

Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Agenda

Thursday, 18 March 2021
11.00 am

Online via Microsoft Teams

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

www.local.gov.uk

This meeting is



Safer & Stronger Communities Board
18 March 2021

There will be a meeting of the Safer & Stronger Communities Board at **11.00 am on Thursday, 18 March 2021** Online via Microsoft Teams.

Political Group meetings:

The group meetings will take place in advance of the meeting. Please contact your political group as outlined below for further details.

Apologies:

Please notify your political group office (see contact telephone numbers below) if you are unable to attend this meeting.

Conservative:	Group Office: 020 7664 3223	email: CONGP@local.gov.uk
Labour:	Group Office: 020 7664 3263	email: LABGP@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat:	Group Office: 020 7664 3235	email: LIBDEM@local.gov.uk
Independent:	Group Office: 020 7664 3224	email: INDEPENDENTGROUP@local.gov.uk

LGA Contact:

Tahmina Akther
tahmina.akther@local.gov.uk | 0207 072 7444

Carers' Allowance

As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme a Carer's Allowance of £9.00 per hour or £10.55 if receiving London living wage is available to cover the cost of dependants (i.e. children, elderly people or people with disabilities) incurred as a result of attending this meeting.

Social Media

The LGA is committed to using social media in a co-ordinated and sensible way, as part of a strategic approach to communications, to help enhance the reputation of local government, improvement engagement with different elements of the community and drive efficiency. Please feel free to use social media during this meeting. **However, you are requested not to use social media during any confidential items.**

The twitter hashtag for this meeting is #lgassc

Safer & Stronger Communities Board – Membership 2020/2021

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (7)	
Cllr Katrina Wood (Vice Chairman)	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Eric Allen	Sutton London Borough Council
Cllr Andrew Joy	Hampshire County Council
Cllr Mohan Iyengar	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
Cllr John Pennington	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
Cllr Dave Stewart	Isle of Wight Council
Cllr Lois Samuel	West Devon Borough Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Richard Auger	Daventry District Council
Cllr Paul Findlow	Cheshire East Council
Cllr James Gartside	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Labour (7)	
Cllr Nesil Caliskan (Chair)	Enfield Council
Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
Cllr Alan Rhodes	Nottinghamshire County Council
Mayor Damien Egan	Lewisham London Borough Council
Cllr James Dawson	Erewash Borough Council
Cllr Farah Hussain	Redbridge London Borough Council
Cllr Johnson Situ	Southwark Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Jeanie Bell	St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Daniel Francis	Bexley Council
Cllr Tim Roca	Westminster City Council
Liberal Democrat (2)	
Cllr Bridget Smith (Deputy Chair)	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire County Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Jon Ball	Ealing Council
Independent (2)	
Cllr Hannah Dalton (Deputy Chair)	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Cllr Philip Evans JP	Conwy County Borough Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Jo Beavis	Braintree District Council
Cllr Helen-Ann Smith	Ashfield District Council
Cllr Nicola Dillon Jones	North Kesteven District Council

Agenda

Safer & Stronger Communities Board

Thursday 18 March 2021

11.00 am

Online via Microsoft Teams

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Date of Next Meeting: Thursday, 17 June 2021, 11.00 am, TBC

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Note of the last Safer & Stronger Communities Board

Title: Safer & Stronger Communities Board
Date and time: Thursday 14 January 2021
Location: Videoconference via Zoom

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions
1	Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest The Chair welcomed members to the Safer and Stronger Communities Board meeting. No apologies were received. No declarations of interest were made.
2	Notes of the previous meeting Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board agreed the notes of the last Board meeting, held on Thursday 12 November 2020.
3	Government Review of the Gambling Act 2005 The Chair introduced the report which updated the Board on the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) review of the Gambling Act 2005. The Chair invited Tom Oldfield, Head of Online Gambling Policy and Susan Harling, Head of Land-based Gambling, Department for Culture Media and Sport to introduce the review. Tom explained that the current Gambling Act was published in 2005 and implemented in 2007, with significant changes in gambling patterns since necessitating an update of the Act. With the rise of smart phones and increase of online gambling, the update would ensure the existing regulatory framework is fit for purpose in the digital age and continues to meet its aims which are; to protect children and vulnerable people, prevent gambling related crime, and keep gambling fair and open.

Tom highlighted six key areas of focus:

- online protection – players and products

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- advertising, sponsorship and branding
- the Gambling Commission's powers and resources
- consumer redress
- the protection of young people – e.g) age limits and verification
- land based gambling.

Tom explained this was a wide-ranging review with the call for evidence to be used to inform proposed changes to the Act expected to be set out in a white paper next year.

Tom put forward four key questions likely to be of specific interest to the Board:

- Whether changes to casino regulations via the Act had met their objectives for the sector, in terms of supporting economic regeneration, tourism and growth while reducing risks of harm?
- Whether licensing and local authorities have enough powers to fulfil their responsibilities in respect of premises licenses and the objectives of the Act?
- Whether to moderately increasing the default number of category D and C gaming machines permitted in alcohol licensed premises?
- Whether current measures for preventing children accessing land-based gambling were sufficient?

Following the presentation, the Chair invited Cllr Kate Haigh, one of the Board's licensing champions, to offer a perspective on the LGA's response. Kate commented that this was a welcomed review of the Gambling Act 2005, which the Board had taken a keen interest in. The Board had recognised gambling harm as a significant factor in, poor mental health, debt, crime and sometimes suicide. She highlighted that there was scope to increase of inspection and enforcement in some areas but highlighted the important role of the Gambling Commission's regional compliance officers in supporting activity smaller councils undertaking less regular gambling compliance work. There was a need for stronger public health presence and Public Health England (PHE) were in favour of treating this as a direct public health issue with more needed to be done to support families with young children, past treatment, vulnerable groups. She noted that collecting evidence of harm can be difficult but that councils are often in the frontline to try to do this.

Kate mentioned she had recently attended the Peers for Gambling Reform group, which was in favour of stronger measures around restricting advertising, sponsorship, stake limits, loot boxes, affordability and the appointment of an ombudsman.

Following the discussion, Members made the following comments:

- Members raised that there were enormous gambling incentives being offered to people, and that COVID-19 will increase the impact of this, with many people at home suffering from stress, loss of jobs and boredom, posing a significant risk.
- Members commented that 'loot boxes' on online gaming platforms were targeted at children and caused significant harm to young people and children, suggesting that local authorities should look at tackling this through public health, education and providing support through school services.

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- Members commented that gambling has been a longstanding issue within sports, particularly within football, almost all football matches advertise betting and gambling organisations, as well as with broadcasting.
- Members raised that people were able to set up numerous accounts with different betting bodies which none were linked, causing massive debts.
- Member asked for further clarification on the role of the Ombudsman and what would be the impacts and outcome of the role.
- Members expressed that a clearer understanding of the issue at a regional or local level is needed.
- Members commented that in some local authorities betting shops had been converted to gaming centres, in which only 20% of the machines can be category D but there is no limit in number of machines.
- Members raised that there was an increase in online gambling heavily glamorised by endorsing celebrities to target and lure in younger audiences.
- Members commented that cumulative impact policies can work well if there is buy in.

