

Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

Title:	Safer & Stronger Communities Board
Date:	Tuesday 21 September 2021
Venue:	Beecham Room, 7th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

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

Item	Decisions and actions
------	-----------------------

1	Welcome, Apologies & Declarations of Interest
---	--

The Chair welcomed members to the Safer and Stronger Communities Board meeting.

Apologies were received from Cllr Arnold Saunders with Cllr James Gartside in attendance as substitute.

Declarations of interest were made by Cllr Lewis Cocking, who informed the Board he was Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire.

The Chair paid tribute on behalf of the Board to Cllr Anita Lower who sadly passed away this year. Cllr Lower had served six years on the Board as Deputy Chair and contributed 25 years of service to the Liberal Democrats representing Newcastle upon Tyne Council.

2	Notes of previous meeting
---	----------------------------------

Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board agreed the notes of the last Board meeting, held on Thursday 17 June 2021.

3	Areas for joint working with the APCC
---	--

The Chair informed the Board that the order of the items in the meeting had been rearranged to accommodate guest speakers and item five would be taken first. The Chair introduced the report which outlined preliminary ideas on areas of joint work between the LGA and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and sought members' agreement on working together more closely on them.

Mark Norris, Principal Policy Advisor, informed the Board that since the formation of the APCC there had been an on-going

relationship with the LGA. A joint partnership board was created between the two Associations in 2013 and ran for around a year and unfortunately declined into inactivity. Since then, engagement had begun between the two Associations and had been on a topic-by-topic basis at an officer level.

Mark invited Marc Jones, the Chair of the APCC and Susannah Hancock, the APCC's Chief Executive to outline possible areas the Board and APCC could work together on and the potential advantages of doing so.

Marc introduced himself and informed the Board that given his background in local government he understood the importance of the APCC and the LGA working closely together to achieve common goals, such as lobbying for effective policies from a national level and developing asks for money to deliver services. Marc then went on to highlight that there were many similarities in the issues that were being discussed within the Boards remit and the APCC, for example domestic abuse and VAWG. Marc commented that from personal experience he was well aware that funding opportunities from government were usually one-off and would normally be received far later than expected with little time to spend, minimising the impact of delivery to services.

Susannah highlighted that one of the APCC's key strategic partnership relationships for the year ahead was with the Safer and Stronger Communities Board with the objective of strengthening the relationship with the LGA. Another key area of focus was supporting community safety (CSP) partnerships as they were critical in commissioning and delivering services on the ground, but unfortunately, they remained under resourced. Susannah then mentioned that there were new policies and legislations which expected CSP's to deliver more. She posed the question of whether there should be a National Community Safety Board, which would bring government departments together with the APCC and LGA, to discuss community safety issues at the national level.

Following the discussion, Members made the following comments:

- Members noted that although some challenges and issues are similar nationally, some of the challenges CSPs deal with differ across the country so local responses had to be different too.
- Members commented that it would be worth broadening the remit to include how the work of Violence Reduction Partnerships are triangulated with CSP's, as they were a major source for funding in local areas but often had little political oversight. Marc recognised that it was contentious that a significant amount of money had been allocated to tackle violence within just 18 police force areas. Marc agreed that partnerships needed to be strong when spending public money, especially when they cross other work and funding streams. Susannah added that they have been pressing the government to ensure that when

new money comes down the line, existing partnerships were used where possible, allowing one place for strategic planning.

- Members sought clarification of the parties proposed for the National Community Safety Board. Susannah replied that at a CSP level it would include DHSC, DHULC, police, local authorities and other government departments and that it was open for suggestions from the Board. Mark responded that officers at the LGA and APCC would like to work together to create a proper proposal to see what the National Community Safety board would look like at a national level with help and support from relevant government departments. The broad proposal was that a Board would pick up on issues from CSPs to feed back to government to change policies.
- Members commented that in looking at gambling harms a stronger focus was needed on regulating gambling on the internet, apps and social media, as it was a problem which was not policed. In response, the Chair agreed that there was a shift in challenges faced around gambling online and that there was an opportunity for legislation around licencing and the role of local government: this was a broader conversation to be had.
- Members raised if this was the right time to lobby government to introduce a new national board as it may confuse the ask.

