Thursday, 17 September 2020
11.00 am

Videoconference via MS Teams

To: Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board
cc: Named officers for briefing purposes
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Councillor</th>
<th>Authority</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conservative (7)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr Katrina Wood (Vice Chairman)</td>
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<td>Epsom and Ewell Borough Council</td>
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<td>Cllr Philip Evans JP</td>
<td>Conwy County Borough Council</td>
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<td>Cllr Helen-Ann Smith</td>
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<td>Cllr Nicola Dillon Jones</td>
<td>North Kesteven District Council</td>
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Agenda

Safer & Stronger Communities Board

Thursday 17 September 2020
11.00 am

Videoconference via MS Teams

<table>
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<th>Item</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</td>
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<td>CONFIDENTIAL ITEM</td>
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<td>2. Security threats in COVID-19 recovery</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Safer and Stronger Communities Board 2020-21</td>
<td>5 - 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Terms of reference</td>
<td>11 - 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Board membership 2020-21</td>
<td>13 - 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Outside body appointments 2020-21</td>
<td>15 - 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Board meetings for 2020-21</td>
<td>17 - 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Board member champions role description (including Equalities Advocate)</td>
<td>19 - 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Safer and Stronger Communities Board priorities and work plan for 2020-21</td>
<td>21 - 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Building Safety Update</td>
<td>41 - 48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Covid-19 Update</td>
<td>49 - 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Update paper</td>
<td>53 - 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Minutes of the previous meeting</td>
<td>61 - 70</td>
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Date of Next Meeting: Thursday, 12 November 2020, 11.00 am
Document is Restricted
Safer and Stronger Communities Board 2020/21: Terms of Reference, Membership and Appointments to Outside Bodies

Purpose of report

For information and approval.

Summary

This report sets out how the Safer and Stronger Communities Board operates and how the LGA works to support the objectives and work of its member authorities.

Members are asked to note the Board’s membership and agree its Terms of Reference and nominations to Outside Bodies for the 2020/21 year.

Recommendations

That the Safer and Stronger Communities Board:

i. agrees its Terms of Reference (Appendix A);

ii. formally notes the membership for 2020/21 (Appendix B);

iii. agrees the Board’s nominations to outside bodies (Appendix C);

iv. notes the dates of the future meetings (Appendix D); and

v. reviews the proposed approach to member champions and confirms roles for 2020/21 (Appendix E).

vi. that the Board identify a member to be the Equalities Advocate for the Board.

Action

Any actions will be undertaken, as directed by Members.

Contact officer: Tahmina Akther
Position: Member Services Apprentice
Phone no: 020 7072 7444
E-mail: Tahmina.akther@local.gov.uk
Safer and Stronger Communities Board 2020/21: Terms of Reference, Membership and Appointments to Outside Bodies

Background

1. The LGA’s Boards seek to lead the agenda for local government on the key challenges and issues within their remit and support the overall objectives of the organisation as set out in the LGA’s Business Plan.

2. They take an active role in helping to shape the Association’s business plan through extensive engagement with councils and oversight of the programmes of work that deliver these strategic priorities.

2020/21 Terms of reference and membership

3. The Safer and Stronger Communities Board’s Terms of Reference, Membership and future meetings dates are set out at Appendix A, B and D respectively for agreement and noting.

Safer and Stronger Communities Board Lead Members

4. The LGA seeks where possible to work on the basis of consensus across all four groups. The Safer and Stronger Communities Board is politically balanced, and led by the Chair and three Vice/Deputy Chairs, drawn from each of the four political groups. This grouping of members – known as Lead Members – meet in between Board meetings, shape future meeting agendas, provide clearance on time sensitive matters, represent the Board at external events, meetings and in the media, as well as engaging with the wider Board to ensure your views are represented.

5. The Lead Members for 2020/21 are:

   5.1 Cllr Nesil Caliskan, Chair
   5.2 Cllr Katrina Wood, Vice-Chairman
   5.3 Cllr Bridget Smith, Deputy Chair
   5.4 Cllr Hannah Dalton, Deputy Chair

The Safer and Stronger Communities team

6. The Board is supported by a cross cutting team of LGA officers, with the safer communities policy team and a designated Member Services Officer being those which you are likely to have regular contact with.

7. The Safer and Stronger Communities team supports the LGA’s work on the Board’s priorities, and also a number of other issues which are within the Board’s remit. The team works with Board Members, the LGA media team and political groups to maintain local government’s reputation on community safety issues in the media, directs our lobbying work (according to Members’ steer) in conjunction with the Parliamentary affairs team,
and works collaboratively with other Boards across relevant cross cutting policy and improvement issues.

8. The team supports Members in person or by briefing when they represent the LGA on external speaking platforms or at Ministerial or Whitehall events. We will provide briefing notes and/or suggested speaking notes as required in advance of each engagement.

9. The team also participate in a number of officer working groups and programme boards, representing the sector’s interests and putting forward the LGA’s agreed policy positions.

Communications and Events

10. There are a number of internal and external communications channels available to help the Safer and Stronger Communities Board promote the work it is doing and to seek views from our member authorities.

11. We have a dedicated section on the LGA website, regular e-bulletins with a personal introduction from the Chair of the Board, outside speaking engagements and interviews, advisory networks, features and news items in First magazine as well as twitter accounts which are used to keep in touch with our members.

12. At the current time, it remains to be seen whether it will be possible to run a programme of events in 2020/21, beyond the virtual webinars that we have been running since the summer. The Board will be kept updated on whether it is possible to run our annual licensing and fire events in early 2021, or our leadership essentials courses on cohesion and counter-extremism, fire and licensing, although the licensing course has been scheduled for February.

13. At the current time, we have the following webinars/events scheduled:

   13.2 Tacking anti-social behaviour – Tuesday 28 September 1330-1530.
   13.3 Licensing leadership essentials course – Tuesday 23 - Wednesday 24 February 2021

Safer and Stronger Communities Board outside body appointments

14. The LGA benefits from a wide network of member representatives on outside bodies across all boards. These appointments are reviewed on an annual basis across the Association to ensure that the aims and objectives of the outside bodies remain pertinent to the LGA and accurately reflect its priorities.

15. A list of the organisations to which the Board is asked to appoint member representatives is attached at Appendix C. The Board are asked to nominate the appointments for this meeting cycle, which as far as possible are to be made in proportion with political representation across the LGA. As an LGA representative, Members appointed to these roles should speak for the Association, and not one particular political Group.

16. To maximise the value of attending regular or ad-hoc outside engagements, Members appointed to represent the LGA on an outside bodies are asked to provide regular feedback, either through the Board meetings, or alternative mechanisms.
Member Champions

17. For 2019/20, the Board appointed the following member champions:

17.1 Abuse, exploitation and modern slavery – Cllr Alan Rhodes

17.2 Anti-social behaviour – Cllr Bridget Smith

17.3 Bereavement services – Cllr John Pennington

17.4 Community cohesion and integration – Cllrs Farah Hussain and Mothen Iyengar

17.5 Licensing and regulatory services – Cllrs Kate Haigh and Eric Allen

17.6 Domestic abuse – Cllrs Lois Samuel and Jim Beall

17.7 Prevent and counter-extremism – Cllrs Simon Blackburn, Hannah Dalton and Dave Stewart

17.8 Drowning prevention – Cllr James Dawson

17.9 Scambassador – Cllr Hannah Dalton

18. A role description for member champions is set out at Appendix E. We recognise that in recent years, not all of the champion members have had a role to fulfil due to the nature of work in the relevant areas. For 2020/21, we are therefore proposing that we agree a streamlined list of champion roles where we believe that there will be work for the champions to undertake.

19. We propose the following broad champion roles:

19.1 Modern slavery

19.2 Serious violence and county lines

19.3 Cohesion, counter extremism and Prevent

19.4 Licensing

19.5 Domestic abuse and FGM

19.6 Drowning prevention

20. For other areas of work that we expect to prioritise as part of the work plan outlined in item 4 of the agenda, we propose that we will liaise with Board members/task and finish groups identified as necessary, or lead members, for aspects of the work where input is required outside of Board meetings.
Equalities Advocate

21. This year the Executive Advisory Board have asked each Board to identify a member to be an Equalities Advocate within each Board to raise the profile of any equalities issues within that Board’s workstream. The advocates will work together to coordinate the messaging across the organisation and to report back to the Executive Advisory Board. We are proposing that equalities issues should be considered a part of each area of work represented by a member champion, with the Chair of the Board the overall lead for equalities.

Financial Implications

22. There are no substantial financial implications arising directly from this report. Reasonable travel and subsistence costs will be paid by the LGA for expenses incurred by a member appointee, whilst carrying out a representative role on an outside body on behalf of the LGA.
Appendix A – Terms of Reference for the Safer and Stronger Communities Board

1. The purpose of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board is to provide strategic oversight of all the LGA’s policy, regulatory and improvement activity in the promotion of the safety of local communities, including issues of crime and anti-social behaviour, policing, licensing, and emergency planning – in line with LGA priorities.

2. The Board will also have responsibility for LGA activity in relation to fire and rescue authority issues where the issues are of a cross-cutting nature or involve the setting of a new LGA policy. On such matters the Board may choose to seek recommendations or guidance from the Fire Services Management Committee, and from time to time may be requested by the Committee to consider recommendations on such matters.

3. Boards should seek to involve councillors in supporting the delivery of these priorities (through task groups, Special Interest Groups (SIGs), regional networks and other means of wider engagement); essentially operating as the centre of a network connecting to all councils and drawing on the expertise of key advisors from the sector.

4. The Safer and Stronger Communities Board will be responsible for:

   4.1 Ensuring the priorities of councils are fed into the business planning process.

   4.2 Developing a work programme to deliver their brief, covering lobbying, campaigns, research, improvement support in the context of the strategic framework set by Improvement & Innovation Board and events and linking with other boards where appropriate.

   4.3 Sharing good practice and ideas to stimulate innovation and improvement.

   4.4 Representing and lobbying on behalf of the LGA, including making public statements on its areas of responsibility.

   4.5 Building and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders.

   4.6 Involving representatives from councils in its work, through task groups, SIGs, regional networks and mechanisms.

   4.7 Responding to specific issues referred to the Board by one or more member councils or groupings of councils.

5. The Safer and Stronger Communities Board may:

   5.1 Appoint members to relevant outside bodies in accordance with the Political Conventions.

   5.2 Appoint member champions from the Board to lead on key issues.
Quorum

6. One third of the members, provided that representatives of at least 2 political groups represented on the body are present.

Political Composition

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Political Group</th>
<th>Number of Members</th>
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<tr>
<td>Conservative group</td>
<td>7 members</td>
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<td>Labour group:</td>
<td>7 members</td>
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<td>Liberal Democrat group</td>
<td>2 members</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independent group</td>
<td>2 members</td>
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7. Substitute members from each political group may also be appointed.

