

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HOUSE OF COMMONS
OFFICIAL REPORT

Sixth Delegated Legislation Committee

DRAFT CONSUMER RIGHTS ACT 2015
(ENFORCEMENT) (AMENDMENT) ORDER 2023

Wednesday 5 July 2023

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The Committee consisted of the following Members:

Chair: ESTHER McVEY

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| † Blomfield, Paul (<i>Sheffield Central</i>) (Lab) | † Malthouse, Kit (<i>North West Hampshire</i>) (Con) |
| † Bonnar, Steven (<i>Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill</i>) (SNP) | † Moore, Robbie (<i>Keighley</i>) (Con) |
| † Byrne, Liam (<i>Birmingham, Hodge Hill</i>) (Lab) | † Oppong-Asare, Abena (<i>Erith and Thamesmead</i>) (Lab) |
| † Creasy, Stella (<i>Walthamstow</i>) (Lab/Co-op) | † Stephenson, Andrew (<i>Lord Commissioner of His Majesty's Treasury</i>) |
| † Crosbie, Virginia (<i>Ynys Môn</i>) (Con) | Timpson, Edward (<i>Eddisbury</i>) (Con) |
| † Davies, Gareth (<i>Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury</i>) | † Twist, Liz (<i>Blaydon</i>) (Lab) |
| † Drummond, Mrs Flick (<i>Meon Valley</i>) (Con) | † Whitley, Mick (<i>Birkenhead</i>) (Lab) |
| † Howell, Paul (<i>Sedgefield</i>) (Con) | Stella-Maria Gabriel, <i>Committee Clerk</i> |
| † Jones, Mr David (<i>Chwyd West</i>) (Con) | |
| † Knight, Sir Greg (<i>East Yorkshire</i>) (Con) | † attended the Committee |

Sixth Delegated Legislation Committee

Wednesday 5 July 2023

[ESTHER McVEY *in the Chair*]

Draft Consumer Rights Act 2015 (Enforcement) (Amendment) Order 2023

9.25 am

The Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury (Gareth Davies): I beg to move,

That the Committee has considered the draft Consumer Rights Act 2015 (Enforcement) (Amendment) Order 2023.

It is a great pleasure to see you in the Chair, Ms McVey. I thank right hon. and hon. Members for attending. This draft statutory instrument will enable trading standards to exercise their investigative powers fully to check compliance with the Tobacco Products (Traceability and Security Features) Regulations 2019.

Smoking is the single leading cause of preventable death and disease in the UK, accounting for approximately 76,000 deaths each year. Half of all smokers will die as a result of smoking-related illnesses. It is estimated that smoking costs the NHS in England alone £2.6 billion per year. The Government are committed to addressing the harms of tobacco. In April, the Department of Health and Social Care announced a package of measures intended to cut smoking rates, including expanding access to new treatments, rolling out a national incentive scheme to help pregnant women quit, and using a new approach to health warnings.

Alongside that approach, His Majesty's Revenue and Customs has a role to play, first, in charging duty on tobacco products to deter smoking and to raise revenue to cover the cost to the NHS. Theory and evidence alike show that high duty rates reduce the affordability of tobacco products and so support the Government's public health objective to reduce smoking prevalence. Meanwhile, revenues from tobacco duty were approximately £10 billion in 2022-23.

HMRC has another key role in tackling the illicit market. One of the main challenges to dealing with smoking prevalence, aside from the addictive nature of nicotine, is the illegal trade in tobacco products, which increases both the affordability and the health risks for smokers. The evasion of tobacco duty also has significant negative impacts on the economy, public health, legitimate businesses and overall public safety. It cheats the Exchequer of revenues and blunts the effectiveness of tobacco duty as a tool for reducing smoking.

The tobacco track and trace system introduced in 2019 helps to prevent the illegal trade in tobacco products by making it more difficult for smugglers and counterfeiters to operate.

Sir Greg Knight (East Yorkshire) (Con): May I refer the Minister to the explanatory memorandum, which his office has kindly produced? Paragraph 7.6 states:

"The provisions in the Tobacco Products Duty Act 1979 provide powers to make regulations to issue penalties of up to £10,000; to seize product involved in a contravention of applicable

law and to exclude retailers from the TT&T registration system, therefore restricting their ability to buy duty paid tobacco for retail purposes."

