

Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

Title:	Safer & Stronger Communities Board
Date:	Monday 1 December 2014
Venue:	Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	<p>Troubled Families</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Joe Tuke, Director of the Troubled Families team at the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), to the meeting. Joe highlighted that the aim of the Troubled Families programme was to turn around the lives of 120,000 troubled families by May 2015, and that currently the programme was on track to meet this target.</p> <p>The Board noted that the programme would be extended for a further five years from 2015/16, and the expanded programme would aim to help an additional 400,000 troubled families. To ensure that the programme was reaching the right families, the programme would retain a focus on schooling, youth crime, anti-social behaviour and unemployment, but would expand to cover domestic violence, vulnerable and younger children, people with physical and mental health problems, those in debt and inter-generational criminality.</p> <p>DCLG would work with a broad range of local and national partners to get views on which problems should be prioritised and how the programme should be designed. There would be local discretion on outcomes and on what constituted significant and sustained progress in particular areas (e.g. a reduction in crime or unemployment). Payment of grant funding for the programme would be linked to incremental improvements that reached quality thresholds, and would be evaluated locally and nationally.</p> <p>Members made a number of comments including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whether families who had progressed to a certain level and had slipped back would receive additional funding if they had made subsequent progress.• There should be even greater co-ordination on the programme across government departments, e.g. Health and DWP.• If disruptive children were integrated back into school a package of support for the school should be provided.• How did the programme ensure that not just the easiest families to turn around were where effort was concentrated?	

- Local government put the most resources into tackling domestic violence, but the police and criminal justice system also benefitted from this work.

Joe Tuke commented that the government favoured payment by results in public services. £9 billion had already been spent on 120,000 troubled families but more funding was required from 2015/16 onwards to ensure that the needs of other troubled families were met. Regarding co-ordination of services, it was noted that 150 members of staff from Job Centre Plus across the country had been seconded to help people towards employment, and this resource would be doubled next year. There was a cost savings calculator that had been developed as part of the expanded programme which could be helpful in making the case to other agencies to invest in the programme. There was a process for checking who councils worked with and there was no evidence that they had concentrated on the easiest families to turn round. The Board noted that local governance of work on troubled families was usually undertaken through Health and Wellbeing Boards, as most relevant agencies were represented.

Actions:

Request to see the cost savings calculator used for the programmes costs benefit analysis.

Email copy of presentation to Board members.

Decision:

Members noted the report and thanked the Director of the Troubled Families team for attending.

2 LGA Betting Commission outcome and future approach to LGA policy on gambling regulation

Ellie Greenwood, Senior Advisor, updated the Board on the outcome from the LGA's Betting Commission work. The final meeting of the Betting Commission had taken place in September 2014. The Commission could not reach agreement on clustering of shops or FOBTs, but had agreed a 'Framework for Local Partnerships' in conjunction with the Association of British Bookmakers which aimed to facilitate better working between councils and betting shop firms at local level in order to address issues linked to betting shops. It was proposed that this should be launched at the annual licencing conference on 15 January 2015.

In addition to the development of the framework, which the Board were invited to endorse, a number of other areas of work were ongoing to help councils improve local gambling regulation within the current legislative framework, including:

- Provision of £30,000 grant to Westminster City Council to part fund a research study to assess area vulnerability to gambling related

harm.

- Updating the LGA's Gambling Handbook for councillors and council officers to reflect recent concerns.
- Lobby government to amend the Gambling Act 2005 to reintroduce the demand test to reduce betting shop clustering, and also to give councils the statutory right to create cumulative impact zones in areas with a high number of betting shops.
- Lobby for the addition of new Gambling Act objectives relating to the prevention of public nuisance and public health.
- Develop further player protection measures for fixed odds betting machines, such as bringing maximum stakes into line with maximum stakes for other types of gaming machine (£2 in betting shop premises and £5 in casinos).

The Chair of the Betting Commission thanked members and officers for their work, and highlighted that the top five betting shop companies had been engaged. Following the publication of the framework, he hoped that the government could provide a quick response to the issues which had been raised.

