

Company Number 11177145

## Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

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**Title:** Safer & Stronger Communities Board  
**Date:** Monday 10 June 2019  
**Venue:** Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

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### Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#) to this note

### Item Decisions and actions

#### 1 Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, and noted apologies received (which can be found at [Appendix A](#)). No declarations of interest were made.

#### 2 Serious Violent Crime – Update

The Chair brought members attention to the report introducing item two on the agenda, including a brief overview of the latest policy developments on serious violent crime, and to the LGA's response to the Government's consultation on taking a multi-agency approach to tackling and preventing serious violent crime.

The Chair then introduced Patrick Green, CEO of the Ben Kinsella Trust. Patrick's presentation focused on:

- The history of the trust and information about Ben Kinsella, a straight-A student, who was tragically stabbed and murdered in the streets after a night out celebrating his exam results with friends, and had written to the Prime Minister before his death calling for more action on knife crime.
- A video that went over the night Ben was murdered, the media's response, the effect this had on Ben's family, friends and the community, and the perpetrators and their sentence.
- The Trust's aims – to stop youth crime and promote early intervention and preventative measures.

Patrick spoke extensively about early intervention and preventative work, especially the need for a universal preventative approach. The Trust is now looking at innovative youth work to provide that universal approach – such as theatre companies, and immersive projects inspired by the Anne Frank Museum, which had resulted in the Trust creating interactive experience rooms in London and Nottingham.

Company Number 11177145

Patrick also discussed the programmes the Trust delivers to schools and in communities, targeting the age group of 10 and 11 year olds as the transition from primary to secondary is a crucial point. Patrick discussed how the programmes are not a one-size-fits-all approach, and that the programmes and services the Trust delivers need to reflect the various experiences that young people face, as well as the address the different communities in which young people reside.

Patrick gave further details on the experience rooms; these challenge beliefs held by young people. The rooms are primarily aimed at young people who are not likely to be carrying knives. The intention is that as a result of the course they will challenge peers that do go on to carry knives. Patrick stated that while the Trust understands that a two hour workshop won't solve the problem, it offers to spread awareness of the potential impact of carrying a weapon, and work with schools to highlight those who may be at risk of this behaviour. The Trust also research potential adverse childhood experiences young people may have experienced that push them into carrying weapons. Patrick invited all members to the experience rooms.

The presentation also touched on Patrick's meeting the architect of Violence Reduction Unit's, a police officer who champions early intervention and prevention methods rather than just enforcement.

Following the presentation, members raised the following points:

Members discussed the benefits of working with children to discuss serious youth violence at primary school age, and whether those who were at risk of carrying knives could be identified while still in primary school. Patrick stated that knife crime needed to be recognised by schools as a safeguarding issue; that they work with children of all ages, teaching them that this is not about knife crime, but about making good choices; and explained that as part of the process the children participating in the experience were anonymously surveyed before and after, and the Trust can highlight young people's responses and indicators that some may be at risk.

Members discussed the importance of working with communities, and of youth work, and questioned what the Trust's position on this was? Members went on to highlight the importance of investing in a variety of youth work. Patrick commented that the Trust supports youth work and stated that there is clear research out there that suggests the more youth work there is, the less serious youth crime is reported. Patrick agreed that more funding needed to be given to youth work, and members stated the LGA needed to be lobbying government to invest more in youth.

Members raised the Board's representation of the Serious Violence Task Force, and that there needs to be a cross-party consensus on how to tackle serious crime, particularly crime committed by young people.

Members discussed school exclusions, and the role this can play in pushing young people to commit serious crime and carry weapons. Members discussed the possibility of training or work if a young person is excluded from school. Patrick stated that children should be kept in school as once excluded it was much harder to prevent a child becoming involved

Company Number 11177145

in crime as drug dealers for example are very clever at targeting at risk young people who suffer exclusion. He added that the Trust works with others to assist children at the point of exclusion and they typically had issues with self-esteem, self-confidence, self-belief and ambition, which had to be addressed. Exclusion should be regarded as a trigger for intervention.

Members debated if drug law, sentencing and possible de-criminalisation could be a way forward in avoiding young people being prosecuted and being pushed into a life of crime.

The Chair concluded discussions by giving praise to the amazing work the Trust carries out, and thanked Patrick for his presentation.

### **Decision**

1. Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board noted the LGA's response to the Government's consultation on taking a multi-agency approach to tackling and preventing serious violent crime.