The Chair thanked Tom, Susan and Kate for their contributions to the review. She summarised that councils have an important role on this issue, which needed to cover public health and the impact of online gambling.

Decision:

Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board noted the report.

Actions:

- Officers to develop a draft response to DCMS's review of the Gambling Act 2005, for sign off by Lead Members.
- Officers to consider including; enforcement role within local authorities, public health support for those who are vulnerable and educating children on online gambling and gaming platforms in draft response.

4 Resilient Communities

Ellie Greenwood, Senior Adviser introduced the report which outlined the proposed piece of work on community safety resilience.

Ellie invited Kersten England, Chief Executive of Bradford MBC and Solace lead for community safety and resilience to present her thoughts on resilient communities and the work Bradford had done in their area.

Kersten informed the Board that, alongside prosperity, she believed there were three key conditions needed to create resilient communities, which were:

- Infrastructure for community life – places and spaces bringing people together to build bonds, where communities can create opportunities.
- Engagement and participation of the whole community in what is happening in their locality ensuring they have a meaningful say in shaping their communities.
- A whole system and agencies working with a deep insight into their localities, focusing on early intervention strategies.

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Kersten commented that local authorities had a critical role to play, acting as conveners for communities within their localities, and noted the challenges of cuts, loss of community infrastructure (e.g banks, religious institutions) and absence of a coherent policy programme on communities over the past decade. She stressed that Bradford did not have all the answers and that much of what it was doing was not unique, but highlighted specific features within Bradford that are aimed at building resilience in the city:

- Area committee structures – based on constituency boundaries, with Ward Officers supporting both the committees and ward councillors. Ward Officers have daily involvement with youth and environmental services and support to the VCS, which starts to build a locally based and responsive approach.
- Asset based approach aimed at building resilience from a strength based approach. The council provides seed money, removes barriers and supports fund raising by local organisation, with a facilitated platform showcasing community action; Kersten noted that this is a model that applies beyond community safety to COVID, flooding etc.
- Locality based prevention – daily and habitual knowledge sharing of all agencies and sectors operating in an area with a shared understanding of individuals and families in communities, allowing issues to be addressed quickly before escalating to agency responses.
- Legacy of programmes from the late 1990s and early 2000s with community anchor organisations at locality level often asset owning and able to support different activities, such as children’s education, employment opportunities. There is a clear difference between communities that have these anchor institutions and those that don’t.

Kersten also talked about the factors she considered to be critical for success:

- Diversity of workforce – representing and reflecting the community they serve with over 30% of residents, 28% of their workforce and 24% of senior management roles were from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities.
- Celebrations and events – recognition and celebration of different identities and beliefs with cross-community interactions.
- Community mediators – from different backgrounds and communities to tackle issues within communities, e.g. anti-social behaviour, extremism, counter-terrorism and serious and organised crime.
- Enablers included a comprehensive and correlated set of data, policies on asset transfer and commissioning, communications and engagement, all of which had benefitted the council during COVID.

Following the discussion, Members made the following comments:

- Members commented the importance of structures reflecting diversity within communities needed to be further strengthened and with COVID-19, there was risk of increased risk of people feeling not part of their wider communities. Kersten responded that ‘Bradford For Everyone’ an organisation outside of the council with representatives from all parts of the district was overseeing the delivery of the local integration programme, supporting community mediation, hate crime, anti-groomer critical thinking and development and district vales.
- Members commented with the difficulties of COVID-19 there was a decline in intervention programmes being delivered due to the lack of face-to-face

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interaction, with local authorities needing support to reclaim online space reaching out across all platforms. Kersten responded that they had tried to maintain youth facing programmes in Bradford and had rolled out COVID Youth Ambassadors with diverse backgrounds to engage with thousands of young people each week. Regular meetings were held with the ambassadors to go through feedback and critique on the overall approach to COVID with insight from people across all online platforms.

- Members commented sharing case studies of best practice across the country was key to managing solutions together and asked how could this be done through the LGA faster to reach those local authorities needing support and further guidance.
- Members commented the report and proposed work built a strong platform for the LGA to go to government and request support, policies to be put in place at national level and funding to reinvest in these communities.

The Chair thanked Kersten for her stimulating and detailed overview on community safety resilience within Bradford.

Decision:

Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board noted the report.

Action:

- Officers to further scope out and take forward the proposed areas of work on community resilience.

5 Conspiracy theories and COVID-19

The Chair introduced the report which highlighted a number of cohesion and extremism issues for local areas.

The Chair invited Dr Gareth Harris, an independent researcher affiliated to Coventry University, and lead Facilitator of the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism (SIGCE), and Dr Valerie van Mulukom, a cognitive scientist at Coventry University, to provide an update to the Board on conspiracy theories in the context of COVID-19.

Dr Gareth Harris informed the Board that conspiracy theories pre-dated the COVID-19 pandemic and were often an integral part of extremist views. However, conspiracy theories thrive during times of uncertainty, using simple narratives to explain complex events, and coupled with increased use of the online space, recent months have seen more widespread circulation and endorsement. and which often express a distrust in the government, mainstream media and minority groups.

Gareth highlighted key conspiracy theories around the COVID-19 pandemic which include:

- The virus is a bio-weapon – deliberately developed by China to weaken the West.
- The 5G network is spreading the virus or lowering immunity to it – with reported attacks on 5G masts and engineers.

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- COVID-19 is a 'scamdemic' – a distraction from Government plans eg to erode personal freedom, microchip the population through vaccinations and de-population.

The increased online circulation of conspiracy theories has likely led to considerable offline activity, including anti-lockdown demonstrations and attacks on 5G masts drawing in a broader demographic in support. Networking between groups has exposed people to more extremist ideologies, deepening distrust in state agencies and mainstream media.

Dr Valerie van Mulukom introduced her presentation which outlined how both low levels of trust and information regarding the pandemic in an environment of threat and uncertainty have contributed to more widespread circulation and advocacy of conspiracy theories. COVID-19 conspiracy beliefs have negatively influenced adherence to COVID-19 safety guidelines, endangering the lives of many. Moreover, these beliefs have been linked to other problematic attitudes, such as prejudice and vaccine hesitancy.

Valerie highlighted that the COVID-19 pandemic was a hugely challenging time with two key factors of concern:

- Threat – e.g possibility of catching a potentially debilitating or lethal disease and possibility of losing jobs.
- Uncertainty – e.g not knowing/understanding the disease fully, uncertainty about the future, whether about social, health, or economic consequences.

Valerie explained that COVID-19 conspiracy beliefs followed from increased fear due to low levels of trust and low levels of comprehensive, accessible information.

The consequences of belief in conspiracy theories has included:

- Pseudoscientific practices – eg ingesting 'miracle cures' (including deadly substances such as methanol or disinfectant).
- Vaccination hesitancy – Theorists generally had anti-vaccination attitudes due to misinformation and incorrect beliefs.
- Hoarding – can help people to regain a sense of security and control (without relying on other people or institutions).
- Prejudice and discrimination – eg that COVID-19 is an artificially created threat associated with certain nationalities or communities.
- Violence – 5G COVID-19 conspiracy has been followed by public demonstrations, abuse of technicians and arson.

