

Item 3g

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

Police and Crime Commissioners

1. Cllr Joanna Spicer from the Board represented the LGA at the Home Office's Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) Transition Sponsorship Board meeting held in mid-June. Discussions included changes in health structures and the APCC's plans as the interim membership body for PCCs.
2. Michael Crick from Channel 4 News chaired the LGA Annual Conference's plenary session with a cross-party selection of prospective PCCs. There was also a session for prospective PCC candidates with the Policing Minister, the Rt Hon Nick Herbert MP and the LGA Chairman. The Board's Chair Cllr Khan chaired a session for the prospective candidates on preparations for the elections with the President of the Association of Chief Police Officers, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, the Electoral Commission and a police authority Chief Executive.
3. This session was also a useful occasion to highlight the LGA's offer to establish a national representative body, including the prospectus published in May, as well as the assistance the LGA is providing to those councils setting up police and crime panels. At the same time prospective PCC candidates were made aware that the LGA was exploring with the Association of Police Authorities and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners the possibility of a joint venture.

Reducing re-offending

4. The LGA was represented at the national Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Conference held in early July in Coventry by the Board's Deputy Chair, Cllr Brooks, who spoke alongside the new Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime in London, Stephen Greenhalgh, about the reforms of the probation service. Cllr Brooks explained the LGA support for IOM as a means of reducing re-offending, and described some of the possible impacts of wider public sector reforms such as reforms of the health service on probation services.

Metal theft

5. In June, Cllr Khan met Richard Ottaway MP, who is introducing a private member's bill to reform the regulation of scrap metal dealers. Mr Ottaway outlined the contents and timetable of his bill and has since confirmed councils would be responsible for issuing, reviewing and revoking licences to scrap metal dealers and that there would be a national database of licensed dealers. Cllr Khan reinforced this as a priority issue, highlighted concerns that the scheme should allow councils to set local fees for any scrap metal licence and signalled the LGA's commitment to this work, offering the support of the Board for the bill.

6. Cllr Khan gave a key note speech at the LGA's annual conference on metal theft alongside Mr Ottaway and Deputy Chief Constable Paul Crowther from British Transport Police, while Cllr Brooks, chaired the event. Delegates also heard from the Energy Networks Association and BT on the impact of metal theft and the alternatives to metal that councils could use to reduce incidents of theft.

Civil Disturbances

7. A year on from the civil disturbances in August 2011, Cllr Brooks, chaired a workshop at the LGA's annual conference on whether enough had been done to prevent similar disturbances happening again in the future. The workshop heard from Darra Singh, the Chair of the Communities and Victims Panel, commissioned on a cross party basis to report on how to stop such disturbances being repeated and heard the views of police and councils from London and the West Midlands on what they had been doing in their own communities.

Street-fundraising event

8. The LGA convened a roundtable with council and charity representatives to build on the findings of the recent survey and media coverage on 'chugging' that showed councils need more up to date powers to effectively manage their public realm. Chaired by LGA Vice Chair Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson, and attended by Lord Hodgson, the Chair of the Charities Act 2006 review, and Board member Cllr Nilgun Canver, the discussion explored existing methods of regulation and voluntary control, the problems reported to councils and the most effective way of tackling the issues. There was consensus that councils should be able to license street fundraisers and set conditions around collections. It was agreed that the LGA and Public Fundraising Regulatory Association should develop a national agreement for councils to voluntarily regulate local fundraising.

Fire

9. Representatives of the Fire Commission, Cllr Heaster, Cllr Byrom and Cllr Aspden, met with the Fire Minister Bob Neill MP to discuss the implication of the retrospective access to pension schemes by retained duty staff. The delegation was successful in getting its key points across to the Minister on how the potentially large costs might be met. We are in continuing discussion with the Minister and officials on the resolution of this issue.

LGA evidence to the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill Committee

10. The LGA evidence presented by Cllr Canver to the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill Committee recognised the value of the Primary Authority scheme to businesses and councils as one of a range of options to be used locally to support businesses and reduce red tape. Cllr Canver also expressed concern that it is not appropriate for central government to intervene in these local partnerships by directing councils to follow inspection plans.

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