### **3 Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism**

The Chair invited Cllr Debra Coupar, co-Chair of the Special Interest Group for Countering Extremism (SIGCE) and deputy-leader of Leeds to give her presentation.

Cllr Coupar's presentation focused on:

- The challenges the SIGCE have identified that councils are facing, and also the challenges that members face in addressing extremism.
- Promoting more collaborative working amongst local authorities.
- Highlighted the distinct links between item two – serious violence – and countering extremism (CE).
- The challenges facing the local government sector, as well as what locally elected members and leaders can do.
- Highlighting the differences between CE and terrorism. Tackling extremism means addressing crimes such as domestic abuse and honour-based violence, child sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and modern slavery. It also means dealing with it on-line.
- How the SIGCE prides itself from not shying away from talking about this work, and how members of the group are taking bolder steps in talking and sharing best practices.
- Cllr Coupar stated that just as all communities are different, the way they counter extremism and promote community cohesion must be different in each case. This work is not a one-size-fits-all approach. Councillors are elected to represent their communities, therefore it is important to stand up and discuss all issues, no matter how hard or sensitive those issues are. Having local narratives and a strong local identity were also important.
- The importance of community buy-in and working in partnership with other organisations, statutory, voluntary, and otherwise.
- Cllr Coupar described that councils, members and leaders are facing very polarised

Company Number 11177145

times, and incidents arising from political divisions such as Brexit increase tension in communities. Having networks for councillors would provide a means of keeping them informed and sharing good practice.

- Cllr Coupar invited members' comments on what they felt the SIGCE should be doing, and identify what gaps are there? The SIGCE is looking to increase its partnerships with other organisations.
- Cllr Coupar concluded her presentation by mentioning the importance of training for members such as the LGA's leadership essentials course on CE.

The Chair praised the work of the SIGCE, and thanked Cllr Coupar for her presentation. Members then made the following comments:

Cllr Hussain, a member representing the London Borough of Redbridge, stated that her authority had experience of working on this agenda. Cllr Hussain commented on the lack of trust from communities and community leaders, particularly faith leaders, who only seem to represent a very small percentage of residents. Cllr Coupar stated that this a huge hurdle to overcome, and that part of the solution was to reach past these individuals to the communities directly. Cllr Coupar also referenced PREVENT as a useful safeguarding resource, as well as various CE community projects to help with this. The SIGCE K-Hub also provided a resource for members to use, and included step-by step guides

Members stated the importance to get this topic on the agenda everywhere, from safeguarding vulnerable children and adults, to planning and licensing, as it is an issue that affects every aspect of living. Members agreed that councils need to come together in collaboration, and grasp this relevant issue by not shying away from difficult conversations. Members agreed that extremism can happen anywhere, and often in places that you wouldn't expect (making reference to the tragic incident in Christchurch, New Zealand). The Chair agreed with these ideas, and stated that as this can happen anywhere, it is an issue for everyone to discuss.

### **Decision**

1. Members agreed for the LGA to continue to support the work of the SIGCE.

### **Action**

1. Views expressed in the Board will be fed back to the SIGCE's steering group for consideration.

## **4 Mental Health and Community Safety**

The Chair requested that this item be deferred until the 2019/20 Board cycle, as it was an exploratory paper, and further consultation was needed.

### **Decision**

1. Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board agreed to defer this item until the 2019/20 Board cycle.

Company Number 11177145

## **5 Fire Safety in High Rise Buildings – Update**

The Chair firstly paid tribute to those affected by the fire in Barking, London over the weekend. This took place in a high-rise residential block. Residents has previously raised concerns over the possible safety of the tower. The Chair then invited Mark Norris, Principal Policy Adviser to introduce the item.

Mark's update focused on four updates:

- The Government has announced it will make the funding available to private high rise building owners for remedial work. Details are still being formalised with the Treasury, with hopes of the fund opening in July, with their being a limited timeframe for applying for funding.
- The Government has also commissioned tests of over 20 different types of cladding products, and this testing is still on-going.
- The MHCLG consultation is now live on how to implement the recommendations made by Dame Judith Hackitt in her Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety. This closes at the end of July 2019.
- Mark also gave a brief overview of the Barking fire; this took place mid-afternoon, with the highest temperatures of 1000 degrees reported. The building in question fell just below what is considered to be a high rise (six stories and above).

