

Performance Measures for Trading Standards Authorities

DEVELOPING THE
NATIONAL
PERFORMANCE
FRAMEWORK FOR
TRADING STANDARDS
SERVICES

No: CCP 006/02

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Developing the National Performance Framework for Trading Standards services

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1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Consultation

- 1.1 This consultation is aimed at Local Authority Trading Standards services. It seeks views on proposals to develop the National Performance Framework for Trading Standards services.
- 1.2 In April 2002, a new performance framework was introduced for Trading Standards services. The National Performance Framework sets priorities and performance standards for a modern Trading Standards service along with guidance on drawing up a Service Delivery Plan and providing an annual Information Return to central Government. The framework was developed to ensure that Trading Standards provide a more coherent and consistent approach to enforcement and service delivery.
- 1.3 The DTI, working with its partners, LACORS, the Trading Standards Institute, NWML and the Office of Fair Trading committed to developing the framework for April 2003, with the aim of introducing performance measures and reviewing the operation of the framework in the light of the first year's experience.
- 1.4 This document sets out proposals to develop the framework for 2003. It seeks views on all aspect of the proposals, in particular the performance measures outlined in Chapter 3.
- 1.5 In producing this consultation DTI has worked closely with the Steering Group, LACORS, TSI and Trading Standards authorities.

Responses

- 1.6 How to respond to this consultation:

On the topic of performance measures (chapter 3):

By e-mail to: heena.prajapati@dti.gsi.gov.uk

On the topic of standardising satisfaction surveys (chapter 4)

By e-mail to: joy.anderton@dti.gsi.gov.uk

On topics of updating the guidance, executive summary, alignment of CIPFA returns and IPF issues (chapters 5,6,7 and 8)

By e-mail to jo.mitchell@dti.gsi.gov.uk

by post to: Heena Prajapati or Joy Anderton or Jo Mitchell

Consumer and Competition Policy Directorate

Bay 2130

Department of Trade and Industry

1 Victoria Street

London, SW1H 0ET

Closing Date

- 1.7 Responses must be received by **21st January 2003**

Outcome

- 1.8 We aim to let you know the outcome of this consultation by end of February 2003.

Confidentiality

- 1.9 Your response to this consultation document may be made publicly available in whole or in part at the Department's discretion. If you do not wish all or part of your response (including your identity) to be made public, you must state in the response which parts you wish us to keep confidential. Where confidentiality is not requested, responses may be made available to any enquirer, including enquirers outside the UK, or published by any means, including on the Internet.

Consultees

- 1.10 We are sending this document to the consultees listed in Annex A. Please inform us if you know of others who would be interested in receiving this consultation. It is also available on our website or direct from Ed Tolson on request (email edward.tolson@dti.gsi.gov.uk or telephone 020 7215 6096).

Help with Queries

- 1.11 If you would like help with queries or further information about this consultation please contact

Heena Prajapati (heena.prajapati@dti.gsi.gov.uk)

or

Jo Mitchell (jo.mitchell@dti.gsi.gov.uk)

or telephone Heena or Jo on 020 7215 6469/6439.

2. SUMMARY

KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 Since the framework was introduced in April 2002, we have received useful feedback from individual Trading Standards authorities and from the Regional Co-ordinators. In summer of this year, we attended four feedback workshops in Edinburgh, Swindon, Northampton and Warrington. The purpose of these workshops was to discuss the development of performance measures for the National Performance Framework and to receive feedback on progress on the Service Delivery Plans prepared in the first year of the framework.
- 2.2 The key issues which emerged from the workshops were:
- Whilst there were aspects of the performance framework, which could be improved, for example some areas of the guidance, on the whole there was little appetite for change so early after introduction. Changes should be kept to the minimum.
 - There was considerable interest in basing performance measures on the four key priorities agreed in the framework, in developing the Good Practice Guide approach (similar to the Tri Nations guides) and in ensuring compatibility with BVPI 166 for Trading Standards.
 - There was considerable support for the development of national standard satisfaction surveys.
 - The CIPFA return should be aligned with the National Performance Framework Profile finance form.
 - The issue of duplication of plans and the single return was raised.
 - Development of an executive summary of the Service Delivery Plan would be useful to engage member involvement.

We outline how we propose to address the above points in the following chapters. We welcome feedback on this.

KEY QUESTIONS

- 2.3 In terms of performance measures
- ❖ Have we got the right set of performance measures for each of the four priorities?
 - ❖ Will these measures make a difference and underpin performance improvement?

- 2.4 In terms of the National Performance Framework, we are especially interested in your views on: -
- ❖ The new finance form, which is now also, the CIPFA return.
 - ❖ The small number of revisions to the guidance on completing the Service Delivery plan and Information Return that we are proposing.
 - ❖ Developing standard survey questions
 - ❖ The provision of a template for future plans
 - ❖ The Executive Summary
 - ❖ Are there best practice/methods the DTI can use to support small authorities to adopt and implement the framework?

3. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Background

When the National Performance Framework was introduced in April 2002, it was agreed by DTI, Trading Standards community, LACORS, OFT, TSI, NWML and many other stakeholders that in establishing the performance framework, the next important stage was the development of performance measures.

Historically much work had already been done on developing performance measures. LACORS in conjunction with SOCTSO and TSI developed a suite of performance indicators, but they were found to be biased towards output as opposed to providing an indication of how the service could be improved. The Trading Standards community stated that they wanted measures that would be of assistance to service improvement, help them link to corporate objectives and highlight the level of their contribution to the local priorities.

In developing the performance measures set out later in this section, we consulted the Steering Group on measuring the four key priorities outlined in the National Performance Framework:

- ❖ Informed Confident Consumers
- ❖ Informed Successful Businesses
- ❖ Enforcement of a Fair and Safe Trading Environment
- ❖ Efficient, Effective and Improving Trading Standards Service

It was agreed that for each of the priorities we would attempt to produce measures, which were useful for service improvement, meaningful and not just a result of collecting statistical data.

The Performance Measures

In developing performance measures, we have tried to address key issues and concerns raised by the Trading Standards community such as accessibility, and compliance by business and staff training. Also to address issues raised by stakeholders such as businesses, in terms of adherence to the Enforcement Concordat and the Home Authority principle.

The measures have been kept to the minimum number possible and if agreed, they will be launched in April 2003, with Trading Standards reporting back on the measures in April 2004. It is hoped that the measures will provide

valuable information in their first year. We will continue to seek feedback and review their contribution to service improvement.

