

Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

Title:	Safer & Stronger Communities Board
Date:	Monday 7 November 2016
Venue:	Room D&E, Ground Floor, Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street, London, EC1M 5LG

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and listed apologies. Cllr James Dawson declared an interest as a member of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). As there were technical problems with the presentation for the Water Safety item, it was agreed that item 3 on Violent Crime would be dealt with first.	
2	Water Safety Campaign Charles Loft, Senior Adviser, introduced the item. He discussed the incidents in Camber Sands over the summer and the effect this had had on all councils. He drew members' attention to the issues set out in paragraph 10, asking them to comment on what more could be done to improve water safety. Amongst a number of suggestions, members were asked to consider supporting the work of the National Water Safety Forum and for a water safety session to be set up at the LGA's National Conference. Chris Margetts, Chief Operating Officer from Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service, spoke to members about the work of the Chief Fire Officers Association and the National Water Safety Forum. The forum had captured all fatalities by drowning (broken down by local authority areas) and had produced a drowning prevention strategy which the government had agreed to support. By the end of 2018, all areas are expected to have carried out a water safety risk assessment. He discussed problems around no government department having responsibility for the area and the work the forum was doing to assist local authorities, highlighting a case study from Northamptonshire, where the RNLI, Local Authorities, the FRS and the Water Safety Forum and had worked together to improve water safety.	

Members made the following points:

- The Northamptonshire case study was discussed and members were advised that this had been locally funded by the partners. It was also advised that Fire and Rescue Authorities did not receive any specific funding for this work. There was a water safety working group to share good practice and resources, with prevention being the best way to reduce the financial impact.
- Members asked if the database could be broken down by area. They were advised that you could search by location, age etc, but it only currently listed fatalities.
- It was highlighted that eight authorities were missing from the database (including Derbyshire) as they had had less than three fatalities by drowning.
- The Camber Sands incident was discussed and the challenges media coverage of the incident had presented as well as the help the LGA had provided noted. A mobile lifeguard in the area had provided reassurance to local residents.
- The number of alcohol related fatalities in rivers due to drowning were noted and options for prevention and education on this issue were discussed given that there was often little evidence on how people had ended up in the river. In many incidents, the victim had not realised that the temperature of the water was so low.
- Members requested that point 15.1 (opportunities for learning to swim) was strongly emphasised, as it was felt many did not understand the dangers of failing to learn, and teaching needed to cover lifesaving. Members also requested that more work was done on teaching water safety to key risk groups and that the paper further emphasised that the dangers applied everywhere (inland and in coastal areas). It was suggested that social media was used to highlight messages.
- Individuals who had rescued others or pets from drowning and the risks associated with this were discussed, as was the need to address post-traumatic problems faced by rescuers.
- The need for localised campaigns on water safety was highlighted, such as in Lincolnshire where there were particular risks associated with the local marshes and drainage ditches.
- Members discussed suggestions for combined authorities to have responsibility for water safety as devolution deals progressed.
- Members noted that water safety education had benefits for those going on holiday and asked for figures on British tourists that had died aboard as a result of drowning, as the WAID data did not capture this.
- Issues on lack of funds for councils to fund prevention methods were highlighted.

Decision:

1. Members noted the report and agreed the actions in it

Actions:

1. Officers to emphasise the importance of the availability of opportunities to learn to swim, as well as education on water safety.
2. Officers to investigate the figures on deaths of those travelling aboard (due to drowning).
3. Officers to progress the recommendations set out in the report.

3 Violent Crime

Rachel Duke, Adviser, introduced the item, advising members that police statistics show violent crime has risen, bringing long-term declining trends to an end. The report provided an overview of the statistics and the nature of violent crime for further discussion. Member authorities/ organisations had raised concerns and had approached the LGA for support on this issue.

In the discussion which followed, members made the following points:

- Incidents of serious knife crime were often related to drug and gang crime. More needed to be done to deal with the drug trade.
- The public sector needed resources to deal with any increase in crime, given the reductions that had had to be made to services like youth workers.
- Members asked how increases in the figures translated into actual numbers of offences (compared to percentages). It was also asked what percentage of crime had been racially motivate, and whether there had been an increase in hate crime.
- Given the availability of knives at home, members stressed the importance of education in reducing knife crime.
- Increasing violence on television and in the media was touched upon as a possible cause of rising crime.
- Members highlighted the need to work in partnership with PCCs in this area to ensure that local plans were in place to tackle crime and resources were available to deliver them. There had been no mention of PCCs in the report or of the role of police and crime plans.

- Members further discussed the importance of partnership of place and community safety, and requested that the paper focused more on this. It was highlighted that many 3rd sector organisations had good relationships with young people and could assist in tackling the issue.
- It was suggested that a conference was organised jointly with PCCs and 3rd sector bodies.

Decision:

1. Members noted the report and agreed the recommendations in line with the steer above.

Actions:

1. Officers to ensure work emphasises the importance of partnerships of place in tackling this issue (e.g. community safety partnership).
2. Officers to look into organising a joint conference with PCCs and the 3rd sector.

4 Homelessness

Charles Loft, Senior Adviser, introduced the item. The EEHT Board had commissioned a report to help inform the LGA's position on homelessness and would consider how to use the findings of the report going forward. He highlighted key issues such as the problem with a high proportion of ex-offenders ending up homeless after release. The report for the SSC Board set out the key findings and recommendations that crossed over with its remit. Members were asked to comment on these.

