

Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Agenda

Monday, 15 January 2018
11.00 am

Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, 18 Smith
Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

To: Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board
cc: Named officers for briefing purposes

www.local.gov.uk

This meeting is



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Safer & Stronger Communities Board
15 January 2018

There will be a meeting of the Safer & Stronger Communities Board at **11.00 am on Monday, 15 January 2018**, Smith Square 1&2, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ.

A sandwich lunch will be available at 1.00pm.

Attendance Sheet:

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Political Group meetings:

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Apologies:

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting.

Conservative:	Group Office: 020 7664 3223	email: lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk
Labour:	Group Office: 020 7664 3334	email: Labour.GroupLGA@local.gov.uk
Independent:	Group Office: 020 7664 3224	email: independent.grouplga@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat:	Group Office: 020 7664 3235	email: libdem@local.gov.uk

Location:

A map showing the location of 18 Smith Square is printed on the back cover.

LGA Contact:

Felicity Harris
0207 664 3231/ felicity.harris@local.gov.uk

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Safer & Stronger Communities Board – Membership 2017/2018

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (8)	
Cllr Morris Bright MBE (Vice Chairman)	Hertsmere Borough Council
Cllr Jo Beavis	Braintree District Council
Cllr Chris Pillai	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Lisa Targowska	Windsor & Maidenhead Royal Borough
Cllr Judith Wallace	North Tyneside Council
Cllr Katrina Wood	Wycombe District Council
Cllr Nick Worth	South Holland District Council
Cllr Colin Spence	Suffolk County Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Bill Bentley	East Sussex County Council
Cllr Paul Findlow	Cheshire East Council
Cllr Vic Pritchard	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Labour (7)	
Cllr Simon Blackburn (Chair)	Blackpool Council
Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
Cllr Alan Rhodes	Nottinghamshire County Council
Cllr Jim Beall	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Cllr James Dawson	Erewash Borough Council
Cllr Janet Daby	Lewisham London Borough Council
Cllr Carole Burdis	North Tyneside Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Richard Chattaway	Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Jane Black	Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
Liberal Democrat (2)	
Cllr Anita Lower (Deputy Chair)	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire County Council
Independent (1)	
Cllr Clive Woodbridge (Deputy Chair)	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Helen Carr	Brent Council

Safer & Stronger Communities Board Attendance 2017-2018

Councillors	11/9/17	22/11/17	15/01/18
Conservative Group			
Cllr Morris Bright MBE	Yes	Yes	
Cllr Jo Beavis	Yes	Yes	
Cllr Chris Pillai	Yes	Yes	
Cllr Lisa Targowska	No	Yes	
Cllr Judith Wallace	Yes	Yes	
Cllr Katrina Wood	Yes	Yes	
Cllr Nick Worth	Yes	Yes	
Cllr Colin Spence	Yes	Yes	
Labour Group			
Cllr Simon Blackburn	Yes	Yes	
Cllr Kate Haigh	Yes	Yes	
Cllr Alan Rhodes	Yes	No	
Cllr Jim Beall	Yes	Yes	
Cllr James Dawson	Yes	Yes	
Cllr Janet Daby	No	No	
Cllr Carole Burdis	Yes	Yes	
Lib Dem Group			
Cllr Anita Lower	Yes	Yes	
Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Yes	Yes	
Independent			
Cllr Clive Woodbridge	No	Yes	
Substitutes/Observers			
Cllr Vic Pritchard	Yes	Yes	
Cllr Helen Carr	Yes	Yes	

Agenda

Safer & Stronger Communities Board

Monday 15 January 2018

11.00 am

Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

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Date of Next Meeting: Monday, 19 March 2018, 11.00 am, Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

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Developing the LGA's position on community engagement and neighbourhood policing

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

Following concerns expressed by Board members about a decline in neighbourhood policing and the police's ability to engage with the communities they serve, members agreed at the September Board meeting that it would be useful for officers to undertake a piece of work on this issue.

The College of Policing has also launched a consultation on its new guidelines for modernising neighbouring policing, in response to recommendations made by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services Police Effectiveness Efficiency and Legitimacy reports in 2015 and 2016. This paper seeks members views on the new guidelines and "in practice" implementation materials. This paper also suggests next steps for developing the LGA's policy position on this issue.

Recommendation

Safer and Stronger Communities Board members are asked to provide their views on the College of Policing consultation on the modernising neighbourhood policing guidelines and implementation materials. We also seek members' view on future work proposals on neighbourhood policing.

Action

Officers to respond to the consultation on neighbourhood policing, on behalf of board members. Officers will progress with the work on neighbourhood policing as directed.

Contact officer: Rachel Phelps
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Background

1. Following concerns expressed by Board members during 2017 about a decline in neighbourhood policing and the police's ability to engage with the communities they serve, members agreed at the September Board meeting that it would be useful for officers to undertake a piece of work on this issue.
2. The Board's work programme for 2017/18 therefore includes a commitment to develop a piece of work to explore the concerns raised by members of the Board about neighbourhood policing and engagement; and additional capacity in the team means we are now in a position to take this forward.
3. The College of Policing has also launched a consultation on its new guidelines for modernising neighbouring policing, in response to recommendations made by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) annual inspections of police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) in 2015 and 2016.

Advantages of community engagement and neighbourhood policing

4. Local government has much to gain from community engagement and citizen participation. With 69 per cent of citizens thinking it is important to feel they can influence decisions in their local area, it is important the residents feel empowered and consulted on decisions being taken in their local communities. This can help to ensure public services are shaped by citizens, which can lead to improved service design and outcomes.
5. Effective community engagement can also help to bring disengaged citizens back into the democratic process. Local areas with a strong track record of community engagement can help to build trust and credibility between residents and local government.
6. Successful community engagement requires the commitment of capacity and resources. This is at a time when local government continues to face a period of financial challenge. However, the benefits of engaging citizens effectively has the potential to balance out some of these costs.
7. It is important for councils to strike the right balance engaging with local communities to ensure all residents feel their voices are being heard. For example, digital engagement can provide a space in which people from a range of backgrounds and areas can participate in online discussion or access services quickly and efficiently. However, it can also exclude some people who do not have the equipment or knowledge to access it easily.

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8. Neighbourhood policing is an important aspect of community engagement. Public sentiment around police visibility can be strong and have a significant bearing on broader attitudes to policing and local safety. This is particularly important in addressing crime as British policing since its inception in the nineteenth century has been built around the concept of policing by consent. Without the active support of the communities they serve the police's ability to tackle crime would be significantly affected. Neighbourhood policing has a significant role in this agenda as it can make the police more visible, help to reduce fear of crime in the local community and improve public confidence in reporting crimes, provide intelligence and aid community engagement between the public and the police.
9. Neighbourhood teams are best placed to understand their local areas as they could use their local knowledge to gain intelligence and updates from the public. They have been particularly valuable in helping counter-terrorism teams, through their leadership on preventative work in local communities.

Existing evidence on neighbourhood policing

10. There is strong evidence that suggests residents feel that neighbourhood policing is in decline. In December 2017, HMICFRS [published the findings from an Ipsos Mori survey](#) on public views of policing in England and Wales 2017/18. Of the 12,662 people surveyed, 83 per cent of respondents felt that it was important to have a regular, uniformed police presence in the local area. However, just 17 per cent of respondents felt that there was a regular police presence in their local area. An increasing proportion of respondents said they had not seen a uniformed police presence on foot in their local area in the past year (44 per cent compared with 41 per cent in 2016 and 36 per cent in 2015).
11. Prior to this, HMICFRS [published](#) its 2016 annual inspection of police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL), to assess how effective police forces are at keeping people safe and reducing crime. The inspection warned of insufficient or eroding capability in areas such as neighbourhood policing. HMICFRS suggested the police service is no longer consistently implementing elements of neighbourhood policing known to be effective in preventing and tackling traditional crime, and has not yet applied these to 21st century threats, such as online crime and hidden and complex crimes.
12. The report followed an earlier 2015 HMICFRS warning that neighbourhood policing was being eroded, concluding that "this is likely to negatively affect forces' ability to undertake the vital proactive and preventative aspects of fighting crime." The inspection found that for prevention and neighbourhood policing, HMIC judged two forces to be 'outstanding', 30 to be 'good', 10 to 'require improvement' and one force to be 'inadequate', representing a decline of 11 forces and an improvement of three forces since the 2015 inspection.

