

Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

Title:	Safer & Stronger Communities Board
Date:	Monday 15 September 2014
Venue:	Smith Square 3&4, Ground Floor, Local Government House, Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note

Item	Decisions and actions	Action
1	Declarations of interests	
	<p>The Chair welcomed new Members to the Board and thanked the work of previous Members of the Board.</p>	
	<p>Action:</p> <p>Officers to write to retiring Members thanking them for their service.</p>	
	<p>Decision:</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
2	Membership, Terms of reference and Appointments to Outside Bodies 2014/15	
	<p>The following representatives to outside bodies were agreed by the Board:</p> <p>Criminal Justice Council – Cllr Joanna Gardner Public Fundraising Regulatory Association – Cllr Nick Worth Better Regulatory Outcomes Group – Cllr Nick Worth Better Regulation Delivery Office Steering Group – Cllr Philip Evans JP HMIC’s interim Police Efficiency Effectiveness and Legitimacy crime inspection advisory group – Cllr Sophie Linden National Group on Sexual Violence against Children and Vulnerable Adults – Cllr Ann Lucas OBE LGA/APCC Strategic Board – Cllr Nick Daubney, Cllr Mike Connolly, Cllr Lisa Brett and Cllr Marianne Overton MBE.</p>	
	<p>Members also agreed the following Member Champions:</p> <p>Domestic Violence – Cllr Ann Lucas OBE and Cllr Joanna Spicer MBE Licensing – Cllr Tony Page Community Cohesion – Cllr Janet Daby</p>	

Anti Social Behaviour – Cllr Anita Lower
FGM – Cllr Lisa Brett
Regulatory Services – Cllr Nick Worth

Members agreed to invite the Chair of the Fire Services Management Committee to future meetings when there was an item on the agenda that related to Emergency Services.

Action:

Officers to invite the Chair of the Fire Services Management Committee to future meetings when there is a relevant item on the agenda.

Decision:

Members agreed the Membership and Terms of Reference.

3 Priorities 2014/15

Helen Murray, Head of Programmes introduced the report and set out the programme of work over the next year. The Board were informed that although this was a full programme there was still room to respond to issues that arise during the year. In addition Helen explained that the LGA was now working with Rotherham Council on delivering an action plan to tackle the issues which had been raised by the Jay report into Child Sexual Exploitation. Cllr Ann Lucas OBE, Cllr David Simmonds, Chair of the Children and Young People Board and Cllr Peter Fleming, Chair of the Improvement and Innovation Board will provide oversight of this programme of work

Members welcomed the report and made a number of comments including:

- Expanding the heading Child Sexual Exploitation to include vulnerable adults and elderly.
- The need to include work on gangs and gang crime.
- Clarification of the work on legal There were still issues relating to loan sharks and pay day loans.
- Highlighting general concern around homelessness and aggressive begging including - in some cases - links to organised crime. Members argued that the legislation around begging is out of date and needs revising. Officers explained that our current understanding is that Government has delayed work on this as it is difficult to agree a legislative solution.

The Board discussed the issue of legal highs in further detail. Officers commented that the expert panel, set up by the Home Office, had looked in detail at the legislation from a number of places. The LGA had suggested that the approach taken in Ireland was adopted as this had banned the sale of all legal highs but made for exemptions on medical grounds where needed. It had been effective in significantly reducing the number of head shops in Ireland.

Decision:

Members agreed the priorities for the next year.

4 FGM Task and Finish Group

Mark Norris, Senior Adviser, updated the Board on the work of the FGM Task and Finish Group since the last Board meeting. He explained that officers continued to work on an amendment to the Serious Crime Bill to make it an offence to promote or encourage FGM.

Mark added that the three organisations who have taken part in the Task and Finish Group, NSPCC, FORWARD and The British Arab Federation, had agreed to assist with the lobbying around the amendment. At the same time officers would be contacting voluntary sector organisations working on FGM in communities to see if they had evidence which would support the case for the amendment.

The Board were informed that the LGA would conduct an audit of referrals into children's services and then make a bid to the Department for Education's Children's Social Care Innovation Programme to develop a specialist FGM service.

In addition the Board were reminded that the FGM Conference was to be held on 14 October, where the LGA was to launch its FGM guide for Councillors.

Members welcomed the report. They noted that there needed to be work across councils to address the issue and commented that there had been real progress in their areas in tackling FGM. For example in Coventry there was now a Muslim women's group who discussed FGM, while the British Arab Federation was also helping link up with communities and mosques in Lewisham to work to change practices. Members commented that it was useful to have a list of questions Councillors could ask their Director of Public Health when performing their scrutiny role, and requested that hard copies of the guide were provided.

