**North Tyneside Council Feedback**

1)  My colleagues always argued Chess is not a Sport and hence not an exclusion from Government Guidelines. It is a 'social event'. But my view was always this was a competition, not a social gathering. What was yours please? As chess is not a sport it was excluded from the Governments list of exemptions. However, the congress is a tournament, and as such we were able to proceed with it at that time and in line with both the letter and spirit of the law as it stood then. However, the local restrictions announced on 17th September changed this, particularly with regard to not meeting with people from other households. With this in mind we could not in good faith allow for a tournament to go ahead where we would essentially be allowing 100+ people from multiple households and from all reaches of the UK to come together in an indoor location. Although I still believe we could have done this safely, it simply wasn’t the right thing to do. Had we gone ahead, it was likely that we would draw significant complaints, especially if there was an outbreak of C-19  linked to the tournament or if even one person who attended was to test positive. Although I had already made my decision I took advice from the senior events manager and the Environmental Health officer responsible for Covid compliance, both of whom stated that the tournament should not go ahead.

     2) The Group of 6 rule. People argued we were cheating by treating the morning and afternoon sessions as if they were separate events. Any words I can use here save " A 90 minute break between finish and start, including sanitising of whole environment and competitors following exactly same protocols on return is exactly that in all bar name"? In planning for the tournament we worked closely with yourself to ensure that it was fully risk assessed and that there were robust protocols in place to ensure the safety of the participants, officials and NTC employees. Although the tables were laid out in such a way that there would be up to 6 people playing in their dedicated space, contingencies were in place to ensure social distancing was adhered to as was good hygiene and personal protection measures. Additionally, between games there were adequate breaks to allow for a full sanitisation of the playing ‘arena’ including all equipment and touch points.