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13. HMICFRS [recommended](#) that new national guidance was designed with the aim of preserving neighbourhood policing as the cornerstone of the policing model in England and Wales, and that all forces should then ensure that the service they provide meets that guidance. It recommended the College of Policing, working with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), review the existing evidence about what makes effective neighbourhood policing, and develop and issue guidance setting out the essential elements of neighbourhood policing which all forces should provide.
14. The APCC [responded](#) to the HMICFRS report in March 2017, welcoming the focus the report placed on neighbourhood policing, which the APCC said is of key concern to all Police and Crime Commissioners. The APCC recognised the importance of visible local policing which it said helped to generate trust and confidence in the local community and helped to address crime and anti-social behaviour; it argued that the importance of neighbourhood policing is evidenced by it being one of the key components for the Policing Vision 2025. The APCC said neighbourhood policing also featured in the work of the Police Reform and Transformation Board and they would continue to work alongside the NPCC and the College of Policing on this issue.

Consultation on modernising neighbourhood policing

15. In response to the HMICFRS [recommendations](#) from its 2016 annual inspection of police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL), the College of Policing has developed some guidelines for modernising neighbourhood policing. As part of the process, they have launched a consultation seeking views on the guidelines and the accompanying "in practice" implemental materials. They are interested in receiving the views of the LGA on this. The consultation closes on 2 February 2018.
16. The College of Policing explains that previous guidelines have been based upon the National Reassurance and National Neighbourhood Policing programmes and supported by substantial investment in dedicated neighbourhood resources. The focus was on establishing public priorities to reduce crime and the fear of crime and improve public confidence in the police, recognising the importance of this for maintaining police legitimacy.
17. The College of Policing has explained the context for neighbourhood policing now is different. It suggests that demand on policing services continues to escalate at a time of decreasing resources, particularly those dedicated to local roles, strengthening the need to find sustainable system-wide solutions across public services. Increased reporting of crime committed in private spaces, often against the most vulnerable in our communities, coupled with new and emerging threats means that the day-to-day activities of neighbourhood policing teams have changed dramatically. At the same time, they are using new technologies to engage communities and solve crime and strengthen partnerships, for example, around mental health and social care.

18. The guidelines focus on activities and processes most likely to be effective at improving community safety, reducing crime, disorder and harm and improving public perceptions. The guidelines cover the following areas:

- 18.1. Fostering the right culture
- 18.2. Engaging communities
- 18.3. Building analytical capability
- 18.4. Solving problems
- 18.5. Targeting activity
- 18.6. Developing offers and staff

19. We are seeking member's views on the College of Policing consultation on the modernising neighbourhood policing guidelines and "in practice" implementation documents, both of which are attached in **Annex A**.

20. Questions on the modernising neighbourhood policing guidelines it would be helpful to have members' views on include:

- 20.1. Is the guidance easy to follow and understand?
- 20.2. Does the modern definition of neighbourhood policing reflect your understanding of neighbourhood policing, and does it provide clarity?
- 20.3. Do you think the guidelines, if implemented, will help forces deliver effective neighbourhood policing?
- 20.4. What impact do you think the guidelines, if implemented, will have?

21. Questions on the "in practice" implementation material it would be helpful to have members' views on include:

- 21.1. How useful do you think the 'in practice' and implementation materials are?
- 21.2. What more could be done to make the guidance relevant for frontline practitioners?
- 21.3. Are there any additional issues the guidance should address?

Gathering information on issues related to neighbourhood policing

22. In order to inform the LGA's work around community engagement and neighbourhood policing, and as a means of identifying any other issues that councils are experiencing in

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their local areas around neighbourhood policing, members may wish us to conduct a survey of councils to ascertain their views on this issue. These findings could then help to inform further work the LGA may wish to take forward on neighbourhood policing with the APCC, the College of Policing and other partners.

LGA work on community engagement in policing and neighbourhood policing

23. Subject to the views of board members, officers will draft a response to the College of Policing consultation on the modernising neighbourhood policing guidelines and implementation materials, and then seek Lead Members' approval of the draft response before it is submitted.
24. Following the consultation, it is expected the LGA will wish to engage with the College of Policing to help circulate the new guidelines and offer examples of best practice in local government.
25. There is also scope for the LGA to survey councils in order to understand levels of neighbourhood policing teams and local community engagement, and the impact of any changes in these areas.
26. Following a review of the available evidence and views of councils, it is expected that the LGA will wish to engage with the APCC, the College of Policing and potentially others to discuss specific concerns about these issues.

Next steps

27. Members are asked determine which, or if any, of these points should be taken forward.
28. Officers will take forward any additional work agreed regarding neighbourhood policing, as directed.

Financial Implications

29. All work can be carried out using existing LGA resources.

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted



Building regulations review and fire safety in high rise buildings

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

The interim report from the Building regulations and fire safety review led by Dame Judith Hackitt was published on 18 December 2017. This report outlines the key findings set out in the report and its direction of travel, and also provides an update on the LGA's building safety programme related work.

Recommendations

That the Safer and Stronger Communities Board:

1. Note and comment on the findings and direction of travel outlined in the interim report of the Building regulations and fire safety review.
2. Consider the suggested areas of LGA focus for the second phase of the review's work set out in paragraph 10 and make recommendations to the LGA's Grenfell Task and Finish Group.
3. Note and comment on the LGA's building safety programme work.

Actions

Officers to proceed as directed.

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Building regulations review and fire safety in high rise buildings

Background

1. In July 2017 following the fire at Grenfell Tower, the LGA called for an urgent and immediate review of the building regulations to look at how easy they are to use, understand and comply with. The government responded by establishing an independent review led by Dame Judith Hackitt at the end of July 2017. The review was tasked with submitting an interim report in autumn 2017 and a final report in spring 2018.
2. The terms of reference for the review identified two purposes: to make recommendations to ensure there is a sufficiently robust regulatory system in the future; and to provide further assurance to residents that the regulatory system is working to ensure the buildings they live in are safe and remain so. In reaching its conclusions the review was also asked to:
 - 2.1 Map the current regulatory system as it applies to new and existing buildings;
 - 2.2 Consider the competencies, duties and balance of responsibilities of key individuals in ensuring that fire safety standards are adhered to;
 - 2.3 Assess the theoretical coherence of the current regulatory system and how it operates in practice;
 - 2.4 Compare this with other international regulatory systems and regulatory systems in other sectors with similar safety risks; and;
 - 2.5 Make recommendations that ensure the regulatory system is fit for purpose with a particular focus on multi-occupancy high rise residential buildings.
3. The review issued a call for evidence in September 2017, and the LGA drafted a submission, which was sent in on 13 October. A copy of the LGA's evidence was included in the papers for the Board's last meeting.

Interim Report

4. The interim [report](#) from Dame Judith Hackitt's review was published on 18 December 2017. In it Dame Judith Hackitt sets out the review's key findings so far, the direction of travel as it prepares the final report and the rationale for the proposed next steps, as well as the mapping it has done of the current regulatory system. The review's overall conclusion is that "the current regulatory system is not fit for purpose in relation to high-rise and complex buildings". It also identifies some early actions to support the review's direction of travel. The most relevant findings and recommendations from a local government and LGA perspective are set out below.



Regulation and guidance

- 4.1 The Building Regulations 2010 are clear, but not about where responsibilities lie or on the definitions of important terms, and there is widespread confusion about what are regulations and what is guidance.
- 4.2 The Approved Documents are not produced in a user-friendly format, and should be revised to provide a more streamlined, holistic view which is accessible and user friendly, while retaining the right level of relevant technical detail.
- 4.3 Given that revising the Approved Documents may take some time, the government should consider improving the clarity of Approved Document B (on fire safety) as an interim measure.
- 4.4 The regulatory system needs to become more risk-based, with a more rigorous process for complex and high-risk buildings (along with a definition of what these are) to ensure that building integrity is maintained throughout the life cycle.
- 4.5 It is inappropriate for the current system of building regulation to rely so heavily on central government to keep all regulations and supporting documents up to date. While government should set the basic framework of standards, it should not lead on the specification of the detailed solutions as to how those standards will be met.

Roles and responsibilities

- 4.6 There is a general lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities throughout the system, including under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. It should be the primary responsibility of those who commission work and those who design and build projects to ensure buildings are built to the correct standard.
- 4.7 There should be identifiable, named dutyholders responsible for ensuring and proving compliance with the Building Regulations across the life cycle of a building, with the industry taking responsibility for demonstrating that all buildings are designed and built to be fit for purpose, including the introduction of new techniques and materials into construction.
- 4.8 The role of regulators should be to seek assurance that standards are being adhered to throughout all stages of construction and use, while industry demonstrates it has complied with those standards.
- 4.9 Responsibilities between landlords and residents in blocks of flats must be clarified under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System Regulations and the Fire Safety Order, so for example there is a clear definition of the 'common parts' of such buildings.

