

Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

Title: Safer & Stronger Communities Board
Date: Monday 3 September 2018
Venue: Smith Square 1&2, Ground Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

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

Item Decisions and actions

1 Declarations of Interest

The Chair welcomed new and existing members to the board. A round of introductions were made.

The Chair noted the apologies that were received from:

- Cllr Jeremy Hilton

No declarations of interest were made.

2 Safer and Stronger Communities Board 2018/19: Terms of Reference, Membership and Appointments to Outside Bodies

The Chair invited Benn Cain, Member Services Officer, to introduce the item.

Benn stated that the paper was for members to agree:

- the terms of reference for the Board;
- the Board's membership;
- the Board's nominations to outside bodies;
- future meeting dates for the Safer and Stronger Communities Board (SSCB); and
- the appointment of member champions.

The Chair thanked Benn for the update and invited members to comment:

- Members requested that the meeting date in November be held a week later; the Board then agreed for the next SSCB to be held on Monday 19 November. All other meeting dates were agreed.
- Members agreed the terms of reference.
- Members agreed the Board's membership.
- Members agreed the nominations to outside bodies.
- Members agreed to the following Member Champions:

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Abuse, exploitation and modern slavery
Anti-social behaviour
Bereavement services
Community cohesion and integration
Licensing
Domestic abuse
Prevent and Counter-extremism

Regulatory Services
Drowning prevention
“Scambassador”

Cllr Alan Rhodes
Cllr Anita Lower (Deputy Chair)
Cllr Nick Worth
Cllrs Farah Hussain and Katrina Wood
Cllrs Kate Haigh and Eric Allen
Cllrs Katrina Wood and Jim Beall
Cllrs Simon Blackburn (Chair) and Colin Spence
Cllr Anita Lower (Deputy Chair)
Cllr James Dawson
Cllr Judith Wallace

The Chair thanked members for their comments.

Action

- Members noted the report.

3 Safer and Stronger Communities Board Policy Priorities for 2018-19

The Chair invited Mark Norris, Principal Policy Advisor, to introduce the item.

Mark stated that the paper sets out proposals for the SSCB priorities and work programme for 2018-19. The proposals are based on corporate LGA priorities and options 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. The Board’s work priorities also include the impact of the UK’s departure from the EU on relevant issues, such as regulatory services in relation to food safety; Mark stated that it is difficult to say what the work load may be currently, as this is dependent on the final deal.

The Chair thanked Mark for his update and asked members to comment:

- Members requested that we include work on removing modern slavery from supply chains as part of our work on this issue. Mark confirmed that work on this is underway, and led by the LGA’s productivity team as part of its commissioning support.
- Members emphasised the links between drugs and a wide range of societal issues; Mark discussed the on-going work the LGA is undertaking in relation to drug and alcohol abuse and stated that the team are having live discussions with the Home Office on this.
- Members discussed deaths caused by drowning during the hot weather over the summer due to the hot weather and the campaign to include Cold Water Shock Training in swimming lessons. Mark confirmed that the LGA will make a submission to the Swim England review on this.
- Members stressed the need to continue to press for a public health objective in licensing.
- Members requested more information on potential cross-cutting work on mental health and community safety issues (paragraph 15.6). Mark stated that this will be discussed at future a future meeting of the SSCB.

The Chair thanked members for their comments.

Action

- Members noted and agreed the report.

4 National FGM Centre

The Chair invited Leethen Bartholomew, Head of the National FGM Centre, to introduce the item. The National FGM Centre was set-up via a partnership Barnardo's & the LGA, funded by the Department of Education (DoE), and works with local areas to try to tackle FGM.