Is there, or will there be, a right of appeal should there be mitigating circumstances in a particular case? For example, if a rogue employee brought in the contraband, but the owner of the corner store were not aware, it would seem very unfair to prevent that store from being able to sell legitimate cigarettes in future.

Gareth Davies: My right hon. Friend makes an important point and he is right to seek clarification. My understanding is that, yes, it is right that people may appeal. All penalties are subject to review. There is a process of appeal to HMRC should that circumstance that he describes happen.

As I was pointing out, the 2019 track and trace system provides a way to verify the authenticity of tobacco products and ensures that they have legally procured distribution. The tobacco products are tracked from the point of manufacture to the point of retail, and at all stages in between. Failure to comply with the requirements of the tobacco track and trace regulations in the UK may result in an issue of financial penalties, the seizure of tobacco products found at non-compliant premises, and the exclusion of retailers from the TT&T registration system.

These sanctions are part of a Government commitment to introduce new anti-evasion measures. In 2019, our election manifesto contained a pledge to consolidate and introduce new anti-evasion measures. The measures I have outlined today achieve that. This statutory instrument will bolster the Government's efforts to tackle the illicit tobacco market and reduce tobacco duty fraud. I therefore commend the order to the House.

9.30 am

Abena Oppong-Asare (Erith and Thamesmead) (Lab): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairship, Ms McVey, and to be with Committee members. As the Minister set out eloquently, this instrument amends the Consumer Rights Act 2015 to allow trading standards to exercise its powers fully under the Tobacco Products (Traceability and Security Features) (Amendment) Regulations 2023, statutory instrument 2023/606.

His Majesty's official Opposition share the Government's desire to crack down on the organised crime gangs that dominate the illegal market in tobacco products. This illicit trade is partly the product of the cost of living crisis, which is forcing people to seek out savings and driving them into the arms of counterfeiters, smugglers and pedlars of stolen goods. It is also partly a product of high duty rates on cigarettes and other tobacco products. However, those duties have had a positive impact by reducing the number of people who start smoking, and increasing the numbers seeking to cut down and quit. Alongside high-level policy such as the smoking ban introduced by Labour in the Health Act 2006, those duties play a part in reducing the harms caused by tobacco and can be a useful tool in the promotion of public health.

We want stiffer penalties for those who seek to avoid paying such duties, and commensurate powers for trading standards to tackle those who procure, supply, distribute illicit tobacco and profit from the illegal trade. We will

not oppose the measure, but I have some helpful questions for the Minister to address, and perhaps take up with officials.

First, the measure has its genesis in the 2020 spring Budget, and a consultation was launched in December that year, so why has it taken until July 2023 for this instrument to come before the Committee? Either this measure is urgent and necessary, or it is not, so why the delay? The Minister may have further information about the background.

Secondly, the Minister refers to the £1 million made available in the 2020 Budget for trading standards' anti-illicit tobacco projects. The Committee will forgive my cynicism, but I am always wary of Ministers brandishing suspiciously round figures. How was the figure of £1 million arrived at, and does the Minister believe it an adequate budget to tackle a vast, violent and invisible network of smugglers, robbers and street-level distributors?

I can help the Minister a little by sharing the view of the Chartered Trading Standards Institute. It says that there are half as many trading standards officers in local government as there were a decade ago. I am sure the Minister is aware of that. It reports that 2,500 highly skilled trading standards professionals have been lost. Do we have the men and women to do the job?

Finally, what measures are in place to review and assess the efficiency of this policy—for example, the level of fines? The Minister knows that for organised crime, fines are often viewed as a business expense. Far from being punitive, they are priced in, as vast potential profits are to be made. It is often the small fry who get caught and fined, while the crime bosses get away with it. What processes are there to review and assess the instrument that the Committee is being asked to sign off?

We will not vote against the measures, but I hope that the Minister finds my questions helpful and that he will answer them in the same constructive spirit in which they were asked.

9.35 am

Kit Malthouse (North West Hampshire) (Con): It is always a pleasure to see you in command, Ms McVey.

This is a seemingly innocuous and small slip of paper, but I want to raise a number of issues about which the Committee needs to be aware. First, anybody who is familiar with schedule 5 of the Consumer Rights Act 2015 will know that the implications of entering trading standards into the schedule can and will be profound. The schedule contains some draconian powers—powers that are now to be bestowed on trading standards—which have caused alarm pretty much ever since Gordon Brown amalgamated Customs and Excise with the Inland Revenue.