Competence

- 4.10 The competence of those involved in the design, construction, inspection, ongoing operational management and maintenance of complex and high-risk buildings has to be raised, as there are numerous examples demonstrating lack of competence among designers, builders, fire engineers, fire consultants, fire risk assessors, building control inspectors and others.
- 4.11 Those working on the design, construction, inspection and maintenance of complex and high-risk buildings therefore need to show they are suitably qualified. The professional and accreditation bodies have an opportunity to demonstrate that they are capable of establishing a robust, comprehensive and coherent system covering all disciplines for work on such buildings.
- 4.12 Local authority building control staff should be subject to audit by an independent body so they have to demonstrate they have maintained their relevant qualifications and experience in the same way Approved Inspectors have to.

Process, compliance and enforcement

- 4.13 There is widespread deviation from what is originally designed to what is actually built, so projects need to be properly documented and a thorough independent review and handover process needs to take place before a building can be occupied.
- 4.14 Checking for non-compliance can be hindered because the work has already been completed before it can be inspected or because work has started before full plans have been approved. Similar issues occur in relation to the Fire Safety Order where advice may be ignored or not acted upon because work is too far advanced.
- 4.15 Modifications and upgrades to complex and high-rise buildings must be subject to the same rigorous processes as during construction, with changes due to refurbishment properly reviewed and recorded, and the possibility that buildings have to be brought up to the latest fire safety standards.
- 4.16 There are differences of view about the impact of the partial privatisation of building control, and the ability to choose between local authority building control and approved inspectors. Issues highlighted include the effect on enforcement, the independence of building control and the pressures placed on local authority resources. Any further privatisation of the market must ensure effective enforcement and that approved inspectors are demonstrably independent.
- 4.17 Local authority building control teams are deterred from pursuing instances of non-compliance with the building regulations, and taking formal enforcement action by the cost of pursuing cases through the courts, and the historical failure of the courts to impose robust sanctions. Those responsible for enforcing the regulations should

have the resources to do so, be provided with appropriate powers, and any penalties should be suitably severe.

4.18 Fire and rescue services should be consulted by building control bodies or those commissioning or designing buildings at the earliest possible stage in the process and fire and rescue service advice should be fully taken into account.

4.19 There is a need for building control bodies to do more to assure that fire safety information for a building is provided by the person completing the building work to the responsible person for the building once it has been occupied. Given the importance of such information for ongoing maintenance and fire risk assessment, proof should be sought that it has been transferred.

4.20 The regular risk assessments of high-rise residential buildings required by the Fire Safety Order should be undertaken at least annually and when any significant alterations are made to the building. These risk assessments should be shared in an accessible way with the residents who live within that building and notified to the fire and rescue service.

Residents' voice and raising concerns

4.21 Residents need to be reassured that an effective system is in place to maintain safety in their homes, though the often complex ownership and management models in multiple occupancy residential buildings involving managing agents, varying leasehold contracts, residents' associations and so on, can make it difficult for residents to identify who to contact to raise concerns or to get responses to concerns when raised.

Quality assurance and products

4.22 As products are marketed in ways in which means their performance can easily be misinterpreted, and individual elements are being used in systems without the systems being fully tested, it is important that products are properly tested, certified and marketed clearly. One of the review's strands of work in the next phase will be to examine whether product testing data should be made publicly available, and how the system product classification and labelling can be made clearer.

4.23 The widespread use of desktop studies is not being properly managed so government should significantly restrict their use to where it is appropriate and there is sufficient, relevant test evidence. Those undertaking desktop studies must be able to demonstrate suitable competence.

4.24 As the integrity and efficacy of product and system classifications are highly dependent on correct installation by competent and knowledgeable persons a number of respondents have called for a reinstatement of the former role of Clerk of Works or similar to act as the primary gatekeeper of quality assurance on significant projects. There is a need to ensure oversight of the quality of installation work carried out as well as of the materials delivered to site and used.



International examples

- 4.25 Fires in high-rise buildings have occurred elsewhere in the world and a number of corrective measures have been put in place or are under consideration. The review will use examples of what has worked well in other countries to support the work during phase two.
5. Having concluded that the current regulatory system is not fit for purpose, in its next stage the review will consider how it can be fully overhauled, so that it is simpler, clearer to all and delivers better outcomes. The ideas for improving the regulatory system set out in the interim report will be developed and turned into final recommendations to deliver the direction of travel set out in the report. A key message from the interim report is the need on the part of construction industry to recognise there has to be significant cultural and behavioural change. The review challenges the industry to take responsibility for buildings in the same way they have taken responsibility over the last few years for the safety of people working on construction projects, and which has delivered considerable changes in practice.
6. Dame Judith Hackitt is looking to work in partnership with industry leaders to help take forward the areas of work identified in the interim report. The first stage in this process will be a summit a summit with key stakeholders, including the LGA, taking place on Monday 22 January 2018. This is partly designed as a call to action to the entire industry to ensure there is real change that improves the effectiveness and efficiency of building regulations and the fire safety system.
7. In his response to the interim report on 18 December 2017 the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government confirmed that the government accepted all of the interim report's recommendations. He added that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) will revise the Approved Documents on Fire Safety to clarify them and restrict the use of desktop studies, with a new British Standard being commissioned on when and how they can be used. MHCLG will also consider how the entire suite of Approved Documents can be restructured and reordered to make it more user-friendly. In addition the Ministry will be writing to building control bodies to highlight the recommendations in the interim report about the need to consult fire and rescue services as early in the design process as possible, and to ensure that fire safety information on a building is handed over by the person completing the building work to the person responsible for the building once it is occupied.

LGA response to the interim report

8. The interim report reflects many of the points made in the LGA's submission to the review's call for evidence in September. The overarching conclusion that the current regulatory system is not fit for purpose echoes the LGA's view that the fire at Grenfell Tower has exposed a systemic failure. Nearly all the substantive points made in our submission were picked up in the interim report including:

- 8.1 the lack of clarity in the Approved Document on Fire Safety;
 - 8.2 the problematic interaction between individual parts of the wider suite of Approved Documents;
 - 8.3 the problems with product labelling, product certification and the fire safety testing of cladding systems;
 - 8.4 the need for specific individuals to have responsibility for ensuring a building is constructed to the building regulations;
 - 8.5 the impact of the competitive market in building control on standards and inspections;
 - 8.6 the competencies of those involved in carrying out fire risk assessments; and
 - 8.7 the way that the Housing Act 2004 and the Fire Safety Order work.
9. This represents a considerable lobbying success on the part of the LGA. In our initial media response to the report's publication we therefore welcomed it. The LGA's Grenfell Task and Finish Group will be considering the interim report in detail at its next meeting on 17 January. Ahead of that it would be helpful to have the Board's views on the interim report, and particular areas of the review's work the LGA should seek to shape going forward.
10. As the report incorporates nearly all the substantive points we thought should be addressed by the review, it is suggested that the LGA supports the review's overall findings and direction of travel, and in particular the recommendations to restructure the suite of Approved Documents and make the Approved Document on Fire Safety clearer. In terms of areas where the LGA should seek to further shape the review's findings, the Board may wish to suggest the following areas for consideration to the Task and Finish Group:
- 10.1 The review argues that the current building regulation system relies too heavily on central government keeping the relevant documentation up to date, and that while government should set the overall framework of standards, government should not lead on the specification of detailed solutions. The review suggests that the construction industry should have a greater role in this process. This would provide the ability to respond flexibly to changes in technology, design and construction methods. However allowing industry to specific solution is arguably part of the reason that we have high-rise residential blocks with combinations of aluminium composite cladding and insulation that has now been deemed to not meet building regulation standards.
 - 10.2 The review points out that the lifetime of the building is considerably longer than the time spent on its construction. During that period new methods of improving the safety of a building will become available. The review argues that it is not sufficient for regulations to make these new methods a requirement for new buildings, and that consideration has to be given to what it is reasonable and

practical to do upgrade and improve the fire safety of existing buildings during their lifespan. This would potentially have a significant impact on local authorities. Currently the building regulations require the installation of sprinkler systems in high-rise residential blocks over 30 metres in height. Although councils are already looking to retrofit sprinklers in many tower blocks there is a substantial financial cost to doing so. A requirement on local authorities to bring existing buildings up to the latest fire safety standards would therefore have to come with an appropriate funding mechanism.

