

Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Agenda

Monday, 19 March 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
19 March 2018

There will be a meeting of the Safer & Stronger Communities Board at **11.00 am on Monday, 19 March 2018** Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ.

A sandwich lunch will be available at 1.00pm.

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Apologies:

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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 JP	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
Substitutes	
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	15/1/18
Conservative Group			
Morris Bright	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jo Beavis	Yes	Yes	Yes
Chris Pillai	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lisa Targowska	No	Yes	Yes
Judith Wallace	Yes	Yes	Yes
Katrina Wood	Yes	Yes	No
Nick Worth	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colin Spence	Yes	Yes	Yes
Labour Group			
Simon Blackburn	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kate Haigh	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alan Rhodes	Yes	No	Yes
Jim Beall	Yes	Yes	Yes
James Dawson	Yes	Yes	Yes
Janet Daby	No	No	No
Carole Burdis	Yes	Yes	No
Lib Dem Group			
Anita Lower	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jeremy Hilton	Yes	Yes	Yes
Independent			
Clive Woodbridge	No	Yes	No
Substitutes/Observers			
Vic Pritchard	Yes	Yes	Yes
Helen Carr	Yes	Yes	Yes
Paul Findlow			Yes

Agenda

Safer & Stronger Communities Board

Monday 19 March 2018

11.00 am

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

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Date of Next Board: Monday, 11 June 2018, 11.00 am, Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Operation Dovetail update

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

Matt Collins, Director of Prevent at the Home Office, will attend the meeting to provide an update on the introduction of Dovetail; a new proposed approach for administering Channel, part of the Prevent counter-terrorism duty, which will see some responsibilities transferred to local authorities. This paper provides a brief overview of proposals and a summary of issues raised by councils in response.

Recommendation

That Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board note the update and issues raised by councils in response to the proposals, and seeks reassurances from the Home Office that these issues will be addressed.

Action

Officers to action as directed.

Contact officer: Rachel Duke
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Operation Dovetail update

Background

1. The UK's counter-terrorism strategy, Contest, comprises four strands; Pursue (catching terrorists before they carry out an attack); Protect (making infrastructure and similar targets less vulnerable); Prepare (planning responses in the event of an attack) and Prevent (stopping people from becoming terrorists or support terrorism). The Contest strategy has been under review by the Government over recent months and an updated version is expected to be published very shortly.
2. The Prevent strand operates in the non-criminal space, and has a number of implications for local authorities and partners. It is underpinned by a statutory Prevent duty on specific authorities, including councils, under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.
3. The Channel programme is a key part of the Prevent strategy. Section 36 of the Act requires local authorities and others to provide support for people who are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism, before they commit an offence. This process, known as Channel, aims to provide support to individuals at an early stage and help protect them from radicalisation. It uses a multi-agency approach to identify those at risk, assess the nature and extent of that risk and develop a plan for support.
4. Under the Act, local authorities are required to establish a multi-agency Channel panel. Statutory Channel guidance sets out how partners, including councils and the police, should work within this process.

Dovetail

5. Government is keen to emphasise, and build on, Channel's core aim of safeguarding individuals at risk of being radicalised. To this end, the Home Office is proposing making changes to Channel – aiming to de-securitise the process by transferring responsibilities for some elements of Channel from the police to local government, sitting more closely with local authorities' wider safeguarding responsibilities.
6. This approach, known as Operation Dovetail, was piloted in nine areas in 2017 (Brighton, Croydon, Haringey, Kent, Kirklees, Lancashire, Luton, Oldham and Swansea), using a range of different models. Following an evaluation of the pilots last year, the Home Office is now proposing to introduce Dovetail across England and Wales, with a graduated regional roll out over the coming months.
7. Matt Collins, Director of Prevent at the Home Office, will provide an overview of the pilots and further details about the model now proposed. However, the key elements are as follows:

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- 7.1. The police will continue to be key partners and will retain the counter-terrorism risk, but the nature of their involvement in the Channel process will change. They will still be responsible for checking that individuals referred to Channel are not currently under police investigation, and that referrals are not malicious, misguided or misinformed, but other elements of the Channel process will be transferred.
- 7.2. Local authority Channel Chairs will be retained, with local authorities picking up responsibility for gathering information about referred individuals, assessing individuals' level of risk, commissioning support for individuals from approved intervention providers, reviewing progress/risk over time, as well as administering panels and updating databases. Responsibility for making initial visits to the individual referred, and securing consent to proceed with a Channel referral from that individual (or their parents, in the case of a child), will now be undertaken by 'the most appropriate person' – who may be a local authority employee, such as a caseworker already involved with that family, or for example a teacher or probation officer.
- 7.3. The model is expected to operate on a regional basis, with new dedicated Local Authority Channel Coordinators (LACCs), funded by the Home Office, coordinating processes and arrangements for a number of Channel panels across council boundaries. LACCs will be managed by Supervisors, also funded by the Home Office. Currently, local authorities administer Channel panels from existing resources.
- 7.4. There are plans for 96 posts in total, comprising 25 Supervisors and 71 LACCs. The posts will be based in Regional Hubs within selected local authorities (employed by one authority), servicing a number of Channel panels across the region.
- 7.5. The Home Office has recently conducted a series of regional meetings with local authority officers to discuss the proposals, including the number of LACCs and Supervisors to be employed in each region, and how this might be coordinated across local LAs. Further consultation with local authority Chief Executives will commence shortly.

Issues

8. We have been in contact with a number of local authorities regarding the proposals for Dovetail to explore the implications and gather views, including three areas involved in the pilots. While there have been very few objections in principle to the roll out or to the concept of aligning Channel with other safeguarding responsibilities, there are a number of concerns about how the programme will work in practice, how it will be resourced and about levels of consultation and communication with local authorities.
9. It should be noted that areas contacted who were involved with the pilots were largely positive about their experiences.

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10. Concerns raised with the LGA can be summarised as follows:

- 10.1. There are many uncertainties about how the model will work in practice and what will be expected of local authorities, leading to a number of operational concerns.
- 10.2. The specific model being proposed has not been fully tested. In addition, a robust evaluation of the pilots has not been made public and processes have not been transparent.
- 10.3. Agreeing arrangements across authority boundaries is not necessarily straightforward, with further concerns about where risk, accountability and escalation of issues will lie. There are also concerns that working across police force and health agency boundaries should be minimised.
- 10.4. Channel panels currently operate differently in different councils. A regional model could mean local insight, relationships with partners, and freedom to design approaches that suit local needs are lost – particularly as LACCs will be working remotely from the majority of councils. This might be exacerbated where the region covers a wide geographical area.
- 10.5. There are concerns that the proposals are not sufficiently resourced. Further, long-term funding arrangements for the programme are uncertain (with a commitment to fund for the period of the spending review), with worries that councils will have to meet these costs by other means in future.
- 10.6. Areas which currently have fewer Channel referrals reported concerns that they would lose out to others where demand is larger and resourced differently – with particular concerns about developing resilience and responding adequately if events escalated.
- 10.7. Transferring some responsibilities from police colleagues will need to be managed carefully to ensure continuity, that new staff can learn from police experiences and to maintain critical relationships with council partners.
- 10.8. There were several concerns reported regarding use of the police CMIS database for Channel case management/recording. Other concerns were raised about the length of time taken to get relevant enhanced security clearance for new staff.
- 10.9. New skills will be required for staff to undertake this work (both LACCs and others) requiring the provision of adequate training and resource. This includes assessing vulnerability; seeking consent from individuals to proceed with referrals; and operating within the law.

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11. Members may wish to suggest how these concerns might be addressed by the Home Office. This could include:

11.1. Improved communication by the Home Office with local authorities regarding the proposals, their implications, plans for implementation along with ongoing contact as the programme is rolled out. Councils need a clearer idea of expectations and what the Home Office thinks this should look like in practice.

11.2. Further piloting of the programme before full roll out would help ensure that operational issues are ironed out and enable a smooth transfer, with opportunities for other areas to learn from early adopters.

11.3. Ensuring there is sufficient lead-in time for implementation and transfer of responsibilities, to allow for continuity, sufficient training, access to systems and security clearance, and to establish new ways of working across authority boundaries and forge new relationships with key partners.

11.4. Detailed Home Office guidance and training about what is needed to ensure Dovetail operates smoothly, including what new protocols and legal arrangements will need to be introduced locally to ensure cross-boundary working, guidance on data protection (including the implications of new data protection regulations, GDPR), as well as opportunities to learn from pilot sites and share resources. Regional events might be particularly useful.

11.5. Assurances about the sustainability of funding in the long term.

Implications for Wales

12. Local authorities in Wales are subject to the statutory Prevent duty under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, and Dovetail will be rolled out across Welsh councils.