Leethen gave his presentation to the Board via a PowerPoint presentation, which was shared with members. In the presentation, Leethen:

- Discussed the aims and objectives of the centre's work, noting that the centre also supports local authorities in relation to breast flattening & child abuse linked to faith and belief.
- Made reference to the Government's Strategy to End Violence Against Women and Girls, which includes breast flattening and female genital mutilation (FGM).
- Noted that this abuse has links to Human Trafficking and that abuse linked to faith or belief is a growing issue in the UK.
- Outlined that FGM is a hidden crime, with reported cases of FGM being undertaken in the UK extremely hard to prove and women unwilling to report abuse due to fear and judgement. It was discussed that women who are victims of FGM are four times more likely to be victims of domestic abuse (DA). Leethen stated that all cases are extremely complex.
- FGM is not just prevalent in countries in Africa, but also in South America, India and Asia.
- Described the centre's services, including the knowledge hub tools, the FGM Assessment Tool (launched in February 2018) which has been globally accessed over 2000 times, and the Global Prevalence Map, as well as its community engagement work and early intervention and prevention work
- Also made reference to Operation Limelight, which investigates inbound and outbound flights from the UK.

The Chair thanked Leethen for his update and welcomed members to comment:

- Members discussed how community engagement is key with this area of work.
- Members discussed the view of Sharia Law in relation to FGM, breast flattening and abuse linked to faith and belief. Leethen stated that there was no religious justification for FGM in Islam. Members noted FGM is practiced across a range of religions, , and that this type of abuse is much more linked to culture.
- Members discussed the link with mental health (which is a modern, Western concept) and this type of abuse.
- Member discussed operational issues in relation to low prevalence areas (and made reference to paragraph five), noting that the initial focus on low prevalence areas was in made in agreement with the Department for Education.

The Chair thanked members for their comments.

Action

- Members noted the update.
- Leethen's PowerPoint presentation to be circulated after the SSCB.

5 Civil resilience and Operation Black Start

The Chair welcomed Lord Toby Harris of Haringey, UK Coordinator for the Electric Infrastructure Security Council, to introduce the item.

Lord Harris' presentation outlined the implications of a major power failure, which could be caused by a number of different events, including:

- Terrorist attacks on the UK electricity grid, either through an Electrical Magnetic Pulse (EMP) or cyber-attacks.
- Natural disaster, including extreme weather, space weather (such as a solar flare), all of which can cause natural EMP's.

Lord Harris also made reference to the Lancaster incident, which highlighted our reliance on power and the interconnection of modern life, in terms of all of our systems (eg communications) being dependent on electrical power. Emergency generators do exist, but tend not to be tested regularly because it involves switching the power off; hence these often fail when needed.

Lord Harris made reference to the services and national infrastructure that may stop being provided/or fail:

- Schools will probably be closed or used as crisis centres.
- Fuel supplies will dry up, meaning people won't be able to get to work – this is especially worrying when thinking about medical staff or engineers.
- Nuclear power centres; what happens when the nuclear core coolant fails?
- Water and sewage systems will fail.
- Communication systems – including phone masts – will also fail, which will inhibit the emergency services' response and information, although the BBC will have the facility to keep broadcasting. Lord Harris also made reference to the government's decision to take out copper landline wire, which would mean old style telephones would no longer work either.

Lord Harris stated that local council emergency plans tend to assume that power will still be available, and are not predicated on other authorities or areas also being impacted. He mentioned the possible impact of austerity on capacity in this area, and urged councils to take the time to think about this issue.

Lord Harris concluded with the importance of how to manage a national emergency incident, and how local ward councils are the best placed to work out what buildings should be kept open and how to help the most vulnerable people.

The Chair thanked Lord Harris for his update and welcomed members to comment:

- Members discussed reliance on businesses such as supermarkets giving food out. Lord Harris stated the major supermarkets have all confirmed they will hand out free food and emergency supplies, however there could be legal concerns over

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this, for example in terms of any food that has gone out of date and legal liability.

