

Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Agenda

Monday, 18 March 2019
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
18 March 2019

There will be a meeting of the Safer & Stronger Communities Board at **11.00 am on Monday, 18 March 2019** Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ.

A sandwich lunch will be available at 1.00pm.

Attendance Sheet:

Please ensure that you sign the attendance register, which will be available in the meeting room. It is the only record of your presence at the meeting.

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Apologies:

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

Conservative:	Group Office: 020 7664 3223	email: lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk
Labour:	Group Office: 020 7664 3263	email: Lewis.addlington-lee@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat:	Group Office: 020 7664 3235	email: libdem@local.gov.uk
Independent:	Group Office: 020 7664 3224	email: independent.grouplga@local.gov.uk

Location:

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

LGA Contact:

Benn Cain
0207 072 7420 | benn.cain@local.gov.uk | 07554 334 900

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Safer & Stronger Communities Board – Membership 2018/2019

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (8)	
Cllr Morris Bright MBE (Vice Chairman)	Hertsmere Borough Council
Cllr Eric Allen	
Cllr Keith McLean	Milton Keynes Council
Cllr John Pennington	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Cllr Colin Spence	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Judith Wallace	North Tyneside Council
Cllr Katrina Wood	Wycombe District Council
Cllr Nick Worth	South Holland District Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Ruth Clark	Redbridge London Borough Council
Cllr Mohan Iyengar	Borough of Poole
Labour (7)	
Cllr Simon Blackburn (Chair)	Blackpool Council
Cllr Jim Beall	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Cllr Carole Burdis	North Tyneside Council
Cllr James Dawson	Erewash Borough Council
Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
Cllr Farah Hussain	Redbridge London Borough Council
Cllr Alan Rhodes	Nottinghamshire County Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Kim McGuinness	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Cllr Claudia Webbe	Islington Council
Liberal Democrat (2)	
Cllr Anita Lower (Deputy Chair)	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire County Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Dine Romero	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Independent (1)	
Cllr Hannah Dalton (Deputy Chair)	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Clive Woodbridge	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Cllr Becca Thackray	Lambeth London Borough

Safer & Stronger Communities Board – Attendance 2018/2019

Councillors	3/9/18	19/11/18	14/1/19
Conservative Group			
Morris Bright MBE	Yes	Yes	Yes
Eric Allen	Yes	Yes	Yes
Keith McLean	Yes	Yes	Yes
John Pennington	Yes	Yes	Yes
Colin Spence	Yes	Yes	Yes
Judith Wallace	Yes	Yes	Yes
Katrina Wood	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nick Worth	Yes	No	Yes
Labour Group			
Simon Blackburn	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jim Beall	Yes	Yes	Yes
Carole Burdis	Yes	Yes	No
James Dawson	Yes	Yes	Yes
Kate Haigh	Yes	Yes	Yes
Farah Hussain	Yes	Yes	Yes
Alan Rhodes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Lib Dem Group			
Anita Lower	Yes	Yes	Yes
Jeremy Hilton	No	Yes	Yes
Independent			
Hannah Dalton	Yes	No	Yes
Substitutes/Observers			
Becca Thackray	Yes	Yes	Yes
Dine Romero	Yes	No	No
Mohan Iyengar	No	Yes	Yes
Eric Carter	No	Yes	No
Claudia Webbe	No	No	Yes

Agenda

Safer & Stronger Communities Board

Monday 18 March 2019

11.00 am

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

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Date of Next Meeting: Monday, 10 June 2019, 11.00 am, Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Female Offender Strategy

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

In June 2018, the Ministry of Justice published the Female Offender Strategy, which sets out the Government's commitment to a new programme of work for female offenders. The Strategy has implications for local government, particularly the level of community support provided to female offenders. This paper seeks member's views on the Female Offender Strategy and proposes the LGA's next steps to progress work in this policy area.

Recommendation

Members are asked to provide their views on the LGA's next steps for taking forward work on the Female Offenders Strategy.

Action

Officers to take forward a programme of work on the Female Offenders Strategy as directed.

Contact officer: Rachel Phelps
Position: Adviser, Community Safety
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Female Offender Strategy

Background

1. In June 2018, the Ministry of Justice published the [Female Offender Strategy](#), which sets out the Government's commitment to a new programme of work for female offenders. The Strategy has three main priorities: a focus on early intervention; an emphasis on community-based solutions; and an aim to make custody as effective and decent as possible for women who have to be there.
2. Although the proportion of women in the criminal justice system is small (approximately 5 per cent of the prison population), the positive impact of addressing their needs is significant. There are approximately 3,850 women in prison currently. According to the Strategy, female offenders cost the Government approximately £1.7 billion in 2015/16, including estimated police costs of £1 billion. This does not take into account the wider social costs, such as the cost of intergenerational offending.
3. The Strategy found there is a higher prevalence of need amongst female offenders. Many female offenders have experienced chaotic lifestyles, involving substance misuse, mental health problems or homelessness, which are often the product of a life of abuse and trauma. For example, almost 60 per cent of female offenders have experienced domestic abuse.
4. Many female offenders are sentenced for non-violent, low level but persistent offences. This often results in a short custodial sentence and evidence suggests these sentences are less effective in reducing reoffending. (70.7 per cent of adult women released from custody between April to June 2016 following a short custodial sentence of less than 12 months reoffended within a year.)
5. The Strategy also indicates that more female offenders are primary carers than their male counterparts, which means these sentences can lead to a disproportionate impact on children and families. This can also contribute to the intergenerational cycle of offending.
6. The Strategy highlights that tackling and reducing the cycle of offending amongst women could therefore have significant benefits to victims, families and Government, as well as to female offenders themselves.