The majority of the measures that have been included in this consultation will involve self-assessment by local authorities by scoring against minimum, good and better practice. This approach proved popular at the workshops and is similar to the scoring method introduced by the Tri-Nations Good Practice Guides, which about a hundred authorities are using. The Good Practice Guide model (click here to see [TRI - NATIONS](#) guides) was devised by Syniad, the Improvement and Development Agency supporting local government in Wales. The Tri-Nation approach has involved the combined working of Trading Standard professionals from Wales, England and Scotland supported by the DTI's Modernisation Fund. Measures of consumer and business satisfaction will need to be based on information collected through standard surveys (see Chapter 4).

Scoring

An authority when undertaking the self-assessment will look at the requirements listed under the headings of minimum, good and better. The overall score would be reported at the end of the year as part of the end-year return to IPF. **One approach to scoring is that an authority's scores in the good and better columns will not count until there is a full score in the preceding column.**

However there has been concern that those authorities that do not meet all the minimum requirements may already be fulfilling requirements under the good and better columns, which will not be recognised. It has been suggested that progress against minimum, good and better standards should be recognised and recorded. **Suggestions on how this could be better reflected this would be welcome.**

Content of the self- assessment guides on performance measures

The content of the self-assessment guides, which follow, has been compiled with the help of the Tri-Nations guides, input from the Steering Group, the workshops and the project team in DTI. **The content of each guide is not set in stone and we would welcome your views on developing the guides to reflect robust examples of minimum, good and better practice for each of the topics.** Experience tells us that there will be differing views on this.

Link to BVPI 166

Best Value performance indicators came into effect in April 2001. They were devised by central government, to be an essential part of the Best Value process.

BVPI 166 is being revised following consultation, which ended on 29th October 2002. The consultation paper can be found on the ODPM website at http://www.local-regions.odpm.gov.uk/consult/pi2003_04/pdf/bvpi.pdf. We have proposed a change in the guidance to include references to the National Performance Framework. A change has also been proposed on the scoring.

Informed Confident Consumers

Two measures are proposed.

Performance Measure 1

Relevant standard in the National Performance Framework (NPF):

Standard: 12g: Improved accessibility and availability of the service to local consumers including action to identify gaps in the service and reach non-users

Aim of measure

An accessible service is likely to be a reasonable indicator that consumers can obtain information and advice, supporting the objective of informed confident consumers. We propose to measure the accessibility of the service by examining what is available to consumers. This includes evaluating whether the service is accessible and setting standards for determining what action has been taken to raise awareness with non-users throughout all sections of the community.

A self-assessment good practice guide is proposed. The model below includes extracts from the Tri-Nations Good Practice Guide (GPG) on Consumer Advice.

Minimum	Good	Better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide telephone service during office hours</i> • <i>Provide service to personal callers at stated times</i> • <i>Make provision for personal callers with disabilities (where possible)</i> • <i>Translation service arranged as necessary</i> • <i>Ensure that the service telephone number and address is correct and available in the local telephone directories.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide full access during office hours to telephone and personal callers</i> • <i>Provide home visit service for disabled or disadvantaged clients within a locally determined target time</i> • <i>Provide answer-phone facility outside office hours</i> • <i>Provide initial advice to out-of-area-enquirers</i> • <i>Establish mechanisms for information exchange</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide free/subsidised telephone or call back facility</i> • <i>Make consumer advice/information available via the internet</i> • <i>Provide home visit service, on request, both within and outside office hours, within a locally determined target time</i> • <i>Provide mobile service or outreach surgeries where local circumstances make this appropriate</i> • <i>Provide consumer</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake raising awareness campaigns • Make service available for enquiries and/or complaints via Internet • Participate in a Consumer Support Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult and collaborate over common issues with partners • Work with CSN partners to develop strategy for increasing accessibility for consumers • Provision of area for consumer confidentiality • Provision of area which is child friendly • Consult nonusers on where they go for advice • Monitor the number of email enquiries and/or complaints received by the service • Monitor & evaluate participation in Consumer Support Network 	<p>access point(s) available in main shopping areas (e.g. touch-screen services points, full shop front access presence etc)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish formal protocols to exchange information • Identify particular areas where nonusers are concentrated and develop action plan to raise awareness • Evaluate the service accessibility on the Internet • An effective strategy is in place for supporting vulnerable groups in terms of accessibility
/8	/12	/9
Possible Total		/29

Guidance

Consumer – An individual or organisation not acting in the course of a business or profession

Contact – Telephone, face to face at office or consumer’s home, letter, fax and email

Access – This is where contact is made with the service for the first time with a new enquiry. This requires a record of how the client contacted the service in order to obtain information and/or advice.

Provision for callers with disabilities – This includes having a ramp or wider doors for wheelchair users, miniloop system where officers are trained to use it.

Provide home visit for disabled or disadvantaged clients – This includes all persons with any disability preventing them physically contacting and/or visiting the office. Also includes all persons caring for the elderly or infirm, all elderly people who cannot get about physically without great difficulty.

Consult and Collaborate over common issues with partners - Partners include local Consumer Network Partners and other neighbouring Trading Standards as well as other departments within the local authority.

Provide mobile service or outreach surgeries – This may include circumstances where an officer will have a “mobile” office and information and advice is given at either a library or neighbourhood office or similar community based office. This type of service may be made available for a limited time, such as once a week, or monthly or what the service decides is necessary to meet the local need.

Directories - could include council directory, other Consumer Support Network partners and Community Legal Services partners.

Raising Awareness campaigns - This could be via press releases, radio appearances, articles in local newspapers, poster and leaflet distribution to community groups, and promotion through library services. (This is not an exhaustive list).

Make service available for enquiries and/or complaints via Internet could include a reference to www.consumercomplaints.org.uk. Authorities are not required to devise separate websites.

Making consumer advice and information available on Internet would include drawing consumer’s attention to existing on-line sources for example Consumer Gateway at http://www2.consumer.gov.uk/consumer_web/index_v4.htm.

It would not be necessary to develop a new website.

Research has shown people with disability found the Internet and helplines particularly useful.

Authorities should bear in mind that this measure will need to be adapted in the future with the advent of Consumer Direct as it will have implications on way the service receives telephone enquires.

Question: How should the scoring system operate, bearing in mind that to score 1 point an authority that has undertaken 5 campaigns in a year will score the same as an authority who has done only 1 campaign?

Performance Measure 2

Relevant standard from the National Performance Framework:

Standard: 12h: Measuring use and effectiveness of education, advice and information services

Aim of measure

To assess how effective the consumer education, information and advice services is in helping consumers become empowered and to look at the long-term effectiveness of the service. This is because the National Performance Framework requires the service to help create informed confident consumers.

