

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

Serious Violence

1. In April, I attended the Serious Violence Taskforce, which focused on the actions that social media companies could take to address violent material online, particularly videos or posts that seek to incite violence. In May, Vice-Chairman of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board Cllr Morris Bright also attended the Taskforce. He informed the Taskforce that local government stands ready to work in partnership to tackle serious violent crime, and we welcome further information on the new Violence Reduction Units.
2. In April, Cllr Richard Watts (Chair of the Resources Board and covering in my absence) and Cllr Ian Hudspeth (Chairman of the Community Wellbeing Board) attended private ministerial roundtables on education and healthcare as part of the Prime Minister's Serious Violence Summit. Following the Summit, the Prime Minister has convened an inter-ministerial taskforce to tackle serious violence. As a member of the Home Office's Serious Violence Taskforce, we have agreed to share best practice and learning across local government on this important issue.
3. In April, Cllr Anita Lower, Vice-Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board, spoke at the National County Lines Coordination Centre Conference, hosted by the National Crime Agency. Cllr Lower emphasised the importance of working in partnership to help tackle serious violence and county lines activity. She called for greater investment in prevention and early intervention services to help break the cycle of youth violence.

Domestic Abuse

4. In May, I gave [oral evidence](#) to the Joint Committee on the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill, as part of the Committee's pre-legislative scrutiny process. We support the introduction of the Bill, as it has the potential to help address domestic abuse through the creation of a statutory definition and the appointment of a Commissioner. However, we think the Bill needs to look beyond crisis interventions and criminal justice measures, and particularly focus on early intervention and prevention.

Prevent and counter-extremism

5. In March I attended a Prevent consultation event to explore the delivery of the Prevent duty across a range of public sector agencies. Deputy Chair Cllr Anita Lower co-facilitated a successful Prevent and counter-extremism leadership essentials course for members in Darlington at the end of March. Attracting 16 delegates, the event focussed on the threats and challenges from extremism and radicalisation in the North East region and councils' role in response.

Fire Services Management Committee

6. In April and May, members including Cllrs Ian Stephens, Nick Chard, John Robinson, Fiona Twycross AM, Roger Hirst attended the Fire Finance Senior Sector Group meeting with senior

24 January 2018

officers from the National Fire Chief's Council and the Home Office. The group continues to work on developing a robust evidence based and compelling narrative for the Spending Review submission to Her Majesties Treasury.

7. On 2 April Cllr Nick Chard attended the Fire Standards Board. The group progressed a number of items and settled on the trialling of two pilot standards for testing in Autumn 2019.
8. On 15 April and 20 May, Fiona Twycross AM attended Her Majesties Inspectorates External Reference Group. The group received updates on the progress of the second tranche of inspections towards publication and plans for work around ongoing monitoring and the corporate inspection programme.
9. The Emergency Services Collaboration Working Group – Task and Finish Group A, met in April where the objectives of the working group were set out. The group will: consider inspection approaches for collaboration and duty to collaborate; identify key learning; make recommendations on improving awareness and activity on duty to collaborate; and consider what a potential framework for effective assessing and gathering outcomes might look like.
10. On 30 April Cllr Les Byrom and Cllr Ian Stephens attended the Strategic Resilience Board. The meeting considered key aspects of national resilience like the progress of interoperability work, business continuity and future proofing blue-light services.

Licensing and regulation

11. In May, I had a catch up with Heather Hancock, Chair of the Food Standards Agency (FSA). Discussion focused on progress with the FSA's Regulating Our Future programme as well as an update on the newly expanded National Food Crime Unit (NFCU).
12. In March, Cllr James Dawson met with representatives from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to discuss progress with their review of responsibilities for beach safety. The review is expected to be published in November.

Media roundup

13. Since the last Forum, I have commented in the following press releases on the Board's behalf:
 - [LGA responds to violence against women and girls strategy](#)
 - [LGA: modern slavery referrals by councils soar ninefold](#)
 - [LGA responds to new programme to protect children at risk of exploitation](#)
 - [LGA responds to new support for domestic abuse survivors](#)
 - [LGA: six in 10 retailers selling knives to children in some areas, as prosecution fund runs dry](#)
 - [Rogue used tyre sellers putting lives at risk, warn councils](#)
 - [Beware fake goods at bank holiday markets, warn councils](#)

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