

Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Agenda

Monday 12 March 2012
11.00am

Smith Square Rooms 3 & 4
Local Government House
Smith Square
LONDON
SW1P 3HZ

To: Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board
cc: Named officers for briefing purposes

www.local.gov.uk

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Safer & Stronger Communities Board

12 March 2012

The **Safer & Stronger Communities Board** meeting will be held on **Monday 12 March 2012** at **11.00am**, in Smith Square Rooms 3 & 4 (Ground Floor), Local Government House, LONDON, SW1P 3HZ.

A sandwich lunch will be provided afterwards at 1pm.

Apologies

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting, so that a substitute can be arranged and catering numbers adjusted, if necessary.

Labour: Aicha Less: 020 7664 3263 email: aicha.less@local.gov.uk
Conservative: Luke Taylor: 020 7664 3264 email: luke.taylor@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat: Evelyn Mark: 020 7664 3235 email: libdem@local.gov.uk
Independent: Group Office: 020 7664 3224 email: independent.group@local.gov.uk

Attendance Sheet

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Location

A map showing the location of the Local Government House is printed on the back cover.

Contact

Stephen Service (Tel: 020 7664 3194, email: stephen.service@local.gov.uk)

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Safer & Stronger Communities Board - Membership 2011/12

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (7)	
Les Lawrence [Vice-Chair]	Birmingham City
Tom Fox	Scarborough BC
Brian Coleman	Barnet LB / London FEPA FSMC rep
Joanna Spicer	Suffolk CC
Robert Gordon DL	Hertfordshire CC
Jim Harker	Northamptonshire CC
Paul Bettison	Bracknell Forest Council
Substitutes:	
Craig Humphrey	Rugby BC
Robert Sleigh	Solihull MBC
Ian Gillies	City of York
Labour (4)	
Mehboob Khan [Chair]	Kirklees MBC
Ann Lucas	Coventry City
Mark Burns-Williamson OBE	Wakefield MDC
Nilgun Canver	Haringey LB
Substitutes:	
Henri Murison	Newcastle City
Crada Onuegbu	Lewisham LB
Liberal Democrat (2)	
Duwayne Brooks [Deputy Chair]	Lewisham LB
Lisa Brett	Bath & NE Somerset Council
Substitutes	
Anita Lower	Newcastle upon Tyne City
Independent (1)	
Goronwy Edwards [Deputy Chair]	Conwy Council

Safer & Stronger Communities Board Attendance 2011-2012

Councillors	13.09.11	16.01.12	12.03.12	09.07.12
Conservative Group				
Les Lawrence	Yes	Yes		
Tom Fox	No	Yes		
Brian Coleman	Yes	No		
Joanna Spicer	Yes	Yes		
Robert Gordon	No	Yes		
Jim Harker	No	Yes		
Paul Bettison	No	Yes		
Labour Group				
Mehboob Khan	Yes	Yes		
Ann Lucas	No	Yes		
Mark Burns-Williamson OBE	No	No		
Nilgun Canver	Yes	Yes		
Lib Dem Group				
Duwyane Brooks	Yes	Yes		
Lisa Brett	Yes	Yes		
Independent				
Goronwy Edwards	No	Yes		
Substitutes				
Henri Murison	Yes	No		
Crada Onuegbu	Yes	Yes		
Marianne Overton	Yes	No		

Agenda

Safer and Stronger Communities Board

11.00, Monday 12 March 2012

Smith Square Room 3 & 4 (Ground Floor), Local Government House

For discussion

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1.	Victims' Services Javed Khan, Chief Executive of Victim Support attending	3
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For information / noting

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Date of Next Meeting: Monday 9 July 2012, 11.00, Local Government House

Victims' Services

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

The Government is looking to improve the services delivered to the victims of crime. Javed Khan, the Chief Executive of Victim Support, the largest independent charity supporting victims in England and Wales has agreed to come and address the Board about the implications of these changes and what they will mean for Victim Support. This paper also sets out the Ministry of Justice's intention of reforming the commissioning of services for victims and seeks members' views on the proposal that local commissioning should be conducted by police and crime commissioners.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. Consider Mr Khan's presentation and ask questions as appropriate;
2. Note the Ministry of Justice consultation on improving services to victims of crime; and
3. Provide comments on the Ministry of Justice proposals in the consultation to inform the Board's response to it.

Action

Officers to reflect members' views in the Board's response to the Ministry of Justice consultation and action as appropriate any other matters arising out of the Board's consideration of this item.

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Victims' Services

Background

1. One of the government's commitments has been to improve services to the victims of crime, with the Coalition Agreement making reference to using money recovered from criminals or any money they earn in prison to invest in victims' services. Further commitments were made in the Ministry of Justice's Green Paper 'Breaking the Cycle', published in December 2010, to increase the financial reparation that offenders make to victims, to give more opportunities to victims to make personal statements in court, and increase the use of restorative justice as a means of improving victim satisfaction.
2. The government also indicated that the Green Paper should be seen as the first step towards a comprehensive rethink of the services provided to victims. The government has been conducting a review of the services provided to victims and witnesses covering three strands: the support available to victims and witnesses; ensuring victims benefit from greater restoration and reparation; and, the responsibilities placed on victims and witnesses are matched with a clearer set of rights.
3. Many of the services currently provided to victims are provided by the voluntary sector, and the oldest and largest independent charity for victims and witnesses of crime in England and Wales is Victim Support. Established in 1974 Victim Support runs the Witness Service in every court and the national victim support line. Mr Javed Khan, the Chief Executive of Victim Support, has been asked therefore to come and give a presentation to the Board about the development of victims' services and the impact government policy is having on this area.

Current issues for Victim Support

4. There are a range of issues where Victim Support's work overlaps with that of the Board. This includes anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and violence against women and girls, community sentences, and the changes the government is looking to make by implementing the Ministry of Justice Green Paper. Two areas where Victim Support are currently engaged in work is the transition to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and the forthcoming White Paper and then legislation on anti-social behaviour.
5. As members will recall the Home Office consulted on changes to the tools and powers available to councils and the police to tackle anti-social behaviour at the start of 2011. As well as simplifying the existing range of tools and making them

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easier to use the Home Office also wanted to ensure that victims of persistent anti-social behaviour such as Fiona Pilkington, are able to ensure that those responsible respond to complaints they have made. The government therefore proposed the introductory of a community trigger – a statutory duty on the responsible authorities on a community safety partnership to respond to reports that they had not done anything to tackle persistent anti-social behaviour.

6. The Home Office was due to publish a White Paper on anti-social behaviour at the end of January, which would provide the government's response to the earlier anti-social behaviour consultation, and would also set out the wider work across Whitehall to tackle anti-social behaviour. It is anticipated that the White Paper will be published in the near future and will be followed by a bill in the new Queen's Speech in early May. We understand that the White Paper will set out the government's intention to implement the proposals in the anti-social behaviour consultation, including the community trigger, with some amendments. Details of the LGA's response to the anti-social behaviour consultation can be found in the copy of the Board's response to the consultation set out at **Appendix A**.
7. The ability of PCCs to make community safety grants combined with the transfer of funding to them to commission services from April 2013 could mean a considerable change in the way services to victims are delivered. The possibility for this is further increased by the Ministry of Justice consultation, 'Getting it right for victims and witnesses', published in January. This consultation sets out reforms which are designed to ensure that there is a more coherent service for victims of crime.

The 'Getting it right for victims and witnesses' consultation

8. The proposals in the consultation are based on the government's view that important needs of victims are not being met, and the principles that support should be given to those needing it most, that support is available as and when the victim needs it, that different areas need different services, and offenders should make reparations for their crimes. The government is therefore looking to assist victims of serious crime, the most persistently targeted and the most vulnerable.
9. The government has in the main been funding services to victims at a national level. Some of this funding is due to continue such as putting money into rape support centres, investing in the National Homicide Service, protecting funding for services under its strategy for tackling violence against women and girls, and investing in voluntary organisations providing support to the most vulnerable victims.