- 10.3 The review recommends that there are sufficient layers of protection to ensure that building safety does not rely heavily on compartmentation, as there is a high risk compartmentation being breached during building use. The review suggests there are a range of other fire protection methods that could be incorporated into existing buildings, including additional stairwells. Not only does this have cost implications but it also has implications for the 'stay put' advice that the fire and rescue service has traditionally given to residents of high-rise buildings in the event of a fire, and for the LGA's own 'Fire safety in purpose built flats guidance'. The practical effect of this approach on 'stay put', including on the ability of firefighters to fight a fire if people are evacuating a building in numbers, should be explored further with the fire and rescue service.
- 10.4 While the review notes the impact of the competitive market in building control, it also talks about the possibility of that market being opened further. It does not however talk about creating the 'level playing field' that the LGA has argued is necessary between local authority building control and approved inspectors. We have argued that there should be absolute clarity on the required inspections (such as the number of them) and the standard of those inspections. The LGA should push the review to make specific recommendations in its final report to ensure there is a level playing field.
- 10.5 One of the review's findings was that approved inspectors are required under their code of conduct to demonstrate and maintain relevant qualifications and experience and are subject to audit by an independent body but local authority building control staff are not. Local Authority Building Control the body for council building control teams has been developing a competency framework with independent auditing for its members, which is in line with the LGA's philosophy of sector-led improvement to driving up standards. We would therefore want to be closely involved in any discussions about the possible creation of an independent body to audit councils' building control functions.

Social Housing Tower Blocks

Remediation work

11. Councils and housing associations continue to make progress in carrying out remediation work to the 45 council owned blocks and the 100 plus housing association tower blocks with combinations of aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding and insulation that have been found not to meet the building regulation standards following tests at the Building Research Establishment (BRE) over in July and August 2017. The update requested by MHCLG from councils and housing associations in November has

shown that remediation work has either been completed or is well progressed on a small number of tower blocks. In over half the blocks work to remove the ACM cladding has started or is already complete.

12. A key issue for councils continues to be that of costs, with some councils reporting that the tenders they have received for work have significantly exceeded original estimates for work. It is not clear why the costs have increased this much. In some areas it is because of additional work being added to the specification, but in others there appear to have been cost increases from firms providing materials and contractors to do the work. This may be reflect earlier concerns about the limited amount of expertise in the market place to do this work.

Alternatives to ACM and other metal composite material cladding systems

13. There is now a range of advice publicly available to building owners about what materials might replace ACM cladding and insulation combinations that do not meet the building regulation standards. This advice however is not consistent. MHCLG's Expert Panel published further advice for building owners following the publication of Dame Judith Hackitt's interim report. The Expert Panel repeated their advice from September that the clearest way of satisfying the building regulation standards is to use materials of limited combustibility or to use a system that has been shown to pass a large scale test conducted to the BS 8414 standard.
14. The Metal Cladding and Roofing Manufacturers Association (MCRMA) also issued a guidance note to its members in November on the safe use of rainscreen cladding facades. The MCRMA goes beyond the Expert Panel's advice and recommends that polyethylene ACM is not used in any building internally or externally, and that in buildings over 12 metres in height the external façade should only use materials of limited combustibility. The MCMRA guidance also raised questions in relation to the robustness of BS 8414 tests, something the LGA highlighted in its submission to the Building Regulations review.
15. The lack of clarity about what materials to use in remediation work is unlikely to become clearer for some time. We anticipate that other industry associations like the MCMRA will produce their own advice. As was highlighted earlier in the report MHCLG will be reviewing Approved Document B, which provides guidance on meeting the fire safety requirements of the building regulations following Dame Judith Hackitt's interim report. However this is likely to concentrate on restricting the use of desktop studies rather than resolve the issue of whether only material of limited combustibility should be used on the external walls of high-rise buildings.
16. To add to this confusing picture MHCLG published guidance on 11 December on the use of cladding materials other than ACM in external wall systems. This advice noted that there are other metal composite material (MCM) cladding products such as zinc, copper and stainless steel that can include combustible materials in the core sandwiched between the metal exterior of the cladding panel. It also pointed out that the metals used have different melting points so the fire performance of the product can depend on the metal used. In addition it pointed out that there are other materials such as high pressure laminates (HPL) that can be used in cladding systems which can also contain combustible materials. Where external wall systems incorporated materials that are not

of limited combustibility, such as rigid foam insulation as well as ACM or other MCM panels, MHCLG advised building owners to check whether the system had passed a BS 8414 test. The LGA has been calling for MHCLG to issue guidance about the risks associated with other materials in addition to ACM so this is a step in the right direction. However it remains to be seen if building owners respond to the advice by checking whether any of their high-rise blocks have MCM or HPL cladding as well as if they have ACM.

Private sector blocks

Data Collection

17. Councils' work to gather information on the private high-rise residential buildings in their area and report this to MHCLG continue. Nine out of ten councils have either sent a nil return or provided a full return and MHCLG is now reviewing the information. The LGA has been in discussion with MHCLG about how to support those councils that have not yet been able to gather the information for a full return, a matter given an added sense of urgency by the fire in the 12 storey private residential block in Manchester over the Christmas period.
18. From this information MHCLG will then have an accurate picture of the number of private high-rise buildings with ACM cladding. Further work will then be required to identify what type of ACM cladding is present, and therefore whether it needs to be removed. Given the guidance issued before Christmas by MHCLG on MCM and HPL cladding panels, the LGA has suggested that the survey should be extended to also identify whether they are present on private high-rise buildings so there is a comprehensive national picture, and to prevent the information having to be gathered at a later point.

Legal powers

19. While many building owners have come forward to volunteer information about their buildings, in some instances identifying building owners and what type of cladding is on a building is taking a considerable amount of time for councils. As a result local authorities continue to have concerns about their ability to take action where landlords do not prove co-operative, and the resource implications of taking action under the Housing Act 2004. The LGA will continue to press MHCLG to ensure that councils are supported in any legal action they take under the Housing Act as part of the work in making private high-rise residential buildings safe.

Outcomes from the programme

20. Local authorities also remain concerned about what happens as the programme develops. As outlined at the last Board meeting there are concerns about:
 - 20.1 The resource implications for Fire and Rescue Authorities of having to inspect private high-rise residential buildings. The information councils have so far gathered suggests that there are considerably more private high-rise buildings with ACM than there are in the social housing sector.

- 20.2 Who will pay for any remedial work, who will carry it out if the building owner is unable to afford to do so, and what happens if the building owner decides to remove or reduce any interim fire safety measures they have been told by the fire and rescue service they need to have in place? Councils and fire and rescue services may have to consider who takes responsibility for any remedial work, though they may not be able to afford to do the work even if they wished to do so, and may also have to consider what powers they have to enforce any interim fire safety measures.
- 20.3 The impact on leaseholders. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in response to questions in the House of Commons in December and his statement to the House following publication of the Building Regulations review interim report stated he did not want to see private landlords pass on the cost of remediation work to leaseholders. It is not clear however that every building owner will be able to afford the cost of replacing the ACM cladding or the interim fire safety measures they have to have in place until that work is completed. This may then mean that substantive costs are passed on to leaseholders, which may impact on the willingness of building owners to pay for interim fire safety measures.
21. The LGA continues to discuss these issues with MHCLG and London Councils, and ensure that the implications of the building safety programme are fully worked through so that councils and fire and rescue authorities are provided with the resources they need.