As a scholar of Daphne du Maurier, Ms McVey, you will know that the excise men, as they used to be known, have historically, since 300 or 400 years ago, had significant powers to deal with smuggling. With that came a culture in the then Customs and Excise of a slightly brutal approach towards their customer base. They were well used to smashing their way into warehouses without a warrant and could demand all sorts of documentation without any cause for suspicion. I am afraid that the amalgamation of Customs and Excise with the Revenue meant that that culture, which was a little bit like

Japanese knotweed, infected the whole of what is now HMRC, to the extent that we do not now see a professional organisation that sits down with other professionals in the accountancy or legal profession and decides what is due. Instead, we see more of a brutal, demanding and aggressive organisation.

Unfortunately, through the schedule, the powers have been spread to other organisations, such as district councils and the Competition and Markets Authority, and we are now giving those powers to trading standards. For example, schedule 5 includes the power for an enforcement or investigation organisation to enter premises without a warrant. There is no requirement to go to a judge and offer any evidence as to why the organisation needs to enter those premises; it can just enter. The only restriction is that those premises, as I try to remind myself from the Act, cannot be wholly or largely residential, but I am not sure who makes that decision.

As my right hon. Friend the Member for East Yorkshire said, an awful lot of corner shop owners will be affected by this legislation, many of whom live above the shop, as my great-grandparents did in Harrogate. The question of who decides whether that premise—that corner shop—is largely or wholly residential will be an interesting one for the enforcement authorities to consider. I can see situations where they may well smash their way into a corner shop and there is a perfectly innocent family sleeping upstairs who will be traumatised by their entry. This is a draconian set of powers.

Similarly, there is the ability to demand documentation without any suspicion or recourse to law whatsoever. Much of it can be suspicionless, as far as I can tell from the Act. I ask colleagues to be under no illusion: this seemingly innocuous bit of paper is actually conferring significant powers on trading standards and we should not underestimate that.

Sir Greg Knight: Could not the concerns that my right hon. Friend raises be addressed by the Government in the guidance they will issue in due course?

Kit Malthouse: They certainly could be. This bit of legislation will go through today and I hope the Government will take those things into account. The explanatory memorandum states that respondents to the consultation were in favour, but I am not sure about the wider group. For example, I would be interested to know the view of the Association of Convenience Stores on the wider acquisition of the powers and the fact that they are being given to trading standards. My right hon. Friend is quite right; that could be addressed in the guidance. As I say, I want nobody to be under any illusions about what we are doing here.

Secondly, while this is an attack on the sale of illicit tobacco at the front end, I would be interested to know what the Minister is doing at the most vulnerable point for the smuggling of illicit tobacco: the border. We are seeing large amounts of illicit tobacco coming through the post, for example. It is mailed in packages from overseas through fast parcel delivery, often through the Royal Mail warehouse at Langley, near Heathrow.

I do not know whether colleagues know this, but that warehouse takes in 100% of overseas mail coming by Royal Mail route, and the ability to scan parcels quickly there is very restricted. We have never invested in proper parcel scanning at that facility, and those who would

[Kit Malthouse]

smuggle these goods—which, of course, can now be bought online and shipped from overseas—recognise the weakness in that route. I would love to see some of the £10 billion we are raising from tobacco every year invested in enforcement at the border, rather than it all being hived off to subsidise other activity. If we were really serious about stopping this trade, we would concentrate on the most vulnerable point, which is this funnel at the border where we could detect a lot of it.

Thirdly, this is yet another step in the phoney war against smoking that is taking place in this country. We never take what strikes me as the brave step of doing something imaginative to phase out smoking. We nip, we tuck, we chisel away, and we try to scratch the surface. We make life difficult for often marginal businesses such as corner shops, which are almost regulated out of existence now—they all have to have sliding doors in front of cigarettes and cannot display them in certain places—and yet we are not brave enough to do what other countries have done, which is to progressively raise the age at which people can buy cigarettes.

If we did that year after year, in time, only the over-60s or over-70s would be able to buy cigarettes, and we would have effectively phased them out in a generation. I do not understand why successive Governments have not been brave enough to do that, given the appalling statistics that the Minister mentioned. I speak as somebody who lost two grandparents and my grandmother's twin sister to smoking-related cancer; both twins died of smoking-related cancer. I have seen the effects for myself, and I wish we could be braver about it and do something sensible, rather than running this phoney skirmish war that drags in so many innocent, struggling businesses.