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10. However the government believes that services for victims need to reflect and be more responsive to local needs, with most services commissioned at a local level. The Ministry of Justice's proposal is for the bulk of victims' services to be commissioned by PCCs from 2014, with a limited number of services commissioned at a national level. PCCs are specifically required under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act to obtain the views of victims about their plans, and the government takes the views that as PCCs will have links to councils, the criminal justice system and the third sector they are better placed than others to work effectively with them all.
11. To assist PCCs in assessing if there are the right services locally the Home Office along with the Victims' Commissioner funded Victims' Services Advocates to catalogue local services and provide a report for PCCs. Victim Support have provided the advocates and will publishing the reports on their website when they are published around May. This work is unlikely to be repeated in the future now that the last Victims' Commissioner, Louise Casey, has moved across to the Department of Communities and Local Government to lead their work on troubled families, as the government has not appointed a replacement Victims' Commissioner, and is currently considering the future of the role.
12. The government will establish a framework for local commissioning which will reflect the government's priorities set out in paragraph 8 above, and will be designed to encourage more joint working between the police and the voluntary sector. PCCs will then have to apply this framework and commission the services they think best meet local need. These changes will have an impact on Victim Support which has previously received a £38 million per annum grant from the government for supporting the victims of crime. They will also impact on councils. There is the potential for service provision to be duplicated if a PCC decides to invest in a service across their force area, such as refuges for victims of domestic violence, which a number of councils also deliver.
13. It is this fragmented approach to commissioning of voluntary services that concerns Victim Support. From a position where Victim Support are commissioned at a national level to support victims, the government's agenda in this area will mean that they alongside other voluntary bodies will have to bid to individual PCCs, with some deciding to commission services and others deciding to do something different. Although the LGA sees no problem with different services being delivered in different areas, we have been concerned about fragmented commissioning at a local level, with partners carrying out separate commissioning rather than merging budgets and working together – something community budgets have been designed to address.

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14. The Ministry of Justice is seeking views on their new commissioning proposals in the consultation and in particular would like responses to the following consultation questions:
- 14.1 Is a mixture of locally-led and national commissioning the best way to commission support services for victims of crime?
 - 14.2 Should police and crime commissioners be responsible for commissioning victim support services at a local level? Who else could commission support services?
 - 14.3 Who do you think should commission those services at a national level?
 - 14.4 Which services do you think should be commissioned at a national level?
 - 14.5 Should there be a set of minimum entitlements for victims of serious crimes, those who are persistently targeted and the most vulnerable?
 - 14.6 Is there further support that we need to put in place for victims of terrorism, and bereaved family members?
15. Members' views on these proposals are sought in order to inform the Board's response to the consultation.

Conclusion and next steps

16. Officers will draft a response to the 'Getting it right for victims and witnesses' consultation based on Board members' comments, and then circulate a draft submission for members to comment on, before submitting a finalised response in time for the 22 April 2012 deadline.

Financial Implications

17. There are no financial implications arising from the LGA from this report.

The Local Government Association's Response to the 'More Effective Responses to Anti-Social Behaviour' consultation paper

Date: 17th May 2011



Introduction

1. The Local Government Association (LGA) is a voluntary membership body and our 422 member authorities cover every part of England and Wales. Together they represent over 50 million people and spend around £113 billion a year on local services. They include county councils, metropolitan district councils, English unitary authorities, London boroughs and shire district councils, along with fire authorities, police authorities, national park authorities and passenger transport authorities.

Background

2. This paper provides the LGA's response to the consultation issued by the Home Office setting out the government's vision of how there can be more effective responses to anti-social behaviour.
3. Anti-social behaviour (ASB) has been a major concern for the public, and therefore for councils and councillors over the last decade. Councils have been at the forefront of tackling ASB and have made extensive use of the powers they have been given to address the broad range of problems the communities they serve face. Making the tools and powers available to councils faster to use, more effective and more flexible would be a welcome move, provided they better protect victims and communities.
4. While the proposed changes to the tools and powers to deal with ASB will apply equally across England and Wales, the Welsh Local Government Association, which represents local authorities in Wales, is submitting its own response about the implications of the proposals in a Welsh context. The LGA's response therefore looks solely at how the proposals in the Green Paper will work in England.

Encouraging local initiative to tackle anti-social behaviour

5. While central government has been keen for the police, local authorities and other agencies to tackle ASB, for much of the time that ASB has had a clear definition, the emphasis has been on ensuring that local partnerships deliver an agenda set by Whitehall. As a result performance targets were combined with Home Office funding and intervention teams so that central government could prescribe what local partnerships should do to tackle ASB and how they should go about doing so. This approach overlooked the local nature of ASB, with the issues facing communities and neighbourhoods varying considerably and depending for example on whether they were urban or rural, or had high levels of deprivation or not. The LGA therefore agrees with the assessment in the consultation document that there cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach to ASB. We also agree that it is

Submission

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local partnerships and the communities they serve that are best placed to find the solutions to the ASB problems in their area. Empowering those on the ground and the communities they work in is in our view the right way to ensure that ASB is tackled effectively. However such local initiatives will only work if the police, councils and other partners like Registered Social Landlords have the tools and powers available to take effective action.

Effective tools and powers to tackle anti-social behaviour

6. As the review of ASB found, there are now a considerable number of tools and powers available to local partnerships to address ASB. There are a range of factors that determine which tools are used including the costs of obtaining a court order, the speed with which the tool can be used, the sanctions related to the tool, what level of evidence has to be provided before the powers can be used, and as the consultation identified the familiarity of practitioners with the tools being used. The principle of reviewing the toolkit to ensure that practitioners have powers that are flexible, easy and inexpensive to use is in our view the right way to proceed. The LGA therefore supports the objectives in the consultation of giving local practitioners more flexible tools, of shortening the processes and reducing the costs associated with the more formal tools, and to make informal tools more effective so people are not unnecessarily criminalised.
7. We are not convinced that the proposed new powers in the consultation document will give local practitioners the effective range of tools and powers they need if they are to reduce ASB. In particular we are concerned that the proposals will marginalise the role of councils in reducing ASB, with primary responsibility for dealing with ASB falling to the police, while other partners including councils playing a subsidiary role. There are a number of instances where new powers are primarily tools for the police when they were previously ones held by local authorities, suggesting that the government's vision is no longer one of local partners being equally responsible for tackling ASB and more about creating a 'two-tier' level of responsibility for dealing with ASB, with the police having stronger powers than others. This division creates the risk that the police and councils will adopt a silo approach to tackling ASB rather than working together on both prevention and enforcement, which is the most effective means of tackling ASB.
8. A further area of concern is the lack of detail about the transition from the existing toolkit to the new tools and powers. Local authorities (and the police) currently have a range of orders in force including Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBO) and Designated Public Place Orders across parts or all of their authority areas. It is not clear from the consultation what will happen to these orders if the original legislation behind them is repealed. Will they continue in effect or will replacement orders have to be sought, and if so by whom? Related to this is the issue of what orders councils and other bodies should seek and for how long between the consultation ending and new powers coming into effect. The Home Office needs to provide greater detail on how the transition from the existing toolkit and powers to the new toolkit and powers will take place.
9. In the LGA's view the best way of reducing ASB is to prevent it happening at all. Councils have previously invested in a range of preventative measures, for example diverting young people away from anti-social behaviour, as well as investing in street cleaning and other

services that keep areas clean and green and tackle signal crime problems such as abandoned vehicles. With the reductions in budgets faced by all councils and other public services, early intervention to reduce ASB will be much more difficult to finance, and further consideration should be given to this preventative work alongside changes in the tools and powers available to tackle ASB.

Criminal Behaviour Orders

10. In many ways a Criminal Behaviour Order seems very similar to the ASBO that is currently available on conviction, and on that basis the changes proposed appear to improve the tool. The detail in some areas needs to be expanded to allow proper comparison with the existing provisions. For example it is not clear whether the prohibitions that could be attached to the Order as wide ranging as those that can be attached to an ASBO.
11. We welcome the fact that the positive requirements that can already be imposed on an offender to take action to address their behaviour will be incorporated into the Order. Where used appropriately, positive requirements can have a significant impact on reducing ASB. However providing positive support for adults will not be easy. Services in this area are less well developed than they are for young people, and cuts in public spending will mean there will be even less provision of these services in the future. Consideration will have to be given to how these positive requirements could be funded, and if it is expected that local authorities will have a role in delivering these services, then the Home Office will need to engage with local government to ensure that further burdens are not placed on councils.

