

12 September 2005

Safer Communities Board priorities and objectives for 2005/06

Decisions

1. **Members are requested to agree and recommend where appropriate to the LGA Executive:**
 - proposed Board ambitions (paragraph 9);
 - key interventions required to make them a reality (paragraph 10);
 - procedures for testing success (paragraph 11); and
 - the future schedule of Board meetings (paragraph 19).

Actions Required

2. **Officers to prepare a detailed work programme on the basis of decisions made**

Action by: Safer Communities Board support team

Contact Officer: Jeni Bremner 020 7664 3259 jeni.bremner@ga.gov.uk

Safer Communities Board priorities and objectives for 2005/06

Summary

1. This report sets out:

- **proposals for ambitions for the Safer Communities Board;**
- **key priority areas for action targeted at making these a reality; and**
- **procedures for testing success in achieving these.**

Members are asked to discuss the proposed priorities and make recommendations. These will be referred to the LGA Executive and developed by officers into a detailed work programme.

Background

2. At the second meeting of the Board on 22 November 2004 members agreed the following key objectives for 2005:

- **Campaigning for local authorities to provide and commission services to resettle offenders and prevent re-offending;**
- **Working to reduce youth offending (in collaboration with the Children and Young People Board);**
- **Police Reform; and**
- **Developing a coherent approach to, and raising the profile of, regulatory services;**

The Board also agreed continuation of projects concerned with fire modernisation, domestic violence, prostitution and emergency planning.

3. At their meeting on 20 June 2005 Members revisited the agreed objectives and priorities in the light of the high political priority the new government was known to place on community safety issues. It was agreed that work should proceed on developing a lobbying strategy designed to deliver the message that local government should be recognised and supported as the leading player in reducing crime and anti social behaviour.

4. As requested by Members, further work was undertaken during the summer to develop these ideas and create a coherent set of objectives and work programme that reflected the existing Board priorities and any new issues identified by Members. This has been done through the organisation of an awayday for Board Members on 15 July, the outcome of which was further discussed by the Safer Communities Board support team in August. This work forms the basis of recommendations that are being put before Members in this report.

5. These recommendations will constitute the Safer Communities Board's contribution to the development of the LGA's four year post-election strategy and the corporate priorities and objectives. Elements in this process will be:

- the launch of a 'refreshed manifesto' in September. This will set out the Association's ambitions for communities, the difference councils will make to people's lives, key actions councils needed to take to achieve these;
- To take forward members' ambition to 'do less, but better' each Board to decide at their September meeting, on a small number of priorities for 2006;
- regional consultation meetings; and
- agreement of objectives by General Assembly on 12 December.

Proposals for the Board's objectives

Priority ambitions

6. The overarching framework of ambitions for the LGA to achieve by 2009 has been identified as:
 - every child should be able to achieve its potential;
 - security and independence for all in older age;
 - clean, green neighbourhoods and public spaces;
 - safe, strong and inclusive communities;
 - better public health;
 - a thriving and sustainable local economy; and
 - transport and public infrastructure that serves the needs of all.
7. All of these are of relevance to the work of the Safer Communities Board. For example, ensuring that vulnerable children are prevented from being drawn into, and are protected from the consequence of, crime and anti-social behaviour will contribute directly towards the achievement by each child of their full potential. Security for older people will contribute to reducing the fear of crime, which will in turn create greater independence. Regulatory services make a major contribution to public health and to a thriving and sustainable economy.
8. These ambitions are set out within an understanding that every locality is different, and should have the capacity and the freedom to determine their own priorities. This will require a radical devolution of power to local councils, and through them to local people and communities. This too will be an important strand in the work of the Safer Communities Board.
9. Against this background, drawing on existing Board priorities, and the issues raised by members at the Board awayday, the following three ambitions are proposed for the Board
 - Making every neighbourhood a safe neighbourhood;
 - Reducing the rate of re-offending; and
 - Modernising regulatory services.

In addition a key theme identified by members was the close link between community cohesion and community safety.

The LGA has also created a Fire Services Management Committee reporting to this Board, to promote change and improvement in the fire and rescue service

Key interventions

10. The following key interventions - that is action targeted at ensuring that these ambitions are achieved - are proposed for each of these ambitions.

Every Neighbourhood a safe neighbourhood

- Develop with the LGA Executive a model of working with neighbourhoods that will reduce crime and the fear of crime. This will include work on neighbourhood policing and the development of the trigger mechanism.
- Work with other LGA Boards to develop joint agenda to ensure that community safety issues are addressed in their priority activities. For example
 - with the Children and Young People Board on the youth crime project;
 - with the Environment Board to increase the understanding of links between community safety and environmental issues; and
 - with the Community Well-being Board on community cohesion issues.
- Ensure that the National Community Safety Plan clearly sets out, in a non-prescriptive way, the leading role local government will play in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.

Reducing re-offending

- Work with IDeA and other partners to refine and promote key recommendations in 'Going Straight' at local level;
- Develop with the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) a model for local authorities' and NOMS engagement and conduct a pilot in one region; and
- Promote the message in 'Going Straight' to local government and partners.

