

## **Safer and Stronger Communities Board End of Year Report 2017/8 and 2018/9 Work Plan**

### **Purpose of report**

For direction.

### **Summary**

This paper sets out the Safer and Stronger Communities end of year report, including initial proposals for the 2018/9 work plan.

### **Recommendation**

That Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board note the end of year report and consider the Board's work priorities for 2018/9.

### **Action**

Officers to prepare a paper for the first meeting of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board in 2018/19 on the work plan for that year, in line with Members' discussions.

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## **Safer and Stronger Communities Board End of Year Report 2017/8 and 2018/9 Work Plan**

### **Background**

1. At its meeting in September the Board considered its priorities for 2017/8 and agreed five overarching themes:
  - 1.1. Prevent, counter-extremism and cohesion;
  - 1.2. Community safety
  - 1.3. Blue light services and civil resilience;
  - 1.4. Licensing and regulation; and
  - 1.5. Crematoria, coroners and medical examiners.
2. Alongside these Board priorities, the contribution the Board would make to cross-cutting priorities identified by the Leadership Board – in particular supporting councils to respond to the Grenfell tragedy and Britain's exit from the EU – was also recognised in the work plan.
3. This paper provides an overview of the achievements delivered against these themes, and seeks an initial steer from the Board on its priorities for 2018/9. This will subsequently be developed into a full paper for consideration at the first meeting of the 2018/9 Board cycle in September.

### **Issues**

#### **Prevent, counter extremism and cohesion**

4. We formally responded to Dame Louise Casey's review of integration. In order to inform our response we drew on member authorities' experience, holding a well-received workshop for council officers working on integration, and going forward we are co-hosting a roundtable for a group of Chief Executives to discuss this issue with SOLACE. We worked closely with officials at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MCHLG) to shape the Government's Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper in the run up to the publication and have developed an LGA response to the consultation. We have made contact with the five integration area councils who will be working with the Government to pilot the ideas in the strategy, and intend to host a meeting of them shortly. Our updated guidance for councillors on community cohesion will be published later this summer.
5. Over the course of the year, we held five well attended Leadership Essentials courses; three on Prevent and two on Counter-Extremism. We continued to work closely with Leeds and Luton councils to build the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism, including sitting on the SIGCE steering group and delivery group, facilitating the KHub

and hosting the Ministerial launch in November. We had early engagement with the new lead Commissioner for Counter Extremism, and fed in the views of local authorities on her priorities for her first year in the role. We commissioned a longitudinal case study on anti-minority mobilisation and commissioned work to explore approaches to community engagement around extremism.

6. We successfully lobbied Government on the implementation of Dovetail for the administration of Channel panels, raising sector concerns and securing assurances from officials about further piloting to address these before national roll out. We also established the elected member Prevent Champions Network to offer advice and support on Prevent to other members.

### **Community safety**

7. We published the first guidance for councils on tackling modern slavery; the document was commended by senior figures at the National Crime Agency as being valuable for other partners as well as councils. In conjunction with the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's office, we held five regional workshops on modern slavery around the country. More than 250 delegates from almost 100 councils attended the events to hear more about councils' role in disrupting modern slavery and work to support victims. We worked with the Home Office to shape the National Referral Mechanism reforms, and helped ensure that it remained a national rather than a localised service for potential victims of modern slavery.
8. We updated our guidance for councils on using Public Space Protection Orders following changes to government guidance on using anti-social behaviour powers, and are hosting a conference on this issue in June. Our report on the future of community safety partnerships was published, and we represented the sector in a number of Government working groups and task forces, on county lines, moped crime, serious violence and serious and organised crime. A conference on county lines is being jointly organised with the Children and Young People's Board for July. We met with the College of Policing to outline the LGA's view on their new neighbourhood policing guidelines and continue to work closely with them on this issue.
9. On domestic abuse, we continued to articulate the need for councils to have the flexibility to commission a range of services for victims, and for the need to invest in perpetrator programmes to reduce incidents of offending. Our views were set out in our response to the Government consultation on the new Bill and the creation of a Domestic Abuse Commissioner, and through our participation in the National Oversight Group chaired by the Home Secretary. We also ensured that domestic abuse issues were included in related social housing consultation responses. The Chair of the Board spoke at the APPG on Domestic Abuse.
10. The National FGM Centre received a further three years funding from the Government in summer 2017 and has expanded its remit to include child abuse linked to faith or belief and breast ironing/flattering alongside FGM. Cllr Anita Lower has continued to chair the Centre's Advisory Group whose membership has now been expanded to reflect the wider remit of the Centre. We have continued to work with them in partnership on sustainability and helping to communicate the Centre's offer to councils.