Crime Prevention Injunction

12. The intention behind the injunction of creating a genuine civil order that allows local partners to deal with the cumulative impact of some sorts of behaviour is welcome. If it is to work as a tool that can be quickly obtained to protect victims and communities it will have to be a genuinely civil court order obtained on the 'balance of probabilities' rather than having to be proved 'beyond reasonable doubt'. To that end it would probably be a more useful tool if the test used by the court to decide on whether to impose an injunction is lowered from the definition in the Crime and Disorder Act to that in place for Anti-Social Behaviour Injunctions of 'conduct causing or likely to cause nuisance or annoyance to a person not of the same household as himself'.
13. The key issue in deciding how effective the injunctions are as a tool in tackling ASB will depend on the sanctions for breach of the injunction. The fact that any breach of the injunction, where there is no power of arrest, is dealt with as contempt of court, would mean an application is made to the court with the defendant being given notice of the hearing. Offenders already try and delay hearings when an ASBO is being sought, and there is the strong risk that legal procedures will be used in these instances to delay the breach being taken to court. In addition the requirement that a breach of the injunction has to be proved 'beyond reasonable doubt' means that councils, and others, enforcing the injunctions will have to go to considerable expense and effort to prove they have been breached. This will have an impact on how effective offenders view the injunction and their usefulness to practitioners as a tool.
14. Furthermore, there is not enough detail about what the nature of the

risk of harm to an individual or community would have to be before a power of arrest was attached to the injunction. This should not be set at such a low level that it applies to behaviour which does not count as ASB in most people's minds, but should not be set so high that a considerable amount of ASB does not qualify for a power of arrest to be attached to the injunction. It would also seem that as the injunction would be a purely civil matter, even if heard in the Magistrates' Courts, that the police would have no role in enforcing them, as they currently do with all ASBOs because breach is a criminal offence. As a result of these issues the LGA has considerable concerns that the injunctions will ultimately prove to be less useful tools than ASBOs in tackling ASB.

Community Protection Order

15. Rationalising the range of place-related ASB tools and powers to make it easier for practitioners to use is sensible. The LGA therefore supports the proposed bringing together a range of existing powers into one tool. However the reason for the division between the two levels is not clear and there appears to be an inconsistency in approach on enforcement. Failure to comply with a Level 1 order (which covers littering and graffiti) a criminal offence, when breach of the crime prevention injunction will not have any criminal sanctions, and it is again unclear what the rationale for this difference is.

Direction Power

16. Again rationalising the range of powers available for dispersing people causing ASB is sensible. However the current powers are exercised by the police in consultation with the local authority or in some cases councils have responsibility for making the orders, and the proposals would hand these to the police alone. It is also unclear how local authority staff would fit within the framework proposed, as the proposals refer to only police constables and Police Community Support Officers, when council wardens and enforcement teams are already involved in asking people to dispose of alcohol, and some council staff enjoy these powers under the community safety accreditation scheme.

17. An additional concern on the LGA's part is that the use of dispersal powers can be highly controversial, which is why the current powers are dependent on consultation requirements and the agreement of the local authority. The changes would mean that the police alone would be able to make decisions about dispersal without consultation or providing the local authority or the community with the option of expressing their views on the proposal. While this is understandable in terms of trying to increase the speed with which the powers can be used, it may lead to greater tensions with some communities or sections of communities if they are not involved in the decision to make an order.

Community Trigger

18. The problems that some vulnerable victims of ASB face set out in the section on the proposed community trigger are serious and need to be addressed, but the LGA is not convinced that a community trigger is the best means of addressing them. Vulnerable victims suffering from targeted ASB are less likely than others to be able to activate the Community Trigger in the first place. It is much more likely to be used well organised and vocal individuals and groups who generally are good at raising their concerns and issues.

19. In the LGA's view the Community Trigger mainly creates a new complaints system that will then sit alongside existing complaints

procedures, and the Community Call for Action processes. Given the range of ASB related complaints that the police and local authorities already receive (include noise nuisance related complaints for example) it is possible that the trigger could be activated a number of times, diverting the limited resources councils and the police have away from tackling ASB.

20. The government is encouraging the development of ASB casework management approaches amongst the police and partners. In the LGA's view the results from this work is much more likely to create the multi-agency working and exchange of information to ensure that targeted and sustained ASB against vulnerable victims is identified early and dealt with. There are a range of complaints mechanisms already in place by which residents can raise issues, and these provide a means for raising the complaints without creating a new system.
21. The LGA also takes the view that the role of the police and crime commissioner in holding the community safety partnership to account for its response is unnecessary. Community safety partnerships are already held to account under the Police and Justice Act 2006 through crime and disorder overview and scrutiny committees, and these committees provide an adequate means for holding the partnership to account without giving the police and crime commissioner an overlapping role in partnership accountability.

ASB in social housing

22. One particular issue that the consultation has mentioned but not developed substantive proposals on is the issue of ASB committed by social housing tenants. The consultation makes reference to making breach of the new orders grounds for eviction, and the government's stated intention of speeding up the eviction of social housing tenants by making breach of ASB orders a mandatory ground for possession. No further detail is provided on these proposals however. Similarly we understand the Ministry of Justice has proposals to ensure that community impact statements can be utilised in housing possession cases where the tenants have been involved in ASB, but have not more information on the proposals.
23. In the LGA's view more needs to be done to ensure that the small minority of social housing tenants involved in ASB understand that if they persist in making the lives of their victims and the communities they live in miserable then they are at significant risk of losing their home. We would therefore be keen to work with the Home Office in giving further consideration to what can be done to address ASB by social housing tenants.

Alcohol strategy

Purpose of report

For discussion / decision. To agree a public position alongside the LGA Community Wellbeing Board.

Summary

1. The Government is due to publish the new national alcohol strategy in late March.
2. The Department of Health is taking the lead, although, because of the cross cutting nature of this issue, a number of other Whitehall Departments are involved.
3. The strategy is expected to strengthen the ability of councils to tackle alcohol related crime and disorder through:
 - 3.1 A new ability for a council to declare themselves at saturation point;
 - 3.2 A new health objective in the Licensing Act 2003;
 - 3.3 Minimum pricing to deter sales.
4. There will also be some important messages about the role of responsible retailers and prevention of underage drinking.
5. The SSCB and CWB will wish to agree an LGA position, including expressing a view on the value of minimum pricing per unit in tackling both health and crime and disorder issues.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the content of the new Alcohol Strategy and to discuss the potential impact on crime and disorder.

Action

Officers to develop key lines subject to Members' comments.

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Alcohol Strategy

Background

1. Alcohol has a clear impact on crime and disorder and perceptions of security at night. Evening and night-time violence accounts for 64% of all violence and 20% of all violence takes place in or around a pub or club. Alcohol is also found to be a factor in 60-70% of all domestic violence. 18-24 year olds are most likely to be involved in alcohol-linked crime.
2. Alcohol misuse costs the NHS £2.7 billion every year (or £90 for every taxpayer). These costs include £645 million in accident and emergency visits, £372 million in ambulance costs and £272 million in outpatient visits. The number of alcohol-related hospital admissions has nearly doubled in under a decade as binge drinking has exploded as a social problem.
3. Alcohol accounts for 80% of all deaths from liver disease. Last year there were 200,000 hospital admissions caused primarily by alcohol, a 40 per cent rise in the past decade. 65% of alcohol purchased in the UK is bought from supermarkets and convenience stores. Some believe that the cost to society as a whole - when factors like lawlessness and worklessness are added in – total in the region of £17 billion.

Content of the Alcohol Strategy

4. We have been advised that the Strategy will contain the following elements:
 - 4.1 **Health objective in the Licensing Act:** Health organisations are currently able to comment on all applications for an alcohol licence, but can only do so on grounds of crime and disorder or public nuisance. A health objective will allow them to impose conditions or object to licences specifically on health grounds.
 - 4.2 **Sympathetic approach to minimum pricing:** This may or may not include the announcement of a specific price. The Government continues to signal commitment to increasing prices as a means of decreasing consumption.
 - 4.3 **Saturation Points:** The ability for a council to declare themselves to be at 'saturation' point and refuse all further licence applications will provide an additional tool that can be used.

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- 4.4 **Removing 1 billion units from alcohol supply by 2015:** This would be achieved through reducing the strength of drinks. It will have some impact on levels of alcohol-related disorder, but alcohol charities advise abusers will simply increase consumption.
- 4.5 **Greater emphasis on collaborative working:** Community Alcohol Partnerships (CAPs) are proven as an effective way of reducing the negative impacts of excessive alcohol consumption. Supermarkets contribute a very small proportion of their turnover to help fund these schemes as well as to industry schemes such as the Portman Group. The LGA supports CAPs but feels that retailers could contribute more.
5. The strategy will not include:
- 5.1 **Changes to the advertising regime:** The LGA has argued that local restrictions on advertising would allow councils to tackle problem drinking, particularly in cases of underage drinking. For instance, some councils wish to ban advertising outside schools.
- 5.2 **Restrictions to promotional offers or bargains:** The undesirability of supermarket deep discounts has long been problematic. Although the Government does not propose to restrict this, we can expect these to reduce as minimum pricing per unit will apply.

