

**ITEM No ...3.....**

**REPORT TO: COMMUNITY SAFETY & PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE – 12  
SEPTEMBER 2016**

**REPORT ON: TRADING STANDARDS TRUSTED TRADER SCHEME PROGRESS  
REPORT**

**REPORT BY: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

**REPORT NO: 276-2016**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To update Committee on the Dundee City Council Trusted Trader Scheme.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 It is recommended that Committee notes the content of this report.

**3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 The Executive Director of Corporate Services advises that there are no direct financial implications with this report.

**4.0 DUNDEE TRUSTED TRADER SCHEME**

4.1 Reference is made to Article IV of the minute of meeting of the Environmental Services and Sustainability Committee of 21<sup>st</sup> February 2005, Article I of the minute of meeting of the Environmental Services and Sustainability Committee of 18<sup>th</sup> February 2006, Article IV of the Housing, Dundee Contract Services and Environmental Services Committee of 28<sup>th</sup> January 2008, Article IV of the Housing, Dundee Contract Services and Environmental Services Committee of 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2009 and Article II of the Environment Committee of 27<sup>th</sup> April 2015 which outlined the launch and previous updates of the Dundee Trusted Trader scheme.

4.2 The scheme aims to improve consumer confidence, community wellbeing, and business standards in a number of ways:

- By reducing the availability of work for bogus or itinerant traders
- By highlighting and helping firms who deliver high quality services
- By providing a facility for word of mouth references for consumers
- By ensuring member firms abide by a code of practice

Member firms undertake to abide by a Code of Practice and a Guide to Trading Fairly. Their work is assessed by their own customers through a questionnaire feedback system operated by Referenceline Ltd. Feedback can be given via paper feedback forms or online. Ratings and copies of handwritten testimonials are freely available for prospective customers to see on the internet at [www.trustedtrader.info](http://www.trustedtrader.info). People without internet access can telephone 01382 436265 (option 2).

Trading Standards, who administer the scheme, vet prospective members and commit to offer members business advice and to promote the scheme locally.

Reference is also made to Article II of the Environment Committee of 27<sup>th</sup> April 2015 which advised that a dispute resolution system is also in operation. Should a dispute

not be resolved successfully locally, the complaint can be referred to an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) provider (Ombudsman Services Ltd).

Dundee City Council now act as a lead authority and licence the Trusted Trader model to ten other Local Authorities with the aid of Memorandums of Understanding to maintain the consistency and integrity of the scheme. Dundee City Council owns the intellectual property in the scheme (Trusted Trader and the 'handshake logo') as a registered trademark (UK00002473707) (renewable 29/11/17).

#### 4.3 Update

4.3.1 The scheme was initially targeted at the Home Improvement sector it has now, through both consumer and business requests, widened its scope. Although the home improvement sector remains its core it now includes a diverse array of business sectors ranging from accountants to osteopaths. Membership currently sits at 145 members.

4.3.2 An analysis of feedback from scheme users over the first ten years of its operation revealed the following:

- over 80% of Trusted Trader reviews are from consumers over 50, and 30% over 70, so the scheme is reaching it's target market.
- paper freepost forms prove especially popular with the older generations.
- over 40% of reviews come from consumers who have never used the business before. This shows the important role that reviews can play in giving consumers the confidence to choose a business that they previously knew nothing about and it also shows how firms depend on new customers to maintain or grow their business.
- Another 10% of reviews are from people who have known the business for less than a year, showing how a quarter of new customers can very quickly become repeat customers.
- the average value of each new customer is just over £1,500, but those who go on to become repeat customers within a year spend nearly twice as much. It is clear that businesses who offer a good service and earn the trust and confidence of their customers can expect to win a loyal customer base over time.
- The scheme generated over 14 million pounds for scheme members over ten years.

4.3.3 This year saw the scheme win Dundee City Council's Outstanding Service & Commitment Award in the customer focus category.

4.4 Future Plans - the service is currently exploring options to further raise awareness of the scheme to targeted consumers, namely the vulnerable and the elderly. The creation of a single Scottish wide Trusted Trader portal is also being explored.

### 5. LOCAL TRADING STANDARDS – SHARED SERVICES

5.1 Officers from Dundee City Council's Neighbourhood Services Department have been working with their colleagues in Angus, Perth & Kinross and Fife councils over the last 2 years identifying areas where common resources and expertise can be shared in order to maximise the quality of service provided and resource efficiencies. A memorandum of Understanding between the 4 Council group has since been formalised, Article III of the Minute of Meeting of the Community Safety and Public Protection Committee of the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016, (Report No. 156 – 2016 refers).

## **6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. There are no major issues.

## **7.0 CONSULTATIONS**

- 7.1 The Chief Executive, Executive Director of Corporate Services, Head of Democratic and Legal Services have all been consulted in relation to this report.

## **8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1 **None**

Elaine Zwirlein  
**Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services**

Tom Stirling  
**Head of Community Safety and Protection**

12<sup>th</sup> September 2016

