

Minutes of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

Safer & Stronger Communities Board

Friday, 29 September 2023

Hybrid Meeting - 18 Smith Square and Online

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#)

Item	Decisions and actions
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1	Welcome, Apologies and Substitutes, Declarations of Interest
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The Chair welcomed Members to the first Safer and Stronger Communities Board of the new 2023/24 Board cycle with a special mention to new Members.

For transparency, Cllr Arnold Saunders declared that he was a Chaplain, Cllr Brenda Dacres and Cllr David Welsh (substitute) declared that they had family members who were police officers, and Cllr Kelly Middleton declared that she was a mental health worker specialising in homelessness in a government funded role.

No apologies were received.

2	Notes of previous meeting
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Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June.

3	Terms of Reference, Appointments to Outside Organisations and Membership
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The Chair invited Mark Norris, Principal Policy Adviser, to introduce the report which set out how the Safer and Stronger Communities Board operates and how the LGA works to support the objectives and work of its member authorities.

Decision

The Board:

- i. agreed its Terms of Reference (Appendix A);
- ii. formally noted the membership for 2023/24 (Appendix B);
- iii. noted the dates of the future meetings (Appendix C);
- iv. reviewed and noted the member champions role description (Appendix D); and

v. noted the member champion roles available and will register interest with their Lead Member

Actions

- Members to share interest in member champion roles and outside bodies with their Lead member.

4 Work Programme for the 2023/24 year

The Chair invited Charles Loft, Senior Adviser, to introduce the report which provided an overview of the issues the Board had focused on in recent years, alongside proposals for SSCB work programme for 2023/24. The proposals are based on corporate LGA priorities and proposals for broader work based on a continuation of ongoing work (including responding to recent policy announcements by Government) and areas of interest previously indicated by board members. It was proposed that the work programme focuses on 6 areas highlighted in paragraph 7.

Members comments:

- A member requested that in relation to regulation and licensing (paragraph 23) and the subsequent work stream outlined (page 32), that SSCB be more proactive in responding to the Government consultation, including raising awareness with Local Authorities.
- Members commented on the issues associated with out of area taxi licensing (paragraph 23), and there was a consensus that giving the licensing powers to upper tiers will not rectify these issues.
- There was a suggestion that licensing functions within councils could be looked at as one, rather than within their individual silos.

Jade Hall, Adviser responsible for licensing, noted the interest and outlined that different types of licensing tend to be looked at separately as they each have different frameworks and come out of different departments, at different times with distinct pieces of legislation. Jade added that the issue of the adequacy of the framework and outdated taxi and PHV legislation, has been frequently raised with the Department for Transport by the LGA.

The Chair noted members' comments and highlighted this will be part of the work programme for the upcoming year.

Decision

The Board agreed the priorities and work programme set out in Appendix 1 to the report, subject to member comments.

Actions

- Officers to amend the work programme in response to Member comments.
- Officers to check on the legislation that under pinned the change of responsibility for establishing medical examiners from a local

authority function to a health service function (as decided by the DHSC).

5 Update paper

Decision

The Board noted the update.

6 Clear, Hold, Build and the importance of effective partnership working to tackle Serious and Organised Crime (SOC)

The Chair welcomed Rod Mclean, Head of Serious and Organised Crime Law Enforcement Unit in the Home Office (HO). Rod Mclean presented slides which outlined the Home Office's new framework, Clear, Hold, Build, for tackling serious and organised crime at a neighbourhood level which was currently being tested in eight forces the Home Office and is now rolling out the approach in all police forces in England and Wales. Councils are seen as a key partner in the success of Clear, Hold, Build in creating communities less vulnerable to SOC.

Cllr Sara Conway, Safety Lead from London Borough of Barnet, highlighted their council's experience as the first London Borough to pilot this and encouraged participation following initial successes, whilst highlighting the need for funding long-term.

Members comments:

- A member requested information on what community involvement would look like.
- It was raised that the knock-on effect of neighbouring authorities to those undergoing the Clear, Hold, Build should be considered, to avoid pushing a problem to another area, as not all SOC gangs are place-based.
- It was requested that the HO consider the effect on licensing, for example, to the night-time economy and to the police licensing team in conjunction with the local authority to help control the situation.
- A focus is needed on cuckooing and the treatment of those involved in county lines.
- A member echoed Rod Mclean's comments in regard to the embedded nature of community engagement and the importance of local knowledge (religion, culture, community ties).
- It was raised that funding is also needed for the voluntary and community sectors, not just local authorities.
- A member commented that place-based initiatives require tailored approaches.
- A member raised that their Basic Command Units deal with community policing and the Gang Command Unit deal with SOC, and so connectivity between units and the community must be ensured.
- There was a request for information on the timelines involved with

large-scale roll out of the Clear, Hold, Build.

