

Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Agenda

Tuesday, 12 November 2019
11.00 am

City of Westminster Archives Centre, 10 St
Ann's Street, London, SW1P 2DE

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

www.local.gov.uk

This meeting is



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Safer & Stronger Communities Board
12 November 2019

There will be a meeting of the Safer & Stronger Communities Board at **11.00 am on Tuesday, 12 November 2019** Westminster Room, 8th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ.

A sandwich lunch will be available at 1.00pm.

Attendance Sheet:

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Conservative:	Group Office: 020 7664 3223	email: lgaconservatives@local.gov.uk
Labour:	Group Office: 020 7664 3263	email: martha.lauchlan@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat:	Group Office: 020 7664 3235	email: libdem@local.gov.uk
Independent:	Group Office: 020 7664 3224	email: independent.group@lga.local.gov.uk

Location:

A map showing the location of 18 Smith Square is printed on the back cover.

LGA Contact:

Benn Cain
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Safer & Stronger Communities Board – Membership 2019/20

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (7)	
Cllr Katrina Wood (Vice Chairman)	Wycombe District Council
Cllr Jason Ablewhite	Huntingdonshire District Council
Cllr Eric Allen	London Borough of Sutton
Cllr Mohan Iyengar	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
Cllr Andrew Joy	Hampshire County Council
Cllr John Pennington	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Cllr Dave Stewart	Isle of Wight Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Richard Auger	Daventry District Council
Cllr James Gartside	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Lois Samuel	West Devon Borough Council
Labour (7)	
Cllr Simon Blackburn (Chair)	Blackpool Council
Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
Cllr Alan Rhodes	Nottinghamshire County Council
Cllr Jim Beall	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Cllr James Dawson	Erewash Borough Council
Cllr Farah Hussain	Redbridge London Borough Council
Cllr Claudia Webbe	Islington Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Daniel Francis	Bexley Council
Cllr Clive Johnson	Medway Council
Cllr Tim Roca	Westminster City Council
Liberal Democrat (2)	
Cllr Bridget Smith (Deputy Chair)	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire County Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Jon Ball	Ealing Council
Independent (2)	
Cllr Hannah Dalton (Deputy Chair)	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Cllr Philip Evans JP	Conwy County Borough Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Jo Beavis	Braintree District Council
Cllr Helen-Ann Smith	Ashfield District Council

LGA Safer & Stronger Communities Board – Attendance 2019-2020

Councillors	2/9/19
Conservative Group	
Katrina Wood	Yes
Jason Ablewhite	No
Eric Allen	Yes
Mohan Iyengar	Yes
Andrew Joy	No
John Pennington	Yes
Dave Stewart	Yes
Labour Group	
Simon Blackburn	Yes
Kate Haigh	Yes
Alan Rhodes	Yes
Jim Beall	Yes
James Dawson	Yes
Farah Hussain	Yes
Claudia Webbe	Yes
Lib Dem Group	
Bridget Smith	Yes
Jeremy Hilton	Yes
Independent	
Hannah Dalton	Yes
Philip Evans JP	Yes
Substitutes/Observers	
Becca Thackray	
Dine Romero	
Mohan Iyengar	
Eric Carter	
Claudia Webbe	

Agenda

Safer & Stronger Communities Board

Tuesday 12 November 2019

11.00 am

City of Westminster Archives Centre, 10 St Ann's Street, London, SW1P 2DE

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Date of Next Board Meeting: Monday, 13 January 2020, 11.00 am, Westminster Room, 8th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Company Number 11177145

Domestic Abuse

Purpose of report

For discussion

Summary

This paper provides a brief overview of the latest policy developments on domestic abuse, to accompany the presentation from Nicole Jacobs, designate Domestic Abuse Commissioner, who will be speaking about her new role and her upcoming priorities.

Recommendation

Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board are asked to note this paper and provide any further feedback.

Action

Officers to take forward as directed.

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Domestic Abuse

Background

Domestic Abuse Bill

1. In June 2017, the then Government's Queen's Speech included a commitment for a landmark Domestic Abuse Bill that would enshrine a definition of domestic abuse in law and create a new statutory domestic abuse commissioner.
2. Since 2017, the LGA has been closely involved in tracking the development of the new Bill. We [responded](#) to a consultation seeking views on legislative and non-legislative measures for tackling domestic abuse. Alongside this Cllr Simon Blackburn, Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board, gave [oral evidence](#) to the Home Affairs Select Committee, which considered the Government's proposals for the Bill.
3. In January 2019, the Government published its response to the consultation, alongside a draft Bill. In May, Councillor Blackburn gave [oral evidence](#) to a Joint Committee of Parliament providing pre-legislative scrutiny of the Bill. The Government subsequently introduced the Bill into the House of Commons in July 2019. Following the appointment of a new Prime Minister, the Government committed to carry-over the Bill in the Queen's Speech 2019 and the Bill was [re-introduced](#) in October 2019.
4. At the point at which Parliament was dissolved for the General Election next month, the Domestic Abuse Bill was in the committee stages in the House of Commons (although the LGA's planned evidence session to the committee had been postponed). The Minister for Domestic Abuse, Victoria Atkins, has given a commitment that if re-elected, the existing Government will re-introduce the Bill. Although at the time of writing political party manifestos have yet to be published, our assumption is that whichever party forms the new government is likely to continue with some form of Domestic Abuse Bill, given the progress that has already been made on this.

Key provisions in the Bill

5. The key measures in the Bill:
 - 5.1 create a new statutory definition of domestic abuse, including economic abuse;
 - 5.2 establish a Domestic Abuse Commissioner in law;
 - 5.3 create new domestic abuse protection notice and orders;
 - 5.4 put the guidance underpinning the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme on a statutory footing, and
 - 5.5 introduce a range of protections for victims of domestic abuse going through the criminal justice system, including:

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- 5.5.1 creating a legislative assumption that domestic abuse victims are to be treated as eligible for special measures in criminal proceedings; and
 - 5.5.2 prohibiting perpetrators of domestic abuse cross-examining their victims in family court proceedings.
6. Alongside this, the current Government had also announced that it would include within the Bill a legal duty on local authorities to deliver accommodation based support to victims of domestic abuse, following an MHCLG [consultation](#) earlier this year. The recent Government response to this consultation proposes that the duty should fall on tier 1 local authorities (upper tier authorities except in London, where the duty would sit with the GLA) to convene local partnership boards to assess local need; and a duty on tier 2 authorities (lower tier authorities and London boroughs) to cooperate.

LGA perspective on the Bill

7. The LGA has been supportive of the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Bill; domestic abuse is a horrendous crime, and we know that councils want to do all they can to tackle and prevent it. There is much in the Bill that we support, such as the creation of a statutory definition of domestic abuse, including economic abuse, and the establishment of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner role.
8. However, we have also consistently argued that to be successful in breaking the cycle of domestic abuse, the Bill must be underpinned by a cross-Government response, incorporating health, housing and education, with an equal focus on funding for prevention and early intervention measures that aim to prevent domestic abuse happening in the first place.

Domestic Abuse Commissioner

9. The LGA supports the creation of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner post, and welcomes the appointment of Nicole Jacobs (see biography below) as the designate Commissioner. We have worked closely and constructively with the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, and hope to replicate this relationship with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner.
10. It will be vital both that the Commissioner is able to operate fully independently, and that there is sufficient parliamentary time to consider the reports submitted by the Commissioner. We would support consideration of the Commissioner's findings by a select committee, so that there is added weight to any recommendations.
11. We are also calling for the key learning and best practice from Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) to be shared at a national level. Any findings or recommendations should contribute towards the Commissioner's Annual Report. This is not being done currently and it could help identify key areas of improvement that could help to save lives and protect domestic abuse victims.
12. The Commissioner should be the 'ultimate critical friend' to the Government, councils, local agencies and all our partners on the issue of domestic abuse, and should have a reasonable

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expectation that her guidance will be followed. However, there must be some flexibility within this, as here is no one size fits all approach to tackling this issue, and we would not support the Commissioner role having the power to direct councils.