Frequency per year

8. Meetings to be held five times per annum.

Reporting Accountabilities

9. The LGA Executive provides oversight of the Board. The Board may report periodically to the LGA Executive as required, and will submit an annual report to the Executive’s July meeting.
## Appendix B – Safer and Stronger Communities Board Membership 2020/21

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*New Member                        **New Substitute
### Appendix C – Safer and Stronger Communities Board Outside Body Appointments 2020/21

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation / contact details</th>
<th>Background</th>
<th>Representatives 2019/20</th>
<th>Allowances/ Expenses</th>
<th>LGA Contact Officer</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>National FGM Centre Advisory Group</strong>&lt;br&gt;Contact: Rachael Aldridge</td>
<td>The Advisory Group meets quarterly to provide advice and support to the development of the National FGM Centre, a joint project between the LGA and Barnardo's.</td>
<td>2 Places&lt;br&gt;Cllr Jo Beavis (Ind)&lt;br&gt;Cllr Anita Lower (Lib Dem)</td>
<td>The LGA will cover reasonable travel and subsistence.</td>
<td>Rachael Aldridge Adviser&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:rachael.aldrige@local.gov.uk">rachael.aldrige@local.gov.uk</a></td>
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<td><strong>National Oversight Group on Domestic Abuse</strong>&lt;br&gt;Contact: Arooj Razvi&lt;br&gt;Tel: 07557 489616&lt;br&gt;Email: <a href="mailto:Arooj.Razvi@homeoffice.gov.uk">Arooj.Razvi@homeoffice.gov.uk</a></td>
<td>The National Oversight Group is chaired by the Home Secretary and meets approximately quarterly to oversee progress against the recommendations from HMIC’s reviews of the police response to domestic abuse.</td>
<td>1 Place&lt;br&gt;Cllr Nesil Caliskan (Chair) pending approval</td>
<td>The LGA will cover reasonable travel and subsistence.</td>
<td>Rachel Phelps Adviser&lt;br&gt;020 7664 3119&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:rachel.phelps@local.gov.uk">rachel.phelps@local.gov.uk</a></td>
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<td><strong>Events Security Group</strong>&lt;br&gt;Contact: Louise Wilson&lt;br&gt;Tel: 01245 452646&lt;br&gt;Internal extension: 100023&lt;br&gt;Email: <a href="mailto:louise.wilson@essex.pnn.police.uk">louise.wilson@essex.pnn.police.uk</a></td>
<td>The Events Security Group was set up to support the cross-government and police Protective Security and Preparedness Steering Group (PSPSG). The group sits under CONTEST (Strategy for Countering Terrorism 2018), and looks strategically across government and police to define priority activities for the improvement of security in crowded places. The Group is Chaired by Chief Constable BJ Harrington, the NPCC National Events Portfolio Lead. There is membership from</td>
<td>1 Place&lt;br&gt;Cllr Kate Haigh (Labour)</td>
<td>The LGA will cover reasonable travel and subsistence.</td>
<td>Rebecca Johnson, Adviser (Regulation)&lt;br&gt;0207 664 3227&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:rebecca.johnson@local.gov.uk">rebecca.johnson@local.gov.uk</a></td>
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<td>government, police and the events industry</td>
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<td>The group has had two meeting since being established. We expect meetings to continue on an ad hoc basis.</td>
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Appendix D – List of Future Safer and Stronger Communities Board Meetings for 2020/21

1. Future meetings of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board will be held on:

   1.1 Thursday 17 September 2020;
   1.2 Thursday 12 November 2020;
   1.3 Monday 14 January 2021;
   1.4 Monday 18 March 2021; and
   1.5 Monday 17 June 2021.

2. The meetings due to be held in January, March and June will be held in the Westminster Room, 8th floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ if they are able to be held in person. The Board meeting in November was due to be held somewhere in the Westminster area (to be confirmed via email) due to 18 Smith Square room availability.

3. We will confirm arrangements for holding meetings in person rather than virtually at the earliest opportunity.
Appendix E - Board Member Champions Role Description

1. Board member champions, and support member champions, where required, take responsibility for a specified subject area or programme and act as spokesperson. This is in addition to any formal role representing the LGA on outside bodies.

Accountabilities

2. To be the main spokesperson for the LGA Safer and Stronger Communities Board (SSCB) in relation to a specified subject area or programme, including writing articles and making speeches at appropriate events.

3. To keep abreast of developments locally and nationally in relation to a specified subject area or programme.

4. To attend residential conferences and other events initiated by the board, leading and chairing sessions as required.

5. To engage actively with councils and groupings of councils to secure the views and involvement of the wider membership to inform the board’s specific policy line on the specialist subject.

6. To communicate back to the wider membership the work and successes of the board in relation to the specified subject or programme area.

7. To lead/participate in task and finish groups set up to look in more detail at the specific areas of policy.

8. To be the principal representative of the Board on that subject area or programme at meetings with partner bodies and other key decision-makers.

Knowledge and Experience

9. Member champions may be portfolio holders for that policy area in their home authorities or have experience/knowledge of, and special interest and commitment to, the policy area.

Appointment and support

10. The expectation is that the Board will review these roles at the start of the Board cycle every September, along with formal appointments to outside bodies.
Safer and Stronger Communities Board Overview Paper and Policy Priorities for 2020-21

Purpose of report
For information.

Summary
This paper sets out an overview of the current status of the issues the Board has focused on in recent years, alongside proposals for the Safer and Stronger Communities Board’s (SSCB) priorities and work programme for 2020-21. The proposals are based on corporate LGA priorities and options for broader work based on a continuation of ongoing work (including responding to recent policy announcements by Government) and areas of interest previously indicated by Board members.

Recommendation
That the Safer and Stronger Communities Board discuss and agree the Board’s priorities and work programme for 2020-21.

Action
Officers will undertake the projects set out in the report.

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Safer and Stronger Communities Board Overview Paper and Policy Priorities for 2020-21

Background

1. At this first meeting of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board (SSCB), members are asked to consider the policy priorities for the work programme for the coming year. In making these decisions, members are asked to consider two issues:

- The work that the LGA Leadership Board has asked Boards to undertake based on the overall policy priorities of the LGA.
- Specific policy priorities based on the remit of this Board.

2. This paper provides an overview of the current status of the key issues that the Board’s work programme has focused on in recent years, along with the key high-level priorities for each of the key thematic work areas for the Board.

3. The work programme takes account of feedback and suggestions provided by Board members at the meeting in June 2020, as well as the input provided by lead members at their meeting earlier this month.

4. The LGA’s business plan for 2019-2022 sets out a range of cross-cutting LGA priorities which Boards are asked to incorporate within their work programmes:

- Funding for local government
- Adult social care, health and wellbeing
- Children, education and schools
- Places to live and work
- Strong local democracy
- Sustainability and climate action

5. Additionally, Boards are also being asked to incorporate equalities issues into their work through the designation of a champion or lead for equalities.

6. As in previous years, it is proposed that the SSCB should focus on the following broad areas of activity:

- Community safety
- Prevent, counter extremism and cohesion
- Regulatory services and licensing
- Blue light services and civil resilience
- Crematoria, funerals, coroners and registrars
7. Alongside this, the team will continue to support two key areas of work on building safety, and responding to the legacy of the Grenfell Fire, and EU transition.

Community safety issues

**Domestic Abuse**

8. Tackling domestic abuse has been one of the key priorities for the LGA’s Safer and Stronger Communities Board. Our main aim has been to make the case for increased investment in early intervention and prevention services, including domestic abuse perpetrator programmes, with the ultimate aim of helping to eliminate domestic abuse from occurring at all.

9. The LGA has worked closely with the Government and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner and we have been successful in helping to secure funding for domestic abuse community-based support services and emergency domestic abuse accommodation, as well as investment in domestic abuse perpetrator programmes and early intervention programmes in schools and communities. We have held a number of best practice events to share learning with local government colleagues and partners, most recently with a webinar session which included a presentation from the Domestic Abuse Commissioner.

10. The Safer and Stronger Communities Board has contributed to several parliamentary inquiries on domestic abuse, including giving evidence to the House of Commons Domestic Abuse Public Bill Committee. The work of the LGA has been highlighted in the committee’s final reports and has been recognised in the Government’s responses. It should also be noted that Safer and Stronger Communities Board representatives have regularly attended the National Oversight Group on Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment, which has been chaired by the Home Secretary.

11. There is an opportunity to transform the response to domestic abuse, by ensuring the forthcoming Domestic Abuse Bill provides the necessary protection for domestic abuse victims, interventions for domestic abuse perpetrators and resources and funding for the services that provide both. There is a statutory duty, proposed in the Bill, which would apply to Tier 1 local authorities to commission domestic abuse accommodation support and services. We have called for this new duty to be fully funded and understand the Government intends to address this in the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review.

12. Unfortunately, the emergency response to the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that perpetrators of domestic abuse have been more likely to be at home with the victim. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, an estimated 2.4 million adults aged 16 to 74 years experienced domestic abuse for the year ending March 2019, according to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). Whilst it will take time to fully understand the impact of how the nationwide shutdown in response to COVID-19 has affected victims of
domestic abuse, there is widespread recognition that the lockdown measures could have escalated and exacerbated domestic abuse in households.

13. A joint investigation by Panorama and Women’s Aid found that someone called police for help about domestic abuse every 30 seconds in the first seven weeks of UK shutdown. The investigation also found that three-quarters of victims said the shutdown had made it harder for them to escape their abusers.

14. The LGA published a guide for councils on tackling domestic abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic. The guide includes resources to help councils support domestic abuse victims and tackle perpetrators’ abusive behaviour. The guide has been downloaded over 2,000 times and is being regularly updated with the latest policy and funding announcements.

15. The LGA is also speaking regularly with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, the Government, councils and the domestic abuse sector to ensure we are doing all we can to tackle domestic abuse. The Commissioner has written an article on this important issue for First magazine. We will continue to lobby the Government on our key asks and will brief Parliamentarians as the Domestic Abuse Bill continues in the House of Lords.

16. **Proposed priorities for 2020/2021:**
   - Continue to lobby for our key asks on the Domestic Abuse Bill.
   - Share best practice on tackling domestic abuse by holding future webinars/ events and publishing case studies.
   - Work closely with councils and partners to help improve domestic abuse services and learn any lessons from the COVID-19 response which could inform future work on this issue.

**Serious Violent Crime**

17. The LGA continues to contribute to national-level strategic discussions on serious violent crime and county lines activity. We have been members of the former Serious Violence Taskforce and the County Lines Working Group, and have contributed to the Prime Minister’s Serious Violent Crime Summit and the Children’s Commissioner’s Gangs Summit.

18. The forthcoming Serious Violence Bill will be a good opportunity to lobby parliamentarians on our key asks, including calling on the Government for greater investment in children’s and youth services, as well as diversionary activities. A statutory duty is expected to be placed on Community Safety Partnerships to ensure there is a local plan to tackle serious violent crime locally. We will be lobbying for this new statutory duty to be fully funded, and for the Bill to take account of wider community safety changes proposed in other forms of legislation and reforms, such as the Domestic Abuse Bill and the PCC Review.
19. Our LGA key messages on tackling serious violent crime have been influential in Parliament, following our evidence to the Home Affairs Committee inquiry on serious violent crime and briefing MPs and Peers ahead of a number of Parliamentary debates in which our briefings were quoted. The Home Affairs Committee report reinforced our calls for greater investment in youth and children’s services, to prompt a shift towards early intervention and prevention in tackling serious violent crime.

20. Following a successful Annual Conference workshop session on taking a public health approach to tackling serious violent crime, we held an LGA conference focusing on this important issue in October 2019 and held a sub-plenary session at the National Children and Adult Services Conference in November 2019. We also held an LGA conference on tackling knife crime in February 2020, which over 65 councils were represented and over 100 delegates in attendance. We have a future webinar session planned for 9 September 2020 on tackling county lines and child criminal exploitation.

