

Update Paper

Purpose

For information and direction.

Summary

This report provides an update on LGA policy work and developments affecting the priorities agreed by the Safer and Stronger Communities Board.

Recommendation

That the board note the activities outlined.

Action

Officers to progress as directed by members.

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Anti-Social behaviour

1. Local authority use of the tools and powers to tackle anti-social behaviour under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014, in particular the use of Public Spaces Protection Orders, continues to attract some criticism. A House of Lords debate on the powers, focussing on the use of PSPOs, took place in September. In October, a report by the Kennel Club on PSPOs controlling dogs was published; Cllr Anita Lower attended the launch on behalf of SSCB. The Home Office is currently reviewing the statutory guidance on using the tools and powers, which is expected to be published in the Spring. LGA good practice guidance for councils on the use of PSPOs is expected to be published by December.

Modern Slavery

2. Anti-slavery day took place on 18 October, to mark the day the Home Office produced a number of materials to promote the 'duty to notify'. The Modern Slavery Act 2015 introduced a 'duty to notify' which applies to all local authorities. This means that local authorities must notify the Home Office if they encounter a potential victim of modern slavery.
3. The materials are available on the Government's website <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/modern-slavery-duty-to-notify>, along with guidance on how to notify the Home Office of potential victims of modern slavery: www.gov.uk/government/publications/duty-to-notify-the-home-office-of-potential-victims-of-modern-slavery.

Counter-Extremism and Prevent

4. A new LGA Leadership Essentials course on counter-extremism has been scheduled for 28 Feb – 1 March 2017, following confirmation of funding from DCLG. The course will be designed to help elected members understand their role in countering extremism; look at the distinctions with delivering the Prevent duty; explore common values; consider how to build cohesive local communities; discuss effective community engagement and communication; and share good practice.
5. The programme will also include effective scrutiny of local counter-extremism strategies. This will be informed by new LGA guidance on effective scrutiny of counter-extremism and Prevent delivery locally, which has just been commissioned and will be published before the event.
6. The ministerial roundtable for elected member Prevent champions is likely to be held at the end of November/early December. It is planned that this will be followed by a number of regional events for elected members in the New Year. Officers continue to work with Home Office officials to confirm arrangements. The Board will be updated when further details are available.

Medical Examiners

7. LGA officers continue to engage with the Department of Health, sector advisers and others around implementation of the new medical examiner service, including through officer representation on the DH Medical Examiners Strategic Programme Board. A letter, co-signed by SOLACE, has been sent to Lord Prior of Brampton, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health, outlining the LGA's key concerns on the reforms. These include the level of the fee proposed to cover provision of the service; who is liable for payment of the fee; how the fee should be collected; and the impact of the reforms on coroner's services.

Improving the community safety response from councils

8. At the June meeting, Board members approved proposals for a project to explore local government's role in delivering community safety services for the future. The proposals included work to build a picture of how community safety partnerships are currently resourced, their priorities and challenges, and how the picture has changed over recent years. The LGA's research team has been commissioned to undertake a survey of all community safety partnerships/county strategy groups in England and Wales, which was distributed to community safety managers in October.
9. Two stakeholder workshops have been scheduled to discuss some of the emerging themes and key questions, informed by the outcomes from the survey. These events are aimed at eliciting views from a broad range of partners with an interest in this agenda, and are scheduled for 25 November in London and 30 November in Birmingham. Nominees from the Board have been invited to attend.

Deaths, Funerals and Coroners Conference – 1st December

10. The LGA will be holding a conference looking into deaths, funerals and coroners services issues on the 1st December. We'll be hearing from a range of speaking including the Department of Health on medical examiners, Dignity and Royal London on funeral poverty, as well as the Home Office and the Institute of Cemetery and Crematoria Management. You can book places on the LGA's website:
<https://lgaevents.local.gov.uk/lga/frontend/reg/thome.csp?pageID=86932&eventID=287&eventID=287&CSPCHD=00n003860000Cf2bKyTn6OV6u5I5QJtwN1CFKMGiYyqhH1GCAK>

Coroner's Pathology Services

11. In October Lead Members discussed coroner's pathology services. A number of organisations including the Chief Coroner and the Royal College of Pathologists have looked at the sustainability of these services in the long term identifying a number of issues. Lead Members agreed that the LGA should continue to work on these issues, engage with a number of interested organisations to see where we can work together on these issues and lobby to ensure that these services are sustainable for the future.

Policing and Crime Bill

12. The [Policing and Crime Bill](#) had its Committee Stage debate in the House of Lords on Wednesday 24 October. Peers have previously considered amendments on Fire and Rescue Services and will go on to consider amendments on licensing powers, mental health services and gambling machines. In our [LGA briefing](#), we have called for a public health objective to be considered as part of licensing applications. We have also supported amendments which are due to be considered on Wednesday 2 November. The first amendment would place cumulative impact policies and assessments on a statutory basis in the Licensing Act 2003. The second would enable councils to apply a late night levy to part of a licensing authority area rather than the whole of it, addressing one of the major barriers to wider take- up of the levy. The Bill will continue in Committee Stage in November, and subsequently move to Report Stage and Third Reading.

Fire risk of faulty tumble dryers

13. In September, the LGA [briefed MPs](#) ahead of a debate in the House of Commons on the first risk of faulty tumble dryers. In the briefing we highlighted that approximately 2,190 tumble dryer fires occurred between 2012 and 2014, equating to three fires a day. Following the debate, the LGA sponsored an [early day motion](#) on the fire risk of faulty tumble dryers, also supported by the Chief Fire Officers Association, Which? and Electrical Safety First.

Taxi Licensing

14. The first of four taxi licensing workshops being held in November will take place in Telford on 2 November, followed by Gateshead (8 November), London (22 November) and Cambridge (29 November). The events are intended to promote best practice in taxi licensing and include presentations on the strategic role of licensing and by Rotherham council on their experience, as well as training sessions on the role of members on the licensing committee and in determining the 'fitness' of applicants.
15. Officials from the Department for Transport have indicated that Government intends to consult on and publish statutory guidance on safeguarding (due to be introduced under the Policing and Crime Bill) early in 2017. An early draft has been shared with us for comment. As we are likely to have to amend our councillor handbook on taxi licensing in light of the guidance (as well as our suggested convictions policy), we have deferred printing copies of the handbooks for the events this month, but intend to do so once the guidance is finalised.