

Informal meeting – Scrap Metal Dealers

Tuesday 9 February 2016

Committee members met informally with representatives from the scrap metal industry on Tuesday 9th February 2016 to discuss their views on the Scrap Metal Dealers Bill.

The need for a Scrap Metal Dealers Licence

The representatives informed members that additional licencing scrap metal dealers was unnecessary as there was already in place a thorough and expensive regime for getting a waste management licence. Waste carriers are also required to have a licence.

The representatives emphasised that the voluntary Code of Conduct was put together after a period of 18 months of consultation, including 7 meetings with the industry. 48 Companies have now signed up to the Code and this represented approximately 90% of the industry. They noted that since the Code of Conduct was introduced in 2012, metal theft has come down by 49%.

They stated that they believed that the industry was in favour of making the Code of Conduct mandatory; and that this would make a better basis for legislation. It was their view that, in order to make the Code mandatory, this would be the responsibility of DOJ, not DOE.

Cashless payments

The representatives noted that due to changes proposed by the Department the only issue left in the Bill is the financial provision; and that if NIEA were to be responsible for financial transactions then it would need to tighten up issues around confidentiality.

They stated that due to the size of Northern Ireland and its land border with the Republic of Ireland it should be treated as a special case.

They were concerned that if cash transactions were banned completely then trade could go underground.

They were of the opinion that if the Bill proceeded in its current form, it might actually increase cases of metal theft

They also had concerns that a lot of regular customers were only making small transactions and a move to a completely cashless system would cause problems for these customers.

They stated that the Industry had no issue with the introduction of cash free payment for very large transactions.

Exemptions

The representatives raised concerns about businesses currently operating using exemptions, which they believed were never designed to be used to run businesses. They welcomed the Department's intention to review exemptions.

There was discussion regarding the Certificate of Lawful Use; and that the industry wanted level playing field.