
Motherwell, 5 December 2006 at 2 pm.

A Meeting of the **PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT (PROTECTIVE SERVICES)**
SUB-COMMITTEE

PRESENT

Councillor McKenna, Convener; Councillors Brooks, J. Coyle, Gemmell, Gormill, Higgins, Holloway, Homer, Maginnis, Saunders and Wilson.

CHAIR

Councillor McKenna (Convener) presided.

IN ATTENDANCE

The Chief Committee Services Manager, Head of Protective Services and Trading Standards Manager.

APOLOGIES

Councillors Devine, Gorman, Lafferty and McGhee.

BANKRUPTCY AS A STRATEGY FOR DEALING WITH DEBT

1. With reference to paragraph 1 of the Minute of the meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 8 August 2006, there was submitted a report dated 6 November 2006 by the Director of Planning and Environment (1) providing details of the Debt Counselling Service which operates a free, confidential and independent service for the community and employees of North Lanarkshire Council together with a breakdown of the type of debt problems dealt with; (2) advising that local authorities are responsible for the collation of money advice statistics for all money advice providers located in their area who receive funding from the Scottish Executive for such services; (3) reporting that in addition to the Council's own Money Advice Service, the statistics include data from five Citizens Advice Bureau located with North Lanarkshire, and (4) outlining the strategies used for dealing with clients debt problems during the period from 1 July to 30 September 2006.

Decided: that the report be noted.

FAREPAK FOOD AND GIFTS LIMITED

2. There was submitted a report (docketed) dated 5 December 2006 by the Director of Planning and Environment (1) reporting that on 13 October 2006 Farepak Food and Gifts Limited, a company which had operated a Christmas savings club, had gone into administration leaving many thousands of customers out of pocket; (2) advising that this type of business is not regulated by the Financial Services Authority as savings are treated as deposits on goods to be supplied by the company and as such are not protected in any way; (3) containing his observations thereon, and (4) attaching, as an Appendix to the report, a copy of the Consumer Advisor Alert distributed by the Trading Standards Service through the Consumer Support Network to the public in North Lanarkshire.

Decided: that the report be noted.

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MANDATORY LICENSING OF HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION – REVISED FEES

3. With reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of the meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 5 October 2004, there was submitted a report dated 5 December 2006 by the Director of Planning and Environment (1) outlining the background to the Mandatory Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation Scheme, and (2) proposing that the three year HMO Licence fee be increased from £800 to £1,000, with the 10% footprint licensing fee for identical properties in the same block and same ownership continuing.

Decided: that approval be given to the Houses in Multiple Occupation Licence fee being increased from £800 to £1,000.

NATIONAL CONSUMER WEEK – 20-24 NOVEMBER 2006

4. With reference to paragraph 1 of the Minute of the meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 4 October 2005, there was submitted a report dated 5 December 2006 by the Director of Planning and Environment (1) advising that the theme for this year's National Consumer Week was "Hey Big Spender – Take a Little Advice From Us" and focused on the major purchases consumers make, the things that can go wrong with those purchases and where to get help and advice; (2) reporting that the Trading Standards Service receive hundreds of enquiries and complaints each year about the sale and servicing of cars and national trends show an increase in the number of complaints about cars; (3) indicating that this year's campaign consisted of a series of posters and leaflets produced by the Trading Standards Service, backed up with leaflets provided by the Office of Fair Trading; (4) advising that the national launch of the week's activities took place at the Department of Trade and Industry in London on 20 November 2006, and that the Council's Trading Standards Service Manager spoke at this launch event, in his capacity as this year's Chair of the Trading Standards Institute, and (5) reporting that, in addition to national press releases issued by the Trading Standards Institute, local press releases highlighting issues in North Lanarkshire Council were sent to local media organisations.

Decided: that the report be noted.

HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2006 - PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON SALE OF HOUSES

5. There was submitted a report dated 5 December 2006 by the Director of Planning and Environment (1) advising that the provisions contained in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 give Scottish Ministers powers to make regulations requiring persons marketing a house for sale to provide certain information to potential buyers, known as the Purchaser's Information Pack and that the new arrangements included a single property survey which in future would be undertaken by the seller or their Agent; (2) containing his observations thereon; (3) indicating that it was intended to introduce the provisions concerning Purchaser Information Packs in early to mid 2008, and (4) reporting that a further report will be submitted when further guidance has been received from the Scottish Executive.

Decided: that the report be noted.

ENFORCEMENT OF LEGISLATION RELATING TO UNDER AGE SALES OF AGE-RESTRICTED PRODUCTS

6. With reference to paragraph 8 of the Minute of the meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 8 August 2006 there was submitted a report dated 5 December 2006 by the Director of Planning and Environment (1) advising of recent enforcement activities relating to the Children and Young Persons

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(Protection from Tobacco) Act 1991, the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act 1937 and the Fireworks (Safety) Regulations 1997; (2) detailing operational test purchase exercises which took place between 1 and 4 November 2006 throughout North Lanarkshire; (3) containing his observations thereon, and (4) advising that further test purchase exercises are planned in the New Year.

Decided:

- (1) that the activities carried out by the Trading Standards Service to protect young persons from age-restricted products be noted, and
- (2) that approval be given to continuing the enforcement operations.

WORK AND WELLBEING – “FIT FOR THE JOB”

7. There was submitted a report dated 5 December 2006 by the Director of Planning and Environment (1) advising that the Council’s corporate Health and Wellbeing Working Group were promoting a Joint Health Improvement Plan, with one element of the Plan focusing on Work and Wellbeing; (2) reporting that a Work and Wellbeing sub-group had been established with membership drawn from the Departments of Planning and Environment (Environmental Health), Community Services, the HSE and SALUS; (3) advising of a signposting initiative which was piloted in Righead Industrial Estate, Bellshill in 2004; (4) containing details of the latest initiative entitled “Fit for the Job”; which comprised a DVD and information pack for distribution to employers in North Lanarkshire and (5) advising that the initiative was launched on 25 October 2006 at an event hosted by North Lanarkshire Council and was attended by representatives from a range of enforcement and advisory agencies and by business representatives based in North Lanarkshire.

Decided: that the launch of the “Fit for the Job” Initiative be noted

TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE FIREWORKS CAMPAIGN 2006

8. With reference to paragraph 3 of the Minute of the meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 6 December 2005, there was submitted a report dated 5 December 2006 by the Director of Planning and Environment (1) reminding Members, that with effect from April 2005, the Manufacture and Storage of Explosive Regulations 2005 had come into force and had introduced new measures for the control of fireworks/explosives; (2) reporting that the Trading Standard Service, as part of its annual operation programme, had visited premises registered to supply fireworks in the run-up to 5 November in order to ascertain whether explosives were being stored safely, and (3) containing details of the visits.

Decided: that the report be noted.