Members agreed that the work had been very worthwhile and it was very positive that the industry were engaged with the process. The return of the demand test would be welcomed by local authorities, however it would be important to ensure it was an effective and workable tool; the concept of cumulative impact might be useful. Members endorsed the need for more work to develop this position to ensure it was robust and could not be circumvented by the betting industry. Members also suggested there was further work on the terminals and the numbers there could be in each shop.

Action:

Further work on the demand test to be undertaken.
'Framework for Local Partnerships' to be published and circulated at the annual licencing conference in January.
Continued lobbying on amendments and additions to Gambling Act 2005.

Decision:

Members noted the report and approved the recommendations therein.

3 Child Sexual Exploitation

Helen Murray, Head of Programmes, introduced the report and updated the Board on work which was ongoing to tackle child sexual exploitation (CSE), which was a particular focus for local authorities following the Jay Report into CSE in Rotherham. The LGA had developed an action plan to support councils in addressing the issue, which included an introductory briefing including key risk factors, an overview of learning from the Jay Report, key lines of enquiry for councillors and case studies and practice examples from around the country.

The Board noted that there was a high demand for safeguarding peer reviews which identified areas of concern and how these could be addressed to improve outcomes for children and young people. A CSE summit would be held on 20 January 2015.

The CSE Action Plan would be circulated to members, and it was noted that much of the work would be finished by mid-January 2015.

Action:

CSE Action Plan to be circulated to the Board.

Decision:

Members noted the report.

4 Female Genital Mutilation

Lucy Ellender, Advisor, updated the Board on FGM work which had been undertaken since the last meeting of the Board and the final meeting of the FGM Task and Finish Group. She explained that there were four key stands of work:

Creation and publication of 'FGM: A Councillors Guide' and the online FGM resource. Guides had now been sent out to councils, and Board members were provided with copies. The online resource had been visited 260 times to date, and would be regularly updated.

The LGA's joint bid with Barnardo's to the Department for Education's Children's Social Care Innovation Programme for the development of a specialist FGM service would be submitted by 10 December and considered by the DfE's Investment Board in mid-January. The Board would be informed of the outcome of the bid in due course, and it was hoped to establish the service as a multi-agency centre of excellence.

Lobbying on the Serious Crime Bill to make it an offence to encourage or promote FGM. An amendment around this topic was moved at the Bill's Report stage, but unfortunately was rejected. Following this the amendment was under consideration by a leading barrister who had also produced a supporting briefing which set out why the amendment was needed.

An audit of referrals to local authority Children's Services departments of cases where a child was thought to be at risk of FGM had been undertaken over the summer. Responses had been received from 98 councils to date, and further work would be done to draw conclusions from the work.

The Chair of the FGM Task and Finish Panel highlighted the FGM councillors guide as a great success. The Chair asked that the model motion on FGM used by Coventry be circulated again so it could be used by councillors at their own local authorities to raise awareness of the

issue.

Action:

That the Board be provided details of where to access the LGA's FGM online resource.

That the Board be updated on the outcome of the bid to the DfE regarding the development of a multi-agency FGM centre of excellence.

The officers explore the possibility of creating a model of community engagement.

Decision:

Members noted the report.

5 Regulatory Services Update

Ian Leete, Advisor, highlighted that in October, following concerted LGA lobbying, the government has announced that it would drop the proposal to allow anyone to drive a private hire vehicle when it was 'off-duty'. This deregulation measure had been controversial as it could potentially increase public safety risks and was inappropriate in view of the use of private hire vehicles in CSE cases.

The LGA had also successfully pushed for Home Office guidance on transitional procedures around the renewal of personal licences. The need to renew is due to be scrapped by the Deregulation Bill, but this will not come into effect before the first renewals are due. Following early sight of the draft guidance, the LGA was able to help redraft the guidance to more effectively address the issues being raised by our members and the alcohol industry.

