

Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

Title:	Safer & Stronger Communities Board
Date:	Monday 14 September 2015
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	Apologies for absence & Declarations of Interest	
	<p>The Chair welcomed new Members to the Board and thanked the work of previous Members of the Board. Cllr Haigh asked that the Board make a particular note of thanks to Cllr Joanna Spicer MBE for her work on the Board.</p>	
	<p>Actions:</p> <p>Officers to write to Cllr Spicer thanking her for her service.</p>	
	<p>Decision:</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
2	Membership, Terms of Reference and Outside Body Appointments	
	<p>Mark Norris, Principal Policy Advisor, informed Members that there had been a change in relationship with some outside bodies. Members agreed to remove the Public Fundraising Regulatory Association, Better Regulatory Outcomes Group and Better Regulation Delivery Office Steering Group from the list of outside bodies. Engagement would continue at officer level with input from Members when required.</p>	
	<p>The following representatives to outside bodies were agreed by the Board:</p> <p>Advisory Board for Female Offenders –Cllr Janet Daby Criminal Justice Council – Cllr Joanna Gardner National FGM Centre Advisory Group – Cllr Lisa Brett HMIC’s interim Police Efficiency Effectiveness and Legitimacy crime inspection advisory group – Cllr Sophie Linden</p>	
	<p>Members also agreed the following Member Champions:</p> <p>Domestic Violence – Cllr Sophie Linden and Cllr Tom Fox Abuse & exploitation – Cllr Lisa Brett</p>	

Licensing – Cllr Tony Page
Regulatory Services – Cllr Nick Worth
Prevent and Counter-Extremism – Cllr Simon Blackburn
Community Cohesion and Integration – Cllr Janet Daby
Bereavement Services – Cllr Ian Gillies
Anti-social behaviour – Cllr Anita Lower

Action:

Officers to inform outside bodies of the changes or continuation of LGA representatives.

Decision:

Members agreed the Membership and Terms of Reference, appointments to outside bodies and Member Champions.

3 Board Policy Priorities for 2015-16

Mark Norris, Principal Policy Advisor, introduced the report and set out the programme of work over the next year. The Board were informed of the cross-cutting priorities the Leadership Board had identified and which Boards were requested to contribute: Devolution and the future shape of local government; Housing; Finance; and, Promoting health and wellbeing.

Members welcomed the report and made a number of comments:

- The Board should respond to the Home Office consultation, 'Reforming the powers of police staff and volunteers'.
- The need to include some proactive campaigning work recognising the social value of work done by local authorities where they are not the direct beneficiaries of the financial savings, which are often experienced by other public sector partners.
- The importance of making the case of locally set fees and charges such as the Late Night Levy.
- Views on the proposals to increase bluelight collaboration should be feed into the LGA.
- The need to include work on modern slavery.
- There was an opportunity to look at the role of the voluntary sector and smaller services in the context of devolution deals.
- Highlighting the increase in violent and knife crime, and the contribution community safety could make to tackling child sexual exploitation.
- The cost of long coroner's inquests and their pay were having an impact on councils.
- Including cybercrime on the programme.

Action:

Officers to amend the Board Policy Priorities to reflect the Members comments and suggestions.

Decision:

Members agreed the priorities for the next year.

4 The future structure of trading standards

Ellie Greenwood, Senior Advisor, introduced the review of trading standards services and detailed how the review will operate. The review will look at what local government needs from trading standards. The government are also looking at this area and this review will inform any discussions arising from its conclusions. A short research report will go to the stakeholder group for discussion, and will also be copied to the Board for comment.

Members welcomed the report and made a number of comments:

- The review should look at the wider regulatory services and interworking between trading standards and other enforcement officers.
- The removal of statutory responsibilities can have a subsequent impact on local authority budgets.
- The variation in cost between different areas should be reflected in the level of fees able to be charged.
- The differences in priorities between urban and rural areas.
- The need to look at where local authorities have the biggest impact and cost efficiency.
- Concern about a loss of local accountability in new governance models.