13. As Dovetail interlinks with a number of devolved areas (including eg local government, education, health), a separate task and finish group is being established to develop a model for how Dovetail will operate in Wales.

Financial implications

14. The Home Office has said it will fund posts for LACCs and supervisors for at least this spending review period, including all associated costs such as travel, accommodation, training, and on-costs.

15. As noted above however, there are concerns about the levels of funding and resourcing in future.

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Next steps

16. Members may wish to raise some of the issues and possible responses noted above at the Board meeting, and seek assurances that concerns will be addressed by the Home Office.
17. If appropriate, these issues could be raised further with the Home Office in writing and/or at further meetings with officials to discuss the concerns in more detail.
18. The LGA could assist with disseminating guidance, training and communications as it becomes available.
19. Members may wish to press the Home Office to ensure that the LGA is included in some formal oversight of the roll out to ensure concerns can be quickly fed back to the Home Office during the roll out and that we are involved in drafting statutory guidance.

Integrated Communities Strategy

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

The Government's Integrated Communities Strategy is due to be published as a consultation document this month, with lead officials due to attend the Board meeting to discuss this. This paper outlines our expectations for the strategy and seeks the Board's views on the document and appropriate LGA next steps.

Recommendation

That Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board provide their views on the content of the strategy, to help develop the LGA's response to the consultation, and the LGA's supporting activities on cohesion.

Action

Officers to develop a draft response to the consultation, and take forward the supporting actions outlined in this paper.

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Integrated Communities Strategy

Background

1. Dame Louise Casey published her report into opportunity and integration in December 2016. Subsequently, the Government's manifesto in 2017 committed to developing a new integration strategy that would help those in more isolated communities engage with the wider world, help women into the workplace, and teach more people to speak English. It also committed to working with schools to ensure pupils are taught about pluralistic British values and help them get to know people with different ways of life.
2. The strategy has been much delayed, but is now expected to be published by the time of the Board meeting. The strategy document is expected to take the form of a Green Paper, with Government launching a consultation that runs until early summer.
3. This paper sets out the key findings of the Casey review and our response to it; our expectations for the strategy; and proposed next steps.

The Casey review and LGA response

4. In March 2017, Dame Louise Casey attended the LGA Executive and set out a key a number of key findings in relation to councils, which can be summarised as:
 - 4.1. Social and economic exclusion is a major barrier to cohesion and integration, with high unemployment rates for young black men and poor life chances for white working class communities highlighted.
 - 4.2. Settlement patterns have resulted in communities segregated on a cultural and religious basis, which results in people growing up without understanding the nature of the country they were living in.
 - 4.3. There is a need to develop a discourse on the impact of the pace and scale of migration that enables issues to be discussed without dividing those with different views into different camps.
 - 4.4. Political leadership is needed to address these issues that extends beyond the leaders of councils, and related to that there is a need to improve standards in public office and the integrity of local government.
5. The Chairman of the Board was tasked by the LGA Executive to work with Group Leaders to develop a LGA response to the review. Our response, which was published in December, outlined the following key points:
 - 5.1. The LGA welcomes the helpful insight provided by the Casey review.

- 5.2. The country is experiencing an evolving context on community cohesion issues. Against a backdrop of tensions highlighted by the referendum on leaving the European Union and threat of extremism and terrorism, local cohesion challenges vary considerably from place to place. Within this context, councils must be given the tools that can help them improve opportunities cohesion in all local areas.
- 5.3. Opportunity and integration, the two main themes of the review, are unequivocally linked to social mobility and aspiration; and in turn, to access to good quality education, jobs and housing.
- 5.4. Local government has a key role to play in all of these services, but their powers to progress them have been eroded by successive governments. Councils need to be freed from current constraints that prevent us doing more around education, local economic growth and housing.
- 5.5. Changes to the education system have impacted on councils' ability to promote integration amongst children and young people and ensure that school populations reflect local populations. The LGA has called for councils to have the power to direct academies to expand to meet local demand; and for councils to have a lead role in commissioning new free schools to make sure they provide places where they are most needed and can take account of cohesion issues.
- 5.6. There are concerns about the growth in home schooling and an associated rise in illegal schools – the LGA believes there should be a legal duty on parents to register home-schooled children with their local authority, and that councils should have powers (and funding) to fulfil their duty to ensure that a suitable education is being provided.
- 5.7. The LGA recognises it has a role in equipping councillors with the skills and knowledge needed to show leadership on difficult issues like cohesion and migration – as well as our current offer to councillors, including training, peer support and guidance, we are looking at what more support we can provide around leading political discourse on challenging issues and engaging with the media and public debates.

Expectations for the strategy

6. We have engaged with officials from MHCLG's integration team throughout the development of the strategy, and earlier this month Cllr Blackburn met the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Faith, Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth, to discuss this.
7. Based on these discussions, we understand that the strategy will focus on the following themes:

- 7.1. **Strengthening leadership** – politically (nationally and locally), but also among other parts of the community, such as the faith, business, and voluntary sectors.
 - 7.2. **Supporting new migrants and existing resident communities** - for example providing better information for new arrivals on expectations about norms and behaviours.
 - 7.3. **School segregation and young people** – preparedness for life in modern Britain, school segregation, safeguarding and home schools.
 - 7.4. **Boosting English language** – English for Speakers of Other Languages support, matching needs and support, outside classroom support.
 - 7.5. **Role of communities in social mixing** – opportunity outside of schools and residential areas, community rights, building resilience, National Citizen Service, sports.
 - 7.6. **Economic opportunities** - working with Job Centre Plus on support for labour market, bringing out of reach groups back to the labour market.
 - 7.7. **Personal / cultural factors** – that can hold back integration and links to the Hate Crime action plan.
 - 7.8. **Evaluation and measuring success** – how to measure cohesion and share learning.
8. The strategy is expected to be accompanied by the launch of an area based programme that supports local and central partnership working on cohesion in different areas. This will be trialled in five areas.

Key issues for discussion

9. The Board may wish to consider the following questions in relation to the strategy:
- 9.1. How can Government ensure that its integration strategy is linked up with the related issues of counter extremism and Prevent? While these cannot be wholly conflated with cohesion, they similarly cannot be considered in isolation. There are significant national developments on the horizon for all three policy areas and it is important that work is joined up and presents a coherent approach (alongside the integration green paper this includes the updated counter-terrorism 'Contest' strategy; roll out of Dovetail for local authority administration of Prevent Channel panels; the establishment of the new office of the Counter Extremism Commissioner).
 - 9.2. What funding will be available to support the Area Based Programme and integration strategy work?

9.3. What are the government's plans for consultation on the green paper and how will they engage with councils specifically?

9.4. How will government support councils which are not involved in the area based programme? How will learning from the programme be disseminated more widely?

Next steps and LGA activity

10. Once the Government's integration strategy is published, the LGA will seek the views of member councils, as well as relevant Boards, to help develop a formal response. Given the expected themes for the review, this is likely to cut across a number of other LGA Boards with responsibility for economic growth, education and other issues.

11. We will also continue to liaise with Government to help shape the area based programme in a way that works for councils. The LGA can play a key role in linking the development of the new integration pilots with other broader work – for instance that of the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism (SIGCE). The SIGCE has identified a Delivery Group of councils which will support the development and delivery of the SIGCE's programme of work, so that there is cross-over with areas trialling the integration area based programme, to help join this learning up.

12. Alongside this, we will also continue with our existing planned activity in the area of cohesion, counter-extremism and Prevent. This includes:

12.1. Our successful leadership essentials programmes for elected members on counter-extremism and Prevent which has been running for over a year now, and has included sessions on engagement and leadership around sensitive issues. Subject to funding, further courses will be held next year. Additionally, a new leadership essentials course will be launched this month on emergency planning and civil resilience which will look at local leadership in times of crisis.

12.2. Plans to commission further work around engagement with 'hard to reach' groups, particularly working class communities, with the potential to trial some approaches next financial year.

12.3. Supporting a roundtable in April for local authority chief executives to discuss cohesion and integration issues.

12.4. Publishing new guidance on cohesion, which will support the themes of the strategy, and we expect to finalise in April or May.

Implications for Wales

13. Most of the themes in the strategy are devolved matters that fall under the responsibility of the Welsh Assembly, but some of our work will be or relevance to Welsh Member Councils (in particular around Prevent and counter extremism). LGA materials and events are open to Welsh colleagues. We will liaise as appropriate with WLGA about how our work may assist Welsh councils.

Financial Implications

14. Funding from the LGA's improvement grant will be used to support the delivery of our work on integration in the 2018-19, through the continuation of a dedicated post within the team to focus on this issue.

