



Public Protection Services

Food and Trading Standards

Trading Standards

Performance Plan

2005/06

Foreword

I have great pleasure in presenting the Trading Standards Performance Plan for 2005 – 2006.

The Trading Standards Service plays an important role in delivering West Berkshire council's vision to **'Facilitate a thriving local community and good quality of life in West Berkshire, now and for the future'** Regulatory services are essential in ensuring that local residents and visitors live their lives in a safe & healthy environment. At the same time the rules must be enforced in such a way that reputable, law abiding businesses are not seriously compromised. Sensible, relevant and proportionate enforcement protects local residents and businesses alike from unscrupulous, unfair or dangerous traders or trade practice. Much of the Trading Standards work is done in the background and largely goes unnoticed but without it West Berkshire would be a much less pleasant place to live.

Last year Trading Standards delivered an excellent service. Whether it was taking legal action against local traders who seriously deceived their customers or giving advice to consumers on their legal rights the service went about its business in a thorough and professional manner. I note the successful prosecutions taken against a car dealer who had 'clocked' cars sold to unsuspecting customers at unfairly inflated prices or the long drawn out case against a local travel company that went out of business leaving people, many of them elderly, without a holiday and out of pocket. The work done on overloaded lorries or those that illegally travel weight restricted roads results in a number of prosecutions each year. This work has received publicity during the year and it is particularly pleasing to see a downward trend in breaches – clearly the safety message is getting across. The service also received 1500 complaints or enquiries from local people during last year which were dealt with effectively & efficiently. I hope that standards are maintained now that the national helpline 'Consumer Direct' is fully operational.

It has been a difficult year as a significant number of posts remain unfilled despite serious attempts to recruit. To address this issue, and to look for ways to further enhance performance, the service is carrying out a comprehensive needs survey during the course of the year. I look forward to the outcome of this exercise and will continue to play my part in supporting this most important West Berkshire service.

Councillor Geoff Findlay
Executive Portfolio Member for Public Protection

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PART ONE: CONTEXT AND COMPARATIVE FACTORS

A: FOOD & TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE IN THE COMMUNITY

1.0 Core Responsibilities of the Trading Standards Service

The Trading Standards Service (TSS) in West Berkshire incorporates a number of food hygiene functions that are often associated with Environmental Health. For details of Food related activities please see the Food, Agriculture & Animal Health Service Plan. The following pages set out the core responsibilities whilst the table below provides a more detailed breakdown of the functions of the Food and Trading Standards Service in West Berkshire:

See also Appendices A & B

GENERIC FUNCTION	SUB-FUNCTION
Fair Trading	False Descriptions – <i>goods, services and property</i> Consumer Credit – <i>criminal and civil provisions</i> Counterfeiting and Trade Marks Pricing Street Trading
Consumer Safety	Product Safety – <i>inspection and sampling</i> Petroleum Licensing and Vapour Recovery Explosives and Poisons
Weights and Measures	Checks on weighing and measuring equipment Checks on goods to ensure correct quantity
Under Age Sales	All age restricted products inc. test purchasing Proof of Age Card scheme
Road Traffic	Overloading of Vehicles Weight Restrictions – <i>environmental and structural</i> Unroadworthy Vehicles
Food Quality and Safety	Food Quality Food Labelling Food Safety and Hygiene Infectious Disease Control Private water Supplies Quality and Labelling – <i>Fertilisers and Feedingstuffs</i>
Animal Health	Disease Control inc. outbreak contingency planning Animal Movement licensing Transport Welfare
Consumer Advice	General Advice with Casework
Business Advice	Comprehensive Advice Service Home Authority Liaison
Education	Comprehensive Consumer Education Service to: Adults Children incl. YCOY and Junior citizen

2.0 West Berkshire Council's Community & Comparative Factors

In 2003 the West Berkshire Partnership published its first Community Plan which was promptly followed by the Council's Corporate Plan. This sets out a 5 year direction for the Authority, taking into account the needs and aspirations of the community as expressed in the Community Plan. The TSS at West Berkshire supports the aims and objectives of these plans as set out below.

2.1 Community Objectives

The West Berkshire Community Plan identified 13 priority areas. From this list the West Berkshire Partnership has chosen to focus on the following four leading priorities:

- Ensuring everyone has access to adequate affordable housing whether owned or rented;
- Developing transport solutions matched to people's needs across the district;
- Reducing social exclusion in rural areas by providing equal access to services and facilities;
- Developing learning opportunities for people of all ages to support social and economic well being.

2.2 Corporate Objectives – Strategic Priorities

The West Berkshire Council Corporate Plan contributes to these community objectives and develops a number of themes that are specific to the work of the Council. The vision for West Berkshire Council, as set out in the Corporate Plan, is ***'To facilitate a thriving local community and good quality of life in West Berkshire, now and for the future'***. The Plan then identifies the 'top ten' strategic priorities that are necessary to realise this vision. These are:

Priority
1. Providing stronger community leadership
2. Tackling all forms of social exclusion across the District
3. Promoting independence for older people and people with disabilities
4. Maintaining high standards of educational achievement across all our schools
5. Ensuring that the street environment is clean, well maintained and safe
6. Increasing the provision of homes that are affordable to those on low incomes
7. Improving the quality of life for looked after children and other young people at risk
8. Improving transportation
9. Improving environmental resource management
10. Creating attractive and vibrant town centres

2.3 Local Priorities

The primary aim of the Trading Standards Service is to provide to provide a high level of protection for both the consumer and the reputable business community.