The final point I want to raise is about the impact on local government. As the hon. Member for Erith and Thamesmead said, trading standards is not what it was. It is hard enough for consumers to get the attention of trading standards on anything these days. All our postbags will have been filled with letters from people who are frustrated by the fact that trading standards is not addressing their issue.

The explanatory memorandum says that there will be no impact on local government, stating:

“There is no, or no significant, impact on the public sector.”

If this measure is going to be effective, and if we are going to have all these inspections and regulation, surely this must fall within the additional burdens doctrine. Greater capacity must be given to trading standards to deal with this issue. If not, what part of its work is going to give? Where will the activity come from that the Minister now expects to be expended on illegal tobacco? We cannot just expect trading standards to expend ever more activity for the same number of heads and bodies and hours worked. If the Government really want this to be effective—and I have to say, I have my doubts—where will the extra capacity come from?

9.44 am

Steven Bonnar (Coatbridge, Chryston and Bellshill) (SNP): It is nice to see you in the Chair this morning, Ms McVey. We in the Scottish National party support this amendment to schedule 5 to the Consumer Rights Act 2015, as set out in the instrument. Speaking more

broadly, we want to ensure that the protections that UK consumers became used to under EU law are not watered down in any way, as this Government seem intent on doing. That is why we in the SNP have tabled an amendment to the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Bill that would ensure with respect to a customer's right to redress that consumer protection was not reduced from the level provided by the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008.

9.45 am

Stella Creasy (Walthamstow) (Lab/Co-op): It is a pleasure belatedly to serve under your chairmanship for the first time, Ms McVey. I am possibly going to shock the Committee in many ways by saying that I agree with much of what the right hon. Member for North West Hampshire has said. He and I might come from different ends of the political spectrum, but we share an interest in local regulation and in doing that in a proportionate fashion, because we have seen at first hand what happens when it does not work.

I am possibly the only person here who served on the Committee that considered the Consumer Rights Act 2015, in that halcyon era in which we in this place were looking at good regulation, rather than having no regulation at all. I want to ask the Minister a set of questions that follow up what the right hon. Gentleman was talking about, and I agree with him that there was a good reason for not including trading standards on the list of bodies that were to have powers under that legislation.

At the time, we felt that the powers were quite strong, and we recognised that the comparator bodies—the others that had the powers, such as the Competition and Markets Authority and the Financial Conduct Authority—were about whole markets. This statutory instrument is very much about a local power and local trading standards. Indeed, it now looks as though trading standards will have stronger powers than local police forces to do searches.

There might be good reasons for that owing to the nature of the trade that trading standards is trying to tackle, and I want to come to that subject, but the Minister did not say anything about, for example, what has been done to monitor the use of the powers over the past eight years. Will he say what we know about when there have been raids, what happened and how the use of the powers is monitored? The difference between market-wide powers and locally applied powers could be very strong.

The next point I want to follow up is the capacity of trading standards to make good on this measure. It is one thing to confer powers, but quite another to have the people to implement them. We know that spending on trading standards fell by 52% between 2009 and 2019. In some areas of the country, there are no trading standards officers at all. Liverpool Council, for example, no longer has a trading standards department because something had to give considering how little money the Government have given the council to run services.

Most local authorities have just one qualified trading standards officer, but if we are to give people stronger powers than the police, we want them to be qualified people who understand the remit and understand why they are being given the powers. Again, I ask the Minister to say something about whether additional funding is going to be given. If this measure generates the impact

that we want it to generate in tackling the illegal cigarette trade, revenue will be raised that could go into trading standards.

My colleagues in trading standards do a fantastic job trying to tackle the crimes that, after all, are the crimes that most of our constituents come to us about most of the time, and they would want to see more investment in trading standards. A £16 billion cut in the core revenues of trading standards means that there will not be the officers to use these powers, and certainly not officers trained to use the powers sensitively, unless there is investment.

There is a final point on which I would like to hear more from the Minister, which is the trade we are trying to tackle. We know that 21% of cigarettes sold in the UK are illicit. This is an international trade—gangs, funding and all sorts of criminal activities in our communities. Putting trading standards officers on the frontline of tackling that trade is a bold move owing to the nature of the people with whom they might be interacting. What conversations has the Minister had with the National Crime Agency?

