

## **Safer and Stronger Communities: Annual Review of the Year**

### **Background**

1. Although the state of the economy and unemployment have continued to dominate the political environment in the last year, crime remains a key concern for communities and the councils that serve them. The Board's activities have been driven by the biggest upheaval in the police governance landscape for nearly half a century, looking at the role that councils and their regulatory functions have in supporting local businesses, and responding to emerging food standards issues.

### **Strategic Issues**

2. The core of the Board's policing and community safety work has been assisting councils and community safety partnerships to complete their preparations for the election of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC), and after the elections in November helping police and crime panels carry out some of their key statutory scrutiny functions. Other areas of work have included: helping councils to implement changes to alcohol licensing; assisting community safety partnerships adapt to the health reforms and new structures, and share good practice around domestic homicide reviews; supporting the private members bill on licensing of scrap metal dealers; developing proposals to change the culture within regulatory services so they are more supportive of business; and working with other LGA Boards such as the Children and Young Peoples Board on child sexual exploitation.

### **Achievements**

3. The Board has achieved some significant successes during the year, including:
  - 3.1 Supporting English councils to establish police and crime panels without Home Office intervention by: publishing guidance on confirmation hearings, dealing with complaints, and how to conduct effective scrutiny; providing training for individual panels or groups of panel members; speaking at regional events on panels; advising on the conduct of confirmation hearings for deputy PCCs and chief constables; sharing good practice through a panels networking event in March and via the Knowledge Hub support group.
  - 3.2 Successfully lobbying Lord Justice Goldring to allow magistrates to serve as members of police and crime panels.
  - 3.3 Ensuring the Scrap Metal Dealers Bill got onto the Statute Book, introducing a new licensing regime for scrap metal dealers.
  - 3.4 Assisting councillors in understanding the role councils can play in reducing metal theft by publishing a Councillors Handbook on metal theft, and holding a conference on the implementation of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013.

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- 3.5 Influencing the Home Office's proposals for new tools and powers for tackling anti-social behaviour, including the ability to attach a power of arrest to the injunctions to prevent nuisance and annoyance.
- 3.6 Making the case for community budgets to fund activity to reduce violence against women and girls, and the importance of providing councils with the financial incentives to continue to invest in services to reduce domestic abuse.
- 3.7 Providing a strong public response to the contamination of beef products with horsemeat, ensuring the role of councils was accurately reported.
- 3.8 Setting up a system of self-regulation to create a flexible and cost effective system to tackle nuisance and intrusive charity street collections.
- 3.9 Publishing a new Vision for Regulation and toolkit to demonstrate that councils are Open for Business.
- 3.10 Reinforced the importance of regulatory services by production of an on-line training module for elected members.
- 3.11 Presenting a compelling case for councils to retain access to communications data to Ministers.
- 3.12 Supporting councils who are actively considering the introduction of the controversial late-night levy or Early Morning Alcohol Restriction Orders (EMROs). The LGA has provided two workshops to share learning and develop handling strategies.
- 3.13 Developing tools to help councils implement changes to legislation. Using LGA frontline officer networks, we have developed good practice frameworks for licensing and gambling policies. This has been supplemented by subject specific publications on alcohol and health, PCCs and licensing and taxi licensing reform.
- 3.14 Defeating Government proposals which would have limited licensing of public entertainment to audiences of more than 5,000; the government has now backed down and reduced this threshold to 500.
- 3.15 Supporting community safety partnerships adapt to the new policing landscape and funding arrangements by conducting four peer reviews, twelve desktop reviews, and publishing guidance on the new role of clinical commissioning groups in community safety partnerships, alongside a guide for PCCs to the role of community safety partnerships.
- 3.16 Provided a cross section of good practice examples of cohesion to the Prime Minister's Taskforce on Tackling Extremism and Radicalisation.
- 3.17 The LGA Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC) was influential in the government's decision to sell the Fire College. Throughout this year FSMC has ensured that the interests of Fire and Rescue Authorities will be

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met by the new owners, Capita. As Chair of the Fire Service Management Committee, Cllr Kay Hammond will be on the Board of the Fire College.

- 3.18 Future funding for and organisation of the fire and rescue service has been a key theme for FSMC. It produced a future funding report which was launched at this year's successful Fire Conference in March. FSMC will continue to work closely with the sector as it responds to the challenges set out in the Knight Efficiency Review.
- 3.19 Accrediting 46 Home Office peers for their ending gang and serious youth violence peer reviews.
- 3.20 Publishing a monthly Community Safety bulletin highlighting the work the Board is doing, making good use of our professional advisers on issues such as licensing and anti-social behaviour.
- 3.21 Holding conferences and events to support councils' work on managing the night time economy, developing new community safety business models and licensing. It also included the successful annual safer communities and annual fire conferences.
- 3.22 Presenting key evidence at a number of parliamentary Select Committees and public bill committees where Board Members represented the LGA.
- 3.23 Issuing 49 press releases and statements on topics ranging from the Scrap Metal Dealers Act, Police and Crime Commissioners, trading standards, the horsemeat scandal, fire service reform and the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill.

**Programme of work 2013/14**

4. Building on these achievements the Board agreed a number of priorities to feed into the LGA Business Plan for 2013/14. The Business Plan sets out the following priorities for the Safer and Stronger Communities Board:
  - 4.1. Councils build business confidence by reducing unnecessary red tape and regulatory burden at the local level, as well as by fighting crime.
  - 4.2. Fire and rescue authorities protect people and places from harm, providing the safe environment in which businesses can thrive.
  - 4.3. Councils support and build the resilience of communities so they are able to thrive in the face of challenging economic conditions and the significant restructuring of services.

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