Female Offender Strategy – Strategic Priorities

7. The Ministry of Justice has outlined the following strategic priorities in its Female Offender Strategy:
 - 7.1. More support for vulnerable women in the community and more measures to divert women coming into contact with the Criminal Justice System, where appropriate.
 - 7.2. Reducing the female prison population, with fewer offenders sent to custody for short periods. Shifting the emphasis from custody to community sentences.

- 7.3. Ensuring there are better conditions for those in custody, for example by reducing the rates of self-harm and self-inflicted deaths.
- 7.4. Supporting women, when they are released from prison, to transition back into the community. For example, by securing stable accommodation and education and/or employment; along with the necessary support to manage and overcome other needs, such as mental health problems and substance misuse.

Government commitments

8. The Ministry of Justice has outlined a series of commitments to improve the collective approach to female offending, these commitments include:
 - 8.1. Investing £5 million of cross-Government funding over two years in community provision for women.
 - 8.2. Working with local and national partners to develop a pilot for 'residential women's centres' in at least five sites across England and Wales.
 - 8.3. If women can be successfully diverted from crime, the Government will use part of the revenue from closing one or more prisons to further the aims of the strategy.
 - 8.4. Publishing guidance for the police on working with vulnerable women, developed in partnership with the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC).
 - 8.5. Publishing guidance on the development of whole system approaches, which sets out the emerging evidence base for a holistic, multi-agency approach to addressing the needs of female offenders.
 - 8.6. Working across Government and with other national and local partners to develop a National Concordat on Female Offenders.

Parliamentary context

9. **Joint Committee on Human Rights Inquiry:** The Joint Committee on Human Rights recently held a series of [evidence sessions](#) to examine how children are affected, both long term and short term, by the imprisonment of their mother and what it is like for women to be pregnant in prison. At least 17,000 children are affected by maternal imprisonment each year. The Minister is due to give evidence to the Committee and update on the Ministry of Justice's work on the Female Offender Strategy.
10. **Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy Refresh:** On 6 March 2019, the Home Office published its [refreshed action plan](#) for the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy. As part of the VAWG Strategy, the Home Office have committed to £2 million of funding explicitly for female offenders who have experienced domestic abuse.
11. **House of Commons debate on short prison sentences:** On 7 March 2019, MPs held a [debate](#) in the House of Commons on short prison sentences. In the debate, the Minister highlighted a recent Ministry of Justice study about the value of community

sentencing in comparison to short custodial sentencing. The study found if there are two offenders, who have both committed the same offences and who have almost identical backgrounds and offending histories, the one who is given a custodial sentence, as opposed to the one who is given a community sentence, is likely to commit one extra offence a year.

12. **Lord Farmer's Review:** Lord Farmer is due to publish his review on the importance of family ties in improving outcomes for female offenders. This review is expected to indicate what specific measures can be taken to help strengthen family ties, especially with children, whilst female offenders serve sentences in the community, in custody or after they are released. This review is expected in the coming weeks.

Progress to date

13. Cllr Kate Haigh raised the importance of the Female Offender Strategy at the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board Meeting in September 2018. During the meeting, members discussed female offenders and the extra pressure this is having on local authorities. Members highlighted particular early intervention work, a more cohesive community solution, and better custody facilities. Members also highlighted the five new women centres around the country.
14. Prior to the Strategy being published, Cllr Haigh attended the joint ministerial group meetings which discussed the Government's priorities and commitments for female offenders.
15. Following publication of the Strategy, the Ministry of Justice convened a National Delivery Board, which brings together Government departments and key agencies, to develop a National Concordat on Female Offenders.

Actions to take

16. The LGA has requested membership of the National Delivery Board, which is currently being considered by the Ministry of Justice. We have also requested LGA representation at any future best practice events.
17. We are seeking members' views on whether the LGA should support guidance on reducing reoffending. The guidance could include examples of best practice and case studies of how areas are taking a holistic, multi-agency approach to reducing reoffending. This would be provide an update to our 'Going Straight' guidance, which was published several years ago.
18. To further the guidance, the LGA could aim to secure funding for pilot areas to test approaches for reducing reoffending, which could then be evaluated and could contribute to the emerging evidence base.
19. Do members think the LGA should refresh its policies around reducing re-offending? Officers could develop the LGA's position on reducing reoffending and return to the Board later in the year with our proposals for member's feedback and clearance.

Implications for Wales

20. Wales has its own legislative and policy landscape in areas such as health, social care, substance misuse, housing and accommodation, education and skills, and violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence. Also, Wales does not have women's prisons. Therefore, the Welsh Government is developing its own strategy for the delivery of appropriate provision for Welsh women in, and at risk of entering the Criminal Justice System.

Financial Implications

21. There may be financial implications if members agree to the LGA supporting guidance and pilot areas and evaluation.

Next steps

22. LGA officers to take forward the actions outlined above, as directed by Board members, to progress the work on the Female Offender Strategy.

Fire Safety in High Rise Buildings

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This report updates the Board on building safety related issues since its last meeting.

Recommendation

That the members note and comment on the LGA's building safety related work.

Action

Officers to action any matters arising from the discussion as appropriate.

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Fire Safety in High Rise Buildings

Background

1. Since the last Board meeting there have been a number of developments related to the government's building safety programme, including the publication of further details about the programme of testing of non-aluminium composite material cladding, and information received by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in 2015 to assist with the review of the building regulations guidance on fire safety – Approved Document B. The LGA continues to work across a range of strands related to the building safety programme and this report summarises this work.

