

Safer and Stronger Communities Board Policy Priorities for 2018-19

Purpose of report

For decision.

Summary

This paper sets out proposals for the Safer and Stronger Communities Board's (SSCB) priorities and work programme for 2018-19. The proposals are based on corporate LGA priorities and options for broader work based on a continuation of ongoing work (including responding to recent policy announcements by Government) and areas of interest previously indicated by Board members.

Recommendation

That the Safer and Stronger Communities Board discuss and agree the Board's priorities and work programme for 2018-19.

Action

Officers will undertake the projects set out in the report.

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

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 the 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 is currently being refreshed, and sets out the following corporate priorities:
 - 3.1. Britain's exit from the European Union
 - 3.2. Devolution and funding for local government
 - 3.3. Inclusive growth, jobs and housing
 - 3.4. Children, education and schools
 - 3.5. Adult social care and health
 - 3.6. Supporting councils
 - 3.7. Providing a single voice for local government
4. The work of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board makes a contribution to a number of these overarching themes, with the proposed work programme at paragraphs 14-18 intended to be incorporated throughout the business plan subject once confirmed by the Board.
5. The work of this Board also has a significant contribution to make to two corporate priorities, on Brexit and on supporting councils to respond to the Grenfell tragedy.

Britain's exit from the EU

6. Following the vote to leave the European Union (EU) in June 2016, the Safer and Stronger Communities Board developed a position paper on its priority issues in light of the fact that the UK will be leaving the EU in early 2019. Our early work on Brexit focused on the possible opportunities for legislative change after withdrawal, and

provided a set of agreed principles for considering potential changes, as well as a detailed overview of relevant legislation.

7. Since the announcement that the EU Withdrawal Bill will incorporate existing EU law into UK law we have been focusing on the implications for relevant council services of operating the current legal framework once we are outside the EU. The Safer and Stronger Communities Board remit includes regulatory services that help to protect the public at ports of entry and exit (ie, seaports and airports) and inland, for example in relation to specific types of food and feed products, consumer goods etc.
8. Our work with councils on these issues has indicated a number of possible resourcing impacts for these services depending on the deal that the UK agrees with the EU as it leaves the EU; for example, if EU goods were to be treated as existing 'third country' goods, more checks would be needed and more capacity required to deliver this. The safer communities team has been working with the LGA Brexit Task and Finish group alongside the SSCB to ensure these issues and risks are highlighted to Government. This work will continue as the date of EU exit draws nearer and the details of the withdrawal agreement become clearer.

Supporting councils to respond to the Grenfell tragedy

9. The safer communities team has also led work on supporting the sector to manage the implications arising from the Grenfell fire tragedy, reporting to an LGA Grenfell Task and Finish group alongside the SSCB. This has had a significant impact this on the workload of the team and, in light of the fact that this position is expected to continue for some time, additional capacity has been brought in to help support this work over the coming year.
10. The anticipated ongoing work relating to Grenfell over 2018-19 includes:
 - 10.1. Working with government to deliver those recommendations from Dame Judith Hackitt's Review of fire safety, which will deliver a regulatory system for high-rise and high-risk buildings fit for the 21st century.
 - 10.2. Responding to a number of Government consultations including proposed bans on the use of combustible materials on the exterior of high-rise buildings and the use of desktop studies, and revisions to the building regulations guidance on fire safety (Approved Document B).
 - 10.3. Working with councils and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to identify those private high-rise buildings with Aluminium Composite Material cladding, and lobbying for the changes to regulations needed for councils to take action where building owners are not taking remedial action.
 - 10.4. Continuing to explore issues with external wall insulation and large panel system buildings.

Specific work of relevance to this Board's remit

11. Alongside Brexit and Grenfell, LGA Boards will continue to develop specific work within their policy areas which underpin the LGA corporate priorities. These priorities will be reported back to the LGA Executive.
12. As set out in the 2017-18 end of year report in June, we are proposing to retain the same five overarching key themes the Safer and Stronger Communities Board has focused on for the past two years. This reflects the fact that work in these areas is still in progress and will continue into this year, as well as taking account of the Government's policy agenda and legislative plans for this area. The five themes are:
 - 12.1. Prevent, counter-extremism and cohesion;
 - 12.2. Community safety;
 - 12.3. Blue light services and civil resilience;
 - 12.4. Licensing and regulation; and
 - 12.5. Crematoria, coroners and medical examiners.
13. The following sections set out proposals for specific activities under each of these headings.

Prevent, counter extremism and cohesion

14. We will:
 - 14.1. 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 the publication of guidance and case studies.
 - 14.2. Respond to the new Contest strategy and support 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 Commission for Counter Extremism.
 - 14.3. 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 also engage with the five local integration area pilot councils, and host further learning events to share best practice across councils.