We propose to measure the percentage of consumers who were more aware of their rights and were confident about asserting them.

We are still considering how to best to do this.

Question: It has been suggested that instead of using a survey question to measure this standard, a scorecard be used like the one proposed for Performance Measure 4. We would like to know what you prefer.

Informed Successful Businesses

Two measures are proposed.

Performance Measure 3

Relevant standard from the National Performance Framework:

Standard: 13g: Improved accessibility and availability of the service to local business including action to identify gaps in the service and reach non-users

Aim of measure

To measure the accessibility of the service by examining the method of contact businesses may use and evaluate whether the service is accessible and awareness is raised with non-users throughout the local business community.

A self-assessment good practice guide is proposed. The model below includes extracts from the Tri Nations Good Practice Guide (GPG) on Business, Advice and Education.

Minimum	Good	Better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide telephone service during office hours</i> • <i>Provide service to personal callers at stated times.</i> • <i>Translation service arranged as necessary</i> • <i>Ensure that the service telephone number and address is correct and available in the local business telephone directories.</i> • <i>Undertake raising awareness campaigns</i> • <i>Make service available for complaints and/or enquiries via the Internet</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Full access during office hours to telephone and personal callers</i> • <i>Visits to businesses during office hours within a locally determined target time</i> • <i>Visits outside office hours to businesses operating at these times</i> • <i>Answer-phone facility outside office hours</i> • <i>Provision of area for confidentiality</i> • <i>Consult nonuser businesses, business groups and trade associations as to why businesses do not contact the service for advice and information</i> • <i>Identify local trade organisations and establish gateway for</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provide free/subsidised telephone or call back facility</i> • <i>Business advice/information available via the Internet</i> • <i>Participate in local business groups to influence their business strategy</i> • <i>Identify trends on which businesses contact service for advice from their own initiative & devise a strategy to address gaps in service accessibility</i> • <i>Evaluate the service accessibility on the Internet.</i>

	<i>information delivery on Trading Standards issues</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Monitor the number of email enquiries and/or complaints received by the service.</i> 	
/6	/8	/5
Possible Total		/19

Guidance

Identify local trade organisations and establish gateway for information delivery on Trading Standards issues – This includes not only establishing a method of delivering information, but also obtaining feedback as to whether the information was useful, relevant and whether additional assistance is required.

Directories - could include, council directory, other government agencies, local authority agencies- Business Link, Chamber of Commerce and voluntary services for example Citizens’ Advice Bureau and Law Centres

Raising Awareness campaigns, this could be via press releases, radio appearances, article in local newspaper, poster and leaflet distribution to community groups, and promotion through library services.

Question: How should the scoring system operate, bearing in mind that to score 1 point an authority that has undertaken 5 campaigns in a year will score the same as an authority who has done only 1 campaign?

Performance Measure 4

Relevant Standard from the National Performance Framework:

Standard: 13b: Developing and delivering a pro-active education programme for business

Aim of measure

To assess how effective the education, information and advice service is in helping business. This is because the National Performance Framework requires the service to help create informed successful businesses.

We propose to measure the percentage of businesses who were better informed and confident about complying with the law.

We are still considering how to best to do this.

Alternative: It has been suggested that a self-assessment approach could help to measure the effectiveness of the advice and information services for both businesses and consumers. A self-assessment good practice guide has been developed. The model below includes extracts from the Tri- Nations

Good Practice Guide (GPG) on Business, Advice and Education. A similar guide could be developed for performance measure 2.

Minimum	Good	Better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track new developments, including legislative changes, to assess local implications and make relevant information available to local businesses Consult businesses to ascertain demand for business training when deemed effective in terms of cost and efficiency. Plan and carry out education programme if demand exists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify businesses affected by new legislation and advise them of implications for their business. Organise business advice briefings/events as required or participate in those organised by other agencies Identify any language problems with businesses, and consider alternative method of providing advice and education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make business aware of education activities available . Have an electronic mailing list facility to notify businesses of relevant developments. Use existing or develop new links between business groups, and other government agencies to give information and advice If business event has been organised for dissemination of advice and information, obtain feedback and evaluate usefulness of event
/3	/3	/4
Possible Total		/10

Question: Which of the above approaches would be best as a measure of service improvement?

Guidance

To assess local implications and make relevant information available to local businesses - this can be by reproducing leaflets from standard texts and making them available to businesses, using media such as radio and television, press releases and information on the website.

Enforcement of a Fair and Safe Trading Environment

Three measures are proposed.

Performance Measure 5

Relevant standard from the National Performance Framework:

14b: The operation of the Home Authority principle in accordance with LACORS guidance including responding to queries from other authorities

Aim of measure

To ensure that all services are following the Home Authority principle when undertaking an investigation into a complaint about a trader. In particular this performance measure aims to ensure that where a Home Authority agreement exists, the authority dealing with a complaint will take steps to liaise with the Home Authority (HA) as required by the Home Authority principle and aim to ensure that advice given to the trader by the HA is followed effectively and consistently. The measure also seeks to establish the extent to which an enforcing authority does not agree with the Home Authority's advice and why. It also aims to pick up the extent to which Home Authorities are not consulted at the outset of an investigation.

Home Authority Principle: Compliance Table

A	Number of investigations where the HAP should be applied	
B	Percentage of investigations (A) where the local authority agrees the course of action with the Home Authority at the start of an investigation	
C	Percentage of investigations (A) where Home Authority is consulted at the start of an investigation but does not agree with the Home Authority advice and goes ahead with different enforcement action	
D	Percentage of investigations (A) where there is no consultation with the Home Authority at the start	
Breakdown of cases at C above by reasons where action not agreed		
	Number of cases	Percentage of A
Disagreement with the Home Authority on the interpretation of a point of law		
Disagreement with the Home authority on the interpretation of		

material facts		
Disagreement with the Home Authority on the length of time allowed for indulgence of the inspector.		
Disagreement with Home Authority on what is proportionate enforcement		

Questions: Will this measure improve the operation of the Home Authority principle? Can it be improved?

Are there other possible reasons why the Home Authority and the enforcing authority would not agree a course of action?

Guidance

Box A – number of investigations where the Home Authority principle applies. This will include all traders under investigation who have a Home Authority agreement in force. Steps will need to be taken to establish whether an HA agreement exists. The Home Authority could be the investigating authority or another authority.