At a local level our approach relates directly back to the following strategic priorities:

Corporate Objective / Strategic Priority	Area of Trading Standards work developed from this objective
Tackling all forms of social exclusion across the district	By providing equitable and accessible consumer advice, making consumers aware of their rights and thus empowering individuals. By developing the West Berkshire Consumer Support Network
Ensuring that the street environment is clean, well maintained and safe	By promoting consumer safety and tackling rogue traders and under age sales.
Improving transportation	By providing an enforcement service in respect of overloading of vehicles, weight restrictions and unroadworthy vehicles
Creating attractive and vibrant town centres	By working with businesses and consumers to create a fair and safe trading environment in which legitimate business can flourish
Maintaining high standards of educational achievement across our schools	By providing education programme including Junior Citizen and Young Consumers of the Year Competition

2.4 Inclusions in the Corporate Plan

It is proposed that the following items are included in the current re-refresh of the corporate plan:

- Reducing illegal under age sales
- Reducing doorstep crime
- Better informed young people on consumer matters

3.0 Aims, Objectives and Strategic Thinking

3.1 Key Aims and Objectives

The key aims and objectives of the trading standards service are as follows:

- Tackling consumer crime & unfair trade practices
- Reducing consumer detriment
- Enabling consumers to make informed choices
- Commitment to improving health and community safety and reducing social exclusion
- Protection of the environment
- Support for the reputable business community
- Improvement in Service Delivery
- Provision of appropriate training & development opportunities for all staff

3.2 Links to Community and Corporate Objectives

Corporate Objective	Areas of Trading Standards Work developed from this objective
Attractive and vibrant town centres Clean, well maintained and safe streets	Tackling Consumer Crime Improving safety in community Support for the reputable business community

Tackling social exclusion	Tackling consumer detriment Enabling consumers to make informed choices Commitment to improving health and community safety and reducing social exclusion
Improving Environmental Resource Management	Protection of the Environment
Stronger community leadership	Support for the reputable business community Commitment to improving health and community safety and reducing social exclusion

3.3 Member Approval

The TSS Performance Plan and the Food Plan (as required by the Joint Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Enforcement) are both submitted for Member approval annually.

The Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) and the Environment and Public Protection Service Plan also receive annual Member approval. Progress against the service plan is reported quarterly. The BVPP is reviewed annually by District Audit.

The following activities have received specific Member approval in the past:

- Under Age Sales Enforcement Programme (Annual)
- Proof of Age Card (one off)
- Fees & Charges (annual)

3.4 The Best Value Agenda

In accordance with the national Best Value Agenda, ***West Berkshire's Trading Standards Service seeks to provide a high quality service at an affordable cost.***

In assessing whether best value aspirations are being met the TSS considers a number of service delivery methods. During 2005/6 the service will undertake a comprehensive needs review to:

- identify and develop key quality processes and procedures,
- develop a retention and recruitment scheme
- develop a training & career progression scheme
- review of current resources & structure to assess whether this matches service demand

The service also jointly commissions work through the Trading Standards South East (TSSE) Liaison Group. This leads to economies of scale and a significant reduction in duplication of effort.

3.5 National Performance Indicator BV166

The **BV 166** A & B score for West Berkshire Trading Standards independently assessed by the District Auditor in 2003/4 and the service was given a score of **100%** against the standard.

B: LOCAL STRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

4.0 Local Authority Organisation, Accountability and Wider Links

4.1 Council Services and Structure

4.1.1 Council Structure

West Berkshire Council's decision-making is based on the separation of the Council's Executive and scrutiny functions. The principal decision making body is now the Executive, which consists of the Council Leader and seven 'Portfolio Members'. Individual Portfolio Members have the authority to take key decisions that fall within their remit. There is a Portfolio Member for Public Protection.

There are also four 'Select Committees' which fulfil the Council's overview and scrutiny function. The Select Committees mirror the 4 service groupings (i.e. Environment & Public Protection, Children & Young People, Community Care & Housing and Strategy & Resources), although they have no decision-making powers. Their role is to:

- help develop policy at the request of the Executive;
- take an overview of existing policy and service provision (including overseeing Best Value Reviews);
- 'call in' decisions taken by the Executive where they feel it is necessary.

Additionally, the Select Committee is required to undertake a broad scrutiny role for the Council in respect of public service provision within the wider community. Monitoring of the performance of the Trading Standards Service (TSS) is therefore the responsibility of the Environment and Public Protection Select Committee.

The Executive (or relevant 'Portfolio Member') must grant approval for TSS policies and plans, as the Select Committees have no decision-making powers. However, decisions taken by the Executive (or key decisions taken by officers under delegated powers) may be 'called in' for scrutiny by the Select Committees at the request of any five Members. The Select Committees can recommend amendments to decisions, but there is no requirement for the Executive to comply.

4.1.2 Management Structure

As a unitary authority, West Berkshire Council is responsible for the provision of all local government services in the West Berkshire Area. Food and TSS is a Division of Public Protection Services (which also incorporates Environmental Health and Emergency Planning).

4.2 Partnerships

The table below gives details of partnership arrangements that the Trading Standards Service has entered into in order to further common aims and objectives:

Activity	Aim of Partnership	Partners
Tobacco Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced access by young people to tobacco products. • Smoke Free Environments • Health Promotion 	Primary Care Trust Other Council Services Other Local Authorities Trading Standards South East (TSSE) Berkshire Tobacco Alliance
Proof of Age Card Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced access by young people to age restricted products. • Promotion of responsible trading. 	Local Schools Police Community Safety Officer Youth Service Citizencard
Community Safety – Drug and Substance Misuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced access by young people to age restricted products and in particular alcohol and solvents. • Promotion of responsible trading • Reduction of Anti-Social Behaviour 	Local Schools Police Community Safety Officer Licensees Youth Service Housing Associations Social Services Community Action on Drugs (CAD) Drug Action Team (DAT)
Consumer Support Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network to improve access to consumer advice 	CABx Police Energywatch Council for Voluntary Services Housing Association Community Council for Berkshire
Community Legal Services Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals Protocols 	Legal Department LSC CABx Local Solicitors Housing Advice Welfare Rights Victim Support MIND Bracknell BC Voluntary Sector