Social housing high-rise buildings

Progress in remediation

2. Progress continues to be made in carrying out remediation to the 45 council-owned and 100 plus housing association-owned blocks with combinations of aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding and insulation that have been found not to meet the building regulation standards.
3. The statistics published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 7 February show that remediation has started or plans are in place to start remediation on around 118, or approximately three-quarters, of the 159 social housing blocks. Work has finished on 40 of these buildings, and in the case of the council blocks the cladding has already been removed from a significant majority, with the work underway to remove it from the remaining buildings.
4. Members have previously been advised about the remediation good practice forums the LGA has been organising with the National Housing Federation (NHF). Three roundtable events were held during February in London, Birmingham and Manchester for councils and housing associations to hear about what has been learnt from the remediation work undertaken to date and what some leading councils and housing associations are doing in anticipation of implementation of the recommendations made by the Hackitt Review. We are developing a site on the LGA's Knowledge Hub to enable councils to share best practice more easily.

Private high rise buildings

Progress in remediation

5. The latest statistics from MHCLG show there are 266 private high-rise buildings with ACM cladding systems that need to be removed. So far remediation work has begun on 19 of the private high-rise buildings with ACM cladding, and has been completed on 33

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of them. Plans are in place for remediation on a further 127 buildings, and plans are being developed for a further 37 buildings. However remediation plans still remain unclear for 50 buildings.

Additional guidance on enforcement action

6. In order to enable councils to encourage building owners to make progress with remediation work, MHCLG published additional guidance on enforcement powers available to councils under the Housing Act 2004 in February 2019. This repeated that if a council judges there is a need for emergency remedial action there is support available from MHCLG including the possibility of funding to do the remedial work needed.

Ministerial private sector remediation taskforce

7. The challenges being faced by councils in taking enforcement action under the Housing Act 2004 were also discussed at the private sector remediation taskforce chaired by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in February, including the timescales councils could give in any enforcement notices, and the funding of any remediation work.

Joint Inspection Team (JIT)

8. Advice for councils on taking enforcement action under the Housing Act is also available from the Joint Inspection Team hosted by the LGA. The JIT has already had preliminary discussions with authorities that may be interested in having its support while further members of the team are recruited. Discussions continue with MHCLG on finalising the agreement between the Department and the LGA on the running and operation of the JIT including the terms of the indemnity provided for the operation of the JIT.

Building Regulations and Fire Safety Review

9. Following publication in December of the government's plan for implementing the recommendations from the Hackitt Review, 'Building a Safer Future', progress has continued with a number of the proposals announced as part of MHCLG's on-going building safety work.

Approved Document B

10. The consultation on the technical review of Approved Document B, which opened in December, closed at the start of March. The consultation sought views on whether for example the scope of Approved Document B should be expanded to cover protecting property from fire as well as safeguarding lives, what changes need to be made to the guidance in relation to specialised housing and care homes, and whether the definition of high-rise buildings should be changed from 18 metres or the requirement for sprinklers to

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be used only in buildings over 30 metres in height revised. Given this was a technical consultation where others, such as the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) have greater expertise, the LGA response was kept short and repeated points made in previous responses to consultations where reference was made to Approved Document B. The recommendations from Fire Services Management Committee's Automatic Fire Suppression Systems Working Group on sprinkler provision in high-rise and high-risk buildings, were considered and approved by the LGA's Executive earlier in the month, and have been incorporated into the LGA's submission – which is attached at **Appendix A**.

11. As part of the consultation MHCLG published research it commissioned from the Building Research Establishment in 2015 covering a range of issues such as periods of fire resistance within compartments, the size of fire compartments, cavity barriers, sprinklers and means of escape for disabled people. The research can be found [here](#).

Joint Regulators Group (JRG)

12. Part of the package of proposals announced by MHCLG to progress development of policy and legislative options for implementation of the recommendations from the Hackitt Review was trialling the new regulatory framework through the Joint Regulators Group. This brings together the Health and Safety Executive, Local Authority Building Control, the NFCC and the LGA with MHCLG officials at an officer level. It has been meeting regularly since the last Board meeting.
13. An early focus of its work has been to consider which elements of the Hackitt Review's recommendations should be prioritised in its work; what recommendations it might be possible to pilot; how those pilots might be conducted; what the relationship between the JRG and other groups working on elements of the Hackitt recommendations such as MHCLG's early adopters group and the working groups established by the Industry Response Group will be; and the governance of the JRG going forward. Due to the amount of work identified for the JRG it has been agreed that a number of working groups, chaired by members of the JRG will be established to work on specific themes, with members drawn from organisations or sectors with expertise or particular relevance to that area.

Wider Building Safety Issues

Fire Doors

14. We continue to hold regular meetings with MHCLG officials, along with London Councils, the NHF and a number of local authorities, to discuss issues related to fire doors. A consistent area of discussion has been when the results of the test data on glass reinforced plastic composite doors will be made available. These were published by MHCLG on 14 February. An issue going forward for building owners is whether there is a glass reinforced plastic composite door that building owners can purchase to replace the

faulty doors. The Association of Composite Door Manufacturers have drafted a remediation plan setting out their proposals for replacing faulty doors which the LGA and others have been able to comment on. The LGA also convened a meeting with a range of interested bodies and organisations to discuss what assurances building owners could be provided that glass reinforced plastic composite doors in the market meet all the required standards consistently. We will be taking forward some suggestions made at the meeting to see if these could work for the industry and building owners.