Victim support and housing

13. We have some concerns about the proposed statutory duty for councils to provide accommodation based support to victims of domestic abuse.
14. First and foremost, support for victims of domestic abuse must be viewed within the wider context of community-based support for domestic abuse victims. Where possible, victims of domestic abuse should be supported to remain in their own home if it is safe to do so. Although the Government has stressed that it intends this duty to be broad, we have some concern that a legal duty on local authorities to provide domestic abuse accommodation-based services may come at the expense of other domestic abuse initiatives, or create a perverse incentive to enter accommodation-based services if that is the main route to accessing support. We are aware that a number of organisations within the sector share the concern that this duty is very narrow and have called for it to be extended.
15. A broader concern about the duty is the extent to which it will be fully funded, and the fact that currently the statutory duty will apply only to local authorities. Tackling domestic abuse requires input from a wide range of agencies, including health, the police and the housing sector, so it is unclear why a duty should sit with councils alone; or how it relates to other proposed new duties around serious violence. It is vital that there is a coordinated and comprehensive approach taken across the whole of Government and through the Domestic Abuse Bill, rather than a piecemeal approach focusing on specific aspects of the response to domestic abuse.

Early intervention and prevention

16. Alongside the proposed new duty and the Bill's focus on criminal justice measures, there is a pressing need to focus on early intervention and prevention. We need to intervene in cases of domestic abuse before the point of a crisis response, and implement programmes and approaches that seek to minimise and eradicate domestic abuse in the long term.
17. This means investing in key frontline professionals to enable them to spot the warning signs, and working closely with schools to inform them when a child has witnessed a domestic abuse incident. It also means speaking to children earlier and consistently about what a healthy relationship looks like. We welcome the new requirement for schools to teach Relationships and Sex Education (RSE), which will help children to understand healthy relationships, but urge the Government to invest in the necessary resources and training to make this effective.
18. To stop domestic abuse from occurring, we need to be taking co-ordinated and urgent action against the perpetrators of abuse. However, there is currently limited reliable research or evidence that enables agencies to select and deploy interventions they know are effective in changing the behaviour of perpetrators. Councils have found that perpetrator programmes

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which aim to change offenders' behaviour and stop reoffending have often lacked funding or are only commissioned as part of temporary pilot schemes.

19. There needs to be a focused effort across agencies to develop and test interventions with perpetrators. Once interventions are identified, they need to be made available for all levels of risk and need, particularly at the stage of early intervention. More needs to be done to develop an evidence base that is extensive and rigorous enough to justify investment. This is why we are supporting the campaign, run by Safe Lives, Respect and Social Finance, for a National Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Strategy.

Local government funding

20. Councils want to do all that they can to work with partners to tackle and prevent domestic abuse, but pressures on local government funding and services create challenges for them in doing so. Local services face significant cost pressure due to demand and inflation alone, and many of these pressures fall on services - such as children's services and housing - which are vital in terms of providing support to victims and their families and trying to prevent domestic abuse in the future.
21. With domestic abuse a factor in the majority of child protection cases, we would like to see more emphasis on how children can be supported when they have experienced domestic abuse. There must be greater investment in child and adolescent mental health services and early intervention work to mitigate the impact of adverse childhood experiences based around domestic abuse.
22. This legislation comes at a time when local government, and particularly children's services, are facing unprecedented demand. Councils have worked hard to protect budgets for essential child protection services, but funding pressures have led to difficult decisions in other parts of the service, reducing vital early intervention work and leaving children and young people unable to access support until they reach breaking point.
23. In order to support victims and tackle domestic abuse, we need adequate and sustainable long term funding for key services, including the new accommodation based support for victims.

Domestic Abuse Commissioner – background information

24. In September 2019, Nicole Jacobs was [appointed](#) as designate Domestic Abuse Commissioner, in advance of the Bill progressing through Parliament, whereby the Commissioner's office is expected to be placed on a statutory footing. Ms Jacobs was the former Chief Executive Officer at charity Standing Together Against Domestic Violence and has more than two decades of experience working to reduce domestic abuse.
25. The Domestic Abuse Commissioner will be expected to lead on driving improvements and encouraging good practice in both preventing domestic abuse and in the response to it; identifying those at risk of abuse as well as those perpetrating it; improving the protection and provision of support to those affected by domestic abuse, and making recommendations on what more should be done to better protect victims and bring more offenders to justice.

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The Commissioner will also be able to publish reports that hold statutory agencies and the Government to account. Specified public bodies including councils will be under a duty to cooperate with the Commissioner.

26. The Commissioner will be expected to map and monitor provision of services, make recommendations to public bodies about their response, carry out research, work jointly with public authorities and voluntary organisations, and raise public awareness of domestic abuse. The Commissioner will also consider both specialist domestic abuse services such as refuges or specialist victim services, as well as how mainstream services identify and respond to victims and survivors.
27. In October 2019, Nicole Jacobs gave [oral evidence](#) to the Public Bill Committee scrutinising the Domestic Abuse Bill in the House of Commons. She set out her vision to help create a co-ordinated community response to domestic abuse, where specialist services have the survivor voice at the centre of the response. She also spoke about the importance of all entities, including housing, health, the criminal justice system and community and religious groups, doing their part to address domestic abuse properly.
28. On the statutory duty for accommodation-based services, Ms Jacobs said she thought the statutory duty should be expanded to the breadth of frontline services for domestic abuse. Ms Jacobs recognised that local authorities are constrained and they do have to make difficult financial decisions and savings. However, she hopes the accommodation-based statutory duty will go some way to addressing the 'postcode lottery' of domestic abuse provision.
29. Ms Jacobs stated that she felt the powers set out in the Bill are fit for purpose and that she intends to work closely with the other Commissioner posts, including the Victim's Commissioner and the Children's Commissioner.

Possible questions for the Commissioner

30. How do you see your new role as the designate Domestic Abuse Commissioner working with local authorities?
31. What are some key actions that local authorities could take to help improve the response to domestic abuse?
32. Do you see it as your role to highlight some of the systemic and funding blockages that make it harder for councils to support victims of domestic abuse and prevent it happening in the future?
33. Do you have any views on how the learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews could be shared at a national level to improve the response to domestic abuse?

Implications for Wales

34. The Domestic Abuse Bill applies to England and Wales, although the duty to cooperate applies only to English councils. While the role of the Domestic Abuse Commissioner



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extends to Wales, the remit of the Commissioner's work will cover areas that are both reserved and devolved; the Bill therefore contains a provision to prevent the Commissioner exercising her functions in relation to matters that are devolved in Wales.

Financial Implications

35. All work can be carried out using existing LGA resources.

Next steps

36. Officers to note any feedback from Board Members and take forward any future work, as directed.

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Holocaust Memorial Day Trust

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) takes place each year on 27 January, building on the objective that prejudice and the language of hatred must be challenged by everyone. HMD 2020 will have particular significance as it marks both the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and is the 25th anniversary of the Genocide in Bosnia.

Claudia Hyde, Local Government HMD Officer from the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust - a charity set up to promote HMD and support other organisations to mark it - will be attending the meeting to provide an update on their work and explore how they can assist councils planning 2020 events.

Recommendation

That the Board notes the input from the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust.

Action

Officers to action any matters arising from the discussion, as appropriate.

