

TYNE AND WEAR TRADING STANDARDS JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, 24 November 2022
NOTES OF INQUORATE MEETING

PRESENT: Councillor K Dodds (Chair)

Councillor(s): C Buckley, Councillor J O'Shea and
Councillor M Lowson

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): Councillor J Fletcher, T Graham,
I Patterson, Heron, P Walker, C Rowntree and IAli

TW73 MINUTES

Members noted the minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2022.

TW74 PROJECTED OUTTURN AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2022

Members noted a report on the projected outturn as at 30 September 2022.

TW75 REPORT AND STATISTICAL RETURN FOR PERIOD TO NOVEMBER 2022

Members noted a report on the work of the Joint Metrology Laboratory for the period ending November 2022.

The laboratory is back to full strength with 6 members of staff. The new staff have settled well. Submissions to the laboratory remain consistent when compared to last year's record submissions. With recently recruited staff trained and up to speed with the laboratories working practices turnaround times to all customers are back to expected levels.

The laboratory has a loyal customer base throughout Tyne and Wear and beyond that continues to use its calibration services for weights, scales and measures. The public weighbridge continues to be an essential service.

The laboratory has taken part in two 'inter-lab' comparisons, one with Devonshire County Council for weights and one with Micro Weighing Solutions for non-automatic weighing instruments (NAWI). These comparisons are seen as good practice throughout the industry and are recognised by UKAS during the annual audit.

The laboratory will be audited by UKAS in January 2023 for both mass calibration and toy testing.

The Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) has confirmed the extension of the sampling budget until the end of the current financial year. The laboratory will continue as the sample hub for the North East, Yorkshire and Humberside regions, organising the testing of products on behalf of the Local Authorities that we represent.

TW76 UPDATE ON THE PASSING OF THE FIREWORKS AND PYROTECHNIC ARTICLES (SCOTLAND) BILL

Members noted a report on the passing of a Fireworks and Pyrotechnic Articles Bill that has been introduced in Scotland.

The Bill introduces a fireworks licensing system, with mandatory safety training for people wishing to purchase and use fireworks. It also introduces powers for local authorities to designate firework control zones, restrictions on the supply of fireworks and pyrotechnics to under 18s.

Being in possession of a firework or other pyrotechnic in a public place or at certain places or events without reasonable excuse also becomes an offence.

The Bill received backing from a coalition of professional medical bodies including the BMA, The Royal College of Ophthalmology, and the British Society for Surgery of the Hand, along with support from emergency services and animal charities.

TW77 UPDATE ON THE RESPONSE TO ROGUE DOOR TO DOOR FISH SELLERS

Members noted a report on the regional response to the important issues of Rogue Door to Door Fish Sellers.

One of the most identifiable issues related to doorstep crime for Trading Standards services/Environmental Health services and also the Police Service is the illegal activities of certain rogue individuals going door to door targeting the most vulnerable and selling quantities of fish.

When buying fish from door to door salesman, the consumer very often has no way of knowing how the fish have been stored and whether they are safe to eat. It can also be difficult to know whether door to door traders are registered as a food business operator, which is a legal requirement, or if they are adhering to all food safety and hygiene regulations. There are also concerns that the traders may pressurise residents to buy more than they actually need.

Following concerns about these illegal activities both locally and indeed national the Regional Investigations Team hosted by Redcar and Cleveland BC and funded by the National Trading Standards Board continues to undertake a complex investigation into these illegal activities.

The report identified a number of prosecutions with further cases pending.

TW78 UPDATE ON THE KHAN REVIEW: MAKING SMOKING OBSOLETE

Members noted a report t on the Khan Review – Making Smoking Obsolete.

In a significant independent review into the government’s current tobacco control policies, led by Dr Javed Khan OBE which looked into whether the government will achieve its ambition to make England smoke free by 2030.

The report recognises that although good long-term progress has been made in reducing smoking rates to their lowest ever level, almost 6 million people still smoke in England and smoking is still one of the largest cause of health disparities.

This review was commissioned by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, and it provides independent, evidence-based advice that will inform the government’s approach to reduce the numbers of people taking up smoking and helping smokers to quit.

The report sets out the case for comprehensive investment now of an additional £125million per year in smokefree 2030 policies. If the government cannot fund this themselves the report recommends that they should ‘make the polluter pay’ and either introduce a tobacco industry levy, or generate additional corporate tax, with immediate effect.

The government must stop young people starting to smoke, which is why it is recommended to increase the age of sale from 18 by one year every year until no one can buy tobacco in this country.

The report recognises to achieve its recommendations that it will also be important to tackle illicit tobacco, which often sells tobacco cheaply and to underage young people.

Chair.....