Testing of non-ACM cladding

15. MHCLG committed at the end of last year following advice from the Independent Expert Panel to testing other non-ACM cladding systems. Details of the materials to be tested have now become available. These include the following types of cladding: zinc composite material, copper composite material, aluminium honeycomb, high pressure laminates, brick slip systems and reconstituted stone. They will be tested at the Building Research Establishment (BRE) over the spring, with the tests expected to commence shortly, and the results then considered by the Independent Expert Panel. The cladding will be tested using a bespoke test methodology for this programme developed by BRE rather than use the BS 8414 test methodology which is designed to test the entire wall systems. The test programme itself will focus mainly on the fire performance of the external panel (including any core or filler in composite materials) of a cladding system rather than the thermal insulation. The results of the test could have implications for councils if one of the cladding systems performs in a way similar to category 2 or 3 ACM.

Implications for Wales

16. Building regulations and fire and rescue services are devolved responsibilities of the Welsh Assembly Government, and the main implications arising from the recommendations of the Hackitt Review and the government's response to it are on building regulations and fire safety in England. However the Welsh government has announced that it will be making the changes recommended in the report to the regulatory system in Wales, and the LGA has been keeping in contact to ensure the WLGA is kept informed of the latest developments in England.

Financial Implications

17. Although the LGA is setting up the Joint Inspection Team, the cost of doing so will be met by MHCLG. Other work arising from this report will continue to be delivered within the planned staffing budget, which includes an additional fixed term post in the safer communities team to support the LGA's building safety work

Next steps

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



Appendix A – LGA Response to the Technical review of Approved Document B of the building regulations: Call for Evidence

March 2019

About the Local Government Association (LGA)

- 1.1. The Local Government Association (LGA) is the national voice of local government. We are a politically-led, cross party membership organisation, representing councils from England and Wales.
- 1.2. Our role is to support, promote and improve local government, and raise national awareness of the work of councils. Our ultimate ambition is to support councils to deliver local solutions to national problems.

Overall view

2.1 The revised document needs in our view to be one that can be used by those with a duty to ensure the design and construction of buildings conforms with the building regulations. To this end we urge the Ministry to:

- Pay particular heed to the comments received from Local Authority Building Control and the National Fire Chiefs Council; and
- Consider supplementing this consultation with practical pilots that could establish whether the guidance is understood by those who need to use it.
- Ensure that understanding of the guidance is not limited to professions with a direct role in building safety, but extends to all individuals whose work may affect a building's fire or structural safety, e.g. utilities installers, decorators.
- Review the overlaps between this guidance and other relevant guidance, e.g. British Standards, Insurance Guidelines, and the London Plan, to ensure all are consistent, streamlined, and allow for easy reference to one another.

2.2 We would also urge the Ministry to pay particular heed to the reports produced by the Building Research Establishment for MHCLG in 2015¹.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/compartment-size-resistance-to-fire-and-fire-safety-research>

Specific issues

Trigger heights and thresholds

- 3.1 Approved Document B sets out multiple building height thresholds at which different regulatory requirements apply, relating to e.g. firefighting shafts, sprinklers, and means of escape. We believe that these should be reviewed.
- 3.2 For example, requirements could apply to all high-rise residential buildings (HRRBs). Whilst these have been defined in Dame Judith Hackitt's final report as buildings over 30m, the LGA's view is that this definition is too narrow.
- 3.3 HRRBs should be defined as all buildings over 11 metres (the height at which Scotland proposes to define high-rise buildings, based on the practicalities of fighting fires at height) and all buildings in which vulnerable people will sleep (other than private dwellings), including student accommodation. There may be some non-residential buildings which need to be subject to the same regulatory approach due to the difficulty in effecting evacuation in the event of fire.

BS-8414 test

- 3.4 The LGA has previously highlighted issues relating to the reliability of the BS-8414 test in determining the combustibility of external wall systems. In particular:
 - 3.4.1 The test does not adequately reflect what happens in real fires in real buildings²
 - 3.4.2 The test fails to reflect how cladding systems are installed in real life on building sites
 - 3.4.3 Test reports may not reflect the system that was actually tested³
- 3.5 These issues – many of which came to light through evidence given to the Grenfell Inquiry - have been partially addressed by the subsequent ban on the use of combustible materials in external wall systems. We are therefore in favour of retaining the ban.
- 3.6 The ban should also be extended to all buildings over 11m in height, and all buildings in which vulnerable people sleep.

Smoke and Toxicity

- 3.7 However, evidence from the inquiry also suggested that some insulation products generate cyanide gas when they burn – the role this gas may have played in the death toll at Grenfell is as yet unclear, and the toxicity of the smoke and fumes produced when products burn is not currently considered in any of the testing criteria.
- 3.8 The LGA's stance is therefore still that the BS-8414 test is limited in its ability to replicate real fires and all the conditions that residents may face, so is not fit for purpose. It should be reviewed, with a view to creating a replacement

² <https://www.abi.org.uk/globalassets/files/publications/public/property/2018/04/abi-cladding-systems-research-report-2018-04-19.pdf>

³ https://www.grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk/file/361/download?token=cL_IHqr

standard which measures factors other than combustibility, where those factors pose a danger to life.

Sprinklers and other fire suppression systems

3.9 We will address this issue in supplementary documentation.

Construction technologies and designs

3.10 In the LGA's view, the continued development of Modern Methods of Constructions (MMC) will likely be an important innovation in enabling the sector to deliver more homes in a challenging context. It has the potential to have a positive impact on many aspects of construction, including design and quality control.

