

Safer & Stronger Communities Board – report from Councillor Simon Blackburn (Chair)

APPG on Beer Reducing the Strength schemes

1. Cllr Tony Page represented councils at the APPG on Beer's session into Reducing the Strength schemes. Cllr Page robustly defended these schemes and called for any evidence against these schemes to be published.

British Transport Police intelligence-sharing resource

2. I have written with Simon Crowther, Chief Constable of the British Transport Police, to all community safety portfolio holders to inform them of a new intelligence-sharing resource which has been made available to them by BTP, the Home Office and the LGA.

LGA survey on licensing fees

3. I have written with Rob Whiteman, Chief Executive of CIPFA, to all finance portfolio holders to ask them to commit their council to completing the LGA's survey on licensing fees. This follows the Home Office's request for the LGA to build the evidence base for localising licensing fees.

Trading standards review

4. I wrote to members of the Association of Chief Trading Standards Officers and Chartered Institute of Trading Standards about publication of the summary report from the LGA's trading standards review.

Year Ahead in regulatory services conference

5. Cllr Nick Worth spoke to delegates at the Year Ahead in regulatory services conference in Stratford upon Avon on 11 February. Cllr Worth discussed the findings of the recent review on trading standards, as well as the potential implications of devolution for regulatory services.

Research into local area vulnerability to gambling harm

6. Cllr Tony Page attended the launch of Westminster and Manchester's research into local area vulnerability to gambling harm. The research was part-funded by the LGA, and will be shared around all councils as soon as possible.

Illegal skin lightening products

7. An LGA press release highlighted the dangers of illegal skin lightening products. This follows recent seizures by local trading standards teams of products containing toxic and poisonous ingredients. In the release, I warned that people should check the ingredients of products and contact their local trading standards team if they have any concerns.

Workshops on Meeting the Challenge of Severe Weather Outbreaks and other Emergencies

8. The first two of three workshops on coping with the challenges of dealing with emergencies were successfully delivered in Bristol on 11 February and in Local Government House on 17 February. The workshops are aimed at senior leaders, both elected and officer, and senior media and communications specialists. The third workshop will take place on 25 February in York.

Enabling Closer Working Between the Emergency Services - Summary of consultation responses and next steps

9. Cllr Hilton responded to the Government's response to the consultation on enabling closer working between the emergency services.

Fire/health regional meetings

10. Cllr John Edwards, Chair of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority and member of the LGA's Fire Services Management Committee, spoke at the first fire/health regional meeting on 9 February at the West Midlands Fire Headquarters. This brought together stakeholders from across the region to discuss how fire and health and social care partners can work together on locally identified needs.

Prevent and counter-extremism

11. I met the Security Minister, the Rt. Hon. John Hayes MP, to discuss the role that councillors can play in the Prevent agenda, and how central and local government could work more closely on countering extremism.

HMIC PEEL Legitimacy Reference Group

12. Cllr Sophie Linden attended the Reference Group Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary have established to support their strand of work around the legitimacy of the police as part of their assessment of police forces' performance.

Greater powers to limit the opening of late-night premises

13. Cllr Tony Page and the Community Wellbeing Portfolio holder, Cllr Izzi Seccombe, raised councils' inability to act on public health concerns when considering alcohol licensing applications in a press release, and highlighted the need for a public health criteria in the Licensing Act.

FGM figures

14. The work the National FGM Centre, a joint initiative between the LGA and Barnardo's, is doing with six pilot areas has resulted in over 40 referrals of children at risk over the last three months, which Cllr Lisa Brett's the Board's lead on FGM highlighted with Barnardo's in a press release.

Building Safe and Healthy Communities

15. Cllr John Edwards spoke as part of a panel at a regional event in the West Midlands organised by the Chief Fire Officers Association, Public Health England and NHS England on how fire and rescue services can become more involved in improving the health and wellbeing of their communities.

JESIP

16. Cllr Kay Hammond attend the Board of the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme which considered issues related to improving interoperability between the blue-light services.

Strategic Resilience Board

17. Cllrs Jeremy Hilton and Les Byrom attended the first meeting of the Fire Strategic Resilience Board since the transfer of responsibility for fire policy from CLG to the Home Office. Issues considered at the meeting included flooding, national resilience and the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme.

Contact officer:

Mark Norris

Position:

Principal Policy Advisor

Phone no:

020 7664 3241

Email:

mark.norris@local.gov.uk