

Meeting: Safer and Stronger Communities Board

Date: 23 March 2023



SSCB work projects

Purpose of report

For direction.

Summary

This paper summarises a series of additional areas of research for officers to focus on and seeks direction from members about which they would like to prioritise.

Is this report confidential? No

Recommendation

The Board are asked to decide which two to three projects they would like officers to prioritise.

Contact details

Contact officer: Mark Norris

Position: Principal Policy Adviser

Phone no: 020 7664 3241

Email: mark.norris@local.gov.uk

SSCB work projects



Background

1. At its meeting in September, the Board agreed its annual work plan. However, members emphasised their desire to remain agile and respond to emerging issues and developments as they arose.
2. In their meeting in February, lead members asked officers to prepare a list of potential research projects for the Board to focus on in the coming months.
3. Officers have prepared a short list based on initial suggestions from lead members, other issues previously been identified by Board members/officers, and recent developments. Board members may have other suggestions they would wish to add
4. The Board are asked to provide their views on which of these items they would like to explore further, taking note of the resource availability identified in paragraph 6.

Issues

5. An outline of the suggested projects is set out below:

Issue	Further information	Resource requirement	Indicative timing
Modern slavery	Understanding how and why councils are able to progress their modern slavery work, and what factors help to ensure local partnerships.	Qualitative research to be undertaken within the team; report presented to Board with potential for public report and recommendations.	Interim report to the Board in June; final report in September
Reducing reoffending: a local government position	It has been several years since the SSCB considered it's position on reoffending. This work would review the LGA's previous policy position in the context of changes to the probation landscape since then and seek the Board's view on an updated position.	Desktop research to be undertaken within the team; paper presented to the Board for discussion and approval.	To inform a June Board paper (any follow up work to be identified)
Mental	The impact of the police's work	Initial review of	Scoping

health impact on policing	<p>with people going through mental health crisis on their capacity for other police work, and therefore on community issues, has been identified as an area of interest.</p> <p>The Home Secretary recently published a letter acknowledging this issue and highlighting work across the Home Office, DHSC, NHS England and NPCC to address this issue.</p> <p>The LGA's Community Wellbeing Board has been consulted on the draft National Partnership Agreement between the police and health to reduce police involvement in mental health and welfare activity, and which based on the 'Right Care, Right Person' model adopted in Humberside.</p>	current issues and activity would be undertaken within the team, in conjunction with CWB team.	report could be developed for next lead members/ Board meeting to identify current position and options for further work.
Police capacity and impact	<p>Lead members expressed an interest in looking at community safety issues linked to police capacity and the balance of recruitment between PCSOs/police officers, including the split of officers between rural and urban areas.</p> <p>A linked area of interest is understanding the effectiveness of community safety outcomes of placing police officers in schools.</p>	The team could undertake council focused qualitative research on this issue, but is likely to need additional support for any quantitative research.	Scoping report could be developed for next lead members/ Board meeting.
Cohesion impact of court case	This research would explore the medium/long-term cohesion implications in Barrow of the Ellie Williams case , which was heavily exploited by right wing extremists following false allegations of rape, grooming and trafficking.	<p>This work is likely to require some external support, which could be funded through the SIGCE budget.</p> <p>The work may take place in phases over time.</p>	This would be a longer term piece of work tracking the lasting impact of the case.

Drugs issues and community safety	Board members have previously suggested exploring the impact of drug use/supply on community safety. This work could look at the drugs strategy and best practice work in this field.	Research to be undertaken within the team.	Report could be developed for next lead members/ Board meeting to identify current position and options for further work.
-----------------------------------	---	--	---

6. In terms of capacity to undertake this work, the safer communities team has access to the following resources:
 - The team's own capacity. While two senior adviser and two adviser posts in the team are funded through our DLUHC grant and subscription funding primarily to support work on building safety, fire services and cohesion, counter extremism and counter terrorism, there is greater flexibility within the remaining capacity (one senior adviser, two advisers and a graduate trainee) to focus on a range of different work areas.
 - A share of the team's policy budget. Although the team is expected to have access to a reasonable budget for 2023-24 (c £80,000), this is expected to support a number of ongoing commitments, including our training provision (licensing and fire leadership essentials courses) and our comprehensive SIGCE programme of work. Therefore, the resources expected to be available for other projects is in the region of £10,000.
 - The LGA's research team, who are able to undertake surveys and polling work. However, there is high demand for this limited capacity, and requests for support from the research team must be approved by the LGA's Senior Management Team based on overall corporate priorities.
7. The Board are asked to set out their views on the issues they would like to prioritise, taking into account the resources available and provisional timing identified.
8. Subject to the Board's views about any areas of research it would like to take forward, the team will consider the resources available and how best to deliver them.