3.11 However, there is conversely a risk that the quality and safety of buildings will be sacrificed in favour of speed of delivery. This risk has been realised in relation to large panel system buildings and other non-traditional methods used in the 1950s-1970s.

3.12 We would therefore urge a review of the guidance in light of new construction methods and design features.

Product verification

3.13 Since MHCLG identified systemic issues with glass-reinforced composite fire doors, the LGA has been working with the Ministry to identify the implications of these issues for building owners.

3.14 This work has led us to the view that the product verification system is currently insufficient, for the following reasons:

3.15 Firstly, the testing regime is opaque with regards to the number and type of tests which are carried out on products before they are brought to market. This has led to a lack of confidence in a product's ability to pass tests consistently.

3.16 Relatedly, the reports associated with product tests are highly technical, and vary considerably between test houses. This makes it difficult for individuals without a technical background to comply with the requirement, set out in the Approved Document, that test evidence is checked to ensure that it adequately demonstrates compliance. It also limits clients' ability to make informed choices about products essential for safety.

3.17 Secondly, standards bodies apply a degree of tolerance when testing whether fire doors meet the standard. We agree that this may be necessary given that the performance of doors is affected by many variables, e.g. humidity. However, this should not mean that doors are certified as having met the standard when they have not done so. The degree of tolerance allowed should be reviewed to ensure that this is not the case. Similarly, product certification should not be awarded on the basis of a one-off test.

3.18 It is also our view that greater requirements are placed on product suppliers to demonstrate the provenance of their products, and to ensure that certification is independently reviewed by a third party.

- 3.19 Finally, a review is needed of how to ensure that better product verification leads to improved procurement practice. MHCLG should consider whether linked good practice guidance is needed.

Structure of the Approved Documents

- 3.20 The structure of the guidance may need review. Currently it is split into two volumes, one for dwellings and another for non-dwellings. In general terms this makes sense. However, thought needs to be given to the fact that non-dwellings can be converted into dwellings and it is questionable whether there is currently sufficient regulation of the fire safety implications of these changes.
- 3.21 Moreover, if we consider the risk associated with buildings, there may be some non-residential buildings which need to be subject to the same regulatory approach as certain high-risk residential buildings, due to the difficulty in effecting evacuation in the event of fire, e.g. hospitals and schools. Any decision on this question needs to allow for a future expansion of the HRRB definition.

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Appendix B – Recommendation of the AFSS Working Group as approved by LGA Executive

1. The height of residential high rise buildings in which AFSS should be installed in new buildings should be lowered to 18m.[¥]
2. AFSS should be installed in all newly-built premises of any height where vulnerable people sleep. This would include residential schools and care homes.
3. The requirements placed on duty holders to demonstrate the safety of existing HRRBs in Dame Judith Hackitt's report should be extended to apply to all residential buildings over 18m[¥] and all buildings where vulnerable people sleep (other than private dwellings).
4. In the absence of the requirement above, owners of residential buildings over 18m high,[¥] and buildings of any height in which vulnerable people sleep should be required to retrofit AFSS as part of a proportionate risk-based programme of fire safety management.
5. For the purposes of this report 'vulnerable people' means those who cannot reasonably be expected to evacuate a building as quickly as others due to disability or age (this includes children as well as the elderly).
6. Any building owner installing AFSS under the provisions above should have the legal right to enter leasehold premises for the purposes of installing and maintaining sprinkler systems.
7. The Government should commit to providing assistance to any council experiencing financial difficulty in meeting the retrospective obligations above as it had done in respect of the remediation of social housing blocks with flammable cladding.
8. The LGA should lobby at national level to influence the development of policy in the wake of the Hackitt Report.

[¥] - or lower depending on the outcome of ongoing reviews including the review of Approved Document B



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Update Paper

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

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

Recommendation

Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board note the update.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

Contact officer: Mark Norris
Position: Principal Policy Adviser
Phone no: 020 7664 3241
E-mail: mark.norris@local.gov.uk

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Update Paper

Serious Violent Crime

Knife Crime

1. In January, Cllr Simon Blackburn visited the Ben Kinsella Trust site in Islington to learn more about their early intervention programmes with children and young people, which help to raise awareness of the consequences of knife crime and serious violence.

Home Affairs Committee Inquiry

2. In January, Cllr Simon Blackburn gave oral evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee, as part of their [inquiry on serious violent crime](#). Cllr Blackburn highlighted the importance of tackling the root causes of serious violent crime, through early intervention and prevention initiatives, which require sustainable and long-term Government funding. The LGA have submitted [supplementary written evidence](#) to the committee, outlining some of the LGA's recommendations.

Serious Violence Taskforce

3. In February, Cllr Simon Blackburn attended the Serious Violence Taskforce meeting, which is chaired by the Home Secretary. The meeting focused on the introduction of Knife Crime Prevention Orders and the Home Office updated on the impact of their #knifefree campaign.

Public Health Approach to Tackling Serious Violent Crime

4. LGA officers have been liaising with the Home Office ahead of their formal consultation on a new legal duty to tackle serious violent crime. We have put forward the views of the Safer and Stronger Communities lead members, and will provide a full update to the Board in due course. The consultation is expected to be published shortly.

Gang's Summit

5. In February, LGA officers attended a Gang's Summit, chaired by the Children's Commissioner for England Anne Longfield. Ahead of the Summit, the Children's Commissioner published the following report on "[improving safeguarding response to gang violence and criminal exploitation](#)", which the LGA responded to [here](#). The aim of the Summit was to bring together those working on the Government response to violence and those tasked with protecting children at a local level.

