

Safer and Stronger Communities Programme Board – Cllr Mehboob Khan (Chair)

Transition to Police and Crime Commissioners

1. Board members continued to be involved in the LGA's work around the transition to police and crime commissioners. Two guides with forewords from the Board's chair Cllr Mehboob Khan have been published over the last couple of months. One produced in conjunction with the Centre for Public Scrutiny explores the questions councils need to consider in setting up a police and crime panel, while the other guide looks at the implications for community safety partnerships of the introduction of police and crime commissioners.
2. The Board was also invited to contribute to the Association of Police Authorities' transition seminar held at the start of December outside Coventry. Cllr Les Lawrence, the Board's Vice-Chair, spoke about the responsibility on English councils to set up police and crime panels, as well as the role police and crime commissioners will have in commissioning key local services including those on community safety.
3. Cllr Henri Murison represented the Board at the Home Office's Police and Crime Commissioners Transition Sponsorship Board meeting in December. One of the issues for consideration at the Board meeting was the commissioning role that police and crime commissioners will have. The need for councils to have clarity as soon as possible on what funding will be transferred to police and crime commissioners and from when was made to the meeting by Cllr Murison. It was agreed that councils needed better communication on this issue and the Home Office would be looking to address it.

Safer Communities Conference

4. The annual LGA Safer Communities Conference was held in November and looked at the changes facing community safety partnerships over the next year, and how they could go about meeting them. The conference was chaired by Cllrs Les Lawrence and Duwayne Brooks from the Board, and Cllr Mehboob Khan addressed the conference to set out the LGA's view of what councils and partnerships need to do in the year ahead. Delegates also heard from Glasgow Community Safety Partnership on the City Council's outsourcing of their community safety function, lunchtime sessions on metal theft and gang violence and workshops on digital engagement, restructuring and merging partnerships, working with colleagues in health, commissioning services and the assistance the LGA is able to provide to councils.

Metal theft

5. The Board has been promoting the need for action to be taken to address metal theft in conjunction with the Environment and Housing Board. The Board's chair Cllr Mehboob Khan was quoted in the national media about the need for changes in the legislation governing scrap metal dealers, which is the route by which stolen metal is often sold on. Cllr Khan along with the chair of the Environment and Housing Board also wrote to the Home Office Minister, Lord Henley on the need for greater powers for councils and the police over scrap metal dealers to ensure that the minority of dealers who buy stolen metal are discouraged from doing so in the future. In his response Lord Henley agreed with the need to strengthen the regulations around scrap metal dealers, and is looking to meet the LGA on the issue this month.

Fire

6. Councillor Jeremy Hilton attended the WLGA Fire Panel meeting on 29 November. This was a useful opportunity to share the work of the FSMC and Fire Commission with the 3 Welsh Fire authorities and to join up on issues such as business continuity, national resilience and peer review.

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