

Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

Title: Safer & Stronger Communities Board
Date: Monday 10 June 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	Action
24	Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest	
	<p>The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, and noted apologies received (which can be found at Appendix A). No declarations of interest were made.</p>	
25	Serious Violent Crime – Update	
	<p>The Chair brought members attention to the report that made up half of item to on the agenda, including a brief overview of the latest policy developments on serious violent crime, and the LGA's response to the Government's consultation on taking a multi-agency approach to tackling and preventing serious violent crime.</p> <p>The Chair then introduced Patrick Green, CEO of the Ben Kinsella Trust. Patrick's presentation focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The history of the trust and information about Ben Kinsella, a straight-A student, who was tragically stabbed and murdered in the streets after a night out celebrating his exam results with friends.• A letter to Prime Minister citing the Glasgow model to tackle youth violence.• The trusts aims – to stop youth crime and promote early intervention and preventative measures. <p>Patrick then proceeded to show members a video that went over the night Ben was murdered, the media's response, the effect this had on Ben's family, friends and the community, and the perpetrators and their sentence.</p> <p>Patrick spoke extensively about early intervention and preventative work – aspects that are missed and causing a detrimental effect in tackling youth violence. The trust is now looking at innovative youth work – such as theatre companies, and participation projects such as the Anne Frank Museum. Patrick went on to explain that it was the museum that has inspired the Trust to create interactive experience rooms in London and</p>	

Nottingham.

Patrick also discussed the programmes the trust delivers to schools and in communities, targeting the age group of 10 and 11 year olds. Patrick discussed how the programmes are not a one-size-fits-all approach, and that the programmes and services the Trust delivers need to reflect the various experiences that young people face, as well as the address the different communities in which young people reside in.

Patrick gave further details on the experience rooms; these challenge beliefs held by young people. The rooms are primarily aimed at young people who are not likely to be carrying knives, but will challenge peers that do carry knives. Patrick stated that while the Trust understands that a two hour workshop won't solve the problem, it offers to spread awareness of the potential impact of carrying a weapon, and work with schools to highlight those who may be at risk of this behaviour. The Trust also research potential adverse childhood experiences young people may have experienced that push them into carrying weapons. Patrick invited all members to the experience rooms.

The presentation also touched on Patrick's meeting the architect of Violence Reduction Unit's, a police officer who champions early intervention and prevention methods rather than just enforcement.

Following the presentation, members raised the following points:

Members discussed the benefits of working with children to discuss serious youth violence at primary school age.

Members discussed funding and cuts to youth work, and questioned what the Trust's position on this was? Members went on to state that this has been stolen from young people, and that funding for this needs to be made available to communities, as currently, community leaders and services (such as councils and police) are firefighting, rather than solving the real issue. Patrick commented that the Trust supports youth work and stated that there is clear research out there that suggests the more youth work there is, the less serious youth crime is reported. Patrick agreed that more funding needs to be given to youth work.

Members stated there needs to be a national reversal of thinking when it comes to youth work, and that it needs to be regarded as a front-line, essential government-funded service. Members gave thanks to the charity sector for its continued support.

Members raised the Board's representation of the Serious Violence Task Force, and that there needs to be a cross-party consensus on how to tackle serious crime, particularly crime committed by young people.

Members discussed school exclusions, and the role this can play in pushing young people to commit serious crime and carry weapons. Members discussed the possibility of training or work if a young person is excluded from school. Patrick stated that children should be in school at all costs. Exclusions rates should be very low nationally, as drug dealers are very clever at targeting at risk young people who suffer exclusion.

Members debated if drug law, sentencing and possible de-criminalisation could be a way forward in avoiding young people being prosecuted and being pushed into a life of crime.

Members questioned how the Trust identifies children that at risk? In response to this, Patrick stated that they work with children of all ages, teaching them that this is not about knife crime, but about making good choices. Following workshops held with students, the Trust can highlight young people's responses and those that may be at risk. Patrick also stated that its about promoting that young people have potential, and if a young person believes in themselves, they feel they have something to loose

The Chair concluded discussions by giving praise to the amazing work the Trust carries out, and thanked Patrick for his presentation.