In addition to the compliance table above, a self assessment good practice guide could help reinforce the principle. The model below includes extracts from the Tri-Nations Good Practice Guide on Business Services, Advice & Education)

Minimum	Good	Better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Formally adopt the Home Authority principle (HAP)</i> • <i>Ensure that staff are aware of principle and it's implications</i> • <i>Consider resource implication of operating HAP and decide scope of service to be provided</i> • <i>Keep LACORS Home Authority database updated</i> • <i>Have arrangements</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Maintain regular contact with Home Authority companies</i> • <i>Advise Home Authority companies of relevant developments (e.g. new legislation) and the implications for their business</i> • <i>Designate and publish the name of an officer(s) responsible for home authority</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Have formal arrangements/ protocols or service level agreements with Home Authority companies for regular liaison</i> • <i>Monitor the number of enquiries received relating to individual Home Authority companies.</i> • <i>Participate in relevant sector grouping of home</i>

<p><i>to notify enforcing authorities of indulgences relevant to subsequently corrected errors</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Make available complaint procedures to businesses, identifying contact names</i> • <i>Ensure staff are competent to undertake home authority role</i> • <i>Liase with Home Authority before undertaking detailed investigation or legal action</i> • <i>Use the Home Authority principle when making referrals to other Trading Standards authorities</i> 	<p><i>business</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Undertake a management review and audit of Home Authorities businesses</i> • <i>Monitor adherence to HAP for referral to Home Authority</i> • <i>Monitor adherence to HAP for referrals from Enforcing Authority</i> 	<p><i>authorities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Follow up all referrals made to establish if any advice was given to business by Home Authority, for future reference</i> • <i>Results of monitoring are reviewed with staff annually and action taken to meet shortfalls in performance and maintain good performance</i> • <i>Results of monitoring are reviewed with Home Authority businesses</i> • <i>Action is taken annually to review adherence to HAP with Regional group</i> • <i>Examples of good/best practice are published and promoted to staff.</i>
/9	/6	/8
Possible Total		23

Question: Is the self-assessment guide approach helpful? Should it form part of the performance measures?

Performance Measure 6

Relevant standard from the National Performance Framework

Standard: 14a: Principles of good enforcement that meet the requirements of the Enforcement Concordat and take into account the Code of Crown Prosecutors (the Crown Office Guide in Scotland).

Aim of measure

This is to ensure that not only have the Trading Standards Services adopted the Enforcement Concordat, but is actively adhering to its principles, providing a coherent and consistent service.

A self-assessment good practice guide is proposed. The model below includes extracts from Tri-Nations Good Practice Guide on Investigation of Offences)

Minimum (1)	Good (2)	Better (3)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Service has clear policy and standards for business and public relating to the principles of the Enforcement Concordat</i> • <i>All staff are aware of the standards</i> • <i>Staff are given guidance on proportionality in relation to risk</i> • <i>Standards are published for business and public to see</i> • <i>Guidance on the standards and how they are applied is promoted to staff</i> • <i>Guidance on the standards and how they are applied is published for business and public to see</i> • <i>Any charges made are published and transparent</i> • <i>Officers will discuss compliance problems with anyone experiencing difficulties</i> • <i>Contact point for advice is published</i> • <i>Complaint procedures about the service are available to business, public, staff and consumer groups</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Performance against standard is monitored</i> • <i>Performance against standards is published</i> • <i>Individual staff appraisal includes assessment of meeting the standards</i> • <i>Service targets small and medium size business to assist with compliance and avoid compliance failure</i> • <i>Advice on compliance is confirmed in writing on request explaining why remedial work is necessary and over what timescale</i> • <i>Written advice distinguishes between legal requirement and good practice</i> • <i>Traders are given chance to resolve problems before formal enforcement action is taken unless there are grounds for immediate action (e.g. safety/public interest/prevention of destruction of evidence)</i> • <i>Where immediate enforcement action is necessary,</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Results of monitoring are reviewed with staff annually and action taken to meet shortfalls in performance and maintain good performance</i> • <i>Standards and performance are formally reviewed with business at least every 2 years and action taken on feedback.</i> • <i>Action is taken at least annually to review service standards and policy with nearest neighbour group, aspiring to the level of the best</i> • <i>Action is taken at least annually to review service standards and policy with Regional Group, aspiring to the level of the best</i> • <i>Examples of good practice are published and promoted to staff</i>

	<p><i>explanation is given to trader within 10 working days</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Complaint procedures include dispute resolution and appeals procedures</i> • <i>Advice on complaint procedures is issued with the above enforcement notice</i> 	
Total Possible Score 10	Total Possible score 10	Total possible score 10 (Each of the above carries 2 points)
	Total Possible Overall Score 20	Total Possible final score 30

Guidance

The service should draw up policy and standards for the Trading Standards service. These should be consistent with the Local Authority's policy and standards on the Enforcement Concordat where practicable. If the authority does not have a complete set of policies and standards, the service should set its own in accordance with guidance published. The National Performance Framework explains where to find this.

Each Trading Standards service will clearly have an interest in being consistent with its own LA policies and standards as well as with neighbouring services. A sensible balance may have to be struck if there are different standards and targets. The scorecard, in column 3, which aspires to better practice, encourages a joined up approach with other services, be these a local benchmarking or neighbourhood group, or the recognised Regional Group.

Neighbourhood or regional groups should aim to validate and work towards improving the local policies and standards of its members under the umbrella of common principles aimed at consistency and performance improvement, adaptable to local circumstances. It is not necessary for all the members of a neighbourhood or regional group to operate to exactly the same standards and rules, as this may not be achievable for a service, which is bound by its own authority's standards. However, to score positively for either of the joined up indicators in column 3, a service must satisfy the neighbourhood or regional group that its policies and standards are the best possible it can aspire to given all the circumstances.

Guidance to staff on applying the standards and rules could be made available through neighbourhood or regional forums. This could avoid the need for small services to institute their own training procedures and would meet the criteria for a positive score. It could help to facilitate the exchange of good practice. Staff should be encouraged to discuss what is a proportionate response with others so that experience and fresh thinking are shared. Staff should be encouraged to contribute to the local guidance to reflect this.

Performance Measure 7

Relevant standards from the National Performance Framework:

Standard: 14c: A programme of enforcement activity that is informed & linked to recognised risk assessment analysis, and which reflects appropriate levels of enforcement:

Standard: 14h: The inspection of metrological equipment and goods based on risk assessment. Verification of equipment and arrangements for joined up working on legal metrology issues.

Aim of measure

This is intended to measure compliance and the effectiveness of inspection programmes. It will help establish whether the Home Authority principle is working and that business advice and education is working to ensure a high compliance rate. The measure proposed is based on the current information return in the National Performance Framework. It has been developed to more closely reflect the new Business Premises Risk Assessment guidance which is being revised by LACORS.