Next Steps

15. Members are asked to provide their views on the content of the strategy, to help develop the LGA's response to the consultation, and the LGA's supporting activities on cohesion.

Domestic Abuse Bill – Home Office consultation

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

The Home Office has published a consultation on the Domestic Abuse Bill, seeking stakeholder views on what should be included in the Bill and other supporting non-legislative measures. This paper outlines the details of the consultation and accompanying policy announcements and seeks members' views on the consultation to inform the LGA's policy position and response.

Recommendation

Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board are asked to provide their views on the Domestic Abuse Bill consultation to inform the LGA's response.

Action

Officers to draft a response to the consultation on the Domestic Abuse Bill, and to progress with the work on Domestic Violence and Abuse as directed.

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Domestic Abuse Bill – Home Office consultation

Background

1. In the Queen’s Speech on 21 June 2017, proposals for a new Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill and new Domestic Violence and Abuse Commissioner were announced. The LGA provided the Home Office with our initial response to the proposals at the National Oversight Group on Domestic Violence, and has continued to provide feedback at further meetings of the Group and through regular meetings with officials.
2. On 8 March 2018, the Government published a [consultation](#) seeking views on proposals for what should be included in the draft Bill and other non-legislative announcements. The closing date for the consultation is **31 May 2018**.
 - 2.1. [Government consultation document](#).
 - 2.2. [Accompanying press release, Home Office and Ministry of Justice](#)
 - 2.3. [Impact Assessment](#)
3. The Government is outlining a combination of legislative and non-legislative approaches for delivering the proposals set out in the consultation. Where primary legislation is required, the responses to the consultation will inform the content of the draft Domestic Abuse Bill.
4. The Government has said it welcomes responses from victims and survivors as well as a range of organisations which deal with these issues on a daily basis. We will be encouraging member councils to respond to the consultation, and will also submit a response on behalf of local government.
5. The consultation seeks views under the four main themes intended to support an overall aim of preventing domestic abuse. These are summarised below then explored in more detail in the following sections:
 - 5.1. **Promote awareness** – Proposals to help put domestic abuse at the top of everyone’s agenda, and raise public and professionals’ awareness.
 - 5.2. **Protect and support** – Proposals to enhance the safety of victims and the support that they receive.
 - 5.3. **Pursue and deter** – Proposals to ensure an effective response to perpetrators from initial agency response through to conviction and management of offenders (including rehabilitation).

- 5.4. **Improve Performance** – Proposals to drive consistency and better performance in the response to domestic abuse across all local areas and agencies/sectors.

Promoting awareness

6. The consultation proposes to:

6.1. Introduce a new statutory definition of domestic abuse, which includes economic abuse as one example of the type of victim experience. It also sets out a focus on improving the identification and response to domestic abuse by organisations and individuals.

6.2. Increase young people's awareness and understanding of healthy relationships, including through high quality relationship and sex education. The Department for Education have conducted an assessment of what should be included in Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), and intend to develop regulations and accompanying statutory guidance for these subjects, which will be available for public consultation.

Protect and support victims

7. The consultation outlines the importance of improving support services for all victims of domestic abuse, in particular recognising the detrimental effect that experiencing domestic abuse can have on children. One of the key priorities in the consultation is how the Government can encourage effective multi-agency working which delivers holistic support to victims.
8. The Government has commissioned an independent, external audit of domestic abuse services to provide a complete picture of provision across England. The audit will report in spring 2018, and the review will be completed by summer 2018.
9. The consultation also references the supported housing and social housing consultations Government launched in 2017, which will have a significant effect on wider domestic abuse reform. It acknowledges the need for sustainable funding of refuges, to ensure there is no postcode lottery when it comes to provision across the country but recognises that local authorities, working in partnership with agencies such as the police and health bodies and specialist domestic abuse service providers, are best placed to assess and meet the need for safe accommodation for victims from both within and outside their local area.
10. The consultation seeks views on a range of issues including victims who have specific and/or multiple needs; what more the Government can do to better support victims who face barriers to support including female offenders who often have a history of domestic

abuse, and the challenges for those victims who have no recourse to public funds and are therefore particularly vulnerable.

11. Government proposes to create a new Domestic Abuse Protection Order which strengthens the existing order regimes, and to put the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme into law to drive greater use and consistent application across the country.
12. The consultation considers what can be done to help victims of economic abuse to escape and recover, and reflects on the role of technology in domestic abuse, both in how it can be a tool used to abuse victims, and how it can be used to support and protect victims.

Pursue and deter perpetrators

13. The consultation outlines recent action to improve the police response and asks how compliance can be improved. It also considers how to improve victims' experience of the justice system, to ensure victims come forward and support prosecutions through to conclusion.
14. It seeks views on the coercive/ controlling offence introduced in 2015 and whether sentencing and cautions are appropriate, and lead to reduced reoffending. It also considers what changes would improve the management of serial perpetrators and what more could be done to work with perpetrators to change their offending behaviour.

Improve performance

15. The consultation:
 - 15.1. Recognises that in order to better understand what works, high quality data is required – and asks what the priorities for improving data collection should be.
 - 15.2. Proposes that a Domestic Abuse Commissioner would have a key role in overseeing and monitoring provision and domestic abuse services, as well as providing public leadership on domestic abuse issues.
 - 15.3. Considers how learning from domestic homicide reviews can lead to change, and explores how the government and local authorities can better share what works in commissioning and delivering victim services.
16. The Government have said their approach to domestic abuse is framed within the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy, which will be refreshed later this year. The LGA has been liaising with the Home Office on the plans to renew strategy.

Creation of the Independent Domestic Abuse Commissioner role

17. As part of the consultation the Government has proposed to appoint an independent Domestic Abuse Commissioner who would provide leadership on domestic abuse issues and play a key role in overseeing and monitoring provision of domestic abuse services in England and Wales.
18. The role of the Commissioner would be to stand up for victims of domestic abuse and their children, raise awareness of the issue, and monitor and oversee delivery of services including those provided to the majority who may never come into contact with the criminal justice system.
19. Government outlines the budget for the Domestic Abuse Commissioner is likely to be around £1 million per year which would be provided by the Home Office. This would provide for the Commissioner's salary, as well as the employment of a team of support staff. It will enable the Commissioner and their staff to travel, conduct research and produce reports, as the role requires.
20. The consultation proposes that the Domestic Abuse Commissioner could have the powers and resources to:
 - 20.1. Map and monitor provision of domestic abuse services against the National Statement of Expectations, and publish information to showcase and share best practice, as well as to highlight where local provision falls short of what is expected.
 - 20.2. Require local public bodies to cooperate and provide information.
 - 20.3. Oversee the Domestic Homicide Review Quality Assurance process, feeding lessons learned into their recommendations.
 - 20.4. Oversee compliance with the Specialist Domestic Abuse Courts Manual.
 - 20.5. Publish findings in reports laid before Parliament.
 - 20.6. Provide recommendations to public bodies, including national and local government to improve the response to domestic abuse, accompanied with a duty on the responsible person/organisation to respond to these recommendations.

Wider funding and policy announcements

21. As part of the consultation the Government is also seeking views on how to allocate some of the £20 million funding announced to help victims of domestic abuse.

22. Following the [LGA's call](#) for an injection of funding into early intervention initiatives to support children who have experienced domestic violence, the Government allocated £8 million to support children who witness domestic abuse, and help with their recovery through locally commissioned projects. We issued a [press release](#) in response to this announcement welcoming the additional funding.
23. The Government also dedicated £2 million to supporting female offenders who have been victims, as over 60 per cent have indicated they have experienced domestic abuse. An additional £2 million will be used to extend a healthcare pathfinder pilot across further hospital trusts and help direct domestic abuse victims to the full range of services they need.
24. The consultation will seek views on how the remaining funding for victims of domestic abuse will be allocated. This will form part of the LGA's response to the consultation.

Issues

Strategic approach

25. Our response to the consultation will highlight the broad approach that councils want to be able to take to domestic abuse, which we have been emphasising in our recent work. Our key lines are that the focus in domestic abuse work must be on disrupting the lives of victims and their families as little as possible. Where it is safe to do so, victims should be assisted to remain in their own homes and the offenders removed, rather than the other way round. To support this, there needs to be greater investment in reducing offending and dealing with serial perpetrators; but there is also a need for flexibility in designing services so they meet local needs, including in the provision of better emergency accommodation (such as self-contained flats as well as refuges) where it is not possible for victims to remain in their own homes.
26. The consultation suggests the new Domestic Abuse Commissioner will map and monitor provision of domestic abuse services against the National Statement of Expectations (NSE), publish information to showcase and share best practice, and highlight where local provision falls short of what is expected. On this point our response will highlight that while councils are supportive of the NSE objectives it will take some time to fully achieve all its objectives. Therefore, whilst it is important the Commissioner is bold and ambitious in what they look to others to achieve, they must also be realistic about the funding available from the VAWG fund (which was delayed) and the wider financial climate that councils and their partners are operating in.

