives requests from consumers, businesses, local authorities, ports and enforcement agencies. It prioritises complaints and intelligence involving scams, unfair trading, unsafe products, vulnerable residents and serious offending.



BRENT & HAROW TRADING STANDARDS MID –YEAR REPORT 2026/27

Trading Standards has a range of enforcement options for businesses that deliberately break the law, ignore advice or cause serious harm. These include written warnings, cautions, monetary penalties, undertakings, fines and imprisonment.

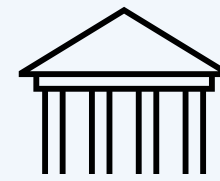
16 Infringement reports completed for various breaches

£6,376 Total cost awarded by the courts from defendants



16

Letters of Warnings issued or recommended following investigation



2

Cases recommended for legal proceedings following investigation

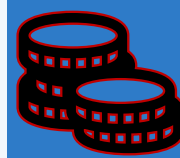


2

Simple Cautions issued & signed by defendants following investigations



3 Cases concluded at the Magistrates' Court, involving 5 defendants



£10,133

Total fines imposed by the Magistrates' Court in concluded cases

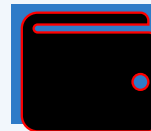
The Service does have two financial investigators who conducts financial investigations for other local authorities



£819,472

Confiscation order made by the courts in Proceeds of Crime Case

The team provides rapid response support to protect residents from doorstep crime. We are pleased to report no urgent callouts have been required, but complaints about building and renovation services have been investigated and residents supported.



SAVED £16,000

Overview of the work of Trading Standards

Trading Standards is a frontline public protection service delivering significant benefits to residents, businesses and the wider Council. The Service addresses consumer protection issues, supports vulnerable residents, removes unsafe products from the market and works proactively with businesses and enforcement partners.

Its work contributes to safer communities, a stronger local economy and public confidence across the borough.

Product safety investigations, business advice and compliance work protect consumers while supporting legitimate businesses. Some preventative work is difficult to quantify but can prevent harm before products reach the market. For example, officers have worked with the Ports and importers on non-compliant goods, including imported toys that failed safety testing and presented a potential choking hazard, affecting approximately 596 products. Officers also examined documentation for a container of porcelain matt tiles held at the Port, where adequate evidence of compliance with the Construction Products Regulation 2011 was not provided. As the importer could not demonstrate compliance, the container was subsequently destroyed.

The 2026/27 work targets are set out in the Service Plan and reviewed regularly, with action plans introduced where needed to maintain progress. Targets assume full staffing of 3.5 Enforcement Officers in Brent and 2.5 in Harrow. As demand varies, targets may change, with final performance reported in the annual report.

The Service has also seen a steady increase in Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, with 13 responded to for each borough during the reporting period. Although not included in the Service Plan targets, these requests require officer time to review and respond to, adding to existing workloads. Common subjects are vaping and tobacco data, but other requests have included gas safety statistics, home improvements, underage sales, petrol pump complaints, counterfeit goods and even a request about weighbridges.

Priorities for October 2026–March 2027

- **Target high-risk activity:** Continue intelligence-led operations against illicit tobacco, illegal vape sales and underage supply specifically with changes being brought in by the Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026
- **Strengthen prevention and partnerships:** Work with council services, police, public health and other partners to improve compliance and reduce harm
- **Focus resources on measurable impact:** Prioritise serious cases, develop staff capability and monitor outcomes against service objectives

**London Boroughs of Brent & Harrow
Trading Standards Joint Advisory Board
3 November 2026
Report from the Senior Service Manager**

FOR INFORMATION

**Serious and Organised Crime on the High Street: The Role of
Trading Standards in Protecting Communities and Supporting
Legitimate Business**

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the increasing presence of serious and organised criminality operating through retail premises on UK high streets and the implications for Brent and Harrow.
- 1.2 The report summarises key findings from the Hidden in Plain Sight: Tackling Crime on the UK's High Streets¹ report published by the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) and the Tackling Illicit Activity in High Street Shops briefing published by the House of Commons Library².
- 1.3 The report outlines the role of Trading Standards in protecting consumers, disrupting criminal activity, supporting legitimate businesses and contributing to wider community safety objectives.

2.0 Recommendations

That Joint Advisory Board Members:

- 2.1 Note the findings set out within this report regarding the emerging national trend of organised crime groups operating through seemingly legitimate retail premises.
- 2.2 Recognise the significant contribution made by Brent and Harrow Trading Standards in tackling illicit tobacco, illegal vaping products, counterfeit goods, unsafe consumer products and other criminal activity.
- 2.3 Supports the continuation of intelligence-led enforcement activity and partnership working across Brent and Harrow.

