

13 September 2004

Relationship Management Priorities

1. Managing relationships with key outside bodies, in particular government departments and partner organisations, will be a priority for the Board.
2. The LGA's most recent perceptions audit, carried out in 2003, identified room for improvement in the Association's lobbying role. It recommended that the LGA should:
 - aim to be a more influential organisation which sets the political agenda and leads the thinking in key policy areas
 - uses its leadership in a more disciplined and co-ordinated way
 - be more focussed and smart in engagement with government and broaden relationships beyond ODPM and the Treasury to key delivery departments
 - identify, involve and promote a wider range of council leaders who can play a national role
3. The reconfiguration of member structures into a group of themed boards with clearly identified leading members provides an excellent opportunity to build relationships with the key government departments and key national partner organisations, and it has been agreed by leading members that a lead Board be designated for each Government Department. The Safer Communities Board has been designated the lead for Home Office and the Department for Constitutional Affairs.
4. It is expected that the Chair of each Board, supported by other senior Board members will
 - play an ambassadorial role on behalf of the LGA/local govt with their lead departments
 - be charged with developing effective personal relationships with Ministers;
 - be spokespeople on their portfolios (where appropriate) and responsible for ensuring the lobbying objectives are pursued effectively.
5. It is recognised that the lobbying objectives for each Board will not be confined to the departments for which they had been designated lead. As has been shown in the list of projects and policy work set out in Agenda Item 3, the work of the Safer Communities Board covers a range of other departments including
 - Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (fire service and building control)
 - Cabinet Office (review of regulatory activities and emergency planning)
 - Department for Food, Rural Affairs and the Environment (pollution control)

It will be important to develop strong relationships with these departments too. When drawing up Relationship Management strategies effective linkages will therefore be made between all relevant boards and projects. To help ensure this, the approach will be coordinated across all Boards by the Public Affairs team working with colleagues supporting each Board. It is anticipated that the Fire Modernisation Project Task Group will take the lead for the ODPM in relation to fire issues, in conjunction with the relationship management strategy of the Improvement Board, which will have lead responsibility for this department.

6. The Strategy must also identify key external partners with which strong relationships must be developed. These include:
 - Audit Commission
 - Environment Agency
 - Food Standards Agency
 - Health and Safety Executive
 - Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
 - Office of Fair Trading
 - Chief Fire Officers Association
 - National Community Safety Network
 - National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO)
 - GMB
 - TUC
7. It is also recommended that members support the inclusion of academic institutions in the relationship management strategy, in order to strengthen the Board's capacity for developing evidence-based policy and encourage a more innovative approach to policy development.
8. It is proposed therefore that subject to members' views a draft Relationship Management Strategy be developed for consideration at the Board's next meeting. The strategy would encapsulate the Board's priorities and propose how they should be pursued in relation to Government Departments and key national partner organisations.
9. Subject to members' views and further consideration by Group Leaders it is proposed that a draft Relationship Management strategy be submitted to the Board at its next meeting.

Relationships with other Boards

10. It will be important for the Board to identify those areas where close cooperation with other Boards will be required. Once policy priorities are agreed the need for links will be assessed for each area of work. Initially members may wish to note that

work on reducing crime and ant-social behaviour has very strong links with drug and alcohol misuse issues for which the Supporting People Board has responsibility.

Outside Bodies

11. The Board has inherited a number of ‘outside bodies’ (see **attached list**) on which members are currently serving. The proposed approach to relationship management outlined in this paper reinforces the recommendations from the LGA Scrutiny Panel about appointments to outside bodies – in particular that we should be more strategic in our approach to appointments. Rather than simply re-appoint members to all the Board’s “inherited” outside bodies, therefore, it is suggested that Boards identify, in the light of their remit and objectives, those key national partner organisations that they, on behalf of the LGA, need to influence or forge alliances with. The need for formal appointments can then be considered in the context of the proposed Relationship Management Strategy at the next meeting.

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