

MINUTES of a meeting of the **CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND COMMUNITIES** held on 27 May 2014 at County Hall, Matlock

PRESENT

Councillor D Allen – Cabinet Member

Also in Attendance – Councillor E S Wilcox

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor C A Hart

52/14 **MINUTES RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet Member for Health and Communities held on 6 May 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Cabinet Member.

53/14 **TACKLING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY CRIME IN DERBYSHIRE 2013-14** Tackling intellectual property crime (counterfeit goods) had been a local, regional and national trading standards priority for a number of years. Derbyshire was no different to any other larger rural authority in terms of the scale of the problem, and there had been a significant increase in complaints about counterfeit goods over the past ten years, although the number of complaints had stabilised over the past year. There had been an increase in counterfeit goods being sold via the internet, and the most significant change had been a large increase in the amount of illicit tobacco.

Details were provided of the type and quantity of counterfeit goods seized in the county during the past twelve months, together with the approximate 'street value'. Investigations as a result of enforcement action following the detection of counterfeit goods had resulted in a range of enforcement action – six warning letters as well as two formal cautions had been issued, and six prosecutions completed.

Trading Standards Services were adopting a more 'intelligence-led' approach to enforcement in recognition of the need to respond to organised criminal activity. For some years, Derbyshire Trading Standards had adopted the National Intelligence Model approach, and the Division input relevant information onto a national trading standards database, which facilitated the sharing of information about criminal activity.

The significant increase in illicit tobacco on sale in Derbyshire had moved enforcement activity into this sector. It was felt necessary to prioritise enforcement activity to those areas of highest risk, and it was therefore proposed that the Division continued to focus on tackling illicit tobacco and those products where there could be a risk to public health and/or safety. In addition, the Division would concentrate on organised crime groups operating

in or based in the county and those posing the greatest risk to the local economy. This would mean that it would perhaps not be possible to respond to individual complaints about breaches of intellectual property legislation where the amount of counterfeit product was relatively small. Greater use of advisory and warning letters would be made, particularly with regard to on-line sales of counterfeit products.

RESOLVED to note the activity to tackle intellectual property crime in Derbyshire and to endorse the proposed policy towards enforcement.

54/14 DERBYSHIRE TRUSTED TRADER FEES AND THE RESULTS OF A RECENT SURVEY OF MEMBERS Approval was sought for an increase in the fees for membership of the Derbyshire Trusted Trader Scheme. When it was established in 2005, the fees had deliberately been set at a rate considered to be affordable by, in particular, small businesses and the original target had been 500 trade members. A two tier structure had been agreed with sole traders and social enterprises paying less than other types of business, and a discount had been given for those businesses wishing to renew their subscription at the end of the first year of membership. Apart from a modest increase in fees in 2011, the fees had remained the same.

It had never been intended for the Trusted Trader Scheme to be 'cost neutral' as it contributed to a number of council priority areas. It was now thought appropriate to consider an above inflation increase in Trusted Trader annual membership fees. There were a number of other local authority and private sector run trader schemes, and the annual membership fee was considerably higher than the Derbyshire scheme. Although the number of businesses registered on the Derbyshire Trusted Trader Scheme had fallen slightly to 1,297 in 2013/14, the scheme remained a valued and strong brand. Over 15,000 feedback cards from members of the public who had used the services of a Trusted Trader had been received with a satisfaction rating of 99%, and the number and type of on-line searches were also monitored.

The Division also sought feedback from Derbyshire Trusted Trader members, and a survey had been sent to all members of the scheme in February 2014 – 32.6% had responded. The majority had responded that the scheme had had a beneficial impact on their business, which was an increase on the previous year. There had also been an increase in those businesses reporting a moderate or significant increase in business compared to a year ago. 96% of members had been happy with the Trusted Trader branding and had felt that it gave customers more confidence, and 87% had responded that they thought publishing feedback on the website had improved the scheme.

Given the success of the Scheme and the need to make further savings, it was recommended to increase the annual membership fee. It was also recommended that the renewal discount was removed, but that the

differential between small and large businesses was retained. A fee of £70 was recommended for sole proprietors and social enterprises, and £100 for other businesses. Three months' notice of any increase in fees was a requirement of the Derbyshire scheme, and it was further recommended that the fee increase be staggered for the first year with an increase to £50 and £75 respectively and that the Division worked with Public Relations and other council service areas to ensure that scheme members were made aware of the benefits and added value from being a Derbyshire Trusted Trader member.

RESOLVED to note the positive feedback from a recent survey of members of the Derbyshire Trusted Trader Scheme and to agree an increase in annual membership fees as detailed in the report.