

Company Number 11177145

Safer and Stronger Communities Board Policy Priorities for 2019-20

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 2019-20. 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 2019-20.

Action

Officers will undertake the projects set out in the report.

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Safer and Stronger Communities Board Policy Priorities for 2019-20

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. The LGA's business plan is currently being refreshed, and proposes a series of corporate priorities. Following the July 2019 motion of the LGA General Assembly *calling upon the government to explore the domestic implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through funded partnership roles with local authority areas, [and] encouraging councils to continue to link local priorities with the overall ambitions of the SDGs and declaring a climate emergency*, the business plan is being developed in the context of the SDGs.
4. As in previous years, LGA policy Boards are being asked to incorporate cross-cutting LGA priorities within their work programmes. The current draft priorities are as follows:
 - 4.1. Funding for local government
 - 4.2. Adult social care, health and wellbeing
 - 4.3. Children, education and schools
 - 4.4. Housing and sustainable communities
 - 4.5. Economic growth and employment
 - 4.6. Climate action
 - 4.7. Britain's exit from the EU
 - 4.8. Strong local democracy
 - 4.9. Supporting councils
 - 4.10. The way we work
5. The work of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board makes a contribution to a number of these overarching themes, in particular housing and sustainable communities, with the proposed work programme at paragraphs 17-21 intended to be incorporated throughout the business plan subject once confirmed by the Board.
6. The work of this Board also has a significant contribution to make to two cross-cutting corporate priorities, on Brexit and on supporting councils to respond to the Grenfell tragedy.

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Britain's exit from the EU

7. Corporately, the LGA is working to ensure that the views and needs of councils in relation to Britain's withdrawal from the EU are represented to Government. A number of areas within the Board's responsibilities may be particularly impacted, including regulatory services, cohesion and integration, and resilience planning in regard to a no deal Brexit.
8. The Board's regulatory remit includes 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. We are working with a number of government departments to highlight the impact of Brexit on these services, and the potential challenges that may be created for councils in delivering them.
9. 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, more checks may be needed on goods entering the country in the absence of an agreement, and overall levels of compliance may decrease given uncertainty about regulatory controls. The 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.
10. We have also been involved in supporting councils, as part of wider local resilience planning, to develop plans for managing EU exit, and in particular a no deal scenario.
11. Our future work in this area is expected to increase as the 31 October approaches, and we will continue to represent the views of councils in meetings across Whitehall, seeking to ensure that adequate guidance and funding are made available to councils to deal with Brexit.

Supporting councils to respond to the Grenfell tragedy

12. 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 leading to additional capacity being brought in to support this work during the 2018-19 board cycle. This support has currently been extended to March 2020.
13. The anticipated ongoing work relating to Grenfell over 2019-20 includes:
 - 13.1. Supporting councils to ensure that all high-rise residential buildings with aluminium composite material cladding systems are remediated, which will include the on-going offer of support from the Joint Inspection Team, and that government provides support for the remediation of any other dangerous cladding systems that are identified.
 - 13.2. Working with government and local authorities to catalogue all high-rise residential buildings, including those with combustible cladding systems, and

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lobbying for the funding for councils to support this work, and to replace fire doors identified as not meeting the building regulation requirements.

- 13.3. Working with government to implement the recommendations from Dame Judith Hackitt's Review of fire safety, with legislation anticipated in 2020 and due to come into force by 2021.

- 13.3.1. Continuing to participate in the Joint Regulators Group and responding to Government consultations, including on the new building safety regulatory framework; and

- 13.3.2. Lobbying government to ensure that councils and fire and rescue authorities are funded to implement changes as needed.

- 13.4. Supporting local government to respond to the changing regulatory environment through an ongoing improvement offer.

Specific work of relevance to this Board's remit

14. 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.

15. As set out in the [2018-9 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 three 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:

- 15.1. Prevent, counter-extremism and cohesion;
 - 15.2. Community safety;
 - 15.3. Blue light services and civil resilience;
 - 15.4. Licensing and regulation; and
 - 15.5. Crematoria and coroners.

16. The following sections set out proposals for specific activities under each of these headings.

Prevent, counter extremism and cohesion

17. We will:

- 17.1. Support councils in their work to deliver the Prevent duty, counter-extremism and community cohesion, including through the provision of further training courses and events, facilitation of the Prevent Knowledge Hub, the publication of guidance and case studies and developing a local authority cohesion network.

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- 17.2. Continue to support the work of the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism (SIGCE), including delivering a support offer for elected members, facilitating the online Knowledge Hub, and feeding in to the outputs of the SIGCE's working groups.
- 17.3. Collate and feedback sector views about the Prevent duty to inform the independent review.
- 17.4. Collate and feedback sector views to central government on the CONTEST pilots.
- 17.5. Collate and feedback sector views on counter-extremism policy and practice to central government and the Commission for Countering Extremism, to inform the new counter-extremism strategy.