3.5 Compliance work through primary inspection visits and follow-up						
Risk level	Number of businesses on data base	Number primary inspection visits planned in period	% of planned visits which were completed in period	% businesses found to be compliant on first visit	Number of non compliant businesses checked again	% businesses found to be compliant upon re-check
High						
Medium						
Low						

3.5 Compliance work through Appropriate Enforcement Activity (AEA)						
Risk level	Number of businesses liable for AEA on data base	Number businesses liable for AEA planned in period	% of AEA which were completed in period	% of businesses under AEA found to be compliant on first contact	No. non compliant AEA businesses checked again	% AEA businesses found to be compliant upon re-check
High risk Non –e-business	X	X	X	X	X	X
High risk E-only business						
Medium						
Low						

Questions: Can the definition of compliance be improved so that minor infringements are not given too much weight?

Is the inclusion of a separate compliance table for Appropriate Enforcement Activity useful and workable?

Guidance

Definitions of high, medium and low risk can be found from LACORS guidance on risk assessment

Give figures for visits relating to businesses based, or with physical premises, in your local authority area. Figures may include Internet sites where the supplier is based in your area, stalls, and mobile traders as well as fixed premises.

To complete this section, the following definitions should be used.

Primary Visit. An inspection visit that meets the requirements of the risks identified as being associated with that business. Visits for this purpose to Internet trader sites can be counted. Only one visit should be recorded against each business during each programmed interval. Visits made for the purposes solely of carrying out sampling, investigation of complaints and trader advice visits etc should not be counted.

Percentage compliant on first visit: When making a visit the officer finds no prima facie infringement (*or an actionable infringement, where it is so minor, that it would be unreasonable considering all relevant circumstances to leave a notice/advisory note/warning*) of statutory requirements as determined by the officer, at the time, that could result in enforcement action against the trader. Enforcement action would include giving advice at the time of the visit. Calculate the number of businesses found to be compliant on the first visit as a percentage of all first visits.

Number of non-compliant businesses re-checked: Count all follow up action where a check has been carried out to ascertain whether the business has corrected the infringement(s) found during the primary visit. A follow up need not be a re-inspection if checking that remedial action has been taken can be done by other means, e.g. by monitoring advertisements. Count only the first follow up.

Percentage compliant upon re-check: Calculate the percentage of businesses found to be compliant upon rechecking as a percentage of all businesses, which have been re-checked.

Appropriate Enforcement Actions (AEA)

This has been suggested by LACORS following their consultation on risk assessment. The consultation process established that the TS community were keen on the move away from enforcement activity being purely inspection based.

AEA can include the following: -

- Test purchasing/sampling

- Issue of guidance documents (to specific businesses)
- Business schemes for specific businesses
- Self assessment methods by summary (as to specific businesses who respond)
- Evaluation of information by businesses where there is no 'premises' e.g. Internet businesses

It should be noted that for high-risk businesses the only way to assess compliance rates would be to carry out a physical inspection. Obviously this would not apply to e- businesses.

Efficient, Effective and Improving Trading Standards Service

Two measures are proposed:

Performance Measure 8

Relevant standard from the National Performance Framework:

Standard: 15e: Developing and training staff to ensure that they have the skills required to deliver the service

Aim of measure

A modern service cannot survive without skilled staff. This measure aims to encourage the training of new staff, in addition to keeping current staff updated in both skills and knowledge. This is important as it maintains the quality and performance of the service.

We propose to monitor the average hours of training per officer. This will ensure that all types of training, including local and in-house development training, can be credited. The table below is extracted from the Information Return for the National Performance Framework. We propose to continue to require this data.

Staff Training

% staff who undertook some TS professional development in last year	Count “recognised” courses that would be similar wherever taken e.g. DCA, CPPD, distance learning, in-house, TSI branches, for example.
Average no. of hours of training per officer on professional development	Give figure for all staff attending qualification or profession related training as above. Calculation: total number of hours of training divided by number of staff eligible whether participating or not.
% staff who undertook other skills training in last year	For example IT training; LA management training; professional not counted above. This is intended only as an indicator of the proportion of staff who undertook some skills or developmental training. Exclude first aid training.
Average no. of hours per officer spent on other skills training	Give figure for all staff attending skills training. Calculation: total number of hours of training divided by number of staff eligible, whether participating or not.

Performance Measure 9

Relevant standard from the National Performance Framework:

Standard: 15h: Evaluating and improving joined-up working and co-ordinated activities for enforcement, advice and information sharing.

Aim of measure

This is to establish the level of partnership working by measuring the extent to which local authorities are engaging in projects that cross boundaries, and the level of joined up working with other agencies. A self-assessment guide on partnership and joined up working is proposed. The model below includes extracts from the Tri-Nations Good Practice Guide on Programmed Inspections.

Minimum	Good	Better
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify relevant trading standard partners and external agencies that would have mutual interest in trading standard issues.</i> • <i>Provide the staff with a directory of external agencies and partners</i> • <i>Network with other services to establish how corporate objectives can be met.</i> • <i>Participate in Consumer Support Network.</i> • <i>Participate in regional TS group and enforcement forum.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Establish mechanisms for information exchange</i> • <i>Develop effective partnership arrangements</i> • <i>Consult and decide course of action (if appropriate) for all partnerships</i> • <i>Develop a yearly plan/programme of activity with partners</i> • <i>Participate in Consumer Advice forum</i> • <i>Participate in Business Advice forum</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Establish formal protocols to exchange information</i> • <i>Effective delivery of project or activity objectives by all partnerships</i> • <i>Evaluate and review programme of activity with partners</i> • <i>Review programme to ensure it links in with corporate objectives</i> • <i>Review programme to ensure it links with community objectives</i>
/5	/6	/5
Possible Total		/16

Question: How can the assessment guide for partnership working be developed?

Question: How can the assessment guide better reflect the diverse partnership arrangements that exist?

Guidance

Identify relevant trading standard partners and external agencies.

Partnerships might include:

- Underage sales with relevant NHS trust &/or Health Promotion Agency
- Proof of age scheme with Education Authority and/or individual schools
- Investigating counterfeiting with police, immigration, inland revenue and benefit fraud section
- Provision of advice through Consumer Support Networks
- Involvement in cross boundary groups – e.g. Regional Safety group or Regional Chief Officers group
- Joint enforcement teams

Develop effective partnership arrangements- this would include meeting with the partner and discussing when and how the partnership arrangement will work and how it will contribute to the overall respective organisations objectives. Outcomes should be recorded.

