
Regulatory Services: Officers for the Future

Summary report for policy-makers

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Introduction and context

This paper, aimed at policy makers, summarises the findings of a small scale exploratory study of what have recently been called the ‘regulatory services’ of local government, namely trading standards (TS), licensing (L) and environmental health (EH).

Spring 2014 is a time which presents great opportunities but also significant pressures on these particular council services. This context creates the opportunity for re-thinking the purpose and nature of regulatory services in local government and how they are best organised and staffed. In particular, the LGA wanted to explore the extent to which local government might be moving towards a generic ‘regulatory services professional’ – that is an officer working across these three services.

The findings of this project will be used by the LGA to inform discussions within the local government sector about directions for change in these services, and with professional bodies and training providers about the skills and qualifications required by officers working in these regulatory areas.

The findings summarised here are based on available reports and workforce data and interviews with over 35 individuals from a range of councils and other stakeholders. Further details of the study approach can be found in the Appendix.

The study set out to answer six main questions posed by the LGA, around which this policy summary is structured:

1. What factors are influencing the future of regulatory services?
2. To what extent is economic growth a key driver of these services?
3. Where will regulatory services sit?
4. Will we see a generic ‘regulatory professional’?
5. How are we developing the next generation?
6. What are the main challenges in these services; what do councils and professional bodies need to think about?

1 What factors are influencing the future of ‘regulatory services’?

This study was prompted by a number of pressures for change in the three so-called ‘regulatory services’: environment health (EH), trading standards (TS) and licensing

(L). Some factors are affecting all local authority services, especially the continued reduction in council resources and the consequent experiments with new forms of organisation and models of service delivery. Other drivers for change are more particular to these services especially the return of public health responsibilities to local councils, the changing nature of illegal trading activities and a growing emphasis on the positive role regulatory services can play in supporting business. Some of these factors may be pulling these three services closer together into a related set of regulatory services, but other factors may result in them moving apart.

1.1 Key characteristics of regulatory services

It is worth noting at the outset that these services are positioned somewhat differently in local government where there are two tier structures. TS is located at county level and EH/L at district. This positioning is a major factor influencing how services are evolving.

It is also a defining feature of these services that they are a very small part of total local government spend and workforce. Reliable workforce information is not available at national level, so overall estimates have to be made from those councils responding to surveys. Based on CIPFA data for 2012/13 there were an estimated 12,400 WTE staff in England working in EH/L in councils during 2012/13 and 2,510 in TS. On the basis of more detailed 2009 data, perhaps a third of these workforces are at manager/officer level and likely to be fully professionally qualified.

Using these assumptions we can estimate around 4590 managers/qualified EHOs working in councils in England in 2012/13 and around 880 TSOs and 1250 licensing officers.

Just to get a feel for magnitudes here, the 1600 giant pandas in the wild in 2004 was low enough to have them classified as an endangered species.

1.2 Higher aspirations and wider agendas

These services exist because they attend to a set of fundamental issues related to public health, consumer protection and public safety. Each of the three services focus on specific issues and indeed have distinct purposes. Their purposes, interests and work activities are inter-linked but different.

Healthier communities

EH developed in response to 19th century problems with poverty, ill health and disease arising from environmental factors including housing, pollution and bad food. Much of this agenda is still surprisingly relevant today, but newer environmental health issues are of growing concern, including poor eating habits and obesity, lack of

exercise, stress, noise, traffic pollution and excess alcohol consumption. Most council EH work is very local, being based on particular premises or sites, especially when working with business. However, the EH agenda is by no means limited to business regulation. Heads of service and councillors do not necessarily see EH primarily as a 'regulatory service', but rather as supporting their strategic commitment to making their communities 'healthier' places to live and work. The recent move of public health back to local authorities makes the wider health agenda even more explicit. Strategic responsibility for public health sits at top tier level in two tier structures, so again not in the same place as EH, but districts have varied arrangements for public health delivery. In several unitary authorities in this study, EH was already moving to become part of public health. The big question for EH may be: will EH remain predominantly 'regulatory' in nature or get much closer to public health services in the drive to create healthier communities?