21. Whilst there are signs that knife crime and serious violence in a public space has decreased during the COVID-19 pandemic, the latest crime data suggests that drug offences have been the main crime type to have increased. The police have reported that county lines networks have adopted new models to continue to sell and distribute drugs. There are concerns about the decrease in children’s social care referrals and safeguarding concerns about vulnerable children at risk of serious violent crime. Certainly, as we look towards the recovery period, the issue of county lines and serious violent crime will become an increasing priority for all councils and their partners.

22. Proposed priorities for 2020/2021:
   - Support councils in their efforts to tackle serious violent crime and county lines activity, through the sharing of best practice and inputting to strategic national-level discussions with Government.
   - Continue to hold webinars/best practice events to provide the latest data and trends on serious violent crime and identify how councils are tackling this important issue.
   - Lobby in favour of our key asks on the forthcoming Serious Violence Bill.

23. Lead members have indicated that serious violence and county lines should be a key priority for the Board in 2020/21.

Anti-social behaviour

24. Many anti-social behaviour offences are serious issues for residents and businesses. Councils recognise they have an important role to play, alongside the police, in protecting our communities from these offenders in order to make our communities safer places to live.
25. During the lockdown period, councils and the police reported an increase in calls about anti-social behaviour. We still need to fully understand how the response to COVID-19 has affected levels of anti-social behaviour. It is possible some of these referrals could be partly attributed to complaints about people who were perceived to have broken the social distancing rules. This increased pressure on anti-social behaviour teams to respond to noise nuisance and neighbour disturbances came at a time when councils and the police faced considerable pressures on their wider services.

26. In our key messages, we highlight that every victim of anti-social behaviour will have different experiences, reactions and needs. We have called for local areas to continue to have services that are flexible and responsive to the victim’s experience and voice. We have seen how strong partnerships that take a multi-agency preventative approach to improving community safety can make a considerable difference. As part of our work to support councils, the LGA will continue to share best practice examples of how councils and their partners are helping to tackle anti-social behaviour and addressing wider community safety issues.

27. Following the appointment of Dame Vera Baird DBE QC to the role of the new Victims’ Commissioner for England and Wales in May 2019, Dame Vera was invited to speak at the LGA’s Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour Conference and at our Safer and Stronger Communities Board meeting. At these events, Dame Vera touched on a number of issues, including support for victims of domestic abuse, particularly during the court and prosecution process, and continued support for victims of anti-social behaviour.

28. The Commissioner also highlighted the importance of the community trigger process and called on local authorities to ensure information and guidance is made readily available to members of the public. This follows the former Commissioner Baroness Newlove’s report, “Anti-Social Behaviour: Living a Nightmare”, which outlines a series of recommendations on the community trigger process. We continue to work with councils and the Commissioner’s office on this important issue and have invited Dame Vera to speak at our upcoming webinar session on Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour, due to take place on 29 September 2020.

29. Across the range of community safety issues, the LGA’s Safer and Stronger Communities Board will continue to press for the victim’s voice to be central to developing and improving support services. We will continue to work with the Government, the Victims’ Commissioner and partners on the proposed victim’s law reforms and wider victim’s support services.

30. Proposed priorities for 2020/2021:
   - Continue to share best practice examples of how local government and their partners are tackling anti-social behaviour in their communities.
• Work with councils, the Government, the Victims’ Commissioner and relevant partners to help provide support to victims and work together on the proposed victim’s law reforms.
• Undertake a piece of work looking at community safety resilience.

Modern slavery

31. The Board tasked officers with scaling up a programme of activity on modern slavery following a presentation to members by the first Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner in January 2017. Our work since then has primarily focused on raising awareness of modern slavery within councils; we have held a number of events and workshops around the country, as well as developing general council guidance, guidance for councillors and producing a set of case studies.

32. There is still work to do to raise awareness of this issue, both generally and in specific areas such as housing. However, we are now also focusing on raising the issue of the new burdens imposed on councils by the issue of modern slavery, as councils have not received any new burdens funding to support their work on this issue, despite growing numbers of suspected victims being identified and referred into the National Referral Mechanism (the central system for identifying and supporting victims).

33. We also engage regularly with the Home Office’s Modern Slavery Unit, who are currently exploring options for reforming and potentially decentralising aspects of the NRM. A pilot of localised decision making for child victims of modern slavery is due to be launched later this year, and the Home Office is also looking at support for adults, given the changing profile of victims being referred into the NRM.

34. Proposed priorities for 2020/2021:
• Develop a new programme of awareness-raising and guidance for councils on modern slavery, targeting specific areas such as housing.
• Set out the case for reforms and funding that enable councils to appropriately support victims of modern slavery.

35. Lead members have indicated that modern slavery should be a key priority for the Board in 2020/21.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Communities

36. Our LGA view has been that engaging with and supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities is very much a local issue that different councils take different approaches on, based on local levels of need.
37. As a membership organisation we have 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.

38. Board representatives have met with All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Gypsies, Travellers and Roma to discuss issues affecting the GRT community, including access to healthcare and education, discrimination faced by the community, and levels of poverty and deprivation.

39. LGA officers have also 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 Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. 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.

40. We held a workshop session with local government officers to help inform our response to the Government consultation on unauthorised encampments and we continue to liaise with our Community Safety Advisers Network group on this matter. We hope to work closely with the Government on the introduction of the National Strategy to tackle entrenched inequality and improve the lives of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

41. During COVID-19, the LGA worked with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to raise councils’ concerns about unauthorised encampments. The Minister sent a letter to councils highlighting the importance of supporting vulnerable people during the COVID-19 outbreak, which we made available on our LGA coronavirus hub.

42. The LGA will continue to liaise with the Government and councils about support for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community and responding to unauthorised encampments. Legislation on unauthorised encampments is expected to come forward later this year. While it is expected that the SSCB should continue to lead on issues linked to unauthorised encampments it is proposed that wider work on a National Strategy for tackling entrenched inequality and improving the lives of GRT communities will fall within the scope of the LGA’s developing equalities programme.

43. **Proposed priorities for 2020/2021:**

- Work with the Government, councils and partners on any proposed reforms or legislation to unauthorised encampments.

**Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

44. In 2015, the LGA and the children’s charity Barnardo’s established the National Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Centre. The Centre was funded through the Department for...
Education’s (DfE) children’s social care innovation fund to pilot a new way of addressing FGM cases in six local authority areas with a low prevalence of FGM. Funding for the Centre was extended in 2017 on the basis that the Centre would expand its remit to include breast flattening and Child Abuse Linked to Faith and Belief (CALFB). The funding was provided on a tapered basis, with the aim of making the Centre sustainable by 2020. The DfE funding period ended in March 2020, although it was extended by a further three months to cover some of the COVID-19 period, ending in June 2020. Options are now being looked at to help ensure that the Centre can continue.

45. The Centre’s vision is to keep children and young people safe from FGM, breast flattening and CALFB, including an aim to end new cases of FGM by 2030. To achieve this the Centre developed a four-part model to create a system change. The model involved embedded social work provision, community outreach, consultancy and professional development, and a Knowledge Hub as a “one stop shop” for resources and guidance.

46. The LGA administers the Centre’s Advisory Board which is chaired by Cllr Anita Lower and involves police, health, social care, education and legal representatives and LGA and Barnardo’s officers hold regular partnership and sustainability meetings to look at the running of the Centre.

47. The LGA has been lobbying for Government to continue funding the Centre to retain core roles and functions, however, it has not been possible to secure further funding. The LGA, Barnardo’s and the Centre are now looking to consider what funding options exist and how the Centre can continue to work towards their goal and become financially sustainable in the long-term.

48. Lead members have emphasised the importance of the LGA through the SSCB continuing to champion this issue, but have agreed to review this work area and member input once there is further clarity on funding arrangements.

**Police and Crime Panels**

49. In July 2020, the Government announced that they would be conducting a review into the role of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs). This was following their manifesto commitment to strengthen the accountability of PCCs and expand their role. The review is in two parts, the first part is currently underway and is focussed on the changes required to strengthen the model which can be delivered ahead of the 2021 PCC elections. Part 2 will start after the election and will be focused on looking at further ways to strengthen and expand the role of PCCs, including looking at their role in tackling reoffending to help reduce crime. There are a number of questions related to Police and Crime Panels (PCPs), especially around the role of PCP chairs. PCPs provide the main check and balance on PCCs during the four-year PCC term, however, many have highlighted the limitations in their powers to require PCCs to respond to a panel’s concerns.
50. Part 1 of the review will also look at fire governance and set out their long-term ambition for fire governance. Currently the Policing and Crime Act 2017 enables PCCs to take on fire governance where there is local agreement, where there is not local agreement the PCC can submit a business case to the Home Secretary for determination. The LGA supports the transfer of governance where there is local support, however we do not agree with mandatory transfers of governance.

51. The LGA has previously held the Police and Crime Panels Annual Workshop and last year, we published updated guidance for chairs, members and officers of Police and Crime Panels. This year, we will be holding a virtual webinar session in September to provide an opportunity for PCPs to discuss current priorities and challenges for the year ahead.

52. Proposed priorities for 2020/2021
   - Respond to the Government’s call for evidence in Part 1 of the review and continue to engage with Part 2.
   - Work with the Home Office to develop a range of tools to support PCPs in their work.

**Water Safety**

53. In recent years, the Board has increased its focus on water safety and drowning prevention, in part following the Camber Sands tragedy, and this has become a small but consistent feature of the Board’s work programme. Over the summer there have been numerous incidents at overcrowded beaches in England. With the country facing an extremely busy summer beach season the LGA has called for urgent government funding to help them introduce measures to improve safety at beaches and coastal spots, particularly as a lifeguard service were not able to be resumed at all the beaches usually patrolled in a normal summer.

54. In March 2020, the Board heard an update on the independent review of the legal framework for beach safety commissioned by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA). The review will make recommendations for greater clarity about responsibilities for beach management. Whilst the publication of this review has been delayed, we are expecting it to be published in the next year, and we propose to continue to maintain a watching brief on this area of work.

**Prevent, counter-extremism, and cohesion and integration**

55. This strand of the Board’s work covers counter-terrorism (particularly in delivering the Prevent duty, under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015), counter-extremism, and building community cohesion. These can be particularly sensitive areas of work, and present a range of challenges for local government, which continue to evolve. Much of our focus has been on supporting councils to understand and respond to these challenges, whilst encouraging government to take (and enable) a dynamic, joined-up and long-term approach across the three policy areas.
56. Recent months in particular have seen the emergence of a number of extremism and cohesion issues, with activists seeking to exploit a range of matters to extend their reach and garner support. During the pandemic we have seen growing levels of hate incidents on and off-line, initially targeting Chinese communities, but focussing increasingly on blaming Muslim communities for spreading the virus and breaching control measures. The pandemic has also seen unprecedented mainstream circulation/advocacy of various conspiracy theories and more recently, Black Lives Matter protests and counter protests, and an increased focus on migrant crossings have added further to concerns about rising community tensions in many areas. We expect that extremists will continue to use the post-COVID landscape to support ‘blaming’ and ‘othering’ narratives; economic decline and rising inequality (or perceptions of these) in particular, have traditionally provided fertile territory for extremists to exploit.