Kit Malthouse: There is an unproven statement that much of the trade is organised crime, but I know from my time at the Home Office that this is a low-margin business. I am not convinced that the volume is coming through via organised crime; I think it is coming through in fast parcels—small packages from overseas. That is why I am so keen to see some kind of intervention at the border, and I worry slightly that the more we talk about organised crime and gangs, the more the effort gets put in that direction, whereas a huge volume is coming through orders on the internet.

Stella Creasy: We were so close to having unanimity in this place about the nature of the challenge. I think it is both. The right hon. Gentleman says that there are small packages—I was going to ask the Minister to say a bit more about what conversations he has had with Border Force—but the Lords Justice and Home Affairs Committee investigation into the matter set out that international gangs were involved. One German-Russian gang made £50 million over several years by importing cigarettes into the UK.

We are therefore potentially asking trading standards officers to interact with very serious and dangerous people, and it is important that this House does not ask trading standards to be the blue line in our local communities. If we are to ask trading standards officers to take on this serious trade—packages might be one piece of investigation work—to enter properties and to take on organised crime, they need support. Will the Minister say more about the conversations that he has had with the National Crime Agency or Border Force about how to keep trading standards officers safe? Everybody agrees that we want to tackle this trade and everybody wants more investment in trading standards. We will all support the draft order, but I hope that the Minister understands that those of us who wrote the original legislation have some concerns about what we are asking of a service that has been stripped bare over the last 13 years.

9.51 am

Gareth Davies: Many excellent points have been raised, and I will do my best to address as many of them as possible.

First, the Labour party spokesperson, the hon. Member for Erith and Thamesmead, asked about the timing of the measure. One of the reasons for the timing of the measure is that the track and trace system that was implemented in 2019 needed time to bed in. We wanted it to get working. It was only in 2020 that we started the consultation on sanctions, and, now that the track and trace system is in place, we are in a position to execute on that.

The hon. Lady asked about the £1 million grant, which was to launch Operation CeCe. The money was provided in the 2020 Budget, and it has resulted in £7 million of illicit tobacco products coming off the streets of the UK. It has been a tremendous success, and we have now committed to extending the operation to 2025 with additional funding of £800,000.

The hon. Lady asked about resourcing, which was a common theme in the contributions of my right hon. Friend the Member for North West Hampshire and the hon. Member for Walthamstow. I will come to the powers of trading standards in a minute, but the key aim of the draft order is to change how trading standards operates with HMRC. Trading standards will gather information and refer cases to HMRC for sanctions to be administered, and HMRC will administer all the penalties. We are not giving trading standards additional powers. It is not required even to execute on the track and trace regulations. It is up to trading standards, but we are asking it to gather information that could then be provided to HMRC. That is why we feel that there is no additional burden on trading standards; if anything, much of the burden of administering the penalties is on HMRC.

The hon. Member for Erith and Thamesmead asked about the review of the policies. All policies remain under review, but HMRC and Border Force will be producing a new strategy on tackling illicit tobacco later this year, and I expect this policy and the success of Operation CeCe to form part of it.

As usual, my right hon. Friend the Member for North West Hampshire makes some incredibly insightful points that are based on his extensive experience. As I pointed out, trading standards is already covered by schedule 5 to the Consumer Rights Act. The draft order is about changing the approach to enforcement so that it is focused on track and trace. To date, it has been focused on the amount of illicit tobacco that has been found, and we have found that organisations and individuals have been holding a small amount of illicit tobacco to avoid significant penalties. The measure will change the approach so that new measures and regulations are tied to the 2019 track and trace regulations, and it will provide additional penalties and enforcement mechanisms for HMRC.

Kit Malthouse: I am no lawyer, and maybe I am reading this wrong. I acknowledge that schedule 5 already includes local weights and measures authorities. That is not necessarily the full extent of the powers of trading standards. I accept that, in legislation, it has the powers to smash its way into premises in pursuit of weights and measures issues, but it do not have those powers in anything else. My reading of the legislation is that it expands that power beyond weights and measures and into the regulation of tobacco. Its current ability to demand documents and enter without

[Kit Malthouse]

a warrant is being expanded so as to include enforcement of tobacco regulations. I do not think that that part of its work is currently included. If it were, why is the measure necessary?