Joined-up proposals and new burdens

27. The Government's approach to domestic abuse is framed within the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy, which will be refreshed later this year. Our response to the consultation will emphasise the need for proposed legislation and non-legislative reforms on domestic abuse to be joined up with proposed changes to the supported

housing and social housing models as well as council's new duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act.

28. The LGA's responses to these consultations acknowledged there is considerable concern amongst third sector partners about the potential impact of the short-term accommodation grant on funding refuge provision, where provision to meet need is already in short supply. The LGA has said it is essential that the Government provides adequate ring-fenced funding now and in the future, so that councils and partners can secure short-term housing for all people in vulnerable circumstances with support needs.
29. The Government's social housing consultation proposed new statutory guidance for local authorities, designed to help victims of domestic abuse who are currently living in a refuge or safe temporary accommodation to move into social housing. Whilst we welcomed new guidance, we emphasised the importance of helping the victim of domestic violence to remain in their own home, if it is safe to do so. The Government expects to issue new guidance in spring 2018.
30. We will also emphasise that any additional costs falling on local government from these housing changes are covered by the new burdens doctrine and must allow for long-term strategic planning and investment. This applies equally in relation to other proposals in the consultation document; for example, the Domestic Abuse Protection Order may include conditions such as alcohol or addiction treatment programmes or parenting programmes, which would need to be supported through additional funding for these services.

Home Affairs Committee – Domestic Violence and Abuse inquiry

31. The Home Affairs Committee has launched a [select committee inquiry into domestic violence and abuse](#), to coincide with the Government's consultation on the Bill. The purpose of the inquiry will be to address the legislation and consider what other policies should be pursued for the Government's strategy to be most effective. The terms of reference and deadline for submissions are still to be confirmed, but it is likely that the LGA will wish to submit evidence.

Questions to consider

32. What is the initial feedback from Board members on the Domestic Abuse consultation and the associated funding announcements made on 8 March 2018? Are there any additional measures which you would like to see included?
33. Do you agree with the proposed model for a Domestic Abuse Commissioner?
34. Are there any measures you do not agree with?

Financial Implications

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

Implications for Wales

36. The proposals set out in the consultation document broadly apply to England and Wales, including some relating to health and health services that are devolved matters for Wales. The UK Government will seek a legislative consent motion for any legislative measures that may impact or fall within the legislative competence of the National Assembly for Wales.

Next steps

37. Officers to develop a response in line with the steer provided by the Board, and to confirm whether the LGA should submit evidence to the Home Affairs Committee inquiry on domestic violence and abuse.

Fire safety in high rise buildings

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This paper updates the Board on the work of central and local government since the last meeting to ensure that high rise buildings are safe, including the LGA's engagement with the independent review of the Building Regulations and Fire Safety Review, as well as ongoing work related to the national building safety programme.

Recommendation

Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board are asked to note and comment on the LGA's building safety programme work.

Action

Officers to proceed as directed.

Contact officer: Mark Norris
Position: Principal Policy Adviser
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Fire safety in high rise buildings

Background

1. At its last meeting the Board considered the key findings and direction of travel set out in the interim report published in December by the independent review of building regulations and fire safety led by Dame Judith Hackitt. Since then the LGA's work has been focused on contributing to the next stages of the review process, while also progressing a number of issues related to the private sector high-rise building safety programme. This report updates the Board on this activity.

Building regulations and fire safety review

2. As members will recall the overall conclusion in the interim report from Dame Judith Hackitt's review was that the "the current regulatory system is not fit for purpose in relation to high-rise and complex buildings". More specifically it highlighted issues with the clarity of the guidance set out in the Approved Documents that support the building regulations, the lack of clarity of roles and responsibilities, and the need to improve the enforcement regime around fire safety. A key objective set out in the interim report is for any changes to the regulatory regime to create a culture change in the construction industry.
3. As was indicated to the Board at its last meeting, the LGA's Grenfell Tower Task and Finish Group, which has overall responsibility for coordinating the LGA's activity related to Grenfell Tower, was due to consider the interim report on 17 January 2018. The Board's views were reported to this meeting, at which the Task and Finish Group agreed to submit a formal response from the LGA to the interim report. The draft of this response was circulated to the Board's lead Members for consideration, along with the Lead Members of Fire Services Management Committee and the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board. A copy of the response is attached at **Appendix A**.
4. The Board was also updated about the plans for the second phase of the independent review's work. This was launched at a summit was held on 22 January, and was followed by an invitation to key stakeholders to contribute to six working groups covering construction and design; occupation and maintenance; regulations and guidance; competence; residents' voice and quality assurance and products.
5. After discussion with the Grenfell Tower Task and Finish Group, the LGA applied for places on all six of the working groups. However we were only offered places on two of the working groups: the occupation and maintenance; and the residents' voice. We were also invited to participate in a sub-group to the construction and design working group looking at procurement and supply. Local Authority Building Control were invited to join the construction and design, regulations and guidance and competence working groups, while the National Fire Chiefs Council were represented on all of the working groups.
6. The occupation and maintenance working group looked at what building owners, landlords and regulators need to do differently to ensure that fire safety is prioritised when a building is occupied and throughout its life cycle. As one of the key issues identified in the LGA's work since the fire at Grenfell Tower has been the interaction

between the Housing Act 2004 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, a joint meeting of the Committee's Lead Members and the Grenfell Tower Task and Finish Group took place in early February to inform the LGA's contribution to the working group.

7. The Residents' Voice working group was tasked with considering how residents of high risk and complex buildings could be given a clear and effective means of raising concerns about building safety with both the building's owners and with somebody with enforcement powers.
8. The two working groups the LGA has been represented on have met twice each, and draft recommendations from them to Dame Judith Hackitt are currently being considered. We understand that the other working groups are operating to a similar schedule. It is anticipated that the working groups will present their recommendations to Dame Judith Hackitt later this month, with the final report being written up for publication in spring this year.

Other building safety issues update

Social housing tower blocks

Remediation work

9. Progress continues to be made by councils and housing associations in carrying out remediation work to the 45 council owned blocks and the 110 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 latest published statistics by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), which were made available at the end of February, show that remediation work has started on 92 of the 158 social housing blocks, with remediation work on seven blocks having finished.
10. MHCLG itself points out that progress with the remediation work is a complex process, and the amount of work and therefore the time needed to complete the remediation work will vary from building to building. In all cases though the work involves major construction work, that needs to be planned, consulted on and carried out carefully.

Alternatives to ACM

11. The advice from MHCLG on what materials might be used to replace ACM cladding and insulation combinations that do not meet the building regulation standards remains 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.
12. However the validity of the BS 8414 standard has been called into question since the last Board meeting. BRE at the start of February issued a statement related to data from a BS 8414 test carried out by Celotex at BRE in 2014 on one of their polyisocyanurate insulation products that was used on Grenfell Tower. BRE had been notified by Celotex that on reviewing the test results Celotex had identified anomalies between their design

specification for the cladding system to be tested and the actual cladding system they installed to be tested. As BRE understood that the test system had not been constructed to Celotex's design specification, the test results have been withdrawn.

13. Additionally at the end of January, Sky News reported claims by one major building insulation manufacturer that another building insulation manufacturer had 'influenced' the full scale fire safety tests carried out by MHCLG over July and August 2017, by placing fire barriers over the thermometers measuring the heat generated by the fire. The manufacturer involved in conducting the tests said the placement of the fire barriers had been copied from previous tests, that they showed the fire performance of ACM cladding was the key factor in the fire safety performance of any cladding system.
14. In response the LGA has called for clear advice from the government for building owners on what they can and cannot put on their buildings as a replacement, and has questioned the robustness of the BS 8414 test.

Private sector blocks

Data Collection

15. At the last meeting we reported on progress by councils in gathering information on those private high-rise buildings in their area with ACM cladding. Although we noted that the councils had made significant progress in submitting this information to MHCLG, a number of councils are facing a series of challenges in gathering the full set of information, in some instances because of the large number of high-rise blocks they have in their area.
16. Our discussions with MHCLG about how best to support those authorities in this position has resulted in the Director General for the Building Safety Programme at MHCLG writing to the LGA on 1 March 2018 to announce an additional allocation of £1 million from the government to support councils' work. We will be discussing how this funding will be used with MHCLG officials and London Councils shortly.

