

**MINUTES OF THE TRADING STANDARDS
JOINT ADVISORY BOARD
Tuesday 21 March 2006 at 7.30 pm**

**PRESENT: Councillor: Gate London Borough of Harrow
Kinnear
Councillor: Jones London Borough of Brent
J. Long**

Also in attendance were John Taylor (Director of Trading Standards), and Gareth Llywelyn-Roberts (London Borough of Harrow).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor O' Sullivan (London Borough of Brent) and Councillor Romain (London Borough of Harrow).

Appointment of Chair (from amongst Harrow Members)

RESOLVED:-

That Councillor Gate be appointed as Chair for the meeting.

1. Minutes of previous meeting – 22 November 2005

RESOLVED:-

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2005 be approved as a true and accurate record.

2. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

3. Trading Standards Service Operational Plan 2006/7

An officer introduced a report on the Service Operational Plan 2006/2007 and invited Members of the Board to comment. It was explained that every year the Service produced an operational plan which detailed the work of the Service and the budget needed to undertake the work as well as aims, objectives and priorities. An officer asked the Board to note the appendix contained in the report which outlined performance. Questions were then invited.

In response to Members' questions, the Director explained the difficulties in preventing illegal DVD trading. Although the traders had been monitored using CCTV and arrests were made, this did not have any long-term impact and Brent and Harrow did not have the resources to prevent the trading of illegal DVDs. It was recognised that a national response would be needed to resolve the problem. It was explained that where traders were operating in licensed premises and Trading Standards as a statutory consultee agency was concerned about criminal activity taking place, the license could be called in for review.

In response to a question from a Member, the Director explained that the DTI review of Trading Standards was seeking to ensure national consistency in the service. It was explained that some Local Authorities invested higher resources in the Service than others and until there was financial consistency, it would be difficult to achieve uniformity in the Service. It was reported that as Trading Standards was included in the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) inspection, Harrow's investment had meant it had been in the upper threshold in the five performance indications relating to the Service. It was also noted that Brent and Harrow Trading Standards had received national recognition.

A Member queried why the actual number of test purchase visits was significantly higher than the planned number. The Director informed the Board that this was due to the under age test purchasing of alcohol which had been partly funded by the government.

A Member questioned why the rate of telephone calls answered had reduced and the Director explained that there were problems with the telephone system but this was being addressed.

Members congratulated the Service on the work done and wished them future success.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

4. **Trading Standards Budget for 2006/7**

The Director introduced a report on the Trading Standards Budget for 2006/7 which updated Members on the budget together with the implications on service delivery. It was reported that Brent had approved the budget set out in the report and Harrow had approved a figure of £844,083. Harrow and Brent would have the same service level as in 2005/06.

A Member commented that if Trading Standards was not adequately resourced in the future, the quality of life for residents would be reduced. Therefore Members of the Board would need to maintain pressure on those making budgetary decisions, to ensure the level of service was not reduced.

A Member informed the Director that residents and Members of the Board appreciated the service and commitment of the Trading Standards staff. The Chair and the Director of Trading Standards thanked Members for their support of the Service.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

5. **Any Other Urgent Business**

There was none at this meeting.

6. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Trading Standards Joint Advisory Board would be held on Wednesday 26 July 2006 at Brent Town Hall.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 7.34 pm, closed at 8.14 pm)

COUNCILLOR GATE
Chair