



Government
Association

Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Agenda

Thursday, 16 June 2022
11.00 am

Beecham Room, 7th Floor, 18 Smith
Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

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

www.local.gov.uk

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Safer & Stronger Communities Board
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There will be a hybrid meeting of the Safer & Stronger Communities Board at **11.00 am on Thursday, 16 June 2022** via Microsoft Teams and Beecham Room, 7th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ.

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

Attendance:

Your attendance, whether it be in person or virtual, will be noted by the clerk at the meeting.

LGA Contact:

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

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Safer & Stronger Communities Board – Membership 2021/22

Councillor	Authority
Conservative (6)	
Cllr Lewis Cocking (Vice-Chair)	Broxbourne Borough Council
Cllr Eric Allen	Sutton London Borough Council
Cllr Bill Borrett	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Julia Lepoidevin	Coventry City Council
Cllr Lois Samuel	West Devon Borough Council
Cllr Arnold Saunders	Salford City Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Graeme Coombes	Bedford Borough Council
Cllr Paul Findlow	Cheshire East Council
Cllr James Gartside	Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Labour (7)	
Cllr Nesil Caliskan (Chair)	Enfield 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
Substitutes	
Cllr Kaya Comer-Schwartz	Islington London Borough Council
Cllr Margaret Mullane	Barking and Dagenham London Borough
Cllr Clive Johnson	Medway Council
Liberal Democrat (2)	
Cllr Heather Kidd (Deputy Chair)	Shropshire Council
Cllr Jon Ball	Ealing Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Kris Brown	Liverpool City Council
Independent (1)	
Cllr Clive Woodbridge (Deputy Chair)	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Substitutes	
Cllr Nicola Dillon Jones	North Kesteven District Council
Cllr Karen Lucioni	Isle of Wight Council
Cllr Paul Hilliard	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council

Agenda

Safer & Stronger Communities Board

Thursday 16 June 2022

11.00 am

Hybrid via Microsoft Teams and Beecham Room, 7th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

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Date of Next Meeting: Thursday, 22 September 2022, 11.00 am, Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

Note of the last Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Title:	Safer and Stronger Communities Board
Date and time:	Thursday 24 March 2022
Location:	Hybrid via Microsoft Teams and Victoria Room, 7 th 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 and Substitutes, Declarations of Interest The Chair welcomed members to the Safer and Stronger Communities Board meeting. No apologies were received. Cllr Cocking declared that he was a Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire.
2	Notes of previous meeting Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board agreed the notes of the last Board meeting, held on Thursday 20 January 2022. Cllr Rhodes highlighted that he had not sent his apologies for the last meeting and was in attendance.
3	Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism - CONFIDENTIAL The discussion for this item is confidential and has been distributed to members of the Board separately.
4	Update on Part Two of the Police and Crime Commissioner Review - CONFIDENTIAL The discussion for this item is confidential and has been distributed to members of the Board separately.
5	Taxi/ PHV licensing update The Chair introduced the item which provided an update on current issues in taxi licensing and the LGA's work on taxi licensing reform.

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The Chair invited Jade Hall, Policy Adviser, to add any comments. Jade informed the Board that paper set out a number of lobbying asks on taxi/private hire vehicle (PHV) licensing reform and the proposal set out in the Levelling Up White Paper, which sought to transfer control of taxi/PHV licencing to combine upper tier authorities.

In the discussion, Members made the following comments:

- Members commented that they were broadly supportive of the LGA's lobbying asks, which had been discussed extensively at previous Board meetings.
- Members were concerned about the taxi licensing proposal in the Levelling Up White Paper. They felt taxi/PHV licensing is fundamentally a local issue with important safeguarding implications, and that while more consistency was desirable across authorities, there was a concern that moving licensing to combined authorities might see standards reduce.
- Members also questioned which councillors would be able to undertake appeals if responsibility sat at combined authority level: local accountability was important.
- The opportunity for a joint policy to be administered by districts in a county council area was suggested as one way of improving consistency of standards.
- Members highlighted that the points made in paragraph 17 were important as changes needed to be made as part of a bigger package of taxi/PHV reform, including new legislation. They also highlighted concerns about taking away taxi/PHV licensing from smaller licensing teams as this may impact on other areas of licensing and staffing levels.
- Members highlighted concerns about limiting out of area working by drivers and questioned the practicalities of introducing measures to address this. However, members highlighted how this is causing firms in some areas to go out of business because they are losing out to out of area workers who are only available during certain periods of the day.
- Members pointed out that people with criminal backgrounds could move around to neighbouring authorities and be approved. This sparked discussion about modern slavery, safeguarding and sexual exploitation issues.
- Inconsistency across authorities was concerning, especially around safeguarding. A best practice model was needed, ensuring certain standards were mandatory, and a national database was also long overdue.
- Members raised that if taxi licensing was moved to a county council level, this could cause challenges in terms of the location of courts.

The Chair concluded that taxi/PHV licensing decisions should be made as locally as possible, elected accountability was an important element, cross border hire raised standardisation issues and any changes needed to be part of a wider package of reform.

Decision:

That members of the Board noted the item.

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6 Update paper

The Chair briefly introduced the item and asked members for any comments, which were as followed:

- Members highlighted that as many Ukrainians crossed borders to safety, especially women and children, they were at risk of modern slavery. As a community it was important to welcome as many families as possible.
- Dame Sara Thornton DBE QPM, Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, was recognised by the board for the excellent work she had done ahead of her term of office ending shortly.

Decision:

That members of the Board noted the item.

Action:

- Officers to circulate drugs consultation to all Board members.

7 Building Safety Update

Due to the meeting overrunning, the Board noted the item.

8 AOB

Cllr Philip Evans informed the Board that this would be his last Board meeting as he was retiring. The Chair thanked Cllr Evans for his work in local government and on the Safer and Stronger Communities Board.

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday, 6 June 2022, 11.00 am, Hybrid via Microsoft Teams and 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Appendix A – Attendance

Position	Authority	
Chair	Cllr Nesil Caliskan	London Borough of Enfield
Vice Chairman	Cllr Mohan Iyengar	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
Deputy Chair	Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
Deputy Chair	Cllr Clive Woodbridge	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Committee Member	Cllr Eric Allen	London Borough of Sutton
	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 Arnold Saunders	Salford City Council
	Cllr Asher Craig	Bristol City Council

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Cllr Jeanie Bell	St Helens Council
Cllr Alan Rhodes	Bassetlaw District Council
Mayor Damien Egan	Lewisham London Borough 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

Substitutes

Cllr James Gartside
Cllr Graeme Coombes
Cllr Paul Findlow
Cllr Kaya Comer-
Schwartz
Cllr Margaret Mullane
Cllr Clive Johnson
Cllr Kris Brown
Cllr Nicola Dillon Jones
Cllr Karen Lucioni
Cllr Paul Hilliard

In attendance

Dr Gareth Harris SIGCE

LGA Officers

Mark Norris
Ellie Greenwood
Lucy Ellender
Charles Loft
Rachel Duke
Rachel Phelps
Rachel Aldridge
Jade Hall
Tahmina Akther

Spiking incidents: current picture and activity

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This paper provides an update on the LGA's activity in response to reports of an increase in the prevalence of spiking incidents, accompanying an update to the Board from Gabby Chamberlain, spiking lead at the Home Office.

Recommendation/s

Board members to provide their views on the LGA's work on spiking.

Action/s

Officers to take forward as directed.

Contact officer: Jade Hall
Position: Policy Adviser
Phone no: 07818 577467
Email: jade.hall@local.gov.uk

Spiking incidents: current picture and activity

Background

1. As the Board will be aware from media coverage, in recent months there has been an increase in reports of spiking. Spiking has traditionally been the term for when alcohol or drugs are put into someone's drink without their knowledge or consent. More recently, another form of spiking has been reported that involves individuals being injected by a needle without their consent.
2. To date, there has been limited evidence of secondary offences, for example theft or sexual assault, associated with the recent increase in spiking allegations. The police are continuing to analyse evidence to try and determine the motives for offences where they have been reported.
3. In response to the increase in spiking reports the LGA and other partners, such as the Institute of Licensing, UK Hospitality, the British Beer and Pub Association, and the Metropolitan Police, issued a joint position statement to encourage licensed premises to be proactive and take steps to improve safety for customers on a night out. This includes ensuring all incidents of alleged spiking are reported to the police and venues; providing appropriate training on preventing and responding to spiking to relevant members of staff; reviewing searching procedures and amending if necessary; and ensuring consideration is given to displaying information about spiking in licensed premises.
4. In December 2021 the Home Affairs Select Committee launched an inquiry into spiking. Cllr Jeanie Bell, one of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board's Licensing Champions, provided evidence to the Committee on behalf of the LGA.
5. Cllr Bell outlined the role of councils in responding to spiking incidents. She highlighted the crucial role that councils play in facilitating partnership working to prevent spiking and issues in the night time economy more generally, and the powers licensing committees have to respond to safeguarding incidents in licensed premises. We also [submitted written evidence](#) to the Committee to compliment Cllr Bell's evidence. This evidence reiterated that councils take reports of spiking seriously and engage in partnership working schemes and use their powers under the Licensing Act to keep communities safe. We also highlighted the guidance the LGA has produced to support licensing committees and called for more national funding for local initiatives that aim to address and prevent spiking and wider community safety issues.

Home Affairs Committee report

6. In April, the [Home Affairs Committee published its report](#). The Committee found that a lack of available data on spiking has made it difficult to get a clear picture of its true

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extent and will remain a barrier to policing until data collection is improved. They also found that a culture of viewing victims as having had 'one too many' and a lack of co-ordinated support from venues, police and health services has meant many incidents are going unreported. The Committee called for a focussed response to ensure that incidents are better investigated and a knowledge base developed to underpin new strategies to combat spiking.

7. They also had a number of recommendations which relate to licensing, which are listed below:
 - 7.1. 'We recommend that all staff working at music festivals, including vendors, be given compulsory safeguarding training, and this be a requirement that licensing authorities consider when approving events. This might be done along lines similar to training provided in voluntary schemes in other licensed premises, such as Ask for Angela or the licensing security and vulnerability initiative (Licensing SAVI).
 - 7.2. Within three months the Government should:
 - 7.2.1. collect data on local licensing authorities' use of their powers to impose conditions or revoke premises licenses, where venues do not take sufficient measures to protect and provide support to customers in spiking incidents;
 - 7.2.2. work with local authorities to develop an anti-spiking strategy which encourages local licensing authorities to make better use of these powers; and
 - 7.2.3. as part of this, review guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 with a view to requiring licensing authorities to consider the prevalence, prevention and reporting of sexual harassment and misconduct and gender-based violence in statements of local licensing policy.
 - 7.3. The Government should evaluate the efficacy of different anti-spiking partnership initiatives and develop a national strategy which promotes best practice and requires all police forces and local authorities to publish their chosen approach.'
8. The recommendations outlined in the Home Affairs Committee's report provide a helpful opportunity for reflection and it would be useful to get the Board's views on them. Officers are working closely with colleagues at the Home Office on the Committee's findings and how we can support the Government's response to its recommendations. Our initial steer to the Home Office has been the following:
 - 8.1. On recommendation 7.1, we are aware that safety advisory group guidance for events is being updated and we have advised that there may be an opportunity to

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incorporate requirements around safeguarding into that. Alternatively, the Home Office could consider updating the Section 182 guidance of the Licensing Act 2003 to encourage councils to take these steps when licensing festivals, and engage with the Events Industry Forum about the guidance in the Purple Guide (the main guidance on non-sporting events).

