

Safer & Stronger Communities Board – report from Councillor Simon Blackburn (Chair)

Modern Slavery

1. Baroness Young held a meeting at the start of March which I attended to discuss the transfer of the Modern Slavery Act (Transparency in Supply Chains) Bill she had introduced in the Lords to the House of Commons. The Bill would require councils to publish a statement setting out what they were doing to tackle modern slavery in their supply chains. I highlighted the work councils are already doing to tackle modern slavery and the impact the Bill would have on councils and the smaller and medium sized businesses they procure goods and services from.

Fire risks from tumble dryers

2. Having highlighted the risks of some types of tumble dryers, I responded to the new safety advice from Whirlpool about faulty tumble dryers awaiting repair, by calling on them to mount a mass publicity campaign to raise awareness of the risks.

Drink drive limit

3. With the latest figures showing that alcohol has contributed to a rise in the number of road accidents and those injured, I called on the government to lower the drink drive limit in England and Wales to bring it into line with Scotland, where there has been a decline in drink related road accident fatalities and casualties.

Regulatory services

4. In May, Cllr Nick Worth spoke about the future of regulatory services in local government at the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health's East of England conference. Cllr Worth emphasised the importance of local regulatory services and how they can support a range of different council objectives.

Taxi/PHV licensing

5. In June, Cllr Clive Woodbridge chaired an LGA event on CCTV in taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs). The session was aimed at councils who are considering introducing CCTV systems in taxis/PHVs with more than 30 members and officers attending. Delegates heard from licensing officers from three different authorities who explored some of the key issues for consideration for councils thinking about introducing mandatory CCTV and shared practical examples of the benefits of these schemes drawn from their own experiences.

Counter-terrorism and counter-extremism

6. We have worked with the Home Office to establish a Prevent Champions Network (PCN) to assist councillors in their work on Prevent and counter-terrorism. As Network members, Cllr Clive Woodbridge, Cllr Anita Lower, Cllr Janet Daby, Cllr Jo Beavis, Cllr Joy Allen and I will be available to other elected members to offer advice and support.
7. The Queen's Speech set out plans for a government review of the national counter-terrorism strategy and the formation of a Counter-Extremism Commission. I responded to the

announcements by calling for councils to be involved in both the Contest strategy review, and in the development and ongoing work of the Commission.

Domestic violence and abuse

8. The Queen's Speech outlined plans for a Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill, and the creation of a Domestic Violence and Abuse Commissioner. I supported the creation of a Commissioner and welcomed the Bill's objectives of ensuring victims feel they are able to report abuse and are confident that organisations will do everything possible to support them, and to pursue their abusers. As a high priority for councils, I set out that councils will expect to work collaboratively with the new Commissioner to support the Bill and embed good practice.

Community safety partnerships

9. In March, Cllr Jo Beavis spoke at an event on Safer Communities through Stronger Partnerships, organised by the LGA, East of England LGA, East of England Officers of the Police and Crime Commissioners, and Public Health England. Cllr Beavis spoke about the future of council community safety services and community safety partnerships, outlining the importance of making inks across different services and partners around issues concerning the safety of local communities, and looking at options for different delivery models going forward.

Fire Health Summit

10. In March, Cllr Jeremy Hilton, Cllr David Acton and Cllr Rebecca Knox attended the Fire Health Summit to represent the Fire Services Management Committee. The summit had attendance from NHS England, Public Health England, AGE UK, the National Fire Chiefs Council and the Home Office, as well as the LGA, and members discussed next steps in improving collaboration between the health service and fire and rescue services. The summit also received updates on progress in evaluating the contribution that fire and rescue services can make to the health agenda, engagement with Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships (previously Plans) and workforce training.

LGA and CFOA Fire Peer Challenge working group

11. Following the announcements of the Home Office's fire reform programme, including to introduce an inspectorate for fire and rescue services, Cllr Jeremy Hilton, Cllr Kay Hammond and Cllr David Acton have represented the fire and rescue authorities on the LGA and NFCC's working group looking at the fire peer challenge offer to the sector. The group has looked at a range of issues and models for the future of peer challenge. The future of peer challenge and sector support will be impacted by the appointment of the inspectorate, and further discussions will take place after the inspectorate is announced.

Strategic Resilience Board

12. Cllr Les Byrom from the Fire Services Management Committee attended the Home Office's Strategic Resilience Board in March to represent fire and rescue authorities. The items for discussion included Marauding Terrorist Firearms Attacks, updates on JESIP, and the National Resilience Board.

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