The Offensive Weapons Bill

6. The LGA briefed peers ahead of the House of Lords debates on the Offensive Weapons Bill, which focused on the introduction of Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPOs). In [our briefing](#), we highlighted the rising demand and reductions to central government funding mean that children's services departments face a £3.1 billion funding gap by 2025. We also called for the Government to conduct a full assessment to assess the potential impact to youth offending teams and other bodies who will be expected to supervise

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compliance with KCPOs. The Government amendments passed. The LGA will continue to highlight our key messages on this important issue.

Breaking the Cycle of Youth Violence – LGA report

7. In March, we published our LGA report on '[Breaking the Cycle of Youth Violence](#)'. The report contains a number of case studies which demonstrate how councils and their partners are taking the lead on tackling youth violence and intervening early to divert young people away from a life of serious violent crime.

County Lines Working Group

8. In February, LGA officers attended the Home Office's County Lines Working Group. We received an update on the new Department for Education Unit which is being set up to support councils on issues concerning modern slavery, child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation and county lines. A formal announcement is expected in the coming weeks.

Violent Crime Workshop

9. LGA officers attended a violent crime workshop, held jointly by the Home Office and the OSCT Joint Security and Resilience Centre. The workshop focused on possible solutions to tackle the use of offensive weapons and how to improve detection of bladed articles and corrosive substances. The Home Office will publish a summary of the workshop sessions shortly.

Domestic Abuse/ Violence Against Women and Girls

Violence Against Women and Girls Event

10. In January, Cllr Simon chaired a joint LGA and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) event on tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG). There were presentations from local authorities and PCCs sharing best practice on this important issue, with a keynote speech from Northumbria PCC Dame Vera Baird and representatives from the Home office.

National Oversight Group on Domestic Abuse

11. In February, Cllr Anita Lower attended the National Oversight Group on Domestic Abuse. The meeting focused on the proposals for the draft Domestic Abuse Bill and HMIC's inspection of the police's response to domestic abuse.

Draft Domestic Abuse Bill

12. The Government has published its [Draft Domestic Abuse Bill](#) and [consultation response](#), as well as a briefing which outlines the economic and social [costs of domestic abuse](#). The Government has confirmed a joint committee of both Houses of Parliament will be set up to examine the Bill before it is debated. In our [response](#) we highlighted the importance of funding vital earlier support services and prevention schemes to help stop domestic abuse occurring in the first place.

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Forced Marriage Consultation

13. The LGA has submitted a joint [response](#) with the Association of Directors of Children's Services and the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services to the Home Office's [consultation](#) on preventing and tackling forced marriage. In it, we outlined councils' concerns about introducing mandatory reporting on forced marriage and called on Government to refresh the current guidance.

Anti-social Behaviour

Home Office's ASB Advisory Board

14. In February, LGA officers attended the Home Office's Anti-Social Behaviour Advisory Board. The meeting focused on the current use of the ASB 2014 powers and whether refreshed guidance was needed for the use of civil injunctions and the community trigger process. If you would like officers to raise anything at the Board, please contact Rachel Phelps (Rachel.Phelps@local.gov.uk).

Licensing

Government response to working group taxi and PHV task and finish group

15. In February the Department for Transport (DfT) published their [response](#) to the recommendations made by the taxi/ private hire vehicle (PHV) task and finish group. The response was very positive from an LGA perspective and accepted many of the group's recommendations including those that the LGA has been calling for. Most notably Government announced that they intend to legislate when time allows to introduce; national minimum standards for taxi and PHV licensing; national enforcement powers; and a national licensing database. There is also a commitment to looking at how to resolve cross-border issues in more detail with the view to legislating on this.
16. In the short term there is no commitment to a complete overhaul of the licensing regime, but the proposals should address most of the key issues for councils, and the overall regime will be considered as part of DfT's wider work on Future Mobility. The LGA will continue to push for legislation to be brought forward as soon as possible.
17. Government's response also includes a number of areas that will be picked up in new Statutory Guidance which is currently out for [consultation](#). This is the first time Statutory (as distinct to best practice) will be issued. The consultation closes on 22nd April and LGA officers are in the process of formulating a response.

Friends Against Scams – Scam Marshal update

18. Scam Marshalls, part of the National Trading Standards (NTS) Scams Team's Friends Against Scams (FAS) initiative, are volunteers who provide support to members of their community to report and recognise scams. Scam Marshalls work supports the Scams Team to disrupt and prevent scams.
19. Currently over 600 people have signed up to be a Scam Marshall with the majority of sign ups coming from local authorities and FAS partners posting about Scam Marshals on Twitter and

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Facebook. Further information about the initiative, including how to sign up can be found on the FAS [website](#).

Modern Slavery

20. Sarah Thornton, current chair of the National police Chiefs Council and former chief constable of Thames Valley police, has been appointed as the new Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, and will take up the role in June. Officers are working with the Office of the IASC to identify dates when the new Commissioner will be able to meet Cllr Rhodes, the Board's modern slavery lead, and attend a future Board meeting.
21. Officers are continuing to engage with the Home Office on its reform programme for the National Referral Mechanism, with a current focus on looking at training and the role of first responder organisations, who are able to refer suspected victims into the NRM.

FGM

National FGM Centre Advisory Group meeting

22. In early March the Advisory Group for the National FGM Centre met. The meeting considered the development of the sustainability strategy of the Centre, and the ongoing membership to forward plan for the Advisory Group.

Parliamentary Screening

23. On 7 February Cllr Anita Lower attended a parliamentary screening of a new BBC film 'Defying the cutting season' depicting the use of safe houses in Tanzania to protect young girls from FGM. Following the screening Cllr Lower and Leethen Bartholomew, the Head of the National FGM Centre, were part of panel which examined prevention in the UK.