The Board also noted a consultation on the introduction of Community and Ancillary Sales Notices (CANs), which are also part of the Deregulation Bill. Several member councils had expressed concern that these notices would prove unworkable following the publication of more detailed proposals for their implementation. In light of this additional information, the Board agreed that the LGA should ask the Home Office to reconsider these proposals, although the basic principle of simplifying licensing for businesses is still supported. The Board were particularly concerned that the new CAN should not replicate the problems associated with Temporary Event Notices (TENs).

The Board noted that, following approval at the previous meeting, officers were working with the LGA's legal team and appointed counsel to develop a short witness statement to form a written submission on behalf of the LGA to the Hemming v Westminster case when it returned to the Supreme Court in January 2015. To support this a survey on costs of compliance and enforcement activity by local authority licencing teams was undertaken in October.

Ellie Greenwood, Senior Advisor, updated the Board on 'Reducing the

Strength' schemes. The LGA had worked with colleagues in public health to develop good practice for councils who were considering implementing a such a scheme. Councils would have to reach their own decisions on whether a scheme was necessary in their area based on local circumstances, and would be able to design them in a way which would be the most effective. Officers also drew the attention of the Board to concerns expressed by industry, including potential legal risks. The National Association of Cider Makers had suggested that by publishing guidance the LGA would be liable for claims for damages under competition law. The LGA view, supported by legal advice, was that the industry opinion had misinterpreted the status of the LGA, and therefore guidance on the issue should be published. The Board supported this view.

Actions:

That the LGA responds to the consultation on CANs to express the concerns of members.

Guidance on 'Reducing the Strength' schemes be published.

Decision:

Members noted the report.

6 Counter Terrorism and Security Bill

Mark Norris, Senior Advisor, explained that the Counter-Terrorism and Security Bill had been published and had its first reading on 26 November 2014. The Bill would bring in a number of measures, including a duty on local authorities to have due regard when exercising their functions to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. It also places a duty on councils to set up panels to assess the extent to which people referred to them are vulnerable of being drawn into terrorism. They would have to prepare a support plan for vulnerable individuals and review, revise or carry out further assessments.

Attempts to amend the legislation were unlikely to be successful, and therefore it was proposed that the LGA should highlight that having a stand-alone panel to consider these issues was unnecessary. The Board agreed that local agencies should be given the flexibility to decide if existing structures, such as Community Safety Partnerships, could be adapted for this purpose. The Home Office should be asked to work with the LGA and councils to ensure that the final estimates reflect what councils would have to do in practice.

Action:

Make representations on the Bill to government, particularly regarding the creation of stand-alone panels to consider people who were vulnerable to terrorism.

Decision:

Members noted the report.

7 Notes of the Previous Meeting

Members agreed the notes of the meeting held on 15 September 2014 as correct.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chair	Cllr Ann Lucas OBE	Coventry City Council
Vice-Chair	Cllr Joanna Spicer MBE	Suffolk County Council
Deputy-Chair	Cllr Lisa Brett	Bath & North East Somerset Council
	Cllr Philip Evans JP	Conwy County Borough Council
Members	Cllr Mike Connolly	Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
	Cllr Tony Page	Reading Borough Council
	Cllr Sophie Linden	Hackney London Borough Council
	Cllr Nick Daubney	King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council
	Cllr Joanna Gardner	Kensington and Chelsea Royal Borough Council
	Cllr Morris Bright	Hertsmere Borough Council
	Cllr Thomas Fox	Scarborough Borough Council
	Cllr Nick Worth	South Holland District Council
	Cllr Anita Lower	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
	Cllr Colin Mann	Caerphilly County Borough Council
	Cllr Richard Chattaway	Warwickshire County Council
	Cllr Chris Pillai	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
	Apologies	Cllr Michael Payne
Cllr Janet Daby		Lewisham London Borough Council
Cllr Ian Gillies		City of York Council
In Attendance		
Joe Tuke		
LGA Officers		
Helen Murray		
Mark Norris		
Ellie Greenwood		
Ian Leete		
Lucy Ellender		
Paul Goodchild		