Community safety

18. We will:

- 18.1. Help local authorities to reduce violence against women and girls by making the case for greater investment in early intervention and preventions approaches to tackling domestic abuse and more effective intervention programmes. This will include lobbying 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; and support LGA input into the National Oversight Group on domestic abuse.
- 18.2. Support councils in tackling serious violence and related issues such as county lines, including through continued LGA input to the Serious Violence Taskforce and running learning events for councils.
- 18.3. Assist councils in their work to eliminate Female Genital Mutilation through our continued support for the National FGM Centre, and by lobbying Government and Parliament in regard to ongoing funding for the National FGM Centre.
- 18.4. Engage with government and support councils on a range of community safety issues, including: holding a national conference on tackling anti-social behaviour to help share best practice; gypsy and travellers issues; burglary etc.
- 18.5. Publish updated guidance for councils on modern slavery and contribute to ongoing policy development; work with key stakeholders to make the case for additional funding to support this issue; continue to support councils on the transparency in supply chains agenda.
- 18.6. Undertake a cross-cutting piece of work on mental health and community safety issues, and explore how councils can work with their communities to make them more resilient to crime and community safety issues.

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Blue light services and civil resilience

19. We will:

- 19.1. Support the fire and rescue sector work on fire reform initiatives (inspection, standards, workforce).
- 19.2. Support fire and rescue authorities to respond to inspection.
- 19.3. Hold masterclasses on culture, inclusion and diversity in the fire and rescue sector.
- 19.4. Publish a Scrutiny Toolkit for Fire Authority members and produce an accompanying eLearning module.
- 19.5. Support police and crime panels, including engaging with the Home Office and hosting our annual police and crime panels workshop.
- 19.6. Undertake further councillor masterclasses on civil resilience, liaise with MHCLG's Resilience and Emergencies Division and explore options for supporting councillors on community resilience and mapping.

Licensing and regulation

20. We will:

- 20.1. Lobby government to bring forward taxi licensing legislation as soon as possible and continue to promote the use of the National Register of Refusals and Revocations (NR3).
- 20.2. Lobby government to provide sustainable funding for vital public protection services and introduce a proper new burdens process that enables councils to increase/ invest in staff.
- 20.3. Work with Home Office officials to explore an increase in licensing fees.
- 20.4. Support BEIS with shaping the development of Primary Authority in licensing.

Crematoria, coroners and medical examiners

21. We will continue to respond to the Competition and Markets Authority inquiry into the funeral and crematoria market.

Legislation and parliamentary work

22. 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. The House of Commons Home Affairs Select Committee is in the process of conducting a number of inquiries

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relevant to the Safer and Stronger Communities portfolio, in particular, Modern Slavery and Serious Violence. We will continue our engagement with relevant select committee inquiries as they are announced and with All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) who are active on safer communities issues (such as the APPG on FOBTs).

Conferences, events and media

23. 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.
24. 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:
 - 24.1. Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials: 26-7 September 2019, Warwick
 - 24.2. Emergency Planning and Civil Resilience Masterclass: 14 October 2019, Durham
 - 24.3. Tackling anti-social behaviour conference: 15 October, London 2019
 - 24.4. Taking a public health approach to tackling serious violent crime conference: 13 November 2019, London
 - 24.5. Prevent and Counter Extremism Leadership Essentials: 14-5 November 2019, North West venue
 - 24.6. Building Safety Leadership Essentials: 26-7 November 2019, Warwick
 - 24.7. Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials: 28-29 November 2019, Warwick
 - 24.8. Cohesion and Integration Leadership Essentials: 3-4 December 2019, Loughborough
 - 24.9. Prevent and Counter Extremism Leadership Essentials: 4-5 February 2020, Leeds
 - 24.10. Annual Licensing Conference: Wednesday 5 February 2020, London
 - 24.11. Fire and Rescue Leadership Essentials: 12-13 February 2020
 - 24.12. Cohesion and Integration Leadership Essentials: 10-11 March 2020, Warwick
 - 24.13. Annual Fire Conference: 10-11 March 2020, Blackpool

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25. 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

26. We will work with colleagues at the Welsh LGA to identify areas where our work will be applicable to Wales in terms of non-devolved issues. Where work relates to devolved issues our focus will be on English authorities, with the WLGA leading on work in Wales, but we will share our work with WLGA should they wish to use it as a basis for Welsh specific work of their own.

Financial Implications

27. The work priorities identified for 2019/20 will be delivered within the planned staffing budget, which includes dedicated capacity to support work on cohesion, extremism and Prevent, and additional capacity to support Grenfell work.

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

Next steps

29. The Board are asked to consider and comment on their priorities for 2019/20.