

14 January 2019

Update Paper

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

The report outlines issues of interest to the Board not covered under the other items on the agenda.

Recommendation

Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board note the update.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

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Update Paper

Serious Violent Crime

International Violent Crime Symposium

1. Cllr Anita Lower attended the International Violent Crime Symposium in November. The symposium was organised by the Home Office to bring together best practice and guidance from other countries who have taken steps to tackle serious violent crime. There was a presentation from the World Health Organization on taking a public health approach to tackling serious violence, which the LGA has been supportive of in recent briefings.

Serious Violence Taskforce

2. Cllr Simon Blackburn presented at the Serious Violence Taskforce meeting in November, to provide members with a 'deep dive' account of how Blackpool has taken steps to tackle county lines issues. Cllr Blackburn touched upon a number of successful police operations, which had uncovered and disrupted county lines activity, with the help of local partners and council officers. The next Taskforce meeting will focus on the Department for Education review of schools exclusions, the National Crime Agency's Assessment of County Lines activity and the Voluntary and Community Sector perspective of serious violent crime.

Public Health Approach to Tackling Serious Violent Crime

3. LGA officers have been liaising with the Home Office ahead of their formal consultation on a new legal duty to take a public health approach to tackling serious violent crime. We have put forward the views of the Safer and Stronger Communities lead members, and will provide a full update to the Board in due course.

Unauthorised Encampments and Developments

4. The LGA convened a private roundtable with council officers, including planning, environmental health and community safety teams, to learn about their experiences of responding to unauthorised developments and encampments. There was a consensus amongst officers that there needs to be more transient sites available and additional funding should be made available by central Government for new sites.

Trusted Relationships Fund

5. The LGA hosted a best practice event with the successful local government bid leads of the Trusted Relationships Fund. The fund has been set up by the Home Office to help youth workers, police, nurses and other professionals form close, protective relationships with children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation, county lines gang crime or relationship abuse. The LGA will continue to work with the Home Office and the bid leads to share best practice and learning.

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Licensing

Just Eats Announcement of Food Hygiene Rating's

6. Just Eat has announced plans to include the official Food Hygiene Rating of each of its UK restaurant partners directly on its platforms, both in-app and online.
7. Following consultations with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) and Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), Just Eat will launch its trial of the initiative in Northern Ireland in early 2019 with over 600 restaurants. Following a full evaluation of the trial, a national roll-out will be implemented later in the year. Full details can be found [here](#).

Modern Slavery

NRM Reform Programme Board

8. The Home Office National Referral Mechanism (NRM) Reform Programme Board met on the 12 December and discussed the progress of the reform programme, particularly focusing on: the development of the digital NRM system and single competent authority; the future victim care support contract; the First responder review; subsistence rates; and move on support and support for child victims. Following this meeting, officers were able to support the Home Office to thoroughly test its new digital systems by linking them up with frontline expert and non-expert officers in Westminster Council.

First Responder Review

9. In December the Home Office launched the First Responder Review Working Group to oversee the review of the First Responder role. LGA officers have been active on this group and helped to provide feedback on the Home Office approach to the review, as well as feedback on the future role of First Responders.

Independent review interim report

10. In July 2018 the Home Secretary announced a review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Members of the review include Frank Field MP, Maria Miller MP and Baroness Butler-Sloss, who published the first of two interim reports in December which focused solely on the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner. The review found that the role of the commissioner was not sufficiently independent from the Home Office and recommended that recruitment should be halted until a revised role description should be written. This recommendation was swiftly rejected by Sajid Javid MP through a [public letter](#) published on the 17 December. The full review is expected to be completed by the end of March 2019.

Homelessness and modern slavery

11. In late November, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government held a roundtable on modern slavery and homelessness as part of their work around the

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Rough Sleeping Strategy, which the LGA contributed to and which was published in summer 2018. LGA officers attended the roundtable which was intended to identify opportunities to build on the work of regional anti-slavery networks and was also attended by ministers including Heather Wheeler and Victoria Atkins.

LGA conference: Disrupting Modern Slavery

12. In November, Cllr Allan Rhodes, the SSCB's champion on tackling modern slavery, chaired a conference on how councils can help disrupt modern slavery in their areas. Delegates heard about the important role that community safety, housing teams and wider regulatory services can play, as well as hearing from the National Crime Agency (NCA) and Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority.

National Week of Action

13. The NCA has been leading on delivering increased operational activity around Modern Slavery throughout 2018. The LGA has disseminated key information on a further week of action planned for early 2019, during which Local Authorities are encouraged to work together with their police forces to identify targets and undertake focused partnership activity. For further information, or to liaise directly with the NCA on this, please contact ellie.greenwood@local.gov.uk

Case Studies

14. We continue to work to support councils on tackling modern slavery by sourcing and sharing good practice that already exists in local authorities. In November a series of case studies were commissioned by the LGA to focus on partnership working practices across the four areas of local authority responsibility for modern slavery. Potential local authorities have been selected and we hope to have the final publication published by the end of 2018/19.