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Holocaust Memorial Day Trust

Holocaust Memorial Day

1. Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) takes place on 27 January every year to remember the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust, and the millions of people killed under Nazi Persecution and in subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.
2. HMD has taken place in the UK since 2001, building on the objective that prejudice and the language of hatred must be challenged by us all. In 2019, over 200 councils were involved in arranging over 1,000 activities including vigils, film viewings, talks, arts events, and hearing from survivors. Set in town halls, libraries, workplaces, schools, universities, museums and other settings, these enable thousands of people come together to learn lessons about the past and to take action to help create a safer future.
3. 27 January marks the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp. HMD 2020 will have particular significance as it marks the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz – made particularly poignant by the dwindling number of survivors who are able to share their testimony – and is the 25th anniversary of the Genocide in Bosnia.
4. The theme for HMD 2020 is Stand Together, which will resonate with the work many local authorities are already doing on counter-extremism and cohesion. The theme explores how genocidal regimes throughout history have deliberately fractured societies by marginalising certain groups, and how these tactics can be challenged by individuals standing together with their neighbours, and speaking out against oppression.

Holocaust Memorial Day Trust

5. Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) HMDT was registered as a charity in May 2005 and has been funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government since 2007. Its objectives are to:
 - 5.1. promote HMD across the UK.
 - 5.2. support individuals and organisations across the UK in marking HMD.
 - 5.3. commemorate and increase understanding of the Holocaust, Nazi Persecution and subsequent genocides, and what can occur post-genocide, through the life stories of those affected.
 - 5.4. enable others to work towards a safer, better future by: promoting a society free from hatred, prejudice and persecution; and reducing the likelihood of future genocide.

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6. HMDT is keen to see more councils than ever marking HMD 2020 and has recently launched new [resources](#) to support local organisations, including a '[Get Involved Guide](#)' for local authorities. The LGA has been supporting efforts to disseminate materials to local authorities through our ebulletins, online Knowledge Hubs and First magazine.
7. Events such as HMD provide an opportunity for local partners, representatives of different communities and residents to convene to show unity, celebrate diversity and vibrancy, and reflect on the consequences of hatred that extremists are trying to promote.
8. Many of the themes for 2020's HMD are particularly apt in terms of current cohesion and extremism challenges including: exploring how propaganda using stereotypes and existing prejudices dehumanises persecuted groups; the need to support and champion individuals who show solidarity with these groups; and the importance of taking a stand together against rising division and hate.

Issues

9. This meeting will provide an opportunity for Board members to explore how HMDT can support local authorities further for events in 2020, and as part of longer-term ambitions to tackle extremism and build cohesion.
10. HMDT is keen to explore the following questions with the Board:
 - 10.1. How much awareness of Holocaust Memorial Day is there amongst members and local councils?
 - 10.2. What challenges do council members and staff face in commemorating Holocaust Memorial Day?
 - 10.3. What support do local councils need to help increase awareness and understanding of the Holocaust and genocides in their communities?

Implications for Wales

11. Holocaust Memorial Day is marked across the UK and HMDT is supporting local authorities throughout the country to take part.

Financial Implications

12. HMDT's website makes a number of resources available to download for free.

Next steps

13. Members are asked to note the input from the HMDT. Officers to follow up as appropriate.

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Independent Review of Prevent

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

Lord Carlile is leading an independent review of Prevent, which is due to report to the Secretary of State in June 2020. A recent call for evidence was launched inviting responses around a number of themes. This paper explores some of the issues for local authorities in Prevent delivery and seeks members' views in order to inform the LGA's submission.

Recommendation/s

That the Board considers the issues raised in the paper.

Action/s

Officers to follow up as directed.

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Independent Review of Prevent

Background

1. In February 2019, the government committed to carrying out an independent review of Prevent. The review must be completed, together with a government response to it, by 12 August 2020. Over the summer, Lord Alex Carlile was appointed to lead the review.
2. The review will be carried out in four phases: information gathering; listening and engagement; analysis and testing findings; report and recommendations. It will report to the Home Secretary by the end of June 2020.
3. As part of the second phase, a recent call for evidence has been published setting out a number of questions for response under the following themes:
 - 3.1. Is Prevent achieving its objectives?
 - 3.2. How effectively is Prevent being delivered at national and local levels?
 - 3.3. How effectively does Prevent interact with other safeguarding and vulnerability strategies?
 - 3.4. How effective is the statutory duty and how effectively is it being implemented?
 - 3.5. How could Prevent be improved to respond to justified criticisms and complaints?
 - 3.6. What should the government consider in the development of Prevent over the next 5 years as the threats evolve, to best engage and support those vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism?
4. As well as feeding in views in response to the above themes, this call for evidence also provides an opportunity to feed in examples of good practice from across local authorities, and to highlight some of the work the LGA has been doing to support councils in delivering both the Prevent duty and work on related policy areas.
5. This paper suggests some broad themes on which the Board may wish to comment, to inform the LGA's response to the call.

Prevent background

6. Prevent forms one part of the UK's counter terrorism strategy, CONTEST; the latest version of which was published in June 2018, partially in response to the terrorist attacks in 2017. The overarching aim of the Prevent strand is to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. It sits alongside three other strands in the CONTEST strategy: Pursue (catching terrorists before they can carry out an attack); Protect (ensuring infrastructure and crowded places are less vulnerable to attack); and Prepare (planning on how to respond when an attack occurs) – these other strands are not being examined as part of Lord Carlile's review.

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7. The CONTEST strategy describes three objectives for Prevent:
 - 7.1. Tackle the causes of radicalisation and respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism
 - 7.2. Safeguard and support those most at risk of radicalisation through early intervention, identifying them and offering support
 - 7.3. Enable those who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.
8. The Prevent strand is often regarded as the most controversial element of CONTEST. Operating in the non-criminal space, it has a number of implications for local authorities and partners. Underpinned by a statutory duty under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, specific authorities (including all councils, schools, further and higher education, health, prisons and probation, police) are required to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. In the main this involves frontline staff in these sectors being aware of radicalisation as a safeguarding issue within their wider safeguarding responsibilities, with a duty to act appropriately on any concerns.
9. CONTEST and Prevent are separate from the government's Counter-Extremism Strategy and Integrated Communities strategy (the former is currently under review, with a new Counter-Extremism Strategy anticipated next year, likely to be informed by the work of the Commission for Countering Extremism).

Councils and Prevent

10. Councils' role in Prevent delivery generally covers the first two objectives listed under paragraph 7, above (with disengagement and rehabilitation work primarily of concern for probation and prison services).
11. The Prevent duty requires local authorities to establish or make use of existing multi-agency groups to assess the local counter-terrorism risk picture, coordinate activity and to put in place arrangements to monitor the impact of safeguarding work.
12. Statutory Prevent duty guidance was published alongside the 2015 Act setting out detailed responsibilities for different sectors, followed by a supplementary toolkit published in 2018 for local authorities and partners. The toolkit and self-assessment benchmark cover: risk assessment processes; establishing a multi-agency partnership board; producing a Prevent action plan; referral processes; Channel; training; venue hire and IT policies; community engagement; problem-solving/disruption activity; communications (the latter two are regarded as 'good practice activity'; for the others the guidance sets out outcomes which the Home Office regards as 'expectation of compliance' with the duty).
13. One of the key elements of the Prevent strategy for local authorities is Channel. Section 36 of the 2015 Act requires local authorities and others to provide support for people who are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. This process, known as Channel, aims to provide support to individuals at an early stage and help protect them from radicalisation. It uses a multi-agency approach to identify those at risk, assess the nature and extent of that risk and

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develop a plan for support. Participation in the Channel programme is voluntary and confidential. Many types of support are available, addressing educational, vocational, mental health, and other vulnerabilities; ideological mentoring is common. Statutory Channel guidance (which is currently being updated) sets out how partners, including councils and the police, should work within this process.

