

Safer & Stronger Communities Board – report from Cllr Mehboob Khan (Chairman)

Transition to police and crime commissioners

1. Board members continued to be involved in the Home Office's transition programme in March and April, and to highlight the support available to councils from the LGA. Cllr Joanna Spicer attended the project group looking at checks and balances which met in March to look at the issues that had been raised at the road show events the Home Office had organised in February and March, what regulations the Home Office are looking to produce that relate to police and crime panels and specifically at what local government legislation on how committees operate should apply to panels. One issue that was repeatedly raised at the Home Office road shows was how to calculate the political make up of police and crime panels. Although the Home Office have produced a legal clarification on this issue, this has raised further questions about how it should be applied, which the Home Office were asked to consider at the meeting.
2. The Board was represented at the Home Office project group looking at what partnerships will need to do to prepare for police and crime commissioners by Cllr Canver. At the meeting Cllr Canver highlighted as a continuing risk the lack of information available from the Home Office about what funding would be removed from councils in addition to the community safety fund, and the impact this might have on community safety activity due to lack of certainty about what funding would be available. In addition Cllr Canver highlighted the opportunities for the Home Office and Department of Health to work with the LGA on helping link police and crime commissioners with the new health structures such as health and well being boards.
3. As well as being involved in the Home Office transition work, the Board's Deputy Chair Cllr Duwayne Brooks, spoke at an ITW Networks Justice and Community Safety event on police and crime commissioners about the preparations councils are making to set up police and crime panels, about what community safety partnerships need to do to prepare for commissioners and the support available from the LGA. The Board's chair, Cllr Mehboob Khan, also highlighted in a press release aimed at the local government trade press the peers who would be available from the end of May to support areas in setting up their police and crime panels.

Fire and Rescue

4. The successful and well attended annual LGA Fire and Rescue Resilience Conference took place over two days in March 2012, in Bournemouth. It is a popular event in the fire sector attracting over 250 Chief Fire Officers, Fire and Rescue Chairmen and elected members and Service Directors. The resilience themed conference hosted an array of relevant and current sessions relating to key fire policy areas including industrial relations, preparedness for the Olympics and Paralympics, environmental challenges and the impact of the Localism Act.

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| Contact officer: | Helen Murray |
| Position: | Head of Programmes |
| Phone no: | 020 7664 3266 |
| E-mail: | helen.murray@local.gov.uk |