



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Trading Standards & Licensing Service Delivery Plan 2006/07



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



2003-2004
Rethinking Construction
2004-2005
Crime and Disorder Partnerships

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1 Introduction

The Borough of Stockton-on-Tees covers an area of 20,400 hectares and is an area of contrasts - a mixture of busy town centres, urban residential areas and picturesque villages whilst maintaining a strong industrial presence. The population is around 187,000, living in approximately 75,000 households.

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council has a vital role to carry out in providing quality services to the people of the Borough. Within this setting the Trading Standards and Licensing Service provides an important regulatory function, carrying out a range of duties aimed at protecting consumers and reputable businesses. This protection is provided in relation to virtually the full range of personal and household goods and services, from the purchase of daily necessities to the arrangement of a mortgage.

The overarching goals of Stockton's Trading Standards and Licensing Service can be described as follows:

- To create informed confident consumers
- To create informed successful businesses
- To enforce a safe and fair trading environment

This Plan lays out how the Service intends to work towards these goals during 2006/07. This work will be underpinned by mechanisms designed to review, develop and modernise the Service and to help bring about continuous improvement.

In order to gain a better understanding of the Trading Standards and Licensing Service this Plan will also lay out the context within which the Service operates. This includes setting out core responsibilities, the new challenges and pressures for the forthcoming year and the needs and expectations of local consumers and businesses.

It is also important to stress the aspects of Trading Standards and Licensing work which provide key involvement with both Community and Corporate objectives. Of particular importance here is the role of the Service in promoting the safety and well-being of the community, in further regenerating the Borough and improving the local economy, in securing a safe and attractive environment for current and future generations and in improving the health of the local economy.

The Service does not operate in isolation and takes part in a number of joint working initiatives with numerous partners across a range of activities. The Service will embrace partnership working where it can be used to improve service delivery.

The Authority was awarded an "Excellent" rating in December 2003, following assessment under the Government's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) scheme, designed as a measure of how each Authority is performing. This "Excellent" rating was maintained following the latest round of Government inspection.

In 2005 performance indicators for Trading Standards were included in the CPA scheme for the first time. This will further raise the profile of the Service and present new challenges.

1 Introduction

This Service Delivery Plan is aimed primarily at informing Members of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and local residents within the Borough. It will also be used by the Service itself to focus officer attention on work priorities for the forthcoming year and as a tool by which performance can be measured.

Any feedback on this Plan, good or bad, would be welcomed and can be made in writing to Trading Standards and Licensing, 16 Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1TX, via e mail on trading_standards@stockton.gov.uk or by telephone on 01642 526560



Stockton Council won the 'Most Responsible Local Authority' for its work with the campaign in the Responsible Drinks Retailing Awards in December 2005.



In January 2006 Stockton Council's Trading Standards Consumer Advice Centre became one of only three local authority consumer advice centre in the country to obtain the government's Specialist Quality Mark. The Advice Team is pictured above.

2 Core Responsibilities Of The Trading Standards And Licensing Service

The work of the Service aims to promote open and competitive markets whilst empowering consumers making it easier for them to resolve problems. Only in a safe and fair trading environment, which protects both consumers and reputable business activity, can the local economy succeed and flourish.

The Service's key areas of responsibility can be shown as follows:

Responsibility	Description
Consumer Advice	Advice and assistance for consumers and traders with problems and disputes arising from the supply of consumer goods and services
Product Safety	Monitoring consumer goods to ensure that they are safe and do not present a risk to health
Weights and Measures	Work relating to the accuracy of weighing and measuring equipment in use for trade and the accuracy of quantity declarations made on products
Fair Trading	Tackling counterfeiting, disrupting the 'black' economy and dealing with misleading statements about the price, quality or description of goods and services
Food Standards	Ensuring that food is correctly described and labelled throughout the supply chain, and that compositional standards are adhered to
Consumer Credit	Monitoring the credit licensing regime, and ensuring transparency in credit transactions, documentation and adverts
Agricultural Standards	Ensuring that fertilisers and animal feeding stuffs are of the correct composition and adequately labelled
Age Restricted Sales	Ensuring certain age restricted products are not supplied to children, for example alcohol, tobacco, videos, solvents, butane lighter fuel and fireworks
Road Traffic	Enforcement regarding unroadworthy vehicles, overloaded goods vehicles and weight restricted areas
Environmental Legislation	Includes energy labelling, packaging disposal and motor fuel pollutants
Specialist Services	Metrology and Calibration Service ¹ Product testing laboratory ¹
Licensing Act	Licensing of alcohol, entertainment and late night refreshment.
Transportation Licensing	Vehicle, driver and operator licences for both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.
Other Licensing	Includes charitable collections and fund raising, skin piercing, hairdressers, lotteries & amusements, street trading, sex shops, scrap metal dealers, explosives, poisons, animal welfare establishments and zoos

¹ A joint metrology service, Tees Valley Measurement, is funded by the Borough Councils of Stockton, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Hartlepool and is subject to a formal, written agreement. The Centre provides specialist metrology services and a screening laboratory for product testing.

3 Community, Corporate And Local Objectives

Community Objectives

The Community Strategy sets out the key priorities for the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees. Within the overall policy platform of 'promoting achievement and tackling disadvantage' the Strategy, which is updated annually, sets out key objectives. It can be seen that the Trading Standards and Licensing Service plays a key role in meeting these community objectives in the following ways:

Community Objective	Areas of Trading Standards and Licensing work that link to this objective
Promote the safety and well-being of the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of a fair, safe and equitable market place Providing protection for consumers Product safety enforcement Under age sales enforcement Consumer advice provision Consumer Support Network Product sampling and testing Work to prevent people being the victims of commercial crime by doorstep sellers in their own home Road traffic overloading and unroadworthy vehicles Food standards, labelling, composition and sampling Licensing of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles Licensing for skin piercing, explosives and poisons Smoke Free Stockton Initiative Think B4 U Drink Campaign
Further regenerate the Borough and improve the local economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active targeting of rogue traders Work to disrupt the informal 'black' economy Tackling product counterfeiting Investigation of trading malpractice Advice, assistance and practical help to local businesses Home authority principle Risk based, comprehensive inspection of businesses Provision of wide-ranging calibration service Operation of a Teesside wide" Good Garage Scheme"
Secure a safe and attractive environment for current and future generations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Product safety enforcement Energy labelling for informed choice Accuracy of 'green' claims Fertilisers & feeding stuffs enforcement and sampling Controls on construction products, hazardous substances and packaging requirements Licensing of entertainment, late night refreshment and alcohol under the new Licensing Act
Improve the health of the local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active under age sales enforcement Contribute to the anti-social behaviour agenda, especially re the under age sale of alcohol Product safety enforcement Smoke Free Stockton Initiative Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy Think B4 U Drink Campaign Food standards, composition, labelling and sampling
Improve opportunity and achievement in education and lifelong learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumer advice provision Consumer education Consumer Support Network initiatives

3 Community, Corporate And Local Objectives

Corporate Objectives

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's purpose statement reads: -

“Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council is your Council. We exist to ensure you receive services, which benefit and improve your lives. We will respond to your needs, provide opportunities and support you to build on your strengths”.

The corporate objectives help ensure that the Council have the right people, structures and processes to deliver good services and continually improve. The Trading Standards and Licensing Service work to meet these corporate objectives in a number of ways:

Corporate Objective	Areas of Trading Standards and Licensing work that link to this objective
Putting people first	Consumer advice and education Business advice Home authority principle Staff development and training in line with Investors in People
Managing resources	Service delivery planning Budget reporting Team and management meetings
Working with others	North East Trading Standards Association Consumer Support Network Community Legal Service Partnership Joint Metrology Unit (Tees Valley Measurement Centre) Partnership working in areas of crime prevention and health and safety promotion Information forums
Striving for improvement	Specialist Quality Mark for Consumer Advice Centre Internal quality management procedures Peer review processes Consultation with consumers and businesses and ongoing satisfaction surveys
Performing well	Monitoring performance levels informally and within the corporate performance monitoring framework Inclusion in local authority CPA rating scheme for the first time in 2005/06
Securing the future	Continued commitment to train staff and update knowledge and skills Three members of staff have qualified as Trading Standards Officers within the last year and another two have just enrolled on the qualification course

3 Community, Corporate And Local Objectives

Local Objectives

Local Objective	Areas of Trading Standards and Licensing work that link to this objective
Promote a fair, safe and equitable market place, providing protection for consumers	All areas of Trading Standards & Licensing work contribute to this key local priority
Respond to residents concerns and fears of crime and anti-social behaviour	Control on the supply of products that may influence the incidence of anti-social behaviour, especially the sale of alcohol to children. Links to Safer Stockton Partnership Complaints investigation Intelligence led enforcement Work to prevent people being victims of commercial crime in their own home by doorstep sellers
Improve the public health of the Borough	Controls on the advertising of tobacco products Work to prevent the sale of tobacco to children Links to Smoke Free Stockton initiative Think B4 U Drink campaign as part of the Council's alcohol reduction strategy