- 8.2. On recommendation 7.2.1, the current statistical returns on alcohol licensing do not provide this granularity of data. We have offered to convene a discussion on what data councils do have, or suggested a deep dive exercise with a small group of councils. It will be important that this proposal does not lead to the creation of additional burdensome data collection requirements.
- 8.3. On recommendation 7.2.2 and 7.2.3, we will support councils to consider these points, including through our LGA licensing handbooks.
- 8.4. On recommendation 7.3, we have agreed to share examples of councils who are taking a proactive approach to tackling spiking with the Home Office so that they can promote these examples as best practice.
9. The Home Office has advised that they will be issuing a formal report on the scale of spiking in spring 2023, are considering whether they will make spiking a specific offence, and that they are looking at updating the Section 182 guidance which accompanies the Licensing Act 2003. This work is of significant interest to the Minister, Rachel Maclean MP, who regards spiking as a big issue and a priority for the Department.

Questions for discussion

10. The Board's views on the recommendations in the Home Affairs Committee report would be welcome. We would also be interested in understanding if members are aware of any good practice in their own council that we could showcase.
11. It would also be helpful to get the Board's views on our planned work on this issue:
 - 11.1. We hope to issue a media release with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners around the dangers of spiking with alcohol to coincide with 'freshers week' at Universities.
 - 11.2. We plan on developing a short guidance note for councils on spiking which outlines best practice and suggests some recommended actions.
 - 11.3. We will incorporate elements of this guidance into our existing licensing handbook.

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- 11.4. We will work with councils and Government to identify best practice approaches to considering sexual harassment, misconduct and gender based violence in licensing policies.

Implications for Wales

12. The increase in reports of spiking was experienced in Wales, as well as England. The Licensing Act 2003 applies to both England and Wales.

Financial Implications

13. None

Next steps

14. Officers will use the Board discussion to inform our future work on this important issue.

Safer and Stronger Communities issues in the Queen's Speech

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This report provides an overview of the items relevant to the Safer and Stronger Communities Board's portfolio within the Queen's Speech.

Is this report confidential? Yes No

Recommendation

Board members note the relevant items in the Queen's Speech and implications for the Board's work programme.

Action

Officers to incorporate the Queen's Speech programme into the 2022-23 work plan.

Contact officer: Ellie Greenwood
Position: Senior Adviser (community safety and regulation)
Phone no: 07795 413660
Email: ellie.greenwood@local.gov.uk

Safer and Stronger Communities issues in the Queen's Speech

Background

1. On Tuesday 10 May, the Government set out its priorities and legislative programme for the next session of Parliament.
2. The LGA has produced a [full summary](#) of the issues relevant to councils within the Queen's Speech; this paper sets out the issues of specific relevance to the Safer and Stronger Communities Board portfolio.
3. The Queen's Speech outlined four broad areas of activity, with most of the proposed Bills relevant to the Board falling within the theme of making the streets safer:
 - 3.1. Growing the economy to address the cost of living
 - 3.2. Making the streets safer
 - 3.3. Funding the NHS to clear the Covid backlog
 - 3.4. Providing the leadership needed in challenging times

Issues

4. For each of the Bills relevant to the Board, we have summarised the key provisions and our initial view.
5. Under the 'growing the economy to address the cost of living' theme, the following Bills have provisions relevant to the Board.

Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill

6. There are two provisions that fall within the remit of the Board contained within the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill - on pavement licensing and the process for changing street names.
7. On pavement licensing, this is an issue where we have had significant engagement with the government to try to shape the development of a permanent framework. While we support the introduction of a permanent pavement licensing regime, it is crucial that the permanent regime provides councils with better enforcement powers, a longer consultation and determination period to give residents and stakeholders time to feed in their views, and that councils should be able to set fees at levels that cover administrative costs. We will continue to work with Government officials and to lobby in Parliament as the draft Bill progresses.

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8. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities is currently consulting on proposals in relation to the changing of street names and has set out its intention to legislate on this issue. We are concerned that the proposals will impose additional costs on council taxpayers and strain on electoral staff by requiring referenda to be held. Our response to including this provision within the Bill therefore urged the Government not to pre-empt the consultation but to take the responses to the consultation into account as they decide whether it is necessary and proportionate to pursue legislative change in this area.

Transport Bill

9. Although the Queen's Speech itself did not reference it, in a speech in the House of Lords on Wednesday 11 May, Baroness Vere, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, appeared to suggest that the Transport Bill will include clauses relating to taxi and PHV licensing. Baroness Vere stated that *'technology has also led to changes in how the taxi and private hire vehicle industry works—for example, through booking apps available on mobile phones. We will modernise the law to ensure that the same minimum standards are met by drivers across England to gain or retain a taxi or private hire vehicle licence, and we will enhance licensing authorities' existing compliance and enforcement powers. These changes will create a level playing field and make journeys safer for all passengers.'*
10. Based on earlier discussions with officials at the Department for Transport, we expect that the Government will use the Bill to take forward the commitments it made in its response to the 2018 task and finish group on taxi/PHV licensing, when it accepted the group's recommendations for national minimum standards, national enforcement powers and a national licensing database. We do not expect the Bill to consider the proposal in the levelling up white paper for taxi/PHV licensing functions to be moved to upper tier or combined authorities.
11. The LGA was part of the taxi/PHV working group and is supportive of the measures proposed, however we are disappointed that they constitute a small number of amendments rather than the comprehensive overhaul that is required.

Draft Digital Markets, Competition and Consumer Bill

12. The legislation is intended to promote competition, strengthen consumer rights and protect household and businesses, as well as creating new competition rules for digital markets and the largest digital firms. It includes measures to tackle subscription traps and fake reviews and will also give the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) the ability to determine when consumer law has been broken and issue monetary penalties for those breaches.
13. While the LGA response welcomed new measures to protect consumers from being ripped off by tactics such as subscription traps and fake reviews and stronger powers for

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the CMA, we highlighted concern that measures to strengthen the consumer landscape overall will be undermined by the continued hollowing out of local trading standards services and shortages in the pipeline of qualified trading standards officers. We urged Government to look again at the cross-government regulatory services task and finish group's recommendations to create a dedicated fund for regulatory apprentices and consider how to secure sustainable funding for regulatory services

14. Within the making streets safer theme, the following Bills are relevant to the Board:

Draft Protect Duty Bill

15. This Bill will:

- 15.1. introduce new security requirements for certain public locations and venues to ensure preparedness for and protection from terrorist attacks.
- 15.2. establish a new framework which requires those in control of certain public locations and venues to consider the threat from terrorism and implement appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures.
- 15.3. deliver an inspection and enforcement regime, which will seek to educate, advise, and ensure compliance with the Duty.

16. In our response, we highlighted that local authorities take threats from terrorism extremely seriously and work hard alongside wider partners to keep their communities safe. We agree that it is important to consider what more can be done to help protect local people and places from attacks.

17. We also emphasised that the new duty should take a risk-based approach, including the implementation of appropriate and proportionate mitigation measures, which does not allow terrorism to disrupt normal life and inhibit our freedoms to enjoy the places and spaces that are a critical and much-loved part of local communities.

18. Introducing the new duty will require significant resource and capacity to ensure that those within its scope are aware of their responsibilities and comply. This must be supported by full funding and time to allow for communication, preparation, guidance and training, and recruitment of specialised staff before implementation can begin. It is also vital that measures to increase security sit alongside continued investment in prevention programmes that stop people being drawn into terrorism.

19. As the Board are aware, officers have been engaging with the Government on the development of the Protect duty for some time. We look forward to seeing further details about the proposed inspection and enforcement regime. Should this responsibility fall to local authorities, significant additional resources would be required to fulfil this role.

Modern Slavery Bill

20. The Modern Slavery Bill will strengthen protection and support for victims of human trafficking and modern slavery and increase the accountability of companies and other organisations to drive out modern slavery from their supply chains.
21. Specifically, it will strengthen the requirement on businesses with a turnover of £36 million or more to publish annual modern slavery statements setting out steps they have taken to prevent modern slavery in their operations and supply chains.
22. It will also mandate the reporting areas to be covered in statements, require these to be published on a government registry and introduce civil penalties to be applied for organisations that do not comply with the requirements. The requirements on modern slavery statements will also be extended to public bodies including councils.
23. The Bill will enshrine in law the Government's international obligations to victims of modern slavery, in particular regarding their rights and support and will also strengthen the operation of slavery and trafficking prevention orders and risk orders to better protect victims.
24. Transparency in supply chains and victim support are both issues which the LGA has previously lobbied Government on. We support the extension to public authorities of the requirement to take steps to prevent modern slavery in supply chains and publish statements setting out the actions that have been taken. Supported by the LGA, many councils have already proactively published modern slavery statements on a voluntary basis. Further direction on mandatory areas to be included within the reporting process will aid consistency and allow councils to focus their resources where most needed.
25. We have previously called for the Government to ensure that our obligations to victims of modern slavery under international laws and conventions are clarified in domestic law, so we welcome the Bill's intention to do just that. However, to ensure that councils are fully able to support recovering victims of modern slavery, it is vital that any additional duties placed on councils through these obligations are fully funded. Additionally, the intersection of these obligations with other relevant legislation, such as the Housing Act and Care Act, must also be clear.

Draft Victims Bill

26. The purpose of the draft Bill is to put victims at the heart of the criminal justice system, ensuring their experiences are front and centre of the process and encouraging them to remain engaged in the criminal justice system. The draft Bill seeks to ensure there is an effective justice system that serves society by restoring victims' confidence that their voices will be properly heard and that perpetrators will be brought to justice.