14. Government has been keen to emphasise that Prevent sits alongside wider safeguarding responsibilities for local authorities. This approach underpins the roll out of the 'Dovetail' programme, which will transfer responsibilities for some elements of Channel from the police to local government.
15. The Home Office has identified around 40 priority areas which they deem particularly at risk, which are supported with funding for dedicated Prevent coordinator posts and their related work. Coordinators are employed by local authorities and are responsible for building partnerships in communities, overseeing the delivery of local action plans to respond to the risk of radicalisation, and working with partners to embed safeguarding activity in statutory services including social care, health and education. These areas are reviewed annually, which has funding implications for authorities who drop out of the top 40 list. Funding may be used for specialist posts (such as Prevent engagement officers, or Prevent education officers), and to commission local projects.
16. Non-priority areas do not receive any specialist funding from the Home Office to support work around Prevent (although accessing training, such as WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) and Hydra simulation training for Channel, is free for local authorities). While the roll out of Dovetail may help support this with new cross-authority coordinators managing the Channel process, there is no specific resource to develop local projects, or build capacity or resilience.

Issues

17. The following themes are suggested as the key areas on which to focus our response:
 - 17.1. Addressing reputational issues.
 - 17.2. Local implementation and implications for councils.
 - 17.3. Ensuring a joined-up approach across related policy areas.

Reputation

18. Prevent remains a sensitive issue with different views about the policy area amongst councils, other sectors, and communities more widely.
19. Prevent is regarded with suspicion by some and continues to be divisive. A number of campaign groups have voiced particular opposition to Prevent - most prominently, these include concerns that some, predominantly Muslim, communities feel disproportionately and unfairly 'targeted' by the approach. Government has been keen to stress how the strategy

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covers all forms of extremism, but a sense of distrust remains for communities in some areas.

20. The Home Office has acknowledged that there have been problems with the strategy in the past, but have argued that some of the ongoing concerns around Prevent are based on myths or deliberate misrepresentation, and that improved practices and training, for example on referrals and spotting warning signs, has improved the quality of referrals and programme delivery.
21. The Casey review in 2016 observed work being delivered under the Prevent programme, commenting that much of it was impressive and heartening and that staff across the public sector who were engaged and confident in delivering Prevent, “should be proud and unapologetic about the important work they do to keep us safe”.
22. Following the Manchester Arena terror attack in 2017, Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham announced his own review of the region’s counter-terror strategy, criticising Prevent for being “too top-down”. The outcomes of the review were broadly supportive of Prevent, but found that further work needed to be done to sell the benefits of the Prevent approach, address inaccurate information about it, and to persuade communities to make referrals when they have concerns.
23. The Home Office has been keen to encourage local areas to develop positive and proactive communications around Prevent, but some are reluctant to do so – and, for obvious reasons, there are difficulties in persuading individuals who have successfully engaged in the Prevent process to tell their story. That said, while there remain sensitivities around this subject, it is clear that promoting positive stories and addressing popular ‘myths’ around Prevent have persuaded some to change their minds.
24. Whether or not negatives perceptions about Prevent are justified, ultimately this is likely to have impacted on the success of the approach - in some areas advocacy groups have worked to dissuade individuals and families from actively engaging with the programme or with wider counter-extremism work. Channel statistics suggest that the majority of case referrals continue to relate to concerns around Islamist extremism, however the number of individuals consenting to receive support via Channel is proportionally much lower for this group than for others such as extreme right-wing referrals. More broadly, many argue that building a more community-led approach to Prevent is vital to ensuring its success.
25. One of the criticisms of Prevent is that it is not regarded as sufficiently transparent - adding to suspicions about how it operates. There have been calls for greater transparency to include establishing a broader set of evidence-based approaches and interventions to help further good practice and increase clarity around decision-making processes.

Local delivery

26. In our response to the Commission for Countering Extremism’s call for evidence earlier this year we set out how councils, working with local partners and communities, are best placed to understand the complexities and context of local extremism issues and determine what works in response.

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27. That said, the Home Office has been undertaking recent work to support consistency in approaches across areas through producing a Prevent toolkit, peer reviews, and additional training on for example managing extremists and radicalisation. Additional investment in national training might further support the understanding and consistent use of language in Prevent and better understanding of terminology.
28. Councils have reported concerns around increasing responsibilities around Prevent (particularly when viewed alongside wider CONTEST delivery). This comes both in the context of limited resourcing for local authorities (particularly those not in receipt of national Prevent funding) – and, where councils are anticipating they will receive resources, some have reported that uncertainties over funding and delays in awarding grants have presented difficulties, including breakdowns in relationships with community groups with whom councils were hoping to work.
29. We have previously commented on the importance of local leaders in this policy space, of the vital need for effective engagement with local communities on sensitive issues, and acknowledged the need to be both braver around difficult cohesion and extremism issues. Supporting councillors' leadership role in particular has been the focus for much of our work on Prevent, counter-extremism and cohesion over recent years, notably though the delivery of our Leadership Essentials courses and our support for the work of the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism (SIGCE).

Policy approach

30. We have long argued that a joined-up approach across Prevent, other elements of Contest, counter-extremism and cohesion and integration is needed at both local and national levels (while recognising that the focus for related policy areas may differ) to ensure work streams are effectively aligned, and areas are supported (locally, and regionally, across authority boundaries) in a coherent and strategic way. Investing in a long-term and holistic approach is vital in order to address some of the broader issues that may contribute to individuals becoming radicalised (as well as tackling the wider harms and challenges that counter-extremism and integration policies cover). It is worth noting here that many councils view social inclusion as the starting point in their strategic approaches to tackling extremism and radicalisation concerns. This approach, with its emphasis on prevention, chimes with a public health approach to preventing violent extremism, which is advocated by some.
31. Furthermore, the Prevent review should consider the outcomes of the Commission for Countering Extremism's work; the anticipated new counter-extremism strategy; and the ongoing work being undertaken as part of the Integration Area pilots.

Implications for Wales

32. Welsh authorities are subject to the Prevent duty, and the remit for the review covers delivery in England, Wales and Scotland.
33. Officers will liaise with the WLGA to ensure any views are collated.



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Financial Implications

34. The planned focus group for councils in November will involve a small cost, which will be met from existing budgets.

Next steps

35. Officers to collate feedback from Board members in order to inform the LGA's response. The LGA will also be hosting a roundtable for councils on 19 November to gauge further views and examples of good practice, ahead of the deadline for submissions on 9 December.



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Update Paper

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

The report outlines issues of interest to the Board not covered under the other items on the agenda.

Recommendation

That members of the Board note and comment on the update.

Action

Officers to action any matters arising from the discussion as appropriate.

Contact officer:	Mark Norris
Position:	Principal Policy Adviser
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Update Paper

Domestic Abuse Bill

1. In September 2019, the LGA [briefed](#) Parliamentarians ahead of the Second Reading debate of the Domestic Abuse Bill. We highlighted the importance of investing in early intervention and prevention to stop domestic abuse from occurring in the first place, and the need to identify effective perpetrator interventions.
2. Following this, the LGA was called to give oral evidence to the Public Bill Committee responsible for scrutinising the Bill in the House of Commons. However, this evidence session was postponed due to the general election.

New statutory duty for domestic abuse accommodation services

3. On the same day as the Queen's Speech 2019, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government confirmed plans for a new legal duty for local authorities to deliver domestic abuse accommodation-based support services. The Government also announced £15 million would be made available for refuges and safe accommodation projects in 2020 to 2021. LGA officers will continue to work with the Government on this policy.

Tackling anti-social behaviour conference

4. In October 2019, Cllr Simon Blackburn chaired the LGA conference on tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB). We had some excellent local government speakers, including contributions from the Home Office and the new Victim's Commissioner Dame Vera Baird. Discussions focused on the use of 2014 ASB powers, the community trigger process, the challenges of Public Spaces Protection Orders and Injunctions. Attendees also discussed the cross-over with serious violent crime and county lines issues, particularly how to tackle cuckooing. Dame Vera Baird addresses some of these important issues in an interview featured in this month's edition of First Magazine, [available here](#).

Safer Streets Fund

5. In October 2019, the Home Secretary announced a £25 million fund to prevent burglary and theft in crime hotspots. The Safer Streets Fund will be open to bids from Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) for projects aimed at preventing acquisitive crime. PCCs must work with local authorities and other partners to develop plans, which need to be based on evidence, demonstrate value for money and engage local communities. Further information [available here](#).

