

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

### **Counter Extremism**

#### Prevent

1. The Director of Prevent at the Home Office attended the Safer and Stronger Communities Board meeting in March, regarding plans for the future administration of 'Channel' panels by local authorities (case panels providing support to individuals at risk of radicalisation). We raised a number of concerns from councils about how the Home Office's proposals would be delivered in practice. In response, the Home Office thanked us for highlighting the issues and announced at the meeting that further trialling of the model would now be undertaken to help ensure these are resolved before it is rolled out nationally.
2. At the end of March I chaired a Leadership Essentials course on Prevent. The event was the third Prevent Leadership Essentials course we have delivered and was attended by 14 elected members from a range of authorities. Dates for further courses over the coming year around Prevent, counter-extremism and community cohesion are currently being finalised.

#### Strategic Resilience Board

3. Councillor Ian Stephens and Councillor Les Byrom attended the Strategic Resilience Board at the Home Office on 24 April. The Board discussed resilience issues generally as well as specific items on the Kerslake Report into the Manchester Arena Bombing and a presentation on the response to the Novichok nerve agent use in Salisbury.

### **Domestic Violence**

#### Sisters for Change

4. In May, Cllr Anita Lower spoke at the Sisters for Change roundtable event on the forthcoming Domestic Abuse Bill. The Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime Sophie Linden and Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner Dame Vera Baird QC also contributed to the roundtable. During the meeting, Anita highlighted the importance of taking a public health approach to tackling domestic abuse – to ensure prevention and early intervention are central aspects of the new Bill. She urged stakeholders to contribute to the Home Office's consultation and outlined the LGA's proposed response.

#### Serious Violence Strategy

5. In April, I attended a Serious Violence Strategy private roundtable convened by the Home Secretary ahead of the launch of the Strategy later the same day. The Strategy brings together a number of initiatives to tackle serious violent crime, building on existing work to tackle knife crime, corrosive substances, firearms, and gang related violence and exploitation including county lines. Following this, I was invited to be a member, on behalf of the LGA, of the new Serious Violence Taskforce, which held its first meeting in April and focused on the creation of the National County Lines Coordination Centre. The next meeting is due to be held in June.

### **FGM Advisory Group**

6. Councillor Anita Lower chaired the National FGM Centre's Advisory Group. The group discussed the sustainability of the Centre and how the Centre's work was developing since the last meeting in January. The Group also had a presentation on the Centre's FGM Assessment tool, which has been developed by the Centre for social workers to help them assess cases where FGM is a concern. It comprises two parts, best practice guidance and the online FGM assessment tool and is available on the Centre's website: <http://nationalfgmcentre.org.uk/fgm-assessment-tool/>.
7. The Group also discussed arrangements for the September meeting, which will take the form of a workshop rather than a meeting to look at the offer of the Centre.

### **Cllr Alan Rhodes meeting with Vernon Coaker MP on Modern Slavery**

8. On 8 March Cllr Alan Rhodes met with Vernon Coaker MP, co-Chair of the APPG on Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery. Cllr Rhodes highlighted the work of the LGA in tackling modern slavery including the joint work with the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's office on the [council guide on tackling modern slavery](#) and the LGA's regional workshops on modern slavery.
9. Vernon Coaker MP outlined the work of the APPG. In particular, the APPG was seeking to increase its engagement with local government and to help foster joint working between the police and local government. The APPG's primary concerns were immigration, recognising the vulnerabilities of victims, garnering support for Lord McColl's Bill, improving funding, county lines, pushing the Government to implement all elements of the Modern Slavery Act. The APPG meets regularly and includes a range of stakeholders including NGOs who work on this issue and the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner

### **Fire Commission**

10. Nick Hurd MP, the Minister for Policing and Fire spoke at the LGA's Fire Commission meeting. He spoke on his three key priorities on funding, inspection and responding to the Grenfell tower fire. He also spoke about standards. A new approach to professional standards in the fire and rescue service will be developed with the creation of a new Fire Standards Boards to ensure standards are nationally coordinated to a high level across the sector.

### **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller All-Party Parliamentary Group**

11. In March, I met with Baroness Whitaker, co-chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities to discuss the APPG's inquiry on unauthorised encampments and recent progress on the issue. Health inequality, transient sites, and language used to describe GRT communities were issues that were also raised in the meeting. Following this, the Government published a consultation on unauthorised encampments and we asked councils to keep us updated if they responded to the consultation. We have asked for councils to send us any case studies or examples of working with GRT communities, that we can share for best practice.

7 June 2018

## **Licensing and Regulation**

### Fixed Odds Betting Terminals

12. Having lobbied for a reduction in the maximum stakes on fixed odds betting terminals or FOBTs, the government announced they are to be reduced from £100 to £2 to reduce the risk of gambling related harm following its consultation on gaming machines and social responsibility measures.

### Trading Standards

13. In May Cllr Anita Lower met with Lord Toby Harris, Chair of National Trading Standards (NTS) and Steve Rudd from the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers (ACTSO) to hear about key issues for both organisations. Discussion focused on proposals outlined in the new consumer Green Paper which was launched in April, the future of food fraud investigations and the performance framework that ACTSO has been developing.

## **Public Spaces Protection Orders event**

14. In June, Cllr Morris Bright chaired the LGA event "Getting Public Spaces Protection Orders right – what have we learnt so far?" which shared best practice with local government teams on how to construct a PSPO, how to lead a good consultation process and reflecting on lessons learned in the process. Home Office minister Victoria Atkins MP opened the event and we were joined by the Home Office policy team in the afternoon, who outlined changes in their recent anti-social behaviour guidance. We also heard from our local government colleagues in Birmingham, Camden, Lambeth, Cheshire West and Chester, Oldham and others sharing their experiences of PSPOs at the event.

**Contact officer:** Mark Norris  
**Position:** Principal Policy Advisor  
**Phone no:** 020 7664 3241  
**Email:** [mark.norris@local.gov.uk](mailto:mark.norris@local.gov.uk)