4 Government Objectives

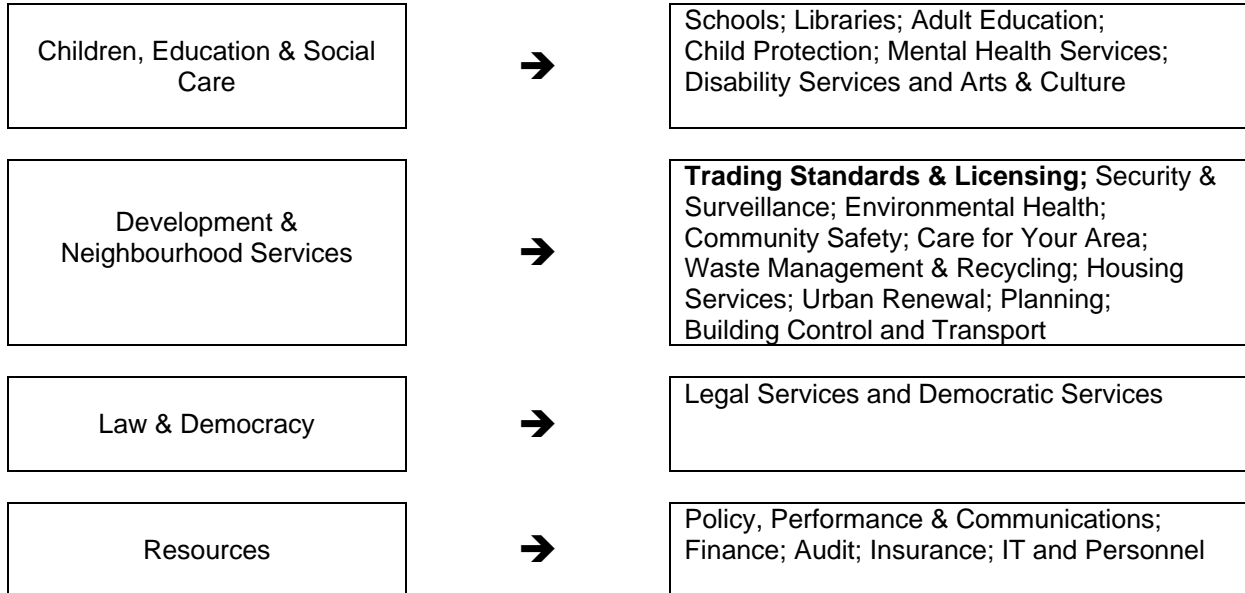
Most central government agencies have now established 5-10 year strategies and have set associated national objectives and targets. The key government strategies which have an impact on trading standards and licensing work are outlined below:

<p style="text-align: center;">Department Of Trade & Industry – Consumer Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • empowering consumers • improving consumer representation • helping consumers and businesses to resolve problems • improving the enforcement of a fair and safe trading environment 	<p style="text-align: center;">HM Treasury</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preventing traders entering the informal economy • improving detection and punishment of traders operating in the informal economy
<p style="text-align: center;">Office Of Fair Trading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making markets work well for consumers • ensuring vigorous competition between fair-dealing businesses • explaining and improving awareness and understanding of how markets work 	<p style="text-align: center;">Department Of Culture, Media & Sport – Licensing Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing crime and disorder in licensed premises • ensuring public safety in licensed premises • preventing public nuisance from licensed premises • protecting children from harm
<p style="text-align: center;">Office Of The Deputy Prime Minister – Creating sustainable communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivering economic prosperity • safe communities • high quality education 	<p style="text-align: center;">Department Of Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing the incidence of preventable premature death from smoking • reducing alcohol dependency • improving the health of the nation
<p style="text-align: center;">Strategy Unit - Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tackling alcohol-related disorder in towns and cities • clamping down on irresponsible promotions • providing better information about the dangers of alcohol misuse 	

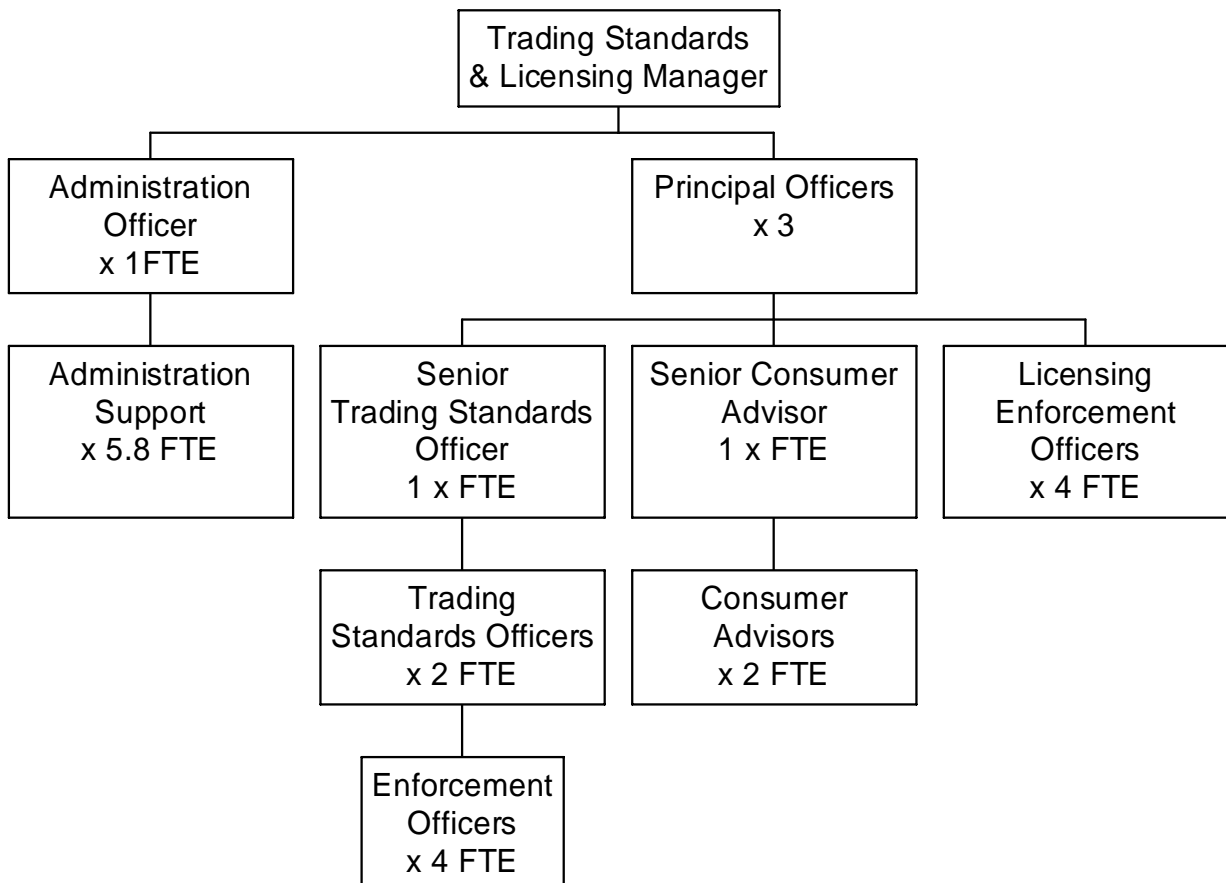
5 Service Profile

Council Structure

The Council's services are delivered by 4 Directorates. Trading Standards and Licensing forms part of the Development and Neighbourhood Services Directorate:



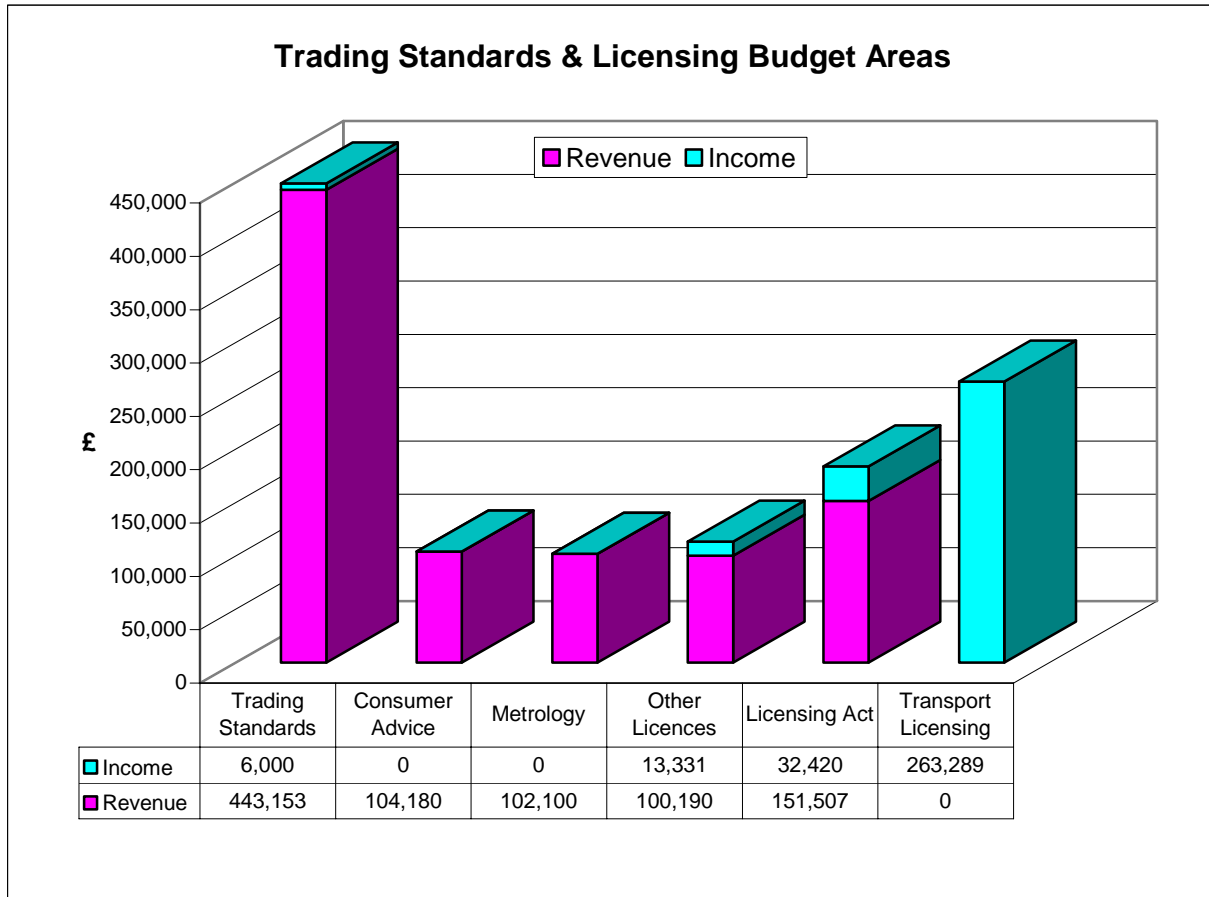
Service Structure



5 Service Profile

Service Budget

The income and revenue for the main service areas are as follows:



6 Partnership Work

The Service does not operate in isolation and takes part in a number of joint working initiatives and information forums with numerous partners across a range of activities. The Service will embrace partnership working where it can be used to improve service delivery.

Area of Service	Partners
<p>Community Legal Service Partnership (CLSP)</p> <p>Aims to support, build upon and co-ordinate the existing network of organisations providing legal advice and help within the Borough</p>	<p>Community Legal Service Voluntary advice agencies Private practice solicitors Other local authority advice providers</p>
<p>Consumer Support Network</p> <p>Aims to ensure that consumers receive good quality consumer advice which is accessible to the whole community</p>	<p>Stockton & District Advice and Information Service (SDAIS) Five Lamps Resource Centre Age Concern Stockton Blind People's Voice</p>
<p>Safer Stockton Partnership</p> <p>In 2004/05 the Council received Beacon Council status for its work on crime and disorder via the Safer Stockton Partnership. The work carried out on alcohol harm reduction played a key role in gaining this award. Working together the partnership has already achieved success in reducing alcohol related harm with initiatives such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation 'Tranquillity' – a voluntary scheme where late night licensed premises and food retailers contribute towards additional policing of town centre areas • Operation 'Sabre' – a joint intelligence led enforcement programme to target problem licensed 'on' premises • Operation 'Scarab' – a joint programme between Community Wardens, Police, Trading Standards and Licensing to target hot spots of anti social behaviour in neighbourhoods and retailers suspected of supplying alcohol to children • Installation of barriers and 'taxi shelters' at the main town centre hackney carriage rank to improve passenger control and safety • Think B4 U Drink campaign – award winning campaign aimed at raising awareness of issues regarding excessive alcohol consumption 	<p>Police North Tees PCT (Public Health) North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Trust Community Safety Road Safety Unit The Albert Centre (Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Centre) Local licensees</p>
<p>Stockton Home Safety Association</p> <p>Aims to promote safety within the home and increase awareness of local safety issues</p>	<p>Fire Service & Police Community representatives & Councillors</p>

6 Partnership Work

<p>Smoke Free Stockton Initiative</p> <p>Aims are to reduce smoking prevalence, increase quit levels, reduce second-hand smoke and reduce illegal sales of cigarettes through initiatives such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on relevant legislation regarding smoking restrictions in public places • Questionnaires to establish customer views on smoking and produce recommendations for further action based on the findings • Guidance on policy development, implementation and enforcement. • Signage for traders to communicate smoking policy to customers 	<p>Stockton Renaissance North Tees Primary Care Trust Tees Start Stopping Service Local councillors and residents Cleveland Fire Service</p>
<p>Billingham And Stockton Town Centre Regeneration Steering Group</p> <p>Works to develop both Billingham and Stockton town centres and our input ensures that consumer protection principles as well as licensing issues are considered</p>	<p>Other Council Services including Planning, Regeneration and Leisure</p>
<p>RIPA Steering Group</p> <p>Aims to ensure that working practices for surveillance and requests for telecommunications data within the authority are consistent and comply with statutory requirements</p>	<p>Other council sections with enforcement responsibilities Legal Section</p>
<p>Violence Reduction Group</p> <p>Monitors the progress of the Alcohol Reduction Strategy on behalf of Police, Local Authority and Health professionals and identifies measures that could be implemented to solve specific violence related problems</p>	<p>Police Fire Brigade Members Health Professionals Youth Offending Team Anti Social Behaviour Team Court Services</p>
<p>Operation Strongbow</p> <p>Aims to deal with the problem of doorstep crime and includes information sharing and joint (mainly Police and Trading Standards) responses when vulnerable consumers are targeted. This year we have provided immediate responses in at least 12 cases. Successful prosecutions have resulted in two cases and a further two are pending</p>	<p>Police Neighbouring Trading Standards Social Services Victim Support</p>
<p>Good Garage Scheme</p> <p>Aims to improve standards in the used car market by ensuring garages trade fairly and honestly. Only those garages complying with specific trading conditions will be permitted to join the scheme giving consumers confidence and reassurance when buying a car</p>	<p>Redcar & Cleveland and Middlesbrough Trading Standards Local businesses</p>

Enforcement And Information Forums

Forum	Purpose
<p>North East Trading Standards Association (NETSA)</p> <p>NETSA is a partnership of 12 North East Local Authority Trading Standards Services: Darlington, Durham, Gateshead, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, North Tyneside, Northumberland, Redcar and Cleveland, South Tyneside, Stockton-on-Tees and Sunderland</p>	<p>Sharing knowledge, information and resources to encourage fair, open and consistent enforcement and to protect, maintain and develop the high public profile of the Trading Standards Service</p>
<p>Consumer Regulation Website</p> <p>Operated by the Office of Fair Trading providing a means for sharing and exchanging information under legislation covered by the Enterprise Act</p>	<p>Sharing knowledge, information and resources to encourage fair, open and consistent enforcement. Contains useful enforcement tools needed for civil action under the Enterprise Act.</p>
<p>Consumer Direct Database</p> <p>Operated by the Office of Fair Trading, it contains details of all complaints (900,000 to date) made to Consumer Direct across the country</p>	<p>Sharing knowledge, information and resources to encourage fair, open and consistent enforcement. Allows identification of problem traders and complaint trends.</p>
<p>Government Agencies Information Network (GAIN)</p> <p>Police, Benefits Agency, Customs and Excise, DVLA, Environment Agency, Immigration Service, NHS, Passport Agency and Vehicle Inspectorate. Membership via NETSA.</p>	<p>Exchange of information, joint participation in enforcement exercises and sharing of resources, such as equipment, when necessary</p>
<p>Food Surveillance Database</p> <p>Food authorities in the northeast region are participating with the second pilot scheme following the introduction of the system in Scotland.</p>	<p>Shared information regarding food samples and analysis results</p>
<p>Tees Valley Licensing Liaison Group</p> <p>This group is a partnership of Licensing Enforcement Services within Stockton-on-Tees, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, Hartlepool and Darlington</p>	<p>Sharing knowledge, information and resources to encourage fair, open and consistent enforcement of licensing provisions</p>

