

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

That members of the Board note and comment on the update.

Action

Officers to action any matters arising from the discussion as appropriate.

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Update Paper

Domestic Abuse Bill

1. The Domestic Abuse Bill was introduced into the House of Commons on Tuesday 3 March. In our [media response](#), we called for a greater focus on prevention and early intervention measures to tackle the root causes, support more victims, and stop domestic abuse occurring in the first place. We called for greater investment in evidence-based perpetrator programmes and for key learning and best practice from Domestic Homicide Reviews to be shared on a national level. LGA officers continue to work with the Home Office Bill team, as the legislation progresses through Parliament.
2. Ahead of the Bill being published, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government [announced](#) £16.6 million funding for 75 projects to help fund domestic abuse refuge services.

Knife Crime Prevention Orders

3. On 4 March, the Home Office [announced](#) new Knife Crime Prevention Orders would be piloted in April 2020 by the Met Police for 14 months. The intention is for the Government to introduce the orders across all police forces, pending assessment after the pilot. The civil orders can be imposed by courts on any person aged 12 or over who police believe is regularly carrying a knife, or upon conviction of a knife-related offence.
4. We have called for the new Knife Crime Prevention Orders to be fully evaluated before they are rolled out more widely, to ensure they do not contribute to the unnecessary criminalisation of young people at a point at which they most need support. We have said the new orders should not just be piloted in London, as there needs to be good geographical spread to make sure these new measures work in all areas.

Tackling Knife Crime Conference

5. In February, Cllr Alan Rhodes chaired a conference on tackling knife crime. Over 80 delegates heard what councils across the country are doing to try to protect their communities from knife crime, with presentations on the work of some of the new violence reduction units; trading standards' work to prevent under age knife sales, and serious youth violence. The presentations from the event are available on our [website](#).

Unauthorised encampments

6. The LGA submitted a [response](#) to the Government's consultation on strengthening police powers to tackle unauthorised encampments. In our response, we emphasised that any reforms to enforcement powers should also accompany wider measures which help and

support local authorities to deal with this important issue. LGA officers will continue to liaise with the Home Office and other Government departments on this important issue.

Prevent, counter-extremism, and cohesion and integration

7. Working with colleagues at Luton and Leeds councils, we recently launched two new Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism (SIGCE) leader networks. These regional networks, covering the East of England and North of England respectively, are aimed at building the capacity and confidence of elected leaders and senior officers to deal with the challenges of extremism; be more informed about evolving threats and risks; share good practice; and provide a safe space to discuss the challenges associated with tackling extremism.
8. In February and March we held two LGA leadership essentials courses for elected members: on Prevent in London; and on cohesion and integration in Coventry. These provided around 30 members with an opportunity to explore the role of local government in delivery of these policy areas, share approaches and discuss some of the challenges of leadership around sensitive issues. A further course on Prevent and counter-extremism will be held in Blackpool at the end of March.

Police Covenant consultation

9. In February, the Home Office published a [consultation](#) on a Police Covenant for England and Wales. LGA officers have been in touch with the Home Office to discuss the implications of the Police Covenant for local authorities. We understand there is not expected to be any additional responsibilities or financial burdens for local authorities, as a result of the Police Covenant. The Home Office will update the LGA and relevant partners following the consultation deadline, on 22 April 2020.

LGA Annual Licensing Conference

10. In February, Cllr Kate Haigh chaired the LGAs Annual Licensing Conference which was attended by 120 Members and officers. The conference covered a range of different areas of licensing with highlights including Leeds council's innovative approach to using health data in licensing and St Helens council's local campaign around passenger safety. Devon county council also gave a thought provoking presentation about their experience of using scrutiny as a way to highlight the issue of problem gambling. Presentations from the day are available on the LGA [website](#).

Licensing Leadership Essentials Course

11. In March we are piloting a Leadership Essentials course for Chairs and Vice-Chairs of licensing committees. The course will focus on effective chairing and the wider leadership role for licensing, understanding key areas of licensing and exploring how a

good licensing committee works and makes decisions. The course has been very popular and we hope to run the program again later this year.

Guidance for public health

12. We have worked with Public Health England to revise our [guidance](#) for councils public health teams on engaging with alcohol licensing. The guidance provides practical ways that public health can input into the licensing process and includes some new local examples of how teams have made effective contributions.

