

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday 7th November, 2011 at 6.00pm
in Committee Room 2, The Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Mrs. Shakespeare (Chairman)
Councillor Mrs. Turner (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Mrs Cowell, A Finch, Hill, James, Mrs Jordan, Ms Partridge, Mrs Rogers, Waltho and Mrs Westwood.

Officers

Director of Corporate Resources (As Lead Officer to the Committee), Assistant Director Environmental Management, Assistant Director Planning and Environmental Health and Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards (All Directorate of the Urban Environment); Assistant Director of Housing, (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services), Treasurer and Miss K Fellows (Directorate of Corporate Resources).

Also in Attendance.

Councillor Stanley, Cabinet Member for Environment.

10. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No member made a Declaration of Interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

11. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED

That, the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7th September, 2011, be approved as a correct record and signed.

12. **PUBLIC FORUM**

No matters were raised under this agenda item.

13. **CONSIDERATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY) REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY THE PETITION'S OFFICER**

No Petitions had been referred to the Committee.

14. REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2012/13

A joint report of Officers was submitted on the proposed Revenue Budget Strategy for 2012/13 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2012/13 – 2014/15 detailing spending and funding options for consultation and representations of Business Ratepayers.

The Treasurer presented the report and Appendix to the report submitted and it was

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet's Revenue Budget Strategy proposals for 2012/13 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2012/13 – 2014/15, as set out in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted be noted and the Cabinet be informed that there were no observations that this Scrutiny Committee wished to make on the proposals.

15. ROGUE TRADERS AND DOORSTEP CRIME.

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on the role of the Council's Trading Standards Service in combating the problems of doorstep crime and investigating rogue traders.

Following the presentation of the content of the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted, the Assistant Director of Planning and Environmental Health responded to Members questions stating that:-

- The Trading Standards Service worked closely with Age UK and attended the Older Peoples Board which had an annual forum for elderly people and had trained the Councils staff to disseminate information to elderly people in relation to the educational package which had been developed entitled "Who's After Your Money".
- That the Dudley Bogus Caller Hotline telephone number would be emailed to Members.
- That work with the Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services continued to be undertaken in relation to rogue traders and doorstep crime.
- Unannounced cold calling zone activity was planned in conjunction with the Police, however this would be subject to police resources.

Members supported and praised the continuing work of the Trading Standards Services in relation to rogue traders and doorstep crime and welcomed the report submitted.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report and Appendix to the report, submitted on the role of the Council's Trading Standards Service in combating the problems of doorstep crime and investigating rogue traders, be noted.
- (2) That the Assistant Director of Planning and Environmental Health be requested to email the telephone number of the Dudley Bogus Caller Hotline to Members.

16.

AGE RESTRICTED PRODUCTS ENFORCEMENT.

A report of the Director of the Urban Environment was submitted on legislation enforcement and advice activity carried out by the Trading Standards Service concerning the sale of alcohol to persons aged under eighteen; an annual report on tobacco enforcement activity as required by specified legislation and advising on the current and forthcoming tobacco control legislation.

Arising from the report submitted Members asked questions and made comments.

The Assistant Director of Planning and Environmental Health responded stating that:-

- The Council were responsible for enforcement action in relation to knives, solvents and spray paints with work being conducted with the police and complaints being responded to and investigated.
- Should Members wish to provide details of problematic areas in relation to the alleged sale of spray paints to underage youngsters, test purchasing would be undertaken by Trading Standards.
- There were no statistics in relation to the size of shops targeted in relation to test purchasing with shops being targeted following intelligence information received from Members, Police and residents.
- That proxy purchasing was a recognised problem and work continued to be undertaken with colleagues and partners in relation to proxy sales.

A Member recommended that test purchasing should be undertaken in supermarkets.

The Chairman referred to the difficulties with proving persistent selling of alcohol as referred to in paragraph 6 of the report submitted and the difficulties with proving proxy sales.

Members praised and supported the continuing work of the Trading Standards Service in relation to age restricted products enforcement.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, on legislation enforcement and advice activity carried out by the trading standards service concerning the sale of alcohol to persons aged under eighteen; the annual report on tobacco enforcement activity as required by specified legislation and on current and forthcoming tobacco control legislation, be noted

The meeting ended at 6.35pm

CHAIRMAN