

**REPORT TO:** HOUSING, DUNDEE CONTRACT SERVICES AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICES (8th JUNE 2009)

**REPORT ON:** DUNDEE TRUSTED TRADER SCHEME

**REPORT BY:** HEAD OF EHTS

**REPORT NO:** 303-2009

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report provides an update on the operation of the Dundee City Council 'Trusted Trader' local business partnership scheme.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the committee notes the positive development of the Dundee 'Trusted Trader' scheme, and agrees to the promotion of the scheme as a model of good practice to the Scottish Government, in respect of proposals for a Scotland wide trusted trader network.

## **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications to this report.

- 3.1.1 No changes are being proposed in respect of local membership fees nor expenditure

- 3.1.2 The development of a Scotland wide trusted trader framework will require to be funded by the Scottish Government.

## **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 This Report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management.

### **4.2 Anti Poverty**

Trusted Trader makes a positive contribution to the Council's anti-poverty strategy by encouraging economic growth within the city, and enabling people to meet their own needs through the provision of information and advice.

## **5.0 MAIN TEXT**

### **5.1 Background**

Committee reports 145-2005, 535-2006, and 64-2008 outlined the launch and previous updates of the Dundee Trusted Trader scheme, which is aimed at improving 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

The scheme currently operates in a range of service sectors, with businesses from Dundee and its environs that provide services to local consumers. Member firms undertake to abide by a Code of Practice, and their work is assessed by their own customers through a questionnaire feedback system operated by Referenceline Ltd. Ratings and handwritten testimonials are available on the internet at [www.trustedtrader.info](http://www.trustedtrader.info).

## **5.2     Update**

- 5.2.1     Membership of the scheme has increased to 145 businesses from 120 in the fifteen months since the last committee update, and this number should increase further as the public profile of the scheme grows. Scheme members have been charged an annual fee from April 2008, and the strong membership numbers indicate that the scheme can be sustainable in the long term without public financing.
- 5.2.2     Trusted Trader was promoted as a model of good practice in responses to the Scottish Government's consultation on the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, and is viewed as an exemplar scheme by the Scottish Government. Proposals, from the Construction Licensing Executive (CLE), are being considered by Scottish Government Housing officials that would see the Dundee Trusted Trader model being used as the basis for a Scotland wide good trader scheme, delivered locally by Scottish Councils. The COSLA Community Wellbeing and Safety Executive Group endorsed this approach at their meeting of 20 May 2009. The development of Trusted Trader over a wider area will bring benefits to consumers and businesses, as well as reflecting well on the City of Dundee.
- 5.2.3     Two English local authorities, Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils, have joined the scheme, and have been licensed to use the Trusted Trader model in their areas. Other Scottish councils are in general waiting to see the outcome of proposals outlined in 5.2.2 above.

## **5.3     Proposals**

- 5.3.1     It is proposed that the Dundee City Council Trusted Trader scheme be promoted to the Scottish Government as a model of good practice, to form the basis of any Scottish national trusted trader framework available to all Scottish Councils and funded by the Scottish Government.

## **6.0     CONSULTATIONS**

- 7.1     The Chief Executive  
Depute Chief Executive (Support Services)  
Depute Chief Executive (Finance)  
Head of Finance

## **7.0     BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

**Albert Oswald**  
**Head of Environmental Health & Trading Standards**

**DATE: 20 May 2009**