

## Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

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<b>Title:</b>	Safer & Stronger Communities Board
<b>Date:</b>	Monday 22 February 2016
<b>Venue:</b>	Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

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### Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
<b>1</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>  Apologies were received from Cllrs Nick Worth, Michael Payne, Philip Evans & Lisa Brett. Cllrs Marc Jones, Joy Allen and Goronwy Edwards were substituting.  <b>Decision:</b>  There were no declarations of interest.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Lord Harris and the work of National Trading Standards</b>  The Chair introduced Lord Harris of Haringey, Chair of National Trading Standards. Lord Harris outlined the work of National Trading Standards in tackling regional and national cases of consumer detriment. Although the he majority of resources for trading standards / consumer detriment work are spent via local trading standards teams, NTS has a £13m budget for addressing cross-border issues (and a further £3m grant for animal feed work). Lord Harris emphasised the importance of local trading standards for providing intelligence and hosting national teams.  The Chair thanked Lord Harris for his presentation and asked Ellie Greenwood, Senior Advisor, to outline the LGA's engagement with National Trading Standards. Ellie Greenwood outlined the LGA's ongoing engagement on trading standards issues including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• cyber-crime</li><li>• lobbying around the Investigatory Powers Bill and the importance of local authorities having access to communications data</li><li>• dealing with a specific concern raised by a council in relation to telephone scams, which would involve working with the NTS scambusters team and organisations such as Age UK.</li></ul>	

The Chair then invited members to ask questions, and the following points

were made in the ensuing discussion::

- NTS uses intelligence to target suspect crates and produce at ports;
- NTS is working with local trading standards teams to ensure the integrity of the feed chain in relation to food and livestock and ensure continued access to EU markets;
- Members praised the work of the NTS illegal money lending teams;
- NTS is in the early stages of a case to tackle the use of copycat websites (eg, for passport or European Health Insurance Card applications) and is in discussion with the government and search engine companies about the prominence of links to these sites;
- Members raised concerns about cold calling zones and the extent to which councils are able to enforce these;
- Some court sentences seemed relatively lenient, which could be addressed by raising awareness of the impact of cases on the vulnerable, which could leave people in a position where they needed care.
- Members would welcome consideration of how the information provided by Lord Harris would be more regularly and widely circulated among councillors.

In response to a question about funding Lord Harris explained that NTS would not charge local authorities for services. However, the likely impact of a significant reduction in funding from BIS would be that NTS would have to drop whole areas of work, such as their estate agent work and illegal money lending.

**Decision:**

The Board noted the discussion.

**3 Developing the LGA's position on measures for reducing alcohol-related harm.**

Ian Leete, Advisor, introduced the paper and explained that it reflected the ruling on 23 December 2015 by the European Court of Justice on the Scottish Whiskey Association's legal challenge to the Scottish Government's proposals to introduce a minimum unit price for alcohol. This ruling established that minimum pricing could be restrictive of trade between member states so could only be introduced if it is proportionate and if it does not go beyond what is necessary for achieving the objective, and must be the least restrictive measure available. The court also ruled that other measures which were less restrictive of trade such as increases in taxation had to be considered. The ruling introduces significant challenges to the implementation of a minimum unit price in England. Members were informed the Scottish courts have indicated they will consider the judgment and members asked to be updated on this at the next Board meeting.

The paper sets out three alternative measures that could be used to reduce harm from alcohol:

- Extending effective harm-reduction measures in the on-trade to the off-trade
- Lobbying for amendments to the duty regime
- Reducing the strength of alcohol and boosting consumer awareness of strength

There was a discussion about the paper during which members made a number of comments:

- councils would need to look at a range of measures as there was no single solution to reducing alcohol related harm;
- the problem of preloading alcohol was more an issue for the off-trade than on-trade and measures should therefore reflect this;
- there should be a focus on the long-term effects of alcohol;
- the LGA should support events such as Alcohol Concern's Dry January Awards;
- problem drinking can be particularly prevalent in areas of high student density;
- York has successfully introduced cumulative impact zone which has helped;
- local authorities should be sharing best practice in how to tackle this issue
- the LGA should encourage the promotion of low alcohol and alcohol free beers;
- members wanted to include reducing the drink drive limit following the success in Scotland.

**Decision:**

The Board noted the European Court of Justice's decision on the Scottish case, and agreed to take forward the proposals outlined in the paper, with the addition of reducing the drink drive limit.

**Action:**

Officers to progress in line with members comments and to update the Board about developments in the Scottish case at the next meeting.

#### **4 Local government and food regulation**

Ellie Greenwood, Senior Advisor, introduced the paper seeking the Board's views on supporting the mandatory display of food hygiene ratings as well as the Food Standards Agency's discussion on its regulatory strategy.

The scheme is currently mandatory in Wales and soon to be so in Northern Ireland. All councils in England are now part of the scheme. The Food Standards Agency believe that mandatory display within the scheme will help to improve food hygiene / public health and reduce the negative impact of foodborne illness. The FSA's preferred option is that businesses are charged for revisits where they are unhappy with a rating. The Welsh legislation requires the cost of this to be reasonable; Welsh local authorities have determined this at £150 per inspection.

Members made a number of comments in relation to the paper:

- the New Zealand model of self-policing should be explored further;
- there was support for the scheme being mandatory, this should also apply to online and market stalls;
- the need for enforcement to ensure businesses were not displaying higher ratings than they achieved.

