

## Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

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**Title:** Safer & Stronger Communities Board  
**Date:** Monday 26 June 2017  
**Venue:** 5th floor, South Side, Layden House, 76-86 Turnmill Street, London, EC1M 5LG

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### Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#) to this note

### Item Decisions and actions

#### 6 Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest

The Chair received apologies and was notified of substitute members to the Board.

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chairman welcomed the Board to the meeting and noted that recent events have had a strong impact on the local government family. The results of the General Election, the terror attacks in Manchester, Westminster, Finsbury Park and the tragedy at Grenfell Tower would all have a significant effect on the work of the Board, and there would be an opportunity to discuss all these issues during the course of the meeting.

#### 7 Prevent and counter extremism

Mark Norris, Principal Policy Adviser, introduced the item on Prevent and counter extremism. He gave apologies for Charles Loft, the report author, as he was assisting the Department of Communities and Local Government with their urgent work following Grenfell Tower. He confirmed counter extremism was to be a high priority in the government's agenda and would continue to be a high priority for the LGA following previous close engagement with the Home Office, Office of Security and Counter Terrorism and Counter Extremism Unit.

Mark outlined key areas of work moving forward. The Government was expected to move forward on reviewing the current Counter Terrorism strategy, including Prevent. Alongside this, the Home Office is supporting the relaunch of the previous special interest group on counter extremism (SIGCE). The LGA is also working with a council to explore a live case study in responding to EDL and far right activity.

Further to this Mark explained that the LGA had been given funding from DCLG towards further community engagement and counter extremism work. He also brought the Boards attention to a Scrutiny Guide that had been drafted by the Centre for Public Scrutiny covering both Prevent and counter-extremism which was due to be available later in the year and that there had been an updated to the Managing Far Right Activity toolkit commissioned by the SIGCE's predecessor in 2013.

In particular Mark brought the Boards attention to paragraph 17 setting out the

proposed programme of work on counter extremism and community cohesion for the current year.

In the discussion that followed Members raised the following points;

- A concern was raised that there was no mention of the role of Police and Crime Commissioners and that it would be crucial to ensure we are engaged with them. Reductions in neighbourhood policing were highlighted as a concern.
- Members emphasised the need to continue working with young people and to be mindful of the role of mental health in better understanding and preventing counter extremism.
- Members suggested that the Board should explore involving the media in new ways to best share this message.
- The significance of deprivation in the cohesion agenda was noted.
- The Chair emphasised the importance of the language used in future work produced and the branding of work such as Prevent.
- A view was expressed that the crisis communication toolkit and relevant case studies had been helpful to members.
- A view was expressed that Councils will need to be better prepared to act on far right extremism going forward, and identify it as such, given that this was the key cohesion challenges in some non-diverse areas.
- In light of members support for the proposed programme of work as it is set out in paragraph 17.6 the Chair emphasised that officers should do as many of the proposed actions as possible.
- Following a query from members Mark Norris confirmed that the proposed Leadership Essentials events would be available for all Councillors and that he would liaise with the marketing team regarding these events being advertised to a wider audience of Councillors.

### **Decision**

That the Board:

1. Noted the work already underway around Prevent and counter extremism set out in paragraphs 12, 13 and 16; and
2. Approved the proposed programme of work as set out in paragraph 17.6.

### **Action**

1. Officers to take forward the programme.
2. Officers to liaise with the marketing team regarding events being advertised to a wider audience of Councillors.

Mark Norris, Principal Policy Adviser, introduced the report on the Queen's Speech of 21 June 2017. In particular he detailed where the Queen's speech had made reference to the review of the governments counter extremism strategy CONTEST, a review of counter terrorism legislation and a Commission for Counter Extremism. He emphasised that the Board will want to be involved in both going forward. He also brought members attention to the speech referring to a draft Domestic Violence and Abuse bill and noted that the Board will want to engage with the new Domestic Violence and Abuse commissioner once they are appointed. Mark also indicated that a number of bills on the exit from the European Union were raised in the Queen's Speech; in particular the Customs Bill was raised as the one most likely to impact on the remit of the Board.

In the discussion that followed Members raised the following points;

- A concern was raised that the work referred to in the Queen's Speech would need to be far better focused to avoid duplication.
- A concern was raised that the Queen's Speech gave no indication as to how local government would resource all of these responsibilities, with no proposed Bills on the future of NNDR.
- The Chair stated that it would be useful to meet with the Domestic Violence and Abuse commissioner soon after they are appointed. Members raised a link with the impact on young people of violent pornography and the need to educate them about normal relationships.

Follow this discussion Mark also brought to the Boards attention where the Queens Speech had addressed the tragedy at Grenfell Tower. He informed the Board that nothing had been announced that was not already in the public domain. In terms of the LGA's response to the fire he explained that the LGA had offered its assistance to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The LGA is also supporting councils in testing cladding and as a priority will be seeking to ascertain from government how the necessary changes to accommodation will be funded. Mark also informed members that a joint meeting will be established between lead members of this Board, the Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board and the Fire Services Management Committee to discuss fire suppression methods including sprinklers.

In the discussion that followed Members raised the following points;

- The Chair emphasised that he had seen first-hand how strenuous the LGA and local authority efforts to support the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea had been.
- The Chair also raised that it would be important ensure this was not seen to become a failure of the entire sector.
- A view was expressed that we should focus on positive action from the LGA and what could be achieved from conversing with government.
- Members emphasised that an overarching approach, as has been taken with the sudden increase in arrivals of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children in recent years, would need to be taken for Councils to be able to respond to the pressures on services.
- A member expressed a view that Councils emergency strategies will need to be thoroughly checked to ensure they are best prepared for a similar disaster, and

that it would be useful to share learning on this.

