Reform of Street Trading and Pedlary Laws

With regard to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills proposals to make significant amendments to councils' powers to manage their streets to the benefit of the public and businesses, I would make the following points.

We hear regular complaints about the activities of street traders forcefully selling their products door to door, which causes a great deal of anxiety and stress to the elderly and other vulnerable people. Fortunately in our area, Derbyshire County Council through their Trusted Trader scheme and Safer Derbyshire initiative are working hard in the county to provide some protection for residents and particularly the vulnerable.

There is also the impact that removal of regulation will have on local businesses. At the time when we are doing everything possible to encourage customers and residents to high streets and town centres, the potential for an increasing number of pedlars, operating much more freely, has the potential to undermine much of that good work.

It is important that councils are able to effectively manage their town centres and streets to encourage economic growth, while still protecting their residents and visitors from fraud and nuisance. While councils and the police will retain powers to tackle illegal activity, such as selling counterfeit goods, harassment and fraud, councils will be unable to address ongoing resident and business concerns about street trader and pedlar activity in their communities.

The proposals by BIS fail to recognise the unease that can be associated with itinerant business, which has been exemplified in recent years by concerns about face to face fundraisers and scrap metal collection. Residents and businesses suffer from the cumulative impact of such activity and often want their council to respond to their concerns.

I strongly believe that further thought needs to be given to what measures can be made easily available to councils to continue to retain control of both of door to door cold call sales and also on street trading other than in a recognised market.

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