Best Bar None Awards

13. Cllr Kate Haigh attended the Best Bar None Awards at the House of Lords in February. The awards were in recognition of the work partners had achieved as part of Best Bar None to improve the night time economy. Sheffield won 'best overall scheme' with schemes in Cumbria and Bolton also winning awards.

Modern slavery: hand car washes

14. Later this month, we will be publishing guidance for councils on the role they can play in tackling exploitation and modern slavery among workers at hand car washes. Hand car washes are recognised to be a high risk sector for modern slavery, and last month the interim Director Labour Market called for the introduction of a licensing scheme for hand car washes, administered by local authorities and overseen by the Gangmasters' and Labour Abuse Authority, with licensing fees set as far as possible to recover the cost of the regime

15. Our response stated that if hand car washing is to be licensed, there must be a proper debate about where the responsibility most appropriately fits and it needs to be fully funded by licence fees, noting that another underfunded regulatory framework will not effectively protect people.

Modern slavery: guidance for landlords

16. We are also publishing guidance on modern slavery that we have developed specifically for landlords, following a suggestion from councils at a previous modern slavery event we held. This will be made available for councils to use or adapt for their local areas.

Modern slavery: localised decision making for suspected child victims

17. The Home Office are in the process of identifying local authorities to pilot localised decision making for suspected child victims in the National Referral Mechanism. This would mean that consideration and decisions on suspected child victims would be taken by local multi-agency structures rather than referred to the Single Competent Authority, part of the Home Office.

18. Officers from the safer communities and children's teams are working with the Home Office to encourage them to select a broad range of authorities for the pilots, and will continue to monitor the pilots as they commence.

Modern slavery: meeting with the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner

19. The Board's champion for tackling modern slavery, Councillor Alan Rhodes, is due to meet with the Commissioner, Dame Sara Thornton following the Board meeting on Monday 16 March.

CMA investigation into Funeral markets

20. The Competition and Markets Authority published a series of working papers in January and February as a part of their Funeral Market investigation. The papers give an overview on the CMA's current findings on areas including pricing, profitability, and competition around price and quality in the funeral director and crematorium sectors. They invite comment on potential remedies suggested in the papers, which can be found on the case page here: <https://www.gov.uk/cma-cases/funerals-market-study>

FGM

21. In February the Home Office launched an updated version of its FGM resource pack to mark International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation. The pack provides a range of information and resources about FGM for local authorities and others, including case studies of good practice by local authorities which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/female-genital-mutilation-resource-pack>
22. In January Cllr Anita Lower chaired a meeting of the National FGM Advisory Group. The meeting brought together LGA members and experts from a variety of sector to discuss the future of the Centre and possible funding options going forward. The Group will meet again in April.
23. On 10 March Cllr Anita Lower opened a National FGM Centre conference on Harmful practices and the Quest for Gender equality to mark International Women's Day. Cllr Lower spoke about the efforts of the LGA to improve diversity and inclusion, including a toolkit for councils to enable women, parents and carers to stand and service in local government, the 'Be a Councillor' campaign, and more widely the impact of local authorities of female residents' lives.

Fire

24. In early February, the LGA hosted the fourteenth Leadership Essentials for Fire and Rescue programme. The programme covered key topics including inspection, good governance, Grenfell and building safety, culture and leadership. Fourteen elected members and one officer from the office of a Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner attended the programme and heard from speakers including Dr Fiona Twycross, Mayor for Fire and Resilience and Jonny Bugg, Head of the Fire Strategy and Reform Unit at the Home Office. New dates for leadership essentials will be released for the 2020/21 period in due course.

25. In January, the LGA ran a masterclass on culture, diversity and inclusion in the fire sector at Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters. Cllr Rebecca Knox, the Chair of Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority, hosted the event which was attended by both elected members and officers. Speakers at the event included officers from Women in Fire, Avon Fire and Rescue Service and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service.

26. In March, the 2020 Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition was held over two days in Blackpool. Delegates heard from experts on issues affecting the sector like climate change, inclusive leadership, finance and funding, standards and building safety. They also heard from the Director of Fire and Resilience at the Home Office, Luke Edwards, and took the opportunity to discuss the recommendations made in Her Majesties Inspectorates in their recent State of Fire and Rescue report.