Valerie stated the following key factors contributed to COVID-19 conspiracy beliefs:

- distrustful personality traits
- distrust in authority
- fewer resources, e.g lower levels of psychological well-being, education and income
- lack of knowledge and understanding
- obtaining knowledge from social media

Valerie's research suggested that in the UK levels of trust in scientists were high, compared to levels of trust in government and other people. Based on the research

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results, Valerie concluded that there should be more focus on building trust in authorities and making information accessible.

Following the discussion, Members made the following comments:

- Members asked about the extent to which theorist beliefs were related to people feeling 'left behind', with e.g gaps between rich and poor. Dr Harris responded that there was no one single profile for those vulnerable to conspiracy theories and encompassed a broad group of people. There was a risk however in wide-ranging groups providing opportunities to cross-pollinate ideas cross network.
- Members raised the dangers of people going beyond main-stream social media platforms and reaching out on unregulated platforms. Dr Harris responded that de-platforming reduced reach, influence and how fast messages virally spread.
- Members commented that more support tools were needed for local authorities to confidently challenge these theories.
- Members asked about what advice there is for supporting people that already had deep conspiracy beliefs.

The Chair thanked Dr Gareth Harris and Dr Valarie van Mulukom for their insightful and detailed presentations.

Decision:

Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board noted the report.

Actions:

- Officers to consider what further support could be provided to local authorities to counter conspiracy theories.

6 Building Safety update

The Chair introduced the report which covers on the LGA's building safety related work since its last meeting.

Following the brief discussion, Members made the following comments:

- Members raised that there were still massive problems with the Waking watch costs which would require further discussions with the Grenfell Task Group.
- Members commented private building owners applying to government funds were being silenced with gagging clauses, stopping them from speaking to the press or other parties without government approval.

Decision:

Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board noted the report.

Action:

- Officers to pick up on gagging clauses and update the Board at the next meeting.

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7 Update paper

The Chair asked members to raise any points regarding the Update Paper by email if necessary.

Date of the next meeting: Thursday, 18 March 2021, 11.00 am, Videoconference via Teams.

Appendix A – Attendance

Position	Authority	
Chair	Cllr Nesil Caliskan	London Borough of Enfield
Vice Chairman	Cllr Katrina Wood	Buckinghamshire County Council
Deputy Chair	Cllr Bridget Smith	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Deputy Chair	Cllr Hannah Dalton	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Committee Member	Cllr Eric Allen	London Borough of Sutton
	Cllr Mohan Iyengar	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
	Cllr Andrew Joy	Hampshire County Council
	Cllr John Pennington	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr Dave Stewart	Isle of Wight Council – in attendance
	Cllr Lois Samuel	West Devon Borough Council
	Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucestershire City Council
	Cllr Alan Rhodes	Nottinghamshire County Council
	Mayor Damien Egan	Lewisham London Borough Council
	Cllr James Dawson	Erewash Borough Council
	Cllr Farah Hussain	Redbridge London Borough Council
	Cllr Johnson Situ	Southwark Council
	Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr Philip Evans JP	Conwy County Borough Council	
Substitutes	Cllr Jo Beavis	
	Cllr Jeanie Bell	
	Cllr Richard Auger	
	Cllr Tim Roca	
	Cllr Nicola Dillon Jones	
	Cllr James Gartside	
	Cllr Daniel Francis	
Cllr Paul Findlow		

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LGA Officers

Mark Norris
Ellie Greenwood
Lucy Ellender
Charles Loft
Rachel Duke
Rachel Phelps
Jessica Norman
Jade Hall
Joe Difford
Tahmina Akther

In attendance

Tom Oldfield
Susan Harling
Kersten England
Dr Gareth Harris
Dr Valerie van Mulukom

Head of Online Gambling Policy
Head of Land-based Gambling
Bradford MBC
Coventry University
Coventry University

Press

Daniel Peters

Municipal Journal

Update Paper

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

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

Recommendation

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

Action

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

Contact officer: Mark Norris
Position: Principal Policy Adviser
Phone no: 020 7664 3241
Email: mark.norris@local.gov.uk

Update Paper

Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse Bill

1. The LGA [briefed](#) Peers ahead of the House of Lords Report Stages for the Domestic Abuse Bill, held on the 8th, 10th and 15th March 2021. During Report Stage, the Government tabled [several amendments](#), which will be of interest to local authorities. These included:
 - 1.1 Placing a duty on the Domestic Abuse Commissioner to publish a report within 12 months of commencement on the need for community-based domestic abuse services and on the provision of such services.
 - 1.2 Amending the provisions in Part 4 of the Bill (which place a duty on tier one local authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children within safe accommodation) to require local authorities to monitor any impact on the new duty on the provision of community-based support in their area.
 - 1.3 Requiring public authorities conducting domestic homicide reviews to send a copy of their completed reports to the Domestic Abuse Commissioner.
2. It was positive to see the emphasis on the value of community-based support services during the final stages of the House of Lords debates. We will continue to work with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, councils and the domestic abuse support services to help secure greater investment in these early intervention and prevention services. We also welcome the changes to the Bill to share Domestic Homicide Reviews with the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, and hope this prompts more shared learning at a national level.
3. In our LGA briefing, we welcomed the £19 million additional Government funding announced in the [Budget 2021](#), which includes £15 million for perpetrator programmes and £4 million to trial a network of 'Respite Rooms' across England. We will continue to work with the Government to confirm further details about these funding announcements.
4. We also welcomed the Government's [funding allocation](#) of £125 million for local authorities to implement the forthcoming statutory duty in the Domestic Abuse Bill. Following feedback from local authorities, we called for clarity on the level of funding

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to be made available in future years, and for a realistic and feasible timeline for local authorities to implement the new duty.

5. It is worth noting the Government has also committed to considering the work with perpetrators as part of the future Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021. The LGA has also been invited to join the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's Perpetrator Strategic Group. We will provide feedback to the Board on progress made.
6. In addition to lobbying on the Domestic Abuse Bill, the LGA held a series of workshops with local authority officers in preparation for the new statutory duty on local authorities to deliver accommodation-based support and services. Over 400 delegates joined the workshop sessions and we have agreed a further two workshops with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in March 2021.

Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (2021 – 2024)

7. The LGA submitted a [response](#) to the Government's [consultation](#) on the development of the next Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (VAWG), highlighting the need for this to align with other strategies and legislation, including the Domestic Abuse Bill.
8. The Government's strategy (2021-2024) aims to focus on all forms of violence against women and girls and drive forward improvements in the effort to target perpetrators, placing victims and survivors at the heart of the approach, something the LGA supports.
9. We hope that the Strategy will consider the systemic barriers facing Black and minoritized women, migrant women, Deaf and disabled women, older women and LGBTQ+ survivors, as disadvantaged and vulnerable groups are disproportionately affected.
10. In line with this Strategy, it is helpful the Government has published a Male Victims' Position Statement to help clarify and strengthen the response to male victims of domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking and so-called 'honour' based abuse. In our response, we indicated our support for the development of an updated Male Victims Position Statement, in line with the updated VAWG Strategy.

