

Update on Regulatory Services issues

Purpose

For information.

Summary

This report provides an update on LGA policy work and developments affecting regulatory services that will be of interest to the Stronger and Safer Communities Board.

Recommendation

That the Board notes the activities outlined.

Action

Officers to progress as directed.

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***Open for Business* implementation**

1. On licensing, we launched our initial reform work through a press release urging government to overhaul licensing frameworks. A more detailed update is provided in a separate paper. The first of our councillor training events took place in Warrington in October, and was well received; a further event will take place in Newcastle on 7 November.
2. On 29 October, we are bringing together a small group of authorities leading the way in implementing the principles set out in *Open for Business* to develop a programme of work aimed at a) sharing their work with other authorities and b) helping the exemplar authorities to go further.

Personal licences consultation

3. The Home Office has published a consultation on the future of personal licences. The consultation proposes to scrap personal licences, allowing councils the discretion to attach training requirements as part of premise licences conditions.
4. Our proposed response argues that we believe that there is a case for scrapping personal licences, but that important safeguards such as training (which are valued by industry and councils) should be automatically incorporated within a revised premises licences. We also argue that reviewing personal licences independently is simply tinkering around the edges, when what is required is a full overhaul of all licensing frameworks.

Consumer Rights Draft Bill

5. Councillor Khan and Councillor Worth wrote to Consumer Affairs Minister Jo Swinson MP and the Chair of the BIS Committee regarding the draft Consumer Rights Bill. The Bill includes measures requiring advance notification of business inspection visits; we are seeking reassurance that these will not curtail the ability of trading standards officers to inspect businesses because there is evidence of a local or national risk that can reasonably be linked to a certain business type rather than to an individual business premises.

Deregulation Bill

6. Councillor Mike Jones, Chair of the Environment Board, gave oral evidence to the Deregulation Bill Committee on Monday 28 October, for which we provided a briefing on our proposals to use the Bill as an opportunity to overhaul licensing frameworks and to introduce a common sense in litigation approach.

Regulators Compliance Code

7. We have had discussions with BRDO about the new Regulators Compliance Code, which comes into force in April 2014. BRDO are currently working up examples of enforcement policies, service standards etc which comply with the code. We are reinforcing the message that there are many different ways in which councils can comply with the code,

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and that these will be determined locally, often based on what councils are already doing. To support this, we will be developing examples of the different ways in which councils are complying with the code.