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Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title:	Safer and Stronger Communities Board
Date and time:	Monday 05 November 2012, 11.00am
Venue:	Westminster Suite Room 8.1 (8 th Floor), Local Government House

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council
Chair	Cllr Mehboob Khan	Kirklees Council
Vice Chair	Cllr Joanna Spicer	Suffolk CC
Deputy Chair	Cllr Philip Evans JP	Conwy Council
Members	Cllr Paul Bettison	Bracknell Forest Council
	Cllr David Burbage	Windsor & Maidenhead RBC
	Cllr Shona Johnstone	Cambridgeshire CC
	Cllr Nick Worth	South Holland DC
	Cllr Henri Murison	Newcastle City
	Cllr Nilgun Canver	Haringey LB
	Cllr Florence Nosegbe	Lambeth LB
	Cllr Michael Payne	Gedling BC
	Cllr Lisa Brett	Bath & NE Somerset Council
	Cllr Anita Lower	Newcastle City
	Cllr Ann Lucas (by Conference call)	Coventry City
Substitutes	Cllr Audrey Lewis	City of Westminster
	Cllr Matthew Evans	Newport City Council
	Cllr Richard Chattaway	Warwickshire CC
	Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City
Apologies	Cllr Duwayne Brooks (Deputy Chair)	Lewisham LB
	Cllr Robert Gordon CBE DL	Hertfordshire CC
	Cllr Tom Fox	Scarborough BC
	Cllr Kay Hammond	Surrey CC

Officers: Helen Murray, Mark Norris, Ian Leete, Stephen Service (all LGA)

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Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
	<p>Cllr Mehboob Khan welcomed Members to the meeting. He announced that Cllr Ann Lucas would be attending via conference call for the first item only.</p>	
1.	<p>Financial modelling of domestic violence services</p> <p>Cllr Khan introduced representatives from Essex CC Janice Logie, Assistant Director for Policy and Strategy – Children and Michael Gardiner, Financial Analyst to talk about Essex CC's whole place community budget approach to domestic abuse services.</p> <p>Following the presentation, Councillors made the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Members asked how the community budget related to the Government's funding for troubled families and linked with domestic violence-specific programmes like ATHENA. Ms Logie responded that as the scheme's focus had been on Community Safety to date, the potential linkages with these initiatives had not been included. However there were plans to pull in the funding stream from troubled families as they moved forward.• Cllr Johnstone reported that Cambridgeshire CC had done some similar work on domestic violence which did not require the use of community budgets. She agreed to share this with the Board. Ms Longie said that Essex had already taken learning from the Cambridge model, which looked at sharing risks in a different way.• Members said that the transferral of funding to PCCs posed the question as to how preventative work could be funded, and how a community budget model could be put in place without the prior commitment of the PCC.• The escalating cost of child social services was seen as a major challenge, with an increase in referrals due to services cut in other departments and other authorities, particularly at the front end of child safeguarding services.	

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Members asked what view Essex officers had of the cost pressures and where savings could be found. Ms Logie agreed, saying that the team in Essex are getting 23,000 child-related incidents referred to them each year. However, she noted that the risks were always evaluated in relation to the family rather than to the perpetrator. This would potentially mean savings to children's services. Mr Gardiner added that the reasons for someone being taken into care rarely stemmed from domestic violence alone, so the total costs of domestic abuse were still not clear. The next stage of the programme would be to harness the funding streams for these linked causes.

- Members discussed with the Officers from Essex several examples of new initiatives tackling domestic violence, including a scheme in Strathclyde Council which has been focused on perpetrators of abuse. Cllr Nosegbe said she had visited the Strathclyde scheme and asked how smaller organisations were being involved in partnership work.
- Councillors questioned the feasibility of engaging with 500 perpetrators over 3 years, suggesting that this was dependent on establishing a baseline from the outset.
- Members sought more information on the principal financial outcome of the scheme. Mr Gardiner agreed to forward the summary of the business case which gave more detail in this area.
- In response to a question on what was being done to target housing, Ms Logie said that Essex were looking at the universal credit and safer accommodation. In particular, their focus was on refuges and working with district councils.
- Ms Logie said that Essex planned to bring schools into the scheme via the implementation phase. She emphasised that few partnership agencies captured much data in terms of domestic violence. Ensuring all partnership work was joined up and understanding what was going on across all services presented the biggest challenge for authorities in this area.

Helen Murray LGA Head of Programme said that it was useful to

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take away some examples of what councils were doing in this area and the importance of pinning down where efficiency savings can be made was an important point for Cllr Lucas and the LGA Chairman to get across to central government.

Cllr Khan thanked Ms Logie and Mr Gardiner for attending. He suggested that a domestic violence workshop be arranged around the issue of funding models.

Action

Officers to circulate more information on good practice examples, including Cambridge in liaison with Cllr Johnstone.

**Helen Murray /
Mark Norris /
Steve Service**

Financial modelling and domestic violence workshop to be arranged with representatives from leading authorities.

**Helen Murray /
Mark Norris**

2. A new generation of local regulation

Helen Murray introduced this item. She said that feedback from authorities suggested that there was an appetite for a discussion on the future of local regulation.

Cllr Paul Bettison, the Board's regulatory services champion said he was happy to work on the discussion paper proposed and asked for contributions from other members. He suggested that the report could be less aggressively worded, suggesting that rather than being presented as "red tape", regulation could be emphasised as a means of supporting customers and businesses, and protecting them from those who would cheat and use short cuts for short term gains.

Cllr Murison argued that the paper should include a degree of challenge, asking authorities to indicate if there is anything which they think they should not be regulating.

