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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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Serious Violence Reduction Orders consultation

1. The LGA has submitted a response to the Government's [consultation](#) on Serious Violence Reduction Orders (SVROs), a proposed new court order to target known knife and offensive weapon carriers. The proposed Serious Violence Reduction Orders would give the police personalised powers to target those already convicted of certain knife offences – giving them the automatic right to search those who pose the greatest risk. These searches could take place without suspicion so that these known criminals could be stopped at any time.
2. The LGA has also published a [case studies document](#) on 'Taking a public health approach to tackling serious violent crime'. The document contains case studies on councils working in partnership to deliver early interventions which help to prevent children and young people from becoming involved in serious violent crime.

MHCLG workshops on domestic abuse accommodation support and services

3. The LGA jointly hosted a second series of workshops with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to discuss the new statutory duty proposed in the Domestic Abuse Bill, which will be placed on Tier 1 local authorities, to commission domestic abuse accommodation support and services. Officers working in housing, domestic abuse services and community safety joined the workshop sessions to share their views on the duty and discussed what the challenges and opportunities would be locally. There were also discussions about how the new [£6 million Building Capacity Fund](#) could be used leading up to the new statutory duty coming into place to help councils prepare for the work.

MHCLG consultation on allocation methods for the associated New Burdens Funding

4. The Ministry of House, Communities and Local Government has also launched a [consultation](#) on the Government's proposals for the allocation of new burdens funding to support the delivery of the new duty. Our LGA response to the consultation will be made available shortly. The deadline for responses is 13 November 2020.

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

5. Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board, Cllr Nesil Caliskan, chaired an LGA webinar on 'Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic', attended by over 280 delegates. Our keynote speaker was Dame Vera Baird, the Victims Commissioner for England and Wales, who highlighted the

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importance of improving the community trigger process. We also had speakers from the National Police Chiefs' Council, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and local government representatives. A recording of the session and the presentations are [available here](#).

6. The LGA continues its work with the Home Office's Anti-Social Behaviour Advisory Board and we have commissioned a series of local government best practice case studies on tackling anti-social behaviour, which will be available in early 2021.

Police and Crime Panels Workshop

7. Councillor Katrina Wood, Vice-Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board, chaired a Police and Crime Panels workshop session in September. This workshop provided an opportunity to share best practice, reflect on the changes to panels and procedures during COVID-19, and look ahead to the forthcoming PCC elections. We had speakers from the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the Home Office and the National Association of Police, Fire and Crime Panels.

The Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism

8. Since 2017, we have been working closely with the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism (SIGCE); a local authority led network chaired by Leeds and Luton Councils which seeks to provide support, and develop and share good practice in countering extremism across councils in England and Wales. It has achieved considerable successes in supporting councils, and wider partners, in their work to counter extremism and respond to the many new extremism challenges councils have been facing.
9. Central government funding for the SIGCE came to an end in January 2020 and we recently received notice that it will not be renewed pending further decisions about national counter-extremism policy direction. In recognition of the challenges that extremism and cohesion issues continue to pose for local authorities, we have recently agreed to sustain the network until at least March 2021, and have developed a work programme with SIGCE colleagues for the next 6 months. This includes providing support for councils through a series of ongoing topical roundtables, thematic webinars, training, facilitation of an online Knowledge Hub, development of a number of case studies; bespoke support to councils facing specific current extremism challenges; reconvening regional elected member networks in the North of England and East of England; and continuing with the work of SIGCE working groups focussing on Far-Right extremism and Faith-based extremism respectively.

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Law Commission consultation on hate crime legislation

10. The Law Commission recently published a [consultation on proposals to reform hate crime laws](#). This comes in response to a number of concerns about how hate crime laws work in practice, with laws regarded by some as complex, spread across different statutes and using multiple overlapping legal mechanisms.
11. The Law Commission's proposals to improve hate crime laws include:
 - 11.1 Adding sex or gender to the protected characteristics under hate crime legislation.
 - 11.2 Establishing criteria for deciding whether any additional characteristics should be recognised in hate crime laws, and consulting further on a range of other characteristics, notably "age."
 - 11.3 Extending the protections of aggravated offences and stirring up hatred offences to cover all current protected characteristics, but also any characteristics added in the future (including sex or gender), to ensure all characteristics are protected equally.
 - 11.4 Reformulating the offences of stirring up hatred to focus on deliberate incitement of hatred, providing greater protection for freedom of speech where no intent to incite hatred can be proven.
 - 11.5 Expanding the offence of racist chanting at football matches to cover homophobic chanting, and other forms of behaviour, such as gestures and throwing missiles at players.

CIEH Local Authority Workforce Survey

12. In October the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) launched a workforce survey aiming to find out more about the state of the environmental health workforce in local authorities. Whilst the COVID-19 pandemic has placed additional pressure on already stretched services, it has also highlighted the vital and wide-ranging role that environmental health practitioners play in keeping our communities safe and presented a real opportunity to make the case for more funding and resources. The data collected as part of this survey will be a vital part of making that case to central government.

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Taxi licence register

13. In October, the Department for Transport wrote to council licensing leads to encourage them to sign up to the National Register of Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licence Revocations and Refusals (NR3). [The LGA commissioned NR3](#) in 2018 and it provides a mechanism for licensing authorities to check if an applicant has had a licensed revoked or an application for one refused elsewhere. We were pleased that the use of NR3 was one of a range of measures to protect passengers that was included in new Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards published by the Government over the summer. We hope this will prompt more councils to sign up and start to use the register over the next few months.