Serious Violent Crime

Serious violent crime funding

11. The Government [announced](#) £30 million additional funding would be made available to support the police to take targeted action in parts of England and Wales most

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affected by serious violence. £23 million funding for new early intervention programmes to help stop young people being drawn into violent crime, was also [announced](#). Wider detail about the funding made available for tackling serious violent crime can be [found here](#).

Offensive Weapons Homicide Review

12. In March 2021, the LGA held a webinar session with local government officers on the Government's plans to introduce Offensive Weapons Homicide Reviews in the forthcoming Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill. These reviews are expected to take place following deaths of adults where offensive weapons have been involved and will require local agencies and safeguarding partners to examine individual cases so future deaths are prevented.
13. The Government [announced](#) £1 million would be made available to set up and start the pilot for new homicide reviews, and a further £1.8 million will be available next year to continue the pilot into 2022 to 2023.

Serious Violence Reduction Orders

14. The Government has published its response to the consultation on Serious Violence Reduction Orders. The response confirms that Serious Violence Reduction Orders will be introduced as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Bill on the basis of a targeted pilot.

Unauthorised encampments

15. The Government has published its consultation response on strengthening police powers to tackle unauthorised encampments. The Government intends to create a new criminal offence to target trespassers who intend to reside on any private or public land in vehicles without permission, and where they are causing significant disruption, distress or harm to local communities.
16. Police will be given powers to seize vehicles and arrest offenders. The measures are intended to target harmful encampments which reflect badly on the wider nomadic community as a whole, the majority of whom are law-abiding. The measures will be part of the new Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill.

Anti-social behaviour

Community Trigger

17. Vice-Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board, Cllr Bridget Smith, chaired a webinar on 'an introduction to the community trigger'. The webinar was attended by over 350 delegates, from a wide range of councils. Speakers included the Minister for Safeguarding Victoria Atkins MP (via video message), and guest

speakers from the organisation ASB Help. Following the session, over 50 councils have signed the ASB pledge to improve the information available online relating to the community trigger. If you missed the LGA's webinar on the Community Trigger last week, you can find a copy of ASB's Help's [presentation here](#).

Home Office's Anti-Social Behaviour Advisory Board

18. LGA officers attended the Home Office's Anti-Social Behaviour Advisory Board, convened in February 2021, to discuss current challenges facing all agencies in tackling anti-social behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic. Representatives agreed to implement an action plan, with a focus on improving the response to anti-social behaviour, sharing best practice and raising awareness of the community trigger and wider resolutions. There were also discussions about a proposed 'Anti-Social Behaviour Awareness Week', which may be promoted later in the year.

Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner appointed

19. The Home Secretary has [appointed](#) Fraser Sampson as the Government's new independent Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner, replacing the two part time posts of the Biometrics Commissioner and Surveillance Camera Commissioner.

Counter-extremism

20. In January we began delivery of two training courses for local authority practitioners on engagement and communication strategies to counter far-right extremism. The courses are aimed at a developing understanding of: audience segmentation; the issues that far-right actors use to mobilise support; strategies to build greater resilience to far-right mobilisation; and how communications and community engagement might be applied locally to diffuse and contain far-right narratives. Officers from around 40 councils have signed up for the free online sessions.
21. In February we supported the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism (SIGCE) to deliver a successful webinar on Balancing social media monitoring for community tensions and extremism against the protection of privacy. Cllr Dalton spoke at a further SIGCE event for members and officers in the East of England region, outlining the evolving extremism challenges facing local government and the continued need for national investment in work on countering extremism and building cohesion.
22. Following discussions at the last Board meeting on the pandemic and conspiracy theories, the LGA communications team ran a webinar on tackling vaccine hesitancy and misinformation earlier this month. [Presentations from the event will be available from the LGA website shortly](#). We have also been supporting work to commission

some new guidance for elected members on online harms, which will include sections on misinformation, extremism and radicalisation as well as other harms such as child sexual and criminal exploitation, addiction and intimidation.

LGA Virtual Annual Licensing Conference

23. In February, Cllr Eric Allen and Cllr Kate Haigh chaired virtual sessions of the LGAs Annual Licensing Conference. The conference which ran over three days was attended by over 800 Members and officers. The conference covered a range of different areas of licensing with a particular focus on the impact of COVID-19 on the licenced trade and what recovery might look like. Speakers including Minister for taxis Baroness Vere of Norbiton and UK Hospitality Chief Executive Kate Nicholls with delegates also hearing from a number of councils who reflected on their experiences and shared good practice.

COVID-19

Compliance and enforcement

24. We have continued our regular engagement with MHCLG and the Department of Health and Social Care on compliance and enforcement issues, which has remained a key area of focus for the Government. Following the challenging and rapid moves through the tier system in December, the subsequent lockdown has presented a more limited but nevertheless consistent set of challenges linked to persistent non-compliance by some businesses; councils have used the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Disorder Act 2014 and Local Government Act 1972 to compel non-compliant businesses to close: we hosted a webinar in March for more than 400 officers to discuss some of these cases.

25. Additionally, there has been ongoing frustration around mixed use premises and the lack of powers to compel businesses to close parts of stores selling non-essential items. Following concerns raised about the risk of infection in supermarkets, councils responded to the Government's request to undertake targeted compliance activity in these premises.

26. With council officers, we highlighted to Government the compliance and enforcement challenges councils experienced under the previous regulations, and how the framework could be strengthened in the roadmap for reopening. Many of the more difficult issues have been addressed through the removal of the substantial meal requirement, curfew for hospitality businesses and the opportunity for tier tourism. We have continued to emphasise to Government the need for consistency between the legal framework and accompanying guidance, with as much information as

possible included within the regulations to ensure that it is enforceable, and are hopeful that this will have been taken on board in the next iteration of the regulations.

27. Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick has written to council leaders in March to set out government measures to support hospitality businesses to reopen safely from April 12, as part of the second stage of the roadmap out of lockdown. This includes an extension of the new pavement licensing framework for 12 months to September 2022. Pubs will also continue to be able to have marquees up without planning permission for up to two months. We are supportive of continued flexibility but continue to engage with the Government and councils, to contribute to the development of workable and helpful guidance, as well as to help shape any longer term changes the government wishes to explore.
28. Looking ahead, the process of reopening will undoubtedly increase the demands on councils. Of particular concern is the withdrawal of the dedicated compliance fund, which has been rolled into wider Contain funding, as councils have been clear that without maintenance of this funding they will be unable to maintain levels of resourcing that have been in place throughout the winter. There is also a concern at the likely demands placed on councils by multiple businesses wishing to stage local events as we move through reopening, and ensuring that councils have sufficient time to review plans and support businesses to ensure COVID secure events. We are engaging with the Government on both these issues.
29. The cross-governmental Regulatory Services Task and Finish Group convened by MHCLG in response to concerns raised by the LGA and others about the demands placed on environmental health and trading standards has identified five workstreams including developing a forward look of burdens on regulatory services; tackling backlogs; workforce capacity and qualifications; cost recovery and income generation, and a government champion for regulatory services. We will input into all of these areas and are taking a lead, jointly with the Office of Products Safety and Standards (OPSS), on the sourcing, capacity and qualifications' workstream. Each workstream will develop recommendations to take back to the wider Task and Finish Group.

