



Subject:	Responses to consumer product safety public consultations: (i) Reform of the product safety framework; (ii) The market surveillance and enforcement framework; and (iii) Fire Safety of domestic upholstered furniture.
Date:	12 May 2026
Reporting Officer:	Siobhan Toland, Director City Services
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Restricted Reports

Is this report restricted? Yes No

Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?

After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in

Is the decision eligible for Call-in? Yes No

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	<p>The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) are seeking views via three public consultations on a package of proposals for reform of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The UK's new product safety framework (closing date: 23 June 2026) 2) The UK's new market surveillance and enforcement framework (closing date 23 June 2026); and 3) The Fire Safety of Domestic Upholstered Furniture (closing date 23 June 2026)
1.2	<p>The regulation of consumer product safety is a reserved matter, for which decision-making has not been delegated by Parliament to the Northern Ireland Assembly. The responsible Department is the Office of Product Safety and Standards which sits within the Department of Business and Trade.</p>
1.3	<p>Under the Windsor Framework, Northern Ireland applies relevant EU rules relating to the safety of consumer products being placed on the NI market. The Council's perspective therefore reflects that any proposed reforms to the UK wide regime should be carried out in a way that safeguards both the UK and EU markets while ensuring public safety.</p>
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	<p>The Committee is recommended to approve the draft responses to the three above consultations as attached in Appendices (1), (2) and (3), for submission to The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS)</p>
3.0	Main Report
	Consultation on the UK's new product safety framework (Appendix 1):
3.1	<p>The existing product safety framework is based on the General Product Safety Regulations 2005, which is overlaid with specific Regulations for certain product sectors. The way consumers purchase products has evolved and there have been many instances of dangerous products being sold to UK consumers, often online, resulting in serious harm.</p>
3.2	<p>The need for a new core framework was identified by the UK Government's Product Safety Review in 2023, and endorsed by Parliament in passing the Product Regulation and Metrology Act 2025.</p>
3.3	<p>This consultation proposes a new, modernised and enhanced framework, giving consumers confidence that what they buy will be safe – thereby supporting growth and giving businesses incentives to invest by providing a level playing field, with clearer responsibilities and a more consistent and streamlined set of regulations.</p>
3.4	<p>The proposals are grouped into the following themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Getting the basics right 2. Accountability throughout the supply chain 3. A new approach to product information 4. Supporting enforcement activity
3.5	<p>The new core product safety framework will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • require proactive action from everyone in the supply chain to protect consumers • reflect modern products and supply chains, • capitalise on the opportunities new technology has provided for both businesses and consumers,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support delivery of the government's Regulation Action Plan
3.6	<p>A draft response to the consultation has been prepared which indicates broad support for the proposals, however comments are provided in respect of products that may be used both by consumers and within the workplace and the need for clear statutory boundaries or joint guidance between OPSS, local authorities and Health & safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI).</p>
	<p>Consultation on the UK's new core product regulation, market surveillance and enforcement framework (Appendix 2):</p>
3.7	<p>There are over 150 pieces of product safety and legal metrology legislation covering a diverse range of products and technical requirements. The Product Safety Review in 2023 identified challenges presented by fragmented and overlapping enforcement powers, with multiple laws often applying to a single product. This complexity makes swift and consistent action difficult for relevant authorities and can cause delay and confusion for businesses. Concerns were also raised about an over-reliance on criminal offences for breaches and called for a more flexible, proportionate approach to enforcement.</p>
3.8	<p>The Government has committed to reforms that will consolidate enforcement powers, introduce civil monetary penalties as an alternative to criminal prosecution, and ensure the system meets the challenges of modern supply chains and emerging technologies. The goal is to create a more coherent suite of enforcement powers, together with better data sharing opportunities, to improve efficiency and use resources to the best effect.</p>
3.9	<p>A draft response to the consultation has been prepared which indicates broad support for the proposals, however comments are provided in respect of civil monetary penalties and the introduction of cost recovery models along with associated resource implications.</p>
	<p>Consultation on the Fire Safety of Domestic Upholstered Furniture (Appendix 3) :</p>
3.10	<p>This consultation seeks views on important reforms to how to regulate the fire safety of domestic upholstered furniture. It follows the UK Government's policy paper The Fire Safety of Domestic Upholstered Furniture published in January 2025, in which the Government committed to move forward with reform plans and work with stakeholders to find resolutions to some of longstanding challenges in this sector.</p>
3.11	<p>The proposals reflect the policy aim to maintain a high level of fire safety while meaningfully reducing chemical flame-retardant use. The proposals reflect stakeholder engagement and evidence gathering undertaken by OPSS over a number of years. The Government will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce new furniture fire safety requirements based on a smoulder test. 2. Put in place pragmatic testing solutions to facilitate innovation. 3. Make proportionate scope adjustments.
3.12	<p>The proposed policy remains subject to review and may change as a result of the evidence and views provided by stakeholders in response to the consultation.</p>
3.13	<p>A draft response to the consultation has been prepared which indicates broad support for the proposals, however comments are provided in respect of the unique situation of NI having to be aligned to both EU and UK markets and legislative requirements.</p>
	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p>
3.14	<p>The Councils regulatory functions in relation to consumer product safety are covered within existing service budgets. Market surveillance work in relation to the safety of imported consumer products arriving through Belfast Port is also supported through the OPSS Ports and Borders grant funding programme, previously approved by P&C Committee in August 2023.</p>

3.15	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.0	Appendices -
	<p>Appendix 1: Response to the consultation on the UK's new product safety framework</p> <p>Appendix 2: Response to the consultation on the UK's new core product regulation market surveillance and enforcement framework</p> <p>Appendix 3: Response to the consultation on the Fire Safety of Domestic Upholstered Furniture</p>