Public protection from crime

TS has a more clearly regulatory history. It grew out of protecting consumers from traders who sold unfair measures or products which were adulterated or otherwise unsafe. TS services describe themselves as 'more business based than premises based', meaning they look at practices throughout a business more than the physical environment of particular sites. Some current priorities for TS services concern protecting vulnerable citizens in their neighbourhoods, for example keeping the elderly safe from 'doorstep' crime and teenagers safe at night. Other priorities are much less local, for example addressing organised crime and large scale 'scams', often perpetrated via the internet. We already see TS services collaborating regionally, nationally and internationally to address this second type of challenge. The TS agendas of traditional consumer protection, neighbourhood crime and organised crime may be diverging. As with EH, newer agendas are less purely 'regulatory'. While EH might move towards health, TS might move more towards crime and also work more in wider geographies.

Food safety

It is in the nature of both EH and TS that events can drive issues up the agenda very rapidly. A clear example is the recent horsemeat scandal which prompted the Elliott review (interim report 2013). Such events create a peak of short-term interest and activity but may also shift priorities in the medium term, for example in this case towards a stronger focus on the integrity of food supply chains. Food supply is one area where both EH and TS have considerable activity and a strong shared interest, albeit addressing rather different types of food risk. Some participants in this study suggested that 'food safety' may become an emerging area in its own right and already has a national body in the form of the FSA.

Wider influences on licensing

Licensing is one way of regulating activities and local government has taken on a diverse range of licensing responsibilities under complex and fragmented legislation, as recently highlighted by the LGA (2014). Although the most purely regulatory of the three services, even licensing is being affected by the wider aspirations of councils. For example, should alcohol licensing take into account overall patterns of sale and alcohol-related health and safety issues in a community?

Wider and higher aspirations in councils may be moving these services away from their purely regulatory remit and indeed in somewhat different directions: EH more towards public health and TS more towards crime.

1.3 Financial pressures and responses to them

These broader service aspirations are facing cuts in the resources available to deliver them. Staffing levels in EH may have fallen by around 15% between 2009 and 2012/13 and in TS the fall may have been around 28% (estimates based on CIPFA's 2009 and 2013 surveys). TSI's recent survey (2014) found a budget cut of 22% between 2010/11 and 2013/14 with further cuts of around 30% expected to 2015/16. Some of the councillors interviewed felt that TS services are especially vulnerable to budget cuts. Responses to financial cuts have included:

'Salami slicing of posts'

Councils have used voluntary severance and early retirement to cut workforces in a humane way. This has led to a considerable loss of professional expertise and in small service teams work patterns are often then re-designed around those who remain. Some services in smaller authorities have become unsustainable. The TSI's recent survey shows many TS services with less than 15 people in total and often less than 10. Even in the biggest TS teams there are only around 15-20 TSOs.

Putting services into wider directorates

Many councils have moved to having fewer, wider Directorates. These may cover pretty random and eccentric collections of services, especially when smaller services are brought together. This change does not really ease the problems of small teams but does hide them in bigger management units. Bigger directorates have had the side effect of shifting management of smaller services (including EH, TS and L) down at least one or two levels and therefore further away from strategic decisions on finance and service priorities. A recent TSI survey (2014) finds heads of TS services now mostly at fourth or fifth tier.

In later sections of this paper we will look at other types of re-structuring including re-designed services within authorities, shared services between authorities and changing staff mix within services.

Intelligence-led approaches and cutting low risk activities

Many councils appear to be adopting what is often called an 'intelligence-led' approach, concentrating on more serious areas of risk or malpractice. EH may be more limited in how much it can cut routine assessments than TS. There are concerns in all three services that cutting routine checks may in time lead to a gradual slippage in compliance.