Legal powers

17. Although 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. In the event that a building owner is not co-operative in identifying what cladding is on their building then councils will have to consider taking samples to identify what it is. Should it turn out to be ACM cladding that needs to be removed there is also a question about what councils can or have to do if the building owner does not organise the removal of the cladding.
18. Councils have powers to take action under the Housing Act and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, but there are risks associated with doing so. We have therefore outlined a number of ways that MHCLG could minimise these risks. In response MHCLG are examining the statutory guidance and the statutory operating directions for local authorities in their relationship with those private sector building owners with a view to reinforcing local authorities in carrying out this building safety related work. If councils have the ability to take the necessary action against any building owners who are not

taking their fire safety obligations seriously, this should limit the burden on fire and rescue services, given that 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.

Outcomes from the programme

19. The work councils are doing around fire safety in private high-rise buildings is already having an impact on leaseholders. A first-tier tribunal has recently ruled that it is legitimate for building owners to recover the cost of interim fire safety measures from leaseholders through their service charges. The mayors of Salford and Greater Manchester had added their voices to those Members of Parliament who are highlighting the impact on leaseholders as an issue. The LGA is currently in discussion with MHCLG officials and London Councils about what could be done where building owners pursue leaseholders for the costs of any interim fire safety measures or remedial work to the buildings.

Implications for Wales

20. Building regulations are a devolved responsibility of the Welsh Assembly Government, and the main implications for the review are on building regulations and fire safety in England, though the Welsh government is likely to take account of the review's recommendations.

Financial Implications

21. 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

22. Members are asked to note and comment on the LGA's building safety programme work.

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Appendix A - LGA response to Dame Judith Hackitt's interim report

Dame Judith Hackitt DBE FREng,
Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety,
3rd Floor Fry,
Building 2,
Marsham Street,
London. SW1P 4DF

Dear Dame Judith,

Interim report

I am writing on behalf of the Local Government Association (LGA) to respond to the findings and direction of travel you set out in your interim report.

Before getting into the detail, I want to say how impressed we are with the speed with which you and your team have produced a clear and concise, but also comprehensive report on a very complex regulatory system.

Differentiated approach to risk

The LGA agrees with the great majority of your findings to date, the direction of travel you set out and your recommendations. In particular we agree that the current regulatory system for high rise and complex buildings is not fit for purpose, and needs to be fully overhauled to address the wide-ranging issues inherent to the model. We were also pleased to see a paragraph emphasising the importance of widening the scope of the review to cover complex and high risk buildings. It would seem deficient not to grasp the opportunity to protect people in all high-rise and complex buildings in which they live and work.

We support your ambition of designing a revised regulatory system which is simpler, clearer and delivers better building safety outcomes. We also agree that there needs to be a differentiated approach to risk in the regulatory system, with there being a proportionate approach to the greater fire safety risks associated with high-rise and complex buildings.

In addition we strongly agree with you that we need a significant shift in culture, behaviour and practice around the construction, operation and maintenance of high-rise and complex buildings. If we are to achieve that aim, we believe certain elements of your proposals need special emphasis. The LGA would single out the need for easily identifiable individuals with responsibility for building and fire safety, greater clarity in the inspection and enforcement regime, and heavier penalties for breaches of the regulations. We would also support a debate about how we ensure new methods of improving building safety can be used to upgrade and improve existing buildings.

Clarity of roles and responsibilities

As the interim report highlights, there is a lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities in the current system. It is vital therefore that there are easily identifiable dutyholders with responsibility for ensuring compliance with the building regulations and fire safety measures, both during construction and throughout the lifetime of the building. There need to be

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individuals who can readily be held to account for any failures or breaches who have an interest in changing culture and behaviour to bring about the necessary paradigm shift.

A requirement to have a clerk of works to act as a gatekeeper for quality assurance is mentioned in your report. We would emphasise the importance of such a role to oversee construction and refurbishment works, ensuring the quality of construction and materials. Further, a clear responsibility on those who commission and design work to ensure a building is fit for purpose would seem essential to bring about the required change.

Ensuring compliance through inspection and enforcement

Having people with clearly identifiable roles and responsibilities who can be easily held to account, will only drive cultural and behaviour change if there is also a robust inspection and enforcement regime. As the interim report notes, a key issue is that work can commence on buildings without the plans being approved by building control. Preventing work on site (as in Scotland) until approval has been given would strengthen the enforcement regime. In addition, there are also issues with the information that councils receive from approved inspectors about buildings they have inspected. Going forward we need to ensure that approved inspectors have an obligation to provide local authority building control, as the building control enforcement body, with all the necessary information on buildings they have inspected.

There are also a number of other weaknesses in the current regime to ensure building and fire safety standards are being complied with post-construction. At the heart of these problems is the fact that neither the Housing Act, and the housing health and safety rating system (HHSRS) it creates, nor the Fire Safety Order, were designed to deal with significant building and fire safety problems resulting from modifications, alterations or changes to the fabric of a building. The problematic interaction between these pieces of legislation and regulation must be addressed.

This should include examining and rectifying the ambiguity over responsibilities for inspection, the lack of certainty in key definitions, the question of whether flammable cladding can ever constitute a Category 1 hazard under the HHSRS, and the absence of powers to deal consistently with breaches of building or fire safety standards irrespective of the type of tenure that might be found in one block. It would be a significant failure if at the end of the review's work there were no recommendations that ensured, for example, that action can be taken against residents who cause fire hazards within their own homes.

One final point on building and fire safety inspections is that there is a vast array of differing complexities among buildings. This means that inspectors must demonstrate hugely varying levels of knowledge. While a universal standard should certainly be applied to inspectors across the board i.e. fire authorities, approved inspectors, or from local authority building control, it would be prudent to offer different levels of expertise within such a framework. Local Authority Building Control (LABC) have recently developed and commissioned their ISO accreditation framework which promises to enshrine a single set of consistent national standards. In discussion with a LABC they have also suggested that their framework would cater for the different levels of expertise needed among building inspectors to serve these varying building complexities. As such we would encourage the review to investigate this as a possibility.

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Product testing and accrediting

As the immediate national response to the Grenfell Tower fire highlighted, inspection and enforcement would be made significantly easier if there were a robust independent process to test and accredit products, with appropriate testing and accreditation marks visible on products. Aluminium composite panels on tower blocks had to be subjected to screening tests to confirm what sort of panel they were because this was not possible by visual inspection. Product certification is not clear and transparent about what particular type of product meets which particular standard, meaning the wrong material could be specified and installed in error.

Over the last week a number of concerns about the full scale tests using the BS 8414 standard have called into question how well it can gauge the fire risks associated with particular cladding systems, and in our view there is an urgent need to evaluate whether it continues to be fit for purpose, and an alternative test needs to be developed. This is a clear area of concern; if product fire tests cannot be relied upon, it brings into question the validity of other recommendations of the building regulations review.

Sanctions

Addressing the above points over clear lines of responsibility and unambiguous legislation will go some way towards changing the culture in the construction sector. To create a robust system though, those who breach building and safety regulations must be prosecuted if we are to successfully encourage people to recognise the importance of building and fire safety regulations.

A number of issues need to be addressed. The reductions in the size of councils' building control and legal teams limits their capacity to take enforcement action. At the same time the competitive market in building control means a prosecution could result in an existing or potential client using an approved inspector in the future. Too often the level of fine and cost awards in the case of a successful prosecution still leave offenders better off than if they had not breached the building or fire safety requirements, and do not cover the costs incurred by the council in bringing the case.

Upgrading and improving existing buildings

The interim report states that consideration should be given to what is reasonable and practicable to do to upgrade and improve the fire safety of existing facilities throughout their lifespan. The LGA supports the idea that existing buildings should be upgraded as near as practicably possible to the latest fire safety standards. There are obviously a range of practical considerations in how this process would work, including how judgements are reached about what is reasonable and practicable to do, and we are keen to contribute to that process.

Resources

A consistent element across all these changes in the current regulatory system is the need for the proper resourcing of those involved in inspecting and enforcing against the building and fire safety regulations. Unless the changes that the review advocates are properly resourced, councils and fire and rescue services will be unable to play their role in delivering the cultural and behavioural change needed across the construction sector.

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Compartmentation

One area we would welcome greater clarity on is the section in the interim report on compartmentation in buildings. We understand the review has drawn on the experience of other industries where there is an emphasis on creating barriers to minimise the risk of accidents, and a range of measures to ensure that if something does go wrong, the impact of that event is minimised. The interim report is right that breaches in compartmentation can have a serious impact on the safety of a building.

