



## ***Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities***

***Tuesday, 19 March 2013 at 1.30 pm  
County Hall, New Road, Oxford***

### ***Items for Decision***

The items for decision under individual Cabinet Members' delegated powers are listed overleaf, with indicative timings, and the related reports are attached. Decisions taken will become effective at the end of the working day on Wednesday 27 March 2013 unless called in by that date for review by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee.

Copies of the reports are circulated (by e-mail) to all members of the County Council.

**These proceedings are open to the public**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter G. Clark." with a horizontal line underneath.

Peter G. Clark  
County Solicitor

March 2013

Contact Officer: **Julie Dean**  
Tel: (01865) 815322; E-mail: [julie.dean@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:julie.dean@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Note: Date of next meeting: 22 April 2013

**If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, but please give as much notice as possible before the meeting.**

## Items for Decision

1. **Declarations of Interest**
2. **Questions from County Councillors**

Any county councillor may, by giving notice to the Proper Officer by 9 am two working days before the meeting, ask a question on any matter in respect of the Cabinet Member's delegated powers.

The number of questions which may be asked by any councillor at any one meeting is limited to two (or one question with notice and a supplementary question at the meeting) and the time for questions will be limited to 30 minutes in total. As with questions at Council, any questions which remain unanswered at the end of this item will receive a written response.

Questions submitted prior to the agenda being despatched are shown below and will be the subject of a response from the appropriate Cabinet Member or such other councillor or officer as is determined by the Cabinet Member, and shall not be the subject of further debate at this meeting. Questions received after the despatch of the agenda, but before the deadline, will be shown on the Schedule of Addenda circulated at the meeting, together with any written response which is available at that time.

3. **Petitions and Public Address**
4. **Trading Standards Service Policy for the Provision of Business Advice and Support Services** (Pages 1 - 10)

*Forward Plan Ref:* 2013/008

*Contact:* Richard Webb, Trading Standards & Community Safety Manager Tel: (01865) 815791

Report by Director for Social & Community Services (**CMDSSC4**).

The Trading Standards Service has undertaken a review of its business advice and support services.

The Service currently offers free advice on regulatory matters to all Oxfordshire based businesses. This is not a statutory function. Taking account of recent changes to the regulatory environment, and the new services that can be offered to businesses, it is necessary to review the approach taken by the Service.

In 2008 the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act introduced a scheme which enables businesses to receive enhanced support from regulatory services. This enhanced support is provided within a scheme called Primary Authority Partnerships. Primary Authority was introduced to address businesses' concerns about how local authorities adopt different approaches to applying and interpreting legislation which can result in wasted resources and duplicated efforts, and the lack of effective dispute resolution when local authorities disagree on the interpretation of the law. The scheme gives businesses the right to form a statutory partnership with one local authority, which then provides robust and reliable advice to the business

and which other authorities have to take into account when carrying out inspections or dealing with non-compliance. Currently 92 local authorities are engaged in such partnerships.

There are a range of potential benefits for business under the Primary Authority scheme. A local authority may charge for services provided under Primary Authority Partnerships in order to recover the cost of the services provided.

Primary Authority Partnerships are not compulsory and would not be of benefit to many businesses, particularly smaller businesses. Therefore, for those businesses that do not wish to enter into a Primary Authority Partnerships, alternative advice and support services should be provided.

The report seeks approval for a new approach to Primary Authority Partnerships and for a new framework for charging for some business advice and support services.

***The Cabinet Member for Safer and Stronger Communities is RECOMMENDED to agree that:***

- (a) the Trading Standards Service actively promotes and encourages Oxfordshire businesses to enter into Primary Authority Partnerships on a cost recovery basis;***
  - (b) the Trading Standards Service will consider approaches from businesses outside of Oxfordshire for Primary Authority Partnerships on a cost recovery basis; and***
  - (c) for those businesses not wanting to enter into a Primary Authority Partnership, the Trading Standards Service adopts a policy of charging Oxfordshire businesses for Trading Standards business law advice on an hourly basis as set out in this report. Basic advice and advice to start-up businesses will continue to be provided free of charge.***
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