This move back to a focus on high risk statutory activities seems to be already constraining the wider agendas discussed above.

Other commercial models

Other possible responses include outsourcing and generating more revenue. Neither of these seem particularly easy for these three services. Outsourcing only seems likely as part of much bigger bundles of service provided across several authorities – there is simply not enough money or cost saving to be made in these services for private sector providers to find them tempting as stand alone work packages for single authorities. Some councils have raised additional revenue, for example by delivering other services for national agencies or through primary authority contracts, but these are mostly not very large income streams and in any case bring with them additional work commitments. Future revenue streams, especially in public health, may have a big impact on how services develop and where they sit.

Financial cuts have to date been managed through 'salami slicing' and moving regulatory services into bigger directorates to save some senior management costs. Services are also prioritising high risk statutory activities, squeezing out the wider ways in which they can make 'proactive' contributions to healthier and safer communities.

2 To what extent is economic growth a key driver of these services?

The officers and councillors interviewed placed considerable importance on the role of councils in supporting the local economy and therefore businesses. They also did see links between healthy communities, public safety and economic prosperity. However it seems fair to say that the economic drivers of these services are second order factors compared with their primary purposes in keeping the public healthy and safe.

Economic and business drivers

A range of economic arguments emerged with differing service consequences:

- The theoretical economic argument for regulation is that it creates a 'level playing field' for business through firm enforcement.
- 'Business friendly' councils want all their staff to be more helpful in their behaviour with businesses, especially smaller or start-up firms. Some councils are creating simpler points of contact for business, sometimes in their centralised customer service teams. They are not delivering regulatory services but can provide simple information and give businesses a better customer experience.
- Other interventions aimed at economic growth or regeneration include local producer schemes (often in rural areas); supporting city centre safety to encourage the night time economy and close working with local enterprise partnerships (LEPs). These activities again reach beyond regulation and are increasingly difficult to fund when councils have been cutting posts in economic development.
- EH and TS can also support business growth by offering specific technical advice but this is generally high skill work and raises issues of when companies should be charged.
- Primary Authority, a structure which allows businesses to have a single local authority as their point of contact for regulation, can be seen as a particular form of 'business friendly' working. It is a flagship policy of BRDO (2013) and is widely welcomed by councillors and officers. It usefully reinforces a more positive approach to business and provides an additional funding stream from business. Its impact on the nature, size and structure of services is limited to date.

Is there a potential conflict between business advice and enforcement?

Supporting business by offering additional services can be seen as conflicting with sustaining an enforcement role. In other sectors it would be thought very strange for professionals involved in enforcement to also be offering significant technical advice. Most of those interviewed in this study did not see much conflict and no chance of separating enforcement from advice in very small teams. . Other councils have separated teams often because they have found the people who are 'business-friendly' have rather different skill sets from those good at investigation/enforcement.

Economic considerations are important to councils but not usually the primary drivers of these regulatory services. Several of the ways councils would like to support business entail significant additional workload. This raises issues of affordability and charging, as funding for economic development has largely disappeared. There is a

question around whether business advice and enforcement roles can be combined in the same teams, both from governance and staff skills perspectives.

3 Where will ‘regulatory services sit?’

3.1 A web of partnerships and interfaces

The regulatory services do have interfaces with each other, but also work with a host of different partners both inside and outside local government including:

- central government (eg BRDO/ BIS, DEFRA etc); key national bodies including the FSA (in food hygiene and food standards), HSE (in health and safety) and the Environment Agency (in pollution control);
- other local authority services including those concerned with the physical environment (planning, housing, transport, refuse), health and wellbeing (public health, adult social care, children and families);
- other public services for example police (on public safety and crime), fire services (especially around the fire safety of commercial premises), the NHS, port authorities (on illegal imports);
- partnerships of other kinds, for example those concerned with economic growth or generation (such LEPs), drug or alcohol issues etc. and with professionals outside councils including private sector EH, TS and L professionals, lawyers, farmers, vets, chefs, nutritionists and environmental experts.