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27. The draft Bill will enshrine the Victims' Code in law. It intends to increase transparency and oversight of the services that criminal justice agencies provide to victims by granting a greater role for Police and Crime Commissioners and inspectorates to assess delivery. The draft Bill also intends to enable improvements in the quality and consistency of support services for victims of sexual violence, domestic abuse and serious violence, and increase awareness of Independent Sexual Violence Advisors and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors.
28. Members will recall the Board's discussion of the Victim's Bill consultation earlier this year, which informed our response to the announcement of the Bill. We commented that it is right that more is done to amplify victims' voices in the criminal justice process and ensure victims are supported to rebuild their lives through accessible and professional services. It is our hope that efforts to strengthen the victims' response through the criminal justice system, will help to increase confidence in victims to report offences and seek justice.
29. We therefore welcomed the Government's commitment to improve the service and support victims receive – from the moment a crime is committed right the way through to their experience in the courtroom.
30. Whilst these are integral principles, our ultimate ambition should be to prevent these crimes from occurring in the first place. We therefore called for the introduction of a Victims' Law to be accompanied by a wider commitment to prevent crime and invest in early intervention and prevention services. This must be a cross-Government approach, rather than a solely criminal justice-led issue.
31. We also stressed the importance of ensuring the Government's various strategies, guidance, and forthcoming legislation work cohesively with the forthcoming draft Victims' Law Bill. Whilst this draft Bill will focus on particular victim support services (domestic abuse, serious violence and sexual violence) it is important that victims of all crimes are supported effectively.
32. In anticipation of the Government creating new duties for councils and others through the Bill, we also commented that adding a legislative duty doesn't automatically improve collaboration or partnership-working, and if it's not adequately funded it will not be effective. We would argue that a sector-led approach, which provides local areas with the flexibility and resources to identify local priorities and take action, is one of the best ways to improve collaboration.

Public Order Bill

33. This Bill is intended to:

- 33.1. ensure the police have the tools they need to better manage and tackle dangerous and highly disruptive tactics.
- 33.2. prevent major transport projects and infrastructure from being targeted by protestors.
- 33.3. introduce new criminal offences, extend stop and search powers and introduce Serious Disruption Prevention Orders

34. In response, we commented that whilst any protest, including lawful protest, is likely to have some disruptive impact, protest is long recognised as a fundamental right in a free society.

35. However, we recognised that it can be a difficult balance to achieve between ensuring freedom of expression, and protest - both integral aspects of our democracy - with responding to activity which may result in disruption or impact on local economies. The proposals therefore require careful consideration and drafting to ensure an appropriate balance can be achieved.

Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill

36. This Bill (included under the theme of providing the leadership needed in challenging times) aims to strengthen animal welfare in Great Britain and implement the proposals set out in the Government's Action Plan for Animal Welfare. The provisions include: ending live imports of animals and addressing the issue of dog attacks on livestock; improving the lives of pets and protecting pet owners by tackling puppy smuggling and creating a new offence for pet abduction; introducing a licensing scheme for primates kept as pets; and improving enforcement and strengthening conservation in zoos.

37. We support the objective of increasing animal welfare standards and eradicating cruel practices. However, while the LGA agrees with the principle that legislation should protect the welfare of kept animals, it is essential that relevant legislation is fully funded and authorities are supported to implement it. On primate licensing, this should include upfront funding to set up the new licensing scheme, fully funded training for inspectors and guidance on inspections, as well as a pool of qualified vets for councils to draw from. Adequate resourcing and training will also be essential to achieve the Government's wider ambitions around companion animals, including action to tackle puppy smuggling, as well as on zoo licensing.

38. This legislation comes at a time when councils' regulatory services are facing unprecedented demand on the one hand, but also reducing capacity and challenges in recruitment on the other. The additional enforcement responsibilities placed on councils

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by this Bill are just a small number of the many and wide-ranging new duties created by different government departments that are expected to be enforced by councils. The Government should look again at the cross-government regulatory services task and finish group's recommendations to create a dedicated fund for regulatory apprentices and consider how to secure sustainable funding for regulatory services.

Implications for Wales

39. We will work with government officials and the WLGA to identify the application of these Bills to Wales.

Financial Implications

40. It is expected that work on these Bills will be undertaken within normal staff budgets.

Next steps

41. Officers will continue to engage with government officials on the development of these proposals and will work with the public affairs team to agree lobbying approaches on these Bills.

42. We will ensure that these Bills are reflected in the Board work programme for 2022-23.



Police and Crime Panels and PCC Complaints

Purpose of report

For decision.

Summary

The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners have raised with the LGA's Chairman some issues related to the process for resolving non-serious complaints about Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs). The Home Office also committed at the end of Part 2 of the Review of PCCs to further consider the process for handling complaints against PCCs. This paper seeks agreement from members on a set of principles to inform the LGA's future work in this policy area, and also seeks agreement to raise a number of practical points which would assist police and crime panels in their work.

Recommendation

1. Members are asked to agree the principles for reforming the system for resolving non-serious complaints against PCCs set out in paragraph 11 as well as the proposals set out in paragraph 12.

Action/s

The agreed principles and proposals will be used to inform the LGA's work in relation to the handling of non-serious complaints against PCCs.

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Police and Crime Panels and PCC Complaints

Background

1. Under the Police, Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 police and crime panels were given responsibility for making arrangements to informally resolve non-serious complaints about the conduct of police and crime commissioners (PCCs) and their deputies. The process for handling such complaints is covered by the complaints and misconduct regulations. Responsibility for investigating serious complaints of criminal conduct by a PCC lies with the Independent Office of Police Complaints (IOPC).
2. In July 2021 the Home Secretary announced that Part 2 of the PCC Review being conducted by the Home Office would consider the role of the IOPC in the handling of complaints about PCCs.
3. Following the conclusion of the Part 2 Review the Home Office committed to giving further consideration to the processes for how complaints of criminal misconduct against PCCs are handled. One option it mentioned considering was the scope to align a new code of conduct with the regime for mayors and councillors in local government. In addition the Home Office said it will also consider how to address the problems of vexatious and political motivated complaints, especially those which stem from disagreements with the political views of the Commissioner, or complaints which are nothing to do with policing.
4. This latter point on the problems of vexatious and politically motivated complaints is an issue of concern to the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), who have raised this issue with the LGA's Chairman. The APCC are aware of instances where complaints have been politically motivated and the media are notified a complaint has been received before the relevant PCC has been made aware a complaint has been made. The IOPC went on to investigate these complaints but did not uphold any of them, but the PCCs and their families were in some instances subject to abuse through social media. The APCC are therefore keen to see panels supported with guidance on how to handle complaints.

The views of panels on the system for resolving complaints against PCCs

5. In order to inform its submission to Part 2 of the PCC Review the Board sought views from police and crime panels on the key issues being considered during the Review, which included the system for handling complaints.
6. Panels reported very different experiences, with the level of complaints they received varying considerably. Panels did however agree that the complaints process was complex, lacking in clarity and as a result expensive to service as they often have to seek legal guidance to navigate their way through the legislation, regulations and guidance issued by the Home Office.

7. Panels also felt that although they made every effort to be clear about the type of complaints they are responsible for resolving, the public found it hard to differentiate between complaints against the PCC and the wider police complaints system overseen by PCCs and the IOPC. As a result panels have received complaints about operational policing matters, or where members of the public felt their complaint about a police force had not been resolved in what they deemed to be satisfactory way. Again this led to a mixed experience by panels with repetitive and want might be considered vexatious complaints.
8. Overall panels have indicated the system for resolving complaints against PCCs needs to be improved, and the Home Office's consideration of the issue of complaints provides an opportunity to make the case for changes in the process.

Improving the resolution of complaints about PCCs.

9. In councils there are specific and separate processes for scrutinising the decisions of the authority and considering breaches of the authority's code of conduct; with scrutiny committees and standards committees dealing with these issues. Police and crime panels combine these functions into one body. Part 2 of the PCC Review sought views on whether the IOPC for example might take on the role of handling all complaints. The views of panels on this issue were split, with some favouring transferring responsibility of all complaints to the IOPC, while others wished to retain accountability of PCCs at a local level.
10. In the absence of suggestions from the Home Office to reform the resolution of complaints against PCCs by transferring responsibility completely to the IOPC, it is likely that panels will retain the responsibility for resolving non-serious complaints against PCCs.
11. Given the different feedback from panels about what might be changed to improve the process for resolving non-serious complaints against PCCs, members are asked to agree the following principles to guide future discussions with the Home Office about changes to the complaints process:
 - 11.1. The system for resolving non-serious complaints against PCCs should be as simple and as easy for police and crime panels to conduct as possible.
 - 11.2. The system should minimise the need for police and crime panels to seek specialist legal guidance in order to resolve a non-serious complaint.
 - 11.3. The system should as similar as possible to the processes councils use for dealing with breaches of their code of conduct on their own authorities as this would allow panels to draw on familiar processes, while also being able to draw on a wider range of expertise and experience.
 - 11.4. Members of the public should be able to distinguish more clearly between any reformed process of resolving complaints about the PCC, and the system for

handling complaints about operational policing matters, so it is easier for them to direct their complaints to the right body.

12. In their responses to the Part 2 Review of PCCs police and crime panels also identified some practical actions which would assist them in resolving non-serious complaints against PCCs, and these were raised in the LGA's submission to the Review. Members are also asked to confirm the following proposals, which would then inform the Board's future lobbying around the resolution of non-serious complaints:

12.1. The Home Office should update and expand its guidance on the handling of complaints, including around complaints recording, identifying valid complaints, dealing with vexatious or repetitive complaints, the role of the IOPC and the parameters of complaints. In doing so the Home Office should engage with panels.

12.2. The inability to impose any sanctions in the event they found against a PCC was thought to be unhelpful by panels, and they also highlighted the lack of a requirement on a PCC to respond any recommendations made by a panel. The Home Office should consider providing further clarity (which could be done through the guidance) on how PCCs should engage with the complaints process and any findings a panel arrives at.

12.3. The Home Office should fund an on-going training programme on the complaints process for members of panels and the monitoring officers supporting panels, and should also support the sharing of good practice.

12.4. Having previously considered whether panels should be given the power to investigate complaints, the Home Office should complete its examination of this option (including the need for further funding to enable panels to carry out any investigations).

Civility in public life – safety of elected people

13. While improvements in the process for handling complaints would address some of the issues the APCC have raised about social media abuse related to vexatious and politically motivated complaints, this will not prevent PCCs all social media abuse. The LGA and APCC have therefore been in discussion about linking their work around the civility in public life agenda.

14. The [LGA Civility in public life programme](#) was established by the LGA's Executive Advisory Board in 2019 to address growing concerns about the impact an increasing level of public intimidation and toxicity of debate is having on local democracy. In particular, there were concerns that attacks risk the personal safety of councillors, undermine local democracy and decision-making, and can put of prospective candidates from standing for election.

15. The purpose of the programme is to address the intimidation of elected members and officers, improve standards of public and political discourse and behaviour in public office and provide support and advice to councils and councillors.

16. Since 2019, the LGA has produced a Model Councillor Code of Conduct and associated guidance for councillors and monitoring officers; a Councillors guide to handling intimidation that has recently been updated; a Councillor guide on using social media and handling abuse on social media; guidance on Digital citizenship; and case studies highlighting good practice from councils supporting councillors experiencing abuse and intimidation linked to their role.
17. In addition, the LGA is working to understand the emerging issues relating to civility in public life, particularly around mounting concerns about the safety of elected members. The LGA launched a Call for evidence of abuse and intimidation of councillors in October 2021 and is due to publish a report of the findings in time for LGA Annual Conference. The report will support the launch of the LGA Debate Not Hate campaign and an associated plenary session also at Annual Conference.
18. The findings of the Call for evidence indicate a significant amount of variance in support offered to councillors to handle intimidation and abuse, and levels of response from police to incidents perpetrated against councillors in relation to their councillor role. The findings also suggest that there is a normalisation of abuse generally and specifically in relation to figures in public life and that some individual may be more likely to experience personalised abuse than others. Finally, evidence from the Call for evidence and other feedback to the LGA indicates that there is a perception that abuse, intimidation and risks to personal safety of elected members are worsening and that this can have a deterrent effect for people interested in getting into local politics.