Supportive measures

Responsibility Deal

6. 119 different companies have signed up to collective responsibility deal pledges on alcohol, including improving labelling and ensuring that 80% of alcohol products have unit and health information by the end of 2013. The Government is also working with industry and non-governmental organisations to remove a significant number of units (500 million units) of alcohol from the UK market through changes in how alcohol is produced and sold.
7. **Duty plus VAT** will be introduced in April 2012 in England and Wales. We have calculated that this would affect less than 1% of sales. Low cost brands commonly associated with underage or binge drinking will be largely unaffected.
8. It was widely reported on 4 March that David Cameron is preparing to introduce a minimum price of **40p** per unit. This is 10p less than the optimum price recently recommended by Sheffield and Bangor Universities, but will have a greater impact on prices than duty plus VAT. LGA research shows that a price of 40p will affect only 8 of the 100 top products, mainly high-strength ciders. 50p per unit would increase the price on 28 products, although Tesco sells about half of the 28 at a higher cost.

Implications for Councils

9. We welcome the cross-government approach to this strategy and the addition of new tools that councils can use to tackle local problems. The ability of a council to declare that particular areas as being at saturation point would be welcome in allowing councils to address high numbers of on and off licences in an area. The detail of the wording on the application of saturation points will be important as councils and communities will want flexibility on this issue to tailor it to local circumstances, rather than having to take an authority wide approach as councils will have to do with the late night levy.
10. Decisions to introduce a saturation point policy may be assisted by the introduction of a health objective into the Licensing Act 2003. Imposing health related conditions on particular licences may not be practicable due to the difficulties of proving any health related effects from a particular licence. Building health considerations around licensing into councils' and partners' plans could be very helpful however in addressing the wider impact of alcohol related disorder and harm, and may for example assist in getting greater cooperation from the health service in sharing data on where people injured or wounded in alcohol related incidents were drinking. The Strategy will also emphasise the new role for councils in delivering Public Health as Directors of Public Health will have an important role in informing a council's cumulative impact policy, or setting a saturation level.
11. Recognising the range of tools and powers that councils now have, including the ability to introduce cumulative impact policies and the ability to impose conditions on temporary event notices, the Strategy offers local councillors greater powers to decisively influence their localities and to positively shape their night-time economy in a way which reflects residents' views.
12. Although we believe local government can welcome this new strategy, there is some detailed analysis to be done around minimum prices to ensure that this raises the price of alcohol to levels that discourage pre-loading drinking, and excessive consumption of cheap, high-strength drinks, yet does not unfairly penalise families who enjoy a responsible drink, or unfairly hit community pubs.
13. Lead members have considered the issue of pricing and concluded that a minimum price needs to be considered as part of a wider package of tools and education measures. To further inform this position, we have canvassed officers and members in 36 councils and found there is no support for the proposal to introduce duty plus VAT, as it will have little impact on sales. We have had responses from 12 councillors, 11 of whom are in favour of a minimum price. There was less consensus on what price should be recommended, but with agreement that it should be high enough to make a meaningful difference.

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14. A survey of Directors of Public Health found that 83% felt that lobbying for a minimum price per unit of 50p was a top priority. Enforcement and licensing officers appear almost unanimously in favour of the 50p cost recommended by Sheffield University. More detail on a minimum price per unit is included in **Appendix A**.

Conclusions and next steps

15. Once the Strategy has been published we will need to consider the implications of it and draw together the views of the Board and Community Wellbeing Board to ensure the LGA provides a coherent response to the Strategy. Implementing some elements of the Strategy will take time. Inserting a health objective into the Licensing Act 2003 will require an amendment in a bill, while the interaction of minimum prices with EU law means the introduction of minimum pricing, if the government supports it, is not likely to happen swiftly. There will also be further practical considerations for councils, particularly around increased enforcement requirements which would need to be fully funded, and for example on what the imposition of requirements related to the health objective into individual licences would mean.

Minimum Pricing

Minimum price per unit: The University of Sheffield have conducted studies to project reductions in alcohol-related disorder and illnesses based on varying unit prices, with a recommendation of **50p per unit** as the most effective balance between addressing social issues and allowing freedom to enjoy alcohol. This approach has been adopted by Scotland.

Introducing a minimum price per unit **would not raise the price for all alcohol**. It would affect lower priced beers, ciders and bottles of wine. Pubs and restaurants already sell most alcohol above even the 50p price. Most spirits and liqueurs also retail for more than this price. In supermarkets the average price of a bottle of wine would raise to £4.50-£5.00. Currently, 40% of the wine market is in the £4 and under sector. Ciders and supermarket's own brand vodka would be hit hardest.

A minimum price would be easier to enforce than the duty plus VAT approach. It would not take into account the differences in costs of living across the country.

Duty plus VAT: The government's measure will translate to about 21p per unit of beer and 28p per unit of spirits. The lowest possible price of a can of lager would range from 38p to 78p depending on its strength, but most drinks would be unaffected.¹

The financial case for a minimum price

In real terms, **the price of alcohol fell by about 5%** between 1996 and 2006. Research, specially commissioned from the Centre for Economics and Business Research (cebr) by the LGA, demonstrates the scale of duty increases that would be necessary to reduce alcohol consumption.

A one per cent increase in duty on sales of bottled beer would have a negligible effect. In order to reduce consumption by 10%, duty would have to increase by 85%, or a 17% increase in the price of beer to the consumer.

For cheap drinks, however, duty would have to rise by less to reduce sales: for standard strength cheap lager, a 36% increase in duty – worth 22p a litre on the selling price – would be needed to reduce sales by 10%, and for premium lager, a 73% increase in duty, worth 57p a litre, would have the same effect.

¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-15634956>

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Although the data needed to make accurate estimates of the effect of price on sales of smaller categories of products are not available, cebr suggests that, to reduce consumers' willingness to buy alcopops by 10%, a duty increase of 45p a litre, or 53%, would be needed.

Item 3

Integration, community cohesion and preventing violent extremism

Purpose of Report

For noting. To brief Members ahead of Andrew Stunell's presentation at this Board meeting.

Summary

This report sets out:

1. the government's approach to integration, community cohesion and preventing violent extremism; and
2. key implications of this agenda for councils.

Recommendation

Members to note this report as background information to assist discussions with Mr Stunell at this meeting.

Action

Officers to action Member suggestions as appropriate.

Contact officer: Helen Murray
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Item 3

Integration, community cohesion and preventing violent extremism

Background

1. At the Safer and Stronger Communities Board's meeting on 7 November 2011, Members requested Andrew Stunell, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at Communities and Local Government (CLG), attend a future Board meeting to discuss the government's integration, community cohesion and preventing violent extremism agenda.
2. This paper therefore provides Members with background details about these policy areas and implications for councils and CSPs.

Summary of the coalition government's approach to integration

3. CLG launched 'Creating the Conditions for Integration' on 21 February 2012, the Government's approach to enabling and encouraging integration in communities throughout England.
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/2092103.pdf>
4. It contends that England is better placed than many to meet the challenges of integration but there are issues in particular places. These challenges require collective action by stakeholders including councils, which the document recognises as being well placed to take a leading role through existing partnerships, but above all communities and individuals. The approach is based on five key factors:
 - 4.1 **common ground** - a clear sense of shared aspirations and values, focusing on what we have in common rather than our differences. This includes initiatives such as the Big Lunch, which encourages lunches with neighbours, and reforms to immigration and settlement rules to ensure appropriate knowledge of English and UK life
 - 4.2 **responsibility** - a strong sense of our mutual commitments and obligations, bringing personal and social responsibility. This includes the National Citizen Service, the Troubled Families team's work, and Baroness Newlove's work to deliver 'Our Vision for Safe and Active Communities' including the recently announced fund to tackle binge and underage drinking
 - 4.3 **social mobility** - people able to realise their potential to get on in life. This includes Pupil Premiums, extended free entitlement to early education, reforms to higher education, a new Work Programme and English language provision support to help those seeking work – the

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government announced on 29 February 2012 up to £10 million to help English language training for speakers of other languages

- 4.4 **participation and empowerment** - people of all backgrounds have opportunities to take part, be heard and take decisions in local and national life. This includes the Community Organisers programme, the Free Schools Programme and the Localism Act 2011 setting out steps to put power into the hand of local communities and neighbourhoods
 - 4.5 **tackling intolerance and extremism** - a robust response to threats, whether discrimination, extremism or disorder, that deepen division and increase tensions. Experience has shown that violent extremism can emerge from even the most cohesive communities but that extremist messages are less likely to find support in this environment.
5. This final strand came out of a review of the Prevent strategy, which concluded that the strategy to date had:
 - 5.1 included some unfocused cohesion activities but they had been productive;
 - 5.2 led to some parts of the community feeling victims of state 'snooping'; and
 - 5.3 raised controversy about how much the public sector should engage with possible extremists albeit with the purpose to achieve greater public good.
 6. The government has therefore adopted the approach of focusing Prevent on stopping people becoming terrorists and distinguishing this from cohesion and integration which is what needs to happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another.
 7. Creating the Conditions recognises that integration is a vital local issue requiring a local response, with many references to localism and civic leadership, and strongly encourages local partners such as councils to take a lead. It acknowledges the excellent examples of locally-led action to build integration and challenge extremism.
 8. Creating the Conditions recognises that integration comes from everyday life, not 'integration projects. It also states that government must not dictate general solutions to complex local issues but create conditions for integration to flourish through its actions and funding.