57. Since its inception in 2017, we have been working closely with the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism (SIGCE); a local authority led network chaired by Leeds and Luton Councils which seeks to provide support, and develop and share good practice in countering extremism across councils in England and Wales. Central funding for the SIGCE’s work beyond March 2020 is still not yet secured, however in the interim we have been working with SIGCE colleagues to explore the extremism challenges highlighted above and develop work plans for the coming months (with or without further funding).

58. Proposed priorities for 2020/2021:

- Lobby for further funding for the SIGCE network.
- Support councils through a series of ongoing roundtables, webinars, training, KHUB facilitation and bespoke support to councils facing specific current extremism challenges. It is likely this will include sessions on partnership working (particularly with the police), leadership, and engagement in the online space.
- Convene and support SIGCE working groups focussing on Far-Right extremism and Islamist extremism respectively, including trialling and evaluating community engagement initiatives in local areas with predominantly white-British communities.
- Scope additional work to explore policing and community relations, particularly in the light of the BLM campaign.
- Ensure that local government’s voice is heard as central government policy and delivery of counter-terrorism and counter-extremism measures is developed, and look to support councils to understand any changes as they are introduced - including responding to both a consultation on a new statutory Protect duty (seeking to increase protection in public buildings from terrorist attacks), and the Law Commission’s anticipated review of hate crime.
59. Lead members have indicated that cohesion, counter extremism and Prevent should continue to be a high priority for the Board.

**Regulatory services and licensing**

**Taxi licensing**

60. The existing licensing governing the taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) sector is outdated and needs substantial reform. We have been lobbying for the introduction of new Taxi and Private Hire Bill to modernise the licensing system for taxis and PHVs, improve passenger safety and create a level playing field for drivers for several years.

61. Our key asks for new legislation have been to give councils the ability to take action against any licensed vehicle operating in their area, to set national minimum standards with local flexibility, and to include measures to ensure drivers are working predominantly in the area where they are licensed, while recognising that there may need to be flexibility in some instances.

62. Last year government committed to strengthening out of date taxi and PHV legislation to improve passenger safety in response to recommendations from a cross-industry working group which the LGA was part of. Whilst new statutory standards on taxi and PHV licensing published in July 2020 will go some way to improving consistency across the country, we will continue to make the point that the best way to improve passenger safety is to reform outdated legislation.

63. We will also continue work to support licensing authorities in strengthening taxi and PHV licensing processes. This will include updating our Cllrs Handbook to reference new statutory standards and continuing to promote the National Register of Revocations and Refusals (NR3) which was commissioned by the LGA in 2018 (the new statutory guidance for councils recommends use of the NR3). NR3 enables councils to share information about people who have had a licence revoked or refused, to stop them going elsewhere and securing a licence without disclosing their past history.
64. The LGA has two longstanding policy asks relating to the Licensing Act 2003: the need for a health objective to be introduced in the Act and for the localisation of fees under the Act: the current fees were centrally set when the Act came into force in 2005 and have not been increased since. In the absence of localisation, we are also pushing for an increase to the current fees. COVID-19 has provided an opportunity to highlight why these asks continue to be important, with councils finding it difficult to take Covid-related action under the Licensing Act, and the centrally set fees preventing them from taking a flexible approach to fees paid by licensed businesses, as has happened in other areas.

65. We have argued that a temporary public health or COVID-19 objective in the Licensing Act would allow councils to act where premises are not protecting the public during the pandemic, for example collecting people’s contact details or maintaining social distancing. Government has seemed receptive to this and Home Office officials have been tasked with looking at what a fifth licensing objective could look like and we will continue to engage with them on this.

66. During the COVID-19 pandemic, councils received requests from a range of businesses including pubs and bars that were subject to closures and no longer able to operate asking for dispensations on licence fees. As fees are set centrally, councils do not have the discretion to do this and there is no clear mechanism to provide refunds or part refunds even where businesses were unable to open. We have argued that locally set fees would give councils the flexibility to respond to changing circumstances and support businesses.

Regulatory services

67. We have consistently argued that councils’ regulatory services are becoming dangerously stretched as a result of cuts to local government funding. Trading standards budgets and staffing have been cut by around half since 2010 – and environmental health teams have also reduced over the same period. Whilst councils use a risk-based model to target their limited resources we have argued that services are simply not sustainable without additional resources, especially as government continues to give them additional enforcement responsibilities. However, it has been challenging to get this issue on the agenda given the many competing pressures that councils are facing.

68. Throughout the COVID-19 response, regulatory services have played a key role, from supporting businesses to comply with new legislation around business closures and offering advice on how they can re-open safely to support the roll out of Track and Trace. This work, alongside the work around last year’s Brexit no deal planning, has raised the profile of trading standards (TS) and environmental health (EH) in MHCLG and across government, while the forthcoming spending review is an opportunity to make the case for additional resources and sustainable funding.

69. We are therefore developing a detailed submission ahead of the Spending Review focused on regulatory services jointly with the Chartered Trading Standards Institute (CTSI) and
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH). The intention is to highlight the breadth of the work council trading standards and environmental health services do, their vital contribution during COVID-19, and the risks they are facing in terms of sustainability.

70. Proposed priorities for 2020/2021:
- Support councils regulatory services in their work to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Lobby government to provide sustainable funding for vital public protection services and introduce a proper new burdens process that enables councils to increase/invest in staff.
- Lobby government to introduce a Taxi and Private Hire Reform Bill and support council's the implementation of new statutory standards
- Work with Home Office officials to explore a health objective in the Licensing Act and an increase in licensing fees.
- Deliver another Leadership Essentials course for Chairs and Vice-Chairs of licensing committees, following a successful pilot course in early 2020.

71. The recent lead members’ meeting recognised the importance of regulatory and enforcement work linked to COVID-19 and anticipated this being a continuing key area of work in the coming months.

Crematoria, funerals, coroners and registrars

72. Bereavement services have been a key part of the response to COVID-19 with a number of changes being introduced as a result of the outbreak though the Coronavirus Act 2020 and other guidance. Our focus has been on providing support to councils in their COVID-19 response, representing councils’ interests to Government and providing resources for councils to draw upon. There have been some positives for these services with the introduction of telephone registration for deaths and we would like to see this expanded into other registrar services, such as birth registration. COVID-19 will continue to have an impact on these services, and will be especially important as we look at the possibility of a second wave.

73. Prior to COVID-19, our work was focussed on funeral pricing in local areas. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has been conducting a market study into the costs of funerals, looking particularly at crematoria costs (many crematoria are run by local authorities). The LGA contributed to the study providing a response on their proposed remedies, which included introducing price controls for funeral directors and crematoria and local authority tendering for a low-cost funeral service.

74. Their study has been significantly affected by COVID-19, including the proposed remedies for the market. The CMA has now released its provisional decision report, which includes a commitment to publish an annual review of revenues and sales volumes, which include
local authority crematoria. This would mean crematoria would also be required to publish price information to ensure that people can access and assess prices for services. They have said that these proposed activities would hold the door open to price controls in the future when the circumstances created by the pandemic change to allow these to be considered.

75. **Proposed priorities for 2020/2021:**
   - Lobby for further flexibilities for registration services.
   - Continue to engage with the CMA on their work.

**Blue light services and civil resilience**

*Resilience*

76. Following a series of high-profile tragedies in 2017 which a number of councils helped lead the response to - terrorist attacks in Westminster, Manchester and London Bridge, and the Grenfell Fire – the safer communities team has increased its resilience policy work. A key focus of this has been to promote awareness and understanding of councillors’ role in emergency preparedness, response and recovery, and we have run a number of training events and developed several guidance documents on this matter. We were able to use these products to develop COVID-19 specific guidance for councils at the outset of the pandemic, and as the focus switched to transition and recovery. It’s clear that COVID-19 has significantly increased awareness of emergency planning and preparation, and our future work programme will need to consider how we build on this to help embed the skills and knowledge that have been developed over the past six months.

77. Before the pandemic led to resources being diverted, a planned future focus for our resilience work was the theme of building community resilience. Again, the development of community resilience structures is something that has happened organically as a result of COVID-19, and a clear priority identified by the Board at the June 2020 meeting was to consider how the structures and capacity generated by COVID-19 could be embedded into the future.

78. **Proposed priorities for 2020/2021:**
   - Review and update the resilience training and support offer.
   - Identify best practice approaches from COVID-19 and support councils to embed community resilience and engagement.
   - Contribute to the Government’s resilience review and make the case for any changes to local resilience structures.

79. Lead members have agreed that resilience should be a higher priority for the Board this year, with work focusing on learning the lessons of the early response to COVID-19 to help inform future responses, as well as good practice on embedding community resilience.
Fire and rescue services

80. The Fire Services Management Committee leads the LGA’s work on fire, with the Fire Commission providing a forum for fire and rescue authorities to discuss issues facing the sector. The Fire Services Management Committee sits under the Safer and Stronger Communities Board.

81. Key issues for the Committee over the last year have been building safety, inclusion and learning from the first round of fire services inspections undertaken by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). A number of key issues were also identified by the Committee including the Spending Review, transparency and standards, governance, workforce development and climate change.

82. The Fire Commission will discuss the priorities for the coming year at their meeting in September 2020 which will then be discussed at the FSMC in October 2020. It is expected that the previous priorities and key issues will continue to be areas of focus.

Building safety

83. Since the Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017 a significant workstream for the safer communities team has been improving building safety, an issue that the Grenfell Task and Finish Group and FSMC in particular have an interest in alongside the Board. Over the last three years the LGA has been successful in lobbying for and securing changes to building regulations so that combustible materials are banned from being used in buildings over 18 metres in height, the 45 councils with high-rise residential buildings with aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding systems have received funding to remove it, and the creation of a building safety fund to allow private high-rise residential buildings to be remediated. We have also shaped the recommendations from Dame Judith Hackitt’s review of building regulations and fire safety, and been closely involved in the development of the legislation to implement the new building safety regime she recommended.

84. The draft Building Safety Bill published earlier this summer provides on paper the strong regulatory framework needed to improve building safety. However key aspects of the new regime will be set out in secondary legislation, which has yet to be drafted and getting this right will be important to the overall success of the new regime. There remain a number of areas of the future framework that in our view have not been satisfactorily addressed in the draft Bill, including the difficulty for building owners in paying for the building safety measures they will need to introduce without bankrupting leaseholders, the impact the government’s Planning White Paper will have on the regulatory framework set out in the Bill, the scope of the Bill and the speed with which additional buildings can be brought into its remit, the charging provisions in the Bill to pay for enforcement activity by councils’ building control teams and Fire and Rescue Services, and the relationship between the Bill and the Fire Safety Bill. We will therefore seek to further shape the Bill and its associated secondary legislation as they make their way through Parliament.
85. As the Bill begins its Parliamentary passage the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) which will become the new building safety regulator, which is a key provision in the draft legislation, is in the process of establishing the regulatory body in shadow form. The HSE team leading this work recognise how dependent the new regulator will be on a close working relationship with councils and Fire and Rescue Services, and are keen to continue to work with the LGA around the detail of how the regulator will work on a day to day basis. The HSE are also aware of the need for councils to prepare not only for their regulatory role working in partnership with the new regulator, but also as duty holders with responsibility for improving the safety of their own building stock.

86. Alongside the Building Safety Bill, the government has introduced the Fire Safety Bill into Parliament. The Bill amends the Fire Safety Order 2005 (FSO) to clarify that the responsible person or duty-holder for multi-occupied, residential buildings must manage and reduce the risk of fire for the External Wall System (EWS, e.g. a cladding system) of the building and entrance doors to individual flats that open into common parts. This clarification will empower fire and rescue services to take enforcement action and hold building owners to account if they are not compliant. The Bill will also provide a foundation for secondary legislation to take forward recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry phase one report.