Implications for Wales

19. Policing is not a devolved matter, while local government is a devolved responsibility of the Welsh Government. As a result police and crime panels in Wales are appointed and supported by the Home Office, although the Home Office works closely with the Welsh Government and WLGA. The LGA will continue to liaise with colleagues in the WLGA around the resolution of non-serious complaints by panels, but the proposals outlined in this paper would only apply to police and crime panes in England.

Financial Implications

20. There are no direct financial implications for the LGA arising from this report. As is highlighted in the paper, making the process for resolving non-serious complaints would reduce some costs for police and crime panels, while permitting panels to investigate non-serious complaints could place additional costs on councils.



Next steps

21. Members are asked to agree the principles for reforming the complaints system set out in paragraph 11 and the proposals set out in paragraph 12. If these are agreed they will inform the LGA's work in relation to the handling of non-serious complaints against PCCs.

Safer and Stronger Communities End of Year Report 2021/22 and 2022/23 work plan

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

This paper sets out the Safer and Stronger Communities end of year report, including initial proposals for the 2022/23 work plan.

Recommendations

That members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board note the end of year report and consider the Board's work priorities for 2022/23.

Actions

Officers to prepare a paper setting out the proposed work plan for 2022/23 in line with the Board's feedback, for consideration at the September meeting of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board.

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Safer and Stronger Communities End of Year Report 2021/22 and 2022/23 work plan

Background

1. At its meeting in September the Board considered its priorities for 2021/22 and agreed five overarching themes:
 - 1.1. Community safety
 - 1.2. Prevent, counter extremism and cohesion
 - 1.3. Regulatory services and licensing
 - 1.4. Blue light services and civil resilience
 - 1.5. Crematoria, funerals, coroners and registrars
 - 1.6. Building safety.
2. This paper provides an overview of the achievements delivered against these themes and seeks an initial steer from the Board on its priorities for 2022/23.
3. Feedback from members on their priorities for next year will subsequently be developed into a full paper for consideration at the first meeting of the 2022/23 Board cycle in September.

Prevent, counter extremism and cohesion

4. Throughout the year we have continued to raise concerns with Government about the impact of extremism on communities and the challenges this presents for councils, and of the need to retain national investment in measures to build resilience and tackle division and polarisation.
5. We have again provided significant support to councils to respond to ongoing extremism and cohesion issues through our work with the [Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism](#) (SIGCE), which the LGA has continued to support both financially and operationally. The SIGCE's lead facilitator attended the Board earlier this year to highlight some of the evolving challenges.
6. The SIGCE's work programme for this year has included delivering eight roundtables and webinars covering a range of emerging issues, including incels, extremism and education, the evolution of conspiracy theories since COVID-19, and the Ukraine conflict, and a bespoke session with government officials to feed in sector views on hate crime policy. A further six roundtables have taken place focussing on the intimidation and harassment of asylum seekers and refugees. We have also continued to provide regular

guidance and updates to over 300 members of the SIGCE's online Knowledge Hub, which has also been revamped during the year.

7. Two thematic leads were appointed to provide bespoke support and advice to councils tackling far-right extremism and faith-claimed "Islamist" extremism respectively, and have continued to support the SIGCE's two working groups in these areas. This has included organising an in-person workshop and simulation exercise to help inform a toolkit for councils on responding to anti-minority extremism; and completed our community dialogue pilot in one local authority area to explore how to improve local engagement. We have also concluded research and a series of local focus group sessions on the impact of "Islamist" terminology on communities.
8. Beyond the SIGCE, we have also provided bespoke communications training to a council facing significant far-right activity, and have continued to support two regional elected member networks on Prevent and counter-extremism. We also recently published a series of [case studies and guidance note on partnership working to counter extremism and tackle hate crime](#).
9. Over last summer we [submitted a response](#) to the [Government's consultation on a new Protect duty](#), aimed at helping to prevent terrorist attacks. In our response we called for terrorism risks to be assessed alongside a range of other health and safety issues, and that a risk-based approach to determining which venues/events should fall within scope of the duty would be preferable to the capacity model proposed. We also highlighted the importance of a proportionate approach to introducing new measures and raised concerns about how the duty would operate in practice, and the significant resource and capacity that would be needed for successful implementation. A new Protect duty Bill featured in the Queen's Speech in May and we will continue to ensure that sector views are fed in to Government as the legislation is drafted.
10. We recently submitted a response to DLUHC's call for evidence on social cohesion and resilience. In our response we set out concerns about the abuse and harassment of elected members, and highlighted the important role of local authorities in countering extremism and building resilience alongside partners. We also set out a number of challenges including tackling sensitive issues, national policy uncertainties, the need for a long-term approach that addresses underlying cohesion issues, and limited resources and capacity available for this work.
11. In April we responded to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' (DLUHC's) consultation on proposals for amending the legislation around changing street names. In our response we argued that the proposals were unnecessary and

undermined the fundamental principles of local democracy, and raised a number of concerns that the proposals would be unworkable in practice.

12. Across the year we have fed into the LGA's wider policy work on the Online Safety Bill and will continue to provide input as the Bill completes its passage through the parliamentary process.

Community safety

Domestic abuse

13. Following Royal Assent of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the LGA continues to support councils with the implementation of their statutory duty to deliver domestic abuse accommodation-based support and services.
14. Throughout the course of the year, the LGA has hosted and supported 15 workshops for local authorities to share best practice and identify and respond to challenges associated with the duty. The LGA continues to engage with DLUHC on the future funding for the statutory duty, following the [announcement](#) of an additional £125 million for councils in this financial year (2022/2023). We will be calling for the third year of the funding allocation (2023/2024) to be made known to councils before the end of this financial year, to help with longer-term strategic planning.
15. In October 2021, the Minister with responsibility for homelessness and domestic abuse and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner convened the first meeting of the National Expert Steering Group on Domestic Abuse. The purpose of the group has been to monitor the progress of the new statutory duty (Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act) and to help improve the overall response to domestic abuse. The Board's Chair Cllr Nesil Caliskan, and Cllr Lois Samuel, the Board's Domestic Abuse Champion, continue to attend the group meetings on behalf of the LGA and our membership. Updates from these meetings will continue to be provided to members via our Board update paper.
16. The LGA is also a representative of the Strategic Reference Group on Domestic Abuse Perpetrators. The group has been convened by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales to improve the response to tackling domestic abuse perpetrators and help inform and respond to the Government's [Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan](#).
17. As part of this work, the LGA has supported a number of workshops and events on tackling domestic abuse perpetrators, including a joint session with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC). The workshops have been well-attended, with over 280 delegates joining our most recent LGA webinar on tackling domestic abuse

perpetrators, with presentations from the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, the Home Office, and wider speakers.

18. To help share best practice, the LGA, in partnership with Social Finance, launched a guidance document on [‘tackling domestic abuse – innovative approaches by councils and partner organisations’](#). The guidance document includes a series of case studies from councils on how they tackled domestic abuse before and during the pandemic. The ambition for these case studies is to share and disseminate best practice from across local government nationally to support locally led solutions.
19. In addition to our wider press work, the [LGA joined forces with Women’s Aid and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner Nicole Jacobs to urge people to look out for common signs of domestic abuse over Christmas](#). As well as a community effort to spot the signs of domestic abuse and report concerns, we called for greater investment in early intervention and prevention schemes that helps stop it from occurring in the first place. This built on our successful campaigning with Women’s Aid and partners to raise awareness of domestic abuse during the [football World Cup period](#).

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)

20. Ahead of the publication of Government’s [updated Violence Against Women and Girls \(VAWG\) Strategy](#) in June 2021, the LGA responded to the [Government’s consultation](#) and [subsequently responded](#) to the publication of the Strategy. The LGA also submitted [written evidence](#) to the Home Affairs Committee [inquiry](#) on tackling VAWG.
21. In addition to the publication of the Government’s Strategy, the Home Office outlined several measures to protect women and girls from abuse and violence. This included introducing a National Policing lead for VAWG, as well as a new [Safety of Women at Night Fund](#), which was open to bids from local authorities, Police and Crime Commissioners, the British Transport Police and civil society organisations. The LGA worked with the APCC and the Home Office to circulate details of the fund to councils and PCCs. We intend to hold a best practice event to share the findings from the fund, once the schemes have been evaluated in Autumn 2022.
22. In November 2021, DCC Maggie Blyth, the newly appointed National Policing Lead for VAWG spoke at the Safer and Stronger Communities Board. DCC Blyth updated the Board on plans for a [National Policing Framework to prioritise tackling VAWG issues](#) and outlined the importance of working in partnership with local authorities to proactively change the culture and response on VAWG.

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23. DCC Blyth and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner will be speaking at our LGA Annual Conference workshop session on tackling Violence against Women and Girls in July 2022, chaired by our Domestic Abuse Champion Cllr Lois Samuel.

Serious violent crime

24. In April 2022, the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act, received Royal Assent. During the Bill's passage through Parliament, Cllr Nesil Caliskan gave [oral evidence](#) to the House of Commons Public Bill Committee. She emphasised the importance of taking a public health approach to tackling serious violent crime, investing in prevention and early intervention, as well as identifying the risk factors and drivers of youth violence. The LGA will be publishing a Get-in-on-the-Act explainer in the coming weeks to provide further details about how the provisions in the Act will have an impact on local government.
25. The LGA has held a series of workshops with the Home Office serious violence team to discuss the forthcoming serious violence duty, and the proposed Offensive Weapons Homicide Reviews. We will continue to hold best practice sessions and support councils with the implementation of the forthcoming duty.

Serious and organised crime

26. The LGA, the APCC and the Home Office continue to meet regularly to discuss the Home Office's forward plan for tackling serious and organised crime (SOC). In January 2022, the LGA held a webinar on tackling SOC, which reached over 190 delegates. We will continue to hold best practice sessions throughout the year and engage with the Home Office on this important issue.

Drug strategy

27. In December 2021, the Government announced an investment of £780 million in drug treatment to break the cycle of addiction as part of a [10-year drugs strategy](#). The Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC) said that all local authorities in England will receive new money for drug treatment and recovery over the next three years.
28. Cllr Joanne Harding, the LGA's substance misuse lead, gave evidence to the House of Commons [Home Affairs Committee inquiry on drugs](#). Cllr Harding welcomed the 10-Year Drug Strategy and the additional funding it has brought. However, she stressed that it must be backed by measures and funding for the wider preventative services that are needed to tackle the socio-economic drivers of problem drug use. The LGA will continue to liaise with the Government on the introduction of drug partnership arrangements, and implementation of the Drug Strategy.