Implications for councils

9. Understanding communities is a key part of the work of councils. The knowledge, expertise and maturity of councils has grown since the Cantle report in 2001 and through the recent emphasis on preventing violent extremism. Areas already map their communities to provide a clear understanding of who lives in the local area and where and this provides a foundation for understanding conflicts

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between different groups and knowledge of the barriers and opportunities which exist. Local authorities are extremely experienced at monitoring tensions which are more easily managed if action is taken early. Local government has a strong record on deftly handling community relations and effective engagement with communities.

10. The overall thrust of this report is welcome. Although central government funding has been well received in the past, it has made little sense for Whitehall to dictate how this money should be spent. This report sets out an important challenge for public sector agencies to change their ways of working, so that the voluntary and private sectors can contribute and invest in their areas and local areas can take action on integration issues which are important to them. Councils are well placed to support these changes.

Metal Theft Update

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

At its last meeting the Board received an update on the work the LGA had been undertaking on tackling metal theft. This report provides a further update on the LGA's work since mid-January.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

Contact officer: Mark Norris
Position: Senior Adviser
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Metal Theft Update

Background

1. Following the remitting of the motion from Centro, the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority about metal theft from the LGA General Assembly to the Board last year, the Board has been pressing for greater powers for councils to regulate scrap metal dealers to help combat metal theft. The Board has also been looking to promote the importance of tackling the issue among local authorities and identifying good practice in this area by councils.

Government measures to tackle metal theft

2. The LGA has been pressing for the replacement of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 1964 and its replacement by a proper licensing regime for scrap metal dealers, with a package of measures being implemented to discourage the purchase of stolen metal. Two of these measures are a move to cashless transactions at scrap metal dealers and increasing the penalties for breaches of the regulatory regime that applies to scrap metal dealers.
3. On 26 January a written ministerial statement was issued by the Home Secretary around scrap metal dealers. This stated that the government would be looking to lay amendments to the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill (which has nearly completed its passage through the House of Lords) to create a new criminal offence to prohibit cash payments to purchase scrap metal, and significantly increase the fines for all offences under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act.
4. The LGA is supportive of these changes, but is not convinced they will be enough on their own to reduce metal theft. The move to cashless transactions will probably have an impact on lower-end community based metal theft, but is unlikely to deter more organised thieves, and of course cashless transactions can be done on a relatively anonymous basis, which may mean that after the initial reduction the benefit starts to wear off. The requirement for cashless transactions needs to be coupled with stronger requirements on dealers to take formal identification from people they buy metal from, including installing CCTV cameras with automatic number plate recognition technology at the entrance to the yard.
5. The move to cashless transactions may also drive people towards unregistered dealers. Increasing the penalties under the Act for not being registered will

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assist, but unless there is a significant increase in powers to close illegal dealers down, the measures may just fuel the illegal side of the business at the expense of legitimate traders. In the LGA's view cashless transactions should be combined with a new robust licensing regime based on that used for alcohol licensing and run by councils. This would allow for additional controls to be imposed on dealers such as tougher provisions on requesting identification. If licences were renewable annually they could be reviewed and potentially revoked where there were concerns about the way a dealer was operating.

Local authority initiatives to tackle metal theft

6. Metal theft in Central Bedfordshire has become such an issue that the council Executive resolved in January to explore how it could introduce a local licensing regime. Officers met with Cllrs Richard Stay and Budge Wells in mid-January to discuss the Central Bedfordshire initiative and how it could be facilitated. This has included looking at the provisions in the Localism Act to see if they could be used to introduce local bye-laws governing scrap metal dealers. Unfortunately the Act in this instance would not allow councils to introduce their own local licensing regime. We have therefore explored with Central Bedfordshire what else could be done, and ensuring that any scheme complemented whatever the Home Office might introduce.

Meeting with Lord Henley

7. Following a letter sent by the Chair of the Board and Cllr David Parsons, the Chair of the LGA's Environment and Housing Board about the need to reform the Scrap Metal Dealers Act a meeting with Lord Henley was held in early February. In the meeting Cllrs Khan and Parsons highlighted the need for further measures to strengthen the regulation of scrap metal dealers. They highlighted the possibility of providing councils with the ability to make bye-laws on this issue, and Cllrs Stay and Wells then outlined what Central Bedfordshire was hoping to achieve.
8. There was then a discussion with the minister about the possibility of amending one of the government's bills to allow councils to legislate locally. The minister was unable to commit, but undertook to explore whether there were any suitable bills in the government's legislative programme which could be used to make an amendment to the Scrap Metal Dealers Act. Having liaised with the Home Office it has not been possible to identify a bill that would allow an amendment and has enough time left in its passage through parliament to allow substantive amendments. We will therefore look to find a suitable vehicle to allow councils to pass their own local provisions in the next session of parliament, although there is a strong possibility that the Home Office will be amending the Scrap Metal Dealers Act themselves.

Tackling metal theft under existing legislation

9. Councils are of course able to use the existing provisions in the Scrap Metal Dealers Act to work with their local dealers to help address metal theft. Using the good practice established by the Forest of Dean District Council and Gloucestershire Police we have drafted a toolkit for councils for working with scrap metal dealers (which is similar to the approach being currently taken in the north-east in Operation Tornado). The toolkit will be formally launched shortly. This includes a model code of conduct to be agreed locally with scrap metal dealers. At the same time we have established a community of practice on the LGA's new Knowledge Hub to enable practitioners to exchange ideas, information and experience on tackling metal theft and we will also be using this as a means of encouraging councils to take more action.
10. Due to the number of potential changes in the legislation surrounding scrap metal theft we postponed our conference on metal theft, and are now looking to hold it in late May or early June, which will be an opportunity to discuss in more detail what the move to a cashless system will mean, and what the increased penalties are for offences under the Act. We will also use it to highlight existing good practice in working with scrap metal dealers to improve standards at their yards.

Conclusion and next steps

11. The LGA will continue to progress the programme agreed between the two LGA boards, which was outlined at the last board meeting. We will also continue to press for legislative changes to the Scrap Metal Dealers Act or for the ability for councils to make their own local licensing arrangements.

Financial Implications

12. The LGA's work on metal theft will be met from existing resources.

Update on Regulatory Services issues

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This report provides an update on developments affecting regulatory services that will be of interest to the Safer and Stronger Communities Board.

Recommendation

That the Board notes the activities outlined.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

Contact officer: Gwyneth Rogers
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Update on Regulatory Services

Background

1. The following update sets out some current issues of relevance to local authority Regulatory Services and their contribution to safer and stronger communities.

Key Issues

Government examines the role of regulatory services

2. At the end of 2011, the Government committed to reviewing the red tape faced by businesses and the activities of both national and local regulators. The Better Regulation Executive (BRE) is leading this review, which will fundamentally examine the role that councils have in delivering regulation. The review will also present an opportunity for councils to highlight unnecessary or confusing regulations that impact on councils and local businesses.
3. The LGA has already met with BRE to express our support for work aimed at reducing the red tape faced by businesses. We have also taken the opportunity to emphasise that full engagement with local government will be fundamental to an effective and robust review process.

LGA responds to 'Seizing the tourism opportunity taskforce report'

4. At the end of January 2012, the Government published a review led by industry representatives about the regulatory burdens faced by the tourism sector. The review raised specific concerns about unnecessary red tape relating to both licensing and health and safety.
5. The LGA response to the report welcomes the taskforce and Government's overall agenda of reducing needless red tape, complexity and bureaucracy. We also commend the taskforce for effectively tackling a range of complex issues to produce a concise report with clear recommendations. However, we express some concern about the lack of engagement with local government during the review because of the key role that councils have in promoting and supporting the visitor economy.