Doorstep Selling Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in doorstep selling problems • Reduce levels of distraction burglary 	TSSE Police Community Safety Neighbourhood Watch
Smart Citizen Competition Young Consumer of the Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educating young people on their rights and responsibilities including those related to consumer issues. 	Local Schools Newbury Building Society
Junior Citizen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging young people about risks associated with certain activities 	Police Fire Ambulance Service Utilities Rail Safety Local Primary Schools
Crime Reduction Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce level of car crime • Reduce levels of burglary, including distraction burglary • Links to various TS issues –cars on highway, unroadworthy cars & doorstep initiatives. 	Police Community Safety Officer Voluntary Sector Local Businesses
Business Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform businesses (especially new businesses) on legal responsibilities • Inform businesses on new law 	Chamber of Commerce Business Link

4.3 Enforcement Forums

The Trading Standards Service participates in the following enforcement forums:

Organisation	Purpose	Members
TSSE Authorities Officers Group	Forum to discuss and take forward issues of mutual significance Achievement of economies of scale and avoidance of duplication.	Neighbouring 8 TSSs
SELCOG – Petroleum Group	Forum to discuss petroleum enforcement issues	All petroleum authorities in South Eastern Region
Assoc. of Petrol Enforcement Authorities (APEA)	Sharing Best Practice Ensure consistent enforcement Benchmark opportunities Coordination of sampling & testing Sharing expertise	Local Authorities (Fire, TSS, EH) HSE Oil Companies Petrol pump fitters
DEFRA Divisional Animal Health Panel	Forum to discuss animal health enforcement issues	All TSSs in region DEFRA
SETSA Animal Health Group	Forum to discuss animal health enforcement & law update.	All TSSs in South East
TSSE Focus Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Performance ▪ Safety, Food, Consumer Advice, U'age Sales, Fair Trading & Metrology 	Sharing Best Practice Ensure consistent enforcement Benchmark opportunities Coordination of sampling & testing Sharing expertise	Neighbouring 8 TSSs Public Analysts

4.4 Business Support Forums

It is the intention of the service to develop a Local Business Partnership in the West Berkshire area. However, the current high level of staff vacancies together with a heavy reactive operational workload means that this important area of 'Business Support' work cannot be implemented in the short term. This is being reviewed as part of the department's 'needs review'. See paragraph 3.4

Officers attend monthly new business briefings at Business Link to explain the Service's role and responsibilities in supporting & assisting business start-ups.

5.0 Trading Standards Expenditure

See Appendix C

6.0 Staffing Allocation

See Appendix D

7.0 Accessibility

As part of the West Berkshire Equalities Strategy, the Council is committed to providing appropriate support to all service users in order to have full access to all services, including:

- making arrangements for translation and interpretation
- home visits
- text phone use
- Braille or tape transcription
- presence of advocates

A recent equalities assessment concluded that the Service is highly accessible with good customer focus.

The following summarises the main routes to accessing the service:

Type of Access	Description
Personal Callers	8.30am – 5pm Mon –Thursday. 8.30am – 4pm Friday Other times by appointment or through 24 hour emergency service
Telephone	Times as above. Note that civil advice calls are routed through to 'Consumer Direct' – a national consumer advice service.
Answerphone	Available outside normal office hours or if all lines are in use
By post	
By e-mail	Tsadvice@westberks.gov.uk Consumercomplaints.org (national e-mail address)
Emergencies	The Council has a 24 hour emergency service number and the Public Protection Service is staffed 24 hours per day
Disabled Access	Building designed for wheelchair users & disabled parking spaces available.
Hearing Impaired	Minicom available
Community Languages	The Council subscribes to language line.
Website	The council's website has a trading standards area.

8.0 Needs and Expectations of Consumers

8.1 Assessment of Need and Expectation

Over the last few years we have made a number of improvements to assess consumer needs and expectations including direct polling and partnership working. The following is a summary of our work in this area:

8.1.1 User Surveys

The service carries out monthly user feedback surveys by contacting at random 50% of those who contacted the service for advice or assistance or to register a complaint for further investigation.

2005/6 data indicates:

- 94% felt the service was easy to contact - about the same as last year
- 94% felt the staff were polite and helpful - up 4 points on last year
- 86% said they felt staff were knowledgeable - down 4 points on last year
- 87% were kept informed on complaint progress
- Overall 85% felt the service was satisfactory or better

From comments received and an analysis of data the following issues are worthy of note.

- Some people have an unrealistically high expectation of the service provided. In some circumstances they expect officers to 'sort out' complaints rather than 'just'; provide advice on consumer rights. This is likely to be addressed because with the introduction of Consumer Direct officers will be taking on more case work.
- Officers are sympathetic and helpful although some people have commented about not being kept informed of developments.
- Consumer Action Packs are helpful.
- No work has been done to determine whether the advice given was acted on or whether complaints were eventually resolved to the satisfaction of the consumer.
- Many comments were received praising the excellent work of the officers.

8.1.2 Analysis of consumer complaints

Last year the service received over 2800 complaints and requests for assistance from the public. This is 500 (over 20%) more than the previous year. Of this almost 1500 were complaints or requests for advice. An analysis of this data reveals the following main areas of concern to West Berkshire people.

1. Second hand cars
2. Food & Drink
3. Prize draws, scams and similar
4. Home maintenance & Improvements
5. Mobile Phones

The list is similar to previous years and mirrors national consumer complaint data but it is interesting to note that complaints about second hand cars and food & drink have overtaken complaints about home maintenance and improvement for the first time. Perhaps the recent high profile 'rogue builders' television programmes are having a positive effect? Prize draws scams remain a problem whilst the high numbers of mobile phone complaints & enquiries can be

explained because West Berkshire Trading Standards is 'Home Authority' for Vodafone and will receive referrals about them from around the country.

Future consumer demands and needs are particularly difficult to predict for the following year. The introduction of Consumer Direct, a national consumer helpline, is already having a significant effect on calls to the department. However, the true extent of this is being clouded by an increase in calls relating to liquor licensing which has recently undergone significant changes. It is clear that the overall number of complaint or enquiry calls to the department will drop this year but the number of calls requiring in depth advice or further investigation is likely to increase significantly.