Other COVID activity

30. Members of the team have also continued to support the LGA's activity in relation to the national shielding programme, with shielding advice in place since the start of the third national lockdown. As was the case during the November lockdown, there have been comparatively few requests for councils to provide direct food support to CEV people, reflecting the efforts made by councils over summer and autumn to assist people to find sustainable ways to access food during the pandemic. However, there

were a significant number of requests for councils to support people who were shielding with basic care and support needs as well as general advice.

31. In February, the Government announced a significant expansion of the shielded population following an extensive piece of risk stratification work to identify factors that make people more vulnerable to COVID. The previous shielded list comprised 2.2m people and was based solely on the clinical conditions that individuals have. The updated list includes an additional 1.6m people identified on the basis of a combination of age, sex, ethnicity, body mass index and a range of clinical conditions which data suggests means they are at high risk from COVID-19. This cohort has also been advised to shield and added to the priority list for vaccinations, with members of the CEV group currently being invited for vaccines. To date, the increase has not prompted a significant increase in the numbers of the newly expanded cohort seeking support, although it has led to a number of queries and calls to council hubs and helplines.
32. The Government has also announced that it expects shielding to end by the end of March, by when it is expected that the CEV population will have been vaccinated. Councils have highlighted that they anticipate an ongoing role in supporting those who have been shielding to effectively re-engage with society following the requirement to shield for a substantial part of the past year.
33. We have also been contributing to the Government's work to develop a framework for non-financial, practical support for people required to self-isolate. This has been developed drawing on the experience of councils' work to provide the shielded group, and additional funding will be provided to enable a consistent

Modern slavery statements

34. On Thursday 11 March, the Government announced the launch of an online [registry](#) of modern slavery statements bringing together the transparency in supply chains (TISC) statements that businesses over a threshold of £36 million are required to produce annually. The registry was a commitment in the Governments TISC consultation, which is also expected to make it mandatory for councils with equivalent sized budgets to produce modern slavery statements. Led by the LGA's productivity team, the LGA has undertaken considerable work to support councils to produce voluntary statements as well as to the development of the registry, which will allow people to search and scrutinise the actions organisations are taking to identify and address modern slavery risks in their operations and supply chains.

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Protect Duty consultation

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

The Government has published a consultation document on a new Protect duty, aimed at helping to protect public venues and spaces from terrorist attacks. Home Office officials will attend the meeting to provide an overview of the proposals.

Recommendation:

That the Board notes the update and discusses the outline proposals.

Action:

Officers to take note feedback, to feed into the development of the LGA's consultation response.

Contact officer: Rachel Duke
Position: Adviser
Phone no: 07464 652612
Email: rachel.duke@local.gov.uk

Protect Duty consultation

Background

1. 'Protect' is part of the UK's 2018 counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. CONTEST comprises four strands; Pursue (catching terrorists before they carry out an attack); Protect (making infrastructure and similar targets less vulnerable to attacks); Prepare (planning responses in the event of an attack) and Prevent (stopping people from becoming terrorists or support terrorism).
2. Under the CONTEST strategy, Protect's objectives are to:
 - 2.1. Detect and deal with suspected terrorists and harmful materials at the border;
 - 2.2. Reduce the risk to and improve the resilience of global aviation, other transport sectors and critical national infrastructure most at risk to terror attack;
 - 2.3. Reduce the vulnerability of crowded places, specific vulnerable groups, and high profile individuals; and
 - 2.4. Detect and prevent terrorist access to and use of materials of concern, knowledge and information that could be used to conduct attacks.
3. The nature of the threats from terrorism continue to evolve. Attacks in recent years have taken place in open public places, requiring a shift in emphasis from protecting a smaller number of iconic sites, to protecting a larger number of public sites.
4. Last year the Government announced they would look to improve the safety and security of public venues and spaces with the introduction of a new statutory 'Protect Duty', aiming to reflect lessons learned following the terrorist attacks in 2017 and more recently. The proposals also follow discussions with victims' groups such as the Martyn's Law campaign, established by Figen Murray whose son was killed in the Manchester Arena attack. The proposals suggest that while there is already good work being done by many organisations, in the absence of a legislative requirement there is no certainty that effective security considerations are being undertaken by those operating sites and places open to the public.
5. The proposed duty will have a number of implications for local authorities. A [consultation on the scope of the duty](#) was launched at the end of February and will run until 2 July. Debbie Bartlett, from the Home Office's Office of Security and Counter Terrorism, will attend the meeting to provide an overview of the proposals.

Consultation proposals

6. The consultation notes that, with some exceptions (for instance on transport security and for certain sports grounds), there is no legislative requirement to consider or implement security measures at publicly accessible locations. However, there are many reasonable and appropriate measures which can be (and often are) undertaken by organisations who operate at such locations, including:

- 6.1. Having security plans and procedures to react and respond to different threats which are understood by all staff and regularly exercised
- 6.2. Having simple and freely available training and awareness courses in place as part of new staff and refresher training programmes
- 6.3. Employing simple security measures for crime prevention and anti-social behaviour, which may also be used in response to other security threats.

7. The consultation proposals cover four broad themes, as set out below.

Who should the legislation apply to?

8. The proposed duty could apply in three main areas (but may also apply to others exception):

- 8.1. Public venues (e.g entertainment and sports venues, tourist attractions, shopping centres)
- 8.2. Large organisations (e.g retail, or entertainment chains)
- 8.3. Public spaces (e.g public parks, beaches, thoroughfares, bridges, town / city squares and pedestrianised areas).

9. The consultation proposes that the duty:

- 9.1. should apply to owners and/or operators of publicly accessible venues with a capacity of 100 persons or more
- 9.2. should apply to large organisations (employing 250 staff or more) that operate at publicly accessible locations
- 9.3. should be used to improve security considerations and outcomes at public spaces.

What should the requirements be?

10. For public venues and large organisations within scope the consultation proposes that owners/operators should be required to:

- 10.1. Use available information and guidance provided by the Government (including the police) to consider terrorist threats to the public and staff at locations they own or operate

- 10.2. Assess the potential impact of these risks across their functions and estate, and through their systems and processes
 - 10.3. Consider and take forward 'reasonably practicable' protective security and organisational preparedness measures (for example staff training and planning for how to react in the event of an attack).
11. For publicly accessible locations, the consultation seeks feedback on what mechanisms are already being used to consider and mitigate terrorism threats, whether more could be achieved through them, or by establishing new requirements to discharge a Protect Duty at public spaces. It notes that many local, and other public authorities are already fulfilling a range of functions to consider aspects of crime prevention, public safety, and security, for instance CONTEST boards; Community Safety Partnerships; Local Resilience Forums and Licensing Committees; health and safety and fire safety.
12. The proposals suggest that a requirement for local authorities and other relevant partners for public spaces could include:
- 12.1. Developing local, strategic plans to mitigate the risks and impacts of terrorism
 - 12.2. Implementing proportionate measures through relevant systems, processes and functions to improve public safety and security
 - 12.3. Establishing clear roles and responsibilities for local partners
 - 12.4. Working with key partners (for instance the police) to consider how a security plan would operate in priority local areas.

How should compliance work?