Action:

Officers to invite Cllr Joanna Spicer to the next FGM Task and Finish Group.

Officers to look into the viability of producing hard copies of the FGM guide.

Decision:

Members noted the report.

5 Local authority use of communications data

Ian Leete, Adviser, updated the Board on the Data Retention and Investigatory Powers Act, a piece of emergency legislation that was passed in July. The Act preserves the right of local authorities to access communications data in order to investigate criminal activity, including tackling cases of organised crime. However, in order for local authorities to be able to use this data they will be required to use the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN) for their quality control functions.

Decision:

Members noted the report.

6 Deregulation Bill

Ian Leete, Adviser, updated the Board on the current position of the Deregulation Bill. This Bill had been put forward to remove outdated and obsolete regulations. The Board were informed that the LGA were concerned with clauses to taxis and minicabs, in particular enabling anyone to drive an off-duty vehicle and allowing cab firms to transfer bookings to firms based out of their own local authority area. The LGA was pressing for these clauses to be deleted from the Deregulation Bill.

The Board were informed that the LGA wished to support a proposal by Westminster Council to create an ongoing mechanism for councils to apply to Government to scrap regulations they believed to be detrimental to businesses in that area.

In addition Members were informed that the Home Office wanted to make changes to the Licensing Act, to include Community and Ancillary Sellers Notices (CAS). These changes would allow a new type of alcohol licence, intended for community venues and retailers of small quantities of alcohol. Officers were keen for a steer from the Board as to whether the LGA should accept the proposal that there is no right to appeal on these types of notices or follow the example of Temporary Event Notices (TEN's) and lobby to ensure that an appeals process is put in place.

Members agreed in principle that there should be a right to appeal if applying for a CAS, although the Board agreed that this appeal process should be kept at the local authority level, rather than having a process that entailed going to the Magistrates.

Decision:

Members noted the report.

7 Future of regulatory services' work

Ellie Greenwood, Senior Adviser, introduced the report and informed the Board that the LGA had commissioned a piece of research into 'regulatory services officers of the future'. The research had identified a number of findings, most notably that services had suffered from the reduction in local government funding, leading to reductions in the number of staff compounded by a loss of significant experience and expertise. The LGA is keen that the role and future of these services is pushed higher up the agenda, and wanted to promote the need for a strategic look about how regulatory services can be organised and delivered in the future..

Members welcomed the report and made a number of comments including:

- The LGA should be showing leadership to all local authorities by proposing a number of ideas that local authorities can discuss.
- The proposed document needed to be altered to make it more appealing for Councillors to engage with.
- Regulatory services needed to be made more interesting and relevant to the changing face of local authorities.
- Each area of the regulatory services family needed to be better informed about their role within the system.
- There needed to be more examples made available in the document showing how regulatory services had worked together.
- It was important to engage with Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and the Fire Sector, as these bodies played an important role.

Decision:

Members noted the report.

8 Regulatory services update

Cllr Tony Page reminded the Board that the Betting Commission were meeting on Wednesday 17 September. Following this, officers will be pulling together a list of recommendations to be ready for the next Board meeting in December.

Ellie Greenwood, Senior Adviser, informed the Board that the Elliot Review into horsemeat had now been completed and the recommendations released earlier in the year had not changed.

Decision:

Members noted the report.

9 Notes of the previous meeting

Members agreed the minutes of 7 July 2014 as correct.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Ann Lucas OBE	Coventry City Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Joanna Spicer MBE	Suffolk County Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Lisa Brett	Bath & North East Somerset Council
	Cllr Philip Evans JP	Conwy County Borough Council
Members	Cllr Janet Daby	Lewisham Borough Council
	Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
	Cllr Tony Page	Reading Borough Council
	Cllr Sophie Linden	London Borough of Hackney
	Cllr Nick Daubney	King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council
	Cllr Joanna Gardner	Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
	Cllr Morris Bright	Hertsmere Borough Council
	Cllr Thomas Fox	Scarborough Borough Council
	Cllr Ian Gillies	City of York Council
	Cllr Nick Worth	South Holland District Council
	Cllr Anita Lower	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
	Cllr Colin Mann	Caerphilly County Borough Council
	Cllr Chris Pillai	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Apologies	Cllr Mike Connolly	Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Michael Payne	Gedling Borough Council
In Attendance		
LGA Officers	Helen Murray	
	Mark Norris	
	Ellie Greenwood	
	Ian Leete	
	Daniel Kalley	