

# Agenda Item 13



LINCOLNSHIRE WASTE PARTNERSHIP

6 July 2017

<b>SUBJECT :</b>	<b>PACKAGING</b>
<b>REPORT BY:</b>	<b>LISA FOSTER - LINCOLNSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL</b>
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## **Background Information**

Trading Standards are responsible for enforcing the Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations 2015, with the main provisions of these regulations being that:

- Packaging volume and weight should be the minimum adequate to maintain the safety and hygiene for the packed product and for customer acceptance
- Packaging shall be designed to permit its reuse and recovery
- Noxious and hazardous substances shall be minimised

Back in 2008, a dedicated Packaging Team was established by Lincolnshire County Council Trading Standards to tackle the issue of excessive packaging. Set up with financial support from the County Council's Waste Department, the Team was fully operational from September 2008 to March 2011.

During the life of the Packaging Project, the Energy from Waste plant was still at the planning and commissioning stage and household waste was, in the main, either recycled or sent to landfill, with the Council facing a large landfill tax each year if targets weren't met. By using the legislation as leverage, the Packaging Team aimed to educate and inform businesses and consumers alike, to consider the implications of excess packaging and use the necessary enforcement tools to help ensure compliance.

To promote the Trading Standards Packaging Team, the Pack It In! Campaign was developed. In partnership with waste services, the message was spread across the County to make consumers more aware of excessive packaging on the products that they purchased and to encourage them to challenge and report any products they felt were over packaged. The Team aimed to help and support businesses in Lincolnshire to minimise the amount of packaging used and to encourage the use of recyclable/recycled materials.

During the project, complaints about excessive packaging to Lincolnshire Trading Standards Service increased and a number of national companies were contacted requesting the technical documentation for their packaging. In the majority of cases, the companies involved worked with the team towards changing their packaging and made substantial savings in the process.

Since the project ended in March 2011, the Trading Standards Service has seen a considerable decline in the numbers of Trading Standards Officers and resources, including its budget. Complaints about excessive packaging have reduced greatly and without the additional funding from the waste department, it is no longer a priority for the Service.

However, one area of the Service where the need to provide advice on packaging could arise is if one of our Primary Authority businesses requested it. A Primary Authority business pays an annual fee to the Service to provide them with 'assured' advice and therefore, if a request for business advice on packaging was made, then the Service would be obliged to respond accordingly. Alternatively, a business can 'pay as go' for advice, and again this is another occasion advice on packaging would be given.

When risk assessed against some of the other areas of trading standards work such as protecting vulnerable people from rogue trading and scams and ensuring unsafe goods, including illicit alcohol and tobacco are removed from the marketplace, the service no longer has the resources to deal with packaging as a strategic priority.

### **Recommendation**

The Lincolnshire Waste Partnership is recommended to note the past progress made and that without continuing resources, there are higher service priorities for Trading Standards to manage.