87. Although we welcomed the Bill we have serious concerns over the impact it could have on councils. Any current fire risk assessments (FRAs) councils have conducted on their residential buildings that do not cover the ESW could become invalid the day the Bill becomes law. If this is an affect of the Bill councils will have to obtain new FRAs with the associated costs of doing so, when there is no guarantee that they would receive new burdens funding to cover the cost. In addition there is a shortage of FRA assessors with the necessary skills and insurance to carry out the FRAs. If these concerns prove accurate, councils could be left with a legal obligation to replace large numbers of FRAs but no means to do so in a timely way. We will continue to lobby around this issue as the Bill continues through Parliament.

88. The Fire Safety Bill is unlikely to come into effect until spring 2021. Primary responsibility for encouraging those building owners who are taking time to put in place plans to remediate their high-rise residential buildings to do so faster will rest with councils for the next few months. The Joint Inspection Team, which the LGA is funded by MHCLG to host, is providing multi-disciplinary support to councils in using their powers under the Housing Act 2004, and after having had to put its inspections on hold during lockdown has now resumed inspection activity and has a forward plan for buildings to visit which stretches into the autumn.

89. Proposed priorities for 2020/2021:

- Continue our work around the Building Safety Bill to ensure it provides a robust new regulatory regime for building safety.
Engage with HSE’s programme to establish the new building safety regulator, and raise awareness amongst councils of their responsibilities as regulators and dutyholders under the new building safety regime.

Seek legal advice on the implications for councils of not being able to obtain new FRAs once the Fire Safety Bill comes into force and lobby for changes to the Bill or secondary legislation as necessary to protect the interests of councils.

Continue to support councils in taking enforcement action under the Housing Act 2004 through hosting the Joint Inspection Team.

Supporting transition from membership of the EU

90. The team is also working with the LGA’s policy leads for EU transition (reporting into the LGA’s transition task and finish group) in relation to the safer communities impacts of the UK’s exit from the EU. With the current transition period due to end at the end of 2020, the team is currently engaging with councils and government departments in relation to the anticipated impact on regulatory services.

91. Port health authorities are expected to experience a significant expansion in the number of products of animal origin goods required to be inspected as these checks are applied to goods from Europe from July 2021, while inspection activity in other areas of regulatory services may also need to be scaled up to meet EU expectations for third countries. We are highlighting to government that much of this burden is likely to fall on environmental health services already operating at full capacity from COVID-19 activity.

Legislation and parliamentary work

92. The Parliamentary programme will drive work programmes in relation to the Domestic Violence Bill, Building Safety Bill and Serious Violence Bill over the course of the 2020/21 Board year.

Implications for Wales

93. We will work with colleagues at the Welsh LGA to identify areas where our work will be applicable to Wales in terms of non-devolved issues. Where work relates to devolved issues our focus will be on English authorities, with the WLGA leading on work in Wales, but we will share our work with WLGA should they wish to use it as a basis for Welsh specific work of their own.

Financial Implications

94. The work priorities identified for 2020/21 will be delivered within the planned staffing budget, which includes dedicated capacity to support work on cohesion, extremism and Prevent, and additional capacity to support Grenfell work.
95. Additional supporting projects may be commissioned subject to funds being available from a small directorate / team budget.

Next steps

96. The Board are asked to consider and approve the priorities for 2020/21.
Building Safety update

Purpose of report
For discussion.

Summary
This report updates members on the LGA’s building safety related work since its last meeting.

Recommendation
That members note and comment on the LGA’s building safety related work.

Action/s
Officers to incorporate members’ views in the LGA’s ongoing building safety related work.

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Building Safety update

Summary of events since the previous meeting

1. Since the Board’s last meeting the LGA has continued to work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Home Office to support building safety reform and the remediation of dangerous buildings. The Joint Inspection Team has resumed inspections. The Building Safety Bill has been published in draft form and is about to be subjected to pre-legislative scrutiny by the Housing Communities and Local Government Select Committee. The Fire Safety Bill has passed its third reading in the House of Commons and has now been introduced in the Lords. The LGA is participating in an officer-level task and finish group looking at the timing of the Bill’s commencement. A consultation on measures to be included in secondary legislation under the Fire Safety Order, including the implementation of recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, has been published.

Remediation

Progress

2. In the three years since Grenfell Tower fire fewer than half the 453 buildings with dangerous aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding systems have been fully remediated; nearly a third have yet to even begin work and the LGA anticipates that ongoing data collection could find almost four times as many buildings with dangerous non-ACM systems.

3. Between the end of April (when figures last went to the Board) and the end of July (the latest available statistics from the Ministry) only 6 social sector buildings and 1 private building have completed remediation work. No new remediation work has begun in the social sector and only 8 buildings have started remediation in the private sector.

4. Covid-19 has been a factor in this. At the end of July work on 19 buildings remained paused while work on a further 60 had restarted after being interrupted (work on 50 buildings had not been interrupted by Covid-19 and the position on 19 was unknown).

5. Even without the effects of the pandemic, progress on remediation is worryingly slow in the private sector. Remediation has finished on 78 of the 155 social sector blocks, has started on 73 and a further 9 have plans in place (the position of one block is unclear). However, only 29 private high-rise residential buildings with ACM have completed remediation. A further 180 buildings are yet to be remediated; of these, 102 have not begun work.
6. While councils’ overriding concern will be the safety of residents, those living in the affected blocks face mounting costs from interim fire safety measures such as waking watches and there is growing evidence (for example here and here) that increasing numbers of residents in high rise blocks are finding it difficult or impossible to sell, re-mortgage or staircase due to the reluctance of finance companies to lend money without the provision of an EWS1 form (which certifies that the cladding system is safe), the shortage of surveyors able to sign off EWS1 forms, and the reluctance of the insurance industry to provide those who can do the work with professional indemnity insurance. There is also evidence that building insurance costs are rising. Not only are these issues impacting leaseholders financially, but if unchecked they must sooner or later have a negative effect on the housing market.

7. The best solution to all of these problems is to remove unsafe cladding systems. However, at the current rate that could take as long as 20 years and in the meantime there is a significant risk of psychological problems for all residents, financial problems for leaseholders and a possible knock-on effect to the economy without government intervention.

8. The Government is funding most ACM removal but its £1 billion non-ACM cladding fund is being operated on a first-come-first-served basis and is likely to cover only about one third of cases. Councils are struggling to access it and the Ministry has been clear that the fund is not really aimed at social housing (although it is supposed to cover costs that might fall on leaseholders in socially-owned blocks). The LGA is flagging this issue in its spending review submission.

9. On 31 July 2020 the Minister wrote to councils with buildings that have no plan to start remediation work this year asking them to consider enforcement action. He also wrote to building owners and fire services. He wants to see fire services and councils taking a case-conferencing approach to these buildings.

Joint Inspection Team

10. As members will recall the LGA is hosting the Joint Inspection Team (JIT) to support councils to use their enforcement powers under the Housing Act and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

11. The team has resumed inspections following a hiatus caused by Covid-19 and has recruited its full complement of staff. It is inspecting approximately two buildings a month, twice the previous rate. The JIT has now inspected 11 buildings in total and has several other inspections pending. A number of improvement notices have been issued by the local authorities that have been supported by the team. No tribunal hearings have taken place as yet, although an order has been made in relation to one building by a tribunal where the building owner agreed to the terms of the improvement notice.
Data collection on external wall systems

12. In July 2019 councils were asked by MHCLG to collect data on the external wall systems on all high-rise residential buildings in England. MHCLG had hoped that the exercise would be complete by March 2020, although it was recognised that for some councils with large numbers of blocks this would be a challenge – one that has been exacerbated by Covid-19 issues. We understand that 25 per cent of the data remains uncollected.

13. MHCLG is also looking at how to collect data on buildings between 11m and 18m. No easy way to do this has been identified so far.

Fire Protection Board

14. The Fire Protection Board’s programme of reviewing the risk in buildings with interim measures because of non-ACM dangerous cladding has continued.

HCLG Select committee Report

15. The Housing Communities and Local Government Select Committee reported on the progress of cladding remediation on 12 June. The LGA submitted evidence to the enquiry. The key points of the report were:

15.1. Remediation is moving too slowly.
15.2. The £1 billion fund (see above) will not be enough to cover the costs of remediation and will need to be increased to cover all fire safety defects in buildings under 18m as well as those over 18m.
15.3. Interim fire safety measures should also be funded.
15.4. Those responsible for the building safety crisis should ultimately contribute to meeting the bill.
15.5. The External Wall Fire Review (EWS1) process is not working and the Government should provide a better system.
15.6. The Government must ensure that residents in affected buildings are offered support by the NHS to cope with the physical and mental health toll of living in a potentially dangerous building.

16. Most of these findings and proposals reflect points made in our evidence. However, the LGA has yet to determine its response to the final proposal:

16.1. The government should consider establishing a new national body to take direct ownership of the freehold of buildings with serious fire safety defects and remediate them.
17. The Public Accounts Committee is now holding an inquiry into the progress of remediation. Members were consulted on the LGA’s written evidence was essentially the same as that submitted to the HCLG committee.

**Reform**

*Fire Safety Bill*

18. The Bill has now passed its third reading in the House of Commons. The LGA has welcomed the Bill.

19. The Bill will require Responsible Persons to review their fire risk assessments. This should be relatively straightforward where the building has no cladding system (EWS) or where the duty-holder has evidence to show that the cladding system is safe. However, where a more complex review is necessary, those currently undertaking fire risk assessments are unlikely to have either the specific competence or the professional indemnity insurance to cover EWS.

20. The Home Office has established a task and finish group on the commencement of the Bill. Officers of the LGA and NFCC are on this group, as are a number of other stakeholders including the Fire Sector Federation and the Fire Industry Association.

21. The Group has been asked to make recommendations to the Home Office on how to commence the Bill in a way that does not leave duty-holders unable to meet their obligations. This is likely to involve statutory guidance. The Grenfell Task and finish Group will be consulted on any draft conclusion.

*Fire Safety Consultation*

22. The Government is consulting on proposals to:

22.1. strengthen the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and improve compliance.
22.2. implement the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report recommendations that require a change in law to place new requirements on building owners or managers of multi-occupied residential buildings, mostly high rise buildings.
22.3. strengthen the regulatory framework for how building control bodies consult with Fire and Rescue Authorities and the handover of fire safety information.

23. The consultation closes on 12 October.

*Building Safety Bill*
24. The Bill was published in draft form before the summer recess and is to be subject to pre-legislative scrutiny by the HCLG committee.

25. The Bill establishes a building safety regulator within the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to:

25.1. Implement the new, more stringent, regulatory regime for higher-risk buildings.
25.2. Oversee the safety and performance of all buildings.
25.3. Assist and encourage competence among the built environment industry, and registered building inspectors.

26. The implementation of the new regime will see the HSE, councils and fire services form a new, close relationship as council building control services and fire services deliver the regime for higher-risk buildings (Environmental Health services may also be involved). It leaves the HSE and local regulators to work out the practical details, but places all three under a duty to cooperate and gives the HSE the power to direct councils and fire services. The latter power is to be used only in exceptional circumstances and the Bill provides safeguards to prevent it becoming a default option.

