

13 September 2004

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## Safer Communities board relationships with wider membership

1. One of the key roles for the new boards will be to communicate effectively with the wider membership, in terms of keeping members in touch with the work the LGA is taking forward on their behalf, and enabling feedback from members to influence policy development.
2. Members will want to give some initial consideration to the most effective ways of communicating with the wider membership. In the past both the Public Protection Executive and Community Safety Panel have used policy reviews groups to provide the opportunity for the wider membership to be both informed on, and discuss, the development of policy on specific issues. Members may wish to continue policy review groups which have in general proved a valuable means of communication and discussion, whilst seeking to improve their effectiveness by learning lessons from predecessor bodies. Attention is particularly drawn to the views of the Public Protection Executive in this respect:

‘In relation to whether Policy Review Groups (PRGs)...the Executive was of the view that PRGs should be retained because of the valuable opportunity for canvassing the wider opinion that they presented. Members believed that any potential for PRGs to become “unwieldy” could be easily addressed and indeed had not been a problem for past Public Protection PRGs. However, Members were keen that the balance between Members and officers attending PRGs be addressed in future as there had been a developing trend for PRGs to be dominated by officers. This trend was due in part to a lack of information reaching members in local authorities. Members suggested that the importance of PRGs should be reemphasised through the LGA Group Offices and local authority Chief Executives. Although this could be done through written word (e.g. through First), the Executive was minded that a greater impact might be achieved through spoken communication on this issue.’

3. In recognition of their distinct status, the Fire Forum had been retained as a means of allowing representatives from all fire authorities to meet on a regular basis to discuss policy matters. This arrangement will continue
4. Predecessor executives have all published monthly bulletins to keep members informed about key issues. These have been welcomed and we would recommended to members that the Safer Communities Board continues with this approach.
5. Members will want to note the approach the rural Commission has agreed to take in terms of their relationship with the wider membership. The new office holders are keen to connect with all new Boards and to highlight the opportunities the Commission can offer in adding value to the work of the Board. The Commission has offered supporting ‘rural proofing’ work, and proofing it for small (district)

council issues and for two-tier implications. Members will want to consider how to take advantage of this approach.

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