

MINUTES of the meeting of the BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL AND SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL JOINT TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE COMMITTEE held at 10.30 am on 9 November 2023 at Paralympic Room at the Gateway Offices, Bucks.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Wednesday, 10 April 2024.

Elected Members:

- * Mark Winn (Co-Chairman)
- * Kevin Deanus (Co-Chairman)
- * Scott Lewis (Advisory Member)
- * Carl Jackson (Advisory Member)

In attendance

Steve Ruddy (Head of Service)
Amanda Poole (Asst Head of Service)

13/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

There were none.

14/23 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING [18 MAY 2023] [Item 2]

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 May 2023 be approved as a correct record.

15/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were none.

16/23 PROCEDURAL ITEMS [Item 4]

a MEMBERS' QUESTIONS [Item 4a]

There were none.

b PUBLIC QUESTIONS [Item 4b]

There were none.

c PETITIONS [Item 4c]

There were none.

17/23 ACTION TRACKER AND FORWARD PLAN [Item 5]

Key points from the discussion:

A report was submitted which requested Members to consider and comment upon the previous actions of the Committee attached at (Appendix A) and to note the forward plan attached at (Appendix B) to the report. It was confirmed that the actions from the previous meeting were now closed.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and Members to indicate if they wished to include any items on the next agenda.

18/23 2023/24 FIRST SIX MONTHS PERFORMANCE [Item 6]

Key points from the discussion:

1. A report was considered which detailed the performance of the Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards Service over the first six months of 2023/24. This was appended to the report at (Appendix A).
2. The information provided demonstrated that the service was performing well across the whole range of indicators and was successful in delivering on activities against key performance indicators. Members were informed that following the development of the national Impacts and Outcomes Framework for Trading Standards, performance indicators had been divided across 3 main areas, these were: Tackling detriment and preventing harm, supporting the local economy and promoting health and wellbeing.
3. The presenting officer gave mention to and expressed concern regards the delays in the court process for trials of more than a day in length affecting vulnerable witnesses and defendants and leading to increased costs to the service. This had a serious impact on justice for all concerned. Members were in agreement that action should be taken and a letter should be despatched to the relevant Secretary of State so that the issue could be addressed.

RESOLVED: That,

1. A letter be drafted and despatched to the Secretary of State for Justice regards the delays in the court process for trials including its effects on the most vulnerable in society
2. Advertising and marketing of the call blockers to be continued with a view to increasing take up of the service.
3. The relatives of those who may be eligible for call blockers be targeted by communications in an attempt to further disseminate the relevant information.

19/23 TRADING STANDARDS VAPES ENFORCEMENT UPDATE [Item 7]

Key points from the discussion:

1. Members considered a report which provided information on the rapidly growing market of vapes, and the concerns relating to disposable vapes in particular. (Appendix A) to the report stated that the two key issues from a Trading Standards enforcement perspective were those related to the safety of the vapes themselves affecting all users, and the sharp rise in the use of vapes by the under 18s age group to whom nicotine containing vapes cannot legally be sold.
2. Members were informed that there was currently a Government consultation which had gone live "Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping" Trading Standards intended to respond to the consultation in liaison with colleagues from Public Health, but any views from the this Committee would also be incorporated. It was agreed that

the response from Public Health would be awaited prior to the committee making further comment in response to the consultation.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted and an update on vapes including the latest on the consultation be brought back to the next meeting

20/23 JOINT SERVICE BUDGET [Item 8]

Key points from the discussion:

1. Members were informed that Joint Service budget showed an underspend of 1.8% (£53,000) against the budget for 2023/24 as agreed by the Committee in April 2023. This was primarily due the difficulties encountered in recruitment and due to a recent decision to hold some vacancies in preparation for managing a likely reduction in the 2024/25 budget.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

21/23 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING [Item 9]

The Committee noted that its next meeting will be held on 10 April 2024.

Chairman