In light of the cuts to regulatory services, some Members felt that the paper could represent an opportunity for local government to argue for fewer central government bodies, particularly quangos which carry out regulatory activity.

Councillors were keen that professional regulatory bodies as well as interested elected members, businesses and unions were

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involved in discussions.

For the public to understand regulation, Members argued that councils needed to “get their language right” and avoid talking about regulation in terms of jargon such as Local Enterprise Partnerships and Primary Authorities.

Action

Officers to reflect Members comments in revised discussion paper.

Gwyneth Rogers

3. Police and Crime Commissioners and Fire and Rescue Authorities

Helen Murray presented this item. She invited comments from Members on the FSMC’s proposal for time limited task and finish groups with representatives from both Fire and the Safer Communities Board.

While Members supported the broader idea behind the proposal, to increase partnership working between fire and safer communities workstreams, they emphasised the risks of getting embroiled in a debate about the PCC policy and its applicability to FRAs and it was agreed that this was a short focussed piece of work, which would principally set out good practice to be of value in the day to day working at local level.

Councillors agreed that 3 rather than 2 Members of each work area should be sought for the group to give a broader balance of skills. Cllr Khan urged interested members to contact Eamon Lally, LGA Senior Advisor.

Decision

The Board **agreed** the task and finish group proposals outlined in the report.

Action

Membership of the task and finish group to be increased from 4 to 6 members (3 from each work area). Interested Members to contact Eamon Lally, LGA Senior Advisor.

Eamon Lally

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Officers to take forward as directed.

Eamon Lally

4. 2013-14 Business plan

Mehboob Khan introduced this item and asked Members for their comments on what the LGA's priorities for 2013/14 should be.

Members agreed that provision of **funding for local government** needed to continue to be at the top of the LGA's agenda in the face of cuts to services.

On licensing, Cllr Audrey Lewis raised the issue of the recent court judgement against Westminster on licensing enforcement. Cllr Murison said the case raised broader issues about enforcement of licensing regimes, and the LGA needed to be making this argument to government.

On **community safety and the night time economy**, some Members pointed out that their authorities were now actively considering a late night levy as an option. They suggested that it would be helpful for the LGA to quantify the amount spent by councils on making the night time economy safe, and which could then be used to demonstrate the need for a late night levy. Members added that any data on the costs of the late evening and night time economies would be welcome. At present there was a perceived lack of clarity over what constituted night time safety, with the police definition of 6pm to 6am too broad.

Cllr Canver, the Board's regulation champion said that she would work with officers to pull together data on regulation in relation to the night time economy.

Action

LGA officers to pull together local government data on regulating the night time economy.

**Gwyneth Rogers /
Ian Leete**

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5. Update on PCCs and Police and crime Panels

Mark Norris introduced this item. He said that the Home Office would not be scheduling any further meeting of its Transition Board and related project groups, though there would be a review of the need for a meeting in February. On Police and Crime Panels, he announced that a dedicated Knowledge Hub had been created to support the panels during their introduction.

Councillors stressed the importance of the LGA supporting Police and Crime Panels and raising its profile with them. They said that it could not be relied upon that Police and Crime Panels would access the website and other approaches also needed to be made such as through officers supporting panels. Helen Murray agreed, saying that work was currently focused on making the LGA's work more visible to Police and Crime Panel members. She cited the use of skilled and experienced member peers for panel members as one option currently being considered as part of the LGA's offer.

On specific support, Members suggested that the LGA offer "50 questions that Police and Crime Panel members should be asking their PCCs" as part of the knowledge hub content and sell the advantages of partnership working. Members also expressed concern about the workload some panels would face, in particular their chairs, that some panels would focus on championing their member authorities rather than appreciating the wider context of their role.

Councillor Khan reported that information could be circulated on how the West Yorkshire panel members were being supported, which he would asked to be circulated by officers to the Board.

Decision

Members **noted** work undertaken since the last Board.

Action

LGA Officers to progress, taking account of Members comments.

LGA Officers

Officers to circulate the good practice work of West Yorkshire police on Police and Crime Panels to Board.

**Mark Norris /
David Lock**

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6. Update on the Scrap Metal Dealers Bill

Mark Norris updated members on the outcome of the committee stage of the Bill and next steps.

Members expressed concern about the enforceability of legislation in its current form for councils, arguing that those involved in metal theft will find ways to bypass laws. They hoped that the importance of local conditions on the licence could still be highlighted in the time remaining for the Bill. Given the time-sensitive nature of this issue, Officers agreed to make metal theft work a priority over the coming week.

Members proposed a number of steps to ensure the LGA's message on local powers were given maximum exposure. They advocated writing another letter to council leaders reminding them to canvas the support of their local MPs and suggested using coverage of November remembrance day services as a basis to highlight the impact on war memorials. Businesses such as rail and telecommunications companies were also seen as a likely source of support to draw upon as there was a direct impact on their costs.

Decision

Members **noted** progress and agreed to the LGA seeking to table amendments to the Bill allowing the setting of local conditions.

Action

LGA to reinforce with council leaders the importance of getting the support of their MPs for local powers to fight metal theft. **Mark Norris**

Officers to canvas support of business communities to underline the cost of metal theft and local powers **Mark Norris**

Media coverage ahead of Remembrance Sunday to include the impact of metal theft on war memorials. **Mark Norris / LGA media team**

7. Update on regulatory services issues

Members noted the update provided.

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8. Notes of the last meeting

Cllr Khan asked members to note that the minutes included a record of the outside bodies and representatives appointed in September. The notes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record.

Date of next meeting: 11am, Monday 14 January 2012, Local Government House