

3 September 2018

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

Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board note the update.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

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3 September 2018

Update Paper

Serious Violence Strategy

Serious violence

1. The LGA submitted written evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee as part of its inquiry into [serious violence](#). In our response, we highlighted the importance of investing in early intervention and prevention, as well as taking a multi-agency approach to tackling this important issue. Cllr Simon Blackburn raised this point at the last meeting of Serious Violence Taskforce. He also called for a greater focus on the impact of watching online pornography and violent online content can have on children and younger people, and how this affects their views of healthy relationships.

County Lines Conference

2. In July, Cllr Simon Blackburn co-chaired the [LGA's conference on county lines - tackling criminal child exploitation](#). Attendees had the opportunity to hear from speakers from the Home Office, the National County Lines Coordination Centre, the Violence and Vulnerability Unit, the Children's Society and from councils who have been leading the way on this important issue. LGA officers continue to outline local government's views at the County Lines Working Group.

Crimestoppers County Lines Campaign

3. In July, Crimestoppers launched a campaign in towns across England to provide the public with information about county lines and how they can help. We helped publicise the campaign to local authorities through our various LGA communications channels.

Violence Against Women and Girls

Domestic Abuse

4. In July, Cllr Simon Blackburn gave [oral evidence](#) to the Home Affairs Committee as part of their inquiry into [domestic abuse](#), alongside representatives from Southall Black Sisters and Women's Aid. Cllr Blackburn referred to our LGA [written evidence submission](#) and highlighted the importance of taking a preventative approach to stop domestic abuse from occurring in the first place.

National Oversight Group on Domestic Abuse

5. In June, Cllr Simon Blackburn attended a meeting of the National Oversight Group on Domestic Abuse. During the meeting, the Home Secretary Sajid Javid MP spoke about the importance of the forthcoming domestic abuse legislation and ensuring the Government delivered a comprehensive package of measures to tackle domestic abuse in all its forms.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Service Transformation event

3 September 2018

6. The LGA held an event with the successful local government bid leads of the Home Office's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Service Transformation Fund. We had presentations from several councils who had received funding for a variety of projects, including: domestic abuse champions, perpetrator programmes, education in school outreach programmes and independent domestic violence advisers in health settings.

MHCLG Review of Domestic Abuse Services

7. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is currently carrying out a review of how domestic abuse services are commissioned and delivered locally. MHCLG commissioned Ipsos Mori to lead an audit of local authority commissioned domestic abuse services to understand what impact services are having and to identify gaps in provision. The audit has now concluded and MHCLG will publish their findings in due course.

Social Housing Green Paper

8. In August, MHCLG announced the [Social Housing Green Paper](#). In our [LGA media response](#), we said the green paper is a step towards delivering more social homes but it is only a small step, compared with the huge and immediate need for more genuinely affordable homes. The Government made a commitment, in the green paper, to take steps towards ensuring victims of domestic abuse retain their fixed term tenancies which may have been granted by the local authority. The Government intend to bring forward legislation to achieve this when parliamentary time allows.

Home Office and MHCLG Funds

9. Ahead of Summer recess, there were a number of Government funds announced by the Home Office and MHCLG that are of interest to community safety teams, predominantly related to domestic abuse. These included the [Priorities for Domestic Abuse Fund](#), the [Children Affected by Domestic Abuse Fund](#), the [Early Intervention Youth Fund](#) and the Move On Fund. The [Trusted Relationships Fund](#) also announced the successful bids in August. The LGA requested an extension to the deadline for a number of these funds and MHCLG agreed to extend the priorities for domestic abuse fund deadline by ten days.

Anti-Social Behaviour

10. At the Independent Group event on anti-social behaviour, Cllr Clive Woodbridge spoke about the importance of addressing the problem in local communities and forming strong partnerships with neighbourhood police officers. There were presentations from the Manifesto Club and the London Anti-Social Behaviour Advisory Service.

Rough Sleeping Strategy

11. In August, the Government announced the [Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) which outlines plans to help people who are sleeping rough now and to put in place the structures to end rough sleeping overall. In the Strategy, the Government indicated it would be working with partners to develop a new training package which focuses on identifying and supporting vulnerable groups, including victims of modern slavery and domestic abuse.

3 September 2018

A Whole Council Approach to Harmful Gambling

12. In July, we launched [guidance](#) for councils on developing a whole council approach to tackling harmful gambling. The guidance was developed with Public Health England and builds on work by authorities such as Leeds City Council, who presented to the Board last year. The guidance was launched at a well-attended event that brought together councillors, licensing officers, public health officials and others to hear about best practice and from those with direct experience of harmful gambling.