Consult and decide course of action on common projects and activities- This includes consulting with the partners when undertaking an activity which the trading standards authority think the partner may have an interest in and consider if and how the partner may wish to be involved. This process should be recorded.

Consumer Advice Forum refers to meeting with Trading Standards personnel from neighbouring authorities to discuss common problem issues relating to provision of consumer information, advice and education. Also consider CLS and CSN partner meetings

Enforcement Forum- regional groups such as Midcots or SETSA, any group meeting to discuss enforcement issues with other agencies, business groups etc

Business Advice Forum – any government or local authority agency initiative involving advice to new and existing businesses. Charitable Trusts geared to provide advice to new businesses.

Quality Assessment and Review

Performance Measure 10 and 11

Relevant standard from the National Performance Framework:

Standard: 16e: User surveys to assess satisfaction

We propose to measure the percentage of consumers highly satisfied with the service and the percentage of businesses highly satisfied with the service.

Aim of measure

The aim of these measures will be to assess the overall satisfaction of users of the service, by measuring consumer and business satisfaction rates. To arrive at meaningful and comparable satisfaction rates for all services, survey questions and methodology will need to be standardised. A possible approach to this is set out in the next section. In measuring user satisfaction, we will also need to be able to assess who is not using the service and why.

Questions:

Are these the questions the service should be asking to measure satisfaction?

What supplementary questions should be asked in a survey?

To inform an overall judgment, a number of questions on issues which are known to influence satisfaction rates might need to be asked, for example about courtesy of staff, quality of advice, complexity of query, speed of response, whether or not the advice given was what the user wanted to hear.

Questions:

Which issues are most important to a consumer satisfaction survey?

Which issues are most important to a business satisfaction survey cover?

4. STANDARDISING SATISFACTION SURVEYS

Standard survey questions for Trading Standards services

Throughout the development of the National Performance Framework, it has been suggested that some measures of the service's performance can only be established through surveys of consumers and business users and non-users. Trading Standards services conduct a variety of surveys of users and non-users. Throughout the development of the performance framework and during the workshops held in September 2002, services recommended that DTI devise standard survey questions and methodology that could be used across the service. The DTI team has discussed possible approaches to this with a number of consultants and the following outlines how we might proceed to establish, in the first instance, user satisfaction rates.

Satisfaction rates

Once we have established through this consultation how performance measures 10 and 11 should be expressed, DTI proposes to tender for consultants to devise two standard survey questionnaires, one for consumers and one for businesses. There may also need to be a questionnaire for non-users, both business and consumer. Initial discussions suggest the following possible approach to developing a standard satisfaction survey.

Qualitative development. Through speaking to service heads, TSOs, consumers and businesses, two questionnaires would be developed.

Surveys could be carried out by post or telephone. E- questionnaires would be required for on-line users. We would expect the consultants to advise us on the most cost effective method based on experience of this type of survey.

The proposed surveys would need to be tested out initially with staff, business and consumers. This could be done through discussions groups. Survey questions and methods could be piloted in a number of offices for a trial period.

Once the standard surveys have been developed, guidance would be distributed to every authority on what to do. We envisage postal questionnaires will be for self- completion by users. Special arrangements may be needed for users with response difficulties such as poor eyesight, poor functional literacy and some elderly people. Professionals would conduct telephone interviews. Services may need to help select prospective interviewees.

The guidance would explain how often the survey should be conducted and over how long a period. It would advise on the number of questionnaires that would need to be issued to ensure a valid result. It would advise on the circumstances in which the questionnaire should be issued e.g. before, during

or after an inspection of a trader, on receipt of a complaint in person, by phone or by email, through outreach surgeries etc.

The issue of postal questionnaires and selection of any telephone interviewees would be likely to fall to each Trading Standards office. Officers would need to keep up to date with the guidance material and may need to be released on occasion to attend any training provided on the use of the questionnaires.

To keep the survey cost to local authorities as low as possible, users could return questionnaires to a central point in reply paid envelopes supplied with the initial packs. The data would then be processed centrally and localised reports would be sent to each authority. The data would form part of the end year performance report published by IPF.

The development of the survey material and any commissioning period is likely to take about 6 months. This would allow for the first surveys to be conducted in 2003 – 2004.

Questions:

Is this a sensible approach? Should the data be processed centrally?

Do you foresee any difficulty in using standard surveys to gather user satisfaction data for your service?

Have you recently conducted a postal survey, telephone survey or on-line survey? What response rate did you get for which method?

At what time of year would you prefer to conduct a survey? Please say why.

Should standard surveys be piloted for a period of a few weeks before they are rolled out to the whole service?

Would your service be willing to be a pilot?

Responses on this section about the process of standardising survey questionnaires should be sent directly to Joy Anderton, Room 2130, DTI, 1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET or by email to joy.anderton@dti.gsi.gov.uk

5. UPDATING GUIDANCE TO THE NATIONAL PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 The Guidance on the Service Delivery Plan Section C, 9 suggests that Trading Standards obtain the data on business start-ups and failure rates from VAT figures. This guidance is incorrect and we propose to change it to the following:

'Approximate data on business start-ups and failure rates can be found on the Small Business Service website at the following website addresses:

<http://www.sbs.gov.uk/content/statistics/vat1400.xls> (excel document)

<http://www.sbs.gov.uk/content/statistics/vat-2000.pdf> (printable pdf document)

- 5.2 Some authorities have expressed concern that these figures are for 2000 and therefore not completely up to date. We have spoken to the Small Business Service and they have advised that in February 2003, the figures will be updated to include 2001 business start-ups and failure rates. In February 2004, the 2002 data will be added. We realise that it will not be possible, therefore, for TSAs to have up-to-date information but advise you to use the most recent available figures.
- 5.3 We would stress here that TSAs should only use these figures if they feel they are useful. It is not obligatory.
- 5.4 Input from the workshops in the summer indicated that Trading Standards authorities would be in favour of a list of useful references. **We would welcome your views on the draft which follows:**

SUMMARY OF USEFUL WEBSITES/ REFERENCES

Beacon Status

Website: <http://www.local-regions.odpm.gov.uk/beacon/prospect/3.htm>

Benchmarking clubs

Examples on LACORS websites

www.lacors.com

Best Value

Website:

<http://www.local-regions.odpm.gov.uk/bestvalue/indicators/indicatorsindex.htm>

Business start-ups and failures

Details of number of businesses set-up and those disbanded

<http://www.sbs.gov.uk/content/statistics/vat-2000.pdf>

Business Link

Website: www.businesslink.org

Charter Mark

Website: www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/markhome.htm

Code of Crown Prosecutors

Website: www.cps.gov.uk/cpsb/whatdoes.htm#codecrown

Community Legal Services Quality Mark

Website: www.legalservices.gov.uk/qmark/

Consumer Support Network

Website: www.csnconnect.org.uk

E-commerce sources

Website: www.consumercomplaints.org.uk

www.ripofftipoff.net

Educational programmes

Website for 'Confident Consumer' CD ROM

www.dti.gov.uk/cacp/ac/work7.htm#ced

Website for Business Education

www.askcedric.org.uk

EFQM Excellence Model

Website: www.lacors.com

EN9000

Website: www.bsi-global.com/ISO9000Revisions2000/Overview/Intro+ISO9001-2000.xalter

Enforcement Concordat

Website: www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/publicsector/enforcement/concordat.htm

Investors in People (IIP)

Website: www.iipuk.co.uk

Local Business Partnership

Website: www.locasslpartners.org.uk

OFT Excellence in TS award

Website: www.of.gov.uk/html/trading/nws26-11.htm

Regional Development Agency

Website: <http://www.regions.odpm.gov.uk/governance>

Small Business Service (DTI)

Website: www.sbs.gov.uk

6. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FOR MEMBERS OF THE SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN

- 6.1 A template for an Executive Summary of the Service Delivery for Members is suggested below.
- 6.2 Local authorities could adapt the template for their own, individual needs and complete the relevant information.
- 6.3 DTI would welcome your views on this.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2002-3

AIMS OF THE SERVICE

The Trading Standards Service undertakes the statutory duty of the Council to enforce a wide range of legislation concerned with the regulation of trade practices. The purpose of this legislation is to protect consumers from fraudulent and unsafe trade practices and responsible businesses from unfair competition. This purpose is adopted by the Service as one of its principal aims:

- (a) To promote and maintain a fair, equitable and safe trading environment**
- (b) To encourage confident and knowledgeable consumers through the provision of advice, information and education**
- (c) To promote and maintain the quality and competitiveness of goods and services produced by local business**

HELPING TO DELIVER THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

The above aims set out in the Service Delivery Plan will assist the Council to achieve its priorities of:

- 1. Building a network of strong, self-sufficient communities**
- 2. Securing safer, more confident communities**
- 3. Working in partnership with others to provide better services to the public**
- 4. Managing the Council's resources in a businesslike way.**

The Trading Standards Service Delivery Plan assists in the achievement of Council priorities **1.** and **2.** by:

- (a) Protecting the community from economic loss due to illegal, unfair and unsafe trade practices.
- (b) Improving community health and safety
- (c) Protecting business from unfair competition

Priority **3.** is achieved by working in partnership with other related organisations.

1. Summary of work to be undertaken in 2002-3

2. Inspection of trade premises

3. Sampling and testing of goods

4. Complaints and enquiries

5. Consumer education and advice

6. Home authority premises

7. Project based work for 2002-3

7. ALIGNMENT OF PROFILE FINANCE FORM WITH CIPFA RETURN

- 7.1 DTI has been working with Peter Heafield and with the CIPFA working group to align the Profile finance form with the CIPFA return. **Our intention is Trading Standards will only be required to complete the revised finance document within NPF, which will also constitute the CIPFA return.**

- 7.2 We welcome your comments on the proposed format (below). LACORS' comments are reflected in the proposal. A copy will also be placed on the LACORS website and sent to Chief Trading Standards Officers.

Local Authority Expenditure.

Column 1: Where available give actual expenditure for last financial year, where figures are not yet available state estimated expenditure and send fully completed form to IPF when figures are confirmed.

Column 2: Give details of your budget allocation.

I EXPENDITURE	1 Gross Expenditure 2002/3	2 Budget Allocation 2003/4
<p>1. Employee Costs</p> <p>Show the costs of all expenditure on employees, categorised as listed below. When calculating costs of posts include: basic pay, overtime, employer's superannuation, employer's national insurance, SSP due, pay arrears, bonus payments, other allowance/payments, subsistence, pensions increases and other employee costs. Where posts have duties in more than one of the categories below, estimate the % of time spent allocated to each category and calculate the cost accordingly.</p> <p>a. <i>Managerial</i></p> <p>b. <i>Staff Employed Directly on Service Provision:</i> Include APEL staff</p> <p>c. <i>Professional Trainees:</i> Include all costs associated with DTS trainees such as salary, course costs and exam fees. Include here any sponsorship and salary for degree students, but not costs of staff undergoing APEL programmes.</p> <p>d. <i>Administrative and Clerical (Direct Support):</i> Include costs of all staff employed to provide direct support for provision of the service. Do not include central support costs here but list these at 3b below</p> <p>e. <i>Training:</i> Include all training expenses such as course fees, membership fees/ subscriptions, exam fees, and conferences. Do not include DTS trainee salaries or salaries of staff on APEL programmes. DTS trainee salaries should be included in 1c. above and salaries of staff on APEL programmes should be included in 1b. above.</p>		

I EXPENDITURE (continued)	1 Gross Expenditure 2002/3	2 Budget Allocation 2003/4
<p>1. Employee Costs (continued)</p> <p>f. <i>Employee Transport:</i> Include all staff travel costs such as car and mileage allowances, lease costs for officer vehicles, travel expenses and fares. Please include expenses for pool cars in 3a below.</p> <p>g. <i>Total Employee Costs</i></p> <p>2. Premises Related Expenses</p> <p>Include repairs, alterations and maintenance of buildings such as offices, Weights and Measures labs, fixed plant and grounds (Including payments to contractors and DLO/DSO charges); energy costs; rents and rates; water services; fixtures and fittings; cleaning and domestic supplies including expenditure on contract cleaning, but not equipment; premises insurance. Also include all accommodation charges for office space used by staff employed on the Trading Standards function. Where premises related costs are included in support services costs please provide a note on the questionnaire. Where any of these are not directly available, please provide an estimate.</p> <p>3. Supplies and Services</p> <p>a. <i>Supplies and Services:</i> Include costs of computer equipment (purchase, rental, maintenance), use of pool cars, furniture, equipment and other tools including protective clothing, publications, journals, newspapers and other supplies and services.</p> <p>b. <i>Support Services:</i> Include any apportionment of central administrative buildings and central support services e.g. legal services and the staff element of central administrative charges although no attempt should be made to separately identify them, nor should such costs be included elsewhere. However, recharges that arise as a result of either internal Service Agreements (SLAs) or the authority contracting out central professional services can be included here.</p>		