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- Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Review / Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs)*
29. Cllr Caliskan and Cllr Mohan Iyengar both gave evidence to the Home Office's Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Part 2 Review. LGA officers also submitted a formal response on behalf of local government. The purpose of the two-part review was to consider how the role of police and crime commissioners (PCCs), can be sharpened and expanded.
30. The Government also announced it would undertake a full review of Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to initially improve their transparency, accountability, and effectiveness, before assessing their position within the wider landscape of local partnerships across England and Wales. Through the review of CSPs, the Government said it would consider introducing a new duty for CSPs to report on local ASB strategy and delivery to PCCs and legislating to set out the PCC role in the ASB Community Trigger process.
31. To help inform our work, the LGA held a series of introductory sessions with local government officers to discuss the forthcoming Community Safety Partnership Review. We will continue to hold sessions with elected members, officers and wider CSP partners to help inform the LGA's response to the Government review.
32. Following discussions at the Safer and Stronger Communities Board we responded to the Policing Protocol Consultation. This was one of the recommendations from Part one of the PCC Review, to clarify the responsibilities of and relationship between PCCs, Chief Constables, the Panel and the Home Secretary and better reflect the current policing landscape.

Anti-social behaviour

33. In July 2021, the LGA supported the UK's first-ever ASB Awareness Week, bringing together housing associations, councils, police forces, charities and other agencies – along with government departments – to take a stand and work together to make communities safer. Organised by Resolve, ASB Awareness Week is backed by the Home Office, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Local Government Association (LGA), National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the National Fire Chiefs' Council (NFCC).
34. The LGA continues to contribute to Government strategic discussions on tackling antisocial behaviour and regularly attends the Home Office-led Anti-Social Behaviour Advisory Board. We have hosted a well-attended webinar on tackling anti-social behaviour and continue to share best practice with councils and partners on this issue.

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35. In April 2022, Safer and Stronger Communities Board lead members attended a roundtable discussion with Association of Police and Crime Commissioner leads to discuss tackling anti-social behaviour and wider community safety issues. LGA officers will continue to work with the APCC on a joint webinar to raise awareness of the community trigger, and support ASB Awareness Week in July 2022.
36. In June 2022, the LGA has responded to the Government's consultation on an effective replacement for the Vagrancy Act. Our full response is available [here](#). We will continue to work with the Government on this issue as it progresses.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) Communities

37. In May 2022, DLUHC launched £10 million of capital funding for 2022/23 to support local authorities in building new transit and permanent traveller sites, to refurbish existing permanent traveller and transit sites and provide temporary stopping places and facilities for travellers. The LGA hosted a [webinar](#) with the department to provide further information about the [Travellers Site Fund](#), which reached over 100 delegates.
38. Prior to this, we held a best-practice webinar on unauthorised encampments, with presentations from DLUHC and the National Liaison Group for GRT Communities.

Modern Slavery

39. On modern slavery, we held a series of webinars to share learning and promote best practice on the following issues: an introduction to modern slavery; making quality NRM referrals; partnership working; and housing/homelessness services and modern slavery.
40. Our housing/homelessness services and modern slavery webinar was accompanied by the launch of [guidance](#) and case studies aimed specifically at these services. As highlighted by the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner in her remarks to the Board in January, the provision of housing for victims of modern slavery has been a challenging issue and frequent pinch point that is often the source of tension between councils and organisations working with victims of slavery. Our guidance has been welcomed as an important tool in increasing awareness and understanding of the role services can play; we have also been working with The Salvation Army, which provides support under the Modern Slavery Victim Care Contract (MSVCC), to build relationships between councils and MSVCC sub contractor organisations.
41. We undertook a [survey](#) of councils' work and progress on modern slavery issues to help inform a refresh of our modern slavery guidance for councils. A full draft of the revised guidance is almost completed, and we will be working with sector experts to refine this in the coming weeks, supported by the development of a maturity matrix for councils' work on this issue. We expect the final documents to be complete by the end of summer.

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42. In recent months, we have also been involved in connecting our contacts in the anti-trafficking sector with the wider VCS/humanitarian sector in relation to the work on the Ukraine refugee schemes.

Blue light services and civil resilience

Fire Reform White Paper

43. On 18 May the Government published its White Paper on reforming the Fire and Rescue Service. Following an initial discussion at the Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC) and the Fire Commission the LGA will be submitting a response when the consultation closes at the end of July. The paper contains a wide range of proposals around governance of the fire and rescue sector, and the Government's preferred model of having a single, elected – preferably directly elected – person governing fire and rescue services. There are proposals around operational independence for chief fire officers as well as questions on changes to promotion and entry requirements, ethics and the negotiating machinery for pay and terms and conditions.

Fit for the Future

44. Fit for the Future is a joint piece of work being undertaken by the LGA, the National Fire Chiefs Council and the National Employers (England) on the future of the fire and rescue service, and how we will seek to enhance and improve the service going forwards. A revised version of Fit for the Future will be published soon.

Equality and diversity

45. The LGA has continued to support the Fire Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Member Champions Network. We have held sessions on different issues including case studies from London Fire Brigade, councillors, women in the fire service and had input from the inspectorate. The Network provides a forum for discussion of EDI issues and support for members and is chaired by the Equalities Advocate for the FSMC, Dr Fiona Twycross, Deputy Mayor for Fire and Resilience in London.

Training

46. We have undertaken a range of support and training activities for members on fire and rescue authorities. We held three training sessions on governance and leadership in September, October and November. We have also continued with our Fire Leadership Essentials Programme to support leading members on FRAs.

Civil Contingencies and Resilience

47. We contributed to two reviews (one Government led, one independent) looking at the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and national resilience strategy, convening two roundtables

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to provide member input to these. The findings of the both the post-implementation review of the CCA and the independent review recognised the need for the Act to formally reflect the role of democratically elected local politicians within resilience structures, and agreed that there should be a stronger framework of assurance for Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) and resilience activities. We expect more detail in the national resilience strategy, which is expected later in summer.

48. In support of the objective of strengthening democratic input to resilience work, we will shortly be commissioning a series of case studies showcasing effective member engagement and oversight of resilience work.

49. We have been participating in the work of the National Consortium for Societal Resilience, which brings together LRFs, the voluntary and charity sector and other partners to consider how to build the foundations for a whole of society approach to resilience. We plan to work with the National Preparedness Commission over the summer to promote case studies they have commissioned on community resilience activities during the pandemic.

Water safety

50. We have published a water safety toolkit to support councils to ensure that both locals and visitors are able to enjoy the natural environment safely whether on the coast or inland. This includes guidance for councils as well as some examples of best practice.

51. We also responded to a Department for Transport consultation on personal watercraft and supported world drowning prevention day.

Licensing and regulation

52. We have worked with officials at DLUHC on the temporary pavement licensing regime introduced by the Business and Planning Act 2020. Our lobbying was instrumental to securing new burdens funding for licensing authorities for year one and two of the temporary regime. We also successfully lobbied for changes to DLUHC's proposals for a permanent regime, and the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill now contains provisions for a higher fee cap, longer consultation and determination period, and improved enforcement powers for licensing authorities.

53. We delivered a second licensing leadership essentials course in March and have another planned for October. This course received excellent feedback. We also ran our annual licensing conference in February, which was a paid for event that generated significant income for the LGA and received positive feedback. We have also progressed work on developing virtual training resources for members of licensing committees (an

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updated e-learning module and scenario videos) and hope to have that work completed in the coming weeks.

54. On taxis, the LGA worked closely with the Department for Transport on the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act as it progressed through Parliament. The Act will mandate the use of the LGA developed and funded NR3 database and increase public safety, which is welcome. We also developed a guidance note for licensing authorities on home to school transport contracts and will be submitting evidence to the Department's best practice consultation in the coming days.
55. Cllr Jeanie Bell, one of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board Licensing Champions, provided evidence to two select committees: first, to the Home Affairs Committee on spiking and second, to the Lords Liaison Committee on the Licensing Act. Cllr Bell showcased the important work of councils to keep communities safe and highlighted our key lobbying asks, such as localised licensing fees.
56. Following the pandemic, there has been a renewed interest in the idea of health as a licensing objective. We have been working with public health colleagues to make the case for health considerations in licensing, including liaising with DLUHC colleagues on this issue.
57. We have continued to work with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport ahead of the publication of the Gambling Act Review and the Lead Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board have written to the Minister to reiterate our priorities for the review.
58. On wider regulatory services, in the early part of the Board year officers continued to work with the DLUHC Covid division and Department of Health and Social Care as the Government developed plans for Covid passes, which were subsequently introduced following the rise of the Omnicron variant. We hosted a webinar for compliance leads to discuss the application of the covid pass requirements and reinstated face mask requirements in early January.
59. Disappointingly, the work of the DLUHC regulatory services task and finish group has not been progressed by Government. As in 2020, the LGA developed a spending review submission covering regulatory services, calling for investment in apprenticeships in environmental health and trading standards: despite this being supported by DLUHC officials this was not ultimately included within the DLUHC departmental bid. We are engaging with our workforce colleagues to ensure that the shortages in these professions are considered as part of wider LGA-DLUHC work on workforce challenges.
60. We continue to work with partners in the professional bodies and Office for Product Safety and Standards to support the professions where possible. We developed a series

of case studies of senior officers with regulatory services backgrounds to accompany the launch of a regulatory services leadership development course, and will shortly finalise a councillor handbook on public protection services to highlight best practice. We also developed guidance for government departments on issues to consider when developing new enforcement duties that councils are expected to enforce. Finally, we have been supporting the development of the new Association of Chief Environmental Health Officers to provide additional professional capacity and input to central policy making.

Crematoria, registrars, coroners and medical examiners

61. We have continued to provide support to member authorities on issues related to coroners and registrars, as well as responding to media enquiries. Media enquires have concerned the impact of the pandemic on registration services, as well as other issues facing the sector. We have continued to provide input into the Ministry of Justice Coroner Services Committee and the Coroner Services Managers Panel.

Building safety

62. Over the last year our focus has been on the passage of the Building Safety Bill through parliament and working to ensure it aligns with the LGA's [fundamental asks](#): that the construction industry, developers, and manufacturers should pay for the cladding crisis. We have continued to press the government to distinguish between local authorities and developers, and fund councils to deliver the Building Safety Regulator (BSR). We have supported a coordinated audit of risk within medium-rise residential buildings.
63. We have also lobbied for the commencement of the Fire Safety Act, which has now taken place with [secondary legislation](#) implementing most of the recommendations of the Grenfell Inquiry. Following our lobbying with other bodies, the Home Office published the Fire Safety Assessment Prioritisation Tool alongside the Fire Safety Act and agreed to implement the LGA's working group on PEEPs neighbour assistance. We will engage in the [new consultation on PEEPs](#) and the Emergency Evacuation Information Sharing (EEIS) proposal.
64. The LGA has published [case studies](#) and a document on [principles of effective regulation](#), and has run several webinars and Leadership Essentials events with more being planned currently. The Joint Inspection Team has secured funding for the next two years which will see it triple in capacity by the end of this financial year.

