

SAFER POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Safer Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 10 September 2024 at the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

Present: Councillors N. Plumpton Walsh (Chair), Carlin (Vice-Chair), Baker, Bevan, Bramwell, Goodall, A. Lowe, Skinner and Wallace

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Ratcliffe

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: S. Burrows, K. Butler, R. Moore and W. Rourke

Also in attendance: None

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
SAF7	CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS There were no Chair's announcements.	
SAF8	MINUTES The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2024 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
SAF9	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME It was reported that no public questions had been received.	
SAF10	TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE UPDATE The Board received a report from the Director of Public Health, which provided an update on some of the work of the Trading Standards Service and the contribution this work had made in protecting public health, children and vulnerable adults from harm. It was noted that the Trading Standards team provided a wide range of statutory services to protect consumers and legitimate businesses from unfair,	

misleading or unsafe trading practices. Amongst others, these services included weights and measures, product safety, restricted sales, explosives, scams awareness, fair trading, doorstep crime, counterfeit and illicit goods – including tobacco and vapes. The team also provided an enhanced consumer advice service to help consumers enforce their own civil consumer rights.

The report focussed on the following services which contributed to protecting public health and safeguarding children and adults:

- scams awareness;
- doorstep crime;
- illegal money laundering;
- tobacco and vapes;
- age restricted sales;
- consumer advice and the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline; and
- iCAN consumer alert network.

The report also provided case studies for each of the services, which the Board noted.

Following discussions and arising questions from Members, some additional information was noted:

- Despite several warnings about selling counterfeit tobacco and illicit vapes, Trading Standards successfully obtained a Closure Order to shut down the News Rack in Widnes Town Centre. This was initially for 3 months which then was extended for a further 3 months. They were then prosecuted. It was confirmed that Closure Orders had a bigger impact on premises operating criminal activity as fines usually did not reflect the crime;
- A Member of the Board gave an example about how a school was dealing with vapes, as these were considered to be a safeguarding concern for children. It was suggested that the Trading Standards Team consider routes of prosecution for the selling of vapes which were targeted at children/young people. It was confirmed that the Early Years Team and the Public Health Team were involved in this area of work but it was agreed that discussion would be fed back to the team; and
- Stop Loan Sharks was operated by Birmingham City Council on behalf of Local Authorities throughout the

country via delegated powers. It was noted that there was no exchange of money; Birmingham received funding directly from central Government.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

- 1) note the report;
- 2) endorse the approach to doorstep crime and illegal money lending;
- 3) endorse the multi-faceted approach to both prosecute and disrupt illegal activity by seizing illegal and illicit products to remove them from the market; and
- 4) encourage partners to sign up to and share the iCan alert system.

SAF11 COMMUNITY, SAFETY & PROTECTION DIVISION UPDATE

The Board received a report from the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on the progress in the Community Safety and Protection Division.

The report provided an update on:

- Domestic Abuse Services;
- Enforcement and CCTV;
- Emergency Planning;
- Asylum Seekers and Refugees; and
- Safer Halton Partnership.

Following discussions and arising questions from Members, some additional information was noted:

- Members raised the issue of parking problems in the Borough and the fact that the powers for traffic/parking enforcements sat with Cheshire Police. It was suggested that the Chief Inspectors for Widnes and Runcorn be invited to a future meeting to discuss the issues. Councillor Angela McInerney informed other Board Members that she received some advice from Cheshire Police who recommended that anyone who witnessed a parking issue, should take a photograph and email it to the Police. They also confirmed that these issues were being investigated and hotspots would be targeted, including Farnworth and Widnes Town Centre;

- Through the Chair, Councillor Bevan requested an item on the next agenda regarding housing for Asylum Seekers and Refugees. It was noted that a report on this matter was being scrutinised by the Health PPB; and
- An update on the White Ribbon status was also requested.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Meeting ended at 7.45 p.m.