Large Panel System built buildings

22. After concerns raised by residents on the Ledbury estate about cracks in the walls of the blocks, and the implications this might have for fire safety, the London Borough of Southwark commissioned Arup in July 2017 to investigate the cracks. Arup concluded that the cracks were actually gaps between the concrete panels that make up the buildings, resulting from the fact the four tower blocks were constructed using the large panel system (LPS) method and did not affect the strength of the blocks.
23. Southwark then asked Arup to check the structure of the blocks to ensure that they could withstand the kind of gas explosion that occurred at Ronan Point in 1968, as the Ledbury blocks were built to the same design and had piped gas. The gas explosion in a flat in Ronan Point had led to one corner of the building collapsing; as this resulted in much more damage than anticipated it was termed 'disproportionate collapse'. The structural appraisal by Arup concluded that the blocks had not been strengthened to a standard required to have piped gas, and this was cut off, pending a further, more thorough, investigation of all four blocks.
24. Arup submitted the conclusions of their further investigations to Southwark on 20 November. This report set out the findings of a structural assessment of the blocks on the Ledbury estate, and in particular their resistance to disproportionate collapse, their resistance to wind loading and the durability of the concrete structure. 19 flats across the four blocks were examined. These investigations found that:
- 24.1 The structure of the buildings was in good condition;
- 24.2 Each block met the wind loading requirements in the current building regulations;

- 24.3 But the blocks do not fully comply with the recommendations to prevent disproportionate collapse in large panel system buildings set out in the 2012 guidance produced by BRE and MHCLG to update the 1968 guidance.
25. Arup has therefore recommended that strengthening work to the floors, cross-walls and connections between external panels and internal walls is undertaken to the blocks. As carrying out the work will require tenants to be moved out of their flats, Southwark is costing the work, and then will work with consultants and local residents to look at all the possible options for the future of the tower blocks.
26. Issues with buildings constructed using the large panel system method have also been identified on the Broadwater Farm estate in Haringey. Following advice from MHCLG to local authorities after the problems had been identified on the Ledbury estate, Haringey instructed structural engineers to examine a number of large panel system buildings with a gas supply. Although these are low rise blocks, the engineers' feedback was that the blocks did not meet the standards to have gas supplies. As a precautionary measure to enable residents remain in their homes Haringey has removed all gas cookers from the blocks, provided all affected tenants with replacement electric cookers and fitted disruptor valves so in the event of a leak the gas supplies to the blocks is cut off, reducing the risk of an explosion.
27. The Arup and Haringey findings may have implications for other LPS buildings, and MHCLG and BRE are currently considering the wider implications of the Arup report. One possibility is that councils will have to commission structural surveys if they have not already done so to check that the strengthening work, which should have been carried out was actually done, and that any they own LPS buildings comply with current building regulations and the 2012 MHCLG and BRE guidance.

External Wall Insulation systems

28. On 11 December MHCLG published advice for building owners with high-rise residential blocks with external wall insulation (EWI) and either a render or brick-slip finish. It had been drawn to MHCLG's attention that in some instances EWI had fallen off buildings including from one in Glasgow, fortunately to date not injuring anyone. This has been the result of either poor installation or inadequate structural calculation methodologies.
29. MHCLG's advice is that where a recent review of the EWI has not been undertaken, then a structural engineer or chartered surveyor should be instructed to inspect the structural integrity of the EWI particularly where the building is subject to high wind loading for example due to its height or in an exposed location. MHCLG's recommendation is that there is both a visual inspection of the EWI and that the design records for the system are assessed for their adequacy. Where necessary further non-invasive or invasive may be necessary to ensure the EWI has been properly installed.
30. The issuing of MHCLG's advice leaves a number of questions unanswered at this stage. It is not clear how widely EWI have been used in high-rise buildings, though the LGA has heard suggestions that energy suppliers used such insulation when fitting high-rise buildings as part of their commitments and obligations under various energy efficiency schemes such as the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target, the Community Energy Saving Programme and the Energy Company Obligation. It is also unclear how



widespread the problems with the design or installation of EWI are, and whether MHCLG's advice is comprehensive enough. The LGA is therefore considering seeking information from member authorities on both the extent of use of EWI and how well it has been installed to gauge whether there is an issue for council owned high-rise blocks. As further information is obtained members will be kept informed.

Implications for Wales

31. The issues set out in the this report are being addressed by the Welsh government and local authorities in Wales.

Financial Implications

32. The LGA's work in response to Grenfell Tower continues to be intensive, however it has been met so far from existing resources.

Next steps

33. Members are asked to:

33.1 Note and comment on the findings and direction of travel outlined in the interim report of the Building regulations and fire safety review.

33.2 Consider the suggested areas of LGA focus for the second phase of the review's work set out in paragraph 10 and make recommendations to the LGA's Grenfell Task and Finish Group.

33.3 Note and comment on the LGA's building safety programme work.



**Safer and Stronger
Communities Board**

15 January 2018

Drowning Prevention Campaign

Purpose

For direction.

Summary

The LGA has been working with the National Water Safety Forum on drowning prevention. The paper proposes a campaign – aimed solely at our members – to raise awareness of the need to act on this issue, in particular in relation to our role as duty holders under the Health and Safety at Work Act.

Recommendation

That the Safer and Stronger Communities Board approve the proposed campaign.

Action

Officers to proceed as directed.

Contact officer: Charles Loft
Position: Senior Adviser
Phone no: 0207 664 3874
Email: Charles.loft@local.gov.uk

Drowning Prevention Campaign

Background

1. In November 2016, the Safer and Stronger Communities Board (SSCB) agreed to:
 - 1.1. Work with the National Water Safety Forum (NWSF) and its members, including the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI), to support existing campaigns and educational work and to support the Forum's objectives;
 - 1.2. Continue to seek examples of water safety best practice and to publicise these on the LGA website;
 - 1.3. Work to encourage councils to share data for inclusion on water related incident data (WAID) and to consider joining the National Water Safety Forum;
 - 1.4. Encourage councils to have a community-level risk assessment and water safety plan and to in turn encourage local recreational activity organisations to have a clear strategic risk assessment and plans that address key risks;
 - 1.5. Make the case for a session on water safety at the LGA's 2018 annual conference;
and
 - 1.6. Work with the NWSF and other partners to encourage central government to do more to raise awareness of water safety issues.
2. The LGA has subsequently:
 - 2.1. Supported the NWSF in attempting to improve data by lobbying the Home Office. Our LG Inform colleagues have been in discussion with the NWSF as to how we can support improved data for WAID and we have raised this with the Home Office in connection with its attempts to make fire and rescue service data more transparent.
 - 2.2. Published a water safety toolkit for councils on the LGA website, along with best practice case studies.
 - 2.3. Had an SSCB representative (Cllr James Dawson) speak at the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) water safety conference.
 - 2.4. LGA communications have supported drowning prevention campaigns by the RNLI, the Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).
 - 2.5. An unsuccessful bid was made for a session on water safety at the 2017 LGA conference.
 - 2.6. Policy and communications have supported Rother DC in dealing with the consequences of drownings at Camber Sands in summer 2016.

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3. The LGA has been invited to join the separate coastal and inland groups of the NWSF. The Coastal Special Interest Group (SIG) will attend the next coastal meeting with officers and SSCB water safety champions will attend the next inland group meeting.
4. We would like to work with RoSPA and Swim England to facilitate more water safety being taught in schools. We have prompted the idea on our website but have not had the capacity recently to pursue this more actively. There may be some challenges around the LGA commenting on curriculum content. There may be opportunities to work with the Culture, Tourism and Sport Board here.
5. The following issues have emerged as potential focuses for future activity on this topic:
 - 5.1. There is some uncertainty around water safety responsibilities placed on councils as duty holders under the Health and Safety at Work Act.
 - 5.2. Although our toolkit was well received, there is insufficient awareness of it among LGA members.
 - 5.3. The term 'water safety' is confusing for some as it is seen as relating to drinking water. Drowning prevention is clearer.
 - 5.4. We have also become aware of the worrying case in Maldon where a local amenity has been lost as a result of safety issues:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maldon_Marine_Lake.
6. It is therefore proposed that the Board approve a drowning prevention campaign aimed at LGA members. The aim of this campaign would be to raise awareness among councils of:
 - 6.1. The issue in general.
 - 6.2. The availability of resources to support drowning prevention.
 - 6.3. The need to work with partners on this issue.
 - 6.4. The need to consider councils as duty holders.
 - 6.5. The importance of including drowning prevention messages in school swimming lessons.
7. The proposed elements of the campaign include:
 - 7.1. It will be linked to one of the major national water safety campaigns.
 - 7.2. Refreshing and promoting our toolkit and case studies.
 - 7.3. Producing information for councils as duty holders and incorporating this role into the toolkit.

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- 7.4. Bidding for an innovation zone slot at the LGA conference, possibly around the establishment of a regional water safety group in the East Midlands (depending on timing, this may not be part of the campaign as such).
- 7.5. A piece in First (this would need to avoid duplication of last year's piece).
- 7.6. A social media 'event' sharing best practice. Linked to one of the main campaigns, this could involve a day on which councils tweet about their drowning prevention work.
- 7.7. Councils writing to schools in the run-up to one of the national campaigns about the need to include cold water shock in swimming lessons (possibly sending a letter from the SSCB Chair and NFCC President).

Implications for Wales ¹

8. Officers have drawn WLGA attention to the proposed campaign and will liaise over Welsh involvement, should the WLGA wish to be involved.

Financial Implications

9. This work would be undertaken using existing budgets, with most work expected to take place in the next financial year.