2022/23 Priorities

65. It is expected that the themes for the 2022/23 work priorities will remain broadly consistent with 2021/22, with a number of workstreams continuing into the new Board cycle.

66. The table below sets out some initial thinking on workstreams that will continue into the new Board cycle, subject to the Board’s views:

Priority area	Proposed activity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent, counter-extremism and cohesion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to lobby Government on the importance of retaining investment in measures to prevent extremism and build resilience • Deliver a programme of support to councils on tackling extremism through the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of roundtables and webinars for practitioners to share emerging challenges and facilitate support • Case studies and guidance to capture good practice • Facilitating academic support to councils on tackling extremism • Provide training for elected members on delivering the Prevent duty, tackling extremism and building cohesion • Lobby around the Online Safety and draft Protect Duty Bills to ensure they reflect sector views.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a further round of awareness raising events on modern slavery • Continue to support councils on the implementation of their domestic abuse duty (outlined in Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021) • Lobby on the draft Victims Bill during pre-legislative scrutiny stages, and when the Bill passes through Parliament. • Support councils with the implementation of the forthcoming serious violence duty and Offensive Weapons Homicide Reviews, outlined in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act. • Continue to hold best practice sessions on tackling anti-social behaviour, and support 2022 ASB Awareness Week. • Provide good practice case studies on community safety issues, such as VAWG, domestic abuse, serious violence – to help support councils with the forthcoming duties.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with the Home Office and partners on tackling serious and organised crime – continue working with the APCC on any joint work related to the Government’s SOC strategy. Respond to the Government’s forthcoming Community Safety Partnership review and ensure local government views are fed-in throughout each stage of the process. Work with the Department for Health and Social Care on the implementation of the 10 year Drug Strategy, and provide support on the implementation of proposed drug partnership arrangements. Continue engaging with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on the Travellers Site Fund – making the case for increased funding to help councils improve current transit sites.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blue light services and civil resilience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fire Services Management Committee will be considering its priorities at its July meeting, and these are likely to focus on responding to the Fire Reform White Paper and the outcome of inquiries such as those into the Grenfell Tower fire and the attack at Manchester Arena. Respond to the publication of the national resilience strategy and help shape future pilots and activities on local resilience Support members and officers to strengthen council activity on resilience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Licensing and regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update the LGA’s guidance on gambling harms, working with the APCC on joint local work on this issue. Continue to make the case for localisation of alcohol licence fees. Work with the Department for Transport on taxi licensing reform and with DLUHC on pavement licensing provisions in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. Make the case for dedicated support to develop expert capacity in regulatory services.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building safety 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will engage with HSE’s programme to establish the new building safety regulator and raise awareness amongst councils of their responsibilities as regulators and duty holders under the new building safety regime. As part of this, we will continue to lobby for the funding of new burdens and a proportionate approach to

	<p>transition to the new regime and new FSO responsibilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will continue to support councils in taking enforcement action under the Housing Act 2004 through hosting the Joint Inspection Team and to monitor the impact of the continuing competitive environment in building control regulation for buildings under 18m. We will continue to support a coordinated approach to regulation between fire services and councils. • We have an improvement programme to support councils and FRs in their enhanced regulatory role and to support councils as landlords. • We will consider any developments around the Grenfell Tower inquiry, including the recommendations of its Phase Two report and respond. • We will continue to lobby around Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans and improved building regulations.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crematoria, coroners and registrars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We anticipate that there will continue to be continuing press and related media work related to the death management processes including crematoria and registrars' service.

67. The Board's views on any other areas they would like us to focus on would be very helpful.

Implications for Wales

68. We will work with colleagues at the Welsh LGA to identify areas where our work will be applicable to Wales, and where WLGA may wish to use our work as a basis for Welsh specific work of its own.

Financial Implications

69. None. The work priorities identified for 2022/23 will be delivered within the planned staffing budget and grant funding available from the LGA's DLUHC grant (which supports dedicated posts on building safety and counter extremism/cohesion).

Next steps

70. The Board are asked to reflect on the work delivered this year and consider and comment on their priorities for 2022/23.

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/s:

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

Action/s:

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

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Update Paper

Draft Victims Bill

1. The Government has now published the [draft Victims Bill for pre-legislative scrutiny](#) and [a formal response to the 'Delivering Justice for Victims' public consultation](#), which sets out a wider package of measures that will put victims at the heart of the justice system. Collectively the Government hopes these measures will amplify victims' voices in the criminal justice process, improve the support victims receive, and strengthen oversight of criminal justice agencies. The Secretary of State, Dominic Raab MP, also laid a [written ministerial statement](#), outlining the provisions in the draft Bill.
2. In [our media response](#), we said it was positive to see Government's commitment to improving services and amplifying victims voices in the criminal justice process through this Bill, but highlighted that it is also important to ensure that the Bill does not lose sight of the need to ensure victims of all crimes are supported effectively. A locally-led approach, which provides areas with the flexibility and resources to identify local priorities and take action, is one of the best ways to improve collaboration but it is essential that any proposed new duties are clarified by government and funded in full.
3. Following the publication of the draft Bill, the Government subsequently published its [Victim Funding Strategy](#), which sets out the Government's vision for how victim support services can be better funded and commissioned, securing high quality support for victims now and in the future. This includes a commitment to multi-year funding for core victim support services and the introduction of new national commissioning standards, establishing a minimum level of service quality. We continue to work with the Government and partners as the Bill and the Victims Funding Strategy progress.

Modern slavery

4. We have published the [findings of our modern slavery survey](#), which was open to councils at the end of 2021 and early 2022. 35 per cent of councils responded, a reasonable response rate given this was a lengthy and cross-cutting survey reflecting the many different council teams that have a role to play in tackling modern slavery and supporting victims.
5. The survey showed that encouraging numbers of councils provide training to officers on this issue and have pathways for referring victims of modern slavery into different services, but suggested there is more work to do to encourage councils to think about how housing teams can support victims of modern slavery. Since our

housing/homelessness and modern slavery webinar in early March, we have been working with The Salvation Army (TSA) to help connect their modern slavery support providers with council housing teams to improve joint working. TSA have reported that the LGA's guidance and communications on this has been hugely beneficial and helped to achieve real progress with a number of councils.

6. We are using the survey to inform the final development of the refresh of our council guide to modern slavery, which will be supported by a maturity matrix for council work on this issue.

Violence Reduction Unit funding

7. In April, the Government [announced](#) an additional £64 million would be made available for Violence Reduction Units, supporting the existing 18 and enabling two new units to be established in Cleveland and Humberside. The Government also announced an additional £30 million would be allocated to the 'Grip' police enforcement programme. The overall funding announcement is expected to support the implementation of the new Serious Violence Duty and Serious Violence Reduction Orders, being brought into law via the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act.

Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act

8. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act reached [Royal Assent](#) on 28 April 2022. A series of factsheets on the various aspects of the Act can be found [here](#). The LGA will be publishing a Get-in-on-the-Act explainer in the coming weeks and will circulate details of the commencement schedule once available. If you would like any further information, please contact Rachel.Phelps@local.gov.uk

Drugs strategy

9. Cllr Joanne Harding, the LGA's substance misuse lead, gave evidence to the House of Commons [Home Affairs Committee inquiry on drugs](#) alongside Maggie Boreham, a public health commissioner at Hackney Council and Professor Jim McManus, President of the Association of Directors of Public Health and Director of Public Health at Hertfordshire County Council. Cllr Harding welcomed the 10-Year Drug Strategy and the additional funding it has brought. However, she stressed that it must be backed by measures and funding for the wider preventative services that are needed to tackle the socio-economic drivers of problem drug use.
10. Cllr Harding also highlighted that councils need long-term sustainable public health funding and a plan for the public health workforce to truly rebuild drug treatment services. Professor Jim McManus said that despite a 24 per cent funding cut to the

public health grant, 85 per cent of the outcomes that local government are responsible for in public health have held up or improved.

Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan

11. On 30 March, the Government [published](#) its Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan, which outlines the Government's approach to tackling domestic abuse through prioritising prevention, supporting victims, pursuing perpetrators, and building a stronger system.
12. The Government also launched two consultations related to changes made by Domestic Abuse Act 2021, the first is on [controlling or coercive behaviour statutory guidance](#) and the second is on the [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme](#).
13. The Government also [published](#) a position statement on male victims of crimes considered in the Tackling Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy.

Strategic group on tackling domestic abuse perpetrators

14. Cllr Lois Samuel, the Safer and Stronger Communities Board Champion on Tackling Domestic Abuse, attended the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's strategic group on tackling domestic abuse perpetrators. This meeting focused on the response to the Government's national Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan, and the specific commitments on tackling perpetrators. The LGA will continue to work with the Commissioner's office and partners to share best practice in this area.
15. The LGA and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners supported a webinar on tackling perpetrators, hosted by Safe Lives and Respect. The webinar focused on the research and data available on current perpetrator interventions and provided guidance on evaluated projects that local authorities and Police and Crime Commissioners could review the findings from. The LGA will continue to host best practice sessions on this topic area, and work with partners to share examples of good practice.

Funding to cut youth crime

16. In May, the Government [announced](#) £300 million funding over the next three years to support councils across England and Wales in catching and preventing youth offending earlier than ever, helping to stop these children and teenagers from moving on to further, more serious offending. Councils will be given funding to intervene early with teenagers displaying signs such as poor school attendance, troubles at home, and a history of substance abuse which are known to be factors which often drive young people into crime – so they can steer them away from law-breaking before an offence is even committed. The LGA will continue to work with the Government and partners on this important issue.

Anti-social behaviour roundtable

17. Safer and Stronger Communities Board lead members attended a roundtable discussion with Association of Police and Crime Commissioner (APCC) leads to discuss tackling anti-social behaviour and wider community safety issues. LGA officers will continue to work with the APCC on a joint webinar to raise awareness of the community trigger, and support ASB Awareness Week in July. Future meetings may be held to focus on LGA and APCC's response to the forthcoming Community Safety Partnership Review.

Travellers Site Fund

18. The LGA hosted a [webinar](#) with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to provide further information about the [Travellers Site Fund](#). DLUHC launched £10 million of capital funding for 2022/23 to support local authorities in building new transit and permanent traveller sites, to refurbish existing permanent traveller and transit sites and provide temporary stopping places and facilities for travellers. The webinar reached approximately 100 delegates, and the DLUHC presentation continues to be available on our [LGA website](#). The deadline for bids into the fund is 13 June 2022.

Government guidance on forced marriages

19. The Government has [published](#) statutory guidance for heads of safeguarding organisations, and non-statutory guidance for front-line professionals, on forced marriage.

Resolve ASB Awareness Week

20. Anti-social behaviour (ASB) Awareness Week has been confirmed for 18-24 July 2022. This week of action will focus on the impact of anti-social behaviour on young people, and the importance engaging with the wider public about their vital role in tackling ASB. Further information is [available here](#).