Working with partners and across boundaries is already an essential component of regulatory services and seems set to become more so. Some of the interfaces may become more important to EH, TS and L than the interfaces with each other. This will influence whether they cohere into a bundle of ‘regulatory services’ or move in different directions to become closer organisationally to, for example, health services or police services.

Those working in ‘regulatory’ services need to be collaborators *par excellence*, supportive partners and adept users of other people’s expertise, information and networks.

3.2 Sharing resources and organising work

Services working across authorities

One way of coping with limited resources would appear to be collaboration or shared teams in particular geographies. This is happening to some extent within each of the

services, especially TS which already has structures for regional co-ordination and some virtual teams working on national issues from their job locations in particular authorities. This is partly about co-ordination of effort, but also about sustaining networks of specialised expertise which could not be supported at a more local level. These experiments with sharing resources across geographies are interesting and merit more serious experiment and evaluation.

Even where formal structures for sharing services across authorities do not exist, there is still a widespread use of informal sharing of staff with particular areas of expertise. This is especially so in EH where the numbers of potential specialist areas of work is much larger than most authorities can carry. So one authority may have an expert in animal health and another in noise pollution. Sometimes money changes hands when experts work across boundaries, but in many cases it seems to be more of an informal 'swap' system.

Combining services within an authority

Collaboration or merger between the three services within a single authority is another option. This is only easily possible in unitary authorities because of where the services sit. The 'regulatory' bundle of TS, EH and L is quite common in unitary authorities but often combined with a range of other services to make up the size of directorate desired. Just because the three 'regulatory services' are in the same directorate does not mean their teams or work are significantly integrated. In some authorities, EH is already moving into public health.

In two tier structures, EH/L are combined in the same directorate with a very varied range of other services and the same goes for TS at county level.

Licensing services are small and therefore often placed organisationally inside another service, but to date seem fairly self-contained in their daily work. The work is fairly well defined and has until recently been seen as more procedural in nature than EH or TS, although normally conducted by staff who acquire specialised knowledge of this area.

As mentioned above, initial enquiries have sometimes been placed within a general customer service centre and most councils rely on Citizens Advice to handle the majority of enquiries from members of the public.

As yet there are only very few examples of public-private partnerships delivering EH, TS and L services, and these are part of a wider change of a range of council services. In time one assumes these providers will seek to sell such services to more authorities.

In at least one case, a county and several districts have created a larger shared team (over 100 people) covering all three 'regulatory' services. Several other counties had

discussed similar options but these had not been implemented. Sometimes pilot work had shown that work overlap was less than previously thought, so cost savings would not be great. More often, proposals had been dropped on political grounds - districts will only voluntarily work with counties when councillors feel this is a win-win option rather than a takeover and where priorities are aligned.

How is work organised at team level?

At team level (i.e. within directorate or service) we see an even more complex and diverse range of organisational options. Work is divided up in different ways, for example:

- 'business' facing teams versus 'community' facing teams
- business advice and support versus investigation of criminal activity – occasionally really separating advice from compliance
- generic local area teams (eg dealing with community safety) calling in more specialised TS and EH/L expertise when needed. Such models work most easily when specialists sit slightly outside generic teams so they can be called into whichever team needs them at a particular time.
- there are less often teams with a single specialist focus within either TS or EH, but this can occur in larger teams and in areas of work which are nearly always large volume (eg food). Indeed it is worth highlighting food-related work as being both a large area of work and one in which EH and TS share considerable interests.

It is clear from looking at different councils that even when EH and TS are under one roof as it were, the work still needs to be supported by teams with specific skill sets.

The councils participating in this study showed no clear pattern in the positioning or organising of their EH, TS and L services and decisions are often more pragmatic and reactive than strategic.