LGA Licensing Conference is a huge success

6. A total of 112 delegates attended the LGA Licensing Conference representing 78 different organisations, including 74 councils. The event generated lively and invaluable debate around changes to alcohol licensing as a result of the Police and Social Responsibility Act and about Government proposals to deregulate entertainment. Contributions made by attendees will be used to inform LGA work on both of these areas. Feedback received about the event has been excellent.
7. Future conferences on Managing the Night-Time Economy and Licensing have been scheduled for 26 September 2012 and 5 February 2013 respectively. The next Safer Communities conference is scheduled for 7 October 2012.

Alternative Vision for the High Streets

8. The LGA has launched an Alternative Vision for the High Street in response to Mary Portas' review, which we contend did not go far enough. We are also critical of CLG's continued tinkering at the edges, rather than investing in a strategic and coherent way in economic development. The online pamphlet contains sections from each of the LGA Boards outlining an ideal high street and how it can be enabled. Cllr. Khan's article explores how councils can work with police and crime commissioners, businesses, and residents to create a safe high street at night.

Protection of Freedoms Bill

9. The LGA is urging Government to overturn an amendment to the Freedoms Bill which would mean environmental health and trading standards officers have to seek a warrant through the courts to carry out basic inspections, unless given permission to enter by the business owner. If passed it would mean an end to on-the-spot-inspections and delays of hours or even days before council officers can respond to complaints made by residents in relation to food hygiene, product safety, animal welfare, licensing and environmental protection.

Deregulation of entertainment and Live Music Bill

10. The Live Music Bill has passed through Parliament and will receive Royal Assent shortly. It is expected that the provisions in the Act will commence on 1st October. The Bill will deregulate the playing of live music at events with fewer than 200 people.
11. We have no date for the DCMS analysis of consultation responses to their proposals to deregulate events with fewer than 5000 people present. However,

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DCMS colleagues advise us that the majority of responses were not favourable and that proposals will need to be reconsidered in light of this. The LGA licensing conference unanimously rejected the proposals and Don Foster MP agreed to pass this information to John Penrose as the minister responsible.

Dangerous dogs

12. The LGA been working to reflect the concerns of our members about the rising number of incidents linked to dangerous dogs and the need to develop specific tools to help councils address community concerns about this issue. At the end of January, Cllr Canver delivered a presentation on behalf of the LGA at a parliamentary reception hosted by the RSPCA. The aim of the event was to exemplify the eagerness of councils, charities and the police to work together and support Government in the development of a sustainable model to tackle this issue.
13. The LGA are expecting a further Government consultation about the introduction of compulsory micro chipping. In the past we have expressed concern about this approach because of the burden it would place on the vast majority of already responsible dog owners. We have strongly advocated that Dog Control Orders would provide councils and local delivery partners with a more proactive model to tackle community concerns associated with dangerous dogs.

Tackling 'legal highs'

14. During 2010 there were a number of high profile incidents where individuals, usually young adults, died or were injured as a result of taking 'legal highs'. The LGA have now responded to a request from the All Party Parliamentary Policy Group for Drug Policy Reform to recognise the devastating impact that 'legal highs' can have on individuals and their families, however, we have also highlighted the limitations on action that can currently be taken by Trading Standards services with powers that are not designed to address this issue. The LGA response goes on to acknowledge the potential role that councils could have in the regulation of 'legal highs', but only where specific tools are provided along with resource and training to implement these. Regulation of 'legal highs' is complicated by the large number of emerging products, high levels of internet sales, the potential for sellers to be located abroad and the ability of those developing new products to exploit loopholes in the law.

Successful LGA presence at the Year Ahead event for regulatory services

15. Cllr. Paul Bettison and Cllr. David Rogers both provided plenary presentations at the annual Year Ahead event for regulatory services. We received specific

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feedback about the positive and constructive contributions made by the LGA, which had been received well by attendees.

Item 6

Meetings with Outside Bodies

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This paper is to inform members of the activities that have been undertaken since the last update to the Board by members and LGA officers, on behalf of the Board.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

Contact officer: Mark Norris
Position: Senior Adviser
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Meetings with Outside Bodies

Member Activity

Transition to police and crime commissioners

1. Since the last meeting Board members have been speaking to both local and central government about the transition to police and crime commissioners. Cllr Duwayne Brooks attended a stakeholder event held by Hampshire Police Authority in mid-February to talk about what is involved in setting up a police and crime panel. Later in the month Cllr Henri Murison represented the Board at the Home Office's Transition Sponsorship Board, which is chaired by the Policing Minister, the Rt. Hon. Nick Herbert MP. Cllr Murison raised the lack of progress in providing councils with a definitive list of the funding to be transferred to commissioners, and urged the government to rethink their decision not to use a free-post delivery of election material.
2. Cllr Goronwy Edwards, the Board's Deputy Chair, attended the project group meeting looking at elections. The issue of support for candidates in getting their message out to voters has been raised previously but the government has indicated that there will be no free-post delivery of election material due to cost. Instead, there will be an internet based alternative where details of the candidates will be provided, and a number which people can call to ask for the information to be put in the post to them.

Metal Theft

3. In early February the Board's chair Cllr Mehboob Khan, along with Cllr David Parsons, Chair of the Environment and Housing Board, and Cllrs Richard Stay and Budge Wells from Central Bedfordshire met Lord Henley the minister responsible for addressing metal theft at the Home Office. There was a discussion with the minister about providing councils with the power to make their own bye-laws regulating scrap metal dealers. The minister was supportive of this in principle although he wanted to take further advice. Since then LGA officers have been in discussion with Home Office officials about finding a possible legislative vehicle.

CCTV

4. Cllr Mehboob Khan appeared on Sky News in February opposite the TaxPayer's Alliance to defend council expenditure on CCTV, following a press release from Big Brother Watch on how much councils have spent on CCTV cameras over the

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last four years. Cllr Khan was able to point out that compared to Big Brother Watch's own figures, the number of cameras operated by councils has declined by 13% from 2009. He also highlighted the important role CCTV plays in tracking down offenders and securing convictions while making the point that councils consult with residents and partners on whether it is the most effective tool for tackling crime in an area.

Deaths, Funerals and Coroners' Conference

5. Cllr Les Lawrence, the Board's Vice-Chair, chaired a successful Deaths, Funerals and Coroners Conference in early March which looked at ways of improving burial and bereavement services, maintaining cemeteries, the impact of the government's decision not to abolish the post of chief coroner, and need for councils to appoint medical examiners as part of the reforms introduced to death certification after the Harold Shipman case. As well as a range of local government speakers delegates heard from the Ministry of Justice, the Department of Health, and the Coroners' Society.

Officer Activity

Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act

6. Officers have continued to visit or meet with a range of member authorities to discuss the transition to police and crime commissioners (PCC). This has included councils in Berkshire, Cumbria, Devon and Cornwall, Hampshire, Kent and Staffordshire. Alongside these visits officers have also attended the Home Office PCC events in Leeds, London, Manchester, Newcastle, Reading and Swindon and have been able to engage with some areas the Board's officers had not yet visited. The police and crime panel group that has been established on the LGA's new Knowledge Hub also means that the Board's officers are engaging directly with those officers around England tasked with setting up police and crime panels.
7. In addition to this contact with member authorities the Board's officers have met with a range of other bodies heavily involved in the transition to PCCs, including Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (with the LGA being invited to participate in their PCC Transition Reference Group), the Association of Police Authorities and the Association of Chief Police Officers. Officers have also met with Cambridgeshire Police Authority to discuss commissioning guidance for PCCs, and Home Office officials to discuss regulations for police and crime panels, as well as participating in workshops on PCCs at a Centre for Public Scrutiny conference and the District Councils' Network assembly.

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Metal theft

8. Officers met with Cllrs Richard Stay and Budge Wells from Central Bedfordshire in mid-January to discuss their council's desire to explore the powers available to them to introduce their own licensing regime for scrap metal dealers ahead of any government legislation which could take a year to eighteen months before it came into effect.

Anti-social behaviour

9. At the start of last year the government consulted on changes to the tools and powers available to councils and the police to tackle anti-social behaviour. From a meeting in mid-January with Home Office officials, officers understand that the Home Office will shortly be producing a White Paper on addressing anti-social behaviour. This will provide the government's response to the anti-social behaviour consultation and will also set out the wider changes the government has made in other Whitehall departments to tackle anti-social behaviour. This will be followed by legislation in the new Queen's Speech anticipated in early May.