Rod responded to Members comments:

- Community involvement in Clear, Hold, Build would be reliant on tapping into local knowledge. For instance, in Bradford Moors, it was found that there was a lack of opportunity for young people to partake in activities in the evening which would leave them open to be targeted by crime groups. Community groups began to hold community gardening sessions and 'cook outs,' which provided opportunities to guide young people.
- Bradford Moor statistics – 57% reduction in burglary, 27% in drug offenses, 38% reduction in anti-social behaviour.
- It was raised that gaining the trust of the community was important, through identifying respected figures in the community and involving the voluntary sector as well as mothers and children.
- It was recommended that community asset mapping is essential before beginning this pilot.
- £2 million invested across the country with initial plans to continue to be implemented with existing funding streams, however Rod acknowledged Members' comments that a dedicated funding stream is needed, and this will be factored in for the next spending review.
- There was encouragement for councils to apply for existing funding opportunities available for knife crime, Project Adder funding around drugs and DLUHC funding for levelling up.
- Concern regarding crime being pushed out to surrounding areas around the Clear, Hold, Build pilot areas was noted and Rod ensured this would be monitored. However, the evaluations of Clear, Hold, Build framework in 7 sites had shown no evidence yet of displacement of crime to other areas.
- A whole Government approach is needed and currently working with the Rt Hon Chris Philp MP, Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire, to unite all Government departments.
- A member of the Head of Serious and Organised Crime Law Enforcement Unit had been seconded into the Met to help understand how Clear, Hold, Build could be rolled out, with ambitions to roll out across all 32 boroughs.
- Clear, Hold, Build is due to be rolled out across all forces by March 2024.

Decision

- (a) The Board noted the rollout of Clear, Hold, Build to all police forces in England and Wales by 2024; and
- (b) the Board agreed the actions set out in paragraph 10. Including to raise awareness of Clear, Hold, Build among local authorities and help influence the voluntary and private sectors to participate in the programme. The LGA would help to create refreshed guidance on partnership working and develop a series of joint communications with the Home Office to local authorities. However, Members highlighted the Home Office would need to reconsider the funding needed in the long-term roll out of the Clear, Hold, Build

framework.

Action

- Officers to share slides with Members.

7 Modern Slavery Cases in the Care Sector

Members had a confidential discussion on current issues and mitigating action being taken to prevent modern slavery in adult social care services.

8 Reducing Reoffending

The Chair invited Joseph Sloyan to introduce the paper on reducing reoffending which highlights the need for a refresh of the Board's most recent re-offending and probation policy position which was published in *Going Straight* (2005), Appendix 1. These positions had been reviewed and evaluated to ensure they remain relevant in light of developments in the field of reducing re-offending, and to support councils' community safety teams in these areas.

Members comments:

- It was highlighted that recruitment and retention had worsened and this needed to be emphasised in the position, particularly of probation officers.
- It was mentioned that further research was needed in the provision of drug and alcohol treatment for ex-offenders and how extensive the treatment is, as many are signed off after just two sessions.
- There was a need for mental health to be factored in, particularly in the drug and alcohol treatment section.
- A member requested for gambling to be added in alongside the drugs and alcohol section.
- It was raised that the effect of neurodiversity on reoffending should be included following the [2021 review](#).
- A member highlighted that Home Office involvement in probation services and with Local authorities is varied in different areas. This could be explored as part of Community Safety Partnership work or considered as an area to look at in devolution.
- Members agreed successful international models of working regarding restorative justice and how local authorities are involved in this should be explored, for instance in Norway.
- The location of accommodation where the Ministry of Justice and probation services place ex-offenders can have a large effect on the likelihood they will reoffend.

Decision

(a) The Board noted the previous policy position on reducing re-offending set out in *Going Straight*, and the review of that position.

(b) The Board provided views on the proposals set out in paragraph 34.

(c) The Board agreed officers bring back an updated policy position around reducing reoffending for the Board to consider at its next meeting following Members comments.

