

11 September 2017

Board Policy Priorities for 2017-18

Purpose of report

For discussion and decision.

Summary

This paper sets out proposals for the Safer and Stronger Communities Board's (SSCB) priorities and work programme for 2017-18. The proposals are based on both corporate LGA priorities and options for broader work based on a combination of areas of interest previously indicated by Board members, ongoing work and recent policy announcements by Government. Subject to members' views, officers will develop a work programme to deliver these priorities.

Recommendation

That the Safer and Stronger Communities Board discuss and agree the Board's priorities and work programme for 2017-18.

Action

Officers will undertake the projects set out in the report.

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Board Policy Priorities for 2017-18

Background

1. At this first meeting of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board (SSCB), members are asked to consider the policy priorities for the work programme for the coming year. In making these decisions, members are asked to consider two issues:
 - 1.1. The work that the LGA Leadership Board has asked Boards to undertake based on the overall policy priorities of the LGA.
 - 1.2. Specific policy priorities based on the remit of this Board.
2. This paper builds on the draft priorities outlined in the end of year report considered by the Board in June.

Work commissioned from LGA policy Boards by the LGA Leadership Board

3. As in previous years, LGA policy Boards are being asked to incorporate cross-cutting LGA priorities within their work programmes. The LGA's business plan, refreshed last Autumn, sets out the organisation's existing corporate priorities:
 - 3.1. Britain's exit from the EU
 - 3.2. Funding for local government
 - 3.3. Inclusive growth, jobs and housing
 - 3.4. Children, education and schools
 - 3.5. Promoting health and wellbeing
 - 3.6. Devolution
 - 3.7. Sector led improvement
4. The work of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board makes a contribution to a number of these overarching themes. Of particular relevance are the importance of supporting and promoting community cohesion alongside tackling violent extremism in the wake of the attacks in London and Manchester earlier this year, and the link between skills, the economy and community, and the intersection between fire safety and the LGA's work around housing.

Supporting councils to respond to the Grenfell tragedy

5. Alongside the corporate priorities set out in the business plan, supporting the sector to manage the aftermath and implications of the Grenfell fire tragedy is also a critical organisational priority.
6. This has already had a major impact on the work of the team, with both the Principal Policy Adviser and one of the team's two Senior Policy Advisers heavily involved in the LGA's response over the last three months. This seems likely to continue for at least the first half of the new Board cycle, with possible implications for the team's capacity to deliver other Board priorities during this period. At the recent lead members meeting, it

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was agreed that the resource requirements created by work on Grenfell vis-à-vis the Board's wider remit would need to be kept under review.

Specific work of relevance to this Board's remit

7. Alongside Brexit and other corporate work, LGA Boards will continue to develop specific work within their policy areas. These priorities will be reported back to the LGA Executive.
8. As set out in the end of year report in June, we have proposed retaining the same overarching key themes as agreed by the Board for 2016-17, in light of the fact that much of the work in these areas is still in progress and will continue into the next year.
9. The proposed priorities also reflect the need to respond to the Government's policy agenda, as set out by the Queen's Speech in June. Although the Queen's Speech set out a comparatively limited domestic policy agenda for the next Parliament, with the legislative timetable for the next two years set to be dominated by Brexit, much of the work that Government outlined fell within the remit of the SSCB. Our existing overarching themes are therefore likely to be well placed to support priority agendas over the coming year.
10. The draft priorities outlined below suggest a series of activities underpinning each of the five themes:
 - 10.1. **Prevent, counter-extremism and cohesion**
 - 10.1.1. We will formally respond to the Casey Review on integration, and deliver a series of events and guidance documents to support councils' work to promote cohesion and integration in their communities. We will also work with both Government and councils in relation to the anticipated new integration strategy and supporting work programme.
 - 10.1.2. We will continue our work to support councils in countering extremism, including holding a series of training sessions for councillors, sharing good practice through supporting the Special Interest Group on Counter Extremism and the development of new guidance documents.
 - 10.1.3. We will ensure that the views of local government are represented in the planned reviews of the counter terrorism strategy, Contest, in particular on Prevent, and make the case for local government's involvement in shaping the creation of the new statutory Commission for Counter Extremism.
 - 10.2. **Community safety**
 - 10.2.1. Continuing work from 2016-17, we will take forward the recommendations from our community safety review and use this to inform the Home Office's emerging proposals to refresh the Modern Crime Prevention Strategy, continue our support for the water safety campaign and respond to the Camber Sands inquest findings, follow up earlier work on violent crime and maintain our work with the National FGM Centre.