Modernising regulatory services

- Develop new model for the delivery of regulatory services with key partners;
- Use the recently established Local Authority Better Regulation Group (LABReG) to lobby for local government to retain and strengthen its responsibility for delivering regulatory services; and
- Build a strong evidence case of local government success in regulation.

Measures for success

11. It is essential that the Board has the means of assessing whether these interventions have achieved the required outcome. The following are proposed;
- Clear leadership role established and recognised by government for local government in reducing offending and re-offending
 - Widespread support for LGA model of local/neighbourhood engagement
 - Model for work between NOMS and local government established and implemented
 - Regulatory services remain local with increased flexibility
 - LGA has successfully managed to integrate safer communities issues across boards
 - National Community Safety Plan reflects the LGAs aspirations for local government community safety work.

Continuing work

12. The key message from the LGA Executive is that all Boards must concentrate on 'doing less, but better'. At their awayday in July Members considered the totality of current Board activities and whether and how these should continue within the context of more clearly focused ambitions. Some, such as the projects and work on licensing, fire modernisation, domestic violence and prostitution represent continuing high profile work that members will want to continue. In other areas, identified as 'live', issues work will continue but the input from the Board will be relatively light. Means will be found of ensuring that members are kept abreast of development without overburdening the Board's future agendas. In other areas it may be preferable, given their largely technical nature, for the LGA should work towards transferring the lead to partner bodies.

Involvement of central bodies

13. The Safer Communities Board and previously the Public Protection Executive has traditionally worked very closely with Local Authority Coordinator of Regulatory Services (LACORS). This relationship has strengthened in recent years, and is likely to develop further following the recent review of LACORS and current discussions with the LGA about other aspects of regulatory work that could be given support. LACORS will form an integral part of the 'modernising regulatory services' project, the detailed plan for which is currently being finalised.
14. The Board and its support team have developed a close working relationship with the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) in the past year. It is becoming evident in a number of areas that elements of the work we have identified relate directly to performance improvement and support and might therefore more appropriately be developed by the IDeA. One example is the work on reducing re-offending where there is now a need to provide support for authorities in implementing policies set out in the LGA report 'Going Straight'. There will be discussions with the IDeA on how this might best be achieved.

Stakeholder engagement strategy

15. Success in working with outside organisations will be key to success in the identified priority areas. These will include government departments, partners, potential allies, and those that the LGA will need to influence. A wide range of bodies can be identified where effective and regular liaison will be essential. The Board's team will work closely with the Public Affairs team in the development and implementation of a generic stakeholder engagement strategy. The following list is intended to be indicative only, but gives a flavour of the range of bodies the Board will need to successfully influence and work closely with:
- Home Office;
 - Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM);
 - Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS);
 - Cabinet Office;
 - Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA);
 - Environment Agency;
 - Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA);
 - Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO);
 - Association of Police Authorities (APA);
 - Audit Commission;
 - Health and Safety Executive;

- Chartered Institute of Environmental Health;
 - Chief Fire Officers Association;
 - Food Standards Agency;
 - CBI;
 - Howard League for Penal Reform;
 - National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders;
 - National Community Safety Network Office of Fair Trading;
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- Police Superintendents Association;
 - Prison Reform Trust; and
 - Other LGA Boards.

16. The full range of partner and stakeholder groups will be identified in the detailed project and activity plans. It is hoped that following the feedback from members at the Board awayday Members will play a key role in developing these relationships, and proposals on how this could best be achieved are invited.

The role of the Board and its members

17. At the awayday Members identified their role both at and between Board meetings. Within these categories members itemised what they saw as core aspects of their role.

Outside meetings

- Networking with neighbouring authorities.
- Gathering best practice.
- Visiting other authorities – gathering views and data, influencing and informing.
- Using regional and local networks.
- Influencing government. – meeting ministers.
- Telephone/email.
- Speaking at conferences, regional LGAs, regional assemblies.
- Working with stakeholders.

Board meetings

- Feeding back intelligence – good practice exchange.
- Identifying key stakeholders and messages – focusing effort, relationship management strategy.
- Monitoring projects and commissioning.
- Strategic thinking and development of policy – not taking papers for information or noting.
- Papers with lots of notice (despatch 2 weeks prior to the meeting).
- 6 – 8 meetings per year – plan the agenda and stakeholder speakers.
- Developing a Forward Plan for the Board and contributing to the LGA's strategic thinking.

18. Members requested that a forward programme of Board meetings should be agreed with one major policy matter for discussion at each meeting with outside speakers and that the number of additional agenda items coming before members should be limited.

19. In the light of these recommendations the following forward programme of meetings is proposed:

September 2005	Modernising regulatory services
November 2005	Community Safety and Community Cohesion
January 2006	Safer Neighbourhoods
March 2006	Reducing re-offending
May 2006	Report on progress and review achievements
July 2006	Setting priorities for next year

20. Members are requested to endorse this proposal

Implications for Wales

21. The implications for Wales will be fully addressed in the development of this programme

Financial/Resource Implications

22. There are no exceptional financial requirements raised by these proposals.

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