

Update on Regulatory Services issues

Purpose of report

For information

Summary

This report provides an update on developments affecting regulatory services that will be of interest to the Safer and Stronger Communities Programme Board.

Recommendation

That the Board notes the activities outlined.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate

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Background

1. The following update sets out some current issues of relevance to local authority Regulatory Services and their contribution to safer and stronger communities.

Key Issues

Local Authority Sampling Work – takeaway food

2. A report on some recent nationally coordinated sampling of takeaway food carried out by trading standards and environmental health at a range of County and Unitary authorities was published. It revealed high levels of fat, salt, sugar and colourings along with bogus meat and potentially lethal nuts for customers who suffer from nut allergies.
3. Local authority food sampling is carried out to check that food complies with the law, is safe and allows consumers to make their own informed choices about what they eat. Some of this important local authority work is coordinated and collated nationally and the results highlighted to the media. In this case food was analysed from 223 takeaways across England and Wales.
4. The press release for this study issued at the end of August explained that analysis of Indian takeaways found one portion of chicken tikka masala and pilau rice contained 116 per cent of a person's Guideline Daily Amount (GDA) of saturated fat and 92 per cent of salt. Chinese takeaways were also investigated and in these results sweet and sour chicken with fried rice contained 119 per cent of the GDA for salt and 75 per cent of the GDA for sugar.

Update on the Red Tape Challenge

5. As members may be aware, the government's Red Tape Challenge launched in April is a high profile initiative to reduce red tape affecting businesses and invites the public, regulators and businesses who regularly deal with regulation, to have their say on particular themes.
6. The Red Tape Challenge website now includes a range of comments from businesses and enforcers about Health and Safety, and legislation in the

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hospitality sector which were highlighted themes earlier this year. From September comments will be invited on regulations relating to the environment.

7. Issues arising from the on-line debates will be considered carefully by Ministers who will have three months to work out which regulations they want to keep and why. One proposal reported to the Board in the last regulatory update to renew all alcohol licences on a single date has now been dropped following LG Group liaison with the Home Office. The LG Group highlighted concerns expressed by some councils about the cost and staffing implications of moving to a single date.

Riots and role for Regulatory Services

8. In the aftermath of the recent riots, the LG Group has been highlighting some of the excellent work carried out by local authorities to help get riot affected areas back to normal, and deal with the offenders. In this context, Trading Standards Officers work in visiting pawnbrokers, checking for valuable goods and urging owners to gather traceable ID records from sellers has been recognised as a useful contribution.