Vagrancy Act submission

21. The LGA has responded to the Government's consultation on an effective replacement for the Vagrancy Act. Our full response is available [here](#).

DLUHC technical consultation on street naming

22. The LGA recently responded to a DLUHC consultation on proposals for amending the legislation around changing street names, which sought views on the content of regulations for councils.

23. Currently, requirements are set out in three Acts: the London Building Acts (Amendment) Act 1939, which applies to London authorities only; with local authorities outside of Greater London able to choose between the procedures in the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907 or the Public Health Act 1925. The consultation proposes replacing this with a single requirement for a residents' vote on any changes to street names based on the principles set out in 1907 legislation. The proposals suggest this should involve:
- 23.1 Repealing the existing three Acts
 - 23.2 Ensuring that the consenting population 'electorate' for changing street names is defined and clearly set out (through regulations); and
 - 23.3 Ensuring that the rights of local residents are clear (through regulations, which may be supplemented by statutory guidance), on matters such as the process for engaging with the electorate.
24. The consultation sought views on both the principles and the detailed questions of how to define the electorate for undertaking a consultation, the process for engaging with the electorate, and other issues that might be covered in regulations (and any statutory guidance).
25. In our response we argued that the proposals were unnecessary and undermined the fundamental principles of local democracy - where decisions about street names can and should be made at local level. We set out that there was no evidence of councils changing street names without engaging with residents; no evidence of a significant issue with the methods they currently use; and that communities are currently involved in decisions about street names through their elected representatives who are responsible for making those changes.
26. Further we raised a number of concerns that the proposals would be unworkable in practice, including difficulties in defining the electorate for referenda in a manner that will be appropriate in every case, and in the additional significant increase in demand on electoral registering authorities, Returning Officers and electoral staff.

Social cohesion and resilience call for evidence

27. Dame Sara Khan, the Government's Independent Adviser for Social Cohesion and Resilience, recently launched a call for evidence to explore the experiences of those targeted by extremists; the role of local authorities and public bodies in promoting cohesion and countering extremism; and how local communities and civil society can be supported to challenge extremism, develop community resilience and promote cohesion.
28. In our response, informed by a practitioner roundtable in May, we set out our concerns about the abuse and harassment of elected members, with evidence of campaigns based on discriminatory narratives, significant concerns about the safety of councillors from particular ethnic groups, and about the abuse of individuals online.

We highlighted the important role of local authorities in countering extremism and building resilience alongside partners, the need for effective and meaningful engagement and communication with communities, and the critical leadership role of elected members.

29. We also set out a number of challenges for local authorities in this space, including tackling difficult issues sensitively, national policy uncertainties, the need for a long-term approach that addresses underlying cohesion issues, and limited resources and capacity available for this work. We highlighted the role of the SIGCE in providing support to councils on counter-extremism and cohesion, as well as wider LGA resources for example to support councillors facing abuse.

30. The deadline for submissions to the [call for evidence has now been extended to 23 June](#), and Sara is keen to receive further responses from councils to support her review (including individuals from councils who have been targeted by extremists).

Countering extremism and tackling hate crime guidance and case studies

31. We recently published a series of [case studies on partnership working to counter extremism and tackle hate crime](#). These are accompanied by a guidance note which explores the consistent elements common across the case studies, namely multi-agency working; information and intelligence; community engagement and development; co-production and communication.

Protect duty

32. In a recent [article for Open Access Government](#), Cllr Caliskan commented on the introduction of a new Protect duty to help prevent terror attacks, and the potential implications for councils.

Taxi licensing

33. The Department for Transport has published new [statutory guidance for licensing authorities in England](#). The statutory guidance is intended to help licensing authorities comply with their new duties under the [Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles \(Safeguarding and Road Safety\) Act 2022](#) which come into effect from 31 May 2022. The other duties of this Act relating to the refusals, suspensions and revocations database, will come into effect once commenced via legislation at a later date.

34. We are also aware that the [Department for Transport has sent a letter to licensing authorities](#) encouraging them to prepare for the upcoming commencement of the [Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles \(Disabled Persons\) Act 2022](#) on 28 June. This letter sets out a range of recommended actions to help licensing authorities prepare for the changes the Act will introduce.

35. We are also finalising our response to the [Department for Transport's best practice guidance consultation](#), which we hope to submit in the coming weeks.
36. In a speech in the House of Lords on Wednesday 11 May, Baroness Vere, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, appeared to suggest that the Transport Bill which was announced in the Queen's Speech will include clauses relating to taxi and PHV licensing. Baroness Vere stated that *'technology has also led to changes in how the taxi and private hire vehicle industry works—for example, through booking apps available on mobile phones. We will modernise the law to ensure that the same minimum standards are met by drivers across England to gain or retain a taxi or private hire vehicle licence, and we will enhance licensing authorities' existing compliance and enforcement powers. These changes will create a level playing field and make journeys safer for all passengers.'*
37. Details are yet to be announced but based on earlier discussions with officials at the Department for Transport, we expect that the Government will use the Bill to take forward the commitments it made in its response to the 2018 task and finish group on taxi/PHV licensing, when it accepted the group's recommendations for national minimum standards, national enforcement powers and a national licensing database. We do not expect the Bill to consider the proposal in the levelling up white paper for taxi/PHV licensing functions to be moved to upper tier or combined authorities.
38. The LGA was part of the taxi/PHV working group and is supportive of the measures proposed, however we are disappointed that they constitute a small number of amendments rather than the comprehensive overhaul that is required.

Pavement licensing

39. Details of the Government's proposals for a permanent pavement licensing regime were announced in the [Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill](#). It is welcome that officials at DLUHC have engaged with councils to make improvements to the temporary regime and that this Bill increases pavement licence fees, provides a longer consultation and determination period, and improved enforcement powers for councils. We will continue to engage with the Bill as it proceeds through Parliament.

Gambling licensing

40. The Gambling Commission has contacted the LGA to raise the importance of licensing authorities conducting age verification test purchasing of the gambling premises they licence as well as other premises where gambling machines are situated, such as pubs. Prior to the Covid pandemic, the failure rate for age verification test purchasing was around 85 per cent. The Commission would like to see a renewed focus on this important work.

Food regulation reform programme

41. Officers met recently with counterparts at the Food Standards Agency (FSA) for an update on the FSA's ongoing work to modernise the food regulation delivery model. The FSA reported that some councils are experiencing challenges in delivering the post-Covid recovery plan agreed by the FSA as councils returned to business as usual following the pandemic: evidence suggests an ongoing high level of new business registrations and compliance issues among some existing businesses, while there are recognised challenges with professional capacity and recruitment. The FSA is considering various initiatives for councils to develop their own skilled capacity.
42. The FSA is also looking at key performance indicators and data reporting by councils and, separately, its audit programme and what the overall purpose of this should be.
43. The agency continues to work on programmes to modernise both food hygiene and food standards work as part of its Achieving Business Compliance programme. It continues to push for a mandatory food hygiene rating system, something the LGA supports.

Resilience reviews

44. In March, the Government published its [post implementation review of the Civil Contingencies Act](#), which the LGA contributed to last summer. The review found that the principles underpinning the Act remain effective, but that there was a need for greater accountability and assurance. The review reflected a point raised in the LGA's submission about the need for democratic accountability, noting that the levelling up white paper included an ambition to empower local leaders and communities and ensure combined authorities have a clear role for them in local resilience. It is expected that the national resilience strategy, expected in summer, will set out how it intends to take forward ambitions for stronger local assurance and clear lines of democratic accountability, although legislative change is not expected in the short term.

Building Safety update

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

This report aims to update members on the LGA's building safety-related work since the last Board meeting.

Recommendation

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

Action/s

Officers to take forward the actions set out in paragraphs 42-44 of the report.

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Building Safety update

Background

1. Since the Board's last meeting, the Building Safety Bill has received Royal Assent, the Fire Safety Act has commenced and the LGA has continued to work to support remediation.

Remediation

2. The LGA has already published [case studies](#) and a document on [principles of effective regulation](#) and has worked closely with Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) officers and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) to promote joint working in this area, including through webinars that have reached over 600 council and fire service staff and through the work of the Joint Inspection Team which DLUHC funds.
3. Two related pieces of work are underway:
 - 3.1. The DLUHC-led group Remediation Partners continues to work on a framework to support remediation, based on proposals for regional meetings between Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) and local authority environmental health teams in line with the Principles for Effective Regulation document. These regional meetings are expected to be based on the NFCC regions. The initial focus of activity is expected to be 'missing buildings', i.e. those with interim fire safety measures which have not applied for funding to begin remediation.
 - 3.2. Discussions are under way with DLUHC and NFCC to support a coordinated audit of risk within medium-rise residential buildings (11-18m).
4. While it is clear that there are a number of buildings under 18m that present a risk to life as a result of the failure of the regulatory system over twenty years and the irresponsible behaviour of some industry actors, we do not have accurate data on the true extent of this problem; nor do we know how widespread the over-provision of waking watches may be.
5. The LGA and NFCC therefore support the principle that we should improve our knowledge in this field. However, both organisations have conveyed to DLUHC that existing regulatory frameworks are not designed to prohibit excessively risk-averse behaviour, and it is unrealistic to think that a programme of inspection by either fire service or council regulators will be able to eliminate it, especially given the absence of powers to do so and the uncertainty around personal emergency evacuation plans (PEEPs).
6. LGA officers have sought a clear steer from Government on when those parts of the Building Safety Act that relate to funding for remediation can be expected to commence (see below), and what their impact will be, and have stressed the need for the Government to set out clear expectations in regard to enforcement action.
7. [DLUHC statistics](#) from April 2022 show that only 12 buildings eligible for the Building Safety Fund have started work on site since the March update and 4 have reached

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completion. LGA officers have identified a risk that the current pace may be slowing due to uncertainty around when parts of the Act relating to funding will commence.

8. The Joint Inspection Team has secured funding for the next two years which will see it expand significantly. In effect it will triple in capacity by the end of this financial year.

Building Safety Act

9. The Act received Royal Assent last month. There are a significant number of pieces of secondary legislation that will need to be passed in order to set up the new Building Safety Regime. There are also a number of questions we need to continue to ask.
10. **What will the impact be of the provisions protecting leaseholders on the ability to pay for remediation?** We are seeking clarification from officials on the impact of the Act and associated measures. In particular it is currently unclear what will happen in blocks where there is no warrantee and no successful claim against the developer and the cost of remediation is too great to be covered by leaseholders within the cap. In theory the freeholder is expected to pay, but that is unlikely if the sum is large as freeholds are not particularly valuable; moreover, the freeholder will in many cases be the leaseholders acting collectively.
11. With no distinction between developers and councils, the Act could leave councils liable for the costs of buildings merely because they are on council land. It also fails to commit to cover the remediation costs of social landlords, exposing the housing revenue account, and limiting councils' ability to provide homes for those most in need and to improve social housing.
12. Another concern here is that the government wants councils and fire services to take enforcement action to drive remediation; this is not going to work if there is no funding available to pay for remediation. There is a specific need for funding in the next few years to increase skilled capacity in local authority building control and in the fire service.
13. We still do not know whether councils will be hit by the Levy or the extent to which councils will be treated as liable freeholders simply because they own land a building is on.
14. The leaseholder protection measures in the Act (sections 116 to 125 and Schedule 8) will be commenced on 28 June (2 months after Royal Assent). Officers will update our advice to members on [supporting residents who have been affected by cladding and other building safety issues](#) to take account of these provisions. DLUHC has provided a summary of their effect:
 - 14.1. Measures will require that historical safety defects in any building above 11 metres or five storeys owned by the developer who built or refurbished it, or by a landlord associated with that developer, must be fixed by them.
 - 14.2. Building owners and non-resident landlords with a net worth of more than £2 million per in-scope building must not pass on any costs relating to historical safety defects to qualifying leaseholders.
 - 14.3. Qualifying leaseholders are those who reside in their own property or have no more than three UK properties in total. The protections will apply to qualifying leaseholders if their property is in a building over 11 metres (or five storeys).

