

13 September 2004

Home Office Strategic Plan 2004–2008 'Confident Communities in a Secure Britain'

1. In July 2004 the Home Office published its five year strategic plan 'Confident Communities in a Secure Britain'. The Plan is a detailed document of around 130 pages setting out targets and plans over a wide range of issues.
2. This paper gives a short summary of the key points that are most relevant to the LGA's current work. It is recommended that a more detailed analysis of the Plan, with a corresponding outline of the action local government can take to achieve the objectives of reducing crime and disorder be presented at the next meeting of the Board.
3. The Plan contains a number of strategic objectives, the first two of which are directly relevant to the Safer Communities Board.
 - more offenders are caught, punished and stop offending
 - victims are better supported
 - fewer people's lives are ruined by drugs and alcohol.
 - migration is managed to the benefit of the UK while preventing abuse of the asylum system
 - citizens, communities and the voluntary sector are more fully engaged in tackling social problems and there is more equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races and religions
4. The Plan contains a target to reduce crime by at least a further 20% by 2008, targeting prolific offenders and crime hotspots with tailored responses to different offences. It makes a commitment to closer partnership work across agencies and with community and a new relationship with citizens.
5. The LGA have argued that successfully tackling the causes of crime, and therefore permanently reducing the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour can only be achieved by effective local partnerships in which local government plays a key role. The plan made little reference to the central role that local government should play in this work. This will therefore be a key lobbying objective for the new Board.
6. The main elements of the Plan that are of primary concern to the Board are:

Home Office 5-year plan	Initial LGA position	Key LGA partners
Preventing crime by reducing the number of young people who become offenders.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s centres • Training and support • Interventions including parenting order, residential orders child safety orders • Educational achievement • Increasing the use of youth inclusion and support panels 	<p>The LGA agree that early intervention and an integrated response are vital and have been lobbying for change in this direction.</p> <p>There is concern about overuse of targets and inappropriate interventions</p>	Children and Young People’s Board
Tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase ASB Action areas to 50 (the ‘Together’ campaign) • Fast track response to ASB • Extension of fixed penalty notices • Neighbourhood policing • Ensure local authorities and other agencies have the right powers to tackle ASB • Safer and Stronger Communities Fund launched 	<p>Short term sanctions alone are not enough to stamp out the problem of anti-social behaviour. A balance must be struck between short term punitive measures and long-term prevention and rehabilitation.</p> <p>We are entering into immediate discussions with the Home Office on the scope and administration of the Safer and Stronger Communities fund, which replaces a number of existing funding streams and is central to the success of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.</p>	

Home Office 5-year plan	Initial LGA position	Key LGA partners
<p>Preventing crime by reducing opportunities and tackling alcohol abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve alcohol education • More rigorously enforce age restriction • Work with local authorities to avoid high densities of licensed premises • Ensure that the alcohol industry makes a significant contribution to reducing harm 	<p>Resources will be needed to ensure that schools can play their full part in improving education on alcohol.</p> <p>Fees levels for the new licensing regime must be set a level that will allow local authorities to manage the night-time economy and associated crime and disorder.</p>	<p>Supporting People Board leads on alcohol issues</p> <p>Children and Young People's Board</p> <p>LACORS</p>
<p>A modern response police service working with communities to prevent crime and catch offenders</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20,000 police community support officers to be recruited • Expansion of neighbourhood policing • Minimum standards of service • New arrangements for accountability • An independent National Policing Improvement Agency 	<p>Strong support for more community based policing. The LGA will be making a detailed response to the forthcoming white paper on modernising the police service.</p>	
<p>Correct and rehabilitate through a new National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and by developing the Youth Justice System</p>		

Home Office 5-year plan	Initial LGA position	Key LGA partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up NOMS on 1 June 2004. • Reducing re-offending National Action Plan (published with the HO Five year plan) • Balance custodial and community sentences • Reduce re-offending by 10% by 2020 	<p>More needs to be done to work with prisoners</p> <p>NOMS must be built from the bottom up, based on existing local partnerships</p>	
<p>Reducing the harm caused by illegal drugs</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine education, early prevention and drug availability • Focus on reducing drug related crime • Increase treatment both in the community and through the criminal justice system 	<p>The creation of an integrated strategy is welcome. An adequate range of treatment options should be available</p> <p>The emphasis on drug prevention and education should be maintained.</p>	<p>Supporting Adults Board leads on drugs issues</p> <p>Children and Young People's Board</p>
<p>Reducing the threat of terrorism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that key agencies are prepared to deal with the consequences of terrorist threats • Provide training and equipment • Better inform the public 	<p>The new arrangements being introduced by the Civil Contingencies Bill have long been advocated by the LGA. We have lobbied successfully for extra funding.</p> <p>The Emergency Planning Project is working on developing support for local authorities in carrying out their new responsibilities</p>	

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