

Notice of Motion July 2026: Zero Tolerance on Dodgy Shops

In the names of A Arif, N Bayley, C Boles, A Chaudhry, U Farooq, E FitzGerald, R Gold, D Green, S Haroon, M Hayes, J Hook, C Hunt, B Ibrahim, G McGill, C Morris, E O'Brien, T Pilkington, A Quinn, D Quinn, T Rafiq, M Rahimov, I Rizvi, M Rubinstein, L Ryder, L Smith, J A Southworth, J Southworth, G Staples-Jones, T Tariq, S Thorpe, S Walmsley

This Council Notes

1. This Labour Council is investing in every town centre across the borough, putting nearly £100m into regeneration projects to support our highstreets and local businesses. However, residents are concerned by the continued national proliferation of so called 'dodgy shops'.
2. Shops like these are widely reported to be fronts for money laundering, often failing to comply with regulations, and blighting our high street by crowding out genuine shops and small businesses.
3. Such businesses are often associated with criminality that may include anti-social behaviour, theft and violent crime, drug supply and modern slavery.
4. Recent studies from the Chartered Institute for Trading Standards shows that up to ½ of mini-marts and vape retailers, along with a third of 'American candy stores' are involved in illicit activities.
5. This council recognises the strong working relationship between the council, Trading Standards, Greater Manchester Police and other enforcement agencies - which has successfully closed a number of illicit stores around the borough, including seizing goods worth around £40,000 from a property in Bury earlier this year.
6. However, more needs to be done to crack down on illicit stores and improve our highstreets.
7. This council notes additional powers and changes brought forward by the Labour Government, recruiting 75 new officers across forces including GMP, an additional £20m to fund a specialist cell in the National Crime Agency, additional funding for trading standards, as well as extending temporary closure powers.

This council believes

1. Thriving town centres depend on legitimate businesses operating on a level playing field.
2. So called “Dodgy shops” engaged in criminality, money laundering, the sale of illicit goods or other unlawful practices damage public confidence, harm local economies and contribute to the decline of high streets.
3. Additional powers from central government, as well as a focused council response, should be utilised to close businesses that are operating unlawfully.

This council resolves to

1. **Continue working closely with Greater Manchester Police, Trading Standards, HMRC and other relevant agencies** to identify and act against businesses engaged in unlawful activity, utilising new powers to increase the rate of successful interventions, closures and prosecutions.
2. **Convene a borough-wide summit**, bringing together Council Officers, Trading Standards, Greater Manchester Police, Local Members, business leaders and other enforcement agencies to develop a borough-wide coordinated strategy to tackle illicit stores.
3. **Adopt and publish a “Zero Tolerance” approach to illicit trading**, ensuring where businesses are found to be operating unlawfully, the Council will work with partner agencies to pursue swift enforcement and seek the strongest sanctions available under the law.
4. **Request a briefing to all members within six months** setting out the scale of the issue across the borough, actions taken to date, outcomes achieved and any further measures required to protect local high streets and legitimate businesses.
5. **Reaffirm this Council’s commitment to supporting genuine local business** and publicly support and utilise the enhanced enforcement powers granted to Bury, ensuring Bury’s town centres remain safe, vibrant and welcoming places for residents, visitors and investors.