Next steps

10. If the Board approves the campaign in principle, the next step will be to discuss with our NWSF partners how we can work together and to obtain detailed advice on the duties of councils as Health and Safety at Work Act duty holders. We will also discuss curriculum issues with LGA colleagues.

¹ The WLGA pays a membership fee to the LGA on behalf of all Welsh councils and we lobby for them on "non-devolved" issues - e.g. DWP work. The WLGA provides "top-slice" for workforce support, but none for "improvement".



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Update paper

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

The report outlines issues of interest to the Board not covered under the other items on the agenda.

Recommendation

That the Safer and Stronger Communities Board members note the update.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

Contact officer: Mark Norris
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Update paper

Counter extremism

1. The Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism (SIGCE) was formally launched at Smith Square on 23 November. Cllr Colin Spence chaired the event, which attracted over 100 elected members and officers, and heard from Baroness Williams, Minister of State for Countering Extremism, and Lord Bourne, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Minister for Faith.
2. The SIGCE is a local authority led network co-chaired by Cllr Hazel Simmons (Leader, Luton Council) and Cllr Debra Coupar (Executive Member for Communities, Leeds City Council), partnered by the LGA, the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University, and funded by the Home Office and DCLG (with funding secured for two years).
3. The network will bring together councils in England and Wales to share learning and experience, and promote good practice on countering extremism beyond terrorism. Its work programme will include developing guidance on counter extremism tools and resources available to councils; organizing a number of expert seminars to build understanding around particular themes; and helping to facilitate links across local authorities. It will be supported by an online Knowledge Hub, which will be used to disseminate outcomes, share resources and host forum discussions around particular issues.
4. Members are encouraged to sign up to the SIGCE's Knowledge Hub group, which can be accessed via [this link](#). For further details or assistance in accessing the knowledge hub site, please contact Rachel.duke@local.gov.uk.

Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 – Updated Statutory Guidance 2017

5. The Home Office published updated [statutory guidance](#) in December 2017, on the use of anti-social behaviour powers for frontline professionals. The Home Office said that changes had been made to the guidance to ensure there is greater focus on the impact of anti-social behaviour on victims and on their needs, ensuring relevant legal tests are met before powers are used, ensuring the powers are used to tackle specific anti-social behaviour, and ensuring there is local consultation, accountability and transparency.
6. The Home Office have noted in particular that the updated guidance emphasises the importance of ensuring the powers are used appropriately to provide a proportionate response to the specific behaviour that is causing harm or nuisance without impacting adversely on behaviour that is neither unlawful nor anti-social.
7. For Community Protection Notices, a new sentence has been included which states “agencies should have sufficient evidence to satisfy themselves that the behaviour in question is genuinely having a detrimental effect on others’ quality of life, in terms of the

nuisance and harm that is being caused to others, rather than being a behaviour that others may find annoying.”

8. For Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs), an additional paragraph has been added to clarify the following: “Given that these orders can restrict what people can do and how they behave in public spaces, it is important that the restrictions imposed are focused on specific behaviours and are proportionate to the detrimental effect that the behaviour is causing or can cause, and are necessary to prevent it from continuing, occurring or recurring.”
9. The guidance now strongly recommends that the council engages in an open and public consultation on PSPOs. It has also been updated to state that before an order is made, the council must publish the draft order in accordance with the regulations published by the Secretary of State and ensure that the draft order is made available on its website.
10. A new section has been added which states that PSPOs should not be used to target people based solely on the fact that someone is homeless or rough sleeping. It recommends councils should consider whether the use of a PSPO is the appropriate response and should also consider consulting with national or local homeless charities on the issue.
11. There is additional guidance for Parish and Town councils who wish to deal with dog control issues but cannot use PSPOs. The guidance recommends these councils should discuss the issue with their principal authority and whether a PSPO would address the issues being experienced by the local community.
12. There is a new section on groups hanging around, standing in groups or playing games. The guidance suggests that councils should not inadvertently restrict everyday sociality in public spaces and the PSPO should target specifically the problem behaviour that is having a detrimental effect on the community’s quality of life. If restrictions are put in place, the guidance recommends that councils also consider whether there are alternative spaces that they can use.
13. The guidance also provides a brief update on the notice required to a tenant with regards to secure or assured tenancies, minor changes to the use of civil injunctions, and the Community Trigger process.

Domestic violence and abuse – update

14. Cllr Blackburn and Mark Norris previously met with Home Office officials in November 2017 to discuss the Government’s proposals for new domestic violence and abuse legislation ahead of a formal consultation, to outline the potential implications for councils. The Home Office had expected to publish the consultation in December, but this has now been postponed until February at the earliest. The Bill team have said they are planning some non-legislative announcements on domestic violence and abuse to coincide with the Bill’s introduction to Parliament.
15. The Government have also introduced the [Secure Tenancies \(Victims of Domestic Abuse\) Bill](#) in the House of Lords. The Bill seeks to make it a requirement that social

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housing tenants in England who currently have a life-time tenancy and are fleeing domestic violence be granted a similar life-time tenancy in their new home. We briefed in support of the Bill and suggested that housing associations should also offer these tenancies to victims of domestic abuse, in order to offer the widest possible protection. In our briefing to parliamentarians, we raised the issue that our housing crisis in limiting councils' ability to offer the right tenancies to our residents. Ending the current restrictions on councils' borrowing to invest in housing would mean more secure social homes become available for vulnerable tenants.

16. On Friday 5 January, the LGA submitted its response to the [DCLG consultation on improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse](#), following feedback from the Safer and Stronger Communities Board (SSCB), and the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport (EEHT) Board. In our response, we outlined that many councils already included exemptions for victims of domestic violence for residency and local connection tests when applying for social housing as part of their allocation policy. We suggested that new statutory guidance could help to provide additional clarity for councils, and ensure consistency across local government, whilst also ensuring councils retain their local flexibility and powers. It was also important to raise the issue of the national housing shortage, which we called on the Government to urgently address, in order to make necessary provision for all groups of people in need of housing.

Taxis/PHVs update

17. The Ministerial working group on taxi/PHVs licensing has now met several times to discuss key themes including passenger safety, cross border hiring and drivers' working conditions. The final meeting before Christmas heard evidence from witnesses including a drivers' union; Unite the Union; the Metropolitan police and Uber. Further meetings in January will hear from a range of other witnesses before reviewing the evidence, discussing outstanding issues and considering a final report. Minister for Taxis, John Hayes MP, has agreed to provide the keynote speech at the LGA's annual licensing conference in February (see below).
18. Work has commenced to build the national register of taxi/PHV licence refusals and revocations, which the LGA has commissioned. This is due to be ready for testing by the project user group at the end of the month, with the release date scheduled for April 2018.

Annual licensing conference

19. The LGA's Annual Licensing Conference is taking place on 7 February 2018. Minister, John Hayes MP, has been confirmed as the keynote speaker and will be updating on progress of the taxi/PHV working group. Other speakers will include Daniel Zeichner MP, Cllr Simon Blackburn, Cllr Kate Haigh, the Gambling Commission, and a number of local authorities sharing best practice from across various parts of licensing. Cllr Clive Woodbridge will be chairing the event.

Modern slavery

20. The LGA and Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner have published a guide for local authorities on modern slavery. The guide sets out what modern slavery is, the legislative framework and the duties of local authorities. The council role can be separated into four distinct areas:
- 20.1. Identification and referral of victims.
 - 20.2. Supporting victims – this can be through safeguarding children and adults with care and support needs and through housing/homelessness services.
 - 20.3. Community safety services and disruption activities.
 - 20.4. Ensuring that the supply chains councils procure from are free from modern slavery.
21. Modern slavery intersects with many different areas that councils are involved with, and a number of different departments may come across it whilst going about their everyday duties. The guide can be found on the LGA's website: www.local.gov.uk/modern-slavery-council-guide.
22. The LGA will also be running a number of free modern slavery regional events to support the guide and provide councils with the opportunity to hear from a range of experts and case studies:
- 22.1. [London](#) – 17 January 2018
 - 22.2. [Newcastle](#) – 25 January 2018
 - 22.3. [Manchester](#) – 31 January 2018
 - 22.4. [Bristol](#) – 27 February 2018
 - 22.5. [Nottingham](#) – 7 March 2018

Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

Title: Safer & Stronger Communities Board
Date: Wednesday 22 November 2017
Venue: Smith Square Rooms 1&2, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

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

Item Decisions and actions

1 Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest

The Chair opened the meeting and noted apologies from Cllrs Alan Rhodes and Janet Daby. Substitutes Cllr Vic Pritchard (Con) and Cllr Helen Carr (Independent) attended the meeting as observers.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Gambling issues - update

Having discussed the issue of problem gambling at a previous meeting, the Board had requested a presentation from representatives from Leeds City Council about their work to tackle problem gambling and its wider impact on society. The Chair introduced Jo Rowlands and Dave Roberts from Leeds City Council, who gave members an overview of the progress made so far.

