

Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

Title:	Safer & Stronger Communities Board
Date:	Monday 3 March 2014
Venue:	Westminster Suite, 8th Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	<p>World Cup Licensing Extension</p> <p>Ian Leete, Policy Adviser introduced the report to Members, outlining the expected consultation in relation to a blanket extension of licensing hours during the 2014 World Cup in June and July, due to a number of games (including England's opening game) kicking off after 11pm in the UK.</p> <p>Local Authorities are expecting an increase in the number of Temporary Event Notice (TEN) applications due to the late kick off of games. It was recognised that this would have a significant resource implication across local authorities.</p> <p>However, Members agreed that there are a number of potential issues associated with extending licensing hours. In particular around domestic violence, this typically increased around the time of major sporting events. With a blanket exemption it would not be possible for the police and local authorities to identify who was opening late and therefore difficult to target resources effectively.</p> <p>Members agreed that the key issue was that a decision to impose a blanket extension of licences during the World Cup would undermine local authorities, who can consider the local context before agreeing or refusing any extensions.</p> <p>All Members agreed that Whitehall should conclude the consultation quickly as the World Cup is only three months away, and depending on the outcome of the consultation this could leave local authorities with little time to make appropriate arrangements</p> <p>Councillor Lucas asked officers to take on board the comments of Members and asked that progress is made quickly.</p>	
	<p>Action</p> <p>Lead Members to push on the timeliness of the consultation and emphasise that local government could not support a blanket extension.</p>	<p>Ian Leete</p>

Decision

Members **noted** the issues set out in the report

2 Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs) and Betting Shops

Ellie Greenwood, Senior Adviser introduced the report and informed the Board that there had been a lot of media activity focusing on betting shop clustering and Fixed Odd Betting Terminals (FOBTs) recently. There had recently been a change in the position of some of the biggest betting shops, who were keen for greater powers to be given to local authorities with regards to licensing betting shops. This included comments from the chairman of BetFred who would welcome back the demand test and the Chairman of William Hill who wanted to see a cumulative impact test brought in in relation to new betting shops.

Since the paper was circulated to Members, officers had been involved in meetings with both BetFred and PaddyPower, who were both interested to continue discussions, although PaddyPower raised concerns that some of the proposals suggested may be anti-competitive.

Members commented that the issues around betting were wider than just FOBT's in betting shops: individuals were now able to place bets on their tablets, phones and other electrical devices. In most cases the industry encouraged people to play by offering free competitions, and the shops were open later than other licensed premises were. Members also agreed that there was an issue with the clustering of shops.

Overall Members agreed it was the right time to talk with the leading betting shops. It was suggested that a short task and finish group be set up over a six month period, inviting all leading bookmakers to discuss issues and take forward a number of recommendations.

Members queried whether there had been any academic research into betting and issues surrounding addiction to gambling. Officers noted that although there is a significant body of evidence linked to betting shops and FOBTs, there is less agreement among the different interested parties.

Action

To establish a short task and finish group for a six month period, to look into making recommendations on issues surrounding betting shops.

**Ellie
Greenwood**

Decision

Members **noted** the issues set out in the report

3 Psychoactive substances (legal highs)

Mark Norris, LGA Senior Adviser introduced the report and informed Members that a number of LGA Members had raised the issue of 'legal highs' being sold in their authority area. The Home Office had commissioned a review into the UK's response to this issue, which the

LGA had been invited to contribute. There was a link across to health and in particular health and well-being boards.

Members agreed that this was a serious issue and noted the 79 per cent increase in deaths in the UK from the previous year. There was concern that mixing these 'legal highs' with alcohol further exacerbated the problems and led to people becoming violent.

Some Members felt it was important that further research into the area was key, particularly getting further insight from authorities across the country on their experiences with 'legal highs'. In addition, now that public health was now part of local government it was crucial to look at the long term impacts of this on people's health. Regarding enforcement Members noted that resources in trading standards teams were limited

Councillor Fox commented that he had been to a workshop run by West Yorkshire Police who were concerned with the increase in the use of 'legal highs' and the consequences for the community as a whole. It was important moving forward that young people were educated on the effects of 'legal highs'.

There was consensus amongst the Board that it was important to look at examples from America and also from New Zealand in to how they tackled the issue. There was the opportunity to work closely with licensing authorities and also community safety partnerships.

Councillor Spicer commented that the Home Office had provided access to free testing of 'legal highs' to assist trading standards in identifying if a product was a controlled drug, and this funding needed to continue. There also need to be action around the labelling of the products and greater involvement of the police around enforcement activity.

