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Visits help regulators and businesses work better together

Regulators from Cornwall Council are spending time in local businesses to learn more about the pressures they face. The initiative aims to help local regulators better understand the needs of Cornwall's business community and come up with new improved ways of working together.

The initiative is part of Better Business for All – a project led by the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

Better Business for All will take a business-led approach to improving regulation and show how working with regulators can save businesses time and money, improve competitiveness and help them grow.

It will also encourage more businesses in Cornwall to seek advice from regulators without fear of enforcement activity.

Cornish bakery firm, Malcolm Barnecutt, was one of the businesses to take part in the initiative. Director Andrew Hallett said: *"The officers who visited our bakery spent two hours discussing all areas of regulation and listening to our concerns. It's hard for them to appreciate how different businesses work and what we're up against on a day-to-day basis without spending time with us.*

We have a fantastic relationship with council regulators – they really do listen. They have moved away from being focused on prosecution to supporting businesses. This is a good way of ensuring they really understand us."

Fourteen officers from across Cornwall Council's regulatory services, including environmental health, planning, building control, fire and community safety have already taken part in visits, with more planned for the coming months.

Cornwall Fire & Rescue Service Watch Manager, Mike Tremellen, visited the Ship Inn, in Wadebridge. He said: *"Spending time with the manager and his staff brought home*

to me how much businesses are juggling at any one time. I will make more of an effort to be more specific about how long things will take when I'm next on a visit and I will also be more sensitive to the additional pressure that hosting a regulator puts on a busy pub or restaurant.

"We also had some useful feedback about the formality of the letters we issue to businesses and the fact that our communication could be more 'human' and more positive. This is something we're now reviewing in all of our teams."

Planning Officer Dan Nicholls is adapting his approach following a visit to Callestick Farm. He explained: *"There is a need for a greater level of dialogue between regulators and businesses. Following my discussions with Callestick Farm, I am now encouraging my planning colleagues to share more information and focus on seeking solutions to achieve the regulatory requirements, while also meeting the needs of a business."*

Mark Luxton, Assistant Head of Public Protection & Business Support (Environmental Health, Trading Standards and Licensing), co-ordinating regulatory services improvements across the Council, also took part in a visit to Fifteen, Watergate Bay. He said: *"The business awareness sessions provided us with a great learning opportunity, giving us new insights into how businesses work and understanding the pressures they face. This will help us enormously with our commitment to improve our business support approach."*

"I have worked as a regulatory adviser for 20 years and also found the time spent with Fifteen was useful to find out what changes to regulation they would like to see us pushing for in Cornwall."

Better Business for All will make it quicker and easier for businesses to comply with the law and will ensure that regulatory staff better understand how businesses operate and the pressures they face. Improvement plans include easier access to information, single points of contact, training for regulatory staff and lobbying Government on behalf of the business community to change legislation.

LEP Board Director Simon Tregoning said: *"Through Better Business for All, the LEP is committed to making business-led improvements to create a regulatory environment that promotes business success and provides public protection."*

"To do this, we first need to listen to businesses and find out what they need. Over the summer, we ran a survey to find out about Cornish businesses' experiences of regulation. Through this initiative, regulatory officers are able to have more in-depth discussions about the issues affecting our business community."

"All of these insights are helping us shape a better approach to regulation in Cornwall, ultimately benefitting the local economy as a whole."

Better Business for All is being managed by a steering group which includes small and large regulated businesses in Cornwall, the Federation of Small Businesses, Cornwall Chamber of Commerce, the LEP and representatives from a cross-section of regulatory services at Cornwall Council (including Environmental Health, Licensing, Trading Standards, Fire, Planning and Building Control).

Cornwall and Isles of Scilly LEP has been selected as one of just 11 early adopters of Better Business for All in the UK, a national initiative endorsed by the Better Regulation Delivery Office, part of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

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Note to editors

Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership

The Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) was launched in May 2011. Private sector-led, it is a partnership between the private and public sectors and is driving the economic strategy for the area, determining local priorities and undertaking activities to drive growth and the creation of local jobs.
www.cornwallandislesofscillylep.com

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