

Report on	Funding offer from Department of Business Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) 2023-2024
Date of Meeting	5th July 2023
Reporting Officer	Kieran Gordon, Assistant Director Health, Leisure & Wellbeing
Contact Officer	Melanie Patterson, Environmental Health Service Manager

Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
	No	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To inform Council of a potential funding opportunity for the Environmental Health service area from the OPSS for 'The Capacity & Capability Building Programme in Northern Ireland: Non-Food Products 2023/24'. Funding is for the period 1 st April 2023 – 31 st March 2024.
2.0	Background
2.1	The Office for Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) was created in January 2018 to deliver consumer protection and to support business confidence, productivity, and growth. They are the overarching body for all aspects of Product Safety for which the Councils Environmental Health service has enforcement responsibility.
2.2	From 2018, OPSS, the national regulator for all consumer products, has worked with district councils in Northern Ireland to enable them to undertake market surveillance (sampling, complaint investigation etc.) and provide advice and support to local businesses regarding product safety responsibilities. This has included a grant funding arrangement either made directly to Council or through a Service Level Agreement with a lead Council.
2.3	Previously in February 2023, Members at the Development Committee resolved to accept a similar funding award for the programme that covered the 1 st July 2022 – 31 st March 2023 period (minute reference: D030/23). Council therefore achieved grant income of £55,000 to cover eligible expenditure for that period.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	In June 2023, the Office of Product Safety and Standards (OPSS) issued an offer of grant funding to each individual District Council for the period 1 st April 2023 – 31 st March 2024.
3.2	The purpose of the grant programme is to further support District Councils in Northern Ireland to build capacity and capability to ensure the safety of consumers following a similar programme awarded for the period 1 st July 2022 – 31 st March 2023. It funds targeted and prioritised regulatory activity on non-food consumer products as part of the OPSS's approach to ensuring there is robust market surveillance across the UK.
3.3	The funding may be used for a range of activity on non-food products, and includes work to: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • build on previous product safety capacity and capability building work. • ensure access to enforcement equipment and facilities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide advice and support to local businesses to meet their obligations under product safety legislation for importing and appropriate labelling/marketing of goods • define work processes • develop officers' understanding of local supply chains and their associated risks • ensure adequate prioritisation of effort and resource against OPSS policy and national regulatory interests • ad hoc requests for case studies or other additional information.
3.4	The grant funding agreement (offering a maximum amount of up to £55,000) can be used for eligible expenditure from the 1 st April 2023 – 31 st March 2024 (Appendix A). The funding for relevant activities undertaken during this period will be paid directly to Council.
3.5	It is expected that District Councils will report to the OPSS on delivery of the activities, through for example, the provision of information on inputs to relevant databases; engagement with businesses and outcomes; submission of records of activity; and review meetings at the end of the grant funding year.
3.6	If accepted, the funding will be drawn down based on the resource allocated to complete the specified activities. This would include areas of work included with the Council's Consumer Protection 2023/2024 work-plan including a focus on ensuring that consumer goods produced and/or on sale in the District are safe and also to provide advice and guidance to manufacturers, distributors and retailer to comply with the relevant legislation and guidance. The funding is up to a maximum of £55,000 and will be utilised in the main to offset the salary associated with additional Environmental Health Officer time.
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	Financial: Up to a maximum of £55,000 in grant to be received by MUDC subject to eligible claim expenditure before deadline of 31 st March 2024.
	Human: Officer time to undertake required activities. Recruitment of additional officer(s) where relevant in line with grant offer – no additional cost to Council.
	Risk Management: Considered in line with Council Policies and Procedures.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.
	Rural Needs Implications: None anticipated at this juncture.
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	It is recommended that Council accepts the offer of funding from OPSS (up to a maximum of £55,000) in relation to activities undertaken in 2023/2024, and if accepted, that it be recommended to the Chief Executive that he operate his Delegated Authority Resolve under the Scheme of Delegation for Senior Officers to sign and return the funding agreement between Mid Ulster District Council and the Department of Business Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix A - Grant funding agreement from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's Office for Product Safety and Standards