

Safer and Stronger Communities Programme Board – report from Cllr Mehboob Khan

1. As part of the Group's lobbying work around the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill, the Board's Chair, Cllr Khan, met **Lord Hunt, the Shadow Deputy Leader of the House of Lords** towards the end of March. Cllr Khan discussed the amendments that the LG Group had been seeking in the House of Commons, and what changes the Group would be looking for when the Bill reached the House of Lords. Following the second reading of the Bill in the House of Lords at the end of April, Cllr Khan will be meeting Lord Hunt again in mid-May to discuss the amendments the Group will be tabling at the Lords' committee stage.
2. The LG Group has also been invited to **join the Police and Crime Commissioner Transition Sponsorship Board which is chaired by the Policing Minister, Nick Herbert MP**, and includes representatives from the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Metropolitan Police and the Association of Police Authorities. The Board oversees twelve project groups looking at various elements of the transition that needs to be made from police authorities to police and crime commissioners. The LG Group has been invited to participate in the project groups looking at elections, checks and balances (which includes the police and crime panels), and capacity building and induction for police and crime commissioners. Cllr Duwayne Brooks, the Board's Deputy Chair, is the Group's representative on the Sponsorship Board and has attended the meetings in mid-March, with the next meeting to take place at the start of June.
3. The Vice-Chair of the Board, Cllr Les Lawrence, and Dave Holland, Operational Manager for Consumer Protection at Cardiff City Council, gave evidence to **the Bill Committee considering the Protection of Freedoms Bill** in the third week in March on behalf of the Group and the WLGA. The Bill covers a range of issues of interest to councils, including the changes being made by the Home Office to local authorities' use of directed surveillance under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act, the introduction of a new statutory code of practice for CCTV systems and a new Surveillance Camera Commissioner, limiting or adding safeguards to powers of entry, limiting when vehicles can be clamped and towed away, and the release and publication of data by public authorities. The evidence session focused on councils' use of surveillance, CCTV and powers of entry, and was followed up by written evidence submitted by the Group and the WLGA.

4. Cllr Tom Fox represented the LGA at the **COBR Ministerial meeting as part of Exercise Watermark** which tested the national, sub-regional and local response capability to a major national flooding scenario and the extent to which the lessons from the 2007 floods had been learnt. During the exercise, Cllr Fox made clear the role of the LGA in representing the issues and challenges being faced by councils on the ground. Cllr Fox also highlighted the role that local government would play as part of the response and recovery phases and the need for consistent local and national media messages to inform the public.
5. At the most recent meeting of the Fire Commission, Members agreed to setting up a Member-led Working Group to explore a range **of issues relating to the Fire Service College**. The cross-party Group has now been formed, with a Terms of Reference agreed, and will hold its final meeting on 24 May, with a report back to the Commission in June.

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