Implications for Wales

9. Officers to engage with the Welsh LGA as required.

Financial Implications

10. As set out in paragraph six above.

Equalities implications

11. Officers to consider the equalities implications of all agreed work themes.

Next steps

12. Officers to take forward as directed.

SSCB work plan – agreed September/November 2022

Proposed SSCB work programme 2022/23
<i>Counter-terrorism, counter-extremism and cohesion</i>
Continue to lobby Government on the importance of retaining investment in measures to prevent extremism and build resilience
Deliver a programme of support to councils on tackling extremism through the Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A series of roundtables and webinars for practitioners to share emerging challenges and facilitate support • Case studies and guidance on tackling extremism and hate (such as antisemitism, Islamophobia) to capture good practice • Facilitating academic support to councils on tackling extremism
Provide training for elected members on delivering the Prevent duty, tackling extremism and building cohesion
Lobby around the Online Safety and draft Protect Duty Bills, and the CONTEST strategy and hate crime action plan reviews, to ensure they reflect sector views.
<i>Community safety</i>
Publish updated council guidance and maturity matrix and develop a further round of awareness raising events on modern slavery
Influence the development of the Modern Slavery Bill and help support the implementation of the new modern slavery strategy
Continue to support councils on the implementation of their domestic abuse duty (outlined in Part 4 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021)
Lobby on the draft Victims Bill as it passes through Parliament, and provide support to local authorities on any proposed new duties.
Support councils with the implementation of the forthcoming serious violence duty and Offensive Weapons Homicide Reviews, outlined in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

Continue to hold best practice sessions on tackling anti-social behaviour, and support 2023 ASB Awareness Week.
Provide good practice case studies on community safety issues, such as VAWG, domestic abuse, serious violence – to help support councils with the forthcoming duties.
Engage with the Home Office and partners on tackling serious and organised crime – continue working with the APCC on any joint work related to the Government’s SOC strategy.
Respond to the Government’s forthcoming Community Safety Partnership review and ensure local government views are fed-in throughout each stage of the process.
Work with the Department for Health and Social Care on the implementation of the 10 year Drug Strategy, and provide support on the implementation of proposed drug partnership arrangements.
Continue engaging with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on the Travellers Site Fund – making the case for increased funding to help councils improve current transit sites.
<i>Blue light services and civil resilience</i>
Respond to the Fire Reform White Paper and the outcome of inquiries such as those into the Grenfell Tower fire and the attack at Manchester Arena.
Respond to the publication of the national resilience strategy and help shape future pilots and activities on local resilience work
Support members and officers to strengthen council activity on resilience, including approaches to community resilience
<i>Licensing and regulation</i>
Respond to the Gambling Act Review White Paper and update the LGA’s guidance on gambling harms, working with the APCC on joint local work on this issue.
Continue to make the case for localisation of alcohol licence fees.
Work with the Department for Transport on taxi licensing reform and with DLUHC on pavement licensing provisions in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

Work with the LGA workforce team and professional bodies to make the case for dedicated support to boost regulatory services capacity and the professional pipeline
Support councils by sharing best practice on a range of issues involving fees and charges, structures and reorganisation
Hold two further leadership essentials in licensing courses
<i>Crematoria, coroners and registrars</i>
Respond to press and related media work related to the death management processes including crematoria and registrars' service.
Conduct further research into the provision of public health funerals
<i>Voluntary and community sector</i>
Influence the development of the Community Spaces and Relationship Strategy currently being drafted by DHLUC
Deliver a programme of support for councils to improve community engagement practices and partnership working with the voluntary and community sector