Ending Gang and Serious Youth Violence

10. The LGA continues to be closely involved in the Home Office's programme to implement the recommendations from the government's report on tackling gangs and serious youth violence. In addition to a place on the programme board the LGA has been invited to participate in the officials group overseeing the programme board. As reported to the last Board the LGA has been involved in the delivery of a pilot peer review in Enfield, will be assisting with three further peer reviews, and has run an accreditation process for the practitioners supporting the Home Office team with 32 practitioners so far accredited.

Employer Supported Policing

11. Following the consideration at the last Board meeting of the LGA's support for the National Police Improvement Agency's Employer Supported Policing Scheme to assist special constables, officers met with the NPIA to discuss what this support would involve. As a result of these discussions a report on the Employer Supported Policing scheme was included in the LGA's *first* publication in February.

CCTV

12. With the Protection of Freedoms Bill due to complete its passage through parliament very soon, the Home Office is already considering how to establish the Surveillance Camera Commissioner's post and the Code of Conduct for surveillance cameras. Officers have met with Home Office officials to discuss the

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work in this area, and how local government can feed into the Surveillance Camera Systems Steering Group that the Home Office has established to oversee work in this area.

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Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: LGA Safer and Stronger Communities Board
Date and time: Monday 16 January 2012, 11.00am
Venue: Smith Square rooms 3 & 4 (Ground Floor), Local Government House

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council
Chair	Cllr Mehboob Khan	Kirklees MBC
Deputy Chair	Cllr Les Lawrence (Vice Chair)	Birmingham City Council
	Cllr Duwayne Brooks (Deputy Chair)	Lewisham LB
	Cllr Goronwy Edwards (Deputy Chair)	Conwy
Members	Cllr Joanna Spicer	Suffolk CC
	Cllr Brian Coleman	Barnet LB / LFEPA
	Cllr Nilgun Canver	Haringey LB
	Cllr Lisa Brett	Bath & NE Somerset Council
	Cllr Paul Bettison	Bracknell Forest
	Cllr Tom Fox	Scarborough BC
	Cllr Robert Gordon	Hertfordshire CC
	Cllr Jim Harker	Northamptonshire CC
	Cllr Ann Lucas	Coventry City
Substitutes	Cllr Crada Onuegbu	Lewisham LB
Apologies	Cllr Brian Coleman	Barnet LB / LFEPA
	Cllr Mark Burns-Williamson	Wakefield MDC

Officers: Helen Murray, Mark Norris, Ian Leete, David Lock, Vicki Goddard, Stephen Service (all LGA)

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Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
	<p>Cllr Mehboob Khan welcomed Members to the meeting.</p> <p>On behalf of the Board, he acknowledged the verdict of the Stephen Lawrence trial at which Cllr Duwayne Brooks had given evidence. Cllr Brooks thanked Members for their good wishes throughout.</p>	
1.	<p>Priorities 2012/13</p> <p>Helen Murray, LGA Head of Programmes introduced this item. She said that as with last year's plan, the focus was on outcomes with a degree of flexibility built in. She asked Members to identify any gaps in the Safer Communities remit.</p> <p>Members agreed that one of the Board's main priorities continues to be Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs). While the LGA has submitted an offer to the Government to set up a representative body for PCCs, Members noted the separate bid from the APA and the APA's view that the LGA would be supporting the police and crime panels which will have the role of holding commissioners to account.</p> <p>While Members supported the LGA's position, they took the view that there should be discrete arrangements within the LGA so that support for PCCs and panels was separated.</p> <p>Members said that they would value more detail on the LGA's model and Cllr Khan agreed to arrange for the LGA's bid letter to the Home Office to be circulated.</p> <p>On community payback reforms, Councillors agreed that it was appropriate for the Board to lead on this issue, but asked that the Housing and Environment Board remain involved.</p>	

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Action

Officers to feed back the Board's views on the draft Business Plan to the Leadership Board. **LGA Officers**

Officers to circulate to Board Members the LGA's bid letter to the Home Office to be the representative body for police and crime commissioners. **LGA Officers**

2. Home Office consultation – domestic violence disclosure scheme

Helen Murray summarised this item and emphasised the balance of risk that the scheme presented between giving would-be victims knowledge through disclosure and potentially triggering further domestic violence events. She proposed an LGA submission to the Home Office to show that the Association is engaging with the issue, but acknowledged that forming a decisive position could prove challenging.

Cllr Ann Lucas, Board Champion on Domestic Violence circulated copies of the draft response from Women's Aid. She explained that Women's Aid took the view that the police already have powers of disclosure and they suggested that improving and encouraging forces to use these powers more effectively was the most appropriate way of addressing the issue. Cllr Lucas emphasised that the police national database did not always contain information on offenders, who may be known to local police but have not been convicted.

Cllr Lucas said that the issue of relationships in domestic violence cases is frequently complex. Victims can fear disclosure and often say they want the violence to stop rather than the relationship to end. This means that even when their partner's history is disclosed, there is no guarantee that the victim will act on the information.

Members agreed that the proposals were problematic, saying that definitions of what constitutes domestic violence are not straightforward and that police require significant training to deal with the issue effectively.

Councillors felt that there was often a tendency for work areas to protect budgets and not work together, when a multi-agency stance is required. There was broad consensus that a cross-

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government approach is needed and that Government departments needed to make links with what is already available. Members had reservations about Options 2 and 3 in the consultation and suggested that the LGA response should pick up on existing legislation and what local partnerships do in relation to prevention, including work happening in schools, councils and the NHS.

Members asked how the current cuts were affecting organisations involved in domestic violence work. Cllrs Khan and Lucas responded that people were working hard to make resources go further. Members asked if there was anything that could be said on prioritising funding. Helen Murray said that the LGA's current position on cuts was to reject protection for specific areas of funding as this could prove difficult to justify over other areas in future.

Members felt support for victims was important in which ever option the government decided on, but preventing domestic violence was just as vital. They argued that the right to ask, should be strengthened with a clear and transparent system in place to examine requests. Cllr Khan contended that this may be a case where the existing system needs better promotion.

On the options outlined, some Members were in favour of strengthening Option 1, while emphasising that the work emerging from the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) needs to be well targeted. Cllrs supported drafting a response on Option 2 which emphasised the risks. There was general consensus that the Board would not feel comfortable supporting Option 3 as it was a high risk strategy.

Cllr Khan proposed that an article on the disclosure scheme and associated issues be written for First magazine. This should include how the scheme could save money for authorities in the long term.

On the subject of trafficking during the Olympics, Helen Murray confirmed that the issue of is being addressed through the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic task group, on which Cllr Lucas sits.

Action

Officers to draft response to the Home Office, taking into account Members' comments

**Helen Murray /
Mark Norris**

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Cllr Lucas/Officers to write an article on the disclosure scheme and associated issues for First magazine.

**Cllr Lucas/ LGA
Officers**

Officers to invite Javeed Khan to the Board to speak on victim support.

LGA Officers

3. Employer Supported Policing

Mark Norris, LGA Senior Advisor summarised this item.

Members expressed disappointment that public sector cuts in staff numbers and finances had not been acknowledged in the Government's proposals. The Board sought greater recognition that staff are already stretched and said that authorities' ability to honour employee requests for time to undertake voluntary work would ultimately come down to resources.

While recognising that the proposals had good intentions, the Board pointed out that training was not free and the fact that police forces had been asked to bear the cost was not mentioned in the letter.

Councillors voiced concern that encouraging employers to pay Special Constables for their time off could lead to a two tier volunteering system as not all employers could afford to do this.

Some Members suggested that other benefits, such as a reduction in council tax for houses with a Special Constable could provide a more democratic system for taking up the opportunity. However, others argued that this posed questions such as which voluntary schemes qualified for council tax credit and which ones should be prioritised for employee release. Members cited the good work of other similarly public spirited organisations such as the St John's ambulance and cautioned against a volunteering hierarchy.

Members endorsed the point made in the LGA Chairman's letter regarding unemployed people and suggested these volunteering opportunities could be advertised through job centres.

Cllr Khan asked for an article to appear in First magazine on

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this topic.

Action

Officers to write article for First magazine on this issue.

**Helen Murray /
Mark Norris**

4. Riots Communities and Victims Panel's Interim Report

Mark Norris began by saying that there was significant overlap between the findings of the interim report and the comments expressed by Members at the meeting with Darra Singh on 7 November 2011.

Chairman Khan asked if there would be another opportunity to influence the panel's findings before the publication of the final report. Helen Murray said that a meeting between Darra Singh, Cllr Khan and the LGA Chairman had been set up.

Cllr Khan said he would be meeting Darra Singh in Kirklees next week. He agreed to give a summary from Members at the Board into this discussion and asked Officers to provide this before the meeting.