8.1.3 Local CABx view

The issue of credit and debt is seen as a high priority for the CABx and remains their number one consumer issue.

8.1.4 Local Consumer Support Network (CSN) views

The last survey carried out on behalf of West Berkshire CSN relating to consumer issues revealed the following issues as being of primary concern:

- Food Safety – 17%
- Builders and Tradesmen – 16%
- Financial Investments – 11%
- Product Safety – 9%
- Selling of Mortgages and Loans - 8%

8.2 Conclusions on Consumer Need in West Berkshire

Based on our current intelligence consumers in West Berkshire need:

- More information on credit and managing debt
- More information and advice on the risks involved in buying second hand cars
- Advice on dealing with unwanted callers i.e. personal and by phone
- Greater knowledge of consumer rights
- Prompt alert warnings of suspect Prize Draws and Scams

9.0 Needs and Expectations of Local Businesses

9.1 The Local Economy

Unemployment, at less than 1%, is one of the lowest rates in Europe. (November 2004) 7,900 businesses provide almost 80,000 jobs for people. 85% of these businesses employ 10 people or less with the main activities being:

- Business activities, real estate & leasing – 22%
- Wholesale & retail – 19%, &
- Manufacturing – 15%

The West Berkshire economy, when compared to national figures, appears to be overheating as far as employment numbers are concerned. This is leading to employers having to search further & further afield to recruit – a problem the Trading Standards Service is also experiencing!

9.1.1 Meeting business expectations

West Berkshire TSS subscribes fully to the Home Authority Principle. This includes responding to requests for advice and handling referrals from other local authorities. The TSS is home to some large companies including Vodafone, English Provender Company, HiPP Nutrition, Direct Wines, Ecover, Walkers Snack Foods, Pepsico & Bayer UK.

See also Appendix E

There are no unique West Berkshire business issues as far as the TSS is concerned.

It is interesting and important to note that the TSS is experiencing similar recruitment problems to the rest of the West Berkshire business community. This means few 'proactive' inspections are being carried out resulting in a loss in regular contact with the business community which is unhelpful in developing an effective working relationship.

9.1.2 Business User Survey

The last business user survey was carried out some time ago which means the results are probably not too helpful or relevant. However, those results indicated that local businesses were aware of the TSS, would seek advice from them if necessary and favoured the use of telephone to make contact. They also found radio, newspapers and leaflets to be effective in receiving TSS related information. It is hoped that another business survey will be carried out soon.

9.1.3 Post Visit Assessments

When inspections do take place 'Customer Satisfaction Questionnaires' are left with business proprietors. Analysis shows that:

- Over 95% of people say that the visit purpose was fully explained as were any actions needed
- Over 95% thought the quality of advice was good or excellent & would contact the service for advice in the future

However, as previously mentioned, inspection figures are low resulting in few returned questionnaires which means that any analysis cannot be statistically reliable.

10.0 Local Awareness of Trading Standards

10.1 The 2003 Consumer Survey

In 2003 a survey of 500 West Berkshire residents indicated that:

- 12% had recently sought advice on a consumer issue
- 49% would seek advice from CABx in the first instance and 14% from TS
- 40% thought it was very or fairly easy to get advice with 53% saying their preferred method of access to be by telephone
- 72% said they felt very or fairly well informed of their rights as a consumer

These results were surprisingly low given the assumed high profile of trading standards within the local media. It also indicates that 60% of those asked felt advice would not be easy to come by – a very worryingly high percentage.

10.2 Business User Survey

This has been reported previously – see 9.1.2

10.3 Media Profile

Relations with the local media remain extremely good with 41 press releases issued relating to Trading Standards work during the year. Use of local media continues to be an effective strategy in getting various trading standards messages across to the general public. It is extremely cost effective with a high proportion of consumers stating they were aware of the work of the service because of local media interest. Almost the full range of work was covered but particular attention was made to the following issues:

- Food hazard warnings
- 'Young Consumer of the Year' competition
- Underage sales – particularly of alcohol
- Firework safety
- Animal Health issues

10.4 Non user survey

Non-users were surveyed as part of the 2003 survey. Consideration is being given to repeating the exercise during 2006/7.

11.0 Demands for Specialist Services

The Service does not currently provide any specialist services as defined in the guidance

PART TWO: NATIONAL AND LOCAL PRIORITIES

D: NATIONAL AND LOCAL PRIORITIES

12.0 Informed Confident Consumers

12.1 Consumer Advice

The service provides a Consumer Advice Service as set out in paragraph 1.0. Following the introduction of Consumer Direct the nature of this service is changing from simply giving advice to taking on casework with a view to resolving problems or disputes.

During the year the TSS maintained its CLS Quality Mark for General Advice with Casework. It is believed the service is the only one in the TSSE to have achieved this standard.

The service also provides advice by using the Consumer Direct advice pack as well as other leaflets developed by the OFT, DTI, FSA and other government departments and agencies.

