

## **Safer & Stronger Communities Board – report from Councillor Mehboob Khan (Chairman)**

### **Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill**

1. The Bill had its Second Reading on 10 June, which it passed without being put to the vote. It then started its committee stage in the House of Commons. The Board was invited to give oral evidence to the public bill committee on 18 June. Cllr Mehboob Khan gave evidence alongside Angela Mawdsley, an anti-social behaviour practitioner from Leeds City Council, and representatives from a number of housing organisations. Issues raised at the evidence session included the powers to tackle anti-social tenants living in private rented accommodation, how useful the community trigger would be, the lack of consultation with local authorities before the police use dispersal powers, whether there needed to be further provisions about dangerous dogs, and the use of community protection notices. Cllr Khan also stressed the importance of early intervention as a means of preventing anti-social behaviour occurring in the first place. The Board has also submitted written evidence to supplement its oral evidence and will be monitoring the clause by clause analysis of the bill by the committee to table and influence possible amendments.

### **Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013**

2. The Board hosted a fully booked conference on the new Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 in mid-June. The conference, which was chaired by the Board's Vice-Chair Cllr Joanna Spicer, was addressed by Richard Ottaway MP, who took the legislation through parliament as a private members bill, and the Board's Chair Cllr Mehboob Khan. The delegates from across England and Wales also received presentations from the Home Office and British Metal Recycling Association giving an overview of the Act, while speakers from Blackpool and Sandwell Councils, British Transport Police, Gwent Police and the Environment Agency looked in more detail at what the legislation requires councils to do. The Home Office were also able to provide details of the transitional provisions between the 1964 Act and the new one. The 2013 Act is due to come into effect on 1 October, with councils accepting applications from the 1 September. Guidance on fees and the necessary statutory regulations from the Home Office are due out in the next few weeks.

### **Horsemeat investigations**

3. The Food Standards Agency has published its final report on their handling of the horsemeat incident. The report pays tribute to the hard work of councils in providing a rapid response and undertaking thousands of sampling visits to ascertain the extent of the problem.
4. Cllr Khan subsequently met with Lord Rooker, Chairman of the Agency, to discuss the ongoing implications of contamination for those who live by certain religious tenets, such as the kosher and halal communities. Cllr Khan will also meet with David Heath MP, Minister for Agriculture, to press Government to take action to guarantee the food chain.

### **Proceeds of Crime**

5. The Board drew attention to the work of councils in recovering the financial assets of criminals to ensure that crime really does not pay, following on from successful coverage in National Scams Week. Councils have recovered more than £13 million of assets in the last year alone, and are re-investing the funds in activities that seek to prevent crime. The coverage was picked up across a range of trade press, including the MJ and Local Government Lawyer.

### **Late-night levy and EMROs**

6. The LGA continues to support councils that are considering the introduction of these two new tools to manage alcohol-related disorder. On 14 June, Cllr Canver chaired a workshop for these councils to share their experiences so far, discuss emerging issues and identify strategies for effectively communicating the need for these tools. Councils continue to face challenges in introducing them, in the face of significant opposition from the alcohol industry, and there has been a succession of councils opting not to proceed with them following public consultation.

### **Street Fundraising**

7. Cllr Khan responded to the publication of the Public Administration Select Committee report on charity fundraising. There are now 62 local agreements in place to manage fundraisers following the launch of the joint LGA-PFRA agreement in November last year. These are showing that working in partnership with the charity sector can provide a cost effective way of responding to public concern. By working with charities, councils have been able to strike a sensible balance between charities' duties to ask people for support and the rights of local people not to be put under undue pressure to give.

### **LGA Conference 2013**

8. Members of the Safer Communities Board led workshops on a number of issues as part of the LGA Annual Conference in July. Cllr Khan hosted sessions exploring the mutual benefits of more effective working between businesses and councils on local regulation, and launched an Open for Business template for councils to adapt, and a new vision for Regulation. He also chaired a session on the developing relationship between councils and PCCs, in conjunction with PCC colleagues. Cllr Anita Lower chaired a session about the implications of the proposed community trigger for local authorities in addressing persistent anti-social behaviour.

### **Sir Ken Knight's Efficiency Review**

9. Members of the Fire Commission met with the Fire Minister, Brandon Lewis MP to discuss Sir Ken Knight's Efficiency Review. The review is a significant contribution to the future of the Fire and Rescue Service and members stressed the need for sector led reform. The Fire Service Management Committee has provided a submission to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee's inquiry into Sir Ken's review and Cllr Kay Hammond chaired a breakfast session with Sir Ken at the LGA conference exploring the sector's response to the review.

**Fire meetings and regional visits**

10. Cllr Hammond chaired a working dinner in the South West with chairs of FRAs from Devon and Cornwall, Avon and North Wales. Cllr Hammond also attended the quarterly meeting of the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme; and undertook a visit to the East Midlands Fire Forum.

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