Serious and Organised Crime Review

6. In October 2019, the Government [announced](#) that Sir Craig Mackey QPM, former deputy commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, will be leading a review on serious and organised crime. The review will consider the powers, capabilities, governance and funding required to tackle today's threats across law enforcement and the justice system in England and Wales -

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including the National Crime Agency, local police forces and regional organised crime units. Sir Craig's report is expected to be published in Spring 2020.

New package of measures to tackle county lines

7. In October 2019, the Home Secretary [announced](#) a new package of measures to tackle county lines activity, which includes £20 million investment to intensify law enforcement efforts to disrupt the county lines model. The National County Lines Co-ordination Centre will receive additional investment to increase its activity, as well as investment in British Transport Police teams and working with money service bureaux.

Knife Crime Prevention Order (KCPO) consultation response

8. In September 2019, the LGA submitted a [response](#) to the Government's [consultation](#) on Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPOs). Where KCPO areas are introduced, we have said it will be essential to ensure the new orders effectively tackle knife crime. These orders should not contribute to the unnecessary criminalisation of young people. We also highlighted it will be vitally important that any new costs to local government associated with KCPOs are fully funded and sustained.

Serious Violent Crime Conference

9. On 13 November 2019, the LGA will be holding a conference on taking a public health approach to tackling serious violent crime. The aim of the event is to share best practice with local government colleagues on taking a multi-agency approach to tackling serious violent crime. Full details are [available here](#).
10. Public Health England has also published a guide for frontline professionals on taking a multi-agency approach to tackling serious violent crime. The full guide is [available here](#).

Prevent, counter-extremism and cohesion

11. On 4-5 November we supported an event at Leeds council on Bridging Northern communities, developed in recognition of some of the common issues facing communities across the North of England around radicalisation, extremism and integration. The conference attracted over 150 delegates from local authorities and partners throughout the region over the two days.
12. The conference concluded with the SIGCE's eighth seminar, also supported by the LGA, on women and extremism and its links to misogyny.
13. Our series of [leadership essentials courses](#) starts in Blackpool later this month; places are still available for the Prevent and counter-extremism course on 14-15 November. We will be running further courses on Prevent in London on 29 November; cohesion and integration in Loughborough on 3-4 December; Prevent and counter-extremism in Leeds on 4-5 February; and cohesion and integration in Coventry on 10-11 March. If you or colleagues would like to attend any of the events, please contact grace.collins@local.gov.uk.

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Commission for Countering Extremism

14. Following the update to the Board in September, the Commission for Countering Extremism [published its report](#) on extremism in England and Wales last month.
15. The report's recommendations included: a new focus on 'hateful extremism', framed within a rights-based approach; a need for better and more consistent application of effective interventions to counter extremism; putting the Commission on a statutory basis; a call for more visible and stronger leadership against hateful extremism from political parties - but also more support and protection from abuse and intimidation; clearer articulation from government about distinctions between related policy areas; and a call for a new hateful extremism task force to oversee development of the new Counter Extremism strategy and respond to extremist incidents.
16. In our response to the report's publication we welcomed its recognition of the importance of councils and their ongoing work in tackling extremism and promoting cohesion, and supported the call for a joined-up approach across related policy areas at both local and national levels. We also called for local government's voice to be heard as part of proposals to introduce a taskforce.

Modern slavery

17. In September, we published two new guidance documents for councils on modern slavery: a set of best practice case studies and a guide for councillors on the role they can play in tackling modern slavery.
18. To mark international anti-slavery day in October, the new Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner published her [strategic plan](#) for 2019-2021. This was in line with the themes the Commissioner outlined to the Board during her presentation at the meeting in September, and focuses on her four themes:
 - 18.1 Improving victim care and support;
 - 18.2 Supporting law enforcement and prosecutions;
 - 18.3 Focusing on prevention; and
 - 18.4 Getting value from research and innovation
19. As well as noting the work of the LGA with councils which have voluntarily developed transparency statements (para 3.5.3), the strategic plan highlights two local authority issues that the Commissioner flagged in her presentation to the board and her subsequent meeting with Councillor Alan Rhodes as Member Champion for Tackling Modern Slavery:
 - 19.1 Whether there is an issue with council awareness of modern slavery on the ground, notwithstanding the LGA's guidance (para 1.2.4).

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19.2 Exploring the possibility of local decision making for child victims of modern slavery (1.5.1).

20. Following the launch of the strategic plan, officers attended a roundtable hosted by the Commissioner which considered the role of local authorities in tackling modern slavery. The roundtable was also attended by London Councils, council officers, local modern slavery partnership leads and charities working closely with both victims of modern slavery and councils. The roundtable considered some of the challenges in supporting victims of modern slavery – in particular, the lack of clarity and tensions between different legal frameworks and systems and pressures on resources – and considered how the Commissioner could use her role to help address these.

Councillor masterclasses on civil resilience and emergency planning

21. In October, the LGA hosted our fourth leadership essentials session on civil resilience. The councillor masterclass took place in Durham, and heard from Councillor Sue Murphy about how Manchester City Council responded to the Manchester Arena Attack, and from Councillor Glen Sanderson about the response to a severe flooding incident in Northumberland. Once again, the event received extremely positive feedback. Officers are currently working with officials from Hampshire County Council and the Hampshire Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum to develop a bespoke version of the event which will be held in Hampshire in early December.

Licensing

Taxi licensing

22. We have [called on](#) Government to stick to the commitment that was made earlier this year to strengthen out of date taxi and private hire legislation to improve passenger safety. Government committed to bringing forward new legislation to introduce national minimum standards as well as new enforcement powers so councils can take action against any vehicles operating in their areas irrespective of where they are licensed. Government has said it will issue new statutory guidance for licensing authorities shortly.

National Register of Revocations and Refusals (NR3)

23. Following the launch of the National Register of taxi licence Revocations and Refusals (NR3) last year, 68 councils are now using the register as part of their licensing checks. In total there have been over 14,000 searches of the register.

Wakefield case - taxi driver enforcement fees

24. The High Court recently ruled against Wakefield council's method of recovering the cost of driver enforcement through vehicle licences. The council has been granted permission to appeal the decision and the LGA is seeking permission to intervene in the case on the basis that there is a wider sector impact. Our view is that there is a key point of principle that councils should be able to recover enforcement costs and that local taxpayers should not be subsidising the taxi/private hire vehicle trade.

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Leadership Essentials – running a good licensing committee

25. Following the publication of our new [handbook](#) for councillors on the Licensing Act, officers are currently developing a course for committee chairs and vice chairs around principles of good practice in running a licensing committee. Further details will be circulated once plans have progressed.

Minimum Unit Pricing

26. Research conducted by Newcastle University into the impact of Scotland's introduction of minimum pricing for alcohol suggests it has been successful in cutting drinking. Since May 2018, the price of alcohol has had to be at least 50p per unit. The study found the amount purchased per person per week fell by 1.2 units between May and the end of 2018. The biggest fall was among the heaviest fifth of drinkers with the amount purchased by this group falling by two units.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Community Member Champion

27. At the last Board meeting, members discussed the possibility of appointing a Member Champion for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) Community. Members agreed for the lead members to make this decision at their meeting in October, and for a comprehensive briefing note to be produced. This can be found at [Appendix A](#).

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Appendix A – Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Community – briefing note on recent activity and future LGA work

Background

1. At the meeting in September, SSCB members discussed whether to appoint a board member champion for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) community issues and requested a briefing on this area.
2. At their meeting in October, lead members decided against appointing a member champion for GRT issues, on the basis that issues linked to the GRT community cut across a number of LGA boards and the SSCB's work plan for this area is relatively limited.
3. However, in line with the request from board members, this paper provides an overview of recent work relating to GRT community issues, and our future work plan in this area.