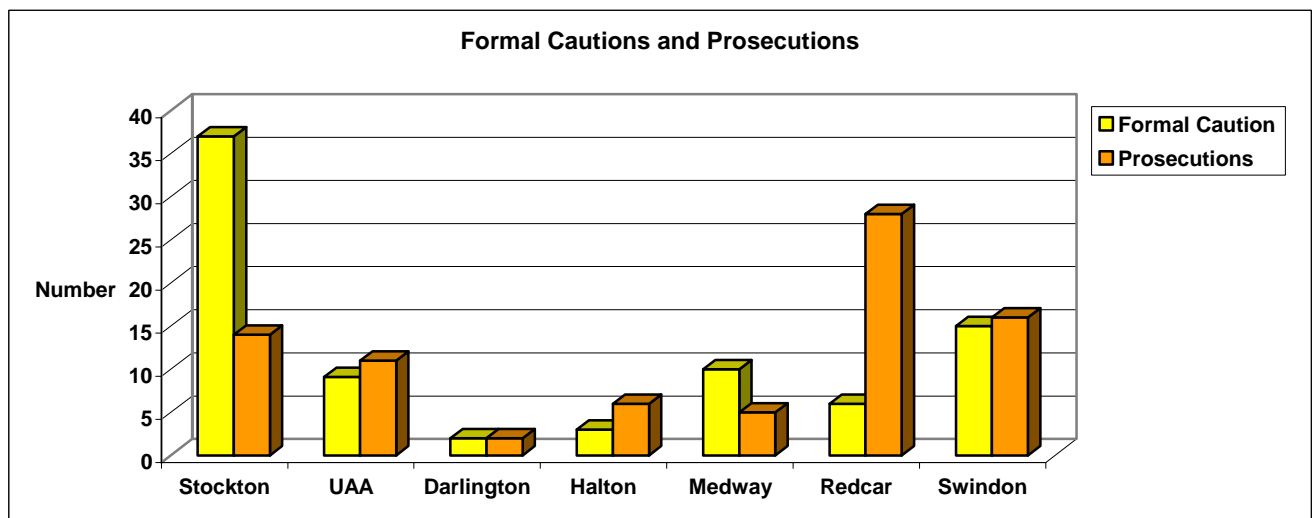
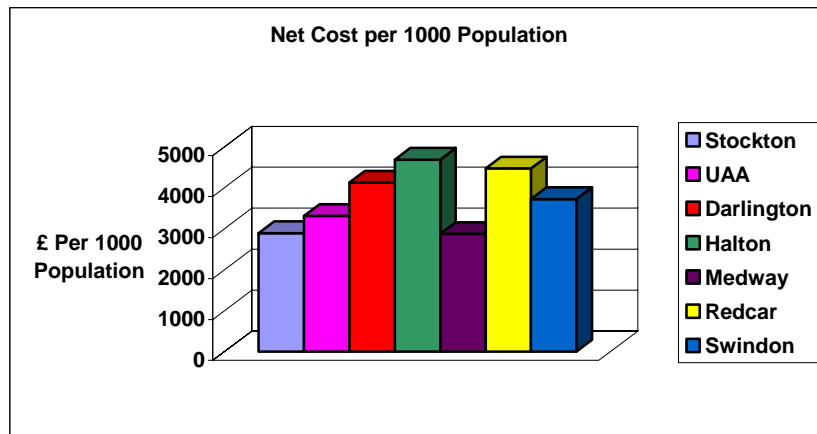
7 How Do We Compare?

General

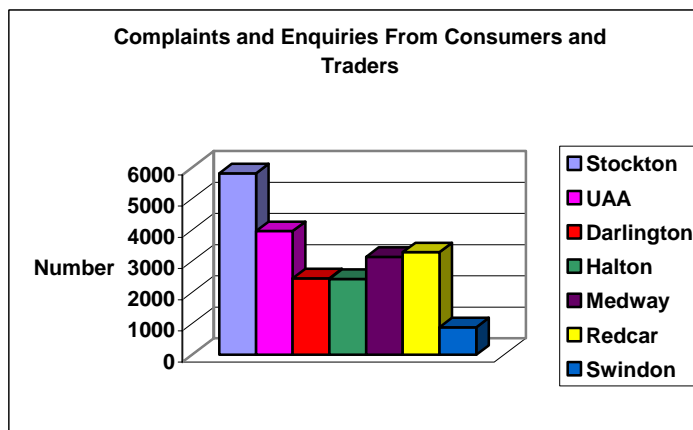
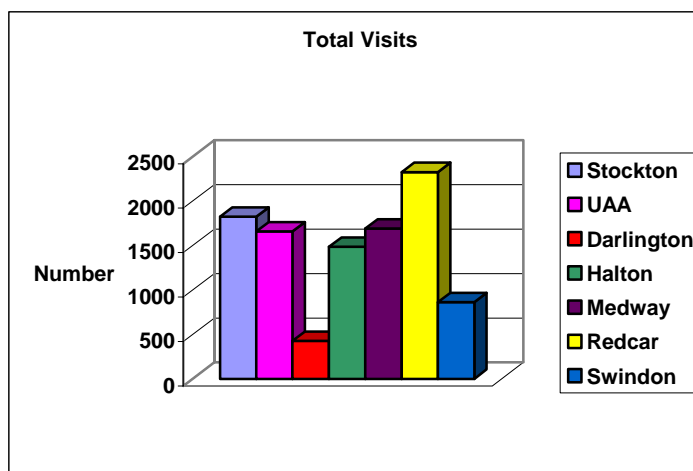
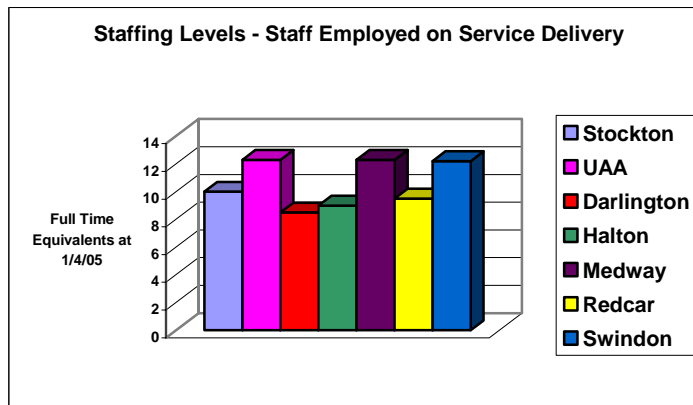
We recognise that comparison of similar services can be an important tool for identifying areas in need of improvement. We have therefore carried out a benchmarking exercise of the data submitted as part of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) return by English unitary authorities in respect of the Trading Standards Service. This return includes data on expenditure, staffing levels, levels of enforcement work, prosecution and formal cautions. The 2005 return was analysed. Data on licensing work is not collected as part of national statistics.

The Nearest Neighbour Selection Model on the Institute of Public Finance's website was used to identify similar unitary authorities in respect of population density and profile, staffing levels and net cost. From our 15 nearest neighbours we chose Darlington, Halton, Medway, Redcar & Cleveland and Swindon. We also looked at the Unitary Authority Averages (UAA).

The results are as follows:



7 How Do We Compare?



Conclusion

The Service compared very favourably with other similar authorities. The net cost of the Service was lower than the unitary authority average and lower than all but one of our selected nearest neighbours. However, whilst staffing levels were below the unitary authority average the total number of enforcement visits was higher than the unitary authority average and higher than all but one of the other authorities selected. In addition the number of formal actions undertaken including prosecutions and cautions were well above the unitary authority average and the Service dealt with more complaints and enquiries than any other authority selected at a level well above the unitary authority average.

8 Consumer Needs And Expectations

Demand For The Service

Each year the Service receives in excess of 7,000 complaints and enquiries from local consumers. Our Consumer Advice Centre located in the main library in Stockton receives the majority of these contacts.

Nature Of Contact	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Civil Complaints (Relates to specific complaints dealt with by the Consumer Advice Centre)	4124	3911	3952
Enquiries (General enquiries dealt with by the Consumer Advice Centre)	2559	1463	1133
Return Visits (Where a consumer calls for further advice on an outstanding civil complaint)	1586	1935	1656
Criminal Complaints (Relates to complaints dealt with by the Trading Standards enforcement team)	513	529	517
Licensing Complaints (Relates to complaints handled by the Licensing enforcement team)	-	210	347
Total Contacts	8782	7838	7605

Analysis Of Complaints

Analysis of the complaints we receive enables us to identify problem traders and trends in trade practices. This allows us to use targeted enforcement against identified problem traders and trade practices. The majority of licensing complaints concerned issues with drivers.

Licensing Complaints Subject Of Complaint	2004/05 %	2005/06
Drivers - includes poor driving, poor attitude, abusive behavior	51	36
Operators – includes failure to respond to complaints promptly	13	11
Vehicles – includes failure to provide documentation, failure to attend for test and sub standard vehicle condition	13	21
Other complaints – includes house collections, public entertainment venues, street trading	13	5

8 Consumer Needs And Expectations

Over the past three years the top three subjects of consumer complaint were about home improvements and repairs, upholstered furniture and secondhand cars.

