

Note of last Safer & Stronger Communities Board meeting

Title:	Safer & Stronger Communities Board
Date:	Monday 7 December 2015
Venue:	Rathbone Rooms 1&2, 7th 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	<p>Counter Extremism Strategy</p> <p>The Chair introduced Neil O'Connor, Director of the Cross-Departmental Review, DCLG. The Director outlined that the review will be looking at opportunity and integration in isolated communities. The review will be looking at some key issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How government can ensure people learn English• Boosting employment• Segregation in schools• Housing• Learning from past approaches. <p>The review will comprise a paper review looking at past research and policies, visits to local areas, and include a call for evidence and submissions. The review will report in early 2016 and inform the new cohesive communities programme. The review was considering the role of local government and wanted to hear from councils on what works and what they would like to see in any strategy.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Director for his presentation and invited members to give their views. Members made a number of comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support and resources would need to be made available to areas.• Concerns that the Community Extremism Trigger could lead to vexatious complaints and that the demands it places on local authorities could become burdensome.• The need for co-operation with the police on the Prevent duty but there were also concerns around the flow of information from the police to councils, and the role of police and crime commissioners.• The vulnerability of individuals and communities and links for example to mental health services needed to be explored.• Applying the lessons learned in Baroness Young's recent review on improving outcomes for BAME offenders to this area of work.• The role of schools and the interaction between local authorities and academies and free schools.	

- Equipping councillors and officers with the necessary skills to deal with this issue.
- The role of faith groups, the voluntary sector and arts and culture in improving integration and community cohesion.
- The Welsh experience needed to be considered both around language of the community and the use of community cohesion coordinators.

Action:

Officers to progress as appropriate in line with Members comments.

Decision:

Members noted the publication of the Counter Extremism Strategy.

2 Alcohol's harm to others: An Institute of Alcohol Studies report

The Chair introduced Katherine Brown, Director of the Institute of Alcohol Studies, who presented the Institute's latest report into the wider impact of alcohol on society. The report summarises the findings of research by the University of Sheffield into the impact of alcohol on people other than the drinker.

The report identifies a number of measures that could be taken to reduce these levels of harm. These included:

- introducing a minimum unit price
- restricting the density of outlets
- restricting permitted hours of sale
- providing brief advice to risky drinkers
- tougher drink driving laws.

The Chair thanked the Director for her presentation and invited members to share their views on the issue. There was a discussion during which members made a number of comments:

- the density and prevalence of outlets contributes to the problem of harmful drinking
- the negative impact on pubs and other licenced venues caused by people who have already consumed cheap alcohol bought from other outlets
- evidence from international comparisons shows what measures can be successful
- the apparent success of tougher drink driving laws in Scotland
- issues associated with stag and hen parties and all day drinking including the impact on the local economy as well as specialist pubs selling high strength beers
- the harm and impact alcohol has on health and the emergency services.

Members discussed whether the LGA needed to revisit its position on minimum unit price and proposed a paper on what councils could do to

address alcohol harms be brought to the next board.

Decision

The Board agreed to receive a brief paper on reducing alcohol related harms, outlining the available information on minimum unit pricing along with a proposed approach for an LGA-wide discussion, recognising the interest of other Boards such as Community and Wellbeing.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

3 Fire Services Management Committee update

Cllr Jeremy Hilton, Chairman of the Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC) introduced the paper and updated the Board on the principal issues concerning the FSMC and fire community at large. Cllr Hilton outlined that there are four key issues the FSMC has identified: funding, service transformation, collaboration and governance.

Members welcomed the update and made a number of comments:

- The potential for the Fire and Rescue Service to contribute to the work of wider council services like trading standards and regulatory services, public health and community safety
- The service has a strong brand and high levels of trust among the public.
- The proposed changes to the fire service governance and the FSMC's opposition to Police and Crime Commissioners taking over responsibility for the running of the service
- There were concerns that the remit of the service was being expanded when funding was being cut, and whether this could impact on the core business of the service.

The Board agreed that the different remits of the Board and the FSMC, and the reporting link between the two structures, are clear. There is a standing invite for a representative agreed by the FSMC to attend Board meetings as an observer.

Action:

Officers noted members' comments.

Decision:

The Board agreed to invite a representative of the FSMC to attend meetings, in an observer capacity, to feed in comments on the work of this Board.

4 LGA review of trading standards services: summary and report

Ellie Greenwood, Senior Advisor, introduced the report updating the Board

on the LGA's review of trading standards. The review was a short high level review which showed a clear commitment to trading standards' role in local government but from which a number of key issues emerged.

The Board welcomed the report and made a number of comments reflecting:

- the important role local trading standards services have in supporting the national trading standards service
- the need for an increased emphasis in the report of local government's control of trading standards as a local service
- the potential for reviewing services and combining them to relate to current issues faced by local authorities
- the LGA should be setting the agenda and challenging how to be more effective in this area, rather than appearing to respond to the professional agenda
- the potential for commercialisation of the service including the possibility of a trading standards kite mark
- recognition that trading standards issues cut across boundaries.

Action:

Officers to redraft and progress the next steps in line with Members' comments.

Decision:

Members approved the report subject to some redrafting to reflect the comments above, and agreed the next steps identified.

5 Legislative update

Decision

Members noted the report.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

6 Update paper

Mark Norris, Principal Policy Advisor, introduced the report which provided an update on LGA policy work and developments affecting the Board's priorities.

The Chair invited members to give their views on the future of work on illegal moneylending. Members were happy to support the National Trading Standards' call for the Financial Conduct Authority to use a proportion of the bank levy to make up any future shortfall in funding for illegal moneylending activities.

Members were informed government will shortly be consulting on how

Police and Crime Panels are able to deal with complaints. Officers expect to be able to bring a draft response to the next Board meeting.

Decision

Members noted the report.

Action

Officers to progress as appropriate.

7 Sustainable Communities Act (CONFIDENTIAL)

Ellie Greenwood, Senior Advisor, introduced the confidential report and updated the Board on progress on the review of Newham Council's SCA application by the LGA Selector Panel.

The Board was supportive of the approach outlined in the report and proposed that the Chair or Vice Chair be involved in future negotiations with government on this issue.

Decision:

The Board agreed to the approach outlined and agreed to appoint the Chair.

Actions:

Officers to take forward the actions in the report and update the Board at the next meeting.

8 Notes of previous meeting

Members agreed the notes of the meeting held on 14 September 2015 as correct.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Cllr Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Morris Bright	Hertsmere Borough Council
Deputy-chairman	Cllr Lisa Brett	Bath & North East Somerset Council
	Cllr Philip Evans JP	Conwy County Borough Council
Members	Cllr Thomas Fox	Scarborough Borough Council
	Cllr Joanna Gardner	Kensington and Chelsea Royal Borough Council
	Cllr Ian Gillies	City of York Council
	Cllr Mike Connolly	Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Michael Payne	Gedling Borough Council
	Cllr Janet Daby	Lewisham London Borough Council

Cllr Kate Haigh
Cllr Tony Page
Cllr Sophie Linden
Cllr Nick Worth
Cllr Anita Lower
Cllr Colin Mann
Cllr Jo Beavis

Gloucester City Council
Reading Borough Council
Hackney London Borough Council
South Holland District Council
Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Caerphilly County Borough Council
Braintree District Council

Apologies

Cllr Nick Daubney

King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council