13. For public venues, the consultation proposes that risk assessments required by the duty should demonstrate:
- 13.1. The range of threats that have been considered
 - 13.2. The steps that have been subsequently taken to mitigate these threats
 - 13.3. The steps that have been taken to prepare for and/or respond in the event of an attack
 - 13.4. Where steps have not been taken, the reasons why.
14. It also suggests that risk assessments will need to be recorded and retained by venues and organisations in scope and will need to be reviewed by their owner, at least once a year, and as and when circumstances change.
15. For public spaces, the consultation states that compliance requirements will be dependent on the outcome of discussions to determine what would constitute appropriate legislative requirements in these areas.
16. The document sets out that an inspection regime is likely to be required to ensure that those within scope of a Protect duty are meeting their requirements. It states that further

work is taking place to identify the most appropriate and cost-effective delivery authority and mechanisms for carrying out inspections, and what their powers should be; it is possible that this role could fall to local authorities.

How should government best support and work with partners?

17. The consultation notes the support and guidance offered by The Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure, National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) and Counter Terrorism Security Advisors (CTSAs) all currently provide advice to support local efforts. If a Protect Duty is developed, further advice and guidance could include:

- 17.1. Information regarding threat and attack methodologies
- 17.2. Advice on understanding risk assessment and managing risks
- 17.3. Outlining the considerations and tools which allow for mitigating threats through systems and processes
- 17.4. Detailed guidance on protective security and preparedness mitigations
- 17.5. Further bespoke support.

Discussion

18. The consultation document invites feedback on a range of issues. Members may wish to explore the following themes as part of the discussion:

- 18.1. Proportionality and practicality of the approach proposed
- 18.2. How risk assessments might be undertaken and by whom; and whether the insurance implications for these personnel have been explored. The reform of building safety post-Grenfell has run into repeated difficulties stemming from a lack of competent risk assessors and the difficulty in obtaining insurance for roles involving responsibility for the safety certification of cladding systems. We anticipate similar challenges here.
- 18.3. How mitigation measures might be funded where this is deemed necessary (we do not believe the New Burden's doctrine would apply for introducing new mitigating measures since this element of the duty would also apply to private sector bodies, although any regulatory role should attract new burdens funding)
- 18.4. How responsibility for some public spaces/outdoor areas may be difficult to determine, and therefore will this put local authorities at additional risk/under further demand on resources
- 18.5. Whether/to what extent LAs will be responsible for all areas beyond defined boundaries associated with specific venues/events etc (this might also include roads around venues); is there a risk that risk is displaced to other areas as a result of some measures

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18.6. Who will hold risk/responsibility for the threat

18.7. Local authorities' potential role in enforcement and regulation, and the resource implications of this.

Implications for Wales

19. The new duty will apply to the whole of the UK, however its delivery will impact on devolved issues. We understand that the Home Office is working with devolved governments to consider these implications in full.

Financial Implications

20. There are likely to be some financial and other resource implications for local authorities if the duty is introduced, for instance in assessing risk, introducing mitigation measures and potentially in enforcement.

Next steps

21. LGA officers will begin to develop the LGA's consultation response, drawing in policy expertise across a range of areas. Officers will also look to run a number of focus groups over the coming weeks to collate practitioner views.

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Serious violent crime

Purpose of report

For discussion

Summary

This paper provides a brief overview of the serious violent crime duty, as proposed in the forthcoming Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill. It accompanies a presentation by Sara Featherstone, Policy Lead for the Serious Violence Duty, Home Office and Sarika Spagnulo, Serious Violence Unit, Home Office.

Recommendation:

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

Action:

Officers to take forward as directed.

Contact officer: Rachel Phelps
Position: Adviser, Community Safety
Phone no: 07464 652844
Email: Rachel.Phelps@local.gov.uk

Serious violent crime

Background

1. Following the publication of the Government's [Serious Violence Strategy](#) in 2018 and a subsequent consultation on a new legal duty to support a multi-agency approach to preventing and tackling serious violence, in July 2019 the Government set out its intention to legislate to create a new legal duty to mandate local multi-agency working to tackle serious violence. The December 2019 Queen's Speech included a proposal for a Serious Violence Bill which would
 - 1.1 Create new duties on a range of specified agencies across different sectors, such as local government, youth offending, and health and probation, to work collaboratively, share data and information, and put in place plans to prevent and reduce serious violence within their communities.
 - 1.2 Amend the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to ensure that serious violence is an explicit priority for Community Safety Partnerships, which include local police, fire and probation services, as well as local authorities and wider public services.
 - 1.3 Ensure the police have the powers they need to keep weapons off the streets.
2. The Government outlined that the new Serious Violence Bill would complement the Government's investment in the 18 Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) established in the areas most affected by serious violence by ensuring that agencies work effectively together. Violence Reduction Units are expected to bring together different organisations, including the police, local government, health, community leaders and other key partners to tackle violent crime by understanding its root causes. The new units were responsible for identifying what is driving violent crime in the area and coming up with a co-ordinated response.
3. The LGA originally supported a non-legislative approach to strengthening multi-agency working in our response, and urged the Government to draw on the experience of VRUs before determining whether a duty was necessary. However, we have subsequently been working with the Home Office to contribute to the development of a duty that is practicable and helpful for local partners.
4. We have also consistently indicated our support for taking a public health approach to tackling serious violent crime, specifically focusing on additional funding for early

intervention and prevention, and highlighted the importance of adequately funding any new statutory duties placed on local authorities to tackle serious violent crime.

Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill

5. On 8 March 2021, the Government [announced](#) funding to tackle serious violent crime, including £30 million to support the police to take targeted action in parts of England and Wales most affected by serious violence and approximately £23 million for new early intervention programmes to help stop young people from being drawn into violence.
6. This funding followed an announcement in February that the 18 VRUs would [receive](#) a third year of funding (for the period 2021/2022), bringing total investment in them to approximately £105 million. The Home Office's [evaluation](#) of Violence Reduction Units (August 2020) found "good progress had generally been made by the VRUs over the first year of the programme, which had in most cases laid a foundation for a more evidence-based and targeted response to serious violence in year two of the programme".
7. Alongside the funding, the Government also announced the introduction of a major criminal justice bill, which will:
 - 7.1 Give police new stop and search powers to tackle known knife and weapons carriers.
 - 7.2 Place a duty on public sector bodies – including police, education and health agencies – to take a joined-up approach to addressing serious violence.
 - 7.3 Require local agencies to review the circumstances when an adult homicide takes place involving offensive weapons, such as knives, to ensure lessons are learnt and future deaths are prevented.
8. On 9 March 2021, the [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill](#) has its First Reading in the House of Commons. The statutory duty to tackle serious violent crime is outlined in the Bill, alongside a wide variety of other measures, including (but not limited to):
 - 8.1 Amendment of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998
 - 8.2 Introducing Offensive Weapons Homicide Reviews
 - 8.3 Criminal damage to memorials
 - 8.4 Imposing conditions on one-person protests
 - 8.5 Extending the positions of trust
 - 8.6 Criminal offences relating to unauthorised encampments
 - 8.7 Increased penalties for causing death by dangerous driving
 - 8.8 Minimum sentences for particular offences

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- 8.9 Amendments on cautions, custodial sentences and community sentences
- 8.10 Adding curfew and electronic tagging requirements to youth rehabilitation orders
- 8.11 Amendments to secure schools and secure children's homes
- 8.12 Introduction of Serious Violence Reduction Orders Management of sex offender and terrorist offenders

9. A number of these provisions are also expected to impact on councils' community safety work, in particular the creation of offensive weapons homicide reviews and measures to tackle unauthorised traveller encampments. We expect to bring these issues back to the SSCB at a future meeting.