11. We continued to offer support to Rother in responding to the tragedy at Camber Sands, launched a water safety toolkit for councils and continued to promote the drowning prevention messages to members, including devising a campaign aimed at our members to run this year alongside the launch of an updated version of the toolkit.

### **Blue light services and civil resilience**

12. We ran two leadership essentials courses for fire, and a diversity masterclass aimed at FRA-members. We organised the LGA's annual fire conference and have held a diversity summit to follow up on last year's Memorandum of Understanding. Four fire and rescue services are affected by three Police and Crime Commissioners' (PCCs) plans to take on the governance of fire and rescue services in their area, and we have provided support to them. We have published our Fire Vision 2024 setting out where we see the future of the service and including a new target for 30 per cent of new firefighter recruits being women by 2024 and a series of case studies promoting diverse recruitment and inclusion within the service more generally.
13. We ran two workshops for Police and Crime Panels (PCPs) in areas where the PCC is taking over the Fire and Rescue Authority role, with a third scheduled later in summer. We provided significant support to PCPs to assist them in establishing a National Association of Police and Crime Panels within the auspices of the LGA; an application from the new Association to become an LGA special interest group is expected to be approved by the LGA Leadership Board this summer.
14. We shaped the outcome of the Cabinet Office's review of civil resilience commissioned after the Grenfell Tower fire, and have strengthened relationships with MHCLG's Resilience and Emergencies Division (this assisted in the provision of support to Wiltshire following the recent incident in Salisbury) as well as working closely with SOLACE to coordinate activity in this area. We published a document drawing on the learning from chief executives involved in the response to the Westminster Bridge and Manchester Arena attack. We also worked with the LGA Leadership Team to host a pilot councillor masterclass on civil resilience and emergency planning. The event received extremely positive feedback.

### **Licensing and regulation**

15. We have made substantial progress on the work to develop a national register of taxi / PHV licence refusals and revocations (NR3). The register functionality has been developed, and we have drafted a suite of supporting guidance and template materials to enable licensing authorities to use the register. The register is expected to go live this summer. We worked with the Institute of Licensing to support the development of guidance on the fit and proper person assessment and a standardised approach to convictions. We have also contributed to the Ministerial working group on taxis and PHVs. Guidance for licensing authorities on CCTV in taxis and PHVs will be published in summer.
16. We updated our councillor handbook on gambling licensing to coincide with the requirement for licensing authorities to update their statements of gambling licensing policy. We have also developed new guidance on taking a whole council approach to problem gambling, which will be launched at an event on this issue in mid-July. Our work

to lobby Government on the review of gaming machines and social responsibility resulted in the announcement in May that the stakes for fixed odds betting terminals would be reduced to £2, a considerable success for the Board's long running work in this area. As a result of our engagement with GambleAware, the charity responsible for research, education and treatment of problem gambling, the members from the Board were invited to sit on the advisory panel for the major responsible gambling advertising campaign being launched as part of the response to the Government's review.

17. We have supported the LGA's cross-cutting work on Brexit by working with port health authorities, councils and professional bodies to highlight the potential impact on regulatory services and port services from leaving the EU.

#### **Crematoria, coroners and medical examiners**

18. Over the last year we have continued to be involved in the Department of Health and Social Care's programme to implement the changes to death certification set out in the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, including the introduction of medical examiners. We have continued to make the point that councils need a two-year transition period to establish a new medical examiners service; although the government's intention is to introduce the new service in April 2019, it is unlikely to be delivered by councils.

#### **Supporting councils to respond to the Grenfell tragedy**

19. Officers in the Safer and Stronger Communities team have led the LGA's response to the Grenfell tragedy. This has involved assisting MHCLG and councils with identifying council and other social housing blocks with aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding systems similar to that on Grenfell Tower, and working with councils on the removal of that cladding. In May the government announced that £400 million would be made available to pay for the removal and replacement of ACM from council and housing association blocks.
20. The LGA also successfully called for a review of building regulations and fire safety. The interim report from Dame Judith Hackitt reflected all the significant points the LGA had made in its submission to the review, and her final report, published in May, sets out how the regulatory system for high-rise buildings can be made fit for the twenty first century. Additionally the Board has looked at issues associated with tower blocks built using the large panel system method of construction. The LGA continues to work on issues related to fire doors, enforcement powers, identifying ACM cladding on private blocks and the impact this may have on leaseholders.