Community safety

15. We will:

- 15.1. Lobby Government and Parliament in regard to the forthcoming Domestic Abuse Bill and Government's wider work on accommodation and support services for those impacted by domestic abuse.
- 15.2. Support the LGA's input to the Serious Violence Taskforce.
- 15.3. Take forward our recent work on modern slavery by holding two further events to support councils on specific aspects of modern slavery, developing a case study document and exploring work looking at changing consumer habits in key areas.
- 15.4. Run a small campaign directed at LGA members around drowning prevention.
- 15.5. Explore opportunities for follow up work on community and neighbourhood policing.
- 15.6. Explore the scope for a cross-cutting piece of work on mental health and community safety issues.

Blue light services and civil resilience

16. We will:

- 16.1. Update the LGA's existing councillor guidance on civil contingencies, host a series of councillor masterclasses on this around the country and work with the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) to explore other opportunities for guidance and training. We will also explore the scope for strengthening existing mutual aid arrangements between councils, through guidance and practical tools.
- 16.2. Liaise with the new National Association of Police and Crime Panels, including looking at the scope to review the existing suite of police and crime panel guidance and develop new guidance on complaints.
- 16.3. Continue to support fire and rescue authorities over the potential transfer of governance of fire and rescue services to Police and Crime Commissioners.

- 16.4. Continue to support the fire and rescue sector work on fire reform initiatives including the results from the first round of fire and rescue authority inspections and the establishment of a new standards body for the fire and rescue service.

Licensing and regulation

17. We will:

- 17.1. Publish a new councillor handbook on the Licensing Act 2003, and work with councils to support them to develop innovative approaches to managing the night-time economy.
- 17.2. Identify opportunities to provide further support for councils on harmful gambling issues, and continue to lobby for the reduction of maximum Fixed Odds Betting Terminal (FOBT) stakes to £2 as soon as possible, engaging with the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on FOBTs and publishing research on the costs of a delay.
- 17.3. Support councils to strengthen local licensing by publishing guidance for councils on introducing a requirement for CCTV in taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs) and working with them to support use of the new information sharing mechanism, the National Register of taxi / PHV licence Refusals and Revocations (NR3). Following publication of the report of the Department for Transport working group into taxi / PHVs legislation, and the Government's response to it, we will also work with the Department to explore legislative solutions to current challenges in taxi and PHV licensing.
- 17.4. Work with councils to explore best practice in commercialisation to support the sustainability of regulatory services, and work with the police to develop tools to support effective enforcement of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act.

Crematoria, coroners and medical examiners

18. We will:

- 18.1. Continue to engage with the Department of Health and Social Care's programme to introduce a new medical examiner service in 2019 to ensure it takes account of the impact on coroners and registrars' services.
- 18.2. Contribute to the Competition and Market Authority's review of funeral costs, and respond to any recommendations in relation to crematoria and funeral provision.

Legislation and parliamentary work

19. A number of key pieces of legislation anticipated over the next year will be directly relevant to the Board, in particular the Domestic Abuse Bill, and Brexit legislation as it

relates to the withdrawal agreement and impact on local regulatory services. The House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee is in the process of conducting a number of inquiries relevant to the Safer and Stronger Communities portfolio, in particular, Modern Slavery and Serious Violence. The Modern Slavery inquiry is expected to feed into the independent review of the Modern Slavery Act being led by Maria Miller, Frank Field and Baroness Butler-Sloss. We will continue our engagement with relevant select committee inquiries as they are announced and with APPGs who are active on safer communities issues (such as the APPG on FOBTs).

Conferences, events and media

20. 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.
21. We have a full programme of conferences and events which support the 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 and training events already being planned include:
 - 21.1. PREVENT Leadership Essentials: 30-31 October Warwick
 - 21.2. Disrupting Modern Slavery: 20 November, London
 - 21.3. Emergency Planning and Civil Resilience Masterclass: 22 November, Leeds
 - 21.4. Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials: 28-29 November, Warwick
 - 21.5. Cohesion and Integration Leadership Essentials: 11-12 December, Warwick
 - 21.6. Counter Extremism Leadership Essentials: 17-18 January, Warwick
 - 21.7. Annual Licensing Conference: 5 February, London
 - 21.8. Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials: 26-27 February, Warwick
 - 21.9. Emergency Planning and Civil Resilience Masterclass: TBC 2019, London
22. We also have a dedicated section on the LGA website, regular e-bulletins with a personal introduction from the Chair of the Board, 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.

Implications for Wales

23. Where the proposed policy area relates to a non-devolved issue we will liaise as appropriate with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), and where it relates to devolved issues our focus will be on English authorities with the WLGA leading on work in Wales.

Financial Implications

24. 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.
25. Additional supporting projects may be commissioned subject to funds being available from a small directorate / team budget.

Next steps

26. The Board are asked to consider and comment on their priorities for 2018/9.