

# **TYNE AND WEAR TRADING STANDARDS JOINT COMMITTEE**

**THURSDAY 22 JUNE 2017**

**Present:** Councillor K Dodds in the Chair

Councillors T Graham and M Foy (Gateshead)  
Councillors A Kerr and A West (South Tyneside)  
Councillors J Blackburn, J Fletcher, M Mordey, and A Wilson (Sunderland)  
Councillor D Huddart, S Lambert, M Lowson and N Kemp (Newcastle)

**Apologies:** Councillors T Dixon and A Ellison (South Tyneside) and Councillor J Harrison (North Tyneside)

## **1 APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR**

RESOLVED - That Councillor Kevin Dodds be appointed Chair of the Joint Committee for the 2017/18 municipal year.

## **2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR**

RESOLVED – That Councillor Jill Fletcher be appointed Vice Chair of the Joint Committee for the 2017/18 municipal year.

## **3 CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED – That the constitution of the Joint Committee for the 2017/18 municipal year be noted.

## **4 MINUTES**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the last meeting of the Joint Committee held on 16 February 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **5 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN AS AT 31 MARCH 2017**

The Joint Committee has received details of the provisional outturn for 2016/17, subject to the audit of Gateshead Council's accounts.

Members asked for the format of the outturn statement to be altered in future so it was easier to read. They also requested more detailed explanatory notes to assist their understanding of the income and expenditure.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

## **6 PENSION SCAMS**

The Joint Committee viewed a video which was available on Gateshead's Facebook page on pension scams.

The Joint Committee commented upon the effectiveness of the video and felt that it should be shared with interested groups. The Chair also stated that he would ask officers to email the link to the video to all members of the Joint Committee.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

**7 REPORT AND STATISTICAL RETURN FOR THE QUARTER ENDING MARCH 2017**

The Joint Committee has received an update on the work of the Metrology Laboratory and the statistical return for the final quarter of 2016/17.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

**8 CITIZENS ADVICE CONSUMER SERVICE UPDATE**

The Joint Committee has been advised of progress with regard to the national Citizens Advice Contract and the work of the Relationship Manager.

The transition is close to being completed and all centres are now live on handling calls. The management teams in all centres continue to work with advisers, offering side by side sessions, coaching and training, where appropriate. They are also continuing to refine the output of their advisers with support from central operations. The centres are concentrating on performance measures as well as quality processes, to ensure all aspects of the service are being delivered well.

The role of the Relationship Manager has already shown some benefit to both the Citizens Advice Service and Trading Standards. One of the first areas looked at was ensuring protocols were up to date and contained sufficient information for advisers to be able to signpost or direct a call.

Aide memoirs have also been produced for the advisers containing relevant information that would give trading standards an early indication as to whether there was a relevant complaint to be investigated.

Future work involves identifying best practice and sharing this with all of the centres, ensuring all case notes are up to a high standard, identifying trends in complaints and action feedback sent from local trading standards services.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

**9 VIDEO FROM THE CHARTERED TRADING STANDARDS INSTITUTE ON ITS WORK AND PRIORITY AREAS**

The Joint Committee viewed two videos from the Chartered Trading Standards Institute on the impact of trading standards and businesses selling on-line. Members were advised that there were a number of other useful videos on their website.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

## **10 RESPONSE FROM LETTERS SENT ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Joint Committee has received responses in relation to two letters sent by the Chair on members' behalf as follows:

- A letter from the Local Government Association on the welfare of domestic animals.
- A letter was from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in relation to the irresponsible use of fireworks by the general public and the potential ban on fireworks to anything other than organised displays.

RESOLVED – That the responses be noted.

## **11 UPDATE ON THE SAFETY OF FIDGET SPINNERS**

The Joint Committee has been advised of safety issues associated with the Fidget Spinner toy.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) are examining a range of fidget spinners to evaluate the concerns raised, with particular emphasis on those products that contain LEDs or other electronic components. BEIS are also considering the potential for hazardous substances, robustness of the product and marketing approach.

BEIS have requested that local authority trading standards services continue to engage with manufacturers, importers and distributors providing advice and support to enable them to have confidence that products are safe and comply with legal requirements. Priority should be given to any fidget spinner products which are marketed or which might foreseeably be used by children under 36 months and the possibility of small parts which may become choking hazards.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.