While other fire protection measures can protect against breaches in compartmentation we would be reluctant to move away from a position where compartmentation is the first line of defence against a fire. The 'stay put' policy allows firefighters to move through a building to fight a fire without having to deal with residents evacuating simultaneously in large numbers. A change to it may not only make fighting a fire more difficult, but may also place lives at greater risk where there are limited exit routes from a building due to panicked residents being crushed together. We believe that any recommendations in this area need to be developed in conjunction with professional advice from fire and rescue services.

Timetable for implementation of the review's recommendations

When the final report is being written we believe it should set a clear timetable for implementation of its recommendations. As has already been pointed out to the review team a number of the recommendations from the coroner's inquest into the Lakanal House fire have yet to be implemented, and we would not want to see the sense of urgency to change the currently regulatory system lost, and the recommendations from the review never fully implemented.

Finally, you have kindly invited the LGA to participate in three of the working groups being established to take forward the next phase of the review. We would ask that in the interest of transparency, the membership of the working groups be made publically available.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. We look forward to working closely with you in the immediate future.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Paul Carter CBE,
Chair, LGA's Grenfell Tower Task and Finish Group

Update paper

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

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

Recommendation

Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board are asked to note the update.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

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Update paper

National FGM Centre

1. Since receiving further funding over the summer the National FGM Centre (NFGMC) has continued to provide direct services to local authorities by combining social work services and community outreach, sharing this learning nationally through a knowledge hub, consultancy, practice development and training. The Centre's remit has expanded to include not only FGM but also child abuse linked to faith or belief and breast ironing/flattening. Since expanding their remit the Centre has continued to work with three low prevalence areas and is also working to bring three high prevalence areas in London, into the work of the Centre. As partners with Barnardo's in the Centre the LGA is keen to ensure that the wider remit and work of the Centre is well known and that the offer of the Centre to councils is being taken up.
2. The Centre has received 254 referrals (between Sept 2015 – Jan 2018), involving over 300 girls from 46 different nationalities, from the six pilot sites in the East of England and 13 from other Local Authorities in England. They have supported the application of 14 FGM Protection Orders over this time. See infographic attached at **Appendix A**.
3. Sustainability is a key goal for the NFGMC both for the immediate and longer term. Over the next few months the NFGMC will be working towards developing a strategy and marketing plan. The Centre's grant from the Department for Education to 2020 has built into it a requirement to generate income from the outset, with a significant tapering of the grant element of the funding over time.
4. Funding from local authorities for the social work service provided is projected to be the largest single source of income. Other sources of income include training and professional development, and statutory funders such as Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and Police and Crime Commissioners.
5. The Centre can be commissioned by councils to provide social work intervention on their behalf and bespoke pieces of work e.g. family assessment and court reports. This is particularly beneficial as councils will benefit from expertise and experience built up over a number of years working in this field.
6. For this wave of funding the Centre is being evaluated by the University of Bedfordshire. The aim is to have the evaluation completed by March 2019 and to promote it to local authorities as evidence of the Centre's impact.

Developments at the Centre

7. The Centre's new website was launched on 11 January 2018. There has already been an increase in the number of users and users are spending more time on the site. The 'Commission Us' section of the site has been revamped to include the new areas of focus and a commission us video.

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Assessment Guidance

8. The NFGMC developed a FGM Assessment Tool and accompanying Guidance to support social workers to assess a FGM case. It was piloted and independently evaluated. It comprises of three main parts:
 - 8.1. A good practice document on what to consider when assessing a FGM case.
 - 8.2. Questions to consider asking when meeting a family.
 - 8.3. An Online FGM Assessment which calculates the risk of FGM to a girl, on the basis of the information provided.
9. Cllr Anita Lower Chaired the launch of the assessment tool and guidance on 5 February in London. The tool was well received and there were 61 delegates in attendance. There was a second launch event in Manchester on 5 March, which was also Chaired by Cllr Lower.

Training

10. The Centre has delivered training to over 1000 delegates, as well as providing specialist school training and learning seminars. Most recently the Centre has also completed training on its new FGM Assessment tool.

Commission for Counter Extremism

11. In February, Cllr Blackburn met with the new independent Counter Extremism Commissioner, Sara Khan. The Commission for Counter Extremism has been established following a statement in the Queen's Speech last year, with Sara's appointment announced in early February.
12. The role is for a period of three years, and will be supported by a small secretariat. The work of the Commission is expected to be shaped by the Commissioner, but the Home Office has stated that it will include:
 - 12.1. Identifying extremism and advising the Government on new policies to tackle extremism, including whether there is a need for new powers.
 - 12.2. Supporting communities and the public sector in confronting extremism wherever it exists.
 - 12.3. Promoting British values and community cohesion – including ensuring women's rights are upheld.
13. Initial objectives for the Commission have been announced as:
 - 13.1. Engaging widely and openly on extremism and Britain's values across the public sector, communities, civil society, and with legal and academic experts.

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- 13.2. Producing a strategic assessment of the threat faced from extremism, and the current response.
 - 13.3. Advising Ministers on the Commission's future structures, work programme and the appointment of further commissioners.
14. Sara is very keen to hear further from councils as her work develops, and we will be represented at an initial Commission stakeholder roundtable at the end of March.

BASS Protocol

15. The Ministry of Justice (MoJ) have appointed a new provider of the Bail Accommodation and Support Service (BASS), replacing Stonham Homes. The BASS protocol has been in place since approximately 2009, and provides the basis for working arrangements between the BASS contractor and each local authority in whose area the Director of Offender Management has determined a need for BASS accommodation with support. The MoJ has redrafted it following the change of provider and is keen to agree the new draft with the LGA as soon as possible because while most of the existing stock will transfer to the new provider, some new stock acquisitions are expected in the run-up to the new contract commencing on 18 June.
16. An introductory meeting between the MoJ, the new provider, the SSCB Chair and an LGA officer took place on 6 March.

College of Policing meeting

17. Following the last Safer and Stronger Communities Board meeting, where members discussed the College of Policing's draft consultation on modernising neighbourhood policing guidelines, Cllr Simon Blackburn met with the College to outline the LGA's views on the guidelines. During the meeting, Cllr Blackburn highlighted the Board's concerns about a decline in community engagement – both with local government and neighbourhood police officers. We agreed to work with the College of Policing to ensure local councils are engaged with the guidelines when they are published, to ensure there is good communication with the local police and also our residents. We have asked for further information about how the guidelines will be implemented and how progress is measured in local communities.

Moped and scooter crime roundtable

18. In January, Cllr Blackburn attended the moped and scooter crime roundtable, led by the Home Office. Discussions focused on parking security (primarily in London) and measures the manufacturing industry could take to help secure motorbikes from theft. There were also discussions about off-road bikes causing different issues in more rural areas, which the members would take into consideration as part of the strategy to tackle powered two wheeled vehicle crime.

County Lines

19. In February, the Home Office held the County Lines working group session and updated members of the group on the upcoming Serious Violent Crime Strategy. The Strategy is expected to be published in the Spring 2018. It is expected to include proposed actions on knife crime, moped and scooter crime, acid attacks and other forms of serious violent crime. There will be a full update to the Board when this is published.

All-Party Parliamentary Group for Gypsy, Roma & Travellers

20. Cllr Simon Blackburn met with Baroness Whitaker, co-chair of the APPG for Gypsy, Roma and Travellers (GRT) to discuss a number of issues affecting the GRT community, including unauthorised encampments, council websites, offensive language and overall inequalities experienced by the group. During the meeting, we outlined recent discussions the LGA has had with the Equalities and Human Rights Commission about a toolkit to support elected officials seek out early interventions to address offensive speech in their work and communities, which we have referenced in our upcoming councillor's guide. We have agreed to update the APPG if we receive good practice case studies from councils, which are available to be shared with the group.

21. Cllr Blackburn also wrote to the Chair of the Women and Equalities Committee Maria Miller MP, as the committee are holding an inquiry into tackling inequalities in the GRT community, to offer to meet and discuss the issue in more detail. In the letter, Cllr Blackburn explained that engaging with and supporting GRT communities is very much a local issue, that different councils take different approaches on, based on local levels of need. As a membership organisation we have sought to provide practical support to local authorities in this area as appropriate.

National Oversight Group on Domestic Violence

22. The Home Office held its latest National Oversight Group meeting on Domestic Violence. There were discussions about the upcoming consultation, which has now been published. We also heard presentations on the DA Matters training, which some police forces had taken up, and the latest trends on referrals and prosecutions for domestic abuse- related crime and incidents.

Modern Slavery Regional Events

23. We have now completed all five of our modern slavery regional events. They were held in London, Newcastle, Manchester, Bristol and finished in Nottingham. We had good attendance across the events with over 300 delegates from over 100 councils joining us. The workshops provided some excellent case studies and learning from areas that had been working on the issue of modern slavery. We are now considering how we can best capture some of this learning to share more widely.