New serious violence duty

- 10. Part 2 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill places a duty on specified authorities for a local government area to collaborate with the other specified authorities for that same area to prevent and reduce serious violence.
- 11. The specified authorities are chief officers of police, specified health authorities, local authorities, probation service providers, youth offending teams and fire and rescue services. The Bill outlines that each specified authority must collaborate with every other specified authority in that area, although it recognises the scale, scope and nature of that collaboration are likely to differ, depending on local circumstances.
- 12. Duty holders will be expected to work together to establish a local problem profile/ strategic needs assessment and develop and publish a local strategy which will outline the collective action they intend to take.
- 13. Local strategies will need to be published and subsequently reviewed on an annual basis. In doing so, partnerships will be expected to be able to self-monitor and collectively evaluate the impact of the local strategy.
- 14. In addition to the proposed serious violence duty, Clause 19 of the Bill seeks to amend the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The 1998 Act introduced Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) (formerly known as Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships) to help tackle crime and reduce offending. This clause amends the 1998 Act to ensure preventing and reducing serious violence is a priority for CSPs.
- 15. Following the Bill's passage through Parliament, the Home Office expect that the duty will come into force no sooner than 2022. Statutory guidance is expected to be produced to support organisations and authorities subject to the serious violence duty. The

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guidance will be subject to a formal Government consultation once the legislation successfully passes its passage through Parliament.

Possible questions (in response to the presentation from the Home Office)

16. Members of the Board may wish to raise the following questions with the Home Office:

- 16.1 How is 'serious violent crime' defined, in terms of the new statutory duty? Does it primarily relate to tackling serious violent crime that occurs in a public space?
- 16.2 Will local authorities receive adequate funding for implementing the new statutory duty, in order to help prevent and tackle serious violent crime?
- 16.3 How will health and education partners be involved in the statutory duty? And will the Departments for Education and Health and Social Care be working with other Government departments on the passage of this Bill?
- 16.4 Has there been a review of Community Safety Partnership arrangements, in particular to assess whether they currently prioritise serious violent crime?
- 16.5 What does the Government think will be the impact of amending the Crime and Disorder Act 1998?
- 16.6 Given the apparent success of the 18 Violence Reduction Units, will the Government look to establish additional VRUs in the remaining police force areas?

Implications for Wales

17. The new statutory duty is expected to apply to councils in Wales.

Financial Implications

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

Next steps

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

Building Safety update

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

This report updates members on the LGA's building safety related work since the last SSCB meeting.

Recommendation:

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

Action:

Officers to incorporate members' views in the LGA's ongoing building safety related work.

Contact officer:	Charles Loft
Position:	Senior Adviser
Phone no:	020 7665 3874
Email:	Charles.loft@local.gov.uk

Building Safety update

Remediation

Progress

1. [MHCLG statistics](#) show that by the end of January 2021, 91% (419) of all identified high-rise residential and publicly owned buildings in England had either completed or started remediation work to remove and replace unsafe Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding (93% of buildings identified in December 2019) – an increase of two buildings since the end of December 2020. During 2020, 159 buildings started works, compared to 90 in 2019 and 111 in 2018.
2. There are no social sector residential buildings that have yet to begin remediation; 144 (92%) have had their ACM cladding removed.
3. 84% (178) of private sector buildings have either completed or started remediation. Of these, 115 (54%) have had their ACM cladding removed. 46 Student blocks have completed with 8 underway and none yet to begin.
4. While these statistics suggest a positive direction of travel ACM buildings represent around a sixth of the total number of buildings over 18m with dangerous cladding and the improved rate is the result of significant official effort and ministerial pressure on owners.

Joint Inspection Team (JIT)

5. MHCLG has confirmed that the JIT will continue working next year with a remit that expands to cover non-ACM dangerous cladding. Work is underway to agree the details of the revised indemnity for the LGA from the Treasury for this expansion in the JIT's remit.
6. The team's inspections were briefly suspended due to Covid in January but have now resumed.

Fire Protection Board

7. The Building Risk Review programme overseen by the Board, remains ahead of its target schedule to ensure all residential buildings over 18m in height have been assessed or inspected by the end of 2021.

Waking watch relief fund

8. In December the Government announced that it would provide £30m to cover the cost of installing fire alarms in buildings that currently have a waking watch because they have dangerous cladding.

9. The fund was launched on 31 January, it applies to private sector buildings over 18m¹ in England only. To be eligible a building must have an unsafe cladding system with a waking watch in place where these costs have been passed on to leaseholders.
10. Social sector buildings where the Registered Provider can evidence that waking watch costs have been passed to leaseholders and the costs of installing an alarm will fall on leaseholders will also be eligible.
11. The fund will only cover the cost of alarms installed on or after 17 December 2020.
12. There will be a staged roll out of the fund with a six-week period in which applications must be made. This begins on 31 January 2021 and ends on 14 March 2021 for all buildings except private sector buildings in London, where arrangements for administering the fund are still being finalised.
13. Installation costs that are above a £1,500 per dwelling threshold will require additional scrutiny and may require additional evidence from the applicant to show whether the costs are necessary and reasonable.
14. £22 million of the £30 million funding available has been allocated to the eight metropolitan areas estimated to have the largest number of eligible buildings across England based on [Building Safety Fund: registration statistics](#) with adjustments made to account for social sector funding. These allocations are:

Local/Combined Authority	Allocated Funding (£m)
Greater London	16.1
Greater Manchester	2.1
Birmingham	1.1
Leeds	0.7
Liverpool	0.5
Bristol	0.5
Newcastle	0.5
Sheffield	0.5
Total	

¹ Actually, over 17.70m in height when measured according to diagram D6 of Approved Document B (Annex A).

15. In Manchester the Combined Authority will administer the fund; in London the GLA is expected to take on the role. In the other six areas local authorities have agreed to administer it.
16. The remaining £8 million of the fund will be centrally administered and is available to buildings across all other areas of England.
17. Guidance and application forms are available [here](#).
18. The fund has been developed very quickly. While this has drawbacks (e.g. it is not large enough to meet demand) it is understandable given that delivering the fund quickly is essential if it is to be of any value.
19. LGA was consulted by MHCLG as part of its development of the fund. However, MHCLG tended to discuss the matter directly with the councils involved. At the time of writing the greater difficulty posed by administering the fund in London are we understand close to being resolved.

