

8 October 2015		ITEM: 5
Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Intercepting Unsafe Goods At Ports – Thurrock Trading Standards Work At Border Points		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non Key	
Report of: Charlotte Edwards – Principal Trading Standards Officer		
Cabinet Member – Cllr Jane Potheary– Portfolio Holder for Public Protection		
Accountable Head of Service: Lucy Magill – Head of Public Protection		
Accountable Director: David Bull – Director of Planning & Transportation		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

Thurrock Trading Standards are now in their third year of delivering the Safety at Ports project on behalf of the National Trading Standards Board (NTSB). This work is fully funded by an external grant from NTSB which is awarded on the basis of the size, scale and risk that border points present to the UK market in terms of the volume of unsafe goods coming through those points.

The Council's team have received £55K funding for the current financial year 2015-2016 of which a large percentage goes towards testing costs.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the Committee note the work the Trading Standards team have undertaken in support of the Product Safety at Ports project**
- 1.3 That the Committee continue to support Trading Standards and their work in relation to this project.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 The National Trading Standards Board is accountable to the Government, via Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), the National Audit Office and ultimately to parliament via the Public Accounts processes, for the delivery of activities related to the BIS grant. Although the National Trading Standards Board has discretion over how Government funding is**

used, it has to report regularly on its work, showing how it meets the requirements placed upon it and how it secures maximum value for money.

- 2.2 Thurrock Trading Standards first received a grant in October 2013 to fund their work at London Gateway and Port of Tilbury. Due to the success of the project and the continued risk of unsafe goods entering the UK via these routes, NTSB agreed to provide a further grant of £50,000 for the financial year 2014-2015 and £55,000 for the current financial year. This money will cover additional resources for the team such as an Apprentice, equipment costs and sample testing costs.
- 2.3 The work is undertaken in partnership with UK Border Force who set profiles to identify containers transporting potentially unsafe consumer goods. These profiles are set using various intelligence resources which include international, national and local sources. Paperwork is then scrutinised and visual examinations of the goods at the port are carried out. In a good percentage of cases the expertise of the officers means goods can be identified as unsafe or non-compliant during the initial examination and dealt with immediately. On more complex matters the goods need to be sent away for testing to identify unsafe aspects such as carcinogenic ingredients in cosmetics or lead in paint on toys for young children.
- 2.4 Since April 2013 to date, 9,809 carcinogenic skin lightening creams have been intercepted at Tilbury and Gateway ports. We are currently awaiting formal confirmation a further 136,800 units of cosmetics have being identified as containing cancer causing ingredients.
- 2.5 For the year from 1st April 14 to 31st March 15:
The team have prevented 16 consignments of unsafe goods entering the UK, these consignments included 10,206 unsafe products. These goods included a range of cosmetics, toys and electrical items. By taking this action Trading Standards protected Thurrock and UK residents from harm and risk of injury.
- 2.6 The team have identified 77 non-compliant consignments including a total of 499,757 products. In most of these cases the matter was referred to the local Trading Standards of the business responsible for importing the items, to work with them to rectify problems. Where this was not possible goods were destroyed or placed under suspension notices prohibiting them from being supplied until they were made compliant.
- 2.7 In June 2014 Graham Farrant received a letter of thanks from Lord Toby Harris, chair of the National Trading Standards Board for the work the team had undertaken and the contribution to the UK economy.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 No Issues or Options

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 For information

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 No requirement for consultation

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 The recommendations will have a positive effect on all the Council's priorities, particularly in relation to economic prosperity and health and well-being.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **John Smith**
Consultant, Corporate Finance

Any costs associated with the scheme for the current financial year are funded by a specific grant from the National Trading Standards Board.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Vivien Williams**
Planning & Regeneration Solicitor

As this report is for noting only, there are no legal implications from this report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Community Development and Equalities Manager

No equality or diversity implications

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

No other relevant implications

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

None

9. **Appendices to the report**

None

Report Author:

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Principal Trading Standards Officer

Public Protection