The top 10 subject of complaints were as follows:

Trading Standards Complaints Subject Of Complaint	2003/04		2004/05		2005/06	
	%	Position	%	Position	%	Position
Home Maintenance/Repairs/Improvements	9.2	1	13.1	1	11.1	1
Upholstered Furniture	6.9	2	5.1	3	7.2	2
Second-Hand Motor Vehicles	6.9	2	6.8	2	7.0	3
Mobile Phones/Services	2.8	9	3.9	4	6.3	4
Radio, TV & Audiovisual Equipment	5.2	4	3.2	5	4.7	5
Food & Drink	2.9	-	2.9	6	4.2	6
Large White Goods	4.4	5	2.9	6	3.3	7
Competitions & Prize Draws	-	-	-	-	3.2	8
Double Glazing Products & Installation	2.1	-	2.1	13	3.1	9
Hire And Credit (Unsecured)	2.8	10	2.9	6	2.8	10

Consumer Advice Centre User Surveys

In each complaint where casework is carried out as opposed to one-off advice, the consumer is sent a satisfaction questionnaire at the conclusion of the case. In 2005/06 a total of 157 questionnaires were sent out, 108 were completed and returned, giving a response rate of 69%. The full results were:

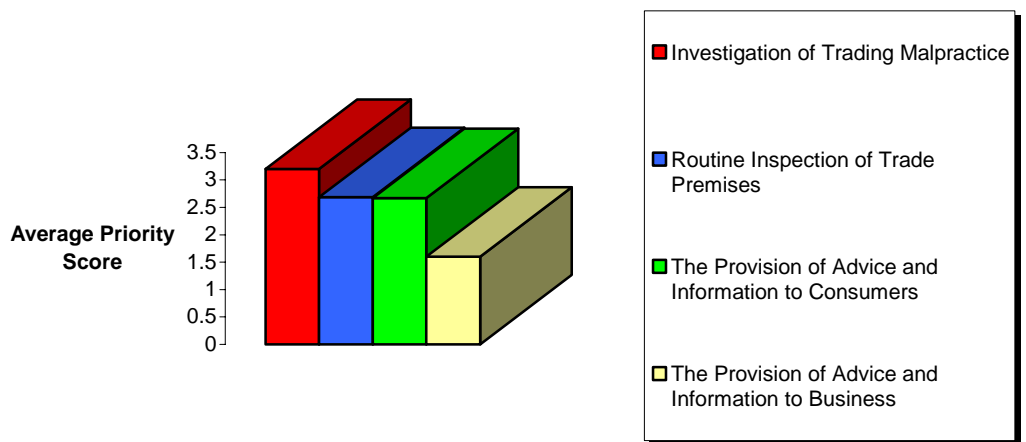
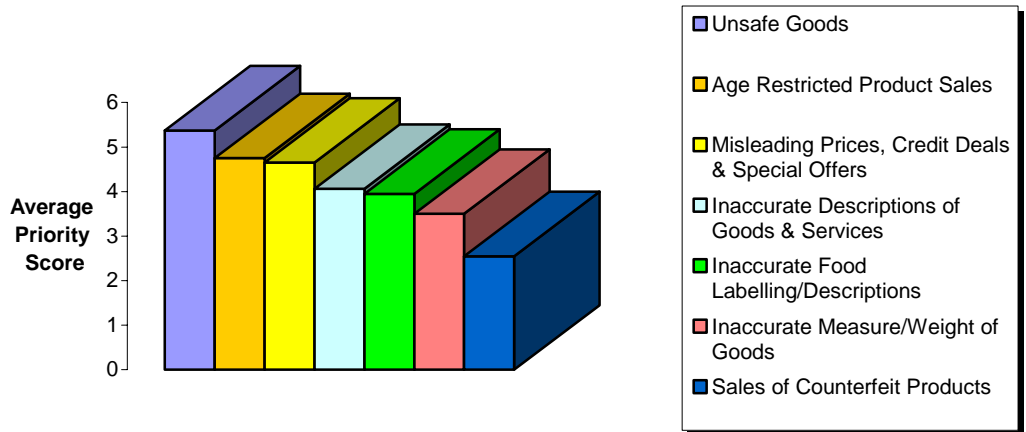
Question posed	Feb 2004 Survey	2004/05 Survey	2005/06 Survey
Users who were very or fairly satisfied with our service	81%	90%	98%
Users who found the information given very or fairly easy to understand	92%	91%	93%
Users who felt better equipped to deal with a problem after receiving advice	75%	86%	--
Users who felt that they were very or fairly well kept up to date with the progress of their complaint	69%	100%	87%
Users who were certain to or likely to recommend the Service to others	--	100%	100%
Users who felt that it was very or fairly easy to access our service	95%	86%	89%

Satisfaction with the Service remains high with 98% of users being very or fairly satisfied with the Service.

Residents Panel Survey

In September 2002 questions were put to 'Viewpoint', Stockton's Residents Panel, in order to assess stakeholders and non-users needs and views of the Service. We are planning to repeat the exercise this year to ensure that the Service's aims and objects still meet our stakeholders' needs and wishes. The results of the 2002 survey are shown below: -

Respondents were asked to rate trading standards issues in order of importance



Consumer Awareness Of Trading Standards

85% of the Viewpoint panel said they had used, or would consider using, Trading Standards when seeking advice or help about goods and services they had bought, although only 68% of respondents were aware that Stockton Council had its own Trading Standards Service. Only 4% of those surveyed said they had never heard of Trading Standards.

Dedicated Website

Our dedicated website was launched in July 2003. Between April 2005 and the end of March 2006 we had over 18,000 hits on our homepage, a huge increase on the 5278 in the previous year. We will continue to develop our website to ensure that the information it contains is current and accurate.

Display Screens

We plan to introduce display screens in our Consumer Advice Centre and at our reception desk giving information and advice on topical consumer and licensing issues.

9 Business Needs And Expectations

Analysis Of Requests For Advice, Including Home Authority Work

Last year we received 179 requests for advice from local businesses or referrals from other enforcement agencies about Stockton traders, compared with 197 in the previous year.

Requests for advice relating to civil law issues were by far the most common. On the enforcement side requests for advice about trade descriptions issues and fair trading were the most common with food standards and consumer credit requests also relatively high.

Area Of Law	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Civil Law Problems relating to the supply of consumer goods and services	41	42	45
Fair Trading Copyright/trademarks, misleading adverts, restrictive statements	17	18	20
Trade Descriptions False descriptions applied to goods or services	20	8	12
Food Standards Labelling, quality, composition etc	6	10	8
Consumer Credit Advertising, documentation, etc	3	10	8
Safety Toys, electrical equipment, sales of age restricted products etc	7	6	3
Pricing Misleading prices, price marking, special offers etc	3	2	1

Analysis Of Inspection Findings

Of a total of 1032 comprehensive inspections (planned inspections to a trade premise where compliance with all relevant areas of legislation was checked), a major non-compliance (requiring follow-up action) was found in 174 or 17% of inspections. The most common problems found were the sale of out of date foods and misleading or incorrectly priced goods.

Area Of Legislation	% Of Non-compliances		
	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Food Standards Labelling, quality, composition etc	17	38	43
Pricing Misleading prices, price marking, special offers etc	19	26	18
Fair Trading Copyright/trademarks, misleading adverts, restrictive statements	20	19	9
Safety Toys, electrical equipment, sales of age restricted products etc	19	4	5
Trade Descriptions False descriptions applied to goods or services	11	5	5

9 Business Needs And Expectations

Analysis Of Complaints Received About Local Businesses

Fair trading issues, including copied trademarks, misleading adverts and restrictive statements and safety issues, including the sale of age restricted products to youngsters continue to be the most common subject of complaints.

	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Fair Trading Copyright/trademarks, misleading adverts, restrictive statements	21	31	29
Safety Toys, electrical equipment, sales of age restricted products etc	23	21	23
Pricing Misleading prices, price marking, special offers etc	21	17	18
Trade Descriptions False descriptions applied to goods or services	21	19	17
Food Standards Labelling, quality, composition etc	7	6	8

Tees Valley Measurement Centre

Given the industrialized nature of the local area, there is a demand for the specialist calibration and legal metrology services provided by Tees Valley Measurement. This is a partnership arrangement between the four Teesside authorities and has facilities for the calibration of instruments for measuring mass, length, bulk fuel, other volume, pressure and torque. The Centre has managed to expand its catchment area and increase its training output as a means of improving income generation. Local businesses, such as bulk fuel operators, benefit from local access to specialist services and do not have to travel outside the region for their needs.

Business Satisfaction

Satisfaction with the Service remains high. In a survey carried out in February 2006, 94% of respondents were very or fairly satisfied with our Service. This echoed the findings of an earlier survey carried out in 2004, when 96% of respondents rated the Service as excellent, good or satisfactory. Additional findings of the 2006 survey were as follows:

- 96% found the information they were given very or fairly easy to understand
- 94% found our staff informative
- 98% felt they had been treated fairly
- 98% found officers courteous and polite
- 96% found it very or fairly easy to make contact with us.

Non-user Surveys

A major consultation exercise was carried out in early 2004 as part of a larger project examining how we could improve our links with business. In total 110 businesses responded to our survey. The level of awareness was good with 82% of respondents being aware of the Service.

