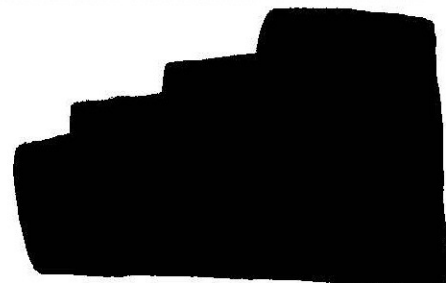
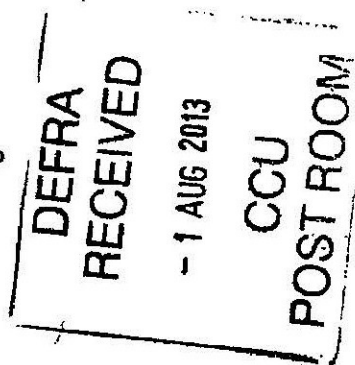


23rd July 2013

Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP
Defra
Nobel House
17, Smith Square
London
SW1P 3JR



Dear Secretary of State

Home Office proposal for firearms fees increase

I would be very grateful if you could raise BASC's concerns regarding the proposal for fees increases for firearms licensing with Home Office ministers. Firearms are an essential tool, not a luxury, for many country people and a significant rise in fees may have a negative impact on the contribution of shooting makes to the rural economy. Unfortunately we have been denied sight of the impact assessment which will accompany the fees order, so remain unsure whether the Home Office has fully assessed these impacts.

BASC is also concerned that the current ACPO and Home Office proposal may breach Treasury guidelines on charging; are based on unverified police figures which are deeply flawed; advocate an increase which exceeds inflation (up to 118% by 2015) and are justified by promises of system improvements with no guarantees that these will be implemented, which itself breaches the principles of the Hampton Review.

The UK has some of the toughest firearms laws in the world but they only work if they are properly applied. We are the only organisation to monitor the licensing system across the UK and remain concerned that the system is undermined by inefficient processes, poor management and variable interpretation of guidelines by different forces. While we recognise the need for an increase in fees and wish to see investment in the system we find that we are being asked to finance a system which lacks any credible performance management and for which nearly half the constabularies have yet to decide to introduce improvements. We are seeking assurances on time-bound measurable improvements in the licensing process and on a commitment that licensing fees will go to improve the system rather than into general police funds.

I would be very grateful if you could press for proper consultation with the shooting associations before the order is laid and ensure that the Home Office is fully aware of the rural implications of their proposals.

With best wishes



The Voice of Shooting

The British Association for Shooting and Conservation Limited
Registered Industrial & Provident Society N° 28488R

Patron: HRH The Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, KG KT

President: The Earl of Home, CVO CBE

Chairman: Martyn J R Howat

Chief Executive: Richard Ali, BSc (Hons) MSc