Overview

4. The LGA's recent involvement with GRT community issues has focused on two themes:
 - 4.1. Concerns about unauthorised GRT community encampments, in terms of the impact on local communities and the significant challenges and costs for councils in trying to remove them.
 - 4.2. Tackling the issues faced by GRT communities themselves, in terms of deprivation; inequality; access to services, and discrimination.
5. Feedback from LGA member authorities has tended to focus on the issues that councils are experiencing as a result of unauthorised encampments, with some local areas greatly affected by these issues (although other areas have very little or no experience of responding to these issues).
6. This is an issue that cuts across a number of LGA boards, but over the course of the last year the SSCB has played a more active role on this policy area in light of concerns among our members and senior figures within the LGA. As a membership organisation the LGA has sought to provide practical support to local authorities in this area as appropriate. For example, we have previously worked with the Planning Advisory Service to inform council officers and elected leaders of the role of planning in working with GRT communities. We have also been working with the Government to monitor the progress of its own recent work on this issue.

Recent LGA /Government activity on GRT community issues

All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Gypsies, Travellers and Roma

7. In March 2018, the Chair of the Board met with Baroness Whitaker, the co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Gypsies, Travellers and Roma. The APPG raised various issues affecting the GRT community, including access to healthcare and education,

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discrimination faced by the community, and levels of poverty and deprivation. The LGA agreed to disseminate relevant updates to our SSC Board and our community safety and planning colleagues through our LGA bulletins.

Women and Equalities Committee inquiry

8. We also followed the progress of the Women and Equalities Committee [inquiry](#) on tackling inequalities faced by GRT communities. The committee inquiry was wide-ranging and focused on all aspects of GRT communities, in particular on access to healthcare and quality of authorised sites.
9. Given the broad scope of the [inquiry](#), we wrote to the Chair of the Committee Maria Miller MP to outline why we felt the LGA was unable to provide formal evidence on behalf of all councils. We highlighted local councils were best placed to provide a local context on how they were supporting and working with GRT communities.

Unauthorised development and encampments

10. In April 2018, the Government consulted on [powers for dealing with unauthorised development and encampments](#). The following December, the LGA held a roundtable with community safety, environmental health and planning officers to understand the key issues facing local authorities (this was reported back to lead members at their meeting that month). Key issues raised in the meeting included:

10.1. Lack of funding available to local authorities to invest in sites or provide additional training of officers.

10.2. Difficulty in securing orders against Traveller groups who were familiar with court delays/ local authority and police procedures.

10.3. Police dispersal powers meant groups could be moved on to different areas, but they would often return.

10.4. Associated clean-up costs.

10.5. In some cases anti-social behaviour-related concerns.

11. In February 2019, the Government published its [response](#), which set out a package of measures to strengthen police powers and to assist local authorities in responding to unauthorised development and encampments, in addition to support for GRT communities.

12. These measures included:

12.1. stronger powers for the police to respond to unauthorised encampments;

12.2. practical and financial support for local authorities to deal with unauthorised encampments;

12.3. support for traveller-site provision; and

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12.4.support for the travelling community to improve life chances.

13. The consultation found that local authorities generally believe the powers available to them under Section 77 and Section 78 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 are adequate. However, some local authorities deal with unauthorised encampments less frequently than others, which makes it difficult to develop expertise and good practice in all areas.
14. The Government said it would keep local authorities' powers in this area under review, following the proposals to reform police powers, and where there are deliberate and repeated breaches of planning. The Government also planned to undertake further work to address issues of concern, such as clean-up costs which can occur following an unauthorised encampment.
15. The Government committed to providing new good practice guidance to support local authorities' use of powers to deal with unauthorised encampments. This guidance is expected to be placed on a statutory footing.

Tackling offensive speech relating to GRT communities

16. LGA officers met with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to discuss a toolkit to support elected officials in seeking out early interventions to address offensive speech in their work and communities about GRTs. The EHRC raised the issue of how the GRT community are referred to on council websites, particularly with regards to unauthorised encampments. We highlighted the EHRC's work on this issue in our new councillor handbook.

Wider policy context

National Government strategy to tackle entrenched inequality and improve the lives of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities

17. In June 2019, Communities Minister Lord Bourne [announced](#) the Government's commitment to publishing a national strategy to tackle entrenched inequality and improve the lives of GRT communities. MHCLG provided £200,000 of funding between six projects aiming to improve outcomes for GRT communities in the areas of educational attainment, health and social integration. LGA officers will continue to liaise with MHCLG as this national strategy is developed.

Unauthorised encampments and developments enforcement handbook

18. We understand the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has commissioned an update to the unauthorised encampments and developments enforcement handbook. This is expected to be published in March/April 2020 and include examples of best practice on how local authorities respond to unauthorised encampments. The LGA will continue to liaise with MHCLG to ensure that best practice is shared across local government.

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Consultation on new police powers to tackle unauthorised encampments

19. On 5 November, in line with the response to the earlier consultation on unauthorised developments and encampments, the Government launched a [consultation](#) on new police powers to tackle unauthorised encampments. Officers are currently reviewing the consultation and will subsequently seek members' views on whether and how the LGA should respond.

Future LGA work on this issue

20. The SSCB's work plan for 2019-20 includes a commitment to engage with government and support councils on GRT issues. As noted above, we expect to continue engage with government on the development of both the national strategy and the enforcement handbook, as well as responding to relevant consultations.

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Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

Title:	Safer & Stronger Communities Board
Date:	Monday 2 September 2019
Venue:	Westminster Room, 8th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

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

Item	Discussion, decisions and actions
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1 Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed members to the first meeting of the Safer & Stronger Communities Board (SSCB) of 2019/2020. Introductions were given around the table and apologies and substitutes were noted (which can be found at **Appendix A**). The following declarations of interest were made:

- Cllr Philip Evans declared he is a member of the Licensing Institute.
- Cllr Farah Hussain declared she is a Director of UK Feminista.

2 Safer and Stronger Communities Board 2019/20: Terms of Reference, Membership and Appointments to Outside Bodies

Benn Cain, Member Services Officer, introduced item two. Benn reminded members that this was a standing item that was presented at the beginning of every annual Board cycle. The report presented asked members to agree the Board's terms of reference, formally note the membership of the Board for 2019/20, agree to the Board's outside body appointments, note the meeting dates of the Board and review and appoint member champions.

Following this update, members' discussion focused primarily around the possibility of appointing a member Champion for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities as this is a long standing issue for councils, as well as the links with other community safety issues such as anti-social behaviour. There was cross-party agreement in principle to making such an appointment, subject to consideration being given to the appointment by Lead Members and a further report to the next Board meeting, to bring other members up-to-speed with the work the LGA had been doing on GRT issues. Members agreed that any work-stream of this type needs to not only focus on issues arising from unauthorised encampments, but also issues that GRT communities are facing – particularly for GRT women, education and health access.

The Chair concluded the discussion by mentioning the engagement the LGA had had with the All Party Parliamentary Group, and the Select Committee inquiry which had requested

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a submission from the LGA. However, the LGA declined this as it was felt that the organisation did not have best practice evidence from councils to provide helpful input to the Inquiry. The Chair agreed in principle to a member champion being appointed, subject to an update paper to be brought to the next Board meeting.

Regarding the other Member Champions, the Chair requested that lead members meet after the Board meeting to appoint members to these roles.

During the discussion the following **action** was noted:

- A GRT update paper to be presented at the next Board meeting. Following this, the Board will agree if a Member Champion needs to be appointed.

