

Safer & Stronger Communities Board – report from Councillor Simon Blackburn (Chair)

Chief Fire Officer's Association Presidential Team and Lead Members of the FSMC

1. On the 27 July the then Lead Members of the FSMC met with the Presidential Team of the Chief Fire Officer's Association (CFOA) to discuss CFOA's internal reform programme. CFOA will become the National Fire Chiefs Council in April 2017 following the changes.

Home Office meeting with FSMC

2. On 31 August a number of FSMC members met with the Home Office to discuss the Government's fire reform programme.

Firefighters Memorial Trust - Annual memorial service and wreath laying

3. Cllr Rebecca Knox, Deputy Chair of the Fire Services Management Committee, attended the Annual memorial service and wreath laying on the 11 September to represent the LGA.

Medical examiners

4. I wrote jointly with Cllr Izzi Seccombe and Joanne Roney, Community Wellbeing Spokesperson for SOLACE, to Lord Prior of Brampton, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health, raising concerns about proposals for reforming death certification and the introduction of medical examiners.

National FGM Centre Advisory Group

5. Cllr Brett chaired the National FGM Centre's Advisory Group on the 29 September, bringing together a range of stakeholders to discuss the work of the Centre. Cllr Brett also spoke at a Westminster Briefing event on FGM, and highlighted the work the National FGM Centre has been doing with the six pilot local authorities it is working with.

APPG Fixed Odds Betting Terminals

6. Cllr Anita Lower gave evidence at an inquiry hearing held by the APPG FOBTs.

Integration City report

7. Cllr Janet Daby attended the launch of the Integration City report by the social integration charity The Challenge (NB - not confirmed yet)

Gambling licensing

8. Cllr Clive Woodhouse chaired a conference on gambling licensing focusing on what councils can do to implement and support recent changes to local gambling controls.

Consumer Protection Framework

9. Cllr Anita Lower fed into the National Audit Office review of the consumer protection framework.

Taxi licensing regional events

10. Cllr Lisa Brett chaired a taxi licensing conference in the South West

CCTV

11. I spoke at a Westminster Briefing CCTV seminar about the CCTV Code of Practice and council use of CCTV, and also spoke to the Surveillance Camera Commissioner in the fringes of the event about CCTV issues related to local authorities.

Danger of 'tombstoning'

12. Cllr Joy Allen and I warned about the danger of young people, some fuelled by drink, are risking their lives 'tombstoning' – jumping or diving from a height into water unsupervised – into the sea and canals. We called on the Government to extend an awareness raising campaign by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency on the dangers of jumping into water and cold water shock - which can lead to drowning – to schools nationwide

Business rates debts and press work

13. I called for new powers to allow councils to suspend the licences of businesses which wilfully or persistently fail to pay their business rates. This would tackle the current loophole in licensing and business laws that is being exploited and resulting in millions of pounds owed to councils having to be written off. I also did media releases on FGM, illegal tattooist and Public Space Protection Orders.

Institute of Economic Affairs report on use of FOBTS

14. In response to a report by the Institute of Economic Affairs on the use of fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTS) by gamblers, I highlighted councils' frustration at the lack of powers to curb betting shops and FOBTS. Independent research has shown that areas close to betting shops tend towards higher levels of crime, deprivation and unemployment.

HMIC Fire Inspection External Reference Group

15. Lead Members from the Fire Services Management Committee attended the first of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's meetings looking at how a fire inspection regime could work.

Breaking Barriers 2 – Criminal Justice

16. Following on from the LGA's involvement with the first Breaking Barriers report on social care I met the Rt. Hon. Hazel Blears and Dr Jon Bashford to discuss their second report on criminal justice in a devolved system.

Security Industry Authority

17. The Security Industry Authority's chief executive met me to discuss their work on violence reduction, council use of private security services and councils' use of devolved enforcement powers.

Counter-Extremism

18. I met the Home Office's Director of Counter-Extremism to discuss implementation of the Counter-Extremism Strategy, their support to councils and how they can engage with all councils around tackling extremist ideology.

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