I EXPENDITURE (continued)	1 Gross Expenditure 2002/3	2 Budget Allocation 2003/4
<p>4. Sampling, Testing and Analytical Costs: Show all the costs, including test purchases, of sampling, testing and analysis of goods and services broken down into the following areas:</p> <p>(a) Food standards including Agriculture</p> <p>(b) Safety</p> <p>(c) Other</p> <p>5. Third Party Payments: These should reflect the net cost of any aspect of the Trading Standards service, which has been contracted to an outside agency, excluding testing and analysis costs above. It should also include that amount which is recharged from the 'Lead Authority' in respect of the Trading Standards activities that it controls on behalf of other authorities. For example, shared costs of Weights and Measures facilities or access to expertise should be included here.</p> <p>6. Plant Costs: Include costs of purchase and hire of plant such as a weighbridge-testing unit.</p> <p>7. Administration: Include administration listed as printers and stationary, telephones, advertising (recruitment), postage/ couriers, insurance, medical costs, petty outlays, hospitality and other admin costs. Please also include central administration charges not covered in 3b. above.</p> <p>8. Capital Charges: Include depreciation and interest calculated using the specified notional percentage.</p>		

II INCOME

- 1. Prosecution Costs**
- 2. Income from Specific Grant** (please specify).
Include money received for Cross-Boundary Projects, any income from the Modernisation Fund/ Scholarship Fund and Consumer Support Networks.
- 1. Income from Grants Received to deal with Foot and Mouth**
- 4. Other Income** (please specify) Include:
 - (a.) Weights and Measures Income
 - (b.) Licensing income
 - (c.) Any other income

III TOTALS

- 5. Total Income**
- 6. Total Gross Expenditure on Service**
- 7. Total Net Expenditure on Service**

8. ISSUES RAISED BY IPF

8.1 The Institute of Public Finance (IPF) were appointed in July 2002 to monitor and assess the National Performance framework and will be producing two annual reports

- ❖ First on the Service Delivery Plans, which will be distributed in November of this year
- ❖ Second on the Information Returns.

In addition, IPF have been contracted to look at ways of streamlining data flows from Trading Standards to central Government departments and others and the development of a single return. Trading Standards authorities will be kept informed of progress in this area.

8.2 IPF would like to take this opportunity to gather opinions on Trading Standards' need/desire for a Template for the preparation of submission of Service Delivery Plans.

8.3 This year in response to a request from authorities DTI provided a sample draft plan to help those preparing SDPs for 2002-3. A number of authorities followed this draft and in particular the use of the numbered key areas in the planning process but even so there was a diverse range of complex, sometimes partial and at times obscure plans presented. This prevents straightforward comprehension, and hampers public appreciation, let alone ease of assessment and comparative evaluation.

8.31 There is thus a case for offering some kind of template to address these shortcomings and more importantly help authorities in planning their service to meet local and national priorities.

8.4 The potential **benefits of a template** are as follows:

- Available for electronic completion
- Easier for authorities to produce their SDP
- Ensure authorities cover all aspects of the SDP and are able to present all their activities and plans
- Permit the attachment of existing service or work plans and other documents
- Allow the cross referencing of parts of the plan to ensure credit is given where one planned activity meets several elements of the SDP requirement.
- Would ensure greater efficiency and consistency in the assessment process
- Would assist and ensure greater success of the subsequent peer review

- Any template could incorporate the relevant guidance alongside each key area of the SDP.
- 8.5 Although we would very much like to see all authorities opting to use a standard template in preparing and setting out their plans, we recognise that "one size does not fit all" and that the plan, and the planning process should acknowledge local circumstances and of course local needs. Any template should be capable of reflecting this without losing sight of the need to meet the national priorities. The template should also help those responsible for compiling the SDP by "walking them through the planning process", prompting questions and ideas.
- 8.6 Even if authorities do not wish to use a template voluntarily, we shall want to work with DTI to simplify the guidance for preparation of the SDP, to make it more user friendly and to aid understanding of the planning process and of the ultimate reason for producing the SDP.

8.7 Next steps

We would welcome your views on the use of a template.

Should it be optional or compulsory?

Would your authority use it on line for preparation and submission?

9. USEFUL REFERENCES & SOURCES

Steering Group for Performance Measures

Katherine Wright	DTI (Chair)
Derek Allen	LACORS
Joy Anderton	DTI
Susan Edwards	OFT
Bill Cassie	SOCTSS
Cathy Macgregor	Audit Scotland
Natalina Cotterell	Welsh Assembly
Doug Elliot	Audit Commission Wales
Richard Foggo	Scottish Executive
Ron Gainsford	TSI
Peter Heafield	CIPFA
Steve Bolchover	WHoTS
David Brown	Audit Commission
Jeff Llewellyn	NWML
John Peerless	SOCTSO

10. ANNEXES

Annex A. List of consultees

Audit Commission
British Retail Consortium
British Chamber of Commerce
Confederation of British Industry
Consumers Association
Convention Of Scottish Local Authorities
Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department of Health
DTI Standards and Regulations Department
Enterprise & Lifelong Learning Department – Scottish Executive
Federation of Small Business
Food Standards Agency
Health & Safety Executive
Home Office
Improvement & Development Agency
Institute of Personal Finance
Local Government Association
Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services
National Consumers Council
National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux
Office of Deputy Prime Minister
Small Business Service
Syniad Benchmarking Centre
Trading Standards services (via LACORS website)
Trading Standards Institute
Welsh Local Government Association

Annex B. Other useful consultations

- ❖ **EU Regulations concerning sales promotions, promotional competitions and games**

<http://www2.dti.gov.uk/CACP/ca/pdf/sprconsult.pdf>

- ❖ **Review of the Consumer Credit Act 1974**

http://www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/topics1/consumer_finance.htm

- ❖ **Best Value Performance Indicators 2003/2004**

http://www.local-regions.odpm.gov.uk/consult/pi2003_04/pdf/bvpi.pdf

THE CONSULTATION CRITERIA

- 1. Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage.*
- 2. It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose.*
- 3. A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain.*
- 4. Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others) and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals.*
- 5. Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation*
- 6. Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and the reasons for decisions finally taken.*
- 7. Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation co-ordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.*

The complete code is available on the Cabinet Office's web site, address www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/servicefirst/index/consultation.htm.

COMMENTS OR COMPLAINTS

If you wish to comment on the conduct of this consultation or make a complaint about the way this consultation has been conducted, please write to Mr P Martin, DTI Consultation Co-ordinator, Room 725, 1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET or telephone him on 020 7215 6206 or email philip.martin@dti.gsi.gov.uk.