Modern slavery

Safe Car Wash App

13. In June the LGA supported the launch of the Clewer Initiative's Safe Car Wash App. Members of the public can download the app for use when they visit a hand car wash. The app provides users with a series of questions to help determine if there might be modern slavery underway in the hand car wash. If the indicators point towards there being modern slavery then users are asked to call the modern slavery helpline.
14. Within the first month of the app's release 11 modern slavery cases in car washes were opened from callers who had been using the app. The cases indicated 69 potential victims of labour exploitation. More information can be found in the Modern Slavery Helpline's [report](#) on hand car washes.
15. The LGA will continue to support and promote the app.

Environmental Audit Committee

16. On 26 June Cllr Alan Rhodes gave evidence to the Environmental Audit Committee as a part of its inquiry into hand car washes. The Committee was taking evidence on the environmental impacts of car washes, the prevalence of illegal employment practices and modern slavery among car washes.
17. Cllr Rhodes' evidence was focussed on modern slavery in hand car washes as well as planning issues and the potential introduction of a new licensing scheme for hand car washes. Cllr Rhodes outlined the work of the LGA to support our members to tackle modern slavery at a local level. Our support for the Safe Car Wash app was also discussed.
18. Our evidence was well-received, and there were a number of issues where they wanted further information, which we have provided to them.

Taxi / PHV updates

National register for revocations and refusals (NR3)

19. In August, the LGA launched the new National Register of Taxi Licence Revocations and Refusals (NR3) and has written to councils to advise that the register is up and running, and to circulate the guidance note that has been developed to support

3 September 2018

implementation. The new register will allow licensing authorities to record details of where a hackney carriage or public hire vehicle (PHV) drivers' licence has been refused or revoked, and allow licensing authorities to check new applicants against the register.

20. There are various steps that authorities will need to take before they start to make use of the register. Firstly, licensing policies and application forms will need to be updated to make reference to the authority's use of NR3. Authorities will need to communicate with existing licence holders to inform them that the authority is intending to use NR3 and that, should their licence be revoked or a renewal refused in the future, their details will be shared on the register. Former licensees or applicants who have had a previous licence revoked or refused will also need to be contacted to make them aware that their details will be shared on the register, and given an opportunity to object to this use of their data. Once authorities have undertaken the necessary steps, they will be able to populate the register with historic data of licence revocations and refusals and begin to check new applicants against the register as part of the routine licensing processes. Suggested wording for policies and application forms as well as template letters are included in the LGAs guidance.
21. Whilst the guidance provides a comprehensive overview of the steps authorities will need to take to use the register in a way that complies with data protection requirements and human rights law, authorities will need to ensure that use of the register is proportionate and underpinned by supporting policies. For authorities receiving requests about drivers whose details they have entered onto the register, there should not be a presumption that information is shared, but rather a decision made on a case by case basis on whether a disclosure is proportionate depending on the nature and timing of the original refusal or revocation.
22. Authorities who are not members of the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN), who host the register, are strongly encouraged to join so that they are to make use of the register. However, we are aware that some smaller licensing authorities are unwilling to join NAFN because they feel that absorbing the £1,050 cost of this within licence fees paid by a small number of licence holders would be too significant for drivers.

Ministerial Working Group

23. The Ministerial working group on taxi and PHV licensing has concluded its work and the Chair of the group has shared his final report and recommendations with Minister for Taxis, Nusrat Ghani MP for consideration by Government. The report will be published in September, with the Government's response expected later this year.

Prevent, counter extremism and integration

24. To support councils around the Prevent, counter extremism and integration the following leadership essentials courses are being run this year:
 - 24.1 Prevent: 30-31 October in Warwick and 28-29 November in East London;
 - 24.2 Integration and Cohesion: 11-12 December Warwick; and
 - 24.3 Counter extremism: 17-8 January 2019 Warwick.

3 September 2018

25. We are also working with councils in the North East to provide a bespoke event recognising the particular challenges facing councils which are not supported by Home Office Prevent and counter-extremism budgets and the difficulty members in some parts of the country face in attending events at Warwick or Smith Square.
26. In addition we are supporting the programme of seminars being organised by the Special Interest Group on Counter Extremism. The first seminar, on disrupting extremist activity was held in July. The second will be on Engagement of Community Groups in Countering Extremism and will take place on 26 September. Members may wish to attend and officers can provide details. Future seminars will cover:
 - 26.1 Developing Shared Leadership on Counter Extremism;
 - 26.2 An Overview of the Current Far Right and Anti-Minority Activist Landscape;
 - 26.3 The Use of Digital Space by Extremist Groups;
 - 26.4 Understanding the Role of Women in Extremist Subcultures; and
 - 26.5 Differences and Tensions between Social & Religious Conservatism and Extremism.