27. In practice the regime for higher-risk buildings is expected to involve multi-disciplinary teams not dissimilar to the Joint Inspection Team which the LGA currently hosts and MHCLG funds.

28. The HSE is very keen to engage with the sector and we are facilitating this. Although we have a very good relationship with the HSE, the scale of reform and its complexity make engagement a challenge.

29. In addition, the LGA and Local Authority Building Control are represented on the Joint Regulators Group, an HSE-chaired body advising on policy and implementation, which has been working on the issue for a couple of years.

30. The LGA’s evidence to the committee argues that, subject to the necessary secondary legislation being passed and sufficient funds provided - the Bill provides the strong regulatory system needed to deliver an effective system of building safety. Nevertheless the LGA has expressed the following concerns:

30.1. The difficulty of funding building safety measures without bankrupting leaseholders.
30.2. The conflict between the new building safety system and the Government’s planning white paper.
30.3. The scope of the Bill, the speed at which its scope can be expanded and the constraints on its expansion.
30.4. How the charging provisions in the Bill will work and set-up costs for the Building Safety Regulator.
30.5. The alignment of this Bill with the Fire Safety Bill.
30.6. The adequacy of the product safety provisions.
30.7. The limited removal of competition in building control

Implications for Wales
31. Building regulations and fire and rescue services are devolved responsibilities of the Welsh Assembly Government, and the main implications arising from the recommendations of the Hackitt Review and the government’s response to it are on building regulations and fire safety in England. However the Welsh government has announced that it will be making the changes recommended in the report to the regulatory system in Wales, and the LGA has been keeping in contact to ensure the WLGA is kept informed of the latest developments in England.

Financial Implications

32. Although the LGA has set up the Joint Inspection Team, the cost of doing so is being met by MHCLG. Other work arising from this report will continue to be delivered within the planned staffing budget, which includes an additional fixed term post in the safer communities team to support the LGA’s building safety work.

Next steps

33. Officers to continue to support the sector’s work to keep residents safe and reform the buildings safety system, as directed by members.
Covid-19 update paper

Purpose of report
For information.

Summary
This paper updates the Board on the safer and stronger communities team’s Covid-19 related activity since the June Board meeting.

Recommendation
The Board note the contents of the report and the implications for the Board's 2020-21 work plan.

Action
Officers to take forward as directed.

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Covid-19 update paper

Background

1. This paper updates Board members on the team’s ongoing activity in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic since the last meeting in June.

2. Across the organisation as a whole, most of the workstreams created to support our Covid-19 response work from March have now been disbanded, with staff going back to their substantive roles and ongoing activity managed through normal channels and Board processes.

3. The exception to this is the continuing test, trace and outbreak management team, which is supporting policy and sector led improvement work linked to councils outbreak plans and work around test and trace. This workstream is headed up by our Principal Policy Adviser Mark Norris and incorporates ongoing activity in relation to the shielding programme, supported by other members of the team. This highlights that, outside of the matters directly within the remit of the Board covered below, wider Covid-19 activity continues to impact the capacity of the team.

Issues

Regulatory services and licensing

4. Work on compliance and enforcement issues is the main area falling in the Board’s remit of continuing work around Covid-19. As businesses have reopened, there has been a focus on the work councils are doing to ensure that businesses are complying with Covid secure guidance, and taking action where they are not. There have been challenges for councils in doing so, in particular linked to the powers and tools available to do so, and the capacity available to support this work.

5. In its sectoral guidance on business and wider reopenings following the removal of lockdown restrictions in summer, the Government highlighted the Health and the Safety at Work Act (HSWA) 1974 as the key vehicle for overseeing the implementation of Covid secure guidelines. The guidance, including on key issues such as collecting contact details in hospitality premises and social distancing measures, has to date been voluntary rather than mandatory.

6. There are challenges with using the HSWA as the main vehicle for Covid enforcement activities, as the tools under the Act are less suitable for the type of swift action to require changes or force closure of non-compliant premises that councils need. The new health protection powers for councils to issue directions to close premises and stop events set a threshold of there being a serious and imminent threat to public health, and require the approval of the local director of public health and Secretary of State. The LGA and councils have called for a more flexible set of powers that can be used more quickly, and...
have suggested the Licensing Act could be used as a vehicle for addressing issues in
the hospitality sector.

7. The Government has accepted the sector’s argument that the collection of contact
details should be mandatory, and we will be continuing to work with councils and officials
to make the case for councils to have the right tools to facilitate compliance with Covid
requirements.

8. We have also been highlighting the pressures on environmental health capacity arising
from the pandemic, linking this to previous work by the Board to raise concerns about the
future of regulatory services. With trading standards officers and other officers,
environmental health officers played a leading role in enforcing the business closure
regulations; as enforcing officers under the Health and Safety at Work Act they have
since been heavily involved in Covid compliance work, as well as local contact tracing
work, in addition to business as usual activity. The pandemic has highlighted a lack of
capacity within environmental health, as well as a worrying lack of resilience in the future
pipeline of future officers.

9. With our workforce team, we have been working with the Chartered Institute of
Environmental Health to support the development of a register of Environmental Health
officers (announced by the Prime Minister on 9 September) which councils can draw on
for short term capacity, as well as looking at the longer term future of the profession. We
have also developed a submission to the spending review which emphasizes the
importance of a sustainable funding model for local regulatory services, which have been
shown to play a critical role in protecting local communities.

Bereavement

10. At the last board meeting members discussed a paper on the impact of Covid-19 on
bereavement services and asked officers to write to the appropriate departments to
express our concerns. The issues highlighted in the paper have now been fed into a
wider piece of work on sector learning from the pandemic. This will be used to inform
conversations with government going forward.

11. The death management workstream has now been closed down, but officers have
retained the network of contacts which was established as a sounding board during the
early stages of the pandemic and continue to communicate regularly with relevant
departments to feed in sector concerns around bereavement services, death
management and registration issues.

Domestic abuse and Covid-19

12. A joint investigation by Panorama and Women’s Aid, into how the nationwide shutdown
in response to Covid-19 has impacted victims of domestic abuse, found someone called
police for help about domestic abuse every 30 seconds in the first seven weeks of UK
lockdown. The investigation found that three-quarters of victims say the lockdown has made it harder for them to escape their abusers. These devastating accounts of domestic abuse highlight the importance of all partners and organisations helping to prevent and eliminate this appalling crime. The LGA has published a guide for councils on tackling domestic abuse during the Covid-19 pandemic. Please contact Rachel.Phelps@local.gov.uk if you would be happy to discuss in further detail.

**Implications for Wales**

13. Work on these issues is being led separately by the WLGA.

**Financial Implications**

14. The policy directorate has reallocated some of its MHCLG improvement money to support ongoing Covid-19 activity in relation to test, trace and outbreak management. This may have some impact on the funds available for safer communities and other policy improvement work, although at the current time it is hoped that all the activities the team had proposed can still be funded.

**Next steps**

15. Officers to progress Covid-19 related activity as necessary.
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.

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Update Paper

Domestic abuse

Government’s response to Home Affairs report on domestic abuse

1. On 27 July 2020, the Government published its response to the Home Affairs Committee’s report on Home Office preparedness for Covid-19: Domestic abuse and risks of harm. Following our oral evidence to the committee, the Government’s response recognised the important work of the LGA in helping ensure that social workers continue to work with vulnerable children at this time. We will continue to make the case for investment in these important services as part of our Spending Review submission to the Treasury.

Domestic abuse bill

2. In July 2020, the Domestic Abuse Bill completed its passage through the House of Commons and had its First Reading in the House of Lords. During the House of Commons stages, several Government amendments were made, including new clauses on: children in the definition of victims of domestic abuse; homelessness; special measures in family and civil proceedings; prohibiting cross-examination in person in certain circumstances; and banning the ‘rough sex’ defence. The Bill will continue to its Second Reading in the House of Lords (date tbc).

Advice line for employers

3. This week, the charity Hestia launched a new advice line for businesses supporting employees experiencing or at risk of domestic abuse. Funded by the Home Office, the Everyone’s Business Advice Line will be a point of contact for businesses, supporting them on how to approach disclosures of domestic abuse by their employees, particularly in light of Covid-19. They will also receive advice so that they can signpost staff to specialist domestic abuse services.

MHCLG workshops on domestic abuse accommodation support and services

4. The LGA also jointly hosted a series of workshops with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to discuss the new statutory duty the Domestic Abuse Bill proposes to place on Tier 1 local authorities to commission domestic abuse accommodation support and services. Officers working in housing, domestic abuse services and community safety joined the workshop sessions to share their views on the duty and discussed what the challenges and opportunities would be locally. MHCLG will be submitting their bid for funding of the duty as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review submission.

Violence Reduction Units

5. In August, the Government announced that Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) will be distributing a further £2.9 million to hundreds of frontline charities working on violence prevention projects, designed to help young people at risk of being drawn into a life of
violent crime. This follows the announcement in 2019 that 18 Police and Crime Commissioners in the areas worst affected by violent crime would share £35 million to establish VRUs, with a further £35 million provided for 2020/21. This new money is welcome, and it will be important for the VRUs to work closely with councils’ community safety teams on local priorities that promote early intervention and prevention.

Tackling serious violence

6. The Youth Violence Commission published its final report, which recognised the devastating effect that serious violence has on young people and emphasised the importance of investing in youth services and early intervention. In our media response, the LGA outlined that a public health approach is needed to tackle serious violent crime with the input of a range of partners, including those in the health and education sectors, as opposed to relying solely on a criminal justice strategy.

7. In addition to this, the LGA also published a case studies document on ‘Taking a public health approach to tackling serious violent crime’. The document contains case studies on councils working in partnership to deliver early interventions which help to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in serious violent crime.

County lines and child criminal exploitation

8. In September, Cllr Nesil Caliskan chaired an LGA webinar on tackling county lines and child criminal exploitation. The webinar (attended by over 280 delegates) was an opportunity to share best practice on how councils, working with their partners, are tackling county lines activity and child criminal exploitation. The session also reflected on the COVID-19 pandemic and what effect there has been on the drug supply chain. Our speakers included Leigh Middleton, Chief Executive Officer, National Youth Agency (NYA), Cllr Joe Calouri, London Borough of Islington Council, Jacqueline Nolan, SCP/SAB Business Manager, South Tyneside Council and Arnold Yousaf, St Giles Trust.

Safer Streets Fund to tackle burglary and theft

9. The Home Office has announced that 35 Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) are to receive funding from a £25 million scheme to crack down on burglary and theft in crime hotspots. The money will go towards measures proven to cut crime. These include simple changes to the design of streets such as locked gates around alleyways, increased street-lighting and the installation of CCTV. Details of the successful bids can be found on the Government’s website.

Community Trigger and Anti-Social Behaviour

10. In July 2020, the Home Office refreshed its guidance webpage on the community trigger process (also known as the ASB Case Review). The guidance now includes a useful example of how the community trigger process works and how victims of persistent anti-
social behaviour have the right to request a case review where a local threshold is met. Further information is available here.

11. The LGA will be hosting a webinar on Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour on Tuesday 29 September 2020.