Decision

1. Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board agreed to the LGA's response to the Government's consultation on taking a multi-agency approach to tackling and preventing serious violent crime.

26 LGA response to the Government's consultation on taking a multi-agency approach to tackling and preventing serious violent crime

27 Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism

The Chair invited Cllr Debra Coupar, co-Chair of the Special Interest Group for Countering Extremism (SIGCE) and deputy-leader of Leeds.

Cllr Coupar's presentation focused on:

- The challenges the SIGCE have identified that councils are facing.
- Promoting more collaborative working amongst local authorities.
- Highlighted the distinct links between item two – serious violence – and countering extremism (CE).
- The challenges facing the local government sector, as well as what locally elected members and leaders can do.
- Highlighting the differences between CE and terrorism. CE includes domestic abuse and honour-based violence, child sexual exploitation, human trafficking, modern slavery, and terrorism.
- How the SIGCE prides itself from not shying away from talking about this work., and how members of the group are taking bolder steps in talking and sharing best practices.
- Cllr Coupar stated that just as all communities are different, the way we tackle counter extremism and promote community cohesion must be different in strategy. This work is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Cllrs' are elected to represent their communities, therefore it is important to stand up and discuss all issues, no matter how hard or sensitive those issues are.
- The importance of community buy-in and working in partnership

- with other organisations, statutory, voluntary, and otherwise.
- Cllr Coupar described that councils, members and leaders are facing very polarised times, and incidents arising from political divisions such as Brexit increase tension in communities.
 - Cllr Coupar welcomed members comments on what they feel the SIGCE should be doing, and identify what gaps are there? The SIGCE is looking to increase its partnerships with other organisations.
 - Cllr Coupar concluded her presentation by mentioned LGA essential courses on CE.

The Chair praised the work of the SIGCE, and thanked Cllr Coupar for her presentation. Members then made the following comments:

Cllr Hussain, a member representing the London Borough of Redbridge, stated that her area is a priority to counter extremism. Cllr Hussain commented on the lack of trust from communities and community leaders, particularly faith leaders, who only seem to represent a very small percentage of residents. Cllr Coupar stated that this a huge hurdle to overcome. As council members, we need to challenge these individuals and their credibility. Cllr Coupar referenced PREVENT as a useful safeguarding resource, as well as various CE community projects to help with this.

Members stated the importance to get this topic on the agenda everywhere, from safeguarding vulnerable children and adults, to planning and licensing, as it is an issue that affects every aspect of living. Members agreed that councils need to come together in collaboration, and grasp this relevant issue by not shying away from difficult conversations. Members agreed that extremism can happen anywhere, and often in places that you wouldn't expect (making reference to the tragic incident in Christchurch, New Zealand). The Chair agreed with these ideas, and stated that as this can happen anywhere, it is an issue for everyone to discuss.

Decision

1. Members agreed for the LGA to continue to support the work of the SIGCE.

Action

1. Views expressed in the Board will be fed back to the SIGCE's steering group for consideration.

28 Mental Health and Community Safety

The Chair requested that this item be deferred until the 2019/20 Board cycle, as it was an exploratory paper, and further consultation was needed.

Decision

1. Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board agreed to

defer this item until the 2019/20 Board cycle.

29 Fire Safety in High Rise Buildings – Update

The Chair firstly paid tribute to those affected by the fire in Barking, London over the weekend. This took place in a high-rise residential block. Residents has previously raised concerns over the possible safety of the tower. The Chair then invited Mark Norris, Principal Policy Adviser to introduce the item.

Mark's update focused on four updates:

- The Government has announced it will make the funding available to private high rise building owners for remedial work. Details are still being formalised with the Treasury, with hopes of bid's open in July for a limited timeframe.
- The Government also commissioned tests of 23 cladding products, that proved less than successful.
- The consultation is now live on how to implement the recommendations made by Dame Judith Hackitt in her Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety. This closes at the end of July 2019.
- Mark also gave a brief overview of the Barking fire; this took place mid-afternoon, with the highest temperatures of 1000 degrees reported. The building in question fell just below what is considered to be a high rise (six stories and above).