Cross-authority shared services are politically fragile and difficult to set up but can run well once established. EH and TS both show widespread informal sharing of staff expertise as one way of coping with the diverse work activities they cover.

Even where TS, EH and L exist within the same directorate of a unitary authority, these services do not necessarily form a natural integrated 'regulatory service'.

Organisation at team level is also varied. Two slightly different axes of team differentiation appear quite common: business facing versus neighbourhood/citizen facing teams and business advice/compliance versus crime-related teams. None of these models entirely houses the range of expertise required, especially in EH, where

experts quite often work across teams which are defined by issue, locality or customer within an authority.

4 Will we see a generic ‘regulatory professional’?

A generic regulatory professional is most likely to emerge if we have:

- TS, EH and L services coming together under single directorates
- TS, EH and L teams which merge to carry all three services at team level
- job roles where the same person does TS, EH and L work within a generic regulatory team

The first condition is occurring in some – but not all – unitary councils and not usually in two tier structures. The second condition does not seem a natural consequence of the first. But is the work of officers becoming more generic across EH, TS and L?

4.1 Breadth versus depth of expertise in job design

What we see at job level are trade offs, both at officer level and for technical support staff, between the breadth and depth at which individuals’ job roles operate. Managers are adopting what several called a ‘*horses for courses*’ approach to the mix of levels of staff in their teams and the varying breadths of their roles. One or two of the participating councils have used serious process-redesign approaches but there is little systematic evaluation of alternative staffing models.

At officer level the common pattern seem to be a professional covering a fairly broad range of work within their profession or occupation (i.e. TS or EH), except where size of team and volume of work argues for specialist teams, for example in food safety.

However it also seems very common for such professionals to carry one or more specialisms *in addition to* a volume of more general work as the main means by which the service retains a range of more in-depth expertise. These same individuals often contribute to regional and national networks and help out other authorities in their area of specialism. The country is very dependent on these specialised capabilities existing somewhere in the system, both to influence policy and legislation and to tackle sudden or serious issues of national importance.

It is also common for professionals to collaborate closely with colleagues from other professional backgrounds and in so doing pick up work tasks at the margin of their own job where this is an efficient thing to do. This happens not only across these three services but in working with police, fire, social care etc. This is certainly more flexible working but is a long way from occupations merging.

Some councils have been experimenting more seriously with people working across more than one profession or occupation. Such experiments need to be reported and evaluated much more fully. Those found in this study had generally found that work overlaps were fairly limited and that without full expertise in both EH and TS little time is saved. Businesses visited by one supposedly multi-skilled officer tended to get frustrated with limited ability to give advice in one area or the other. This study did not find any examples of a truly generic officer operating at full professional level right across the regulatory terrain. The greatest barrier lies in the professional knowledge bases of the different occupations – both legislatively and also scientifically - which are fairly distinct and also in themselves quite diverse. There are also inefficiencies in training people in many skills when there is enough work to fully occupy them across a smaller skill set. However a few senior managers do see TS and EH in effect merging their work over the coming years.

Others suggested it might be more realistic to imagine an officer operating across TS, EH and L but on a particular set of issues. A 'food safety officer', for example, may be a more practical idea than a wholly generic 'regulatory officer'.

The same choice in breadth versus depth applies at technical support level – a very important part of the regulatory services workforce. These roles can be quite specialised, substituting for some professional tasks, or more generic, offering less specialised support but across a wider range of work.

Roles at the officer/professional level have become more collaborative and more flexible at the margins with other professions in the work they take on. Many professionals also carry an 'expert' hat in at least one area of specialism within their profession, even if this is not their full-time role. Retaining this specialist capability in the system is vital for the country as well as important to councils.

We are still quite a long way from having a truly generic 'regulatory officer' operating across the full range of EH, TS and L work. Those involved in this study had differing opinions as to whether this is a desirable direction of travel or would be achievable.

