

Meeting: Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Date: Thursday 19 January 2023

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.

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Update Paper

Background

1. This report outlines issues of interest to the Board not covered under the other items on the agenda.

Serious Violence Duty

2. The [Serious Violence Duty](#) will come into effect in January 2023, placing a new legal requirement on a range of public sector organisations to share information locally to reduce incidents of serious violence, such as knife and gun crime, and prevent loss of life.
3. In light of this Government has [published guidance](#) to support police, health, fire and rescue services, local government and criminal justice partners in meeting their responsibilities under the duty, outlining how they must collaborate to find and address the causes of serious violence in their communities. The Government's response to its consultation on the statutory guidance can be found [here](#).

Domestic Abuse Support Services Funding

4. Government has [announced £257 million of funding](#) to be made available to councils to ensure safe accommodation spaces such as refuges and shelters can provide vital support for domestic abuse victims. The support will include counselling, assistance with rehousing, financial advice and play therapy for traumatised children. The funding will be allocated over two years and take the form of a grant.

Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Intervention Fund

5. The Government has announced a commitment of up to £18 million per year over two years in funding towards the next phase of the [Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Intervention Fund](#), bringing the total of the fund to £36 million. Police and crime commissioners (PCCs) will be given funding to increase the availability of domestic abuse perpetrator intervention schemes, such as behaviour change programmes, that aim to improve victim safety and reduce the risk posed by abusers.
6. The Government also [published seven standards](#) which provides commissioners with the guidance on commissioning effective interventions with perpetrators while ensuring that victims' safety and welfare remain paramount. The publication of the standards and launch of the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator

Intervention Fund is part of the government's commitment to tackle domestic abuse, as laid out in the [Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan](#).

Funding to support child victims of abuse

7. The Safeguarding Minister has [announced](#) funding to support child victims of domestic abuse. The funding will help to develop early intervention strategies to prevent violence against women and girls. More than £10 million has been allocated to organisations providing vital support to children who have survived domestic abuse, such as counselling and one-to-one support. Up to £7.4 million will be invested over three years to programmes which prioritise early intervention and research into the most effective ways of preventing abuse. The funding will be awarded through the Children Affected by Domestic Abuse Fund.

Modern slavery guidance and maturity matrix

8. We have now published our updated [council guide on modern slavery](#) (replacing the original version from 2018), supported by a [maturity matrix](#) designed to assist councils in developing their work on this issue. The guide builds on the experience of councils in developing their work on this issue in recent years, and is split into targeted sections for officers working in different council services including children's services, adult social care, housing, community and regulatory services and procurement.

Clampdown on antisocial behaviour

9. The Prime Minister has [asked](#) the Levelling Up and Communities Secretary, Michael Gove, to draw up plans to crack down on antisocial behaviour as he makes the problem a priority before the next election. He also set out his intention to ensure tackling antisocial behaviour is a priority for the Government, promising to give police forces, mayors, and local authorities the tools they need to crack down on anti-social behaviour.

Security Update on Surveillance Equipment

10. The Cabinet Office has issued a [written ministerial statement](#) providing a security update on surveillance equipment. The Government Security Group has undertaken a review of the current and future possible security risks associated with the installation of visual surveillance systems on the government estate.
11. The review has concluded that, in light of the threat to the UK and the increasing capability and connectivity of these systems, additional controls are required. Government departments have, therefore, been instructed to cease

deployment of such equipment onto sensitive sites, where it is produced by companies subject to the National Intelligence Law of the People's Republic of China.

12. Additionally, departments have been advised that no such equipment should be connected to departmental core networks and that they should consider whether they should remove and replace such equipment where it is deployed on sensitive sites rather than awaiting any scheduled upgrades. Departments have also been advised to consider whether there are sites outside the definition of sensitive sites to which they would wish to extend the same risk mitigation. The Government will continue to keep this risk under review and will take further steps if and when they become necessary. If you would like to discuss in further detail, please email Rachel.Phelps@local.gov.uk

