

Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

Title: Safer & Stronger Communities Board

Date: Monday 12 September 2016

Venue: Smith Square 3&4, Ground Floor, Local Government House, Smith

Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note

Item Decisions and actions Action

1 Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received from Cllrs Alan Rhodes and Anita Lower.

Decision:

There were no declarations of interets.

2 Membership, Terms of Reference and Outside Bodies Appointments

Cllr Blackburn took members through the paper which outlined the Terms of Reference and membership of the Board. The report also outlined the outside bodies the Board appoints members to.

The following representatives to outside bodies were agreed by the Board:

Advisory Board for Female Offenders -Cllr Kate Haigh

Criminal Justice Council – Cllr Chris Pillai

National FGM Centre Advisory Group – Cllr Lisa Brett/Cllr Goronwy Edwards

HMIC's interim Police Efficiency Effectiveness and Legitimacy crime inspection advisory group – Cllr Janet Daby with Cllrs Keith McLane and Clive Woodbridge as substitutes

National Oversight Group on Domestic Abuse – Cllr Simon Blackburn

Members also agreed the following Member Champions:

Abuse & exploitation – Cllr Lisa Brett

Anti-social behaviour – Cllrs Anita Lower and Clive Woodbridge

Bereavement Services - Cllr Ian Gillies

Community Cohesion and Integration – Cllr Janet Daby

Domestic Violence – Cllrs Kate Haigh and Bill Bentley

Licensing – Cllrs Jim Beall, Joy Allen and Chris Pillai

Regulatory Services - Cllr Nick Worth

Prevent and Counter-Extremism - Cllrs Simon Blackburn and Janet Daby



Action:

Officers to inform outside bodies of the changes or continuation of LGA representatives.

Decision:

Members agreed the Membership and Terms of Reference, appointments to outside bodies and Member Champions.

3 Community Cohesion

The Chair introduced David Evans, Director of The Campaign Company (TCC), who presented the organisation's work on community cohesion. The presentation outlined work TCC is doing with four pilot councils/groups of councils to support engagement with communities on difficult issues, and the importance of trust and empathy in supporting engagement and building community cohesion. A guide on engagement will be published in January and the organisation would welcome examples of the work different councils are doing.

The Chair thanked the Director for his presentation and invited members to share their views. There was a discussion during which a number of comments were made:

- There could be a role for the LGA in collating the work done across this area into a centre for excellence.
- The potential role of community or participatory budgeting as a next step in improving engagement and trust between councils and their communities.
- The impact of national government policies, such as education, on community cohesion when attitudes are formed in childhood.
- There must be a zero tolerance approach to racism at all times.
- The importance of good engagement and consultation in fostering cohesion, with councillors having a leading role in leading this engagement.

Decision:

The Board agreed to the proposed activities outlined in the paper.

Action:

Officers to progress the work in line with members' comments.

4 Board Priorities

Mark Norris, Principal Policy Advisor, introduced the paper setting out the proposals for the Board priorities.

Following the vote to leave the EU, the LGA Leadership Board has identified two priority work areas for the LGA which have relevance for this Board: community cohesion and the legal framework for council enforced



regulatory services, given that much of the underpinning legislation is derived from European legislation.

There are 600 items of regulation that apply directly from European regulations and decisions and will cease to have effect when leaving the EU. Particular areas of relevance to the Board are consumer protection regulations, including the majority of food and feed law.

Members made a number of comments:

- It is important that the LGA's lobbying is about what is best for local people and not about individual views on EU exit.
- There is a strong need for the LGA to lobby around retaining consumer protection regulations.
- There could be a change to food safety regulation, with a shift from councils enforcing regulations to companies having a legal duty to comply and report activity.
- The expertise of local trading standards services should be utilised to inform the LGA's work and opportunities for deregulation should be considered.
- Police and security services must continue to share intelligence and this is something vital to counter-terrorism work.
- There were concerns that a new legal framework should still ensure standards for the importation of goods at ports, particularly in relation to foot and mouth disease.
- Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) were posing an increasing cost on councils and the Board's domestic abuse work should incorporate a strand on DHRs.

Members asked that an update on this work be brought to the November Board meeting.

Decision:

The Board agreed to the priorities and work programme for 2016/17.

Action:

Officers to progress in line with members comments.

5 Portsmouth/LGA Domestic Abuse project

This item was taken fourth on the agenda.

The Chair introduced Lisa Wills and Julia Wickson from Portsmouth City Council who presented to the Board on an LGA commissioned study investigating the costs of domestic abuse to councils and exploring the savings that can be made through investing in prevention and intervention strategies.

The research identified a number of key findings:

 Domestic abuse services compete for funding at a local level with statutory services, providing councils with difficult decisions about



funding priorities

- Domestic abuse remains an under reported and under recorded crime.
- Recent research indicates that incidents of domestic abuse have been steadily increasing since 2008/09, suggesting repeat victimisation may be rising.
- Support and prevention services that understand the dynamics of domestic abuse can be cost effective.
- Basic and comparable local data on the extent of domestic abuse and the impact on local government services is not routinely recorded across all local government departments.
- Reducing funds to domestic abuse support and prevention services seems like a false economy.
- Without early intervention core local authority services will experience increased demand and costs.

The Chair invited members to share their views on the issue and during the discussion a number of points were made:

- Investing in research can help identify costs which can be used to make a case for sufficient funding.
- Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) are well placed to coordinate multi-agency responses to domestic abuse.
- It would be useful to consider how data can be used to create a 'trigger' for early intervention.
- Research into costs for other agencies might be used to persuade partners to invest in funding early intervention.
- Working with schools around acceptable behaviour is important to get messages across to young people. However there were concerns that too much is placed on schools when other public services may be more appropriate.
- The threshold for intervention by social workers is set high and can prevent early interventions. Supporting referrals at earlier stages may prevent cases escalating.
- The focus on families can miss individuals at risk in same sex relationships or the elderly. It is important to look across the spectrum and ensure services and communication strategies are inclusive.

Decision:

The Board noted the presentation and agreed the next steps outlined in the report.

Action:

Officers to progress in line with members comments.

6 Update report

Mark Norris, Principal Policy Advisor, introduced the report and updated members about the work the LGA is doing on safety around water following the recent fatalities in Camber Sands. Councillor Allen noted that Durham council was pleased to have been able to share details of its work



on this issue.

Decision:

The Board noted the activities in the report.

7 Notes of previous meeting

The Board agreed the notes of the meeting held on 6 June 2016 as correct.

Appendix A - Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman Vice-Chairman Deputy-chairman	Cllr Simon Blackburn Cllr Morris Bright Cllr Clive Woodbridge Cllr Lisa Brett	Blackpool Council Hertsmere Borough Council Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Bath & North East Somerset Council
Members	Cllr Jo Beavis Cllr Bill Bentley Cllr Ian Gillies Cllr Keith McLean Cllr Chris Pillai Cllr Nick Worth Cllr Kate Haigh Cllr Jim Beall Cllr James Dawson Cllr Janet Daby Cllr Joy Allen Cllr Goronwy Edwards	Braintree District Council East Sussex County Council City of York Council Milton Keynes Council Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council South Holland District Council Gloucester City Council Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Erewash Borough Council Lewisham London Borough Council Durham County Council Conwy County Borough Council
Apologies	Cllr Alan Rhodes Cllr Anita Lower	Nottinghamshire County Council Newcastle upon Tyne City Council