4.2 Regulatory skills even if not generic regulatory officers

Several current recent projects are reviewing and articulating the skills and competencies needed in regulatory work. In particular the BRDO has co-ordinated the RDNA framework supported by several stakeholder organisations. The link to available training opportunities through the GRIP website is also being populated. The FSA is also producing a competency framework for those working on food standards.

Those interviewed in this study had fairly clear views about skill gaps and skill shortages.

- Several generic competencies were important for those in regulatory services including analytical skills (including increasingly sophisticated use of ICT for investigative purposes), communication, persuasion and influencing, and collaboration. A focus on outcomes and the ability to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions is becoming increasingly important.
- Of the more specifically regulatory skills, two sets were of concern. Understanding business (especially business processes and financial aspects), working with business and the ability to influence through advice is clearly needed by the 'business friendly' model and in supporting primary authority. At the other end of the spectrum many of those interviewed felt their officers did not necessarily have the willingness or confidence to take enforcement action even if they knew they should do so. Managers often felt that the people who perform very well as advisers do not make the best enforcers and vice versa.
- These services are underpinned by a considerable amount of theoretical and practical knowledge gained through both study and experience. Some of this knowledge is of legislation and codes of practice and some of issues and work areas and their associated scientific knowledge and practical techniques. Technical capacity is becoming very thinly spread as many experienced people have left or will soon leave local government.

There are fairly clear skill development needs for the workforce in these services. Regulatory skills are needed both to work with business and to enforce. Many managers feel people tend to be better at one of these than the other and are rarely well suited to both. Technical skills are fundamental to these services and are becoming thin spread.

5 How are we developing the next generation?

The study collected views on future workforce supply and training issues which are not reported in detail here. The key points are:

- the presence of two very active professional bodies (CIEH and TSI) and a lively network for licensing (IOL). There is no shortage of training, from a wide range of providers, especially in the form of short courses and conferences for those already working in these areas.
- for those entering these fields of work, however, it is not always clear which types of training are most appropriate to develop skills and competencies – both generic and technical - in a progressive way across different levels of job. The three bodies also have very different approaches to professional development.

- TS and L do not relate very clearly to national frameworks of educational qualifications and the idea of a 'professional level' occupation. Higher education cannot easily sustain courses without reliable volumes of students. EH has relied predominantly on first degrees leading onto professional qualification. Licensing has been something of a Cinderella with regard to professional training. In effect it has operated at sub-professional level. Licensing does have a long standing BTEC offered at several levels and run by NALEO with accreditation from Edexcel. The IOL offers a range of training which it is hoping to extend to create a stronger professional training structure. Other small professions are tending to take appropriate graduates and qualify them through a range of postgraduate certificates, diplomas or masters courses. Indeed this route may already be becoming more important in EH.
- Both the CIEH and the TSI are of the view that the flow in of newly qualified people is lower than those retiring or leaving employment so their workforces are being refreshed at below replacement levels.
- The confused variety of service arrangements seem likely to make these work areas quite difficult for young people to understand. Services which have been heavily cut and may be further cut in future are also not attractive from a career choice point of view.
- Entry paths at technician level seem likely to be important to resource this set of occupations and as gateways to officer level jobs. Graduates may enter at this level and then take further education and training to qualify. The technical support roles also seem ideally suited to an apprenticeship model which could easily work in parallel with graduate level entry. The active support of trainees is present in a minority of councils, often those with larger teams, and needs to be strengthened nationally.

The three occupations structure their initial training in very different ways and training is not always easily linked to well understood national qualification levels. EH and TS pipelines of newly qualified people have become too small to sustain these occupations, although of course numbers of jobs may be about to fall further. Entrants may come into local government with varying levels of prior qualifications and need to be able to relate the professional training structures to their previous level of study and to the jobs they are working in and working towards. The rather confused variety of ways in which these services are organised will not help attract young people, nor will the precarious future of these services.