#### **Conferences, events and media**

21. The Board ran a range of events over the last year in addition to those already listed, including the annual licensing conference, the annual fire conference and the violent crime conference.
22. Over the last year the Board issued press releases or responded to stories on domestic abuse, modern slavery, faulty white goods, product safety, taxi licensing, food hygiene ratings, Fixed Odds Betting Terminal stakes, gambling advertising, fake goods, integration, serious violence, anti-social behaviour, FGM and fake news.

## 2018/9 Priorities

23. It is expected that the themes for the 2018/9 work priorities will remain broadly consistent with 2017/8, with a number of workstreams continuing into the new Board cycle.

However, changes in some of the existing priority areas (for example, in relation to crematoria, coroners and medical examiners) and the conclusion of elements of work in others (for example, the NR3 register and taxi / PHV Ministerial working group) means that there is scope for the Board to provide new direction on the issues it would like to focus on in some areas. The likelihood of additional resource to support the team on Grenfell work also means that there may be some additional capacity to support this.

24. The table below sets out some initial thinking on workstreams that will continue into the new Board cycle:

Priority area	Proposed activity
Prevent, counter-extremism and cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue work to support councils in countering extremism and implementing the Prevent duty, including holding further training for councillors, sharing good practice through supporting the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism, trialing approaches to community engagement and publication of guidance and case studies.</li> <li>Respond to the new Contest strategy/supporting councils to implement changes, particularly around Prevent; feed into the development of the revised Hate Crime Strategy and represent the views of local government to the statutory Commission for Counter Extremism.</li> <li>We will continue to work with MHCLG as it takes forward the response to the Integrated Communities Strategy Green Paper, putting forward the views of councils on key issues. We will host further learning events to share best practice across councils.</li> </ul>
Community safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lobby Government and Parliament in regard to the forthcoming Domestic Abuse Bill.</li> <li>Support LGA input to the Serious Violence Taskforce.</li> <li>Subject to funding, hold two further events focusing on specific aspects of modern slavery, develop case study document and undertake work looking at changing consumer habits in key areas.</li> <li>Run a small campaign directed at LGA members around drowning prevention.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore opportunities for follow up work on community and neighbourhood policing.</li> </ul>
Blue light services and civil resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update the LGA's existing councillor guidance on civil contingencies, explore with SOLACE and MHCLG local authority mutual aid arrangements, and host a series of councillor masterclasses on this around the country.</li> <li>• Liaise with the new National Association of Police and Crime Panels, including looking at the scope to review the existing suite of PCP guidance and develop new guidance on complaints.</li> <li>• Continue to support fire and rescue authorities over PCC transfers.</li> <li>• Continue to support the fire and rescue sector work on fire reform initiatives (inspection, standards etc).</li> </ul>
Licensing and regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish the new councillor handbook on the Licensing Act 2003.</li> <li>• Continue work to strengthen gambling licensing and the adoption of a whole council approach to harmful gambling.</li> <li>• Work with councils and the Government to ensure a sustainable post-Brexit approach to port health and regulatory services.</li> <li>• Support councils to develop innovative approaches to managing the night-time economy.</li> <li>• Work with councils to explore best practice in commercialisation to support sustainability of regulatory services.</li> <li>• Work with the police to develop tools to support effective enforcement of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act.</li> </ul>
Support councils to respond to Grenfell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with government to deliver those recommendations from the Hackitt Review which will deliver a regulatory system for high-rise and high-risk buildings fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.</li> <li>• Respond to the government consultation to ban the use</li> </ul>

	<p>of combustible materials on the exterior of high-rise buildings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with councils and MHCLG to identify those private high-rise buildings with ACM cladding, and lobby for the changes to regulations need for councils to take action where building owners are not taking remedial action.</li> <li>• Continue to explore issues with external wall insulation and large panel system buildings.</li> </ul>
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25. Alongside this, the Board may wish to consider whether there are any cross-cutting themes in community safety issues that they would like to explore – for example mental health, disrupting crime through community safety and regulation, multi-agency enforcement, information sharing or innovative practice. One area of work the Board has been asked to consider by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Gypsies, Roma and Travellers (GRT) is to examine the impact of councils' activities on GRT communities.

26. Officers welcome Board Members views on areas they would like to focus on.

### **Implications for Wales**

27. We will work with colleagues at the Welsh LGA to identify areas where our work will be applicable to Wales, and where WLGA may wish to use our work as a basis for Welsh specific work of its own.

### **Financial Implications**

28. The work priorities identified for 2018/9 will be delivered within the planned staffing budget, which includes dedicated capacity to support work on cohesion, extremism and Prevent, and new additional capacity to support Grenfell work.

### **Next steps**

29. The Board are asked to reflect on the work delivered this year, and consider and comment on their priorities for 2018/9.