National FGM Centre events

24. The Centre recently held two conferences; one on the medico-legal perspectives on FGM; and another on safeguarding in the context of faith and culture, at which Cllr Jo Beavis spoke on behalf of the LGA. Both were well attended and well received.

Brexit

25. Officers have been working with a cross-government group of officials from MHCLG, Defra, BEIS, FSA and HMRC's Border Deliver Group to support communications to officers working in local regulatory services, particularly with regard to planning for a possible no deal.

Civil Resilience

26. Officers have worked with colleagues within the LGA and with MHCLG's Resilience and Emergencies Division to develop a light touch process for sourcing mutual aid for authorities in the event of a council leading a response and recovery to an exceptional emergency. This builds on the LGA's experience of being involved in similar work in recent years, and is intended to simplify the way in which this has worked previously.

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However, the LGA has emphasised to Government that the process in itself cannot overcome one of the fundamental obstacles to sourcing mutual aid, which is that councils do not generally have the capacity to free up resources for mutual aid over a sustained period of time.

Counter-Extremism

27. In January we submitted our [response](#) to the Commission for Countering Extremism's recent public call for evidence. The Commission is a non-statutory independent expert committee of the Home Office, headed up by Sara Khan as Lead Commissioner. The initial objectives for the Commission are to engage widely on extremism and Britain's values across the public sector, communities, civil society, and with legal and academic experts; produce a strategic assessment of the threat faced from extremism, and the current response; and advise Ministers on the Commission's future structures and work programme.
28. Our submission set out councils' core role in countering extremism and building cohesive and resilient communities, and how, working with communities and partner agencies, councils are best placed to understand the complexities of local issues and what works in response. The submission explores the impact of extremism on local areas, the evolving threats from extremism and how understanding, responding and building resilience to it requires a dynamic, joined-up and long-term approach at both local and national levels. It also highlights the impact of funding challenges on work to counter extremism and foster cohesion.
29. Cllr Simon Blackburn was recently invited to join the Commission's Expert Group, which will provide the Lead Commissioner with advice and challenge in her first 12 months of the Commission. Cllr Blackburn attended the Group's meeting in February to explore some of the emerging themes from the call for evidence and next steps.
30. Cllr Anita Lower chaired another successful Leadership Essentials course for elected members on counter-extremism in January and we are now preparing for the next free course on Prevent and counter-extremism in Darlington on 26-27 March. There are still places available at the March event; if you or council colleagues are interested in attending please contact grace.collins@local.gov.uk for further details.
31. In February we supported the [Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism's \(SIGCE\)](#) seminar on Becoming Proactive Towards the Far Right. Cllr Lower attended the event, which included sessions on the evolving nature of far-right and anti-minority extremism and engagement with communities. Outcomes from the seminar, and details of future SIGCE events, will be published on the SIGCE's online [Knowledge Hub](#).

Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

Title: Safer & Stronger Communities Board
Date: Monday 14 January 2019
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
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1 Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, and noted the apologies that were received. This included the guest Speaker Louise Baxter, who was due to present item two to the Board. No declarations of interest were made.

2 National Trading Standards Scams Team: Councils' Work to Tackle Fraud

Rebecca Johnson, Adviser, presented item two, and updated members on the work of the National Trading Standards Scams Team (NTSST). Rebecca stated that scams are estimated to cost around £5-10 billion each year, however the exact figure is not known due to people often not being aware they are victims of a scam, or being too embarrassed to report the incident.

Rebecca went on to state that the Scams Team works alongside local Trading Standards teams to investigate scams and identify and support victims. Rebecca outlined some of the wider work the scams team have been doing, for example with the banking sector – such as a new Banking Protocol involving the training of front line staff to look out for unusual transactions.

Rebecca introduced the Friends Against Scams initiative (FAS) which is a programme of work focused on raising awareness about scams, and providing individuals and organisations with information about how to spot and support a victim. Councils have a key role to play in raising awareness amongst residents and are well placed to signpost to self-help tools that are available. Currently around 54 councils have signed up to FAS and NTSST is working to encourage more councils to sign up.

Rebecca confirmed that the LGA (and WLGA) has committed to becoming a FAS partner – and to promote the initiative with councils, Cllr Wallace has also been nominated as Scambassador.

Cllr Judith Wallace – the Board's Scambassador – gave the following update:

- The FAS initiative is aimed at communities to build up resilience against scams.

- The FAS aim to sign-up one million friends against scams by 2020.
- Victims of scams do not want to admit it they are a victim of this crime, as they often feel ashamed.
- Part of the work is to raise awareness of scams and for victims not to feel ashamed.
- Cllr Wallace asked members to encourage their authorities to sign-up to the initiative.
- The FAS e-learning tool will be circulated following the Board.
- Alongside banks, the FAS is working with the Royal Mail, as postal scams make up the majority of NTSST's work.
- The FAS initiative is also working with young people, for example during universities fresher's weeks.

Following the update members discussed how scammers can play on peoples' greed and victim's generosity, giving examples of fake charity collections in towns and highstreets, as well as via post and on the internet. Members agreed that this is an incredibly important issue that creates significant costs to the taxpayer and economy, and as a result, local government should be at the forefront to tackle scams.

Members also discussed the importance of the Scambassador role and the FAS initiative, although some had not been aware of it. Members went on to state that it is worrying only 54 councils have signed so far, noting that while initiatives such as these takes a while to gain traction, the LGA and NTSST need to encourage more councils to sign up.