- Members discussed the implications of Brexit. However, Lord Harris stated that the UK's electrical dependence is different as we are an island and not part of the European mainland continent.
- Members discussed resilience, with Lord Harris advising to prepare a grab bag to include; something to keep you warm, a wind up radio; a wind up torch; and containers of water for two weeks.
- Members discussed how this is an issues that is not at the forefront of peoples mind until it happens.
- Members discussed previous education in relation to resilience. Lord Harris stated that this has disappeared, and that there is a real nervousness on the part of Government to issue guidance around resilience to the public to avoid causing fear and panic.
- Members discussed the need for sharing best practices amongst local authorities. Lord Harris stated that some authorities that have a high risk of flooding have good plans but encouraged all local authorities to prepare extensively, and where possible, move this up the political agenda.
- Members welcomed plans for a series of councillor training events on civil resilience.
- Members discussed generators and the issues on reliance on them. Members questioned if there is list of public bodies that have generators. Lord Harris stated that there probably is not a list in circulation, and questioned how authorities would prioritise diesel supplies.
- Members agreed the presentation highlighted the importance of emergency planning at a very local level, and not just in relation to a blackout scenario.
- Members discussed ways of ensuring preparation without causing panic. The Chair asked if it would beneficial for future updates and case studies of preparation and best practices. Members agreed this would be helpful.

Action

- Members noted the report.
- Officers to explore the development of case studies of preparation and best practices.

6 Fire Safety in High Rise Buildings

The Chair invited Mark Norris, Principal Policy Advisor, to introduce the item. Mark stated that the report sets out the LGA's building safety related work since the last Board meeting, including the LGA's response to Dame Judith Hackitt's final report, the LGA's response to the consultation on the ban on the use of combustible materials on high-rise residential buildings, and remediation work to private high-rise buildings with combustible cladding systems.

Mark also stated that the Secretary of State for MHCLG has set up a private high-rise buildings remediation taskforce, as remediation work to the cladding on these buildings is very much behind public sector buildings. Mark concluded by stating the Secretary of State has asked the LGA to set up a joint inspection team, which will be funded by MHCLG.

The Chair thanked Mark for the update and concluded made areas to the two areas to note in the report:

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- The Chair made particular reference to paragraph 13, the government's announcement that it would be fully funding the removal and replacement of unsafe cladding. Details on how councils can apply for funding were published on 3 July 2018), and the Chair praised officers for all their hard work, stating that this announcement would not have happened without the LGA lobbying, which built a very strong case.
- The Chair also made particular reference to the submissions set out in both **Appendix A and B**, and highlighted the importance of these messages being raised at a national level.
- Members agreed that all ongoing work is appropriate.

Action

- Members noted the report.

7 Update Paper

The Chair invited Mark Norris, Principal Policy Advisor, to introduce the item.

Mark stated that the report outlines issues of interest to the Board not covered under the other items on the agenda. The Chair asked members to comment:

- Members discussed the BBC's round-table interview on drowning prevention, in a response to the UK's second heatwave.
- Members noted that the new strategy on female offenders has a number of indicators linked to councils, in terms of early intervention work, a more cohesive community solution, and better custody facilities. Members also highlighted the five new women's prisons being delivered under the strategy.
- Members also discussed the new Safer Car wash App to report possible instances of modern slavery, referenced in paragraph 13 – 15 in the report.
- Members also discussed the work carried out by the parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee in relation to modern slavery (referenced in paragraph 16 – 18 in the report), noting that that the LGA submission was well received.
- Members also discussed the recent event attended event at the American Embassy, in relation to FGM.

Action

- Members noted the update.

8 Notes of previous meeting

Members agreed the noted to the previous SSCB on Monday 11 June 2018.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Morris Bright MBE	Hertsmere Borough Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Anita Lower	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
	Cllr Hannah Dalton	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
Members	Cllr Eric Allen	Sutton London Borough Council
	Cllr Keith McLean	Milton Keynes Council
	Cllr John Pennington	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr Colin Spence	Suffolk County Council
	Cllr Judith Wallace	North Tyneside Council
	Cllr Katrina Wood	Wycombe District Council
	Cllr Nick Worth	South Holland District Council
	Cllr Jim Beall	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
	Cllr Carole Burdis	North Tyneside Council
	Cllr James Dawson	Erewash Borough Council
	Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
	Cllr Farah Hussain	Redbridge London Borough Council
	Cllr Alan Rhodes	Nottinghamshire County Council
	Cllr Dine Romero	Bath and North East Somerset Council
Cllr Becca Thackray	Lambeth London Borough	
Apologies	Cllr Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire County Council