Councillors agreed there were a number of actions for officers to take forward, including exploring local authorities' work and experience was.

Mark Norris also updated the Board on the group set up by the Home Office, which involved civil servants from the Home Office, Ministry of Justice, the UK Border Agency, police officers from the Metropolitan Police and National Crime Agency, academics, charities and the chair of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs. Members requested that future engagement with the panel be considered by Lead Members.

Action

To **contact** local authorities to gather their experiences.

Mark Norris

To **update** Members on the work of the new group set up by the Home Office.

Decision

Members **noted** the issues set out in the report.

4 Tackling Extremism Task Force

Mark Norris, LGA Senior Adviser informed Members that following the last meeting in January officers had been in contact with the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism (OSCT) to seek how they plan to implement the recommendations from the Prime Minister's Task Force on tackling radicalisation and extremism report related to local authorities.

The Home Office was looking at how it could give effect to the requirement to deliver the 'Channel' programme as this would require new legislation, but it was thought that the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 provided a means for making councils deliver the Prevent strategy.

Members did not feel that Government's proposed action was appropriate and agreed that it would be beneficial to speak to the Minister for Security and Immigration to raise concerns about the proposed approach to working with local authorities on tackling extremism.

Councillor Lucas asked Members to endorse a letter from Lead Members to the Minister for Security and Immigration asking for a cross party meeting.

Action

Officers to **write** to James Brokenshire MP, Immigration and Security Minister, requesting a meeting to discuss the Extremism Task Force recommendations.

Mark Norris

Decision

Members **noted** the report and requested officers to follow up meeting with James Brokenshire MP.

5 Regulatory Services Update

Councillor Burbage asked whether the review of licensing legislation recommended in Rewiring Licensing should be undertaken by the LGA rather than asking government to do this. Officers felt that although the LGA has a part to play and want to be closely involved, this work requires central Government attention as licensing is spread across so many Whitehall Departments.

Members agreed it was important to take a review step by step and not be overly ambitious on every aspect. Moving forward, it was key to prioritise certain areas of licensing and make progress.

Decision

Members **noted** the report.

6 LGA Governance Arrangements

Helen Murray, Head of Programmes introduced the report and explained

to Members that there had been changes to the governance arrangements at the LGA. With regards to the Safer and Stronger Communities Board there would be a new name from September 2014 with the Board being called the Community Safety Board. In addition the number of meetings a year had been reduced from five to four.

While Members welcomed the new arrangements, Councillor Mann asked why the Fire Services still had separate meetings, if they were to report to the Board in the future. Councillor Hammond explained that the Fire Services Management Committee had always been represented on the Board, the purpose for Fire now reporting to the Board directly was to ensure all blue light services were together. It was considered that the Fire Services played a distinct role and warranted having their own committee.

Officers confirmed that it was possible to call a meeting at short notice should the Board be required to do so.

Councillor Lucas informed Members that there would be more Lead Member meetings during the year to ensure that communication channels were kept open.

Decision

Members **noted** the report.

7 Notes from previous meeting

The Board noted the minutes of the meeting on 13 January 2014. Councillor Fox requested that his name be added to the attendance list as he was in attendance at the meeting.

Councillor Brett updated Members on the first meeting of the FGM working group, which had involved three organisations, namely the NSPCC, FORWARD and the British Arab Federation. Two key issues arose from the first meeting, firstly there needed to be better data collection and secondly there needed to be better models of engagement in reaching out to local communities. There was one more scoping meeting planned for April, at which a work programme would be discussed.

Decision

Members **noted** the report.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Ann Lucas OBE	Coventry City Council
Vice-Chairman	Joanna Spicer	Suffolk CC
Deputy-chairman	Lisa Brett	Bath & NE Somerset Council
	Philip Evans JP	Conwy Council
Members	Morris Bright	Hertsmere BC

David Burbage MBE
Ian Gillies
Tom Fox
Nick Worth
Kay Hammond
Janet Daby
Michael Payne
Tony Page
Mike Connolly
Kate Haigh
Anita Lower
Colin Mann

Windsor & Maidenhead RB
City of York Council
Scarborough BC
South Holland DC
Surrey CC
Lewisham LB
Gedling BC
Reading BC
Bury MBC
Gloucester City Council
Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Caerphilly Council

Apologies

LGA Officers

Helen Murray
Mark Norris
Ellie Greenwood
Ian Leete
Daniel Kalley