



Subject:	Product Safety update
Date:	8 August 2023
Reporting Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Director of City Services
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Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
<i>After Committee Decision</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>After Council Decision</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Some time in the future</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Never</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues
1.1	This report is to highlight continuation of funding to support Belfast City Council's activity in the area of product safety regulation.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agree to avail of continued grant funding offers to support Belfast City Council's work on product safety in 2023/24 and subsequent extensions over future years, if made available.
3.0	Main report
3.1	At the Committee's meeting on 7 February 2023, Members were presented with an update report on the Councils activities in the area of product safety regulation; principally, that NI

Councils are subject to statutory duties for implementing consumer safety legislation, via the Consumer Protection Act 1987, the Market Surveillance (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2021, and allied Regulations for safety of specific products such as toys, electrical goods, cosmetics etc. These laws set out how Councils must carry out certain functions for product safety, including some additional enforcement powers.

3.2

At its February meeting, the Committee agreed to avail of in year (2022/23) grant funding totalling £120,000 which was made available from Department of Business Enterprise and Skills (Office of Product Standards and Safety, OPSS) to support Councils work in relation to:

- ensuring that businesses involved in the importation, supply or sale of goods comply with their legal obligations and to ensure that goods presented on the market do not present risk of harm or injury to consumers.
- Building capacity and capability of the service to understand and deliver requirements of the legislation, and to build strong working relationships with key partners and businesses.

3.3

OPSS have now extended both grant funding programmes to support the Councils activities in these areas for a further year. The grant funding on offer for 2023/24 comprises:

- a. A £140,000 grant is available to Councils that have specific duties to assess product safety and compliance of higher risk consumer goods arriving at UK and NI ports, to ensure unsafe goods are prevented from entering the UK market. These products are typically identified by OPSS on the basis risk assessments carried out using customs data for specific commodities. Details of potentially dangerous products are referred to Councils for the relevant ports around GB and NI for intervention. These products typically involve high risk/poor quality manufactured goods arriving from countries across the world such as China, Hong Kong, Taiwan etc. Eligible activities under this grant include the potential to support engagement with businesses to educate and raise awareness while creating a deterrent for importing unsafe goods, building partnerships with relevant trade bodies and other stakeholders, and improving current processes.
- b. A £55,000 grant is again available to NI District Councils to build capability and capacity for product safety work. This is to ensure Council's are sufficiently equipped to carry out the statutory duties, while also building strong partnerships with businesses, other Councils and Government Departments to improve future

	<p>compliance across the consumer market. A significant portion of Belfast City Council's activity for delivery the NI Consumer Protection workplan in 2022/23 is eligible for this funding.</p>
3.4	<p>Officers have reviewed the 2 available grant funding offers and have confirmed that Belfast City Council is eligible to claim the available funding in full, in line with the eligibility criteria.</p>
3.5	<p>It is possible that these programmes may continue beyond the 2023/24 financial year, with further grant funding offers in future years. To assist Council in planning for delivery and to draw down future funding in a timely manner, it is recommended that approval be given to avail of extended funding opportunities under these programmes should they become available in 2024/25 or beyond.</p>
3.6	<p><u>Finance and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Council has previously accessed similar OPSS funding opportunities to support product safety work in 2020/21, 2021/22, and 2022/23. As a result, the potential for grant funding income in 2023/24 was forecasted as part of earlier financial estimates for the current financial year, to support this work area. Given the overall increase in funding (£75k increase) on offer compared to the previous 2022/23 year, there may be a need to look at resource allocation in this area of work.</p>
3.7	<p><u>Asset and Other Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
3.8	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/ Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None.</p>
4.0	<p>Appendices – Documents Attached</p>
	<p>None</p>