

14 January 2021

Resilient communities

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

This paper provides an outline of the proposed piece of work on community safety resilience, and introduces a presentation by Kersten England, Chief Executive of Bradford MBC and Solace lead for community safety and resilience.

Recommendation

The Board provide their views on the proposed work on community safety resilience.

Action

For discussion and direction.

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Background

1. The Board have previously indicated that they would be interested in undertaking a piece of work exploring what makes communities resilient in the context of community safety. Although officers began initial discussions and planning on this work in 2019-20, the work was subsequently delayed by the need to divert resources to support the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board reiterated their interest in this subject as part of 2020-21 work planning discussions, and officers have therefore been scoping a piece of work. This short paper sets out current thinking on how this piece of work could be developed, and seeks the Board's views on this outline.
2. To help inform this item, we have invited Kersten England, Chief Executive of Bradford MBC, to provide a perspective on community safety and resilient communities. Kersten recently took on the role of community safety and resilience lead for the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (Solace), and acts as the lead chief executive for Yorkshire and Humber in discussions with MHCLG. Through the city's work as an integration area pilot under the Integration White Paper and a focus on hyper local and prevention/ early help approaches, there are many ways in which Bradford is already extremely active on issues relating to community resilience and development.

Issues

3. Resilience is a term that is used regularly in different policy areas and is an issue that the Board has considered in different contexts over the past 18 months. As part of the Board's policy responsibility for civil resilience and emergency planning, we have previously held training and developed guidance for councillors on emergency responses structures and processes to help strengthen civil resilience. The Board has also discussed undertaking work to consider what has made communities more or less resilient in terms of the response to COVID-19 and how we can learn lessons from this. While there may be scope to consider this issue as part of this piece of work, officers are also expecting to be able to look into this issue in more depth later in 2021, as COVID response work reduces.
4. Members have also identified an interest in exploring what makes communities resilient in the context of community safety; specifically how do communities become more resilient to anti-social behaviour and crime, address the challenges of knife and gang crime, remain cohesive and reject the narratives of extremists? What can councils do to promote and support this? What behaviours drive resilient communities?
5. Clearly, these are critical, but extremely difficult questions. As with community cohesion and social integration, and the response the LGA made to the Government's Integration White Paper, there are a number of contributory factors – going beyond the remit of the

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SSC – that inevitably impact on communities’ overall resilience to risks and shocks, including the availability of jobs, secure accommodation and amenities, and overall prosperity: all of which require long term solutions. The Government’s levelling up agenda is intended to begin to address the structural inequalities that make some communities less resilient than others, but this is not a quick process.

6. Beyond socio-economic trends, there are more specific measures that can be taken to address community safety challenges at the local level. The College of Policing’s What Works Centre has looked at broad, top level community safety interventions and are currently looking at policing and public health initiatives and the evidence base for investing in them, while the Youth Endowment Fund are already exploring the interventions that can help divert people at risk from becoming involved in gangs and knife crime
7. To assist councils in developing a clearer picture of what is already out there and what works in building community safety resilience, we are proposing that a first phase of this work should be a literature review to identify and collate what work has been undertaken and what evidence is available. Officers have already held initial discussions with the College of Policing to inform this work, and would expect to engage with a wider range of stakeholders and councils that we are aware have undertaken work on this issue.
8. As a second strand of work, we are proposing exploring the approaches that councils themselves are taking to community safety issues, and in particular the rapidly evolving community safety landscape, in part as a follow up to our 2016/17 [review](#) of community safety partnerships (CSPs). Recent initiatives on serious violence – such as the creation of eighteen violence reduction units, the forthcoming statutory duty on tackling serious violence, the Domestic Abuse Bill requirement for local partnership Boards – are both impacting and highlighting the work of CSPs and we believe there would be a value in understanding how these developments are being managed at the local level, what is working effectively and where there are challenges, with a view to developing to any proactive asks on this issue.
9. This a broad and complex policy and service area, and we have developed these two areas of focus based on areas the Board have indicated an interest in and current developments. However, we are very keen to hear the views of the Board as to how they would like this work to be targeted and structured and whether these are the areas they would like us to focus on.

Implications for Wales

10. We will liaise with the Welsh LGA in relation to this piece of work. In 2017, a [review](#) of community safety work was undertaken in Wales, which we would expect to consider in relation to the second theme outlined in this proposal.

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Financial Implications

11. This work will be supported from existing budgets, although it is anticipated that at least part of this work may be commissioned from an external partner.

Next steps

12. Subject to the Board's views, officers will scope out the proposed areas of work with a view to taking them forward over the coming months.