



Formal CTSI response to LGA review

The Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) welcomes the publication of the Local Government Association's (LGA) 'LGA trading standards review'. There are some significant steps forward, however we remain concerned that the LGA's conclusion and recommendations lack the ambition

political and officer level. In the last 30 years only a handful of shared services have been created and to date only five survive across England and Wales.

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that the LGA review remains committed to voluntary shared service agreements – a solution that may not succeed on a number of levels. This was highlighted in our original submission to the LGA review, and there is no indication in the report that our concerns have been considered. The CTSI submission is included as Appendix One.

The LGA advocates the notion that there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach for the structure of trading standards. CTSI agrees that there are a range of factors that need to be taken into account when considering structure in different areas and we have in no way discounted the importance of local differences when setting out our Vision for the future of trading standards. However, we disagree with the LGA conclusion that shared services must be developed locally on a voluntary, piecemeal basis rather than mandated or centrally driven. We believe there is a need for strong leadership from the centre to ensure any change to the structure of trading standards across the country is coordinated and takes place quickly.

The most significant problem with relying on the voluntary creation of shared services is the risk of gaps in protection across the country. At the very least, a voluntary move towards shared services will mean that restructure plans happen at different speeds. The speed with which this happens will be driven by the priority accorded to services – and the most under-resourced services which are most in need of urgent restructuring will probably be last to gain political attention. The LGA review has accepted that trading standards services work at a range of levels – local, regional, national, and even international – but fails to recognise that this means enforcement weaknesses in one area are more than just a concern for local elected members and require a coordinated approach across borders. The impact of failures in one area will not be confined within local authority boundaries but will cause problems to spread, putting greater strain on neighbouring services. For example to risks of an animal disease outbreak will be greater in areas with small, under-resourced trading standards services and will require intervention from neighbouring areas (o) (f) --3ETBT1 0 0 ss

Therefore, while we agree that wider regulatory services can function effectively in some places and that it may not be necessary to pull these apart, we do not think that they provide an alternative to the creation of larger, more strategic units. The scope for efficiencies between professional roles is limited and ultimately these services will need access an even greater range of expertise. We are concerned that the creation of regulatory services has seen further devaluation of trading standards in some areas and threatens the survival of the specialist expertise which the LGABT1 GABT~~2~~thereefyC(

agreement. We will also assist them in putting together case studies of successfully managed shared service agreements in order to help inform future restructures.