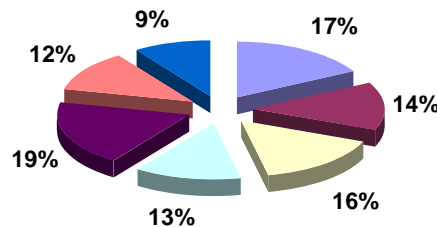
9 Business Needs And Expectations

When asked what businesses wanted from the Trading Standards Service 41% said they wanted more advice for business; 32% wanted us to meet with them to find out their needs and 27% wanted more specialist staff.

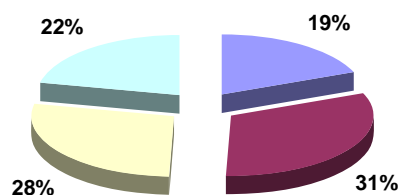
Surprisingly when asked about to rate their level of knowledge of Trading Standards legislation on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being high and 1 being poor) 58% felt that their level of knowledge was 7 or higher. This finding was despite the fact that 42% said that they wanted more business advice.

Businesses were also asked what priorities they gave to Trading Standards duties and problem areas. The results were as follows:

Businesses were asked to determine which Problem Area they thought was of Highest Priority



Businesses were asked to Prioritise the Areas of Work carried out by Trading Standards



The exercise also examined the level of interest in the proposal for a local business forum or partnership. 56% of respondents said they would be interested in a specific trader scheme. In particular interest was expressed by a number of car dealers with regard to the setting up of a 'Good Garage' scheme -something we hope to have in operation by the end of this year.

10 New Initiatives And Responsibilities

New responsibilities and specific local and government initiatives have an impact on the way the Trading Standards and Licensing Service is delivered. The main challenges this year are summarised below.

Consumer Direct



This is a Government led initiative to improve the provision of consumer advice and meet unmet demand throughout the country, working in conjunction with existing local authority services. Regional call centres will deal with first tier consumer advice leaving local authority Consumer Advice Centres to deal with the more complex issues that will emerge.

Consumers can contact a single national Consumer Direct telephone number of 08454 040506 and new calls will also be diverted from existing Consumer Advice Centres. Since its launch, in excess of 1 million calls have been handled by Consumer Direct.

The northeast is the tenth region to come on-line, with the opening of a call centre in Redcar and Cleveland. Stockton will begin to transfer its new calls to Consumer Direct from 27 March 2006 and it is important that there is a seamless transition both in terms of technological issues and customer service. This will need to be closely monitored.

It is anticipated that the Consumer Advice Centre will be dealing with increased case work levels as a result of Consumer Direct referrals. The fact that that the Centre has become only the third local authority provider in the country to obtain the government's Specialist Quality Mark means it is ideally placed to deal with this increased caseload. The Specialist Quality Mark standard has been specifically developed to ensure quality legal service provision and demonstrate that an organisation is providing a well-managed service that has been independently assessed to a nationally recognised quality standard.

Underage Sales

Last year as part of the Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign the Home Office provided funding to both Police and local authorities to support test-purchasing operations on premises thought to be selling alcohol to underage children. Joint test purchasing operations with the police were undertaken in the summer of 2005 and further exercises were undertaken in the run up to Christmas. The campaign is due to continue this year. It is clear that proactive under age test purchasing will continue to play an important part in the work of the Service. We will continue to be proactive in our enforcement of the legislation concerning the supply of tobacco products to minors.



We have also developed a campaign aimed at educating the sellers of age-restricted products. The 'We don't overlook underage campaign' involves the distribution of an interactive CD containing lots of advice and guidance on the law and best practice. It also contains examples of statutory notices and promotional posters which traders can print and use.

General Product Safety Regulations

These regulations impose requirements concerning the safety of all products intended for use by consumers. In replacing existing legislation, the regulations give officers new powers to compel traders to place specific warnings on a product, to warn those who have already been supplied with an unsafe product, to withdraw unsafe products from the supply chain and to instigate product recalls with regard to unsafe products that have already been supplied to consumers. In enforcing and exercising these new powers the Service will act in a proportionate manner at all times taking into account the seriousness of the risk and will seek to promote voluntary action by traders, except in cases of serious risk.

National Review Of Regulatory Services

In March 2005 Phillip Hampton published the results of his review which considered the scope for reducing administrative burdens by promoting a more efficient approach to regulatory inspection and enforcement. Amongst his recommendations he proposed the establishment of a new national consumer and trading standards agency. The report also recommended better assessment of potential burdensome legislation; advocated enforcement based upon better risk assessment and promoted tougher penalties for some offences.

In order to build on the initial proposal to create a new national consumer and trading standards agency the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is taking the lead in establishing the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO). It is intended that this new agency will champion the cause of Trading Standards and consumer protection and establish clear guidelines for local authorities to use in setting priorities and performance indicators.

We welcome the establishment of LBRO as a means of raising the profile of Trading Standards nationally, developing best practice, setting priorities and driving up performance standards. Consultation on the issues raised will be undertaken throughout the forthcoming year. We will participate in this process through attending stakeholder road shows, responding to consultation documents as appropriate and working with other NETSA authorities to ensure a common regional approach.

Trading Standards Peer Review

The objective of peer review is to identify service improvements through a detailed self-assessment process and a rigorous third party audit to defined national guidelines. It has been developed by LACORS and TSI and is funded and supported by the DTI. The framework is based on the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM®) Excellence Model, adapted for Trading Standards use. The auditors are a mixture of Trading Standards personnel from other authorities and officers from the Peer Clearing House register of the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA).

There is a three-year rolling programme during which each authority will carry out their self-assessment followed by a third party peer review.

NETSA is co-coordinating the programme at a regional level. TSI is managing the provision of training for self-assessors and peer reviewers. We are hoping to have officers trained by the end of 2006 and to complete our reviews in early 2007.

Police And Justice Bill

This Bill is designed to deal with crime and the impact of anti-social behaviour. Of particular relevance for the Service are the provisions which will allow Trading Standards Officers to issue penalty notices to the sellers of alcohol to minors.

Smoke Free Stockton Initiative



Smoke Free Stockton is a partnership of many organisations including Stockton Renaissance; North Tees Primary Care Trust; Tees Start Stopping Service; Stockton Council; local Councillors, residents and Cleveland Fire Service. The campaign is concerned with the health implications of smoking tobacco and aims to make the Borough of Stockton smoke free.

The partners are achieving this by working with organisations across Stockton to encourage them to protect staff and the public by introducing smoke free policies to create cleaner and safer working environments. A number of workplaces have already introduced such policies and the campaign would like to extend this to all workplaces across Stockton.

Smoke Free Stockton also provides resources and support to help businesses implement smoke free policies in their workplaces and create a “smoke free culture.” A smoke free environment is good for health, good for the working environment and well supported by the general public.

Think 4 B U Drink Campaign



This campaign is one of many implemented by the Safer Stockton Partnership which aims to raise awareness of alcohol harm. The partnership is collaboration between Police, North Tees PCT (Public Health), North Tees & Hartlepool NHS Trust, Trading Standards & Licensing, Community Safety, Road Safety, The Albert Centre (Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Centre) and local licensees.

Mid October 2005 saw the project launched in 20 licensed premises across the Borough with the ‘Below-the-line’ marketing activity which included promotional beer mats, bar posters, washroom posters (in selected venues), branded T-Shirts, bar runners, window stickers and ‘Get home safely’ taxi cards.

Key messages of the Think B4U Drink Campaign include:

- Safe drinking limits
- Alcohol related violence
- Alcohol consumption amongst minors
- Getting home safely from a night out

So successful was the campaign that Stockton Council won the ‘Most Responsible Local Authority’ for its work with the campaign in the Responsible Drinks Retailing Awards in December 2005.

New Trading Standards Officer Qualifications



Recently qualified Trading Standards Officers, Jodie Allwood (left) and John Morley, are pictured above.

The Service continues to be committed to the professional training of its staff and two of our officers have qualified as Trading Standards Officers within the last year.

However as there continues to be a shortage of Trading Standards Officers nationally, a new training and qualifications framework has just been introduced. The framework is designed to be flexible both in terms of entry levels and methods of delivery.

We already have two officers registered on the new framework. This inevitably has an effect on service delivery but in the past this has been minimised by careful management. This 'grow your own' approach has been the only available prudent method of 'recruiting' qualified staff members. It is hoped that the long-term benefit will outweigh the short-term losses, subject to being able to retain the staff on qualification.

The New Gambling Act

When implemented the Gambling Act 2005 will replace most existing gambling law in Great Britain with an improved, more comprehensive structure of regulation and creates a new independent regulatory body, the Gambling Commission.

The Act removes from licensing justices all responsibility for granting gaming and betting permissions. Instead the responsibility will be shared by the Commission and Licensing Authorities.

Licensing Authorities will have new powers to licence gambling premises within their area. The Act also produces for a new system of temporary use notices which will authorise premises that are not licensed generally for gambling purposes to be used for certain types of gambling, for limited periods.

