

Safer & Stronger Communities Board – report from Councillor Mehboob Khan (Chair)

Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill

1. Lord Taylor, the Home Office minister in the House of Lords, attended the Board meeting at the start of November to talk about the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill, which has just started its passage through the Lords. Issues for discussion were the powers of arrest that can be attached to the injunctions to prevent nuisance and annoyance, the lack of council input into the use of dispersal powers by the police, and the ability to take action against anti-social tenants in private rented accommodation.
2. In mid-November the Board's Chair, Cllr Mehboob Khan, participated in a panel session at the Social Landlords Crime and Nuisance Group's annual anti-social behaviour conference. The session looked at the role of councils, social landlords and other partners in tackling anti-social behaviour and the others on the panel answering questions from delegates included the police and crime commissioner for the West Midlands and the Association of Convenience Stores.

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

3. Cllr Joanna Spicer, the Board's Vice Chair, spoke in early November at a Home Office conference for police and crime commissioners and their offices on tackling sexual violence and domestic abuse. Cllr Spicer outlined the role councils have in tackling these offences, the importance of multi-agency work in successfully addressing them and the need for partners to come together to jointly fund initiatives. The conference also heard from a cross-party selection of police and crime commissioners on their approaches to addressing violence against women and girls, and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary on their review of the police response to domestic violence.

Police and Crime Panels networking seminar

4. The Board hosted the third of its networking events for police and crime panels in mid-November. Cllr Joanna Spicer, the Board's Vice-Chair chaired the event, which was opened by Julian Huppert MP, member of the Home Affairs Select Committee and an LGA Vice-President. Mr Huppert was able to talk about the Select Committee's consideration of panels' activities when it had looked at the impact police and crime commissioners had had as part of an inquiry in the summer, along with the Select Committee's examination of panels' role in the dismissal of chief constables. Delegates also heard about the good practice from other panels that came out of a study commissioned by the LGA and discussed conducting proactive scrutiny, the experience of panels involved in the suspension of chief constables and what lessons could be learnt from health scrutiny.

Surveillance Camera Conference

5. The Board's Deputy Chair Cllr Lisa Brett spoke at the conference held in mid-October by the Surveillance Camera Commissioner on the new Code of Practice for surveillance cameras. In her speech Cllr Brett outlined the implications of the new Code for councils across the surveillance camera systems they operate, not just the ones monitoring high streets. Cllr Brett also highlighted the need for councils to look at how councillors could scrutinise their own authority's implementation of the Code.

Criminal Justice Council

6. Cllr David Burbage attended the meeting of the Criminal Justice Council in October, which brings together a range of people and organisations involved in the criminal justice system to discuss reforms and changes in the way the criminal justice system operates. Items for discussion at this meeting included the work of the Victims' Commissioner, better multi-agency working to reduce offending and re-offending by women, and the community remedy proposals on out of court disposals set out in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill. The discussion on providing better support for female offenders and the need for earlier intervention to prevent women becoming involved in crime was used to raise the need for a community budgets approach to the funding of local services.

Rewiring the Licensing Landscape

7. Work to take forward our licensing proposals under Rewiring continues at pace, with a media release on reviewing outdated licences across at least five government departments. This has caught the attention of ministers and businesses alike and we are receiving requests for more detailed information. A more detailed set of proposals was included in the briefing provided to Cllr David Simmonds in advance of his appearance before the Deregulation Bill committee. Our submission expressed disappointment that the Bill had not been used to deliver more ambitious plans to rationalise licensing and proposed a Licensing Consolidation Bill be brought forward.

Fire Conference 2014 working group

8. In October, a working group comprising Cllrs Hammond, Joyce, Hilton and Howson as lead members of the Fire Services Management Committee met to discuss arrangements for the LGA's forthcoming Fire Conference in Cardiff on 11-12 March 2014. Members identified fire finance, national resilience and interoperability as key themes to be covered during the conference and emphasised to conference organisers the importance of inviting a range of stakeholders alongside fire authorities in order to maximise the reach of the Conference's key messages.

Meeting with South East Fire Authority Chairs

9. Cllr Hammond chaired a working **dinner with Chairs from South East Fire Authorities** on 6 November in Maidenhead. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss whether the LGA's work programme continued to meet members' needs and what support was required in the year ahead as part of the LGA's ongoing dialogue with the sector.

Safer Suffolk Partnership workshop

10. Following a survey of partner organisations gathering views on the effectiveness of its work and activities, Cllr Hammond facilitated **an LGA workshop with the Safer Suffolk Partnership** on 7 Nov. The event looked at the results of analysis to explore what the foundations of effective working were and identified “hot topics” and developing ways forward for the partnership.

Fire Leadership Academy - West Midlands

11. On 18 November, Cllr Hammond led sessions in the West Midlands at the second of the LGA's latest cycle of Fire **Leadership Academies** for elected members with senior roles on fire and rescue authorities.

Contact officer:

Helen Murray

Position:

Head of Programme

Phone no:

020 7664 3266

E-mail:

helen.murray@local.gov.uk