Councillors cited the relationship between the IPCC and the family of Mark Duggan as a primary cause of the problems in Tottenham, arguing that the police did not handle the situation effectively. They suggested that greater clarification on the role and responsibility of the police was needed here.

While Members acknowledged that a repeat of the riots was always possible, they questioned whether authorities knew they had sufficient community relationships in place, emphasising that strong links with faith leaders, youth workers and others can often signpost tension points in communities before problems arise.

Members championed the work of Councils in the aftermath of the riots and said that the final report should reflect this.

On social media, Members felt Councils could be harnessing young people more effectively as a resource for countering negative messages. Councillors gave examples where online intervention and policing from young people had prevented disorder during the riots.

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Some Members noted the absence of any reference to the withdrawal of Educational Maintainance Allowances (EMAs) as a factor in the report and expressed the view that those commentators who had suggested EMAs as a cause should withdraw their statements.

Members felt that there was no mention of independent advisory groups in the interim findings and argued that this should be added to the final report.

Cllr Duwayne Brookes asked if a meeting between all lead Members and Darra Singh could be arranged before the publication of the panel's final report. Cllr Khan asked officers to check if this was possible before the submissions deadline.

Action

Officers to provide Cllr Khan with a summary of Member's comments in advance of his meeting with Darra Singh.

**Mark Norris /
Stephen Service**

Officers to check if a meeting between all lead Members and Darra Singh can be arranged in advance of the final report's publication in March.

LGA Officers

5. Update on Metal Theft

Mark Norris said that the LGA had met with Central Bedfordshire the previous week to discuss introducing a licensing scheme for scrap metal dealers.

Members stressed that under current legislation, fines for scrap metal businesses not undertaking checks were low in comparison to the high value of the metals bought and sold. This meant there was no clear financial incentive to uphold the law and made it easy for thieves to find a buyer.

Members commented that British Transport Police had been put in charge of the problem which suggested that only transport infrastructure was affected. They highlighted that many other areas were also targeted, including hospitals and war memorials.

Cllr Khan said that while a private members bill was in the process of going through parliament, any local powers that could be agreed would be useful as this was quicker to enforce

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than waiting for national legislation to be introduced.

Members asked whether there were any pilot schemes that the LGA was aware of. Cllr Khan said that there were examples of voluntary codes of practice for scrap metal dealers being introduced, such as keeping records of sellers and photographic identification.

Cllr Khan emphasised that a good LGA media and communications strategy was needed to back up the good work that the LGA has done in this area.

6. Update on Regulatory Services issues

The Board noted the activities outlined in the report.

On **alcohol**, some Members wanted to see a minimum cost per unit, stressing the health implications and anti-social behaviour issues caused by excessive drinking. Others felt that a minimum would unfairly penalise casual drinkers and interfere unduly with personal freedoms.

Members discussed what the LGA's position should be. Some wanted the association to highlight examples where state intervention has not succeeded in its aims, such as in curbing teenage smoking rates. Other Members said that the job of the Safer Communities Board was to emphasise the effects of alcohol on community safety in such areas as anti-social behaviour and domestic violence.

The Chairman agreed to send a note to the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure that a joined up approach was taken on this issue.

On **Gambling**, Members said that the clustering of betting shops was still a big issue and that they needed to be categorised as a class of gambling establishment in their own right.

On **dangerous dogs**, Councillors suggested that there was a current gap in legislation which meant that no police action could be taken if a dog bites an individual in their own home.

Action

Cllr Khan to send letter on alcohol licensing to the Chair of the

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Health and Wellbeing Board.

**Cllr Khan/ Helen
Murray /
Gwyneth Rogers**

7. Meetings with Outside Bodies

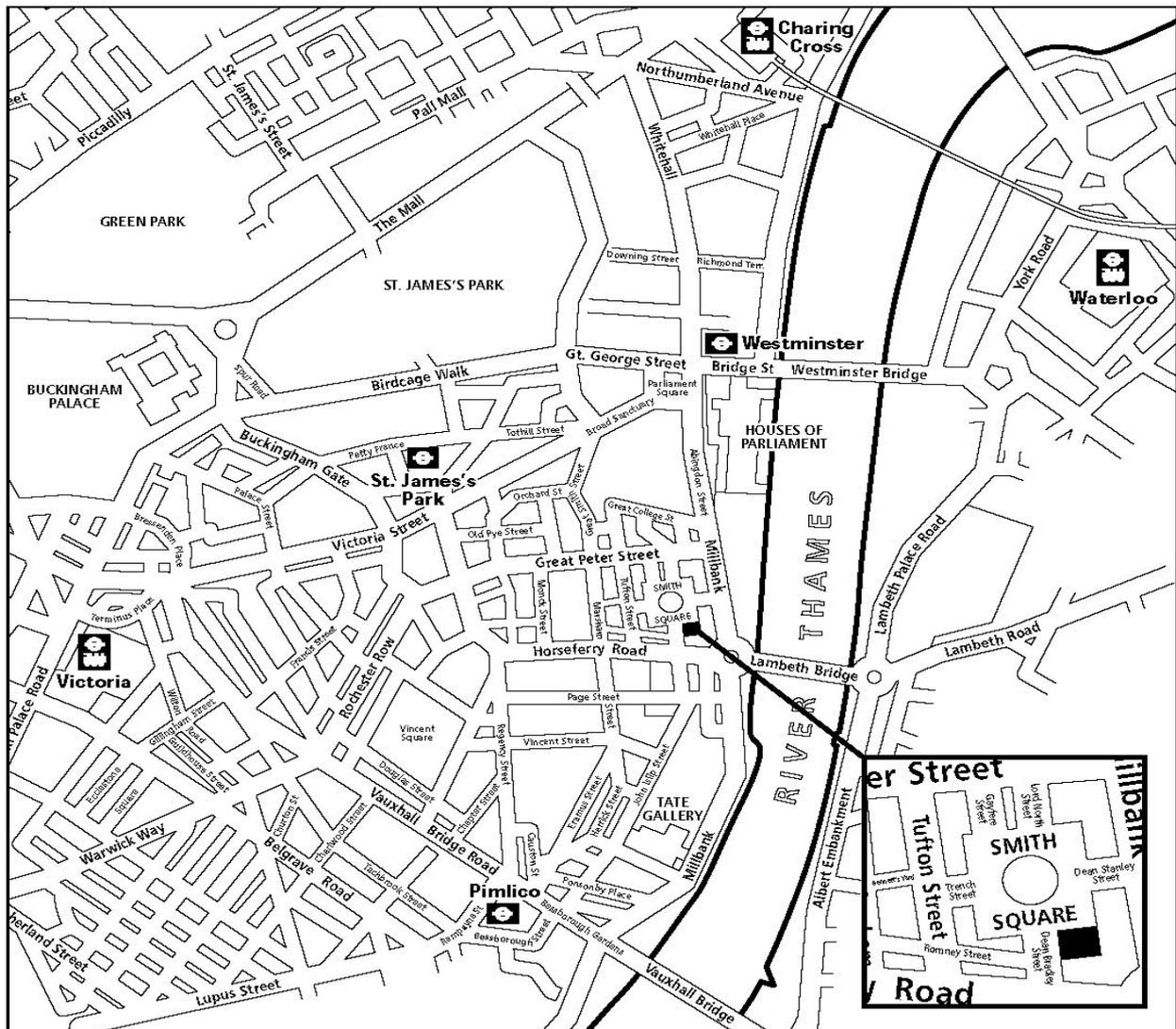
Cllr Khan asked for the issue of Metal theft licensing to be raised in the next meeting with the magistrates' association and the Board's view that licensing responsibility should not reside with the courts.

8. Notes of the last meeting

The notes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record.

Date of next meeting: Monday 12 March 2012, Local Government House

LGA Location Map



Local Government Association

Local Government House
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Public transport

Local Government House is well served by public transport. The nearest mainline stations are; **Victoria** and **Waterloo**; the local underground stations are **St James's Park** (District and Circle Lines); **Westminster** (District, Circle and Jubilee Lines); and **Pimlico** (Victoria Line), all about 10 minutes walk away. Buses **3** and **87** travel along **Millbank**, and the **507** between Victoria and Waterloo goes close by at the end of **Dean Bradley Street**.

Bus routes - Millbank

- 87** Wandsworth - Aldwych **N87**
- 3** Crystal Palace - Brixton - Oxford Circus

Bus routes - Horseferry Road

- 507** Waterloo - Victoria
- C10** Elephant and Castle - Pimlico - Victoria
- 88** Camden Town - Whitehall - Westminster-
Pimlico - Clapham Common

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