



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE TRADING STANDARDS JOINT ADVISORY BOARD

Monday 21 March 2016 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Aden), Long, Stopp (Brent), Ferry) and Parmar (LB Harrow)

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Mithani and Venetia Baptiste (Officer)

Officers in Attendance were: Simon Legg, Richard Le Brut and Aktar Choudhury

1. **Election of Chair**

RESOLVED:

that Councillor Long be elected Chair of the Joint Advisory Board for the meeting.

2. **Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests**

None.

3. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 June 2015 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. **Matters arising**

None.

5. **Deputations**

None.

6. **Trading Standards Fees and charges 2016/17**

The Board received a report that provided them with information concerning the proposed level of fees and charges to be made by the Brent & Harrow Trading Standards service in 2016/17. Simon Legg (Regulatory Services Manager), in introducing the report informed members that the Service's fee structure was applied at the same level for each borough and fell into three main categories.

Statutory fees were set nationwide by Government and accordingly, local authorities have no discretion to vary them. These fees applied to explosive (firework) licenses charged by the Harrow team but in Brent, this function was carried out by the Licensing Team rather than a Trading Standards function with the fees being set by the Health and Safety Executive. He continued that a Retail Price Index (RPI) escalator was applied to Primary Authority partnerships where the Councils had partnered with businesses who work across the whole of the UK, who chose to receive their advice and guidance from one Regulatory Service. The fee charged was to be on a cost recovery basis only. The third category of fees was that determined annually with any change in the fee charged being determined each year according to prevailing circumstances.

Members heard that fee income was a relatively small contributor to the Trading Standards Service budget, the budgeted fee income for 2015/16 (excluding Court cost or proceeds of crime recovery) totalling £23,500. Simon Legg advised members that an anticipated rise in fees was expected to increase income for 2016/17 albeit small, unless there was growth in the amount of fee paying services undertaken during the year.

RESOLVED:

that the report on Trading Standards fees and charges 2016/17 be noted.

7. Underage Sales report 2015

This report provides information about the Trading Standard's duties enforcing underage sales legislation and a summary of this year's underage sales work the Service has carried out. Simon Legg (Regulatory Services Manager) informed members that the Service maintained a regular programme of underage test purchasing operations throughout the year with our current work plan requiring 125 Brent underage test purchases and 135 in Harrow. The frequency of these visits was spread throughout the year but visits were increased during school holiday times.

He outlined the programme of testing designed to make it difficult for young children to purchase any of the items which were illegal to be sold to underage persons as set out in the report including alcohol, tobacco and fireworks. Members heard that options available for offending shops included a warning letter, simple caution, prosecution and for a licensed premises, a review of their operating licence.

For the last eight years, we have operated our free Responsible Trader Scheme that helps businesses to understand and comply with the various requirements of age restricted goods legislation. Members of the scheme receive a complementary training pack and materials to help them implement controls and procedures to prevent illegal sales. In response to members' enquiries, Simon Legg stated that the sources of recruitment of volunteer children were through the Duke of Edinburgh Scheme, Police Cadets, children of Council staff and advertisement in the local press. In terms of risk assessment, he continued that officers followed Home Office guidance and also three officers were always on hand and near the subject shop. Additionally, general advice was given to the volunteers that if they felt vulnerable at any time of the test purchase, they should leave the shop immediately.

In welcoming the report, members urged officers to work in close partnership with Anti-Social agencies and the Police to target any suspected hotspots. Simon Legg added that lack of resources prevented the Service from prioritising internet underage sales and that large businesses had controls in place to combat that.

RESOLVED:

that progress report on underage sales and the contribution made by the Trading Standards Service in preventing illegal underage sales and the continued approach to enforcement be endorsed.

8. **Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm

L. JONES
Chair