19 March 2018

Prime Minister's Tackling Modern Slavery & People Trafficking Implementation Taskforce

24. In February 2018, the Chairman of the LGA, Lord Porter, attended the Prime Minister's Taskforce on tackling modern slavery. The meeting was chaired by the Prime Minister. A number of different organisations were present around the table including a number of different Government departments, the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, the Crown Prosecution Service, the police and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner. A range of issues were discussed at the meeting.

Cllr Alan Rhodes meeting with Vernon Coaker MP on Modern Slavery

25. On 8 March Cllr Alan Rhodes met with Vernon Coaker MP, co-Chair of the APPG on Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery. Cllr Rhodes highlighted the work of the LGA in tackling modern slavery including the joint work with the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's office on the guide and the regional workshops.

26. Vernon Coaker MP outlined the work of the APPG. In particular, the APPG was seeking to increase its engagement with local government and to help foster joint working between the police and local government. The APPG's primary concerns were immigration, recognising the vulnerabilities of victims, garnering support for [Lord McColl's Bill](#), improving funding, county lines, pushing the Government to implement all elements of the Modern Slavery Act. The APPG meets regularly and includes a range of stakeholders including NGOs who work on this issue and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner.

Taxis/PHVs update

27. The Ministerial working group on taxi/PHV licensing has concluded its evidence gathering stage and is now in the process of drafting a report which will include a series of recommendations for new Minister for Taxis, Nusrat Ghani MP, to consider.

28. Work has continued on the development of the national register of taxi/PHV licence refusals and revocations, with initial user testing of the websites functionality now complete. All councils has received communications from the LGA about how they can sign up to the register and we are in the process of developing guidance setting out steps councils will need to take to update internal processes in preparation for the launch of the register in April.

29. A Private Members Bill tabled by Daniel Zeichner MP which aimed to build on the LGA's work and effectively put a statutory duty on licensing authorities to share information about licences they have revoked, refused or suspended on a register, and to check the register in respect of every new and renewal application had its second reading in Parliament on 2 February 2018. Unfortunately though, the Bill was unsuccessful and fell during second reading.

Emergency planning and civil resilience

30. The LGA's first Councillor masterclass session on emergency planning and civil resilience is scheduled for Thursday 15 March, with twenty councillors from around the country due to attend the event at the West Midlands FRS. Councillor Sue Murphy, the Deputy Leader of Manchester council, was the keynote speaker at the event, giving a councillor perspective on the council's response to the Manchester Arena bombing last year.
31. Following the event, we will be reviewing the feedback and format with a view to holding further events around the country. There has been a very positive response to the event from our networks of emergency planning officers, who are very keen to support events in their areas. We will also be building on the event by revising our councillor guide on civil contingencies.
32. Emergency planning and civil resilience is one of the areas of support identified in the LGA-MHCLG MoU for 2018-19. Alongside the activities above, we also expect to work with SOLACE to look at support for senior leadership teams (including both politicians and senior managers) and on developing guidance on the lifecycle of an emergency.

National FGM Centre Data

SUMMARY OF CASES THE CENTRE HAS WORKED ON BETWEEN SEPT 2015 - JAN 2018.



200+ Hours
Consulting & advising professionals on cases.



14 FGMPO's
(FGM Protection Orders) Supported

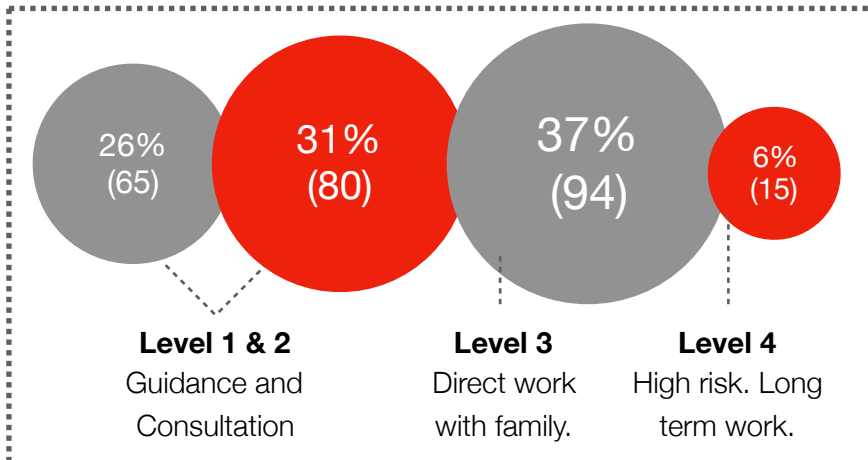
REFERRALS

254

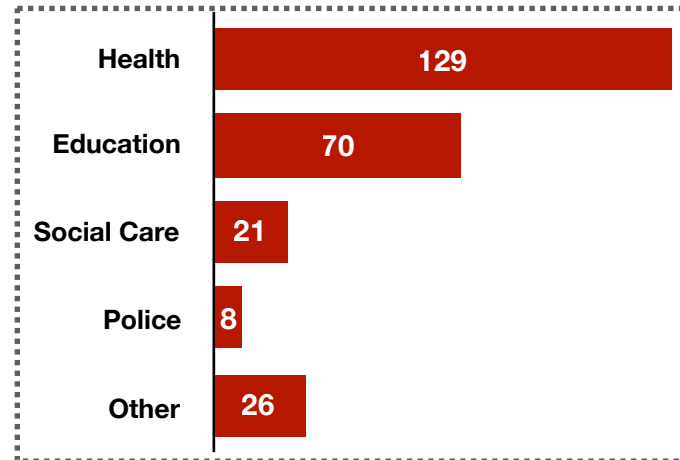
Referrals received.



OUR INTERVENTION



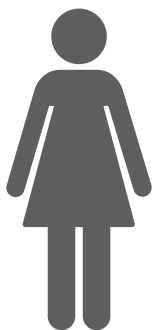
WHO'S REFERRING?



HARMFUL PRACTICES IDENTIFIED

131

FGM Survivors (Over 18)



13

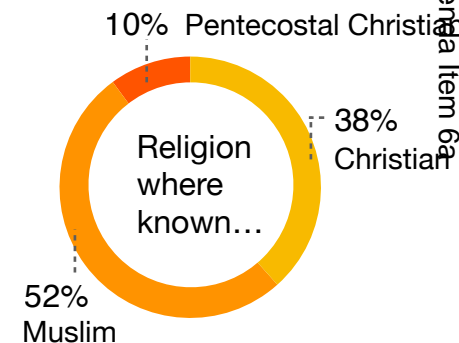
FGM Survivors (Under 18)



- 11** Abuse linked to Faith and belief
- 5** Honour Based Abuse
- 2** Physical Chastisement
- 2** Other Harmful Practices

FAMILIES ETHNICITY & RELIGION

We have worked with families from **46** countries including the places in the UK, Asia, Africa and the Middle East.



Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

Title:	Safer & Stronger Communities Board
Date:	Monday 15 January 2018
Venue:	Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, 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 welcomed members to the meeting, noting apologies from Cllrs Janet Daby, Carole Burdis and Katrina Wood. Cllr Paul Findlow (Con) and Cllr Jane Black (Lab) were both present as substitutes.

The Chair brought members' attention to the New Year's Honours List, which saw Cllr Morris Bright being awarded an MBE. Members of the Board offered their congratulations.

There were no declarations of interest.

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

The Chair introduced this item, noting that there had been a discussion at a previous Board meeting about members' relationships with their local police forces and an apparent decline in neighbourhood policing.

Rachel Phelps, LGA Adviser, outlined the contents of the report and thanked members who had sent information from their areas to help inform this work. Rachel noted that HMIC had recently recommended that the College of Policing (CoP) put together updated guidance on neighbourhood policing and engagement. The CoP was seeking the LGA and others' views on these guidelines and the toolkit published alongside it. Rachel asked for members' views on the documents, and on suggested next steps for LGA work on neighbourhood policing.

The following comments were made:

- Members felt that while the document provided a good basis as an aspirational document, it could be strengthened and improved. It was not clear who the guidelines were aimed at or how they would be implemented.
- The issue of funding and resources was discussed in some depth, with several members feeling the guidelines did not reflect what is happening on the

ground. It was suggested that budget cuts had led to a decline in neighbourhood policing and a reduction in the level of engagement between the police, the public and local authorities. Members noted that a number of guidelines in the document would have associated costs but they were concerned by the lack of information about where this money would come from and how additional engagement activities would impact existing funding.