Licensing

13. The Home Office has launched several consultations relating to alcohol and entertainment licensing:
 - a. Licensing hours: We responded positively to the consultation on extending licensing hours between 5-8th May to celebrate his Majesty the King's Coronation.
 - b. Spiking: This consultation focused on whether to update the Section 182 guidance (which accompanies the Licensing Act) to reference spiking prevention. Our response highlighted that we welcome any move that shares best practice in tackling spiking, however, it is important that spiking is looked at alongside a range of other vulnerability issues in the night-time economy. We also highlighted the importance of any new data reporting requirements on councils being proportionate and not burdensome.
 - c. Late night levy: A consultation has also been launched on the charge to be applicable to late night refreshment premises. The LGA will respond to this consultation in the coming weeks.
14. The Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee has also recently [launched a consultation on gambling regulation](#). Our response will reiterate our priorities for the Gambling Act Review, focusing on concerns about the aim to permit and insufficient powers to decide whether or where gambling premises can open in a local area.
15. Additionally, we have produced a briefing note on bringing together regulatory services teams into a newly formed unitary council, based on a roundtable discussion with councils. The briefing provides an overview of lessons learnt and will hopefully provide useful advice to councils going through this process in the future.

Protect duty

16. The Government has announced [further details for the introduction of a new Protect duty](#), aimed at improving preparedness for, and protection from, terrorist attacks. The duty, also known as ‘Martyn’s Law’, will require the owners and operators of certain locations to consider the threat from terrorism and implement appropriate mitigation measures, with measures dependent on the size of the venue and activity taking place. An inspection capability will be established to ensure compliance with the duty. We expect that Government will publish draft legislation in the Spring and will also be undertaking stakeholder engagement events ahead of its introduction.
17. In [response to the announcement, we called on government to ensure that funding is available](#) to respond to the significant resource and capacity requirements needed to implement the new protect duty successfully. There is also a need to clarify how the new duty will be enforced.

UK Government Resilience Framework

18. Shortly before Christmas, the Government published its long awaited [UK Government Resilience Framework](#) delivering on a commitment in the 2021 integrated review to develop a new national resilience strategy. The strategy is based on three key principles; that a shared understanding of the risks we face is essential; that prevention is better than cure, and resilience building should focus effort across the whole risk cycle; and that resilience is a whole of society endeavour which everyone should be empowered to make a contribution to.
19. The section on responsibility and accountability will be of particular interest to councils, with proposals to pilot the creation of a full time local resilience forum chair ‘chief resilience officer’ role, accountable to executive local democratic leaders. The Government will also consider the best ways of developing mechanisms for stronger assurance of LRFs’ collective delivery, including auditable frameworks and building assessment of resilience into inspection/adult regimes of individual responders.
20. Officers will be meet later this month with the DLUHC officials tasked with taking forward the proposals in the framework.

Voluntary and Community Sector

21. In December, the LGA published a research report looking at the [State of strategic relationships between councils and their local voluntary and community sectors](#). The research, undertaken with Locality, provides an honest reflection of the state of relationships between the sectors, establishes

a typology of council/VCS relationships, and sets out four key principles to maintain or improve partnership working:

- Shared foundations, providing clarity of purpose, values and roles;
- Relational culture: behaviours and ways of working that allow the community to flourish;
- Effective structures that are fit for purpose and enable innovation;
- Capacity and resources

22. A toolkit for members and officers is being prepared to enable the findings of the report to be disseminated and turned into good practice. This will be available later in the year.

Fire Services Management Committee

23. The Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC) met on 9 December. The FSMC received updates from the Home Office on the White Paper, and had discussions on wildfires, the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme and the Manchester Arena Inquiry. Industrial relations were also discussed, with the work being led through the National Joint Council for local authority fire and rescue services.

Independent Culture Review of London Fire Brigade

24. In November, London Fire Brigade (LFB) published the outcome report of an [Independent Culture Review](#), led by Nazir Afzal OBE, which was commissioned last year by Commissioner Andy Roe, with the support of the Mayor.

25. The review included experiences of current and former staff, and the public, including members of the Grenfell community and showed examples of poor behaviour and negative experiences over many years. The report showed failings in LFBs processes which have meant women, Black, Asian and minority ethnic people and members of the LGBT+ community have been more likely to experience poor treatment and do less well in their career.

26. The Commissioner has announced immediate action in response to the testimonies, analysis and recommendations from the review, as part of a long-term programme to improve the Brigade's culture.

27. The FSMC will be considering further work on the issues highlighted in the report.

LGA's Annual Fire Conference

28. The LGA's Annual Fire Conference will take place in Nottingham on 7-8 March. We will hear from the Fire Minister, Chris Philp, as well as hold sessions on key topics of interest to the fire and rescue service.

Implications for Wales

29. Officers to work with the Welsh LGA as necessary.

Financial Implications

30. None.

Equalities implications

31. To be considered in relation to each individual policy area.

Next steps

32. Officers to continue progressing these issues as required.