Leeds City Council granted Global Gaming Ventures a licence in 2013 on the condition that they were able to secure a number of economic, social and environmental benefits to mitigate against any negative impacts a large casino may cause. The Council used an associated grant to commission research to assess rates of problem gambling and found that there were around 10,000 adult problem gamblers in Leeds (in percentage terms, double the national average rate), and a further 30,000 'at risk' individuals. The research found that this could affect anyone at any time, and that it was often a hidden addiction which impacted on personal finances, wellbeing and relationships. It was noted that there was often a clear link between problem gambling, existing debt problems and those with mental health difficulties, and links to the council's priority on tackling poverty and reducing inequality. The council had also met with the director of Public Health England, who agreed that this was an issue growing in prominence.

In response to the research, Leeds City Council aimed to deliver three strands of work looking at increasing awareness through marketing and promotional campaigns, increasing awareness of problem gambling through staff development and increasing support to those impacted. Their awareness campaign, Beat the Odds, launched in October 2017 and was advertised in targeted areas such as bus shelters close to

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gambling establishments, pubs, garage forecourts, hospitals and GP practices, and also made use of geo-location advertising which would show pop-up adverts on mobile phones when close to a betting shop. The work to increase staff awareness was focused on staff with direct customer contact, libraries, housing providers, schools, children's centres, advice centres, universities and community based organisations. Where staff had previously identified problem gamblers, they reported that while they recognised the problem, they were not clear where individuals could be referred to for support. This fed into the third strand which focused on increasing the support services available to gamblers, including local counsellors, as well as awareness of the National Gambling HelpLine. The council had been working on this issue for around 18 months and reported that there was clear evidence of enthusiasm for tackling this problem within the city.

The Chair thanked the speakers and invited comments from members of the Board:

- Members discussed whether there was a definition of 'problem gambling' and what the link was between other addictions or crime. Dave Roberts explained that there was national research which suggested co-morbidity and a link between gambling and other issues such as debt, addiction and domestic violence, and he was clear that this was not being looked at as a single issue problem.
- A conversation was had about how little was currently known about the scale of the problem and how beneficial it would be to have sufficient evidence to back up calls to tackle problem gambling. Comments were made about a need not to appear against gambling but to show that for some people, there is a problem which needs tackling and that advertisers needed to be held more responsible.
- Members felt it was crucial to consider the impact problem gambling had not just on the individual but also their wider families and employers. Leeds City Council agreed with this position and confirmed they were looking at how to tease out this particular issue and whether low level screening could work across partnerships. Members were told that screening was not taking place at the moment because there was insufficient local support available for those affected and there was a reluctance to provide false hope when there was only one counsellor available in the city. While the national helpline was good, far more local provision was needed.
- Members supported attempts to work across partners and agreed that the voluntary sector and community organisations should be involved in any efforts to tackle problem gambling.

Ellie Greenwood, LGA Senior Adviser (Regulation), then provided members with an update on the Government's recent announcement on their review of fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs), stake reduction and advertising. The Government had committed to substantially reducing stakes but it wasn't clear if that would go as far as the LGA's calls for a reduction to £2. Members were told that the trade body for amusement arcades had commissioned research looking at the benefits of reducing stakes. It was also noted that the Government was not looking to increase any other stakes and was rejecting calls from casinos to increase the number of machines permitted in their establishments.

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In terms of advertising, the Government had not committed to anything substantive but that there would be a major public information campaign to be funded by the industry and led by GambleAware. Members were told that the Government would also encourage the industry to take voluntary action on promoting responsible online gambling. The Government had confirmed it would consider introducing a statutory levy to fund research, education and treatment if the industry did not voluntarily increase donations. The LGA planned to respond to the consultation on this, which would close on 23 January, and officers were seeking a steer from members on the content of the response.

Members made the following points:

- The LGA should continue to press for a reduction to a £2 stake but should also ask that spin speeds are reduced and that measures are taken to encourage responsible advertising. On stake reduction, it was suggested that research into the benefits of stake reduction in countries where this had already been introduced would be helpful – e.g. New Zealand where the maximum stake is less than £1.
- Members agreed with the suggestion of a levy which would raise funds for the treatment of gambling addictions but expressed concerns that a voluntary levy was unlikely to be as profitable as a mandatory levy. They also suggested that links with the health agenda were considered and more funding was needed for enforcement.
- It was noted that online betting organisations were previously fined £7.8 million for their failure to assist vulnerable customers and members asked where that money had gone. Members suggested that analysis by the LGA of the amount of funding given to local authorities to deal with gambling addiction would be useful.
- Members felt that while a stake reduction would be a positive step, it was not a panacea and it was also important to look at educating people so they understood the odds of winning online gambling so that the problem is not simply pushed from one arena to another.
- It was suggested that the LGA could run a social media campaign to raise awareness of the issue.

Decision

Members **noted** the presentation and update.

Actions

- 1) Officers to develop a new guide for councils on the issue of problem gambling.
- 2) Officers to circulate a link to Leeds City Council's report.
 - [Leeds Council - Executive Report](#)
 - [Leeds Council - Gambling Report](#)

- 3) Officers to liaise with the LGA's Communications team about a possible social media campaign.

3 Civil resilience

Mark Norris, LGA Principal Policy Adviser, outlined the contents of the report and noted that local authorities were keen to share their experiences of handling civil emergencies after events earlier in the year. Members were told that the Cabinet Office's Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) were undertaking a review of the challenges associated with national resilience and how the Government can be assured that councils are prepared for civil contingency issues. LGA officers had engaged with the CSS at an early stage in their review to inform the recommendations, and had identified measures to provide central government with an assurance process that did not involve a new inspection regime, as well as setting out what central assistance local areas most needed in a civil emergency. Recommendations had been sent to the National Security Council and it was expected that a report on the review would be available by the end of November.

Members were told that feedback from the review suggested one outcome would be a move towards a peer review system which would use the new set of standards being developed on civil resilience. It was noted that the past year had shown strong regional arrangements in terms of mutual aid in both London and Manchester but there were concerns about other areas and the need to increase and strengthen mutual aid requirements.

In terms of next steps, members were advised that a pilot masterclass session was being developed for councillors, that a guide for councillors about civil emergency roles in planning would need updating to include reference to community leadership, and that joint work with Solace was planned to provide guidance aimed at chief executives which would take readers through the life cycle of a civil emergency. Members were asked how they thought councillors should fit into this and what training or support was wanted.

A number of points were raised in the discussion which followed:

- Members stressed the need to develop mutual aid arrangements, as reductions in the number of council staff meant they had less capacity to cope with civil emergencies.
- On training, members welcomed the masterclass offer but wanted to see it expanded to allow backbenchers to benefit as well as leaders and portfolio holders. A discussion took place about how officers and councillors should work together during a civil emergency, whether joint training could be held, and how useful media training would be. Members discussed the use of social media during an incident and how important it was to ensure that both councillors and officers were consistent in the messages they were putting out.
- It was suggested that there was a great deal of focus on cities and urban areas in terms of civil resilience but not enough focus on rural areas. Members also noted that the potential for tragedy is diverse so emergency training needed to cover as many potential threats as possible.

Decision

Members **noted** the report.

Action

Officers to continue working with Solace and the CCS on guidance on civil resilience.

4 Government response to House of Lords Select Committee post legislative scrutiny of the Licensing Act 2003

LGA Adviser, Rebecca Johnson, spoke briefly to members about the House of Lords Select Committee's scrutiny of the Licensing Act and their proposal for planning and licensing committees to be merged. The LGA's view is that the Act is a good framework which needed small amendments rather than a complete overhaul. In responding to the Select Committee's report, the Government agreed that the Act did not require an overhaul but made no commitment to either of the LGA's key asks around localisation of licensing fees and a Public Health objective. Members were told that the LGA would continue pushing the health objective agenda by promoting the role public health can play in licensing. In terms of fees, the Government felt that the localisation of fees would undermine rate relief given to some licensees following changes to business rates in 2017. The LGA suggested that a flat rate increase, for example in line with inflation, would be a useful interim step whilst continuing to call for the localisation of fees in the longer term.