The Chair summarised that while some members were supportive of the idea of a national board, and support for closer working, there was apprehension from the Board around agreeing to a national board, as more clarification was needed on the scope of board, partnerships involved and an understanding of if this board would fill in any gaps or would this be another added layer of bureaucracy.

Marc agreed with the comments made by members and concluded that further discussions were needed on the necessity of the Board and the value it would add.

Decision:

Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board agreed the actions set out in paragraph 22.2.

Action:

- Officers to explore the scope and benefit of the National Community Safety Board.

4 LGA submission to Part 2 of the Home Office's Review of Police and Crime Commissioners

The discussion for this item is confidential and has been distributed to members of the Board separately.

5 Safer and Stronger Communities Board 2021-22

- a) Terms of reference
- b) Board Membership 2021-22
- c) Board meetings for 2021-22
- d) Board member champions role description (including Equalities Advocate)

The Chair introduced the report which outlined how the Safer and Stronger Communities Board operated and how the LGA worked to support the objectives and work of its member authorities. The Chair commented that she would like the opportunity to discuss the member champion roles and equalities advocate with lead members before appointing roles to members of the Board.

Following the discussion, Members made the following comment:

- Members flagged that the next Board meeting clashed with Remembrance Sunday preparations and if this could be moved to a more suitable date.

Decision:

Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board:

- agreed its Terms of Reference (**Appendix A**);
- formally noted the membership for 2019/20 (**Appendix B**);
- noted the dates of the future meetings (**Appendix C**); and

Actions:

- Officers to rearrange the next Board meeting as it conflicted with some member diaries.
- Lead members to discuss member champion roles and equalities advocate role.

6 Safer and Stronger Communities Board Overview Paper and Policy Priorities for 2021-22

The Chair introduced the report which provides an overview of the issues the Board has focused on in recent years, alongside proposals for the Safer and Stronger Communities Board's (SSCB) work programme for 2021-22 and the member champion roles.

Mark highlighted the following key areas of focus within the Boards work programme:

- Community safety
- Blue light services, civil resilience and water safety
- Prevent, counter extremism and cohesion
- Regulatory services and licensing
- Crematoria, funerals, coroners and registrars
- Building safety

Following the discussion, Members made the following comments:

- Members agreed with the focus on strengthening use of the National Register of Revocations and Refusals (NR3) to ensure sharing of information on drivers who had had licences revoked to prevent them securing licences elsewhere. However, public service vehicles should also be considered for inclusion, particularly minibus drivers.
- Members commented the building safety updates were important as there were still a lot of loose ends that the government has not addressed.
- Members raised that they would like to discuss cyber security at future Board meetings; it was noted that the LGA runs a comprehensive programme on this.
- Members welcomed the broad programme but urged caution that the breadth of work did not become a weakness.

The Chair concluded that the priorities for the year were very specific this year but, that would allow the Board to focus on particular outputs. The Chair also mentioned the Gambling Review being undertaken by the government which would be of interest to the Board and could be a future item on the agenda for discussion.

Decision:

Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board approved the draft work programme.

Actions:

- Officers to take forward the work programme as approved and develop a forward plan to help monitor this.
- Officers to provide briefing on cyber security support and events for members.
- Officers to circulate draft briefing of Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism (SIGCE) to members and include a detailed conversation at the next Board meeting.

7 National resilience strategy - overview and draft LGA response

Ellie Greenwood, Senior Adviser, introduced the report which summarised the key issues for councils in relation to the national resilience strategy call for evidence and sought the Board's approval for the draft LGA response to the consultation.

Ellie informed the Board that in July, the Government had launched a call for evidence on a new national resilience strategy and an associated review of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The call for evidence outlined six key themes: risk and resilience; roles and responsibilities; partnerships; communities; investment, and resilience in an interconnected world.

Ellie updated the Board that a short paper was taken to the LGA group leaders and Chairman to get their steer on the issue. They

unanimously agreed that the role of members needed to be formally reflected within the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 albeit with flexibility around this, given the different structures there are locally.