6 Services at the crossroads - choices and challenges

As cuts bite deeper in 2014/15, 'salami slicing' is not going to deliver the next round of savings. These three services have some serious choices to make:

1. Can they respond to the wider agendas and numerous partnerships through which they can help to address our key community health, protection and safety issues? Will further budget cuts see them ditch business support and pro-active work on health and safety and snap back into more purely regulatory services again, focused on statutory duties in high risk situations?
2. Should business advice and enforcement work be undertaken by the same teams and individuals or should there be a clearer separation between the two?
3. Will EH, TS and L achieve the best impact by moving closer together as a group of 'regulatory' services and increasing the alignment in their professional education and training structures? In other words do we think we should be moving towards a generic 'regulatory professional'? Or are wider trends in public health and crime likely to move EH and TS further apart from each other and closer to other public services and occupations? Where does licensing end up?
4. Might new services and occupations evolve cutting across the existing three services but in specific areas of activity, for example in food safety?
5. How can services best operate at the different geographical levels relevant to their work? If larger and more sustainable teams are created across authorities by mergers or collaborations in regions or even nationally, how can they continue to serve local communities in the many aspects of their work which are neighbourhood and premises based?
6. How will we retain enough of the specialist expertise in the current EH/TS workforce to ensure national resilience in the face of major incidents and current challenges?
7. How will these occupations in public sector settings market themselves to young people entering the workforce? Can clearer vocational paths be developed and communicated to offer progressive development up to professional level for entrants coming with varied levels of educational qualifications?

Appendix - About the research

This study, conducted by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) on behalf of the LGA examined possible directions for the development of the future roles and skills of officers working in what are sometimes called the 'regulatory services' of local government, namely trading standards, licensing and environmental health.

Research questions

The project addressed a set of inter-related research questions:

- **Service change:** What are the main **drivers for change** in council regulatory services and how are councils changing their **work activities and priorities** and **ways of organising** these services?
- **Job roles and workforce:** What consequent trends or options do we see councils and other stakeholders considering for changes in **work roles and skill mix** in regulatory services? How do these relate to the current and future **workforce demand and supply** for those working in these fields?
- **Evidence from recent examples of change:** What are the likely **pros and cons** of different service and workforce scenarios, especially as experienced by councils which have already implemented new models?
- **Skills and training:** What trends and options do we see for the **competencies, attitudes and technical skills knowledge/ experience** likely to be required by Regulatory Officers in future? What kinds of changes to the **training and qualifications** infrastructure may be required to meet future needs?

Research method

This small scale exploratory study was conducted between January and March 2014. It gathered factual data, written reports and views on the issues above from a range of stakeholders.

Interviews (usually of about an hour) were conducted with 36 individuals drawn from:

- Senior council officers or Directors, responsible for one or more of the relevant services, sometimes within a wider cluster of services or Directorate and some acting in a regional capacity. Some of these officers were on relevant expert panels (policy forums etc) or represented national associations (eg ACTSO, NALEO).
- Councillors, especially those with a special interest in one of more of these services, including members of the LGA Workforce Board and Safer and Stronger Communities Board

- Local authority HR managers/leaders
- The Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO), a unit of BIS
- Chief executives and workforce specialists of relevant professional bodies including the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), the Trading Standards Institute (TSI) and the Institute of Licensing (IoL)
- Relevant staff of the Local Government Association (LGA)
- Individuals working in close partnership with those leading relevant services eg managers of a public-private partnership delivering these services, representative of the Chief Fire Officers Association.
- Individuals involved in other relevant projects, including: FSA work on competencies for those working in food regulation; Scottish work under COSLA on officers working in regulatory services; an expert in regulation in the financial sector; a consultant with experience of skill audit in regulatory services

The samples of officers and councillors were chosen to give a spread across types of council and the relevant services, to include individuals with high levels of experience in these services and also some working in councils which have adopted particular service models.

In addition to these interviews, 36 individuals contributed to the project through a workshop at the national Year Ahead conference in Stratford-upon-Avon in February 2014.

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