

Item 3(i)

Safer & Stronger Communities Board – report from Councillor Mehboob Khan (Chair)

Police and Crime Commissioners

1. The LGA Executive received a report at its September meeting on the discussions between the LGA and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) that have taken place over the summer and which the Board's Chair, Councillor Mehboob Khan, has been heavily involved in. These looked at the possibility of both associations making a joint offer to police and crime commissioners (PCCs) to support them at a national level. The result of the discussions was a proposal to create a Joint Strategic Partnership Board to promote the common interests of councils and PCCs at a national level across Whitehall, spread good practice and facilitate the building of relationships at a local level. The Executive has agreed to these proposals being taken forward.
2. Councillor Henri Murison attended the Home Office's Transition Sponsorship Board meeting in early September, which looks at all the transition work being undertaken to prepare for the introduction of police and crime commissioners. The Sponsorship Board heard back from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary about their inspections and assessments of police authority preparations for the transition and progress in establishing police and crime panels. It also discussed community safety funding announcements, and the discussions between the LGA and the APCC on forming a Joint Strategic Partnership Board.
3. The Safer and Stronger Communities Board was represented at the Association of Police Authorities (APA) and APCC transition events in the middle of September. The Board's Vice-Chair Councillor Joanna Spicer spoke at the APA event about progress in establishing police and crime panels; and Councillor Mehboob Khan spoke at the APCC event for PCC candidates and highlighted the role councils could play in delivering on PCCs' manifesto commitments. He also emphasised the prevention role councils have in delivering safer communities and councils' experience in making financial savings, for example by merging back office functions.

Metal theft

4. The LGA arranged for two sets of amendments to be tabled to the Scrap Metal Dealers Bill at its committee stage in mid-September. One set would allow councils to stipulate their own licence fees in place of the capped fees the Bill would allow. Although the Home Office resisted the LGA's amendment this was on the grounds that they had their own amendment which delivered something similar, and this government amendment was accepted by the committee. As a result councils will be able to set their own fees for scrap metal dealers licences subject to having to have regard to guidance from the Home Office. The other set of amendments looked to allow councils to impose locally set conditions on scrap metal dealer licences but were resisted by the government on the basis they were too widely drawn. The Safer and Stronger Communities Board will continue to lobby on this point.

Item 3(i)

Violence Against Women and Girls

5. The Board's domestic violence champion Councillor Ann Lucas accompanied the LGA's Chairman to a meeting in mid-September with the Home Secretary about the funding of services for the victims of domestic violence. The Chairman and Councillor Lucas were able to highlight the continuing commitment of local government in this area but pointed out the lack of financial incentive for councils to invest in these services when the police and criminal justice services benefit more. Councillor Lucas additionally highlighted the important role police and crime commissioners would have in this area once elected, and the role of preventing violence as well as the importance of tackling serial offenders.

Party conferences

6. Members of the Board, in particular the Chair, Vice-Chair and Deputy Chair Cllrs Mehboob Khan, Joanna Spicer and Duwayne Brooks were invited to a number of fringe events at their respective party conferences relating to community safety and the Board's wider remit. These included being asked to speak at the Association of Police Authorities / Association of Police and Crime Commissioners events at each party conference on the transition to police and crime commissioners, as well as at events by the Transition to Adulthood Alliance and Revolving Doors on the policing of young adults, and Catch 22 events on addressing gang violence.

Managing the night-time economy conference: 26 September 2012

7. This conference aimed to support councils in making connections across service directorates to drive local growth and manage a thriving night-time economy to the benefit of both residents and businesses. Chaired by Councillor Khan, it allowed member councils to showcase the work they had already taken to display leadership in reforming and regenerating local areas. Councillor Canver presented on the importance of engaging with Police and Crime Commissioners, while Councillors Peter Box and Flick Rea outlined the contributions that their respective programme areas could make to creating a vibrant and safe night-time economy.

Fire

8. Councillor Kay Hammond, Chair of the LGA's Fire Services Management Committee, met with the new fire Minister Brandon Lewis MP to agree an approach to working with the minister and department on fire matters. It was also an opportunity to press the LGA's case on a number of issues including retained firefighter pensions.

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