Police and Crime Commissioners / Panels

12. The LGA submitted a response to the Home Office’s review of Police and Crime Commissioners, which was announced in July. The review will run in two parts. Part one, which is due to report to the Home Secretary in October, is focusing on improvements that could be made to the current PCC model in advance of the rescheduled PCC elections in May 2021. This includes considering the existing accountability mechanisms, including the role of Police and Crime Panels, as well as links with the Mayoral model and the links with fire governance. Part two of the review, which will take place after the elections, will look at the Government’s ambitions for expanding the role of PCCs in criminal justice and reducing reoffending.

13. The LGA will be holding a workshop session on Police and Crime Panels on Tuesday 22 September, 10:30am until 12:30pm. Speakers at this webinar include the Home Office, who will give an update on the current PCC review, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, and National Association of PFCPs. If you would like to attend, please email Jordanne McKenzie-Blythe (Jordanne.McKenzie-Blythe@local.gov.uk) who will circulate joining instructions nearer the time.

Cohesion, counter-extremism, and Prevent work

14. We remain concerned about the impact of the pandemic on community cohesion and extremism. Several areas have reported significant increases in hate incidents locally, and narratives continue to circulate blaming particular communities for the further spread of COVID-19 (especially in areas under local lockdown). Black Lives Matter protests and counter protests, and the recent increased focus on migrant crossings have added further to concerns about rising community tensions in many areas. We anticipate that extremists will look to exploit the post-COVID landscape to further divisive narratives, particularly in the context of economic decline and rising inequality (or perceptions of these); we are working to support councils to respond effectively and build resilience to these evolving issues.

15. We have continued with our series of online sessions for councils to explore the cohesion, extremism and security challenges and threats that have emerged over recent months. This has included organising a webinar with the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism (SIGCE) on online extremism in July, holding a number of roundtables with councils to discuss new and emerging issues and how to respond to these, developing
and delivering bespoke support to councils facing specific current challenges, and reconvening the SIGCE’s working groups. The SIGCE’s Knowledge Hub also continues to be a well-used forum for councils to engage with one another and share ideas and resources.

16. In June we published a guidance note for councils receiving calls for changes to the names of estates and streets and the removal of statues (alongside objections to such proposals). We also recently published joint LGA/Centre for Public Scrutiny guidance for scrutiny practitioners on counter-extremism and the Prevent duty.

**Competition and Market Authority investigation into the funerals market**

17. In March 2019, the CMA began an investigation in to concerns it had identified about the funeral services sector, following a market study into the effectiveness of competition in the sector. The investigation identified a number of issues around choice, transparency and pricing and the CMA did consult on some proposed remedies to those issues. However, the CMA have recognised that COVID-19 has had unforeseen impacts on the funerals sector and on the investigation. You can read the CMA’s statement on the conclusion of the investigation online.

**The National FGM Centre**

18. The National FGM Centre was partially grant-funded by the Department of Education since its establishment in 2016. Despite a request for continued funding to support for the Centre, the grant period ended in June 2020. The Centre and Barnardo’s are now working to identify other sources of funding and more sustainable ways of working, so that the Centre can continue to work towards its aims to end FGM by 2030, to protect those at risk from harmful practices, and to support those who have already been affected.

**Law Commission consultation on weddings**

19. On the 3 September, the Law Commission published a consultation on weddings. The Commission believes that the current law is not fit for purpose and does not meet the needs of many couples; they propose that couples should have a greater choice over their wedding venue, including outdoor locations, and that couples should have more freedom to decide the form of the ceremony. The Commission suggests that updating marriage law would simplify the process by removing unnecessary red tape and make it easier for couples to have a wedding that is meaningful to them; they also propose that flexibility on the location of a wedding will reduce the cost associated with weddings. These changes would bring England more in line the approach to weddings taking in other places, including Scotland, Ireland and the Channel Islands. The proposals will affect local authority registrar services and so the LGA will be submitting a response to the consultation, which closes on 3 December 2020.
Her Majesties Inspectorate for Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services’ (HMICFRS) COVID-19 inspection

20. The second cycle of national inspections of fire and rescue services was halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as it was impossible to carry out inspections in the usual manner. HMICFRS has now been commissioned by the Home Secretary to conduct a thematic inspection of FRS’ around their response to COVID-19. The LGA will feed in to this inspection and respond to the final report, which will be published in January 2021.

Comprehensive Spending Review fire submission

21. The LGA and National Fire Chiefs Councils have been working together on a joint submission into the Home Office for the Spending Review. The final submission went into the Home Office in July and provides the Home Office with a strong evidence base with which to make their arguments to the Treasury to support fire budgets through the next spending review period.

Statutory Standards for taxi licensing

22. Over the summer the Department for Transport published new statutory standards on taxi and private hire vehicle licensing. The new standards have been developed to support councils to safeguard vulnerable passengers and included a number of recommendations that the LGA has pushed for including enhanced driver safety checks and safeguarding and disability awareness training. However, we have also made the point that the best way to improve passenger safety is to reform outdated legislation. We will be updating our Cllr Handbook to reflect these new standards shortly.

Sexual Entertainment Venues

23. The Chairman of Cheltenham Council’s Licensing Committee wrote to the LGA requesting that the SSCB consider a government review of Sexual Entertainment Venue (SEV) licensing legislation. The regulation of SEVs has not been explored by the SSCB previously and Members are asked for views on whether this is an area that causes issues in their areas, and if so whether the it is an issue that the LGA should explore further.

Spending Review Regulatory Services Submission

24. The LGA is developing a joint submission with the chartered Institutes of Trading Standards (CTSI) and Environmental Health (CIEH) ahead of Sending Review this autumn. The submission will focus on our call for the Spending Review to address the challenges faced by council trading standards and environmental health teams and provide the resources needed to maintain these vital public protection services over the next few years and beyond.

Food Standards Agency letter to councils on the impact of COVID-19

25. The Food Standards Agency has written to councils asking them to complete a short survey on the impact of the pandemic on the delivery of official food controls. The FSA has
previously agreed to normal requirements being relaxed during the height of the pandemic, with regulatory capacity diverted to COVID related work. The survey will help inform the FSA about what is feasible after the current relaxation comes to an end in September.

EU transition

26. Officers have been working with the LGA’s policy leads on EU transition and Government officials to highlight the impact on council regulatory services of changes to border controls following the end of the transition period in December. A phased approach to introducing checks on EU goods currently not subject to them will see port health authorities required to check certain goods and imports from Europe with effect from July. Defra have opened up a fund for Port Health Authorities to bid into to recruit additional capacity to support these checks, but there are concerns about the ability to recruit new staff. It is also not yet clear where the responsibility for these checks will rest in areas where inland ports are required to be built to accommodate these checks away from ports.

27. There are also likely to be implications for councils with businesses newly requiring an Export Health Certificate to export fish products to the EU, and additional checks on some business premises required to demonstrate compliance with standards. These issues are being considered in conjunction with our work with the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health on EH capacity.
Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

Title: Safer & Stronger Communities Board
Date: Monday 15 June 2020
Venue: Zoom videoconference

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Decisions and actions</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Chair welcomed members to the meeting.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Apologies were received from Cllr Jim Beall.</td>
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<td>There were no declarations of interest.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Chair paid tribute to Andrew Campbell who had passed away unexpectedly last week. Over the past few months Andrew had been leading the Covid-19 workstream on excess deaths and bereavement services with members of the safer communities team, including speaking at the recent lead members’ meeting, and would undoubtedly have joined the meeting today for the discussion of agenda item 5. The Board agreed to write to Andrew’s family expressing their condolences.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 March 2020</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2020 were agreed.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Prevent regional delivery - Presentation by Chris Williams and Sam Howe, Home Office</td>
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<td>The Chair invited Chris Williams and Sam Howe from the Home Office, to introduce the report.</td>
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<td>Chris explained that they were seeking the views of the local government sector on Home Office proposals to deliver the Prevent programme in a different way. Currently, the Home Office provided funding to 44 ‘priority’ local authorities, identified as having the highest level of risk based on an annual prioritisation exercise.</td>
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<td>Chris said that since this model was introduced, the threat from radicalisation had changed and so a different method of prioritisation and funding was needed. 53 per cent of all cases now dealt with by the Government were linked to the far-right and were scattered around the</td>
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country, rather than necessarily being concentrated in the 44 priority areas which were more related to islamist extremism.

Chris said that the current model of annual prioritisation did not give any level of funding certainty to local authorities and greater stability was required. He added that threats and risk were also not contained within local authority boundaries and so a more flexible approach was needed.

Sam then went on to outline the 3 options that were being considered by the Home Office for reform:

- **Option 1** – expand the current model by using existing priority areas as regional hubs. Sam said that this model would expand the coverage outside of the 44 priority local authority areas, would increase flexibility to respond to threats, would provide more funding certainty and would retain existing local partnerships and good practice. However, it would require staff to cover wider areas and so sophisticated prioritisation tools would be required. There could also be issues over governance of the new structures.

- **Option 2** - nine regional hubs would provide support to the whole of England and Wales. A lead authority, determined by the most significant threat, would host a regional coordinator to allocate projects and posts. Sam explained that this model would enable support to be moved to any area of the country as required and would spread best practice much more widely. However, it would risk losing local intelligence and experience and would provide significant logistical challenges.

- **Option 3** – A hybrid between 1&2. An annual prioritisation process would continue to allocate Prevent coordinators to a smaller number of high priority local authorities, and nine regional hubs would host Prevent posts who would provide both reactive and proactive support to vulnerable areas.

Charles Loft, Senior Adviser, said that the key issue for the LGA was the trade-off between the local knowledge of the existing system and the comprehensive coverage offered by a more regional approach. He said that it would be difficult to maintain both unless more funding was made available by the Government.

Following the introduction, members raised the following points:

- **How did reprioritisation of risk areas work in practice?** Chris said that evidence was provided to the Home Office by the Police and Governance Board which was then used to determine relative priority.

- **To what extent would the hybrid model place additional demand on resources?** Chris said that assuming there was no overall increase in funding, it would result in resources being spread more thinly, and the number of priority local authority areas would reduce from 44 to between 12 and 15.

- **How would regionalisation affect Channel Panel delivery?** Chris confirmed that there would still be a panel in every local authority area.

- **Doubts were expressed about whether creating new artificial regional structures would be effective.** The hybrid model was
therefore considered preferable as it would retain some degree of local knowledge and structures in those most at risk areas.

- Effective training of stakeholders was considered to be crucial to the success of any future model. Chris acknowledged that there was currently a disparity in the quality of training across the country and said that adopting a more regional approach would help to address this. He added that whichever model was eventually chosen, the Home Office would launch a comprehensive training programme.

- Had the 44 priority local authorities been consulted about the proposals? Chris said that the Home Office was currently talking to them and advised that the response so far had been mixed. He admitted that it was a difficult trade-off for local authorities that currently received funding and who could therefore potentially lose out.

- Additionality was considered to be key - a new scheme had to protect the robustness of the current scheme whilst building greater flexibility and responsiveness.

**Decision**

Members of the Safer & Stronger Communities Board noted the presentation on the Home Office proposals.

### 4 COVID-19 emergency: Safer and Stronger Communities team update

The Chair invited Mark Norris, Principal Policy Adviser, to introduce the update.

Mark updated the Board on the team’s activity since its last meeting in March and outlined the main areas where they had been working with councils and Government departments in relation to Covid-19. These were: emergency planning and Local Resilience Forums; supporting the shielded and vulnerable groups; the death management process (subject of a separate report – item 5); regulation and licensing, particularly in relation to businesses closing and eventually reopening; providing support to domestic abuse victims; early release of prisoners; counter-extremism and community cohesion; and addressing beach safety.