Gareth Davies: This measure is necessary, first, to increase the penalty up to £10,000 for HMRC; secondly, to give trading standards the ability to share data with HMRC, which was not previously the case; and, thirdly, to shift the focus on to track and trace and away from the amount of illicit tobacco that is found. Trading standards is empowered to gather information and refer cases to HMRC for further investigation. I can write to my right hon. Friend on his specific point on weights and measures—he will forgive me for not having the same mastery of detail as him on that point. I hope the three points I mentioned clarify what we are seeking to do with this specific measure.

My right hon. Friend quite rightly asked about the border, where typically a lot of illicit tobacco enters our country. HMRC and Border Force work very closely together. As I mentioned in response to the hon. Member for Erith and Thamesmead, a new strategy will be published this year to outline how HMRC and Border Force interact and what more they can do to tackle illicit tobacco coming into our country. I can tell my right hon. Friend that 8 million cigarettes were seized between 2015 and 2021, and so there is a reasonably effective operation in place, but they can always do more.

Kit Malthouse: I recall that Border Force ran a competition looking for fast scanning technology. It awarded some money to a series of companies and there was some prize—I have in mind £1.5 million—for whoever could come up with this ability to whizz parcels through and scan them at speed. When I visited Langley, there were just two standard airport scanners, one of which was on the blink, for something like 1 million parcels a day, which is nuts. When he writes to us, will the Minister also update us on where that competition has got to?

Gareth Davies: I am very happy to do that. I am not familiar with that particular case.

The principle is right, in terms of ensuring that tobacco is tracked. We have a similar system for alcohol. The whole point of track and trace is to ensure that, from the point of manufacture to the point of sale, we are tracking and monitoring where illicit tobacco is going. We believe that will be an important way of bringing down the illicit trade that riddles our country and many countries in the world.

My right hon. Friend also asked about tackling smoking. That is an issue that unites the whole House. We all want to see smoking rates come down. He may describe the measures we have taken to date as piecemeal—I do not want to put words in his mouth—but they have had success. We have a prevalence rate of 13%, which means that 13% of our country smoke. That is lower than many countries and has come down quite significantly in recent years.

Some of the measures we are taking are based on the Khan review, which recommended the use of vaping to bring people off tobacco smoking. We are providing 1 million vaping kits for those who wish to come off smoking. Duty, as I said in my opening remarks, is a key way in which we can disincentivise the smoking of tobacco. We can always go further and I welcome the challenge.

Kit Malthouse: I mean, sliding doors are bonkers, right?

Gareth Davies: I very much welcome the challenge, and I can imagine that my right hon. Friend will be right there with us as we announce further measures in the Department of Health and Social Care.

Finally, the hon. Member for Walthamstow asked about the powers. I hope that I have addressed many of those points already, in terms of trading standards not gathering additional powers but seeking to work more closely on data sharing with HMRC, which will have the burden of executing and administering the additional penalties that we are able to operate today.

The hon. Lady quite rightly asked how we are keeping trading standards officers safe. We are in constant discussions with Border Force. We have not had discussions with the National Crime Agency, but I will write to her on what discussions have taken place across Government. The safety of trading standards officers is not directly related or relevant to this order, but the hon. Lady is right to raise it at any opportunity, because we want those who are gathering information with a view to prosecution and penalty execution to be as safe as possible. I expect them to work closely with local police officers wherever they deem a danger to exist.

The sale of illicit tobacco undermines public health policy by offering a cheaper option to those who might otherwise see price as a reason to stop smoking. It damages legitimate businesses and makes tobacco more accessible to children. The evasion of tobacco duty also has a significant impact on our economy and a negative impact on public health, legitimate businesses and overall public safety. It cheats the Exchequer of revenues of billions of pounds each year, and it blunts the effectiveness of tobacco duty as a tool to reduce smoking. This amendment to the Consumer Rights Act is important in tackling the trade in illicit tobacco. These changes will facilitate the UK Government in their objectives to protect public health, raise revenue and combat organised crime.

I hope that the Committee has found today's sitting informative. I am certainly grateful for the interventions made and speeches contributed. I commend the order to the Committee.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved,

That the Committee has considered the draft Consumer Rights Act 2015 (Enforcement) (Amendment) Order 2023.

10.2 am

Committee rose.