Members agreed that this work should be covered by schools as some young people are just as unaware of scams as some of the elderly. Members also commented that this is a cross-boundary issue.

Members reported that Trading Standards teams in their own authorities had received a significant increase of reporting of scams. Concerns were raised over perpetrators securing money transferred via banks, as once money has been transferred from one account to another, it is effectively gone for good. Members discussed the idea of a time lock to delay transfers of money.

Members raised awareness of a recent event for the elderly at elderly retirement village, which was well attended by both residents and stakeholders, such as banks, HMRC and the NTS.

Members agreed that working with the Post Office to train staff on this issue is key.

Members requested the list of the 54 councils who had signed up to the FAS initiative.

- Rebecca stated she would seek clarification from the NTS regarding circulating this list.

Member raised the issue of cuts to trading standards, as well as the age profile within trading standards services, with many officers approaching retirement.

Members also discussed the impact of Brexit, and how consumer law and scams legislation may fall under the radar following the UK's departure from the EU.

Actions

1. Members noted the update.

2. Officers to circulate the list of council members of FAS and e-learning tool.

3 Protective Security Issues - Government Security Advisor, CPNI

Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board received a confidential update from a government security adviser.

Action

3. Members noted the update.

4 Fire Safety in High Rise Buildings

Mark Norris, Principle Policy Adviser, introduced the item. Mark's update included numerous developments since the previous Board meeting, including:

- Progress has been made on remediating buildings with ACM cladding, particularly in the social housing sector, where dangerous cladding is now being removed from around three quarters of buildings.
- The bigger, outstanding issue however is with private sector buildings, and Government has made a number of announcements on this since the last meeting. The Secretary of State has announced changes to operating guidance, which will come into effect in a couple of weeks and will aid local authorities in taking enforcement action against owners who are not taking off cladding as fast as they need to.
- In the same statement, the Secretary of State also said that where councils want to take action to remove cladding themselves (given that they already have powers to strip cladding off), MHCLG will make money available to support this, although councils will have to make a case for funding on a case by case basis.
- Significant progress had been made on the indemnity insurance for the joint inspection team, though further work was needed to finalise the funding and indemnity agreement with MHCLG. Once this is in effect the team will be better placed to go and advise authorities; a lead officer is now in post and there is a list of local authorities the team is expecting to talk to.
- The ban on combustible cladding came into effect on 21 December 2019.
- The Government's implementation plan for the Dame Judith Hackett proposals has been published. The LGA is heavily involved in discussing with this with MHCLG, and there will be a consultation, so there will be further opportunities to influence this.
- The LGA has been sharing information with authorities about possible risks relating to buildings with concrete roofs, following the collapse of a concrete roof at a school in 2018. The speed between the issue being noticed and the roof collapsing was a particular concern.

Following the update, members discussed the Approved Document B consultation, which seeks views on whether the scope should be expanded. Members discussed that there is a case for looking at lower buildings with vulnerable residents. The Chair agreed with this point, and stated that his area has lots of buildings that are at a lower level – hotels for example – where lots of people reside. The Chair also made the note that managers of these buildings often test the fire alarm at the wrong time, for example in the middle of the day when the buildings are less busy than they would be during the night.

Action

1. Members noted the update.

5 Update Paper

Member Champions of the Board fed-back their recent work during item five:

Member Champions for Licensing had attended a meeting of BACTA, the trade body for amusement arcades. Members reported that BACTA are pleased about the reduction in Fixed-Odd Betting terminal (FOBT) stakes, but feel there are similar products on the market they felt would be appropriate for regulation and campaigns.

Members discussed the impending Councillors' guide to tackle Modern Slavery. The member Champion to Tackle Modern Slavery also updated members that is still no Independent Commissioner in post, and also noted that he would be meeting with Vernon Coaker MP, Chair of the APPG on Modern Slavery. The Member Champion concluded by thanking officers for the recent conference that took place at the LGA – making specific reference to paragraph 12 in the Update Paper.

Members questioned if there had been any further news or assurances around future funding of the National FGM Centre. Deputy-Chair Cllr Anita Lower, Member Champion to Tackle FGM stated there had been no assurances from the government yet, but ideas are being formulated by Sarah Champion MP.

Members, Deputy-Chair Cllr Dalton, and the Chair, all welcomed the announcement that Just Eat will now include the official Food Hygiene Rating of each of its UK restaurant partners.

The Member Champion for Water Safety thanked officers for their submission into the MCA review, as well as officer's work to get incident data released by the Home Office.

Action

1. Members noted the update.

6 Note of last Safer Stronger Communities Board meeting

Members agreed to the notes of the previous meeting on Monday 19 November 2018.

Appendix A - Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Morris Bright MBE	Hertsmere Borough Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Anita Lower	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
	Cllr Hannah Dalton	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Members	Cllr Eric Allen	Sutton London Borough Council
	Cllr Keith McLean	Milton Keynes Council
	Cllr John Pennington	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr Colin Spence	Suffolk County Council
	Cllr Judith Wallace	North Tyneside Council
	Cllr Katrina Wood	Wycombe District Council
	Cllr Nick Worth	South Holland District Council
	Cllr Jim Beall	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
	Cllr James Dawson	Erewash Borough Council
	Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
	Cllr Farah Hussain	Redbridge London Borough Council
Substitutes (In attendance as observers)	Cllr Alan Rhodes	Nottinghamshire County Council
	Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire County Council
Substitutes (In attendance as observers)	Cllr Mohan Iyengar	Borough of Poole
	Cllr Becca Thackray	Lambeth London Borough

LGA location map

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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