The Act contains three licensing objectives:

- preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder, or being used to support crime.
- ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way, and
- protecting children from being harmed or exploited by gambling.

Licensing Authorities are required to prepare, every three years, a statement of the principles which they propose to apply when exercising their functions. This documented statement of policy must be published.

Responsibility for the issue of permits for amusements with prize gaming machines, permits for commercial amusements with prizes and authorisation of low-stake gaming on alcohol-licensed premises has already been given to Licensing Authorities from the 24th November 2005. Further changes will come into force as a result of the new Act. We will keep permit holders advised of any new arrangements.

Hackney Carriages And Private Hire Licensing

In anticipation of the publication of Government best practice guidance a full review of current policies and procedures relating to vehicles, drivers and operators will be carried out. This will include the review of the hackney carriage policy to consider restricting the issue of licences to wheelchair accessible vehicles only. It is proposed that there will be full consultation with the trade and a range of stakeholders.

The Licensing Act 2003

Last year saw major changes introduced with the wholesale reform of the country's licensing laws and the transfer of the licensing responsibilities from the Licensing Justices to Licensing Authorities. During the transitional period the Service dealt with the following applications:

- Personal Licences
- Conversion to a premises licence/ club premise certificate
- Variation to a licence
- Temporary event notice

Work will continue in dealing with new applications as well as the possible variation and review of existing licences as appropriate. Work is also ongoing in assisting other Council Departments obtain licences for parcels of Council land as recommended by the Government.

The Service will also need to carry out a risk assessment of all licensed premises to enhance the joint enforcement protocol with Cleveland Police.

Development Of The Street Café Culture

This is a local initiative to promote better use of the Borough's open spaces, especially in the "cultural quarter". The aim is to make areas more attractive to residents and in particular families, in the daytime and early evening.

Part of the initiative involves amending the current consent street trading requirements and the introduction of a new street café licensing policy .

11 Service Priorities, Key Actions And Activities For 2006/07

The overarching goals of Stockton's Trading Standards and Licensing Service can be described as follows:

- To create informed confident consumers
- To create informed successful businesses
- To enforce a safe and fair trading environment

As a means of working towards these goals and in turn helping to meet local and government objectives, we have developed 10 service priorities for the forthcoming year:

1. To empower consumers by providing high quality advice and information
2. To prevent people being the victims of commercial crime in their own home
3. To ensure fair competition through goods and services being safe, correctly described and priced and accurately measured
4. To ensure quality food standards for healthy consumers
5. To promote good business practice and to help reputable businesses to flourish
6. To disrupt traders operating in the informal economy
7. To prevent harm to children and reduce nuisance caused by young people from access to age restricted goods
8. To ensure the implementation of a fair, transparent and effective gambling regime
9. To reduce crime and disorder in licensed premises and vehicles to help promote a safe and diverse night time economy
10. To develop, modernise and continually improve service provision.

Under each priority we have listed key actions and activities for the forthcoming year. These will be used by the Service to focus attention on work priorities for the forthcoming year and as bench marks by which performance can be measured.

Priority 1

To empower consumers by providing high quality advice and information

Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility
To provide a high quality, specialist consumer advice, casework and conciliation service	To ensure that the Consumer Advice Centre maintains the government's Community Legal Service Specialist Quality Mark, the highest standard possible	To pass the post Specialist Quality Mark audit carried out by the Legal Services Commission	Oct 2006	J Jones
To ensure that consumers have easy access to consumer advice provision at a level appropriate to their need	To maintain close contact with Consumer Direct North East and ensure a seamless transition both in terms of technological issues and customer service	<p>Respond to all Consumer Direct referrals within 3 working days</p> <p>To report to the Section's Quality Management Meetings on the interaction between Consumer Direct and the Consumer Advice Centre</p> <p>To raise matters of concern with Consumer Direct</p>	<p>Within 3 working days</p> <p>Monthly</p> <p>Where appropriate</p>	<p>P Chilver/B Dix</p> <p>P Chilver/B Dix</p> <p>P Chilver/B Dix</p>
To ensure that the Consumer Advice Centre continues to meet the needs of the residents of Stockton	<p>To review the work of the Consumer Advice Centre in light of the introduction of Consumer Direct</p> <p>Carry out a satisfaction survey of all those consumers for which the Consumer Advice Centre has undertaken casework</p>	<p>Carry out the review</p> <p>A minimum satisfaction level of 95%</p>	<p>Oct 2006</p> <p>March 2007</p>	<p>J Jones</p> <p>J Jones</p>

Priority 2**To prevent people being the victims of commercial crime in their own home**

Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility
To deter doorstep criminals and protect vulnerable consumers	Offer immediate response in conjunction with Operation Strongbow to reports of doorstep crime	To respond to 100% of requests for attendance at incidents of doorstep crime	When needed	P Chilver
Reduce the level of doorstep selling in designated neighbourhoods	Consider the feasibility of introducing "no cold calling zones" in Stockton	Analysis of intelligence to identify particular areas where this type of incident is prevalent	June 2006	F Russell
		Consultation with local residents in any area identified to gauge support	Sept 2006	F Russell
		Feasibility report with view to launch within 1 month	December 2006	F Russell
To improve intelligence information and develop partnership working in area of doorstep crime	Continue participating with the Operation Strongbow network for the collection and distribution of intelligence	To pass all reports of doorstep crime to the Operation Strongbow co-ordinator	When appropriate	P Chilver

Priority 3	To ensure fair competition through goods and services being safe, correctly described and priced and accurately measured
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Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility
To ensure that reputable businesses flourish and to prevent illegal trading	<p>Carry out a risk based programme of comprehensive business inspections</p> <p>Carry out intelligence led visits in response to complaints and other information received.</p>	<p>To inspect:</p> <p>100% high risk businesses 50% medium risk businesses 20% low risk businesses</p> <p>2500 total enforcement visits</p>	March 2007	L Wilford
To ensure that businesses comply with the law	Carry out a scheduled programme of revisits to those businesses that are found to be flouting the law in order to ensure compliance	95% of premises to be brought to compliance by the end of the year	March 2007	J Jones
To ensure that goods and services available within the Borough are safe, accurately described and correctly priced	<p>Targeted project based sampling to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety of Toys • Hallmarking of jewellery • Safety of children's clothing • Sunglasses • MOT testing of cars • Holiday pricing 	Test 5000 items	March 2007	L Wilford
To ensure that local traders offering credit comply with consumer credit advertising requirements	<p>To take part in OFT sweep looking at consumer credit advertising in local newspapers</p> <p>Continue with monitoring of credit adverts in local newspapers</p>	<p>Carry out sweep and follow up with written advice where needed</p> <p>Monitor local newspapers with trader advice and referrals to other authorities as appropriate.</p>	<p>April 2006</p> <p>Quarterly</p>	<p>J Allwood</p> <p>J Allwood</p>

Priority 4

To ensure quality food standards for healthy consumers

Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility
To ensure effective and efficient food law enforcement	Update our Food Enforcement Plan in line with Government targets & priorities	Update and publish the Plan in conjunction with Environmental Health Section	Aug 2006	L Wilford
To ensure that reputable food businesses flourish and to prevent illegal trading	Carry out a risk based programme of comprehensive food business inspections	To inspect: 100% high risk businesses 50% medium risk businesses 20% low risk businesses	March 2007	L Wilford
To ensure that food available in the Borough is accurately described and meets any relevant compositional requirements	Targeted project based sampling to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species of meat present in cooked meat products • Authenticity of spirits sold in pubs • Presence of peanuts in foods • Vitamin C in fruit juice • Level of salt in bread • 'Five fruit a day' claims • Use of inferior ingredients in catering establishments 	Test 400 samples	March 2007	L Wilford
To ensure that local sampling reflects national priorities	To participate in national FSA food sampling projects	To submit 8 samples as part of the FSA project looking at meat content declarations in butchers and food manufacturers. Participate in other FSA food sampling projects	May 2006 When appropriate	J Allwood L Wilford

Priority 5

To promote good business practice and to help reputable businesses to flourish

Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility
To improve standards in the retail car market and improve consumer confidence when buying cars	Develop a 'Good Garage' scheme in conjunction local car dealers and other neighbouring authorities	To identify, recruit and audit suitable garages	May 2006	F Russell
		Launch the scheme	June 2006	F Russell
To ensure traders are aware of their legal responsibilities with regard to the sale of age restricted products	Distribute an Age Restricted Sales CD outlining the law and giving examples of best practice	Distribute information to all retailers, pubs, clubs, petrol sites and other sellers of age restricted products	July 2006	L Wilford
To ensure that establishments in the animal feed chain are aware of recent changes with regard to registration and approval requirements	Distribute information packs on the new requirements	Contact all manufacturers, wholesalers and farms handling animal feeding stuffs	October 2006	J Morley
To ensure that the Service continues to meet the needs of local businesses	Carry out a satisfaction survey of local businesses that have had contact with the Service	A minimum satisfaction level of 90%	March 2007	L Wilford
To encourage street café culture within the Borough	Produce a street café policy	Obtain Cabinet approval for the policy	January 2007	D Kitching
	Review our current consent street trading policy	Carry out the review	January 2007	D Kitching