Ellie put forward the following questions to the Board:

- What is the Board's experience of involvement in resilience work locally, including at the very different stages of preparedness, response and recovery? Is the role of councillors clear?
- What engagement and communication do local civic leaders have with local resilience forums in your areas?
- What roles do the Board think that councillors should have on these issues going forward?
- How can local councils and councillors support their communities to understand and prepare for local risks? How do we develop a whole of society approach to resilience?

During the discussion, Members made the following comments:

- Members commented that they fully supported elected members being more involved. Councillors' contributions were essential and transformative in gaining community buy-in and addressing inclusivity issues especially during the pandemic. Councillors can play a key role in identifying and joining up community resources before and after a crisis.
- Members questioned how things worked in two-tier areas during the pandemic and that it would be helpful to share best practice to understand what worked well and what didn't. Some members felt that ward members had not been kept informed during the pandemic, but that they were community leaders who would be the first port of call for resident queries and concerns.
- Members asked if the review was focusing on the issues that councils should be considering, eg food security, supply chains etc posed risks for the future.
- Members emphasised councillors' key roles in emergency planning and response as political, civic and community leaders. It was noted that the need to manage uncertainty and disruption would become more common.
- Members agreed that there needed to be political neutrality within local resilience forums.
- Members raised that there were cross-border communication issues along the English/Welsh border, which were highlighted especially during the pandemic.
- Other members highlighted the importance of coterminous boundaries in supporting the smooth operation of LRFs, and suggested this be reflected in the draft response.
- Members commented that locally elected representatives have the ability to scrutinise local government compliance with the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Local authorities should have been planning and preparing for every potential risk over a number of years with risk

registers in place on an annual basis.

- Members reflected the tensions between dealing with immediate crises versus a long term crisis, arguing that councils already had structures that ensured democratic checks and balances for dealing with long running issues.

Decision:

Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board agreed the draft response, subject to any necessary amendments.

Action:

- Officers to amend the response in line with feedback given by members of the Board.

8 Update Paper

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

Following the discussion, Members made no comments.

Decision:

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

9 Building Safety update

The Chair introduced the report which report updated members on the LGA's building safety work since the Board's last meeting.

Charles Loft, Senior Adviser informed the Board of the following key points in the report:

- Remediation -
 - Since the report was written MHCLG had been renamed to Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC).
 - The Building Safety Bill passed its second reading in the House of Commons before the summer recess and is about to enter the Commons' committee stage, where the LGA gave oral evidence on 9 September. Concerns have been raised by the Fire Chiefs Council and from other concerned parties that the funding proposed would not be substantial.
 - The Fire Safety Act was expected to commence in mid-October. Following lobbying from the LGA (and the NFCC) the Home Office has agreed that it would not commence ahead of the completion of work on the Building Prioritisation Tool.
 - We are waiting to hear from DLUHC if the costs imposed on councils as landlords by the Building Safety Bill and by fire safety reform needed to be

- covered by new burdens funding.
- Lobbying around personal emergency evacuation plans had been successful, with the Home Office looking into the policy development again.

Following the discussion, Members made no comments.

The Chair concluded the item and brought the meeting to a close.

Decision:

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

Date of Next Meeting: Tuesday, 9 November 2021, 13.00 pm,
Beecham Room, 7th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Nesil Caliskan	Enfield Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Mohan Iyengar	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
	Cllr Clive Woodbridge	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Members	Cllr Eric Allen	Sutton London Borough Council
	Cllr Bill Borrett	Norfolk County Council
	Cllr Lewis Cocking	Broxbourne Borough Council
	Cllr Julia Lepoidevin	Coventry City Council
	Cllr Lois Samuel	West Devon Borough Council
	Cllr Asher Craig	Bristol City Council
	Cllr Alan Rhodes	Bassetlaw District Council
	Mayor Damien Egan	Lewisham London Borough Council
	Cllr Jeanie Bell	St Helens Council
	Cllr James Beckles	Newham London Borough Council
	Cllr James Dawson	Erewash Borough Council
	Cllr Jon Ball	Ealing Council
	Cllr Philip Evans JP	Conwy County Borough Council
Apologies	Cllr Arnold Saunders	Salford City Council