Following Mark's update, members made the following comments:

Members praised officers for their work, but stated that this is not just a building safety/cladding issue. A member reported a fire locally at the beginning of May. Due to fire stations being shut down in her local area, there were significant issues as fire response was coming from ten miles away, in peak traffic. Residents were also reliant on an on-call fire service, rather than full-time one.

Members raised concerns that residents in the Barking fire who have raised these cladding safety issue, with nothing reported actioned, and questioned what can residents do? Mark responded that the consultation will look at giving residents greater say in building safety issues.

Members focused on the number of buildings that are still incomplete in their remedial work. Members questioned if there was a central database to gain access to this information, including how far along the work has been done? Mark stated that there is no central database, nor individual details as to each remedial work, however the LGA had been checking on progress with the work on council blocks.

Mark also stated that progress in remedial work was dependent on the complexity of the block and the system used, with some more simple to work on and others less so.

Members pointed out that it has now been two years since the Grenfell Tower tragedy, and stated that it is vital the LGA reinforce concerns ahead of the Government consultation. Members requested a letter sent out now to Ministers highlighting the LGA's concerns.

Company Number 11177145

Mark stated that he will liaise with the Grenfell Task & Finish group regarding a letter, stating that councils should have a greater say and control.

The Chair stated that powers to improve building safety absolutely need to be with local authorities. The Chair highlighted numerous failings in the system, and members agreed that if the building safety framework had been fit for purpose, the Grenfell disaster would never have occurred.

### **Decision**

1. Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board will continue to note and monitor the LGA's building safety related work, during the 2019/20 cycle.

The following **actions** were noted:

1. Officers to update the Board on progress in remediation undertaken on high-rise residential buildings at its next meeting.
2. Officers to liaise with the Grenfell Task and Finish Group about sending further letters to ministers which highlight the LGA's continued concerns and positions.

## **6 Update Paper**

The Chair stated that as this update item was for noting, all ideas and responses to the announcements set out in the report are emailed to officers.

### **Decision**

1. Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board noted the update paper.

### **Action**

1. Members to liaise with officers directly if they have any thoughts or feedback on the policy announcements made in the paper.

## **7 Safer and Stronger Communities Board End of Year Report 2018/19 and 2019/20 Work Plan**

Mark Norris, Principal Policy Adviser, introduced item seven. Mark stated that the paper sets out the Safer and Stronger Communities end of year report, including initial proposals for the 2019/20 work plan.

Following the update, members made the following comments:

Members discussed how the Board's important remit, focusing on making communities more resilient, as well as a focus on councils relationship with their communities and residents, and how we make them more robust. The Chair agreed with this, but stated

Company Number 11177145

councils and members need to be realistic about targets and plans for this, given the extreme lack of funding councils have to undertake this. The Chair concluded by questioning how can we make communities resistant and resilient to solve their own problems, supported firstly by councils.

### **Decision**

1. Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board noted the end of year report and agreed to the Board's work priorities for 2019/20.

### **8 Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting**

Members agreed to the note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting that took place on Monday 18 March 2019.

### **9 Any Other Business**

The Chair thanked officers for their continued hard work. The Chair went on to thank members of the Board, for their dedication to the Board, as well as their valuable contributions. Finally, the Chair paid special tribute to lead members Cllr Morris Bright and Cllr Anita Lower, who will be stepping down in the 2019/20 cycle. The Chair stated that both these lead members have deputised on his behalf, which has ensured consistency and a safe pair of hands for the Board's leadership.

## **Appendix A -Attendance**

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Morris Bright MBE	Hertsmere Borough Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Hannah Dalton	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Members	Cllr Eric Allen	Sutton London Borough Council
	Cllr Keith McLean	Milton Keynes Council
	Cllr John Pennington	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr Judith Wallace	North Tyneside Council
	Cllr Katrina Wood	Wycombe District Council
	Cllr Nick Worth	South Holland District Council
	Cllr Mohan Iyengar	Poole Borough Council
	Cllr Jim Beall	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
	Cllr James Dawson	Erewash Borough Council
	Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
	Cllr Farah Hussain	Redbridge London Borough Council
	Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire County Council
Apologies	Cllr Colin Spence	Suffolk County Council
	Cllr Carole Burdis	North Tyneside Council



**Safer and Stronger Communities Board**

02 September 2019

Company Number 11177145

Cllr Alan Rhodes  
Cllr Anita Lower

Nottinghamshire County Council  
Newcastle upon Tyne City Council