Mark explained that several of the Covid-19 workstreams that the team were working on were now being wound down, as the immediate crisis passed. However, a number of them were likely to continue for the foreseeable future. In particular, he said that they were expecting Government announcements in the coming days about the future role of local authorities in supporting the shielded and vulnerable groups and the testing and tracing programme, with the potential for local lockdowns. Mark said that the reopening of local businesses on the high street and associated licensing and regulatory issues was also going to become increasingly important, and officers were having discussions with Government about the issues this would raise. Similarly, managing the increasing numbers of people who were accessing the coastline was going to be crucial as the summer progressed, and this was being looked at across several Government departments. Mark said it was a fine balance for many local authorities that relied upon income from tourists but also had a responsibility for people’s safety.
Following Mark’s introduction Members raised the following points:

- There was a lack of guidance from the Government about implementing Local Outbreak Management Plans. This could be very challenging for local authorities as there would be strong reactions from local residents. It was suggested that SSCB needed to think carefully about how best to manage this. The Chair stated that the legal advice he had received was that councils did not currently have the powers to enforce local lockdowns and so the Government would need to legislate for it. He added that it would be completely impractical and would take enormous amounts of police resources to enforce in an area such as Blackpool with a large beach. It was acknowledged that there couldn’t be a ‘one size fits all’ solution. Mark said that as far as he was aware, there were no plans by the Government to legislate and officers were having conversations with Government about the issues raised by members.

- It was stated that in Gloucestershire, 47% of deaths from Covid-19 were in care settings and there had been serious shortcomings around availability and use of PPE, lack of testing and use of agency staff. This raised question marks about the effectiveness of councils’ emergency plans and the LGA should look at how these could be improved for the future. The Chair agreed that Emergency Plans should be reviewed and approved on a regular basis but also how they were implemented. Members suggested that some Emergency Plans had been written with influenza in mind, rather than other possible pandemics. They added that Home Office guidance on recovery was written for flooding events, not pandemics. Further confusion was caused by the additional powers introduced by the Government in the Coronavirus Act and whether these were expected to be discharged centrally or locally.

- Concern was raised about the safety and additional costs of reopening public toilets, particularly for areas that currently operated community toilet schemes.

- In order to aid economic recovery, many councils weren’t planning to charge businesses for street furniture licenses but this would have implications for income.

- It was suggested that the Prime Minister had not helped the water safety situation by encouraging people to swim in lakes, rivers and the sea. It was also queried whether local authorities would be able to enforce local lockdowns on beaches that they didn’t own. It was reported that Swim England were publishing guidance on safety in swimming pools for when they were allowed to reopen.

- It was stated that local government had generally responded well to the pandemic but there were some areas for improvement. How could the sector learn from its experiences, share best practice and recognise areas where things could have been done better? What could central Government and other national bodies have done differently that would have made it easier for local government to respond on the ground. The Chair responded that there would be a national Public Inquiry in due course which would look at the response by national bodies and institutions but a local review should be led by the LGA.
Concern was expressed about inconsistent advice from schools around shielding, some schools saying do send people in, others saying don’t.

As the hospitality trade begins to reopen, there would be considerable pressure on the resources of licensing departments and committees.

It was proposed that a new working group be formed at the LGA to review the impact of community engagement on the Coronavirus response, to learn lessons and help develop strategy for future sustainability of the sector. Members agreed that this would be helpful.

The close cooperation between military and civilian authorities during the crisis had been fantastic and should be recognised as having great potential for the future.

**Decision**
Members of the Safer & Stronger Communities Board noted the update.

**Actions**
Officers to consider establishing a member-led working group to review the impact of the Community & Voluntary Sector during the Covid-19 crisis.

5 Impact of Covid-19 on Bereavement Services

The Chair invited Lucy Ellender, Senior Adviser, to introduce the report.

Lucy began by paying tribute to Andrew Campbell who had been leading on this work stream before his sudden passing last week.

Lucy said that death management had been one of the key workstreams for the LGA since the pandemic hit and there were 3 main areas of activity – (i) responding to issues raised by councils; (ii) engaging with Government to represent councils’ views and highlight issues; and (iii) producing resources for councils to help respond at a local level.

Lucy reported that two workshops had been held on the lessons learned from the pandemic, one with registrars and one with those responsible for wider death management. The outcomes from these had been used to draft the next steps outlined in the paper, including a proposal for the Board to write to MHCLG to outline the key points that had been raised with the LGA on death management issues. Lucy asked whether there were any further areas that the Board would like officers to look into.

Following Lucy’s introduction, Members raised the following points:

- Great efforts had been made to build capacity into the system early on during the crisis and thankfully, it had not proved necessary to make use of it all.
- The changes to the death management process that were introduced in response to the lockdown – in particular, removing the requirement to register deaths in person - had actually improved the user experience in many cases. Could the LGA lobby for these changes to be made permanent?
Members queried whether the changes made by the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) to the processing of funeral expenses payments had made any noticeable difference, and were there a significant number of people now in funeral poverty as a result of Covid-19? Lucy said that in 2015-16, the DWP had taken an average of 18.6 days to process applications whereas at the beginning of June they were processing double the number of applications within their 15-day target. She sounded a note of caution that there weren’t any figures on how successful the applications had been. Lucy added that there was a mixed picture in terms of the number of public health funerals being carried out across the country. Members requested some more detailed figures on this, as public health funerals were considered to be a hidden cost of Covid-19 for councils. Lucy said that she had a survey ready to go out to councils on this and she would report back to members when she had some results.

**Decision**

Members of the Safer & Stronger Communities Board noted the report and agreed the next steps outlined in paragraphs 24 and 25.

6 **Building safety update**

The Chair invited Charles Loft, Senior Adviser, to introduce the update.

Charles reported that remediation of residential blocks with ACM cladding had slowed down as a result of Covid-19 with just 4 blocks being completed in the previous month.

Charles reported that the Fire Protection Board was launching the next stage of its Building Risk Review programme this week.

On the Joint Inspection Team, Charles said that the funding agreement had now been signed and they were recruiting new staff members with a view to starting inspections up again in July.

On non-ACM remediation, Charles reported that the Government had now published the prospectus for bids to its new £1 billion fund and added that the deadline for submitting bids – 31 July 2020 – would be very challenging. Councils would be eligible if the cost of the remediation works threatened the financial viability of the Housing Revenue Account for stock holding authorities (although it would be possible to reclaim any costs that would be passed to leaseholders).

Charles then ran through the recommendations of the recent Housing, Communities & Local Government Select Committee report on dangerous cladding and said that all bar one of them were measures that the LGA had been calling for.

Charles reported that the Fire Safety Bill was entering the Committee stage in the House of Commons and the LGA was working on a set of amendments which would address some of the concerns set out in paragraph 27 of the report.
On Approved Document B, Charles said that the Government had announced that the height at which sprinklers would be required in new buildings was to be lowered to 11 metres from November. This was an excellent result after a long period of lobbying by the LGA.

Finally, Charles highlighted the continuing insurance and mortgage issues being faced by leaseholders in blocks that had dangerous cladding and the difficulties faced by surveyors seeking insurance to demonstrate that cladding was safe. The LGA was providing examples of these problems to MHCLG.

**Decision**

Members of the Safer & Stronger Communities Board noted the update.

7 End of year report and future Board priorities for 2020/21

The Chair invited Mark Norris to introduce the report.

Mark explained that the first part of the report summarised the work carried out on the priority areas that were set out by the Board in September 2019. Mark stressed that this was before the Covid-19 outbreak which diverted the team’s time and resources to other priorities.

Mark then outlined some initial thoughts on themes for the 2020/21 work priorities and said that these would remain broadly consistent with 2019/20. He warned members that it was likely that part of the team’s capacity would continue to be diverted to the Covid-19 response and that they would have to retain some flexibility to respond to any further developments in this area, such as a second peak of infections.

Following Mark’s introduction, members raised the following points:

- Could the successful LGA annual licensing conference be added to the annual report? Members agreed to add this in.
- Could the cross-cutting work on community safety resilience that was agreed as part of the 2019-20 work plan be carried over into next year? Ellie Greenwood, Senior Adviser, said that this work had been due to start in March this year but had to be postponed due to Covid-19. This could be picked up again next year.
- It was considered important to include policing and community relations as a workstream given the events of recent weeks around the Black Lives Matter campaign. It was vital that local government, through the LGA, had a voice on the various reviews and commissions that were being set up to look into the issues. The Chair agreed and suggested that officers speak to the Association of Police & Crime Commissioners to get their viewpoint.
- The water safety brief and, in particular, the increasing number of related suicides, was considered to be a high priority. Could this work be tied in with the work of the Community Wellbeing Board on suicide prevention?
- It was suggested that modern slavery retain the high profile that it had in the workstream in 2019-20. The Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown could well have exacerbated the situation.
Mark thanked members for their comments and said that these would be used to feed into a more detailed work plan for 2020-21 which would come to the Board for agreement in September 2020.

**Decision**
Members of the Safer & Stronger Communities Board noted the End of Year Report and agreed that the points raised in the discussion be fed into the 2020-21 Work Plan.

**Actions**
- Officers to incorporate LGA Annual Licensing Conference in End of Year Report.
- Officers to amend 2020-21 Work Plan to incorporate members’ comments.

8 **Safer and Stronger Communities Board update**

The Board update paper was noted without discussion.

**Decision**
Members of the Safer & Stronger Communities Board noted the update.

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### Appendix A - Attendance

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position/Role</th>
<th>Councillor</th>
<th>Authority</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Cllr Simon Blackburn</td>
<td>Blackpool Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice-Chairman</td>
<td>Cllr Katrina Wood</td>
<td>Wycombe District Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy-chair</td>
<td>Cllr Bridget Smith</td>
<td>South Cambridgeshire District Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy-chair</td>
<td>Cllr Hannah Dalton</td>
<td>Epsom and Ewell Borough Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>Cllr Eric Allen</td>
<td>London Borough of Sutton</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cllr Mohan Iyengar</td>
<td>Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council</td>
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<td>Cllr Andrew Joy</td>
<td>Hampshire County Council</td>
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<td>Cllr Dave Stewart</td>
<td>Isle of Wight Council</td>
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<td>Cllr Lois Samuel</td>
<td>West Devon Borough Council</td>
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<td>Cllr Kate Haigh</td>
<td>Gloucester City Council</td>
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<td>Cllr Alan Rhodes</td>
<td>Nottinghamshire County Council</td>
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<td>Cllr James Dawson</td>
<td>Erewash Borough Council</td>
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<td>Cllr Farah Hussain</td>
<td>Redbridge London Borough Council</td>
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<td>Cllr Johnson Situ</td>
<td>Southwark Council</td>
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<td>Cllr Jeremy Hilton</td>
<td>Gloucestershire County Council</td>
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<td>Cllr Philip Evans JP</td>
<td>Conwy County Borough Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apologies</td>
<td>Cllr Jim Beall</td>
<td>Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>In Attendance</td>
<td>Cllr Richard Auger</td>
<td>Daventry District Council</td>
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<td>Cllr James Gartside</td>
<td>Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council</td>
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<td>Cllr Daniel Francis</td>
<td>Bexley Council</td>
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<td>Cllr Clive Johnson</td>
<td>Medway Council</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cllr Tim Roca</td>
<td>Westminster City Council</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chris Williams (item 3)</td>
<td>Home Office</td>
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