Decisions

- Members agreed to the Board's Terms of Reference.
- Members noted the membership of the Board for 2019/20.
- Members agreed to the Board's Outside Bodies appointments:
 - o National FGM Centre Advisory Board – Cllr Anita Lower to continue to Chair the Board, with Cllrs Jo Beavis and Farah Hussain to attend the meetings in order to enable some succession planning at the end of the 2019/20 cycle.
 - o National Oversight Group on Domestic Abuse – Cllr Simon Blackburn.
 - o Serious Violence Taskforce – Cllr Simon Blackburn.
 - o Events Security Group – Cllr Dave Stewart with Cllr Kate Haigh as a substitute.
- Members noted the dates of the future Board meetings for 2019/20.
- Members reviewed and agreed to the Board Member Champions role descriptions.
- Lead members agreed to the following:
 - o Abuse, exploitation and modern slavery – Cllr Alan Rhodes.
 - o ASB – Cllr Bridget Smith.
 - o Bereavement Services – Cllr John Pennington.
 - o Community Cohesion and Integration – Cllrs Farah Hussain and Mohan Iyengar.
 - o Licensing and regulatory services – Cllrs Kate Haigh and Eric Allen.
 - o Domestic Abuse – Cllrs Lois Samuel and Jim Beall.
 - o Prevent and counter-extremism – Cllrs Blackburn, Dalton and Stewart.
 - o Drowning Prevention – Cllr James Dawson.
 - o Scambassador – Cllr Hannah Dalton.

3 Tackling modern slavery: LGA support for councils and joint work with the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner

The Chair introduced Dame Sara Thornton, Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner to introduce item three.

The Commissioner thanked members for the invitation to the Board, and gave a brief overview of her career history as a police officer, as well as the strategic four point plan,

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which she hopes to be published in October. This plan was currently with the Home Secretary for sign-off. The Commissioner's presentation included:

- Slide one – the role of the Commissioner;
- Slide two – the strategic plan & four priorities. This mentioned the LGA as a key partner.
- Slide three – improving victim care and support. This included figures of victims, the key role for frontline staff in identifying victims and the need for up-to-date quality training within the local government sector, increasing the quality of victim support including the review of the National Referral Mechanism, the roll out of Independent Child Trafficking Advocates and other means of improving support to child victims (including details around the Bedfordshire University research into child trafficking).
- Slide four – supporting law enforcement and prosecutions. This included details on the nature of this serious violent crime, coordinating the whole criminal prosecution system, details around victims that are trafficked across police borders, the need to take into account the serious and organised crime aspect of modern slavery, the need to increase prosecutions and how labour intensive this can be (the Commissioner gave an example of a West Midlands operation which took place over a five year time frame), and getting the balance right between prosecutions and protecting victims.
- Slide five - a focus on prevention and protection; working with the private sector, organisations and businesses looking into their supply chains and encouraging them to complete and meet their statutory requirements around statements on transparency in their supply chains (Government departments will be completing statements for 2020/2021), raising public awareness when buying products produced by victims and highlighting examples of this (sourcing of consumer products, such as chocolate and clothes for example), and homelessness - homeless people are actively targeted.
- Slide six – value from research & innovation, and making sure this feeds into policy and practice more.
- Slide seven & eight – the Commissioners work with local authorities and the LGA including the LGA's guide for councils on modern slavery. The Commissioners office is trying to raise awareness of the issue on the ground, and are keen to work with local authorities to identify good practice via possible joint reports or round tables. The Commissioner stated that there were around 7,000 referrals last year; 40 per cent of these were child victims, and so adopting multi-agency child social care working models may be an avenue to explore, so the plan can integrate within existing local authorities procedures.

Following the Commissioners presentation, members made the following comments:

Members asked the Commissioner if this policy area will remain a high priority for the new, Prime Minister (PM) and Home Secretary. The Commissioner stated that when this issues is discussed in parliament, it continues to gain cross-party support and that Whitehall decision makers believe this continues to be a very important issue of our time. There are also a number of organisations that believe tackling modern slavery is an important issue. The Commissioner also stated that there are a number of international conventions to which the UK is party requiring it to tackle modern slavery.

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Members discussed nail bars and car washes as some of the most common businesses where modern slavery can be found; members questioned if the Commissioner held any statistics over how many of these businesses commit modern slavery crimes. The Commissioner responded that there are approximately 15,000 – 20,000 car washes in the UK, and that there are wider issues around breaking other laws such as health and safety standards, for example. It is known that some of these businesses are run by serious organised crime gangs, with money laundering taking place. The Commissioner concluded that if you are paying under £6.70 for a car wash, the employees of that business will be paid under the national minimum wage, though some employees were happy to be paid at that rate.

Members discussed women who are presenting as sex workers, and if there are any questions being asked as to whether they are victims of modern slavery? The Commissioner stated that her offices plan has a significant focus on the welfare of women, and noted that more needs to be done with sex workers to ensure they are not modern slavery victims.

Members also brought up the issue of County Lines and the increase in these across the country and the links they have with modern slavery, particularly children. Members questioned how public awareness of this issue could be raised? The Commissioner responded that child referrals are on the increase because of County Lines – children are being forced to traffic drugs, and dealers are being prosecuted under modern slavery laws. However, the Commissioner concluded that further awareness needs to be raised amongst middle classes drug users, as drug taking and purchasing is not a victimless crime and affects all people in the narcotics supply chain.

The Chair thanked Dame Sara for her time and invited the Commissioner back to a future Board meeting, and stated the Board will continue to maintain a close focus on this work.

Decision

Members noted the update, and provided their views on future work in this area.

4 Commission for Countering Extremism

The Chair welcomed Sara Khan, Commissioner for Countering Extremism, who introduced item four. The Commissioner stated that councils are vital to this work, as council workers are on the front line, whose voice and work is invaluable.

The Commissioner updated members on her visit to 20 different towns and cities, including talks councillors and officers as well as with critics of extremism policy, and the public consultation which has played a vital part of the commission's work as it represents the public views on this.

The Commissioner stated that extremism threatens democracy, liberty and the public's freedoms, including freedom of expression - the commission aims to champion freedom of expression, but to protect the public. The Commissioner went through the proposed broad areas of work; tackling behaviours including those that seek to restrict the rights of others, hateful extremism and violent extremism; addressing the range of harms associated with

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extremism including mental health issues, crime and violence. The main focus of the Commission will be tackling hateful extremism, which was discussed in the Board report, and include hateful behaviour and the incitement of hatred. Finally, the Commissioner mentioned the on-going protests in Birmingham, the group of which aims to stop LGBT education in primary schools. The Commissioner stated that whilst the parents are completely within their right to protest, hateful extremist groups are actively exploiting this.

The Commissioner then handed over to Euan Neill who confirmed that the Government is committed to move this work on, and that the challenge ahead is becoming more victim focused. The commission aims to bring a rights-based approach, including:

1. A greater public awareness of what hateful extremism is: the commission is writing a statement on this.
2. Delivering better interventions: this offer is via a toolbox to offer the right interventions to local areas, and promote best practices of new and innovative practises.
3. Better leadership across society: this is a vital aspect and needs consistency, with the Commission working with others to help develop that leadership.
4. More transparent leadership with a new Home Secretary chaired taskforce being a possibility.
5. The role of education and what is done about the unregulated sector.

Following the Commissioners update, members made the following comments:

Members discussed how some local authorities are receiving additional funding, and questioned that there would surely be a better outcome if all councils get funding given the importance of this national issue. The Commissioner stated that this issue has arisen through the public consultation, and that this funding should not be at the expense of other services such as youth centres. The Chair stated that the commission does not hold any funding powers, and that the LGA always raise these points through all consultations that are undertaken. The Chair also mentioned how this work feeds into the #CouncilsCan campaign.

Members questioned what can the commission do to get Government departments to buy into this work? Members mentioned the Birmingham example, and reported that one head teacher felt let down by the Department of Education (DoE). The Commissioner confirmed that the new strategy she would be publishing would require the DoE to take action, and that she had personally said not enough was being done to address this issue.