Members were also supportive of introducing an upfront registration fee before food businesses can start trading. Members felt the fees should be set locally to allow flexibility for new businesses and local variation. The fees should be paid to the local authority who carries out the inspection and not where the company is registered.

**Decision:**

The Board agreed to endorse recommendation four, that the LGA publically endorses mandatory display of food hygiene ratings. The Board also agreed to support upfront registration fees for food businesses.

**Action:**

Officers to progress taking into account members comments.

## **5 Cyber-crime - LGA work plan**

Mark Norris, Principal Policy Advisor, introduced the paper which updates the Board on LGA work to support councils in preparing for and dealing with the threat posed by cyber-crime. The LGA productivity team is working with DCLG and will be holding an event on reducing councils' exposure to cyber-attacks in Spring 2016. The LGA is also launching a survey of members to see what type of support in the area of emergency planning and cyber resilience would be most effective. Members asked that training for elected councillors also be included on the programme.

Mark Norris also updated members on the work the LGA was doing around the Investigatory Powers Bill and ensuring that councils having access to communications data. The LGA is lobbying parliamentarians to raise awareness of why local authorities need access to such data.

**Decision:**

The Board agreed to the programme of work outlined in the paper.

**Action:**

Officers to circulate details of the joint LGA-CLG event about cyber security.

Officers to progress work programme taking into account members comments.

## **6 Complaints about Police and Crime Commissioners - draft LGA consultation response**

Ellie Greenwood, Senior Advisor, introduced the paper seeking the Board's views on key issues around the handling of complaints about Police and Crime Commissioners by Police and Crime Panels (PCPs).

The consultation proposes a number of measures including: developing guidance on what constitutes a complaint; whether PCPs should be subject to the Nolan Principles of public life and measures to handle persistent and vexatious complaints.

The consultation also proposes giving PCPs the power to appoint someone to investigate a complaint, removing the restriction on panels investigating complaints. The government's preferred option is that this be the PCC's monitoring officer. Members felt there should be flexibility on who panels are able to appoint, but felt that utilising groups of council monitoring officers might overcome resourcing constraints.

### **Decision:**

The Board approved the draft response.

### **Action:**

Officers to progress taking into account members comments.

## **7 Government Consultation on cremation following recent inquiries into infant cremations**

This item was taken out of order and was considered after item two.

Lucy Ellender, Advisor, introduced the paper which set out the draft response to the Ministry of Justice's consultation into infant cremation, and made a number of recommendations for the future of cremation services.

The Board welcomed the report and agreed the LGA should play a role on the national working group. Members did not think there was a need for a national inspector role, instead they felt this could be addressed using a Code of Practice with inspections carried out by Trading Standards.

### **Action:**

Officers to progress taking into account the Board's views.

### **Decision:**

Members agreed the LGA's response to the Government's consultation on infant cremation.

## **8 Update report**

Mark Norris, Principal Policy Advisor, introduced the paper which provides

an update on LGA policy work and developments affecting the priorities agreed by the Board.

Members asked about the event the LGA will be hosting jointly with the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Home Office about domestic abuse. The event will be looking at how service provision for domestic abuse victims can be improved, and what support might be available at a national level to assist authorities in the future.

Cllr Kay Hammond, Deputy Chair of the Fire Services Management Committee, raised the Policing and Crime Bill in reference to the proposed changes to the governance of Fire and Rescue Authorities. Where the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) does not take on governance for the fire and rescue service they can be given a place on the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) where they request it, though the council(s) involved can refuse the request. Cllr Hammond highlighted the impact this could have on authorities which are also the FRA.

Members asked that the letter from the Chair, Cllr Brett as the Board's champion with responsibility for FGM, and Javed Khan, Chief Executive of Barnardo's wrote to the relevant Minister at the Department of Education along with the Chair of the Children and Young People's Board in December be circulated.

**Decision:**

Members noted the activities outlined.

**Action:**

Officers to circulate the letter sent to the Department of Education.

**9 Notes of previous meeting**

Members agreed the notes of the meeting held on 7 December 2015 as correct.

**Appendix A -Attendance**

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Morris Bright	Hertsmere Borough Council
Members	Cllr Nick Daubney	King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council
	Cllr Thomas Fox	Scarborough Borough Council
	Cllr Joanna Gardner	Kensington and Chelsea Royal Borough Council
	Cllr Ian Gillies	City of York Council
	Cllr Mike Connolly	Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Janet Daby	Lewisham London Borough Council
	Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
	Cllr Tony Page	Reading Borough Council
	Cllr Sophie Linden	Hackney London Borough Council

Cllr Joy Allen  
Cllr Anita Lower  
Cllr Colin Mann  
Cllr Goronwy Edwards  
Cllr Jo Beavis  
Cllr Marcus Jones  
Cllr Chris Pillai

Durham County Council  
Newcastle upon Tyne City Council  
Caerphilly County Borough Council  
Conwy County Borough Council  
Braintree District Council  
Lincolnshire County Council  
Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council

In Attendance

Cllr Chris Pillai

Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council

Observer

Cllr Kay Hammond

Surrey County Council

Apologies

Cllr Michael Payne  
Cllr Nick Worth  
Cllr Lisa Brett  
Cllr Philip Evans JP

Gedling Borough Council  
South Holland District Council  
Bath & North East Somerset Council  
Conwy County Borough Council