12.2 Planned Levels of Activity

The following activities are planned for 2005/6 with respect to consumer advice:

Activity/programme/project/work planned	How the activity reflects local need	Links to strategic priorities
Act on casework referrals from 'Consumer Direct'	Consumer demand for more intervention	SP1 & SP2
Through CSN Raise Awareness and Improve Referrals System	Increase awareness of CA Provision	SP1 SP2
Education campaigns to raise awareness of consumer issues – e.g. prize draw scams, second hand cars & doorstep selling	Complaint analysis, customer surveys	SP1 SP2 SP4
Junior Citizen initiative	Increase in awareness of consumer rights	SP2, SP4
Young Consumer of the Year competition	Increase in awareness of consumer rights	SP2, SP4
Consumer Home Safety visits	Consumer demand	SP1 SP4
Introduce TS Community Website	Customer Survey	SP1 SP4
Provide more information on credit and debt	CABx / OFT Concerns	SP2 SP4

12.3 Continuing to Take Account of Emerging Issues

The TSS will also continue to take account of emerging issues in the following ways:

Activity	Purpose
Monitor & analyse Complaints and Enquiries – incl. those dealt with by Consumer Direct	Look for trends in complaints to allow TSS to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Tackle problem traders- Provide advice campaigns
Monitor Local and National Media	Look for changes to market place to enable TSS to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Tackle problem traders- Provide advice campaigns
Examine Emerging Issues at Regional Level	Provide advice
Monitor Changes to legislation	Look for changes to market place to enable TSS to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Tackle problem traders- provide advice campaigns
Speak regularly to partners and to vulnerable groups	Look for changes to market place to enable TSS to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- tackle problem traders- provide advice campaigns

13.0 Informed Businesses

13.1 Informed Successful Businesses

It is a TSS priority to provide advice & assistance to the local business community. A well-informed business community is good for consumers and is consistent with the strategic aim of creating a strong and vibrant local economy.

The following sets out the provision being made in 2005/6 for creating an informed, successful business community in West Berkshire:

Activity/programme/project/work planned	How the activity reflects local need	Links to strategic priorities
Work with Business Link to encourage use of the TSS	User Survey	SP1 & SP10
Research further the business case for a Local Business Partnership	User Survey	SP1 & SP10
Carry out Business Needs Survey	User Survey	SP1 & SP10
Monitor new legislation and where necessary provide advice	Post Inspection Feedback	SP10
Work with TSSE to provide targeted advice for business & for benchmarking exercises	User Survey	SP1 & SP10
Continue to carry out post inspection evaluations	Post Inspection Feedback	SP10
Improve web-site Information	User Survey	SP10
Be an active member of Business Watch – ensure businesses don't become crime victims	Analysis of Enquiries	SP1 & SP10
Work with local media to create regular contribution to business reports	Analysis of Enquiries	SP10
Business Verification service	Business & legal necessity	SP10
Promote 'Home Authority Principle'	Business need	SP10

13.2 Continuing to Take Account of Emerging Issues

The above table clearly sets out or planned activity for the 2005/6 period. However we will continue to take account of emerging issues in the following ways:

Activity	Purpose
Monitor Complaints & Enquiries	Look for trends and provide advice campaigns
Monitor Local and National Media	Look for trends and provide advice campaigns
Monitor Changes to legislation	To provide advice and avoid breaches
Work with Business Support Agencies	To ensure changing demands are met

14.0 Fair and Safe Trading Environment

14.1 Provisions for securing a Fair and Safe Trading Environment

In the interest of residents, local businesses and visitors the Council is committed to securing a fair and safe trading environment in West Berkshire. The following sets out the provision being made in 2005/6 for doing so:

Activity/programme/project/work planned	How the activity reflects local need	Links to strategic priorities
Implement updated Enforcement Policy	N/A	S10
Target audits & sampling to reflect problem areas or new legislation.	Consumer Survey	SP2, SP10
'Buy with Confidence' project	Consumer need	SP2,
Credit project in partnership with Sovereign Housing	Consumer need	SP2
Seasonal Product safety projects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fireworks ▪ Electric blankets (PSA) 	Consumer need – accident prevention	SP5, SP10
Road Traffic Act enforcement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overweight vehicles ▪ Weight restricted roads/ bridges 	Consumer need	SP5
General licensing/ registration administration activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fireworks ▪ Poisons ▪ Petrol ▪ Liquor ▪ Scrap metal 	Linked to enforcement/ accident prevention although activities are more aligned to a 'business facilitation' process	SP10
Inspection & testing of bulk fuel measuring instruments	Consumer need + business support facility	SP2
Inspection & testing of commercial weighbridges	Consumer/Business need	N/A
Reception & investigation of criminal complaints including referrals & notifications from Consumer Direct	Consumer need	SP2
Quantity checks on non pre-packed foods	Consumer need	SP2
Attendance at Newbury show to ensure compliance with TS, Food & Animal health law	Consumer survey	N/A
Work with TSSE / Police to reduce levels of doorstep crime by introducing TV wide enforcement initiative	Consumer Survey	SP2

Work with TSSE / Police/ PCT to reduce illegal access by young persons to dangerous / anti-social products – incl. PSA project	Consumer Survey	SP2, SP4, SP5
Carry out inspection of metrological equipment based upon risk – linked to food inspections	N/A	N/A
Participate in targeted regional and national sampling and inspection initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Environmental packaging ▪ Safety of cosmetic products ▪ Holiday window displays 	Consumer concerns	SP2, SP5
Promote Home Authority Principal	Business Surveys	SP10, SP5
Step up enforcement of environmental controls including storage of dangerous products and road traffic enforcement (details above)	N/A	SP5, SP9
Work with partner organisations to carry out home safety audits - PSA target 12	PSA Survey	SP2
Participate in National Consumer Week: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Internet check on local availability of age controlled products 	Consumer Survey	SP2, SP4, SP5

14.2 Continuing to Take Account of Emerging Issues

The above table sets out or planned activity for the 2005/6 period. However we will continue to take account of emerging issues in the following ways:

Activity	Purpose
Monitor Complaints and Enquiries	Look for trends and target enforcement
Monitor local and national media	Look for trends and target enforcement
Monitor changes to legislation	Target enforcement
Work with partners to assess need	To ensure changing demands are met

E: EFFICIENT, EFFECTIVE AND IMPROVING SERVICES

15.0 THE MODERNISATION AGENDA

15.1 Efficient, Effective and Improving Service Provision

In the interest of residents, local businesses and visitors the Council is committed to securing and efficient, effective and improving trading standards service in West Berkshire. The following sets out the provision being made in 2005/56 for doing so:

Activity/programme/project/work planned	How the activity reflects local need	Links to strategic priorities
Carry out a service wide 'needs assessment' to address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recruitment ▪ Career progression ▪ Continued competence ▪ Structure, officer roles & responsibilities 	Maximises effectiveness & efficiency of all service delivery activities – many of them featured in consumer surveys or are necessary for protection of local community.	N/A
Ensure regular team briefings take place	N/A	SP1
Ensure regular appraisals and one-ones take place	N/A	SP1
Maintain CLS Quality Mark following Assessment	Consumer Survey	SP1
Develop Service in line with SOCTSO EFQM Model – Peer Review to take place during 2006/7	N/A	SP1
Develop regional & national links to ensure best practice, avoid duplication of effort and wasted resource	N/A	SP1
Develop business continuity plans and ensure all emergency response plans are up to date	N/A	SP1
Review sources of electronic and written data and databases that are used in service delivery	N/A	N/A
Develop staff training programme and monitor performance against it	Business and Consumer Surveys	SP1
Ensure formal reports are accurate and submitted on time	N/A	N/A

F: QUALITY ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW

16.0 PROVISIONS FOR REVIEW

16.1 Monitoring Performance against the Plan

Service plan activities are monitored regularly to ensure that targets laid down in the Service Plan are met as follows:

Area to be Monitored	Frequency	Method
Inspections and Sampling	Monthly	FLARE
Complaints and Enquiries (response targets reproduced below)	Monthly	FLARE
Assessment of Quality – Inspections	Monthly	File Checks
Assessment of Quality – Enquiries	Monthly	In accordance with CLS QM
Compliance with Investigation Framework	Ongoing	In accordance with CPIA

16.2 Complaints and Enquiries

The service standards for complaints and enquiries are as follows:

Type of Enquiry	1 st Response	Considered Response	Closure
Safety, Food & W&M Complaints	1 day	10 day	95% in 6 months
All other Complaints	2 day	10 day	95% in 6 months
HA Referral	2 day	1 month	N/A
Business Enquiry	2 day	10 day	N/A

16.3 Learning From Others

We are very keen to learn from best practice developed in other authorities & have found the work done by authorities that have received DTI innovation grants very useful. We intend to work with colleagues from across the TSSE group to improve and enhance service delivery across the region through the work of the Regional Policy Officer.

16.4 Benchmarking

Much benchmarking work is done via the TSSE group.

16.5 Consultation

Plans for consultation (and publication of results of consultation) are highlighted elsewhere in this plan.

16.6 Meeting the Challenges of New Agendas and Future Planning

Changes to legislation and best practice are regularly reviewed by Lead Specialists who have a responsibility to make recommendations & implement changes to service plans where appropriate.

16.7 Identification of any variation from plan

Key posts within the service remain unfilled. A service wide needs assessment will address all related issues and make recommendations on remedying this problem. It is likely that some service plan activities will wither be deferred to a later date or amended in order to accommodate this needs assessment.

16.8 Identification of areas in need of improvement

The following areas for improvement were identified in the plan and have been reproduced below as key targets for 2005/2006:

Target	Where addressed in plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More information to consumers on doorstep selling• More information for consumers on credit and debt	Section 12, Section 4.2 Section 12, 14, 4.2 CSN, CABx
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Need to carry out a comprehensive business needs assessment• Develop relationship with business support organisations.	Section 13 Section 13
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More effective consultation with business, consumers and other stakeholders and TSSs	Section 12, 13, 16

APPENDIX A – CORE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE

Name of Authority	West Berkshire District Council
Chief Inspector of Weights & Measures	Sean Murphy

Status of Plan	
Approved by Members	
Member Approval Pending	Tabled at September 2005 Member meeting

Enforcement Responsibility	Description	Is this in your remit
Weights & Measures	Work relating to the accuracy of weighing & measuring equipment in use for trade and ensuring quantity of goods is within tolerance. Verification services	Y
	Does your authority maintain local standards?	N
	Does your authority hold Approved Body status?	N
Fair Trading	Includes claims about prices, quality or description of goods & services	Y
Product Safety	Includes monitoring goods supplied to consumers are safe & correctly labelled	Y
Food Standards	Includes ensuring food is correctly described & labelled throughout the supply chain & that applicable compositional standards are met	Y
	Is this function shared with Environmental Health	N
Consumer Credit	Including monitoring licensing regime, ensuring transactions, docs & adverts comply.	Y
Animal Health & Welfare	Includes movement licences, monitoring welfare during transport & at markets	Y
Agricultural Standards	Includes ensuring fertilisers & animal feeding stuffs are of correct composition & labelled correctly.	Y
Age Restricted Sales	Ensuring certain products are not supplied to children. E.g. tobacco, videos & DVDs, butane lighter fuel, alcohol,	Y
Road Traffic	Includes supply of unroadworthy vehicles, overloaded goods vehicles, weight restriction areas.	
Explosives	Ensuring fireworks & other explosives are safely stored on registered premises.	Y
Petroleum	Ensuring petrol is safely stored on licensed premises	Y
Environmental Legislation	Includes energy labelling, packaging disposal & motor fuel pollutants	Y
Licensing	Petrol	
	Explosives	
	Poisons	
	Functions under Vehicle (Crimes) Act 2002	

Additional Functions.
Food Hygiene, Safety & Disease Control
Some Health & Safety in food premises
Emergency Planning
Town Centre & Mobile CCTV

Specialist Services	Partners
Metrology Laboratory	Oxfordshire CC

Advice Responsibility	Description	Is this in your remit?
Are you part of a Consumer Support Network?		Y
Business Advice	Through other means other than inspection & home authority	Y
Consumer Advice	Provision of advice & information to consumers + casework	Y

Indicate the level of consumer advice you provide.