- Members noted that the introduction of PCSOs was largely welcomed but numbers had since been reduced and it seemed that police officers were reluctant to spend time tackling what was considered low-level crime, such as antisocial behaviour, graffiti and petty crime. It was suggested that the police were focused on tackling crime hotspots and so were less able to engage with communities on a wider or longer term basis. However, it was also noted that the report recognises that policing is changing, and councils need to forge a new relationship with the police based on prevention.
- Members discussed public perception of the police and were clear that better communication (with the public and key partners) was key to ensuring the public felt protected. In some areas, meetings with the local Police and Crime Commissioner were available via a webcast. Members suggested that this, alongside better communication using the internet and social media would be welcomed by the public. Members suggested that the police needed to be seen to be active in their communities and reactive to people's concerns, and that neighbourhood policing should be modernised to reflect how policing in the 21st century has changed.
- It was suggested that the guidance needed a clearer focus on how policing differs between rural and urban areas. Members felt that a one size fits all approach would not work.
- In terms of the next steps, it was noted that if the LGA were to survey community safety teams, they may have closer relationships with the police than local councillors, so it was suggested that surveying councillors directly could provide a clearer picture. It was also suggested that the survey from the review of CSPs in 2017 could also be reviewed for information.
- The Chair thanked the Board for their comments. It was agreed that the LGA would respond to the consultation via a meeting with the College. Following that, the Chair should meet with the APCC.

Decision

Members **noted** the report.

Actions

1. Officers to consider members' comments arrange to respond to the College of Policing's consultation.
2. Officers and lead members to discuss how to obtain as many views as possible on neighbourhood policing via a survey at the SSC Lead Members' meeting being held in February.

5 Building regulations interim report and fire safety update

The Chair introduced this report and thanked officers for the work they had put into this. His thanks were echoed by the Vice Chairman and other members who wanted to note the team's efforts over the previous six months.

Mark Norris, LGA Principal Policy Adviser, updated members on the progress which had taken place since the Board's last discussion, noted some of the conclusions outlined in Dame Judith Hackitt's interim review of building regulations and fire safety and summarised the report, which focused on Dame Judith's findings and how to address them. Mark noted that nearly all of the points listed in the LGA's submission to the review were picked up in the report findings and recommendations. Members were advised that Dame Judith Hackitt and the review team were seeking responses from those who fed into the initial review and Mark noted that the LGA's Grenfell Task and Finish Group was due to meet that week to discuss how to respond to the review.

Mark asked members for their comments and the following points were made:

- Members wanted to see the findings in paragraphs 4.12, 4.17 and 4.18 strengthened in the final report from the Review to emphasise the need for better consultation with the fire service.
- Members made several comments about the need for clarity on whose responsibility it is to enforce both building regulations and fire safety measures, especially where there were complex ownership arrangements, and for there to be the resources to do this. They said that it was important that councils had a role in ensuring that building regulations are considered as part of the scrutiny process, and that better training on regulations had the potential to reduce the need for enforcement.
- Members suggested that there should be a push to retrofit existing buildings with sprinklers, though it was noted that there were implications from this for other LGA Boards.
- Concerns were raised in response to paragraph 4.5 and taking a risk based approach, which may lead to different interpretations of regulations and standards in different parts of the country; there was a need for a bottom line to be built in.
- Members questioned whether the competitive market in building control had worked, and also stressed the need for those working on high rise buildings to have the necessary skills and competencies.

Mark advised members that their comments would be fed back to the Grenfell Task and Finished Group, and then gave members a brief update on the building safety programme being led by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). MHCLG had collected data from local authorities about privately owned high rise buildings in their areas and there were still a significant number where it was not clear if there was cladding on the blocks, and if there was cladding what type it was.. The Ministry had approached the LGA to ask for assistance in gathering this information and on working with authorities to identify building owners. The LGA has also been working with London Councils regarding the

powers councils have to compel owners to take action where it is required.

Members thanked Mark for the report.

Decision

Members **noted** the report.

Actions

- 1) Officers to relay members' comments to the Grenfell Task & Finish Group to inform their formal response to Dame Judith Hackitt's interim review report.
- 2) Officers to consider whether or not to survey local authorities about tower blocks with external wall insulation with a render or brick-slip finish.

6 Drowning Prevention Campaign

Charles Loft, LGA Senior Adviser, introduced the item, outlining the agenda paper and the suggested next steps, which included an LGA drowning prevention campaign. The proposed campaign would be aimed at councils, rather than the public facing campaigns being run by the RNLI and others. The campaign would attempt to raise awareness of the issue in general, the availability of resources to support drowning prevention, the need to work with partners on this issue, the need to consider councils as duty holders and the importance of including drowning prevention messages in school swimming lessons. Charles was keen to hear members' views on these proposals.

Members made the following comments:

- It was suggested that there ought to be a stronger focus on the vulnerability of people who are intoxicated and the higher risk of them falling into water and drowning. Members agreed that the LGA campaign should encourage schools to include drowning prevention messages in their swimming lessons but also suggested that this should be extended to universities and colleges, specifically during freshers' weeks. Members suggested involving the National Union of Students (NUS) in this campaign.
- A conversation was had about campaigning for swimming lessons to be made compulsory in schools, though members were clear that even with the ability to swim, people can be vulnerable to cold water shock and other related safety issues. While children are taught to swim in swimming pools, they may not be able to swim in different conditions, such as open water, rivers or lakes. Members felt it was important not to blame a lack of swimming education, particularly as the RNLI had been clear that the problem is not people who cannot swim, but people who think they can or who are not familiar with open water.
- It was noted that drowning is accountable for more accidental deaths annually than fires in the home and cycling. Members spoke about children being taught about road and fire safety from an early age and they felt there should be an equal focus on water safety and drowning prevention.

- Members were concerned to hear that drowning prevention would not be covered in any of the plenary sessions at the LGA's Annual Conference 2018 and they felt that it was an important enough issue to be discussed in the main conference hall rather than the innovation zone. Charles explained that the plenary sessions had already been agreed for this year's conference but that officers would push ahead with a bid to have this issue discussed in the innovation zone. Members also suggested that there could be a stall dedicated to drowning prevention at the exhibition.

Decision

Members **agreed** that the proposed campaign should go ahead.

Actions

- 1) Officers to use members' comments to inform the central points of the Drowning Prevention Campaign.
- 2) Officers to continue with bid for a session on water safety at the Innovation Zone of the LGA's Annual Conference 2018.

7 Update paper

Mark spoke to the Board briefly about the reshuffle which took place on 9 January, noting that there was no substantial impact on the work of the Board but that John Hayes MP had been moved from his position in the Department for Transport. Officers had been working with him on the reform of taxi licensing arrangements but would pursue this with new minister, once the new portfolios had been published.

Members made the following comments on the update paper:

- Members wanted to highlight the paragraphs on modern slavery and encourage other Board members to download the LGA produced guide on modern slavery from the website. They were keen to promote the events being held throughout the UK and felt that this was an opportunity for the LGA to make a big impact. The Chair advised members that a press release was due to go out that day on the Independent Commissioner's attendance at one of the events.
- Members were keen to stress the importance of the launch of the SIGCE and noted that the launch event had been very positive.
- Support was noted for paragraphs 7 and 8 of the report on public spaces protection orders and the need for a proportionate response where possible.
- On the Crime and Policing Act, Cllr Anita Lower noted that she had attended a roundtable about antisocial behaviour in young people and was following up these issues. Cllr Lower had also attended a dinner to discuss FOBT stakes and noted that a joint letter would be going to the press from the betting industry and the parliamentary committee voicing support for the reduction to £2 stakes.

Decision

Members **noted** the update paper.

8 Notes of previous meeting

Members **agreed** that the notes of the previous meeting were an accurate recording of the conversation had.

Appendix A - Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chair	Cllr Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Morris Bright MBE	Hertsmere Borough Council
Deputy-chairs	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 JP	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Lisa Targowska	Windsor & Maidenhead Royal Borough
	Cllr Judith Wallace	North Tyneside Council
	Cllr Nick Worth	South Holland District Council
	Cllr Colin Spence	Suffolk County Council
	Cllr Paul Findlow (substitute)	Cheshire East 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 Jane Black (substitute)	Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire County Council
Apologies	Cllr Katrina Wood	Wycombe District Council
	Cllr Janet Daby	Lewisham London Borough Council
	Cllr Carole Burdis	North Tyneside Council
In Attendance	Cllr Helen Carr	Brent Council

LGA location map

Local Government Association
 18 Smith Square
 London SW1P 3HZ

Tel: 020 7664 3131
 Fax: 020 7664 3030
 Email: info@local.gov.uk
 Website: www.local.gov.uk

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