The following points were made:

- The opportunity to work together in existing partnerships should be expanded upon and the role of Police and Crime Commissioners considered. It was suggested that a guide was produced on partnership working.
- Drug-related problems were discussed and the importance of early intervention for those coming out of treatment for drug and alcohol addictions.
- The quality of life in housing for ex-offenders was discussed, including the sense of isolation they can feel, the need for support in buying replacement essentials such as white goods and cookers. Members asked what the suicide rates were.
- Members felt this was another report where a sense of the total numbers involved would be helpful in appreciating the full picture.

- It was highlighted that sharing of information was important, especially when opening new hostels. It was also noted that it was difficult to set up hostels in many areas, as there was often opposition from the local population. Planning applications for housing of this type was met negatively by the public.
- The different companies that had been awarded contracts to operate community rehabilitation companies could produce different results given the commercial emphasis of some. It would be helpful to know if there were different outcomes and results between them.
- There were problems facing ex-service personnel who sometimes became homeless. Members asked whether the LGA was backing the campaign to gather better statistics on the numbers of homeless ex-service personnel. Officers advised that CWB were making calls for better data gathering on this.
- It was highlighted it was politically difficult for politicians to prioritise ex-offenders for housing over others in need.

Decision:

1. The board noted the report and the recommendations in line with the steer above.

Actions:

1. Officers to look into producing a guide on existing partnership working and the role of PCCs on this issue.
2. Officers to feedback to the CWB the Board's support for calls for better data gathering on the numbers of homeless ex-servicemen.
3. Officers to feedback the discussion to the EEHT board to inform the LGA's cross-cutting work on homelessness.

5 Gambling Review

Ellie Greenwood, Senior Adviser, introduced the item. She advised members that on Monday 24 October, the Government had announced a review of gaming machine stakes, and this report outlined the key themes the LGA would cover in its submission. The LGA would reiterate support for a reduction in the stakes, highlight concerns members had about advertising and would look widely at the impact on communities. Evidence would need to be submitted by the 4th December. She asked for members' views on this.

The Chair asked for long points to be emailed to officers.

The following points were made:

- This was an opportunity to raise awareness of the issues with all councils, as gambling had an impact on other problems such as domestic violence and alcohol addiction.
- The impact of gambling on community safety and the problems with violence in betting shops were discussed and it was requested that the need to protect shop staff from violence should be captured in the report.
- Members asked whether councils should submit responses to the LGA or to the government, and were advised that they could do either.
- Members requested that Leicester's scrutiny report was circulated to the board.
- It was agreed that the LGA would specifically a £2 maximum stake rather than simply calling for stakes to be brought into line with other high street stakes.
- The risks of internet gambling were touched upon.

Decision:

1. Members noted the report and the recommendation.

Actions:

1. Officers to circulate Leicester's scrutiny report.
2. Officers to capture problems with violence against staff in betting shops in LGA work.

6 Update Paper

Members noted the update paper and made the following points:

- Institute of Alcohol Studies work on minimum unit pricing was noted, as was the campaign to reduce the breathalyser limit. It was agreed that officers would look into supporting this.
- Members noted the links between the future of pathology services and the introduction of medical examiners and the possibility this could reduce the number of post mortems.
- Members asked for an update on Prevent.
- Taxi licensing was discussed, and the problems with some authorities having different standards to others.

- Members asked if Trading Standards could be involved with tackling the problems around faulty tumble dryers.
- Misuse of public space protection orders and rules around exercising dogs were discussed.
- The decision of the DVSA to withdraw tests for taxi drivers was discussed.
- Concerns were raised over instances where taxi drivers had denied access to those with guide dogs to taxis. Members were advised that the LGA was currently working on this issue.

Decision:

1. Members noted the report.

Actions:

1. Officers to look into the progress of work from the Institute of Alcohol Studies on reducing the minimum unit of pricing.
2. Officers to update members on prevent when possible.
3. Officers to look into involving Trading Standards further with the issue of overheating tumble dryers.

7 Notes of Previous Meeting

Members **agreed** the notes of the last meeting as an accurate summary of the discussion.

8 EU Exit Update

Mark Norris, Principal Policy Adviser, introduced the item.

Decision:

1. Members noted the paper and the recommendations.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Morris Bright	Hertsmere Borough Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Clive Woodbridge	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Members	Cllr Jo Beavis	Braintree District Council
	Cllr Bill Bentley	East Sussex County Council
	Cllr Ian Gillies	City of York Council
	Cllr Chris Pillai	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Nick Worth	South Holland District Council
	Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
	Cllr Jim Beall	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
	Cllr James Dawson	Erewash Borough Council
	Cllr Janet Daby	Lewisham London Borough Council
	Cllr Joy Allen	Durham County Council
	Cllr Anita Lower	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
	Cllr Tim Oliver	Elmbridge Borough Council
Apologies	Cllr Keith McLean	Milton Keynes Council
	Cllr Alan Rhodes	Nottinghamshire County Council
	Cllr Goronwy Edwards	Conwy County Borough Council
	Cllr Lisa Brett	Bath & North East Somerset Council