Members raised concerns over the public's support and confidence in this work, and how do we get a strategy that everyone has confidence in? The Commissioner responded that there needed to be a consensus on how to tackle extremism – although practitioners like the Government's definition of extremism the public did not. The Commissioner went on to explain that the challenge is to balance the public's right to freedom of expression and the harms that hateful extremism has on all victims, including children and young people. This stage of the work is about getting all people – both the public and Government – to buy into a new way of thinking.

Members highlighted the key role the voluntary sector had to play, and asked if their work will be incorporated. The Commissioner stated that the civil society's role is huge especially in tackling extremist narratives, however, a lack of funding is recognised by the

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commission and that the third sector needs a significant increase of support from Government. The Chair supported this, saying a strength of the Serious Violence Taskforces was the involvement of charities and civil society groups to give their feedback.

Members questioned if protection and early intervention for violence against women and girls (VAWG) will be a distinct area that the commission will focus on? Members mentioned honour-based violence and Female Genital Mutilation as two examples that feed into countering extremism. The Commissioner responded that the plan will link to the VAWG strategy, which provides support and best practice for these crimes.

Members supported a two-year plan for this work, and asked if this was a possibility. The Commissioner responded that the report will focus on steps going forward, and develop what the commission aims to do. The Commissioner confirmed that there would be a two year work programme.

Decisions

Members of the SSCB:

1. Noted the updates on national counter-extremism policy, the Commission for Countering Extremism and support for local authorities; and
2. Considered and offered feedback on the issues and suggestions outlined in paragraph 15, which members raised with the Commissioner.

5 Safer and Stronger Communities Board Policy Priorities for 2019-20

Mark Norris, Principle Policy Adviser, introduced item five.

Mark stated the paper sets out the proposals for the SSCB's priorities and work programme for 2019/20. These proposals are based on corporate LGA priorities and options for broader work based on a continuation of ongoing Board work (including responding to recent policy announcements made by Government) and areas of interest previously indicated by Board members. The LGA's Executive would be considering the LGA's declaration of a climate emergency and adoption of the UN's sustainable development goals at its annual meeting in the summer and would be considering what work individual Boards do in this area.

Members made the following comments:

Member questioned if crematoria and the CMA investigation should be a priority of the Board. Mark responded that this investigation may have a significant impact on local authority revenue from provision of these services.

Members discussed adding a work stream on neighbourhood policing. The Chair reminded members the Board had considered the issue before and there had been meetings with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners as well as with the College of Policing. Mark also stated that there would be further Home Office work on the provision of more front line policing linked to the spending round announcements. Members questioned if it would be possible to reach agreement on what should be done to strengthen neighbourhood policing and highlighted the links with Police and Crime Panels

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and their Police and Crime Commissioners.

Members questioned if points raised in paragraphs 19.1 – 19.4 will fall under the Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC). Mark stated that the FSMC falls under the SSCB.

Members questioned if mental health and community safety – points raised in paragraph 18.6 – should be split up (although recognised this as a cross-cutting issue). Mark confirmed the wording needed to be revised here and that they would be two different strands of work.

Members requested that points raised in paragraph 18.1 should be opened up to males? Members agreed that this is a heavily gendered crime, but that men are victims of domestic abuse too. Members also raised the point of perpetrators of domestic abuse and early intervention.

Members discussed how paragraph 18.4 is linked to the possibility of a GRT Member Champion.

Members discussed paragraph 18.2, and questioned how the LGA can help local authorities reduce violence against children and young people who are victims of County Lines. Members questioned if there needs to be a public health and child protection approach. The Chair supported this statement, and stated that whilst the Children's Act helps to stop the abuse of children, it is designed for intra-familial violence and doesn't protect the most vulnerable from issues such as County Lines, which also has distinct links to modern slavery.

Members held discussions over adopting public health approaches in other areas – such as licensing and regulation. This was supported by the Chair, who reminded members that the Government is now taking a public health approach to tackle serious violence.

The following **action** was noted during the discussion:

- Officers to re-word paragraph 18.6 and take forward two different work streams on mental health and community resilience in the coming year.

Decisions

1. The SSCB agreed to the Board's priorities and work programme for 2019/20.
2. Members agreed to the recommendations set out in paragraph 15.

6 Fire Safety in High Rise Buildings

Mark Norris introduced item six. Mark's update included:

- Details around the remedial work on housing blocks – out of 45 council blocks, 16 are complete, 20 of them with problematic cladding have been stripped off; 9 are facing funding issues.
- The MHCLG / LGA Joint Inspection Team have completed their first inspection.

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- An advice note of high pressured laminates has been published which states that some types of this cladding can be regarded as dangerous as category 2 ACM cladding, and owners have been advised to remove it.
- Discussed the 'Building a safer future: proposals for reform of the building safety regulation system' consultation response (which can be found at **Appendix A** in the agenda).

Following the update, members made the following points:

Members requested a seminar once this work has concluded, to brief members on the changes of regulations, wins for local Government and changes of national policy, as the development of this work has been very fast-paced.

Members raised questions on the government's proposals for residents' involvement in the future of building safety. Mark responded that this was an important issue that the new regulatory framework was considering but there was also an overlap with Social Housing Green Paper which the LGA's Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board was leading on.

Decision

Members of the Board noted the LGA's building safety related work.

7 Update Paper

Mark Norris, Principal Policy Adviser, introduced this item, which outlines issues of interest to the Board not covered under the other items of the agenda.

Following Mark's update, no comments were made.

Decision

Members of the Board noted the update.

8 Note of last Safer Stronger Communities Board meeting

Decision

Members agreed to the note of the last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting, which took place on Monday 10 June 2019.

Appendix A - Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Katrina Wood	Wycombe District Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Bridget Smith	South Cambridgeshire District Council
	Cllr Hannah Dalton	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Members	Cllr Eric Allen	London Borough of Sutton
	Cllr Mohan Iyengar	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
	Cllr John Pennington	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr Dave Stewart	Isle of Wight Council
	Cllr James Gartside	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Lois Samuel	West Devon Borough Council
	Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
	Cllr Alan Rhodes	Nottinghamshire County Council
	Cllr Jim Beall	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
	Cllr James Dawson	Erewash Borough Council
	Cllr Farah Hussain	London Borough of Redbridge
	Cllr Claudia Webbe	London Borough of Islington
	Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire County Council
	Cllr Philip Evans JP	Conwy County Borough Council
	Cllr Nick Chard	Kent County Council
	Cllr Tim Roca	Westminster City Council
	Cllr Clive Johnson	Medway Council
	Cllr Daniel Francis	London Borough of Bexley
Apologies	Cllr Jason Ablewhite	Huntingdonshire District Council
	Cllr Andrew Joy	Hampshire County Council

LGA location map

Local Government Association

18 Smith Square
London SW1P 3HZ

Tel: 020 7664 3131

Fax: 020 7664 3030

Email: info@local.gov.uk

Website: www.local.gov.uk

Public transport

18 Smith Square is well served by public transport. The nearest mainline stations are: Victoria and Waterloo: the local underground stations are

St James's Park (Circle and District Lines), **Westminster** (Circle, District 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 stops in Horseferry Road close to Dean Bradley Street.

Bus routes – Horseferry Road

507 Waterloo - Victoria

C10 Canada Water - Pimlico - Victoria

88 Camden Town - Whitehall - Westminster - Pimlico - Clapham Common

Bus routes – Millbank

87 Wandsworth - Aldwych

3 Crystal Palace - Brixton - Oxford Circus

For further information, visit the Transport for London website at www.tfl.gov.uk

Cycling facilities

The nearest Barclays cycle hire racks are in Smith Square. Cycle racks are also available at 18 Smith Square. Please telephone the LGA on 020 7664 3131.

Central London Congestion Charging Zone

18 Smith Square is located within the congestion charging zone.

For further details, please call 0845 900 1234 or visit the website at www.cclondon.com

Car parks

Abingdon Street Car Park (off Great College Street)

Horseferry Road Car Park
Horseferry Road/Arneway Street. Visit the website at www.westminster.gov.uk/parking

