

Safer and Stronger Communities Board – Report from Cllr Caliskan (Chair)

Annual licensing conference

1. We held our annual licensing conference on the mornings of Tuesday 8th and Wednesday 9th February which was chaired by two of our licensing champions, Cllr Jeanie Bell and Cllr Clive Woodbridge. The conference gave delegates an opportunity to reflect on some of the key developments that can be expected to affect councils' licensing committees and teams over the next year. There was a wide range of expert speakers who covered issues including licensing and counterterrorism, animal licensing and vulnerability in the night-time economy. The event was one of the first paid for LGA events since the pandemic and, despite being virtual, had over 100 delegates and generated over £10,000 for the organisation.

Meetings with Addictions and Substance Misuse Portfolio leads, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners

2. The Safer and Stronger Communities Board Licensing Champions, Cllr Jeanie Bell, Cllr Clive Woodbridge, and Cllr Eric Allen met with the Addictions and Substance Misuse Portfolio leads at the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, Joy Allen and David Sidwick. During these meetings, the SSC Board's Licensing Champions briefed the APCC on the LGA's work on tackling gambling related harms and our lobbying priorities for the Gambling Act Review. Following this meeting, the LGA and the APCC issued a joint press release calling for more powers for councils to regulate gambling premises in their local area, which achieved good coverage in the national press.

Modern slavery and housing/homelessness webinar

3. On Thursday 3 March, SSC Board's Deputy Chair Cllr Clive Woodbridge chaired an LGA webinar focusing on how councils' housing and homelessness teams can support victims of modern slavery. The webinar was held to coincide with the publication of new LGA guidance and case studies on this issue. The provision of housing for victims of modern slavery has been a challenging issue, not least due to the shortages of suitable accommodation many councils are grappling with. The guidance is intended to promote awareness of the issue of modern slavery withing housing/homelessness services and set out best practice approaches that councils can take, and has been welcomed by charities working closely with victims. Several hundred people were able to join the webinar.

Serious and Organised Crime Webinar

4. On 24 February 2022, the Vice-Chair of the SSC Board Cllr Mohan Iyengar chaired the LGA's webinar on tackling serious and organised crime – sharing best practice. Over 130 delegates joined the session, from community safety, safeguarding and trading standards teams. Speakers included representatives from the Home Office, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and several local authority case

studies, highlighting the importance of working in partnership to tackle serious and organised crime. The LGA will continue to work with the Home Office, councils and wider partners on this important issue.

National Steering Group on Domestic Abuse

5. On 23 February 2022, the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing Eddie Hughes MP chaired the second meeting of the National Steering Group on Domestic Abuse, which oversees the implementation of the Part 4 statutory duty on Tier 1 local authorities to provide domestic abuse accommodation-based support and services. The Local Government Association is represented at the Steering Group alongside domestic abuse service providers and the Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales. The February meeting focused on the future funding allocation for local authorities (2022/2023) which has recently been announced, providing an additional £125 million for councils next year. The session also focused on the importance of providing “by and for” domestic abuse services for victims and children and ensuring commissioning practices consult with specialist services effectively. The LGA continues to work closely with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, alongside councils and wider partners on implementing the statutory duty.

Strategic Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Group meeting

6. Cllr Lois Samuel, member of the LGA’s SSC Board and LGA Board Domestic Abuse Champion, attended the Domestic Abuse Commissioner’s strategic group meeting on tackling domestic abuse perpetrators. Cllr Samuel raised the importance of increased investment in perpetrator interventions, as part of the Government’s forthcoming Domestic Abuse Strategy – which is expected to be published before April 2022.

Government consultation on improving victims’ experiences of the justice system

7. The LGA has responded to the Government’s consultation on improving victims’ experiences of the justice system. Our full response can be [found here](#). The Government is expected to publish its consultation response in the coming weeks and lay a draft Victims Bill before Parliament for pre-legislative scrutiny. The LGA will continue to engage with the Ministry of Justice and wider Departments on this issue.

Counter-extremism

8. We have continued to host a series of regular roundtables with the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism, including recent events on tackling hate crime and harassment of asylum seekers and refugees, and the evolution of conspiracy theories and anti-establishment narratives. We have also delivered bespoke training to councillors facing specific local extremism issues.

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