Client → Level ↓	Local Tax Payers	Contract in Area	All Contacts
Information	Y	Y	Y
Assisted Information	Y	Y	N
General Help	Y	Y	N
General Help + Casework	Y	Y	N

APPENDIX B – COMMUNITY TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN

PROFILE FORM

Name of Authority	West Berkshire District Council
Area in Hectares	70,000

Local Authority Organisation

In what year will the TSS be part of a Best Value review by your authority		
Indicate if you have received, or are working towards, any of the following:	Received	Working towards
▪ Charter Mark		
▪ Investors in People		
▪ OFT Excellence award		
▪ Beacon Status – topic		
▪ CLS Quality Mark	Yes	
▪ ISO 9000		
Do you use the EFQM model? (yes/no)	No. Working towards	
Do you have a service level agreement with the OFT?		

APPENDIX C – LOCAL AUTHORITY ORGANISATION – BUDGETS

\	£	£
DESCRIPTION	2004/5 Spend	2005/6 Budget
Employee Costs	265,210*	348,640
Supplies & Services	48,310	38,230
Gross Costs	313,520*	386,870
Income	22,220	12,470

* Note: Managed vacancies for the year 2004/5 equate to £61,320

APPENDIX D – STAFFING ALLOCATION

Role	Description	Number of Staff
Managerial	Staff primarily concerned with the management of staff within TS. Include only the proportion of time spent on such duties	0.6
Administration	Staff that support the service within the office	1.0
Enforcement Staff	TSOs, CPOs, FTOs authorised under criminal legislation	7.0
Enforcement Support Staff	e.g. lab staff, technical assistants	1.0
Consumer Advice	Full time staff & proportion of time other staff spend on such duties	0
DTS Trainees		3
Total No. of Staff	Exclude vacant posts	9.6
Current Vacancies	All roles	5
Long term Vacancies	More than 4 months duration	4

Qualification	Description	Number of Staff
DTS	Diploma in TS or equivalent	6
DCA	Diploma in Consumer Affairs	1
DCA Food	Full DCA incl. Food qualification	0
DCA An. Health	Full DCA incl. Animal Health qualification	0
DMS & similar	Diploma in Management Studies, MBA & similar	3
Others:		
	DCA – Petroleum Certificate	1
	DCA – Food and Agriculture Certificate	1
	BA Consumer Protection	1

APPENDIX E – BUSINESS PROFILE

	Description	Number
Business registered for business rates		TBC
Home Authority companies: Formal agreements	Follow LACORS Home Authority Principle guidance.	0
Home Authority companies: Informal recognition		22
Enquiries received concerning Home Authority companies		33
Risk Assessment: Assessment of risk of a business poses to consumers & competitors to determine frequency of inspection visits & appropriate enforcement.		
High	Follow LACORS guidance on premises risk assessment.	44
Medium		1771
Low		3007
No Inspectable risk		2506

Other Business Data

	Description	Number
Business Start Ups	Use figures based on VAT registrations.	TBC
Business Failures		TBC

APPENDIX F EMERGENCY PLANNING ACTION PLAN (Updated June 2005)

Action	By whom	By when	Status
EP Review			
Review Rest centre procedures, premises information, contact details	RB CC&H LB	complete	
Review EOC procedures and set up, run through current set up, EOC volunteers – recruit more? Develop use of new com room. Introduce new system – trg req.	RB- recruit, procedures PG - trg	complete	PG/ RB running training sessions
Service level plans – draw up template for service areas to complete their own emergency plans. Give advice re service level EP procedures	RB	Some complete, most underway	Template complete and given to service groups.
EPLO meetings – recruit EPLOs from all service areas to attend regular EP meetings	RB	ongoing	Still awaiting more Amey reps. Speak to Ian Priestly once services transferred back to WBC.
Introduce EP into all EPLO's job descriptions & managers?	RB HR	ongoing	RB to chase with HR
Contact local hotels and compile list of hotels and contact details that can be used in an emergency	LB	complete	Replies received – update database of contact details and send out
Corporate Board report to cover issues such as EPLOs, JDs, training, EOC, Amey staff, payment for out of hours response, budget. To go to JCC, HR, Finance, TU first	RB SM	complete	Report taken to board in April and returned to board in May with action plan
Provide support to the member task group reviewing emergency planning	RB PG	Ongoing until Sep 05	Includes minute taking, arranging meetings, advice, writing sections of the report
Back up EOC – procedures, phonelines, IT, training	PG	Complete	
Quarterly reports to Corporate Board, Management board. Service area self assessment.	RB	Ongoing	2 reports completed.
Recruit and equip rest centre managers	PG	Complete	

IT & Communications			
GIS – update and review contents of CD	PG PP	May 05	PG to review data and provide info to IT
EOC IT – set up user names and passwords for IT in the EOC. Designate computers for roles. Maintenance required.	PG JH	complete	PG to chase Jane to check passwords
Radio system- get new system up and running, apply for a licence, training for personnel	PG	complete	Procedures for use need to be developed and training completed.
ID card printer – produce templates for RC and TS, manual for use	PG	complete	
Develop new LALO system – recruit volunteers, purchase equipment, provide training	PG RB	complete	
Evaluate Airwave for use within WBC	PG	complete	Awaiting management decision
Update EP web page on a regular basis – PG to have access	PG	Ongoing	PG to arrange access and training
Agree and implement contract for Easy Text system with other Berkshire unitaries	PG	complete	
ECO Review			
Complete review of efficiency of ECO system – explore other options – what will give the customer the best level of service most efficiently?	RB	Complete	Awaiting management decision
Update ECO manual	LB	complete	
Seek at least 3 quotes from companies for the contract	RB	complete	
Work with new contractor to develop manual and procedures and provide training to staff before switch over	RB	??	
Consider implications of WTD and minimum wage regulations	JS, DH	Oct 05	
Admin			
Compile ECO statistics	LB	Ongoing	
Regular filing	LB	ongoing	
Secretary for meetings – , booking rooms, produce agenda and minutes – AWE OSWG, Padworth, EPLO			

