

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

Counter Terrorism

Contest 3.0

1. On 4 June I attended the ministerial launch of Contest 3.0, the Government's revised counter-terrorism strategy. Following the launch I met with Home Office officials to discuss the strategy's implications for councils, which includes new pilots that are trialling different ways of sharing information about individuals with a broader range of partners, including councils.

Prevent Champion's Network

2. At the end of June Cllr Joy Allen, one of the LGA/Home Office's Prevent Champions, launched a new Prevent Champions Network in the North East. The Network brings together elected members and officers from authorities across the region to increase awareness of local, regional and national Prevent delivery, further understanding of current threats, share best practice, and provide a forum for discussion and debate.

Domestic Violence

Women's Aid Roundtable

3. Deputy-Chair Cllr Anita Lower attend a roundtable hosted by Women's Aid which explored the various funding models for supported housing and refuges. Representatives from No.10, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Home Office and MHCLG also attended. Cllr Lower highlighted the importance of ensuring domestic abuse services are adequately funded, with a particular emphasis on early intervention and prevention programmes – to stop domestic abuse from occurring in the first place.

National Oversight Group on Domestic Abuse

4. I attended the Home Office-led National Oversight Group on Domestic Abuse. The meeting focused primarily on the police response to domestic abuse and the importance of training for frontline professionals on this important issue. The new Home Secretary Sajid Javid MP provided an update on the Domestic Abuse Bill consultation, which the LGA submitted a response to.

Domestic Abuse Services Funding

5. The Government has responded to calls from the LGA to provide additional funding for domestic abuse services and announced there would be almost £19 million of funding available to councils working in partnership with charities and other organisations to expand the support for survivors of domestic abuse. This will go some way to helping local authorities and their partners continue to provide support for domestic abuse services. We continue to push the importance of early intervention and prevention initiatives that will stop domestic abuse from occurring at all.

Home Affairs Committee Evidence

6. We submitted written evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee as part of their inquiry into domestic abuse. Subsequently, I have been called to give oral evidence to the committee in July. Our key messages are [available here](#).

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Event

7. In June, the LGA held an event with council officers who had been successful in their bids for funding as part of the Home Office's VAWG service transformation fund. The purpose of the event was for councils to share best practice and case studies, showcasing some of the innovative work being carried out across local government, which is helping to improve the lives of victims of domestic abuse.

Serious Violence

Serious Violence Taskforce

8. In June, I attended the second meeting of the Serious Violence Taskforce. The Taskforce is formed of Government Ministers, cross-party MPs, police leaders, local government and the voluntary sector, who ensure sustained, swift and decisive action is taken against serious violent crime. The meeting focused on the Offensive Weapons Bill and the use of social media to insight violent crime. The next meeting is due to take place in July.

County Lines Event

9. In July, the LGA hosted a conference on county lines issues and tackling child criminal exploitation. This included speakers from the Home Office, local government colleagues, the Violence and Vulnerability Unit, the Children's Society and other key partners. Local government colleagues who attended to event were able to share best practice and discuss how improvements could be made in local areas when responding to county lines issues.

Moped and Scooter Roundtable

10. In June, I attended the moped and scooter roundtable which focused on parking security measures, police disruption methods and included an update on the recent Government consultation on police pursuits. The next meeting is expected to be held in September.

Cohesive Communities

11. I chaired a Building Cohesive and Resilient Communities workshop at the LGA conference, which included inputs from Dame Louise Casey; Sara Khan, Lead Commissioner for Countering Extremism; and Cllr Hoddinott, Community Safety portfolio holder at Rotherham Council. The workshop was well attended and explored the importance of social and economic integration, leadership around tackling difficult issues, and the evolving nature of extremist threats.

Fire Safety Management Committee

FSMC Meeting

12. A special meeting of the FSMC was held on 11 July to discuss the findings from the Hackitt Review and the LGA's response to the issues raised within it.

Risk and Demand Roundtable

13. The Home Office and some members of the FSMC held a meeting on the 11 July to discuss the Home Office's work on risk and demand. The meeting will help to inform a piece of work that the Home Office are doing looking at the evidence for both demand and risks facing the fire service, as well as the financial resilience of the sector. The work will also examine how the identified risks set out in Integrated Risk Management Plans translate into the level of resources required in order to meet those risks.

Fire Safety in Buildings

14. Cllr Ian Stephens and Fiona Tywcross AM from Fire Services Management Committee respectively chaired and spoke at a session at the LGA conference on fire safety in high-rise buildings after the fire at Grenfell Tower, which included a discussion of the recommendations from Dame Judith Hackitt's review of building regulations.

Licensing and Regulation

Fixed Odds Betting Terminals

15. We have also sought to keep up the pressure on Government to ensure an early implementation of reduced FOBT stakes, by highlighting concerns about the amount of money that will be lost on FOBTs if the reduction is delayed. Following a press release on this issue, I set out our concerns on Sky News Radio, while Cllr Lower gave evidence at a hearing of the APPG on FOBTs.

Harmful Gambling – Event to Launch New Guidance

16. Earlier this month, Deputy-Chair Cllr Anita Lower chaired an event on 'Taking a whole council approach to tackling harmful gambling', to coincide with the launch of a new LGA-Public Health England guidance document on this issue. The event considered a range of different steps councils can take to help support local people experiencing harm connected to their or someone else's problem gambling, including hearing from individuals and families with direct experience of this.

Modern Slavery

Environmental Audit Committee inquiry into Hand Car Washes

17. Last month, Councillor Alan Rhodes gave evidence to an EAC inquiry into hand car washes. Hand car washes have been identified by the Gangmasters' and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) as a sector where there is a high risk of modern slavery and labour exploitation.

19 July 2018

Cllr Rhodes outlined local authorities' regulatory responsibilities in relation to hand car washes, and highlighted the LGA's recent work with councils to raise awareness of modern slavery and how they can disrupt it.

APPG on human trafficking and modern slavery

18. On 5 June Cllr Alan Rhodes met with the APPG on human trafficking and modern slavery to talk about the work of the LGA on this issue. He outlined the LGA's guide for councils on tackling modern slavery as well as talking about future work. The APPG were positive about the work of the LGA and our commitment to tackling modern slavery, however there was some acknowledgement that there was still further to go to ensure that everyone was aware of modern slavery.

Public Bill Committee

19. Last month, I gave evidence to a Public Bill Committee session on the Tenant Fees Bill. The session focused specifically on how local authorities will regulate the ban. I emphasised councils' support for the ban, but called for local flexibility on how the ban is regulated and highlighted the resource pressures trading standards are experiencing.

Police and Crime Panels Workshop

20. Last week, Cllr Clive Woodbridge hosted an LGA workshop for members and support officers of police and crime panels. The meeting discussed the impact of the Policing and Crime Act, and increasing role of some Police and Crime Commissioners in fire governance, as well as the new LGA Special Interest Group for PCPs.

Media Roundup

21. Since the last Forum, I have given comments in the following press releases on behalf of the Board:
 - 21.1 A press release regarding the [delay in cutting FOBT stakes](#).
 - 21.2 Commenting on [fake football memorabilia](#) in the wake of the World Cup.
 - 21.3 Raising awareness of [domestic abuse ahead of the World Cup](#), alongside Women's Aid.
 - 21.4 An LGA [response to the introduction of medical examiners](#).

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