

3rd Cross Party Group on Independent Convenience Stores Meeting

17th January 2017

The Scottish Parliament, Committee Room 5

Minute as approved

(for attendance list see Appendix A)

The meeting commenced at 6.10 pm.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Convenor (Gordon MacDonald MSP) welcomed attendees to the 3rd Cross Party meeting group and the 1st meeting in 2017.

2. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. UPDATE ON ACTIONS FROM MEETING WITH THE CABINET SECRETARY

John Lee (SGF) discussed the letter from the Cabinet Secretary for the Economy to his Westminster counterpart Greig Clark MP. The Cabinet Secretary had attended the last CPG meeting.

John mentioned one of the commitments that Keith Brown made to the group was that he and his colleagues from the Scottish Government will support and work with the Cross Party Group. The most part of the discussion was the accumulative impact on the retail sector and the cabinet secretary took this on board and agreed to write to his counterpart in Westminster and invite him to come to a meeting of the CPG and address these issues directly. The cabinet secretary has written the letter and John refers to the copy that it is in front of everyone. The key points are that it has been issued and the invitation has been extended to Mr Clark. John Lee pointed out that this fact does not guarantee that the meeting will happen but the letter has been sent, which is a very positive development.

John mentioned that SGF had had a meeting recently with special advisor for David Mundell (The Secretary of State of Scotland). One of the things discussed in that meeting was the Cross Party Group and the letter from the cabinet secretary. Pete and John asked if the Scotland office was asked for a recommendation around this letter whether or not to accept the invitation he will give a positive recommendation to support that meeting and it will be very positive and hopefully that will encourage Mr Clark.

John summarised, the letter has been sent, the invitation has been issued and SGF will feedback on progress.

It was asked if it is not easier for SGF to arrange the meeting in London but it was also said that the relevant point of this is to bring the Minister in front of the cross party group and it is unusual for Cross Party Groups to meet in an official capacity out with the Scottish Parliament.

4.a COMBATING UNDER AGE SALES

Presented by Inspector Alistair Anderson and Officer Scott Brown from Police Scotland.

John Lee made an introduction to this item on how retailers are getting involved in issues in the community and providing solutions to these issues.

John Lee explained the theme of the campaign was focused on community based issues relating to alcohol and harm. John pointed out it is a difficult issue for retailers to deal with to identify proxy purchase and do something about it.

Alastair described how the campaign took place in Summer of 2015 in the area of Lanarkshire from April to October. He introduced his colleague Scott Brown who delivered the campaign operationally. This was a partnership targeting adults who are buying alcohol for children, ie proxy purchases

Police Objectives:

1. Increase local awareness.
2. Tackle antisocial behaviour, particularly alcohol disorder.
3. Reduce harm to children and their exposure to alcohol.

The name of the campaign was "You're Asking For It" It was created by vibrant images including, posters, street advertising, public transport adverts, social media and it was supported by Lanarkshire council. He remarked the importance of raising awareness that adults buying alcohol for minors is illegal and that adults have to understand what the consequences are of doing this. Partnership working was vital because all the partners were fully committed and worked very well together.

Alistair highlighted that the crucial police role is identifying where are the hotspots, working with the key stakeholders and targeting the areas at key times

The campaign results were:

- 88 license offences over 6 months' period.
- 49 adults were charged for buying alcohol for children. In the same period in 2014 there were 3 offensives in Lanarkshire area.
- 9 premises were reported for directly selling alcohols to children
- Reports of anti-social behaviour dropped by 13%
- Complaints from the public of street drinking dropped by 50%

Social media was key between young people, the Facebook campaign had 60,000 hits.

52 retailers were visited during the campaign as part of education strategy.

Key learning points were: better engagement with schools, early engagement, more creative engagement with young people, more evaluation, engagement with a media partner.

In January 2016 the campaign won the National Police Award for 'Best Contribution to Policing Priorities in Scotland'.

Pete Cheema (SGF) congratulated the great job done. He made the point of the role alcohol has at home and the easy access for young people to access it. Retailers underreporting crimes, it has been mentioned that backing confidence in retailers is essential.

Pete Cheema (SGF) pointed out that it is important to communicate this success to the parliament to ensure the sector's contribution is recognised.

The Convenor agreed to write to the Minister for Community Safety and highlight the success of the campaign and see if we can have any support in other areas.

4.2 SUPPORTING BREAKFAST CLUBS AND EARLY YEARS NUTRITION

Linda Williams presented on a partnership project between Scottish Government and SGF. The Healthy Living Programme, which is funded by the Scottish Government, involves retailers and schools in promoting healthy eating options. The programme started in 2004 to improve accessibility, availability and sales in the retail sector and it has been strengthened over the years in the context of community retailing. This programme has a focus on our more disadvantaged communities. The programme has broadened into promoting health eating options in retail outlets in NHS hospitals through the Healthy Retail Standard.

She referred to the Gold Standard, which focused on approving the quality of what is in the store. The key elements are: strands of merchandising; how you merchandise, how you purchase, how you rotate your stock to get the best from your stock. Participation in the programme increases sales, footfall and profits.

The Healthy Living Programme is supporting retailers to support the work of breakfast clubs in Schools through Big Breakfast events.

She pointed out the key point to discuss: Breakfast Clubs - this is because most children go to school without having breakfast or having inadequate breakfast or a completely unsuitable breakfast.

In a report public last week by Public Health England, of relevance for Scotland, most children have eaten 81% of daily sugar at breakfast and that happens when eating the wrong products like sugary cereals or packs of sweets or crisps on the way to school. More children have to become interested in breakfast because these children are not concentrating at school, have bad behaviour and disruption in the classroom.