A brief discussion also took place about training, with the Committee having made recommendations about training requirements for members of licensing committees. The LGA is developing a Licensing Act handbook for councillors which could include a recommendation that councillors should have a minimum level of training before sitting on a licensing committee.

It was noted that the Supreme Court had ruled in favour of the Scottish Government's policy on Minimum Unit Pricing and members were asked if an update on this issue, once an assessment of the policy has been undertaken, would be useful.

Members made the following comments:

- Clarification was requested on what a 'minimum level' of training would consist of and the suggestion was made that a statement of expectation could be developed to set out what this should be. Members agreed that a high level of training is important, but that should be tailored depending on what licensing committee members need. Members asked whether people who had received training on the Act when it was first introduced would now need additional training because of the changes which had been implemented since then. Members also asked whether the LGA had surveyed councils on what level of training they offered and whether there was any correlation between the level of training provided and the number of appeals received.
- Members agreed that it would be interesting to know how minimum pricing per unit would work in Scotland alongside other measures already in place such as views on drinks promotions and a zero tolerance approach to drink driving.

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- Members were very supportive of the proposal to push for a flat rate increase in fees, while continuing to lobby for localisation in the long term.

Decision

Members **noted** the report.

Action

Officers to liaise with the Home Office with a view to lobbying for a flat rate increase of fees.

5 LGA response to Casey review on integration and opportunity

Ellie Greenwood, LGA Senior Adviser, outlined the paper on the LGA's response to the Casey review on integration and opportunity, noting that there were four key issues highlighted in relation to local government. Members were told that Cllr Blackburn had been tasked with working with the Group Leaders to develop an LGA response to the review and he had taken a draft of the response to the Group Leaders' meeting in October. The draft had been circulated to members and they were advised that it would be discussed at the meeting of the LGA Executive on 7 December. The response centred the LGA's calls to devolve powers around skills, growth, housing and education, as helping councils to tackle socio-economic exclusion would help to support local cohesion. Officers expected the response to be published once signed off by the Executive.

More broadly, members were told that the Government was working on an integration strategy which was due in the new year. The strategy would be similar to a green paper and would be subject to a consultation. The SSC Board would need to consider a draft response to the consultation and further guidance would be given on this following the publication of the draft strategy.

Members made the following points:

- Members thanked officers for their work on this subject, noting that it had been a difficult topic to respond to.
- It was suggested that it would be useful for the member champions for community cohesion and integration, Cllrs Jo Beavis and Janet Daby, to get together to discuss the matter.
- The report suggests that local government was lacking in diversity but members noted that the LGA was already working on this particular issue so recognition of this should be noted.

Decision

Officers **noted** the LGA's draft response to the Casey Review.

Action

Officers to proceed as directed once the response had been signed off by the LGA Executive.

6 Fire safety in high rise buildings update

Mark Norris provided members with an update on the work being carried out post-Grenfell and gave details about the number of social housing high-rise buildings which had already had unsafe cladding removed and those which were in the process of having it removed. He noted the need for clearer guidance for local authorities about what materials could replace the unsafe cladding and support for authorities being asked by insurance companies whether replacement materials had gone through a full safety test by the Buildings Research Establishment (BRE). The LGA was pressing the Government to commit BRE to publish a set of materials which had passed their tests and was also seeking clarity on the test results of those which had failed. Members were told that there were a number of bodies in the industry providing guidance on replacement materials but that the recommendations needed to be consistent. The LGA was also continuing to lobby the Government for additional funding.

In terms of privately owned high-rise buildings, the survey councils had been undertaking for DCLG indicated that there were a larger number of buildings affected than there was in the social housing sector. Some building owners had already sent materials off for testing and a number had been cleared as safe, but it was thought that there was a group of around 2000+ buildings awaiting inspection to identify whether they have cladding for a variety of reasons including reduced capacity and resources. Discussions with the Government about local authorities' legal powers were ongoing and legal advice was being sought to clarify these powers. Once established, guidance would be made available to the sector on what powers they had and where responsibility would lie for funding remedial work should private owners not be able to afford to pay.

Members were told that Dame Judith Hackitt's interim report on the review of building regulations was expected in early December and initial indications suggested that she viewed the system as not being fit for purpose. The LGA would be looking at the report in detail and would provide a further update at the next Board meeting in January.

Members made the following comments:

- Members felt it was important that the list of buildings which had failed the ACM cladding tests was published.
- Members liked the idea of updating building regulations but expressed concern that competition between local authorities and private sector building regulations operators could lead to a lowering of standards. The KiteMark accreditation scheme was discussed at the previous meeting but it wasn't covered in the LGA's submission to the review. Mark said he would look at that and ensure it was included as part of the submission into the inquiry into the cause of the Grenfell fire.

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- Members discussed sprinklers and asked how many of the social housing blocks which had had cladding removed would have sprinklers retrofitted. Mark explained that the LGA had some anonymised indicative figures on council blocks that would have sprinklers retrofitted but the approach between councils varied due to the particular circumstances of each block, where the need to move people out while work was done, and the presence of asbestos could all complicate the process.
- Concerns were raised about there being an insufficient number of qualified building inspectors to carry out all of the inspections required and there were not enough fire engineers to deal with fire safety requirements. Members felt that the LGA needed to make sure that recommendations coming out of the review included an improved inspection regime for tower blocks, ensuring there were enough qualified individuals to deal with demand and better training for new inspectors. It was suggested that building owners should pay for ongoing inspections to reduce the burden on local authorities.

Decision

Members **noted** the update.

Action

Officers to consider points raised by members when writing the LGA's submission to the public inquiry into the cause of the fire at Grenfell Tower.

7 Update paper

The following comment was made in response to the section in the update paper on taxis/PHV licensing:

- Some drivers who had been refused a licence or had had their licence revoked subsequently received public carriage vehicles licences and returned to an area to drive minibuses. The Chair had written to the Minister about the issue and it was noted that one option to tackle this was to establish a register of refusals and revocations which could be shared with the DVLA. Officers committed to raise this again through the current taxi and PHV working group.

Decision

Members **noted** the update paper.

8 Notes of previous meeting

Members **agreed** the notes of the previous meeting as an accurate summary of the discussions which took place.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Morris Bright	Hertsmere Borough Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Anita Lower	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
	Cllr Clive Woodbridge	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Members	Cllr Jo Beavis	Braintree District Council
	Cllr Chris Pillai	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Lisa Targowska	Windsor & Maidenhead Royal Borough
	Cllr Judith Wallace	North Tyneside Council
	Cllr Katrina Wood	Wycombe District Council
	Cllr Nick Worth	South Holland District Council
	Cllr Colin Spence	Suffolk County Council
	Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
	Cllr Jim Beall	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
	Cllr James Dawson	Erewash Borough Council
Apologies	Cllr Carole Burdis	North Tyneside Council
	Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire County Council
In Attendance	Cllr Alan Rhodes	Nottinghamshire County Council
	Cllr Janet Daby	Lewisham London Borough Council
In Attendance	Cllr Vic Pritchard (observer)	Bath & North East Somerset Council
	Cllr Helen Carr (observer)	Brent Council

LGA location map

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Public transport

18 Smith Square is well served by public transport. The nearest mainline stations are: Victoria and Waterloo: the local underground stations are **St James's Park** (Circle and District Lines), **Westminster** (Circle, District and Jubilee Lines), and **Pimlico** (Victoria Line) - all about 10 minutes walk away.

Buses 3 and 87 travel along Millbank, and the 507 between Victoria and Waterloo stops in Horseferry Road close to Dean Bradley Street.

Bus routes – Horseferry Road

- 507** Waterloo - Victoria
- C10** Canada Water - Pimlico - Victoria
- 88** Camden Town - Whitehall - Westminster - Pimlico - Clapham Common

Bus routes – Millbank

- 87** Wandsworth - Aldwych
- 3** Crystal Palace - Brixton - Oxford Circus

For further information, visit the Transport for London website at www.tfl.gov.uk

Cycling facilities

The nearest Barclays cycle hire racks are in Smith Square. Cycle racks are also available at 18 Smith Square. Please telephone the LGA on 020 7664 3131.

Central London Congestion Charging Zone

18 Smith Square is located within the congestion charging zone.

For further details, please call 0845 900 1234 or visit the website at www.cclondon.com

Car parks

Abingdon Street Car Park (off Great College Street)

Horseferry Road Car Park
 Horseferry Road/Arneway Street. Visit the website at

www.westminster.gov.uk/parking