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- 14.4. The protections transfer to subsequent buyers when the property is sold.
- 14.5. Qualifying leaseholders will be protected from all cladding remediation costs.
- 14.6. Qualifying leaseholders whose property is valued at less than £325,000 in Greater London and £175,000 elsewhere in England will also be protected from all costs associated with non-cladding defects and interim measures.
- 14.7. Any contribution that will be required from qualifying leaseholders for non-cladding defects and interim measures (including waking watch costs) will be firmly capped and spread over ten (increased from five) years. This will ensure that the majority of leaseholders will have to pay no more than £10,000 (£15,000 in Greater London) over ten years.
- 14.8. Costs already paid out in the last five years – including interim costs such as waking watch – will count towards the cap, but leaseholders will not be reimbursed for costs already paid.
- 14.9. DLUHC are seeking to spread the cost of decades of malpractice equitably across the system and ensure above all that the most vulnerable leaseholders are protected.
- 15. Will councils and fire services be adequately funded?** The funding for councils and NFCC to expand building control and fire service competence and capacity to meet the requirements of the new regime has been agreed at £41 million. It will be essential to ensure the programme of work developed for the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) is proportionate to the capacity this funding provides.
- 16. Will the cost recovery arrangements work in practice?** LGA is waiting for a meeting on this organised by DLUHC to be reorganised as it was postponed.
- 17. How effectively will the Act be aligned in operation with the Fire Safety Act?** An important issue here is that FRS staff may attend inspections of high-rise residential buildings as part of a Building Safety Regulator multi-disciplinary team, work for which cost recovery funding is available. In doing so they may come across issues that require addressing under the Fire Safety Order, work which cannot be covered by cost recovery. This work would not have been done in the normal course of events, because inspecting this building would not take place under the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP). As a result, resource will be diverted from work prioritised under the IRMP to work that does not meet that test. While this is unlikely to matter in individual cases, in some areas the sheer volume of work that may arise in this way could have implications for delivery of IRMP. The LGA and NFCC continue to seek to influence the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE's) setting-up of the new regulator to ensure this alignment takes place. The LGA has related concerns on around the impact of BSR demands on the business-as-usual activities of local building control teams.
- 18. What will be the impact of continued competition in Building Control in relation to buildings under 18m?** We hope to work with Local Authority Building Control (LABC) to monitor this. The Government has already accepted that allowing developers to choose their own regulator has undermined the regulation of building safety by disincentivising effective regulation. It has therefore removed that right in relation to buildings over 18

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metres. The LGA does not recommend the continuation of this flawed model in relation to buildings under 18 metres.

19. **Will the BSR develop an effective system of safety cases and safety case review?**
We are working with HSE, NFCC and LABC to support the development of safety cases.
20. **The effectiveness of the product safety regime is still unclear.**

Fire Safety Act

21. The [Act](#) commenced on 18 May. This was followed by regulations implementing most of the recommendations made by phase one of the Grenfell Tower inquiry. This was announced in a [written ministerial statement](#). The NFCC has published an [FSA page](#) and [a series of FAQs](#) on both the Act and the regulations on its website and the Home Office has provided some [guidance](#).
22. The Act requires responsible persons to consider the need to update their fire risk assessment to take account of external wall systems. A [Fire Risk Assessment Prioritisation Tool](#) was launched alongside commencement. Its purpose is to inform Responsible Persons of how urgent the need to review their Fire Risk Assessment is, in order to spread out demand for the limited resource of fire risk assessors.
23. Following commencement of the Act, the Home Office has laid regulations delivering the recommendations of the Grenfell Inquiry Phase One. These will come into effect in January 2023. These regulations will require Responsible Persons to share various items of information with Fire and Rescue Services, including:
- 23.1. Details of the materials and design of the external wall systems, including the level of risk posed and mitigations in place
 - 23.2. Floor plans (including the location of essential fire-fighting equipment) and a single page building plan
 - 23.3. Details of any lifts for use by firefighters and fire-fighting equipment which are out of order for a period of longer than 24 hours
24. A full list of regulations and a set of fact sheets explaining them is available on the [Home Office website](#). Guidance will follow.

PEEPs

25. The regulations do not include Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans or Evacuation Plans.
26. The recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report included the following:
- e) (...) that the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to prepare personal emergency evacuation plans for all residents whose ability to self-evacuate may be compromised (such as persons with reduced mobility or cognition).

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f) (...) that the owner and manager of every high-rise residential building be required by law to include up-to-date information about persons with reduced mobility and their associated PEEPs in the premises information box.

27. The Government ran a consultation on the Phase One recommendations which included a proposal to implement PEEPs and subsequently ran a second consultation on the subject. This closed on 19 July 2021 and alongside a [response](#) to the second consultation, a third [consultation](#) has now been published on 18 May containing new proposals, including a proposal called Emergency Evacuation Information Sharing (EEIS).
28. The latest consultation proposes that Responsible Persons of buildings with a simultaneous evacuation policy in place (rather than a stay put policy) are **required to**:
- 28.1. ask residents to make themselves known to the Responsible Person for their building if they think they would need support to evacuate in the event of a fire
- 28.2. offer a Person-Centred Fire Risk Assessment (PCFRA) checklist (example found [here](#)) and connect them with a home fire safety visit from the local Fire & Rescue Service. This should consider whether there is something present (or lacking) in the common areas that hinders the individual's ability to self-evacuate. There would be no requirement to act on the conclusions of that process.
29. Responsible Persons would also be **required** to provide Fire & Rescue Services with up-to-date information on where these residents live within the building.
30. No obligations about PEEPs are proposed for Responsible Persons (RP) in buildings that do not have interim fire safety measures. This falls short of what the Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommended and what the Equalities Act requires of social landlords as we understand it.
31. The Home office is also seeking examples of existing PEEPs for residential buildings, agreed between resident and the RP, that provide for evacuation from a building, that at least partially:
- 31.1 avoids the staffing up of buildings to enact the PEEPs.
- 31.2 avoids the liability issues for RPs and third parties who are enacting the PEEPs such as friends or neighbours.
- 31.3 avoids the safety issues in enacting them e.g. the blocking of stairwells.
32. The Government are also setting up a working group the LGA called for in our consultation response that will look at how neighbour assistance would work (i.e. how neighbours will help disabled residents evacuate in the event of a fire).
33. There is much in the proposal that reflects the LGA's response to the second consultation, which drew attention to the practical difficulties of enabling someone who cannot self-evacuate to leave a building without the assistance of the fire service. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that the LGA has always argued that in buildings

with a simultaneous evacuation policy there must be measure in place to allow everyone to evacuate. This is also the position of the National Fire Chiefs Council.

34. Members will be aware that the LGA recently shared with its members legal advice on the requirements on social landlords in respect of Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans under the Equalities Act. This advice was in effect that social landlords had a duty to identify disabled residents, consider their evacuation needs and make reasonable adjustments. The LGA advised its members to seek their own legal advice on this matter.
35. As this issue impacts on the fire service in particular, the LGA position was discussed with FSMC lead members, who agreed as follows:
- 35.1. **The LGA does not support the proposal in the consultation set out above at paragraph 28 because it does not require the responsible person to act and have a plan on how the resident would evacuate in the event of a fire.**
- 35.2. This would arguably transfer responsibility from the duty-holder to the fire service. While rescue is a back-up option, which is facilitated by EEIS, it cannot be **the first and only option** in a block with Simultaneous Evacuation. In addition, this policy would in our view be unlawful under the Equalities Act if adopted by a local authority.
- 35.3. **The LGA has called for the Home Office to meet its duty under Article 50 of the Fire Safety Order and provide appropriate guidance to social landlords, covering duties under Equalities Act as well as any fire regulations.**
- 35.4. Under the Equalities Act social landlords have a duty to disabled residents in all blocks, not just those with simultaneous evacuation. The proposals being consulted upon place no duties on responsible persons in stay-put blocks, but this would not remove the duty on social landlords.
- 35.5. **The proposed group to discuss neighbour assistance is welcome but should be able to explore the issue of PEEPs more widely.** The Home Office has indicated that this is acceptable, but it would like to start with neighbour assistance.

Improvement

36. A Building Safety Leadership Essentials Event is being held in person at Warwick University on Tuesday, 18th October – Wednesday, 19th October 2022. To book a place contact Grace Collins Grace.Collins@local.gov.uk
37. A Portfolio Holder Fire Safety Update webinar is being held virtually on Tuesday, 5th July 2022. The Home Office will be providing an update on the Fire Safety Act and associated regulations; the development of the new building safety regulator; and other implications of the Building Safety Act. The LGA will provide an update on disabled evacuation arrangements and LPS buildings.

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38. As part of the improvement grant funding agreement with DLUHC, the LGA has committed to:
- 38.1. Run webinars on building safety following the Building Safety Bill getting Royal Assent and the commencement of the Fire Safety Act, along with additional resources provided to councils through case studies and publications.
 - 38.2. Delivery of the building safety political leadership programme (Leadership Essentials) to housing portfolio holders.
 - 38.3. An E-learning module available to officers and elected members to inform them about councils' duties as one of the regulators supporting the Building Safety Regulator.
 - 38.4. Work in partnership with HSE to support their programme of engagement with local authorities in areas with High Rise Buildings.

Implications for Wales

39. The Fire Safety Act came into force in Wales in [October 2021](#). The new regulations passed under the FSO only apply in England. 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

40. Although the LGA has set up the Joint Inspection Team, the cost of doing so is being met by DLUHC. 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 community's team to support the LGA's building safety work.
41. The cost of developing PEEPs under the Equalities Act is impossible to quantify as we do not currently know what would be considered reasonable measures.

Next steps

42. Officers to take forward improvement work as set out in paragraphs 36-38.
43. Subject to any further comments from members, the LGA will pursue the arguments in paragraph 35 when responding to the consultation and in responding to the consultation on a new edition of the *Fire Safety in Purpose-built Blocks of Flats* guide.
44. Officers to continue to support the sector's work to keep residents safe and reform the building safety system, as directed by members.