Metal and Waste Crime Week of Action

14. The rising price of metal has led to an increase in metal crime with thieves targeting railway and telecommunication networks, churches, vehicles and isolated locations causing disruption and significant costs to businesses. The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) led a metal crime week of action between 12th and 16th October 2020. During the week of action, the police - jointly with councils and other enforcement agencies - visited over 500 scrap metal dealers sites, stopped over 1,000 mobile collectors and made 29 arrests as well as shutting down illegal and unlicensed sites.

Modern slavery

15. The Home Office has published an [evaluation of modern slavery Local Authority Pathway pilots](#) which took place in Birmingham, Derby, Croydon, Leeds, Nottingham and Redbridge. The pilots aimed to test new approaches to identify best practice in supporting victims to transition out of National Referral Mechanism (NRM) support and link up with local services. The report highlights best practice and what an effective transition looks like for victims and highlights key recommendations to improve the transition of victims into local services, which may be useful to other authorities.
16. The Home Office has also launched a competed grant process for funding to support a pilot of devolved decision making for child victims of modern slavery. The funding available, and the support provided by the Home Office, will enable local authorities to develop appropriate processes that enable decisions about potential child victims of modern slavery to be taken at a local level by appropriate multi-agency partners, rather than being referred to the national Single Competent Authority for a decision. Devolved decision making for child victims has been championed by the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner Dame Sara Thornton.

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17. All social care authorities in the UK are able to apply to take part in the pilot, and the deadline to apply is 14 December. It is intended that the pilots should commence in January 2021.
18. Finally, the Home Office has also published its 2020 [annual report](#) into modern slavery in the UK. The report summarises recent work under the headings of pursue, prevent, protect, victim identification and support and international activity, and includes a number of case studies of work throughout the year.

Cyber security

19. The LGA's improvement directorate has been running a [Cyber Security](#) Programme since 2018, funded by the National Cyber Security Programme (NCSP) through the Cabinet Office, and which is now in its final year of its initial three-year agreement. The aim of the programme is to improve the cyber security of English Local Authorities, with the desired strategic outcome being that local government networks and services will be as secure as possible from the moment of their first implementation, and that the public will be able to use local government digital services with confidence, trusting that their information is safe.
20. The LGA works collaboratively with representatives from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), SOLACE, SOCITM – the society for innovation, technology and modernisation, the NHS, the Cabinet Office and the local government community. The programme uses a sector-led approach to improvement to deliver sustainable cultural change within councils that both directly improves cyber security and indirectly leads to members and officers viewing it with increased importance.
21. Following a recent large-scale cyber-attack on a London Borough, the LGA has also been providing some initial technical guidance to council IT colleagues, containing some important advice and actions to take and signposting the following:
 - 21.1 An article in First magazine written by Councillor Neil Prior on [managing cyber security risks](#), which includes tips on what action individuals can take, and also gives general advice on the type of questions councillors should be asking officers.
 - 21.2 NCSC's [suite of guidance on their website](#) including [mitigating malware and ransomware](#), [incident management](#), and [10 steps to cyber security](#).
 - 21.3 The NCSC's [free Early Warning Service](#).
22. For further advice or support, the LGA's cyber security team can be contacted on cybersecurity@local.gov.uk.

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National FGM Centre

23. The National FGM Centre is a partnership between the LGA and Barnardo's. It was established to improve the social care response to cases of FGM and, since 2017, to breast ironing/flattening and child abuse linked to faith or belief (CALFB). The Centre's approach to improving social work has focussed on four key elements including embedding specialist social workers, the provision of training and professional development, the creation of a knowledge hub and community engagement.
24. The Centre's Advisory Group was held on 26 October where members discussed the current situation of the National FGM Centre. The current model costs approximately £1.2 million per year to run. The Centre initially received funding in 2015 from the DfE's Children's Social Care Innovation Fund, with further funding being granted in 2017 on a tapered basis, reducing year on year. Funding was due to end in March 2020 on the agreed approach that the Centre would be self-sustaining by 2020. Due to COVID-19, the DfE agreed to extend the funding of the Centre to June 2020, and since then the Centre has been supported through other funding, however this is due to expire at the end of December 2020. Between January to March 2021, the Centre will continue to offer training and consultancy. At the time of writing Barnardo's have not secured alternative funding arrangements and there is thus a significant risk that the Centre will cease to exist in March 2021. The Centre is now looking at options for the future if no new funding from the Government can be secured to continue its work, including working with private funders.
25. More broadly Barnardo's are proposing to establish a BAME Centre of Expertise, which would work in collaboration and partnership with relevant organisations to provide leadership, best practice, training, research, advocacy, consultancy and support. The proposal is therefore that the FGM Centre would come under the Centre of Expertise and retain its distinct focus. Barnardo's aim to establish the new Centre of Expertise during 2021.
26. Barnardo's has also established Boloh, a helpline and webchat facility for Black and Asian children, young people and families affected by COVID-19. The helpline is there to encourage children, young people and families from these communities who have been impacted by COVID-19 to speak about their worries and stresses. It provides therapeutic support, as well as signposting to other organisations who can provide further help.

Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers' Impacts and Outcomes Report

27. The Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers have produced a useful [report](#) and [infographic](#) summarising the impact of trading standards services. Based on

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returns from 95 services covering 106 local authorities, the reports cover a range of impacts and out outcomes including: the numbers of businesses supported; the number of premises visited for test purchasing; estimates on the value of counterfeit products removed from the market and consumer detriment prevented; and the sums seized from defendants as a result of Proceeds of Crime sentences, fines and costs.