
Meeting of the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods

8th June 2006

Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services

Enforcement of Excess Packaging Legislation

Summary

1. To inform members about the results of the excess packaging initiative undertaken by the trading standards service.

Background

2. The council's trading standards unit are responsible for enforcing the Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations 2003, which require (amongst other things) that all businesses minimise the amount of packaging on any goods they place on to the market. Businesses which fail to keep packaging to a minimum can be fined up to £5000 per offence. Essential packaging is defined as packaging so manufactured that the packaging volume and weight be limited to the minimum adequate amount to maintain the necessary level of safety, hygiene and acceptance for the packed product and for the consumer
3. The trading standards service have traditionally enforced the legislation by advising businesses on the requirements of the law but the number of complaints about excess packaging has been very low (in 2004-5, only one complaint was made on this matter).
4. In 2005-6, as part of the council's drive to minimise waste, the trading standards team undertook publicity so as to encourage residents to complain to trading standards if they felt the goods they were buying were packaged excessively. As a result the team received 12 complaints about 40 items.
5. Investigations revealed that all of the products complained about were manufactured outside of the City of York. As a result, the trading standards service in the area for which the product was manufactured was notified in order to raise the matter with the business concerned.
6. In addition to encouraging York residents to 'complain', the trading standards service also participated in a national survey of excess packaging. Trading standards services across the country were involved in buying various products to assess varying packaging levels. The items to be purchased were suggested to the trading standards service by 'intelligence' from earlier pilot surveys. City of York Council trading standards purchased 10 items of clothing from the internet. Three items were identified as being packaged

excessively, in the worst case – a football shirt - the packaging was only 34% full.

7. The three clothing businesses concerned have been investigated and have confirmed to trading standards that steps have been taken to reduce the amount of packaging used.
8. In 2006-7, the trading standards service will extend the project to York based businesses and proactively give advice on minimising packaging. The service have engaged the support of Envirowise (a government backed scheme to advise businesses on waste minimisation) to assist in any specific 'technical' issues that may arise preventing further packaging reduction. The team will prioritise businesses producing high volume goods, and those businesses producing products which gave the most concern during the 2005 -6 national packaging survey.
9. The approach will be advice in the first instance, followed by formal action if appropriate e.g. if advice is ignored. This approach is consistent with the Environmental health and Trading Standards enforcement policy (approved by Members in September 2005).
10. The Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability approved an enforcement policy for Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing Services in September 2005. This policy replaced the previous policy which had been approved by members in 2001.

Consultation

11. Liaison has taken place with Envirowise and other trading standards authorities.

Options

12. Not applicable.

Analysis

13. Not applicable.

Corporate Objectives

14. Corporate objective 1.5 minimise waste arising from both residents and businesses.

Implications

15. **Financial:** There are no financial implications associated with this report. The 2006-7 project will be funded from within existing budgets.
16. **Human Resources:** There are no Human Resources implications associated with this report.
17. **Equalities:** There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

18. **Legal:** There are no legal implications associated with this report.
19. **Crime and Disorder:** There are no crime and disorder implications associated with this report.
20. **Information Technology (IT):** There are no IT implications associated with this report.
21. **Other:** There are no other implications associated with this report.

Risk Management

22. There are no known risks associated with this report..

Recommendations

23. That members note the report.

Reason: To update the Executive Member with the results of the excess packaging initiative undertaken by the trading standards service.

Contact Details

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SPECIALIST IMPLICATIONS OFFICER(S) – none

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers –

Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations 2003
Environmental Health, trading Standards and Licensing Enforcement Policy
Statement 2005.

Annexes - None