- The potential risks to other buildings, including housing association and NHS buildings and student accommodation was noted.
- The Chair expressed a view that this tragedy was a strong case for us to explore the impact of austerity measures on the council role of safeguarding.

### **Decision**

The Board noted the Bills and announcements in the Queen's Speech of interest to the Board.

### **Action**

Officers to incorporate members' comments in any work going forward on these areas.

## **9 Strengthening local approaches to tackling problem gambling**

Ellie Greenwood, Senior Adviser, introduced a report providing members with an overview of recent initiatives to address problem gambling, as requested at the previous Board meeting. She brought members attention to the research project on problem gambling undertaken by Leeds City Council which was detailed in the report, and explained that it had evidenced there was more that councils need to be mindful of in approaching problem gambling going forward, while recognising that councils did not have the responsibility or resources to support problem gamblers directly. She also emphasised that Gambleaware were keen to work with councils and the LGA in tackling problem gambling.

In the discussion which followed members raised the following points;

- A member asked if the Board could write to those licensing authorities who have not updated their gambling statements of policy, or developed a local area profile and accompanying approach to operator risk assessments, to further stress the importance of adopting the new requirements.
- Ellie confirmed she would seek to ascertain those licensing authorities who have not updated their gambling statements of policy, or developed a local area profile and accompanying approach to operator risk assessments, from the gambling commission.
- Members raised concerns that a greater focus on internet gambling would need to be taken going forward.
- A view was expressed that it is a positive and appropriate action for the LGA to provide support and new LGA guidance document on gambling, targeted at councils as proposed in the report.
- Members emphasised the wider impact of problem gambling taking money from the local economy and raised concerns that councils aren't always asking the right questions to understand what is happening in their areas.

### **Decision**

The Board agreed the actions outlined in report.

**Action**

1. Officers to ascertain from the gambling commission which licensing authorities have not updated their gambling statements of policy, or developed a local area profile and accompanying approach to operator risk assessments.
2. Officers to put a greater focus on internet gambling going forwards.
3. Officers to produce a new LGA guidance document on gambling, targeted at councillors and regulatory / public health officers.

**10 LGA future of community safety services review: summary and draft report**

Rachel Duke, Adviser, introduced the report which summarises changes to the draft report on the LGA's review of community safety services (made in the light of members' comments at the March meeting of the Board) and sets out proposed next steps.

Members emphasised their support for the importance of collaboration between local areas and partners, although concerns were raised that CSPs were more likely to take account of Health and Wellbeing Boards than vice versa. The Chair noted that he had recently met with the Director of crime at the Home Office who was very interested in the role of CSPs. A concern was raised that the role of policing in the community has been eroded, with lower visibility and capacity to deal with lower level issues such as ASB, which could lead to a breakdown in relationships between police and communities. It was noted that the meeting had highlighted in several areas how significant neighbourhood policing is.

**Decision**

The Board approved the revised report on review of community safety services and the next steps identified.

**Action**

Officers to progress the approved report.

**11 End of year Board report and 2017/18 priorities**

Mark Norris, Principal Policy Adviser, introduced the report that provided members with an overview of the work of the Board over the past year, setting out key achievements as well as looking to next year's priorities.

**Decision**

The Board:

1. Noted the achievements against the Board's priorities in 2016/2017; and
2. Noted the Board's priority areas for 2017/2018.

## 12 Update paper

Mark Norris, Principal Policy Adviser, introduced the report outlining any additional issues of interest to the Board.

A member asked that the Board is updated on new legislation regarding taxi services throughout the 2017/2018 political cycle.

### Decision

The Board noted the update.

### Action

Officers to ensure the Board is updated on any new legislation regarding taxi services throughout the 2017/2018 political cycle.

## 13 Notes of previous meeting

Members agreed that the notes from the last meeting were an accurate summary of the discussion.

As the last meeting of the Board for the 2016/2017 political cycle Members expressed their thanks to the Chair for his Chairmanship over the course of the year.

## Appendix A -Attendance

| Position/Role   | Councillor            | Authority                               |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---|
| Chairman        | Cllr Simon Blackburn  | Blackpool Council                       |
| Vice-Chairman   | Cllr Morris Bright    | Hertsmere Borough Council               |
| Deputy-chairman | Cllr Clive Woodbridge | Epsom and Ewell Borough Council         |
|                 | Cllr Anita Lower      | Newcastle upon Tyne City Council        |
| Members         | Cllr Jo Beavis        | Braintree District Council              |
|                 | Cllr Bill Bentley     | East Sussex County Council              |
|                 | Cllr Ian Gillies      | City of York Council                    |
|                 | Cllr Chris Pillai     | Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council |
|                 | Cllr Nick Worth       | South Holland District Council          |
|                 | Cllr Kate Haigh       | Gloucester City Council                 |
|                 | Cllr Alan Rhodes      | Nottinghamshire County Council          |
|                 | Cllr James Dawson     | Erewash Borough Council                 |
|                 | Cllr Janet Daby       | Lewisham London Borough Council         |
|                 | Cllr Joy Allen        | Durham County Council                   |
| Apologies       | Cllr Keith McLean     | Milton Keynes Council                   |
|                 | Cllr Jim Beall        | Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council        |
|                 | Cllr Goronwy Edwards  | Conwy County Borough Council            |
|                 | Cllr Daniel Duggan    | Gateshead Council                       |
| In Attendance   | Cllr Helen Powell     | Lincolnshire County Council             |

Cllr Barrie Patman

Wokingham Borough Council