Actions

- Officers to bring back an updated policy position after feeding in Members' comments.
- Officers to share if local authorities are involved in the Home Office Prison Leavers project.

9 Future Crime Horizon Scan

The Chair invited Joseph Sloyan to introduce the report which reviewed some of the key qualitative and quantitative trends in crime that councils' community safety teams are likely to see in the next 5-10 years as a result of developments in artificial intelligence (AI). It also set out case studies on how local authorities are already responding to these changes.

Members shared their interest in the paper and their experiences of enhanced phishing scams already happening.

Decision

(a) The Board noted the potential for AI to shape and change the way crime is committed, and the impact this could have on councils' community safety work; and

(b) The Board agreed to the proposed work programme set out at paragraph 33 to help support the local government sector to manage these trends.

10 RAAC Update

The Chair invited Mark Norris to introduce the paper on the identification, remediation, and management of RAAC which had been subject to substantial public and media concern in recent weeks, following the Department for Education's change in approach to managing the risks associated with RAAC. The paper set out a brief background to the LGA's work on RAAC, recent developments, and the current key areas of interest to the Safer and Stronger Communities Board and seeks member's views on the LGA's next steps.

Members comments:

- It was raised fixed-rate fees should be compulsory for the survey work that needs to be done to identify RAAC.
- The capacity and availability of qualified building safety staff to undertake the survey work needed to be understood.

- Organisational resilience strengthening should be encouraged. The LGA should prompt authorities to refresh these plans, as many buildings are being lost to RAAC, therefore contingency plans are needed.
- There is a need for a database log to track faulty materials when they are known to avoid similar incidents in future. Mark Norris commented that there is a log as part of the Building Safety Act regime, however this only applies to buildings over 18 meters in height.
- It was highlighted that local authorities had been alerted to the presence of RAAC since 2018, and therefore should not have been a surprise. It was suggested there is a wider issue where councils need to be supported to have better systems to reduce failures, for instance, this work could be fed into the LGA's corporate peer challenge.

Mark Norris thanked Members for their comments and acknowledged there had been variable responses from local authorities to RAAC since 2018 and agreed it would be a good idea to feed into the corporate peer challenge work to ensure councils have the correct processes and procedures in place. Charles Loft highlighted that there is a wider issue where communications between central government, local government, the LGA and partners needed to be improved.

Decision

(a) The Board noted recent developments relating to the identification, remediation, and management of RAAC; and

(b) The Board provided views on the LGA's next steps in its work related to RAAC.

Actions

- Officers to consider Members' comments on further areas of work that could be explored in relation to RAAC.

11 Local Government White Paper

The Chair invited Mark Norris to introduce the report which outlined the work within the LGA to develop a Local Government White Paper that was announced as an LGA priority at its annual conference, and a process for providing the Board's input to it.

Decision

a) The Board noted the work in the LGA for developing a Local Government White Paper;

b) The Board agreed the process outlined in paragraph 13 for developing the Board's contribution to the White Paper, with proposals being brought back to the Board at the November meeting.

Actions

- Officers to work on Local Government White Paper proposals ahead of discussions with Lead Members and bringing it to the Board in November.
- Members to be informed where possible when their councils will be contacted regarding the Local Government White Paper.

Mark Norris thanked Joseph Sloyan for all his work, especially on RAAC and wished him luck in his next rotation of the LGA graduate scheme in Partners in Care and Health.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Heather Kidd MBE	Shropshire Council
Vice-Chair	Cllr Afrasiab Anwar	Burnley Borough Council
Deputy-Chairman	Cllr Sue Woolley	Lincolnshire County Council
Deputy-Chair	Cllr Clive Woodbridge	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Members	Cllr Brenda Dacres	Lewisham London Borough
	Cllr Anthony Okereke	Royal Borough of Greenwich
	Cllr Jeanie Bell	St Helens Council
	Cllr Kelly Middleton	Telford and Wrekin Council
	Cllr Asher Craig	Bristol City Council
	Cllr James Dawson	Erewash Borough Council
	Cllr Bill Borrett	Norfolk County Council
	Cllr Bobbie Dove	Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council
	Cllr Priti Joshi	Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
	Cllr Liam Bones	North Tyneside Council
	Cllr Arnold Saunders	Salford City Council
	Cllr Jon Ball	Ealing Council
	Cllr Jake Short	Sutton London Borough
	Cllr Karen Lucioni	Isle of Wight Council
In Attendance	Rod Mclean	Home Office