Priority 6

To disrupt traders operating in the informal economy

Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility
To prevent the supply of counterfeit goods in the Borough	To carry out a programme of proactive enforcement at car boot sales and markets within the Borough	Surveillance of trading activities at local car boots	Quarterly	J Wynn
		Take appropriate enforcement action based on surveillance undertaken	When needed	J Wynn
To ensure that operators of local car boot sales are aware of their legal obligations especially in relation to the sale of counterfeit goods	To provide advice and guidance to the operators of local car boot sales	Distribute advice to car boot operators	March 2007	J Jones
To ensure that internet traders comply with the law and follow good business practices	To carry out an enforcement exercise aimed at identifying and auditing Stockton based internet traders	To bring 95% of those Stockton based traders identified to a state of compliance by the end of the year	March 2007	D Coulton
To prevent illegal plying for hire and the use of unlicensed vehicles in the taxi trade	Undertake targeted test purchasing exercises	Undertake 4 exercises	March 2007	S Mills
	To ensure private hire operators have adequate recording of bookings and systems for recording vehicle and driver details	Visits to all operators twice in the year	March 2007	M Vaines
	Carry out proactive enforcement in relation to taxi vehicles	Carry out 12 out of hours enforcement exercises	March 2007	C Barnes

Priority 7

To prevent harm to children and reduce nuisance caused by young people from access to age restricted goods

Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility
To reduce the level of sales of alcohol, cigarettes and other age restricted products to youngsters	Undertake targeted test purchasing exercises of age restricted products with young volunteers	12 test purchase exercises with at least 8 in relation to the sale of alcohol to young children	One exercise per month	J Allwood
To ensure consistent and effective investigation of offences regarding the illegal sale of age restricted products	To carry a full review of our enforcement practices when carrying out under age sales exercises	To carry out the review	May 2006	J Allwood
		To issue comprehensive updated guidance to Enforcement Officers	June 2006	J Allwood
To encourage joint working with Community Safety Officers and the Police at a local level	To participate in targeted Operation SCARAB exercises	To participate in 75% of all Operation SCARAB exercises	March 2007	L Wilford
To ensure that local enforcement reflects national priorities	To arrange participation in AMEC projects with NETSA partners	To participate in all AMEC projects	March 2007	L Wilford
		Submit bids and secure funding via AMEC process	March 2006	L Wilford
Increase awareness of alcohol harm amongst consumers	Distribute floor walkers & shelf markers promoting the "Think B4 U Drink" message to all interested retailers	Contact all regional & national retailers in the Borough	March 2007	D Kitching
Reduce levels of smoking in public and work places	Publicise the Smoke Free Stockton initiative	To encourage 50% of licensed vehicles to operate "smoke free"	March 2007	D Kitching

Priority 8 **To ensure the implementation of a fair, transparent and effective gambling regime**

Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility
To ensure that our actions under the new regime are transparent and clear to all parties affected	To produce a Gambling Policy Statement outlining the principles that we intend to apply when exercising our functions	Produce and publish the policy	December 2006	M Vaines
To ensure our policy meets the needs of our stakeholders	To consult on our draft Gambling Policy with Police, businesses, consumers, councillors and other stakeholders	Carry out the consultation exercise	March 2007	M Vaines
To ensure that all business are aware of the new rules and transitional provisions	To provide advice and information	Distribute advice to all businesses licensed under the current regime	March 2007	M Vaines
To ensure a smooth transition to the new regime	To have systems in place to allow for advance applications to be accepted under the 2005 Act	Introduce systems and start accepting applications	February 2007	M Vaines

Priority 9	To reduce crime and disorder in licensed premises and vehicles to help promote a safe and diverse night time economy
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Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility
To ensure enforcement is targeted at the most appropriate areas through a consistent risk based approach	To carry out a risk assessment of all premises licensed under the Licensing Act 2003 in the Borough	Complete risk assessments	Sept 2006	M Vaines
To ensure that reputable businesses flourish and to prevent illegal trading	Carry out programmed inspections as well as intelligence led enforcement to target problem traders	Carry out 1200 licensing visits	March 2007	M Vaines
To improve enforcement and surveillance capabilities	To obtain an enforcement vehicle equipped with CCTV	To have a vehicle in service and to introduce relevant work instructions	June 2006	D Kitching
To ensure that enforcement work is targeted effectively at problem times and specific locations in conjunction with other agencies where appropriate	To devise and implement a plan for out of hours enforcement work in licensed premises in conjunction with the Police	Devise and introduce a plan	June 2006	M Vaines
		Liaise monthly with the Police	Monthly	D Kitching
		12 out of hours enforcement exercises	March 2007	C Barnes
To ensure the Council's policies in relation to taxis reflects the needs of service users and are in line with government guidelines and best practice	To review our current policies relating to drivers, vehicles and operators	Carry out review	July 2006	M Vaines
		Carry out a consultation exercise with stakeholders	August 2006	M Vaines
		Obtain member approval as appropriate	Sept 2006	M Vaines

Priority 10 **To develop, modernise and continually improve service provision**

Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility
To identify areas where service improvements can be made through self assessment and 3rd party audits	To engage fully in the Peer Review process	At least 1 officer trained in the self assessment process	Dec 2006	J Jones
		At least 1 officer trained in the peer review process	Dec 2006	J Jones
		Undertake self assessments and 3rd party audits	March 2007	J Jones
To ensure that the Service has a sufficient number of qualified Trading Standards Officers to help deliver a quality service	To ensure that the officers registered on the new training framework are able to work towards successful qualification	To implement a structured training plan	July 2006	L Wilford
To ensure that the Council's Enforcement Policy is fair, clear and in-line with current government guidelines and best practice	To review our current policy	Carry out review	June 2006	J Jones
		Obtain Member approval as appropriate	July 2006	D Kitching
To ensure that our procedures for food standards enforcement are in line with the Food Standards Agency's Framework Agreement and recognised best practice	To review current practices and develop and document new work procedures	Review, develop and document new work procedures for food law enforcement	March 2007	J Jones
To canvass the views of stakeholders to ensure our Service meets their needs	To carry out a consultation exercise with the Viewpoint Panel (Stockton's Residents Panel)	Complete the consultation exercise	March 2006	L Wilford

Priority 10**To develop, modernise and continually improve service provision**

Objective	Actions	Targets	Timescale	Responsibility
To ensure the Service has adequate resources to deliver the enforcement and administration of the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2003	To carry out a review of current resources and staffing levels	Report to Cabinet	Nov 2006	M Batty
To ensure that staff have the necessary knowledge to undertake their duties effectively and meet any "continuous professional development" requirements	To utilise external training courses or arrange internal training sessions as required	Average of 75 hours training per officer per year	March 2007	L Wilford
	To review our current procedure for recording of training undertaken	Carry out the review	March 2007	L Wilford

12 How To Contact Us

Consumer Advice Centre based within the Central Library, Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1TU

Access	Availability	
Consumer Direct (this is the first point of contact for consumer advice) Telephone Number 08454 04 05 06	Monday - Friday	8am – 6.00pm
	Saturday	8am – 1.00pm
Personal callers to Centre	Monday - Thursday:	9.30am – 5.00pm
	Friday:	9.30am – 4.30pm
Telephone callers to Centre (01642 527938)	Monday – Thursday:	8.30am – 5.00pm
	Friday:	8.30am – 4.30pm
Fax	01642 526584	
E-mail	trading.standards@stockton.gov.uk	
Website	www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/stockton	
Disabled Access	There is level access to the ground floor and a public lift	

Trading Standards Enforcement Team based at 16 Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1TX

Access	Availability	
Opening Hours	Monday - Thursday	8.30am – 5.00pm
	Friday	8.30am – 4.30pm
Telephone Number	01642 526560	
Fax	01642 526584	
E-mail	trading.standards@stockton.gov.uk	
Website	www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/stockton	
Disabled Access	There is level access to the ground floor	

12 How To Contact Us**Licensing Administration based at 16 Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1TX**

Type of Access	Availability	
Opening Hours	Monday -Thursday	8.30am – 5.00pm
	Friday	8.30am – 4.30pm
Telephone number	01642 526558	
Fax	01642 526584	
E-mail	licensing.administration@stockton.gov.uk	
Website	www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/stockton	
Disabled Access	There is level access to the ground floor	

Licensing Enforcement based at 16 Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1TX

Type of Access	Availability	
Opening Hours	Monday -Thursday	8.30am – 5.00pm
	Friday	8.30am – 4.30pm
Telephone numbers	01642 526568 01642 526566	
Fax	01642 526584	
E-mail	licensing.services@stockton.gov.uk	
Website	www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/stockton	
Disabled Access	There is level access to the ground floor	