

Other Business of the Board

Decisions

1. That the report be noted

Actions Required

2. Officers to take action as appropriate

Action by: LGA Secretariat

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20 June 2005

Other Business of the Board

Summary

1. This paper provides a summary of other business relevant to the work of the Board.

Queens Speech

2. The Queen's speech (17 May 2005) set out a legislative programme of 45 bills and five draft bills, many of which have important implications for local government. There are a number of Bills in the Queens Speech that may have implications for the work of the Board – these are attached as Appendix 1 with brief comments. The LGA has produced a full briefing on the Queen's speech, which is available at: <http://www.lga.gov.uk>
3. Of key interest to Safer Communities Board members will be the Violent Crime bill which was published on 8 June. This bill focuses on alcohol-related violence and crime involving guns and knives. Officers had already been working with Home Office officials to develop proposals around alcohol-related crime, which will be of substantial interest to local authorities. This follows our response to the Government's consultation on "Drinking Responsibly" in February 2005. An LGA briefing on the Bill can be found on the LGA website.
4. Members may wish to note that the Management of Offenders Bill, has been brought forward from the last Parliamentary session. This Bill underpins the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) which bring together probation and the prison service into a single body. The LGA have met Home Office Officials to discuss this Bill, in particular, the important contribution which local government can make in reducing (re)offending.

Safer Communities CLP Sub Group

5. As members may be aware, at the 18 January meeting of the CLP it was agreed to set up a Safer Communities Sub-group. This was welcomed by the LGA. Discussions are continuing with the Home Office and ODPM on terms of reference. It is hoped that the first meeting will take place before the summer recess.

Police Reform

6. Our work on police reform is progressing, independently and in partnership with the APA. In recent weeks, we have continued to focus our attention on the issues of scrutiny and membership of police authorities, which were raised by members as key areas of concern. We have also engaged with the neighbourhood policing agenda following the Home Office publication "Neighbourhood Policing – your Police; your community; our commitment" in March. The Government has committed to rolling out neighbourhood policing by 2008. This will mean that

there are designated neighbourhood policing teams in every area. By the end of 2005, 43 pathfinder areas will have been established.

7. Lead members of the Safer Communities Board will meet for a second time with lead members of the APA's Neighbourhood Policing Policy group (formally the Community Leadership Policy Group) on 15 June to discuss these issues and to facilitate continued joint working.
8. The latest news from the Home Office on the review of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 - which the LGA has been closely involved in - is that a white paper will be published in July 2005. However, we are awaiting confirmation and further details of this development.

Domestic Violence

9. Members may wish to note recent developments within the Domestic violence project. In particular, the LGA's programme of engagement with ten domestic violence partnerships ended in April. The Tavistock Institute is evaluating this programme of work and will publish their results at the joint LGA/Home Office domestic violence conference on 15 June. It has been agreed that a second, year-long programme of consultancy will start in September aiming to make shorter, more focused interventions available to a greater number of partnerships with selection dovetailed with other national domestic violence initiatives.
10. In March 2005, the Home Office published its National Domestic Violence Plan which includes key objectives and national performance indicators. A key initiative will be the development of 25 specialist courts with integrated support services provided through Independent Domestic Violence Advisors.
11. In April 2005, the LGA published guidance on the new domestic violence Best Value Performance Indicator. The guidance spells out the details of the new indicator, sets out the LGA's position and concerns and lists extensive case studies. The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 established domestic homicide reviews. The aim of these reviews is for all agencies involved to identify the lessons that can be learned from the death. Local authorities are among the agencies listed to take part. The LGA is feeding into the Home Office process for determining how these reviews should be conducted.
12. Finally, given the current restructuring of children's services and the links between domestic violence and child abuse; developing policy work in this area is a priority. The LGA is working with ADSS, CAF/CASS and Women's Aid to see if we can develop a framework for service provision for children and young people affected by domestic violence, based around the key outcomes for children in "Every Child Matters". The priority is to strengthen protection while ensuring that children do not become unnecessarily involved in child protection procedures.

Developing a Coherent Approach to Regulatory Services

13. Initial meetings have been held with Cabinet Office officials to discuss the scope of the Hampton Implementation Plan as well as LGA/LACORS involvement in the various project groups. A new strand of work on "Reducing Unnecessary Bureaucracy in Local Government Consent Regimes" is proposed. Officers are

now finalising the detail of the project to take forward the work, and incorporating the ongoing work to tackle the recruitment and retention crisis in Environmental Health and Trading Standards and to raise the profile of regulatory services.

Board Away Day and Policy Review Group Meetings

14. At the last meeting of the Board, members agreed to hold an away day in July 2005. (to focus on broad horizon issues of interest to the Board, which in turn will help to shape the Board's future objectives and work programme for the forthcoming corporate year. As members will have been informed by letter, an away day has now been organised for 15th July, at the City Inn, which is closely located to Local Government House. Officers will develop a programme for the event which will be circulated to members in due course.
15. At the 21 March Board meeting, members agreed to hold a Policy Review Group (PRG) to engage with the wider LGA Membership on the issue of reducing road and driving offences. The PRG would be an opportunity to look broadly at why "road crime" has such a low priority status and what contribution local government and the LGA can make towards challenging this. The emphasis of the event would be on presenting the issue in a way that showed its importance. Officers are exploring holding a meeting of the Board in Gateshead, which could be used as a PRG or to look at a part of the country that has been undertaking an innovative project between the Council and prisons within the region, connecting prisons and prisoners back to the community. Officers are also looking at the possibility of holding a second Policy Review Group in the South West (possibly Plymouth). Officers will report back to the board on the progress of these arrangements.

Safer Communities Board Conference

16. The Boards 2 day conference will take place in Birmingham on 13 and 14 September. Originally, we had anticipated that the conference would cover the theme of children and crime. However, to reflect the development of our community safety post-election pledge (set out in Item 1 of this agenda) and due to another event on this theme being held around the same time, Board office holders have agreed that the theme of the conference should be based around outcome of members discussion on the potential future work in the area of community safety.

Safer Communities Board – Task Groups and Project Work

17. Attached as appendix 2 is an update on Board related task group/project work.

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