

**REPORT TO: ENVIRONMENTAL & CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMITTEE  
19 MAY 2003**

**REPORT ON: AUDIT SCOTLAND – PERFORMANCE AUDIT OF TRADING STANDARDS**

**REPORT BY: PRINCIPAL TRADING STANDARDS OFFICER**

**REPORT NO: 299-2003**

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To note and approve proposals following the 2001/2002 national and local audits of local authority trading standards services by Audit Scotland. Copies of the document have been passed to each of the Group Secretaries and are available for inspection in the members lounge.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The committee is asked to:
- 2.1.1 Note the 2001/2002 performance audit of trading standards services, 'Made to Measure', carried out by Audit Scotland.
- 2.1.2 Authorise the Acting Director of Environmental and Consumer Protection to review the current operation of trading standards services in Dundee, and prepare proposals where appropriate, in light of the findings and recommendations of the national and local audits.

## **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications to this report.

## **4.0 DUNDEE 21 IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no Dundee 21 implications to this report.

## **5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no Equal Opportunity implications to this Report

## **6.0 PERFORMANCE AUDIT OF TRADING STANDARDS**

- 6.1 This review of trading standards services by Audit Scotland piloted a new assessment model for performance audit, designed for smaller services without a government inspectorate. The approach included a number of innovative aspects, including the development of Good Practice Guides, and peer review by other local authority officers. The project was developed in close collaboration with SCOTSS the Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards in Scotland.
- 6.1.1 Key findings from the national report:
- Small trading standards services perform worse overall than large services, and there is a risk they do not have the capacity to improve. The size of services varied from 3 to over 50 staff.

- Larger services tend to provide higher quality services, although consumer and business expectations are broadly the same for all authorities
- Some councils spend twice as much on trading standards services than others of a similar size. Spends per head of population range from £2 to over £5
- Resource management needs to be improved in some areas and councils are encouraged to review their staffing requirements
- All councils need to respond to the challenge of the new DTI National Performance Framework

6.1.2 Key findings from the Dundee City Council local report:

- Many of the factors and recommendations made in the national report are also applicable to Dundee City Council
- Expenditure of £3.28 per head of population is ninth highest in the medium family group of twelve authorities, which has an average spend of £3.69
- Service resources should be reassessed as current staffing levels have not been reviewed since reorganisation
- There are specific areas where service performance needs to be improved, for example in service planning and public performance reporting
- The service feels it is well resourced with the latest information and technology for undertaking its work

6.2 It is proposed that the Acting Director of Environmental and Consumer Protection, together with the Principal Trading Standards Officer, review the current operation of trading standards services in Dundee, and prepare proposals where appropriate, in light of the findings and recommendations of the national and local audits, to improve service delivery within the city.

## **7.0 CONSULTATIONS**

7.1 The Chief Executive  
Directors of Finance  
Director of Support Services

## **8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 The following background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report

Made to Measure – An overview of trading standards services in Scotland, Audit Scotland, October 2002, ISBN 1 903433 72 X

\*Made to Measure – An overview of trading standards services in Scotland – Executive summary, Audit Scotland, October 2002, ISBN 1 903433 73 8

Dundee City Council – Performance Audit of Trading Standards, Audit Scotland, February 2003-04-02

\*Copies of the Made to Measure Executive summary are available in the members' lounge.

PRINCIPAL TRADING STANDARDS OFFICER

DATE: 12 MAY 2003