Following Mark's update, members made the following comments:

Members praised officers for their work, but stated that this is not just a building safety/cladding issue. Members reported of a fire at the beginning of May. Due to fire stations being shut down in her local area, there were significant issues as fire response was coming from ten miles away, in peak traffic. Residents were also reliant on an on-call fire service, rather than full-time one.

Members raised concerns that residents in the Barking fire who have raised these cladding safety issue, with nothing reported actioned, and questioned what can residents do? Mark responded that the consultation will look at residents powers in social housing.

Members focused on the number of buildings that are still incomplete in their remedial work (50 have been completed, with 180 outstanding). Members questioned if there was a central database to gain access to this information, including how far along the work has been done? Mark stated that there is no central database, nor individual details as to each remedial work. The LGA have an in-house data gathering source, which can be presented at the next Board meeting***
Mark also stated that some remedial work is more simple, and others can be extremely complex.

Members pointed out that it has now been two years since the Grenfell Tower tragedy, and stated that it is vital the LGA reinforce concerns ahead of the Government consultation. Members requested a letter sent out now

to Ministers highlighting our concerns. Mark stated that he will liaise with the Grenfell Task & Finish group regarding a letter, stating that councils should have a greater say and control.

The Chair stated that Government has basically said large, non-residential buildings are too hard to complete remedial work, and that powers absolutely need to be with local authorities. The Chair highlighted numerous failings in the system, and members agreed that if building regulations had done their job, the Grenfell disaster would never have occurred.

Decision

1. Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board will continue to note and monitor the LGA's building safety related work, during the 2019/20 cycle.

The following **actions** were noted:

1. Officers present the LGA's in-house data gathering source at the next Board meeting on remedial work undertaken on high-rise residential buildings.
2. Letter sent to ministers which highlight the LGA's continued concerns and positions.

30 Update Paper

The Chair stated that as this update item was for noting, all ideas and responses to the announcements set out in the report are emailed to officers.

Decision

1. Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board noted the update paper.

Action

1. Members to liaise with officers directly if they have any thoughts or feedback on the policy announcements made in the paper.

31 Safer and Stronger Communities Board End of Year Report 2018/19 and 2019/20 Work Plan

Mark Norris, Principal Policy Adviser, introduced item seven. Mark stated that the paper sets out the Safer and Stronger Communities end of year report, including initial proposals for the 2019/20 work plan.

Following the update, members made the following comments:

Members discussed how the Board's important remit, focusing on making communities more resilient, as well as a focus on councils relationship with their communities and residents, and how we make them more

robust. The Chair agreed with this, but stated councils and members need to be realistic about targets and plans for this, given the extreme lack of funding councils have to undertake this. The Chair concluded by questioning how can we make communities resistant and resilient to solve their own problems, supported firstly by councils.

Decision

1. Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board noted the end of year report and agreed to the Board's work priorities for 2019/20.

32 Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

Members agreed to the note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting that took place on Monday 18 March 2019.

33 Any Other Business

The Chair thanked officers for their continued hard work. The Chair went on to thank members of the Board, for their dedication to the Board, as well as their valuable contributions. Finally, the Chair paid special tribute to lead members Cllr Morris Bright and Cllr Anita Lower, who will be stepping down in the 2019/20 cycle. The Chair stated that both these lead members have deputised on his behalf, which has ensured consistency and a safe pair of hands for the Board's leadership.

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 Hannah Dalton	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Members	Cllr Eric Allen	Milton Keynes Council
	Cllr Keith McLean	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr John Pennington	North Tyneside Council
	Cllr Judith Wallace	Wycombe District Council
	Cllr Katrina Wood	South Holland District Council
	Cllr Nick Worth	Conservative
	Vacancy	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
	Cllr Jim Beall	Erewash Borough Council
	Cllr James Dawson	Gloucester City Council
	Cllr Kate Haigh	Redbridge London Borough Council
	Cllr Farah Hussain	Gloucestershire County Council
	Cllr Jeremy Hilton	
Apologies	Cllr Colin Spence	Suffolk County Council
	Cllr Carole Burdis	North Tyneside Council
	Cllr Alan Rhodes	Nottinghamshire County Council
	Cllr Anita Lower	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council



In Attendance

LGA Officers