

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.

LGA Plan Theme: Championing climate change and local environments

Recommendation(s)

That 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.

Local government and social care ombudsman report into ASB

2. The Local government and social care ombudsman has published a focused report on councils handling of ASB complaints. [Out of order: lessons learnt from ASB complaints](#) sets out a series of common issues in managing complaints, including poor communication and not liaising with other agencies. The report includes scrutiny questions for councillors to consider asking within their authorities.

Martyn's Law

3. At the Board's June meeting, [SSCB members discussed the Terrorism \(Protection of premises\) draft Bill, known as Martyn's Law](#), which was published in May. Cllr Clive Woodbridge gave evidence on the draft Bill to the Home Affairs Select Committee (HASC) in June, alongside the LGA's written evidence submission.
4. [The HASC has now published its report on the draft legislation](#), which reflected many of the LGA's concerns, concluding that there was insufficient clarity about the overall objectives of the Bill, and questioning whether the Bill as drafted is an effective response to the nature of the terrorist threat. The Government is expected to respond to the HASC report in early autumn.

CONTEST

5. In July, The Government published its [refreshed counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST](#), which includes an update on the national threat picture. The strategy judges that risks from terrorism are rising, and notes a more diverse, dynamic and complex threat, including a less predictable domestic terrorist threat, a persistent and evolving threat from Islamist terrorist groups overseas, and advances in technology that provide both opportunity and risk to counter-terrorism efforts.
6. The strategy notes that:
 - 6.1. the primary domestic terrorist threat comes from Islamist terrorism, which accounts for approximately 67 per cent of attacks since 2018, about three quarters of MI5 caseload and 64 per cent of those in custody for terrorism-connected offences
 - 6.2. within Islamist terrorism in the UK, explicit affiliation and fixed ideological alignment with any one specific international terrorist organisation is diminishing, with a broader array of fragmented ideological narratives and unconventional belief sets

- 6.3. the remainder of the UK domestic terrorist threat is driven almost exclusively by Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism (ERWT), which amounts to approximately 22 per cent of attacks since 2018, about a quarter of MI5 caseload and 28 per cent of those in custody for terrorism connected offences
 - 6.4. the threat from ERWT in Western countries is increasingly transnational in terms of radicalising influence, inspiration and communication, and unlike Islamist terrorist groups, extreme right-wing terrorists are not typically organised into formal groups
 - 6.5. Left Wing, Anarchist and Single-Issue Terrorism (LASIT) currently represents a significantly smaller terrorist threat to the UK than Islamist terrorism or ERWT and is not currently present in the UK at any significant scale
 - 6.6. adherence by terrorists to specific ideologies is less structured and coherent than a decade ago, reflecting in part the wide range of material available online
 - 6.7. there is a need to manage a wider spread of narratives and beliefs that may be used to motivate and support terrorist violence, including radicalising influences operating below the terrorism threshold but seeking to encourage others to cross it while fragmenting and dividing communities
 - 6.8. the domestic terrorist threat is dominated by individuals or small groups who may sometimes be inspired or encouraged by organised terrorist groups but are acting without their direction or material support
 - 6.9. conspiracy theories can act as gateways to radicalised thinking and sometimes violence, with common themes include religious or ethnic superiority, antisemitism, misogyny, anti-establishment and anti-LGBT grievances.
7. The strategy goes on to outline measures in response to the threat, with the aim of increasing agility to evolving threats; reducing risk through a more integrated response, and becoming more aligned with international allies. This includes:
 - 7.1. reiterating Government's commitment to implement the recommendations of the Independent Review of Prevent
 - 7.2. gaining royal assent for the Online Safety Bill
 - 7.3. dovetailing work on CONTEST with wider Government work on countering radicalising narratives and behaviours and boosting social cohesion and resilience
 - 7.4. enhancing protective security and attack preparedness through introducing Martyn's Law.

Prevent

8. The Government has published [updated draft statutory Prevent duty guidance](#), following the publication of the Independent Review of Prevent (IRP) earlier this year. Subject to parliamentary agreement, the updated guidance will come into force on 31 December 2023. The guidance aims to deliver on several recommendations of the IRP, making it clear that Prevent's objective is to tackle the ideological causes of terrorism, sets out a new 'security threat check' to ensure that Prevent activity is aligned with the national threat picture, and updates terminology to reflect an individual's 'susceptibility' to terrorism (with 'vulnerability' only used where appropriate).

9. Alongside the new statutory guidance, the Government has also published a [revised \(non-statutory\) Prevent duty toolkit](#) to support the delivery of the Prevent duty by local authorities, including examples of good practice in implementing the Prevent duty guidance.
10. A refreshed ministerial oversight board is expected to meet in the coming months to oversee continued implementation of the IPR and ensure delivery remains in line with the review's recommendations.

Pavement licensing

11. The [temporary pavement licensing regime has been extended to 30th September 2024](#). This has been done to allow the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, which contains proposals for a permanent pavement licensing regime, to complete its parliamentary stages. A reminder that the LGA successfully lobbied for a higher fee, a longer consultation and determination period, and improved enforcement powers for councils in the permanent regime. Officers will continue to monitor the Bill closely as it completes its final stages and will support councils with its implementation.

Cosmetic procedure licensing regime

12. The [Government has launched a consultation](#) on how to make non-surgical cosmetic procedures – including Botox, laser hair removal and dermal fillers – safer for consumers. The responses will shape a new local authority led licensing scheme for practitioners and cosmetic businesses which operate in England. The Government is proposing a three-tiered licensing regime based on risk, with the highest risk (red) tier procedures being regulated by the Care Quality Commission, and the lower risk amber and green procedures being regulated by councils. This first consultation is primarily focused on what tier each procedure should be located in. However, officers will respond and highlight broader points around capacity, funding, training and the need to take a comprehensive approach.

Vaping

13. Following sustained LGA lobbying, we are expecting Government to ban single-use vapes on health and environmental grounds. The Government, like councils, are particularly concerned that the products are often aimed at children, who then become addicted. Further detail will be announced in the coming weeks.

Scams

14. In response to reports of criminals exploiting the digital switchover to scam vulnerable residents who use health care telephony devices, officers have produced a [guidance note to raise awareness of the issue amongst councils](#) and offer advice on recommended actions. This was supported by a media release to raise further awareness.

Implications for Wales

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

Financial Implications

16. A number of the items within the Update paper may incur additional costs for councils and the LGA will seek to raise these as part of its ongoing work.

Equalities implications

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

Next steps

18. Officers to continue progressing these issues as required.