3.0 Details

National Context

¹ [hidden-in-plain-sight-tackling-crime-on-the-uks-high-streets.pdf](#)

² [Tackling illicit activity in high street shops - House of Commons Library](#)

- 3.1 High streets remain a fundamental part of local communities and economies. However, changing retail patterns, vacant commercial premises and economic pressures have created opportunities for organised criminal groups to establish operations within retail environments.
- 3.2 Evidence presented by the CTSI demonstrates that organised crime groups are increasingly using retail premises to facilitate criminal activity including:
- Money laundering
 - Illicit tobacco sales
 - Illegal vape sales
 - Counterfeit goods distribution
 - Consumer fraud
 - Labour exploitation and modern slavery; and
 - Wider organised criminality.
- 3.3 The National Crime Agency estimates that at least £1 billion criminal cash is laundered annually through high street businesses, particularly cash-intensive business sectors.
- 3.4 The issue has become a national enforcement priority, with government establishing a dedicated High Street Organised Crime Unit and increasing the resources available to enforcement agencies.

Key Findings from Recent National Reports

- 3.5 The CTSI report identifies serious, organised crime operating through retail premises as one of the most significant challenges currently facing the Trading Standards profession.
- 3.6 A survey of Trading Standards professionals found
- 96% had encountered organised crime groups during their duties.
 - 97% were aware of suspected organised crime groups operating from local retail premises; and
 - 99% had observed an increase in cash-intensive businesses opening on local high streets since 2020.
- 3.7 National enforcement activity has identified a range of business types associated with illicit trading, including convenience stores, vape retailers, fast-food outlets and so-called "American candy" stores.

- 3.8 The CTSI report concludes that activity associated with counterfeit goods, illicit tobacco and illegal vaping products is often linked with wider serious criminality including human trafficking, labour exploitation, drug supply and money laundering.

Role of Trading Standards

- 3.9 Trading Standards is the lead enforcement authority in several areas directly linked to illicit high street activity, including:
- Product safety
 - Counterfeit goods investigations
 - Tobacco control;
 - Vape compliance
 - Under-age sales enforcement; and
 - Consumer protection legislation
- 3.10 Although Trading Standards is not the primary agency responsible for investigating serious, organised crime, officers frequently identify offending businesses and gather intelligence that contributes to wider criminal investigations.
- 3.11 Brent and Harrow have diverse local economies and vibrant town centres that rely upon legitimate businesses operating within a fair and regulated marketplace.
- 3.12 The presence of businesses engaged in illicit activity can:
- Expose residents to unsafe products
 - Undermine consumer confidence
 - Create unfair competition for compliant businesses
 - Reduce tax revenues available for public services; and
 - Contribute to wider criminal activity within local communities
- 3.13 Intelligence and enforcement experience locally mirrors trends identified nationally, particularly in relation to illicit tobacco, illegal vaping products and counterfeit consumer goods.
- 3.14 Whilst many businesses within Brent and Harrow operate responsibly and lawfully, a small number of rogue operators continue to present significant risks to consumers and legitimate traders.
- 3.15 Brent and Harrow Trading Standards adopts an intelligence-led approach to

enforcement, focusing resources where risk to consumers and communities is greatest.

3.16 Activity includes:

- Joint inspections with partner agencies
- Targeted intelligence gathering
- Enforcement visits to high-risk premises
- Test purchasing operations
- Seizure of illicit products
- Investigation of counterfeit goods supply chains; and
- Participation in regional and national operations.

3.17 National focus such as Operation Machinize (a nationwide, multi-agency law enforcement crackdown led by the National Crime Agency and the National Police Chiefs) and Operation Zoridon (a police led campaign to disrupt businesses handling stolen goods) ensure that Brent and Harrow remains resilient to the threat posed by criminal enterprises operating through retail premises. To maintain this position, the following priorities are proposed:

- Strengthen intelligence sharing arrangements with Metropolitan Police, Licensing, Planning Enforcement and regional partners to improve identification of high-risk premises.
- Continue targeted interventions within sectors identified as presenting higher risk nationally, including:
 - Vape retailers;
 - Retail convenience stores;
 - Tobacco retailers;
 - Cash-intensive businesses; and
 - Premises subject to repeated complaints.
- Host reporting mechanisms that enable residents, businesses and elected Members to provide intelligence relating to suspected illicit trading activity.

4.0 Financial Considerations

4.1 Any significant new initiatives identified through future enforcement activity will be considered within existing budgetary and governance arrangements.

5.0 Legal Considerations

5.1 Trading Standards officers hold a range of statutory powers to enter and inspect

business premises, examine goods and records, take samples, and investigate potential breaches of consumer protection and trading legislation. These powers support the Service's role in protecting consumers, promoting fair trading, ensuring legal compliance by businesses and help to identify and eliminate organised crime taking root in our high street business premises.

6.0 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Considerations

- 6.1 The proposals in this report have been screened to assess their relevance to equality and were found to have no equality implications.

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

- 7.1 There is no requirement to specifically consult Ward Members about this report as it affects all wards across both Boroughs.

8.0 Human Resources Implications

- 8.1 There are no human resource or property implications arising from this report although it should be noted that the number of staff vacancies currently within the Service may result in a reduced ability to generate income, as well as the continued restrictions during the pandemic.

Contact Officer

Any person wishing to obtain more information should contact Anu Prashar, Senior Regulatory Service Manager, Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley Middlesex HA9 0FJ. Telephone: (020) 8937 55215, anu.prashar@brent.gov.uk

ANU PRASHAR
SENIOR REGULATORY SERVICE MANAGER

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