Cllr Nick Worth and Cllr Anita Lower volunteered to be representatives on the stakeholder group.

Action:

Officers to progress the report, taking into account Members' comments.

Decision:

Members noted the report.

5 Crematoria and Coroners report

Lucy Ellender, Advisor, introduced the paper and noted a range of issues affecting councils' crematoria provision and the work of coroners. The paper also set the proposed work programme to respond to the three reviews related to crematoria and coroner provision announced by Government.

Members welcomed the report and made a number of comments:

- There is a lack of land and space available for traditional burials. This was becoming critical, especially as planning policies had an impact on the opening of new cemeteries and crematoria.

- The provision of burial services to local communities is an area where local authorities can provide good quality services. There had already been a number of reviews undertaken by councils to look at the provision of these services that the LGA could draw on.
- The increase in private provision of cremation services had, in some areas, added pressure to council's ability to cover costs as well as invest in and maintain facilities.
- The interaction between the health and care systems and coroners was creating delays in the issuing of death certificates.
- There was concern about the length of time coroners inquests can take. Members noted that there were differences in approach between coroners and that this can have an impact on the bereaved. The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard changes were also affecting the number of cases coroners had to deal with.
- There were concerns that the introduction of the Chief Coroner for England and Wales to oversee the coroner system had introduced a new level of bureaucracy when sharing local best practice could be an alternative.

Actions:

Officers to progress as appropriate.

Decision:

Members agreed officers should produce a short guide for councillors to support them in scrutinising cremation provision. Members also agreed the LGA responds to the Government's consultations on crematoria and coroner provision.

6 Other Business Report - update on Regulatory Services and Community Safety issues

Mark Norris, introduced the report updating Members on LGA policy work and developments.

Members discussed the following activities within the report:

- Licensing – Alongside the proposed amendments to the Late Night Levy being proposed by the Home Office, Members asked officials to continue to make the case for the inclusion of public health as an objective.
- Members also argued that the LGA should put forward proposals to stop Temporary Event Notices being used to by licenced premises to circumvent licensing rules, eg by allowing councils to impose conditions, and for licences to cease if fees are outstanding
- Newham SCA application - Members agreed to chase the groups that had yet to provide nominations for the LGA's selector panel.
- Part of any Counter-Extremism and Prevent should be to understand why some communities were not as integrated as others into British culture.
- Taxis and private hire vehicles – Members requested an update before the conference.

- Members flagged concern around the activities and licensing of pedlars.
- The need to strengthen the powers of police and crime panels.

Members also asked to be provided with an up-to-date list of consultations announced and those that are ongoing in future update reports.

Action:

Officers to take forward the work programme in line with Members direction.

Decision:

Members noted the report.

7 Notes of previous meeting

Members agreed the notes of the meeting held on 8 June 2014 as correct.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Morris Bright	Hertsmere Borough Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Lisa Brett	Bath & North East Somerset Council
	Cllr Philip Evans JP	Conwy County Borough Council
Members	Cllr Lucy Botting	Mole Valley District Council
	Cllr Mike Connolly	Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Michael Payne	Gedling Borough Council
	Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
	Cllr Tony Page	Reading Borough Council
	Cllr Sophie Linden	Hackney London Borough Council
	Cllr Joanna Gardner	Kensington and Chelsea Royal Borough Council
	Cllr Thomas Fox	Scarborough Borough Council
	Cllr Ian Gillies	City of York Council
	Cllr Nick Worth	South Holland District Council
	Cllr Anita Lower	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
	Cllr Colin Mann	Caerphilly County Borough Council
	Cllr Jo Beavis	Braintree District Council
Apologies	Cllr Janet Daby	Lewisham London Borough Council
	Cllr Nick Daubney	King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council
In Attendance		
LGA Officers		