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- 10.2.2. Domestic violence and wider violence against women and girls (VAWG) is expected to be a significant area of focus, following the Queen's Speech announcement of a draft Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill and creation of a Domestic Violence and Abuse Commissioner. We will work with and lobby Government to ensure the views of local government are taken into account in the development of this agenda, and continue to support councils on their work in this area.
- 10.2.3. As part of our joint work with the office of the Modern Slavery Commissioner, we will publish guidance for councils on modern slavery, and run a series of awareness raising events on this issue.
- 10.2.4. We will develop a piece of work to explore the concerns raised by members of the Board about neighbourhood policing and engagement, and address the issues councils are experiencing with the National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Companies.
- 10.3. Blue light services and civil resilience**
- 10.3.1. We will support the Fire and Rescue Service on the first wave of Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) governance transfers to Police and Crime Commissioners, the new duty for blue light collaboration and new inspection processes.
- 10.3.2. Fire Services Management Committee's priorities mean we will continue existing work to shape the role of the 21st century fire fighter and service.
- 10.3.3. We will contribute to the LGA's response to the review of building regulations and fire safety announced by the Government in July and continue to contribute to the wider LGA work in response to the fire at Grenfell Tower.
- 10.3.4. We will engage with the Cabinet Office review of civil resilience to shape its recommendations, issue good practice guidance drawing on the experience of chief executives in recent civil emergencies, and work with the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives to improve civil resilience in the sector.
- 10.3.5. We will continue to support police and crime panels in their scrutiny of PCCs, including rolling out new guidance on FRAs and providing training on the scrutiny implications of new PCC-style FRAs. We will strengthen our engagement with PCPs by supporting them to create a Special Interest Group to represent their views and share good practice.
- 10.4. Licensing and regulation**
- 10.4.1. We will maintain our efforts to strengthen taxi and PHV licensing by delivering a national register of licence refusals and revocations, publishing guidance on CCTV in taxis/PHVs and participating in the Ministerial working group on taxis/PHVs.

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- 10.4.2. We will continue to lobby Government in regard to the review of gaming machine stakes, and respond to the anticipated announcement and consultation of proposed changes. We will develop guidance for councils on supporting problem gamblers, and work with the Gambling Commission to ensure councils are preparing to fully update their statements of licensing principles.
- 10.4.3. We will continue to press for the localisation of all licensing fees.
- 10.4.4. We will continue to engage with the Food Standards Agency as they develop proposals for the future of food regulation.

10.5. Crematoria, coroners and medical examiners

- 10.5.1. With reforms to the death certification process enabled by the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 expected to be introduced in late 2018 or early 2019, we will continue our work to support councils in implementing medical examiner reforms. We will also work with Government to ensure that the new system does not impose additional costs on councils, and that there is appropriate guidance and support available.

Legislation

- 11. As noted above, much of the agenda set out by the Government in the Queen's Speech will be directly relevant to the Board; specific pieces of legislation are expected to include a Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill. Additionally, the regulatory implications of Brexit legislation, specifically the Customs Bill, will need to be reflected in our Parliamentary work.

Communications and Events

- 12. There are a number of internal and external communications channels available to help the Safer and Stronger Communities Board promote the work it is doing and to seek views from our member authorities.
- 13. We have a full programme of conferences and events which support these draft priorities and are designed to support members and officers with new issues and improving their ability to protect the public and communities they serve. Conferences already being planned include:
 - 13.1. 12 September 2017: PCP training event
 - 13.2. 25 September 2017: Community cohesion officer networking pilot
 - 13.3. 18-19 October 2017: Leadership Essentials Fire and rescue
 - 13.4. 1-2 November 2017: Leadership Essentials Counter Extremism / Prevent
 - 13.5. 6-7 December 2017: Leadership Essentials Counter Extremism / Prevent
 - 13.6. 7 February 2018: Annual Licensing Conference

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- 13.7. 13-14 March 2018: Annual Fire Conference
 - 13.8. 20-21 March 2018: Leadership Essentials Counter Extremism / Prevent
 - 13.9. Winter 2017-18 TBC: Modern Slavery workshops
14. We also have a dedicated section on the LGA website, regular e-bulletins with a personal introduction from the Chair of the Board (though the LGA's e-bulletins are due to be reviewed), outside speaking engagements and interviews, advisory networks, features and news items in First magazine as well as twitter accounts which are used to keep in touch with our members.

Next steps

15. Following the Board's discussion, officers will prepare a detailed work programme to manage the day to day work. The priorities agreed by the Board will also be reported back to the LGA Executive.

Implications for Wales

16. Where the proposed policy area relates to a non-devolved issue we will liaise as appropriate with the WLGA, and where they relate to devolved issues our focus will be on English authorities with the WLGA leading on work in Wales.

Financial implications

17. This programme of work will be delivered with existing resources, including the improvement grant funding for cohesion and related work which will support the recruitment of an additional short term post until the end of the financial year. Additional supporting projects may be commissioned subject to funds being available from a small directorate / team budget.