Document compiling and distribution	LB	Ongoing	
Maintaining the library system	LB	Ongoing	
Purchasing equipment	LB	Ongoing	
Admin support for training days	LB	Ongoing	
3 monthly updates of MIP contact lists	LB	Ongoing	
Review documents held on the carousel	LB/ PG	complete	
Review computer filing system	PG	Mar 05	
Review manual filing system	RB/ LB	Mar 05	
Equipment			
Review ACCOLC numbers registered	PG	??	Awaiting home office review
Maintain equipment store and inventory	LB	ongoing	
Maintain wishlist of equipment needed	All	ongoing	
Clear out of stores	All	Review complete	Skip required for disposal
COSHH assessments for storage of petroleum in the store	PG	complete	
Plans			
MIP – update required	RB/ LB	complete	
Schools Emergency Response Plan	RB Educ - AB	Sep 05	
Develop a community risk register	RB	May 05	Awaiting risk register group to be established
Padworth off site plan – see liaison	PG		
AWE off site plan – see liaison	RB		
Flood plan review	RB	complete	
NHS hot weather plan – assess our responsibilities	PG	complete	
Training			
New training programme for 2005	PG	Complete	
Rest centre training – recruit volunteers through basic awareness presentations, book EPC lecturers to train staff, build up to rest centre Ex	PG/ RB CC&H	Complete	Exercise booked for Feb 05

EOC training – basic set up training and procedures, who has experience in this? Build up to full exercise	RB PG	Complete	Training commenced in Aug – more sessions booked
Basic council wide awareness training – all staff to have basic awareness of EP in West Berks – through induction course?	PG	ongoing	Intro to Crisis Management every 3 months
Promote and book external trg courses for staff	PG	ongoing	Berks and EPC courses promoted and booked for staff
Plan and run Ex Aldex 05 – level 2 off site exercise with AWE	RB – lead PG AWE	Complete	Ex to be held on 02 Mar 05
Provide service specific training when requested	PG RB	Ongoing	RB led training pm for Education. CC&H have also requested some training.
Assist with Berkshire training days as required	PG RB	Ongoing	Members seminar - Dec
Strategic training with Corporate Board – recovery phase training	PG/ RB	Dec 05/ Jan 06	Set date for training. Invite external agencies.
LALO training	PG	Complete	
Aldermaston PSD exercise	PG	May 05	Date booked 11 May, council offices
Lead CBRN training day for Berks unitaries	RB	Oct 05	Invite speakers, host in conjunction with RBC
Update Intro to CM course	PG	July 05	
Refresher courses – EOC	PG	Sep 05	
Elected members seminar - Berkshire	RB	Dec 05	
Liaison			
Continuing liaison with AWE – review off site plan, through planning group meetings, conduct joint exercises, attend LLC meetings	RB	Ongoing	
Aldermaston PSD – write off site plan, establish working group of interested parties	PG	Ongoing	Plan complete and sent out. Regular meetings still required for amendments to plan and to plan an exercise.
RAF Welford – develop a relationship with RAF Welford	RB	Ongoing	

Harwell – continuing liaison	RB	ongoing	
Emergency Services – develop local relationships – attend joint meetings and training events	RB PG	ongoing	
BLAEPG – attend all meetings and support Berkshire wide EP issues	RB PG	Ongoing	
Attend Regional EPO meetings - quarterly	RB	ongoing	
Safety Advisory Group	PG	ongoing	Plan exercise for racecourse
Attend the business continuity forum for Berkshire – invite local businesses	RB/ PG	ongoing	
Berkshire Issues			
IT & Communications – develop Berkshire wide GIS and lead on comms issues. Communications group to be set up.	PG	Sep 05	
CBRN – attend Berkshire wide meetings and training events on behalf of BLAEPG	RB	Ongoing	
Op Sassoon planning – plan for evacuation to Newbury race course. Berks wide plan.	RB	Ongoing	Newbury and Berks plans written. Thames Valley plan due to be completed by end Sep.
Military liaison	RB	ongoing	Ex Bucks Fizz – Oct 04
Business Continuity leaflet and relaunch BCF in Berkshire	PG	complete	
Nuclear – act as the Berkshire rep for any nuclear matters	RB	Ongoing	
Establish and develop the Berkshire Warning and Informing Group	PG	complete	Handed over to Slough in Mar 05
Act as liaison with Health agencies in Berks	PG	Ongoing	
Others			
Support Strategy and Commissioning in the development of a council business continuity plan, attend JCC risk management meetings	RB	ongoing	
RWG/ Helpline Actions			
Database of volunteers to help with helpline, counselling, general duties	LB	Complete	

Training for helpline volunteers – work with those who experienced Ufton Nernet	Janet Raymond Mary Page	Oct 05	Include vol agencies
Leaflet template – use UV leaflet and generalise it. Print 100 copies.	RB YJ	May 05	
Annual RWG exercise – bring together members of the group	PG RB	Sep 05	
Initial Responders Actions			
Training for LALOs – esp duty EHOs	PG	Complete	
New systems to call in staff – text system, designated number for staff to call in and offer help	PG	Complete	
Representation at Gold – ensure that TVP call WBC first if incident in our area	RB	Complete	
Visibility at scene – mark the PP vehicle up with WBC logo and Incident Response Vehicle	PG	Complete	
Access to the EOC – extra cards should be kept in the EOC and signed out when the EOC is opened	RB PN	Complete	
TV required in the EOC – news channels should be available	PG	Complete	
CPA Self Assessment Actions			
Work with Amey to develop their emergency planning arrangements	RB	Ongoing	
Generic community risk register – develop with local multi agency group	RB	July 05	Est gp with local responders if required
Review action cards for CMT and Controller – authorisation of expenditure	PG	Complete	
Review of exercise programme for all emergency plans – work into annual training programme	PG	Complete	
Cascade call out exercise required	PG	complete	
Promotion of business continuity – press release re the leaflet	RB	June 05	