Linda Williams explained the plan in local primary schools of setting up tables in the morning putting a variety of different fresh fruit, porridge, honey, banana on toast. The idea of doing it in the school is because they are much more likely to share the experience with friends. Linda explained supplying porridge to breakfast clubs results in children asking their parents for the same brand.

She mentioned the importance of getting the community working together getting suppliers engagement as is happening with Booker, Allied bakeries, Warburtons who are providing products that we can use in the breakfast club.

There are more Breakfast Clubs planned in March and Linda said that they have created a pack of letters to be sent to the schools, Councillors and suppliers. What retailers can do is a "Healthy Eating Day" which is setting a table in front of the shop and filling them with fresh food, porridge, juice, cereals. It has good results because people are in the habit of buying the same things. In this way people try things, buy more.

How we can get children more interested in having breakfast? Broadway convenience store is piloting a 'Fruit Club' Project. The objective of this is to encourage children to pick up fruit, instead of sweets. Sign posting is one of the key points to make it easier for the customer find where the products are.

The aim is every time children buy fruit they will get a smiley face stamp in the loyalty card and every 5 pieces of fruit is free. Friday is called "Fruity Friday" event in the primary school, 460 children were issued one of these cards. These events are based on providing seasonal fruit. Very successful events and hopefully they will continue.

Job opportunities are given to children excluded from schools or had troubles for many reasons and made them have a routine of getting up, have manners and so on. Linda counted and 70 convenience stores gave people their first job.

Due to some customers having mobility issues they are not able to go to a big supermarket and they rely on retailers to have everything they need and they go to the store 3 or 4 times during the week because of the value of social contact, making friends with staff and meeting new neighbours. She mentioned the great choice of healthy products, meal solutions, and recipe cards provided by the Healthy Living Programme.

She said that the convenience stores are open longer hours and that is increasing because we are offering more services now, such as post office, bill payment services, ATM.

Ross Kerr (Director of Healthy Living Programme) gave thanks to Linda and Dennis for supporting project of getting school children to community shops through healthy eating.

One of the aims when this programme started was how to pass on the message to future generation with the Scottish Government was to encourage retailers, primary schools in terms of healthy eating.

12,000 schools are involved and shopkeepers are very committed. A useful document can be found on SGF website.

The Convenor gave thanks to Linda and Ross and he mentioned the event he attended in the primary school was great to see and he saw the enthusiasm of children trying new fruits or experimenting with new flavours for them.

Pete Cheema (SGF) congratulated Linda for the great talk. Pete reminded everyone this programme started in 2004 and it is the SGF Healthy Living Programme, in delivering a good foundation from Scottish Government and bookmarked from Westminster. He asked if the success made by the Healthy Living Programme put us in good position to with the Health Minister to lead on the good foundation approach.

Gordon McDonald MSP (and Convenor) said from all the evidence he saw it has been a fantastic scheme to encourage people into eating good quality food and decreasing diet health problems.

Pete Cheema (SGF) insisted to Gordon that the 5,300 convenience stores in Scotland are the best place to deliver the governments Good Food Nation regarding Scottish products.

5. REPORT FROM THE RETAIL CRIME SUB GROUP

John Lee (SGF) said there are three subgroups attached in the CPG; one of them is Retail Crime. Some of the subgroups had the first meeting last week, a very constructive meeting and they developed a draft outline which Harris Aslam is going to update us on.

Harris Aslam (Subgroups), said retail crime is a very challenging issue to face, it is a wide topic. That is why in the meeting it was imperative to design a work plan of how it can be tackled. The plan is focused on 6 key areas:

1. Subgroup is going to work with MSPs on the protection of shop workers and get key organisations on board in order to delivery this.
2. Reporting of retail crime issues such as shoplifting is a key challenge. A very wide topic sometimes because retailers report a crime and do not get feedback after its reported. Police Scotland is taking a proactive approach. Harris pointed out working in collaboration between all organisations the issue can be tacked. SBRC has developed a package to improve the report of incidents.
3. SBRC are doing the crime incident platform for Edinburgh hotels. The plan is how it can be adapted to the retailers' systems through apps or website.
4. Combating illicit trade.
5. Cybercrime and how independent retailers can tackle this.

This is not a final plan, it is open to make changes, it is a work in progress. CPG will meet in May again and before that date Subgroups have another two meetings to work on it.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Shabir Beg (Scottish Ahlul Bayt Society) wanted to encourage and inspire further engagement with the SGF members, he agreed the project is going on to promote healthy eating. He gave thanks for the invitation to attend the meeting.

Pete Cheema distributed Crime Seminar event 15th February booking forms.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on **Tuesday 23rd May**.

The Convenor thanked everybody for coming along tonight, he will try to encourage more MSP colleagues to attend because all in all it makes them understand the issues

The meeting concluded at approximately 7.20 pm

Appendix A – List of attendees of CPG on Independent Convenience Stores 17.1.17

MSPs in attendance

Gordon MacDonald

Anas Sarwar

CPG Members in attendance

Antony Begley

Malcolm Brown

Pete Cheena

Mike Gordon

John Lee

Mike Leonard

Ian Lovie

Irati Ugarte

Dennis Williams

Linda Williams

Non-Members in attendance

Dougie Anderson

Harris Aslam

Inspector Alistair Anderson

Daniel Arrandale

Mark Baird

Scott Brown

Wendy Craig

Jim Fox

Jack Gemmell

Niall Hassard

Adeel Hussain

Lindsay Keating

Ross Kerr

Louis McMahon

John McNee

David Milliken

Douglas Meikle

Kathryn Neil

Phil Prentice

Kate Salmon

Lakhvir Singh

Ali Shahid

Amanpreet Singh

Margaret Smith

Sarna Vishal

Mike Wilkinson

Ed Woodall