

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

1. At the LG Group Annual Conference, Cllr Khan chaired a well attended workshop on police and crime panels which looked at the issues councils will have to consider when they come to setting them up. The workshop heard from Ed Hammond from the Centre for Public Scrutiny about the links that need to be made with existing scrutiny structures and the elements that will be crucial in ensuring a panel is successful in its role and from Sarah Hopkins from Plymouth City Council about the preparations in Devon and Cornwall for setting up their panel.
2. The Board also hosted a fringe event at the LG Group's Annual Conference about the costs of domestic violence and the benefits councils receive from investing in preventative work. Cllr Khan chaired the well received event where those attending heard from Cllr Lucas, the Board's domestic violence champion, and Annalise Elliot, the Head of Safer Merton at the London Borough of Merton, and then engaged in an informative discussion of the issues.
3. The Board's Deputy Chair, Cllr Brooks, has continued to represent the LG Group on the Home Office's Police and Crime Commissioners Transition Sponsorship Board. This 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. Cllr Brooks is also representing the Group on the transition project looking at the handling of complaints about police and crime commissioners as police and crime panels will have a role in handling minor complaints against the commissioners.
4. Cllr Khan was a key note speaker at the Home Office's Neighbourhood Policing Plus Conference held at the end of June at the National Police Improvement Agency site in Coventry. This by-invitation only event also heard from Nick Herbert MP, the Policing Minister, Cllr Rob Garnham, the chair of the Association of Police Authorities and the Chief Constable of Lincolnshire who leads on neighbourhood policing issues for the Association of Chief Police Officers. The conference looked at how links could be made between police and crime commissioners and the wider public and with neighbourhood policing teams, and what could be done to help fill some of the gaps left in neighbourhood policing structures where funding from third parties meant police community support officer numbers had fallen. Cllr Khan pointed out that councillors were very well placed to raise neighbourhood crime and disorder issues, and that schemes like the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme offered a means by which council staff could help provide a visible policing presence on the ground.

5. At the end of June Cllr Khan spoke at Westminster Briefing's conference on Cutting Crime in Partnership about the role of communities and the public in crime fighting. Cllr Khan set out the key role the public have in reducing crime given the British model of policing by consent which relies on people reporting crime and giving evidence in court. He also set out some concerns the Group has about the elections for police and crime commissioners and the impact this could have in some areas on public and community engagement in crime fighting, and the need for communities to be more directly involved in tackling crime if they are to continue to help cut crime.
6. The Fire Commission this month received the report of the FSMC working Group looking at the Future of the Fire Services College. The report represents a substantial contribution to the debate on the future of the college. The cross-party working group concluded private partnership with strong leadership from fire authorities is the only option to secure the future of the institution. The Commission has commended the report to the Fire Services Management Committee which will consider the recommendations at its meeting on 18th July 2011.

#### **7/7 inquest recommendations and the implications for Fire and Rescue Services**

7. Cllr Brian Colman AM, chaired a lunchtime fringe meeting on 7/7 inquest recommendations and implications for the Fire and Rescue Service at the Local Government Group Conference. Commissioner Ron Dobson, London Fire Brigade and London Deputy Mayor Richard Barnes AM, set out respectively the 7/7 recommendations and implications for Fire and Rescue Services and the role of Councils and elected members in planning for future events. The meeting was well attended and the presentations were well received.

**Contact officer:** Helen Murray

**Position:** Policy Director

**Phone no:** 020 7664 3266

**E-mail:** helen.murray@local.gov.uk