FGM

Meeting with Sarah Champion MP

15. Following Cllr Anita Lower's letter to the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Safeguarding in Faith Settings regarding the work of the National FGM Centre, Cllr Lower was invited to meet the Chair of the APPG Sarah Champion MP in early December. As a result the National FGM Centre has now been invited to present ahead of a parliamentary event in February where there will be a screening of a new BBC documentary on FGM called 'Defying the cutting season'.

National FGM Centre Advisory Group meeting

16. In early December Cllr Anita Lower chaired the most recent National FGM Advisory Board meeting. The meeting included a presentation on the medico-legal issues relevant to FGM from Dr Deborah Hodes, Paediatrician from University College Hospital London.

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TJ Awards – Technological Innovation

17. The National FGM Centre was invited to attend the TJ Awards where its FGM digital toolkit received a Bronze award in the Technological Innovation category.

Home Office – FGM Unit

18. In December officers met with officials from the FGM Unit in order to establish better links between the National FGM Centre and the Home Office. Since then the Home Office have invited the Centre to speak at nine events planned over the next few months and have plans to meet with the Centre and the LGA on a regular basis.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM): Medical, Legal & Research Perspectives conference

19. To mark International Day of Zero Tolerance for FGM, the National FGM Centre is hosting a seminar on the 6 February to explore the medical aspects of FGM, the medical challenges of identifying FGM and implications for the law. Speakers will include Dr Deborah Hodes (UCLH), Zimran Samuel (Doughty Street Chambers) and Ngianga-Bakwin Kandala (Northumbria University). More information can be found [here](#).

Conversations around Culture and Belief within the Safeguarding Context

20. The National FGM Centre is hosting a conference to explore the impact that culture and belief can have on parenting, which may lead to a safeguarding concern, and how professionals can work better with affected families. Speakers include Isabelle Trowler (Chief Social Worker Children and Families), Lisa Oakley (National Working Group – Child Abuse linked to faith or belief) and Laura Hamblin-Opaluwa (Researcher specialising in Child Abuse linked to faith or belief). More information can be found [here](#).

Taxi Fees

21. Wakefield City Council has recently lost a case in the High Court relating to the charging of enforcement costs for taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs). The decision of the court has raised a question about the general principle that the taxi licensing regime should be self-financing. The council is appealing this decision. The LGA is engaging with the council and the Department for Transport to ensure any wider impact of these proceedings on the sector are considered.

Prevent, Counter Extremism and Integration

22. In November Cllr Blackburn met with Baroness Williams, Minister of State for Countering Extremism, to discuss national and local efforts in tackling extremism. The meeting explored the evolving nature of extremist threats, particularly from far-right extremism, and the need for adequate support for local authorities to respond effectively, particularly those councils who do not currently receive specialist Home Office funding for counter

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extremism work. Also discussed was the work of the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism (SIGCE) - the local authority led network chaired by Leeds and Luton councils and partnered by the LGA, which is bringing councils together to develop and share good practice - in particular, its proposals for a new Far-Right Working Group to develop and test new resources to help tackle far-right extremism.

23. Also in November, the LGA hosted the SIGCE's seminar on effective leadership in countering all forms of extremism, and the challenges for local leaders in particular around this agenda. The event was very well received, attracting around 50 delegates from a range of different councils. We are continuing to support the development of the SIGCE's future seminars, including the forthcoming [February event](#) on proactive responses to far-right extremism.
24. The LGA also continues to offer a number of leadership essentials courses around counter-extremism and related areas. Successful courses were held in November in London on Prevent, and we launched a new community cohesion course in Coventry in December. There are still places available on the next [counter-extremism course](#) on 17-18 January, and we will shortly be announcing details of a further course in Durham at the end of March.

Water Safety

Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) Review of Responsibilities for Beach Safety

25. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) has commissioned a review of responsibilities for beach safety. The review will provide recommendations to the Secretary of State and comes in response to the call from the Coroner investigating the Camber Sands deaths for work to be done around the prevention of future deaths.
26. The LGA has fed into the review our view that individuals have a key role to play in taking responsibility for their own safety at beaches. We also said we would not want to see new responsibilities placed on local authorities for ensuring safety at all beaches. In addition we said any future role for local authorities in relation to beach safety, for example as a regulator, needs careful consideration.

Incident Level Data

27. On 31 January the Home Office will release a new incident level dataset covering flooding and water rescue incidents. This is information the Water Safety Forum (WSF) has long wanted in order to better analyse the risk around water safety and which the LGA has been instrumental in delivering through its contacts with the Home Office team responsible for publishing FRS data. Our partners in the WSF have welcomed the development.

CMA Report – Crematoria and Burials

28. In late November the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) published an Interim report and consultation on the Funerals market. The report was critical of increases in

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funeral and crematoria costs, in particular of private sector services noting that local authority services were still generally among the most affordable. In general the CMA was concerned about the effectiveness of competition in relation to the supply of funeral and crematoria services and launched a consultation on a full market review.