Leaseholder costs

20. In January the LGA published [a position statement on leaseholder costs](#).
21. On 10 February, the Secretary of State announced further measures in response to the cladding crisis. The announcement has three key elements set out on the [Government website](#). The Government has said the measures announced will:
 - 21.1 provide reassurance and security to leaseholders;
 - 21.2 give mortgage providers confidence that where cladding removal is needed, properties will be worth lending against; and
 - 21.3 will mean people living in homes which they have been prevented from selling, or re-mortgaging, through no fault of their own, will now be able to move on with their lives.
22. The first element is **£3.5bn to pay for cladding remediation over 18m**.
 - 22.1. This is simply an increase (a very substantial one) in the £1bn already announced for the non-ACM Building Safety Fund. The level of increase suggests the HCLG Select Committee was right to estimate that the initial £1bn would cover less than a quarter of the full cost.
 - 22.2. There is a 30cm tolerance in the 'over 18m' requirement, meaning that buildings over 17.7m can apply.
 - 22.3. The fund only covers external wall systems but does cover insulation as well as cladding. The Government website implies that the new money will be subject to the same limitations as the existing non-ACM fund, which would

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mean that it will [not cover balconies](#), but would cover render-based systems and cavity barrier issues within cladding systems. We are checking these details with MHCLG.

22.4. We have also asked MHCLG to confirm it will cover costs to leaseholders that are imposed by social providers where social providers own blocks (as the initial £1bn covered this).

23. The second element is low interest loans for cladding remediation for buildings of 4-6 stories or 11-18m.

23.1. Interest payments will be capped at £50 per month for each leaseholder. We understand that costs that cannot be met through the repayments will be met by the taxpayer.

23.2. It is unclear what effect this might have on the value of a flat, but it might be expected to reduce the value by an amount that would reduce a typical mortgage by £50 per month. We have seen no reference to a time limit on the payments, but there have been [suggestions](#) by campaigners that £50 per month would service a loan of between £14,500 over 30 years or up to £25,000 over 60 years, each at 1.5%.

23.3. At present the loans only cover cladding costs.

23.4. A key question raised by leaseholders is whether the loan stays with the property or with the leaseholder.

23.5. We are seeking further information from the Government.

24. The third element is measures to make the industry pay. This comes in two parts:

24.1. A 'Gateway 2' developer levy. This will be payable when developments pass through Gateway Two of the new Building Safety system (GW2). GW2 will not exist until the Building Safety Bill becomes law at some point in 2022 and will only apply to 'high risk' residential buildings (currently defined as those over 18m). GW2 is the beginning of construction. It is likely that this announcement will encourage developers to seek planning permission as soon as possible and seek to technically commence work before the levy can be introduced. This would be unfortunate, given that the purpose of GW2 is to ensure buildings are built safely. The LGA will raise this with MHCLG.

24.2. A new tax will be introduced for the UK residential property development sector. This will raise at least £2 billion over a decade to help pay for cladding remediation costs. The tax will ensure that the largest property developers make a fair contribution to the remediation programme, reflecting the benefit they will derive from restoring confidence to the UK housing market. The government will consult on the policy design in due course.

- 24.3. The LGA has already asked MHCLG whether the GW2 levy will apply to social providers and has stressed the need to ensure the cost of any levy is kept separate from s.106 and does not erode the value of that to councils.

Will this solve the problem?

25. The initial reaction from cladding campaigners has been negative, and it appears that [Conservative backbenchers](#) will not drop their proposed amendment to the Fire Safety Bill, prohibiting landlords from passing costs on to leaseholders, when it returns to Parliament later this month.
26. Much of this opposition is based on two arguments about fairness.
- 26.1. Why should cladding issues be covered when other fire safety issues are not? The Government has previously indicated that cladding poses a particular risk because it spreads fire, while compartmentation issues are simply a failure of measures that resist the spread of fire. While this is a valid safety distinction that could usefully be taken into account when considering the need for remediation, once remediation is deemed necessary the financial consequences of these building/regulatory failures for leaseholders are the same.
- 26.2. Why should buildings over 18m have all their costs covered while those in blocks of 4-6 storeys only get low-interest loans and those in blocks under 4 storeys get nothing? Again, the Government argues that the higher blocks pose a greater danger (which is broadly true) and once again, although this might mean remediation is less likely to be required in lower blocks, it is irrelevant once remediation is deemed necessary.
27. With the exception of those living in blocks over 18m where the only issues is cladding remediation, the announcement does not appear to have provided security or reassurance to leaseholders.
28. Aside from arguments about fairness, the success or failure of this initiative is likely to rest on whether it resolves the problems of mortgage lending and unblocks the housing market – as indicated in the Government’s stated aims.
29. These measures will not in themselves remove the demand for EWS1 forms, because buyers will want a clear indication of what the position in relation to a given block is. The difficulty in obtaining these forms derives from a lack of qualified surveyors and the difficulty of obtaining professional indemnity insurance, so in that respect the measures above are unlikely to have any effect.
30. It is conceivable that in blocks of 4 storeys and higher, where the only remediation required is covered by the new arrangements (i.e. only cladding is affected), flats will be

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mortgageable and sellable once the funding is in place – whether a grant or a loan (whether buyers will be found before remediation is complete must be open to question).

31. However it is unclear what the impact of remediation loans on prices will be for blocks between 4 and 6 storeys and how mortgage lenders will react to clients whose flats have been reduced in value by the effect of remediation loans, but whose outgoings are now increased by the cost of those loans.
32. A key unknown is what proportion of blocks *only* have cladding issues. Our understanding is that in one major city half the blocks with interim measures do not have cladding issues and would therefore not benefit from these measures. Moreover, some of the buildings with cladding issues will have other issues *as well* and so will only derive partial relief from the new arrangements.
33. If this is a typical scenario it seems likely that a significant proportion of flats will remain unmortgageable for the foreseeable future, even if the EWS1 issues are resolved. It is also possible that the measures outlined may not bring relief even to all leaseholders over 18m with cladding issues. However, this is very much an initial impression and members may have additional points.

Social landlords

34. We understand the Government is not going to help social providers with remediation costs except where these might fall on leaseholders or where a provider's viability is threatened.
35. We have asked MHCLG whether it has any views on mitigating the impact of these costs on maintenance and improvement budgets (bearing in mind that cost pressures on social housing provider refurbishment were a significant factor in causing this crisis in the first place).
36. We have also asked whether the Government is expecting applications to raise rents above the usual cap?
37. We are seeking views of member councils on the impact these costs are having and may have in the future.

EWS form

38. Earlier this month RICS published [updated information on the EWS1 form](#), including a [Q&A](#). We have questions about the content of the guidance which we have raised with MHCLG.

Reform

Building Safety Bill

39. The Government has still not responded to the HCLG Select Committee's pre-legislative scrutiny of the Bill (nor has it responded to the PAC report).

Fire Safety Bill

40. The Bill returned to the House of Commons for the start of ping pong on 24 February. The LGA [briefed for the debate](#). The commons overturned two Lords amendments: one on leaseholder costs and another on the implementation of some of the recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. The Bill returns to the Lords on 17 March. It is now expected to commence in June.

41. The LGA continues to be involved in producing guidance to accompany the commencement of the Bill.

Implications for Wales

42. The devolved administrations will receive additional funding through the Barnett formula, except where new departmental spending is funded by an England-only levy (where the devolved administrations can instead implement their own levies should they choose to do so).

43. 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

44. 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

45. Officers to continue to support the sector's work to keep residents safe and reform the buildings safety system, as directed by members.