

Notes of Decisions Taken and Action

Safer Communities Board

20 June 2005

Local Government House

Present

Chair:	Cllr Bryony Rudkin (Suffolk CC) (Lab).
Vice Chair:	Cllr Ann Stribley (Poole BC) (Con).
Deputy Chairs:	Cllr Caroline Seymour (Hambleton DC) (Lib Dem) and Cllr Graham Brown (Powys CC) (Ind).
Conservative:	Cllr Les Byrom (Sefton MBC), Cllr Roland Domleo (Congleton BC), Cllr Victor Lyon (Barnet LBC), Cllr David Smith (Lichfield DC) and Cllr Andy Sutton (Isle of Wight Council).
Labour:	Cllr Mark Burns-Williamson (Wakefield MBC), Cllr Milkinder Jaspal (Wolverhampton City Council) and Cllr Mehboob Khan (Kirklees MBC).
Liberal Democrat:	Cllr Christina Jebb (Staffordshire CC), Cllr Audrey Jones (Greater Manchester FCDA) and Cllr Patrick O'Connor (Lincolnshire CC).
Substitutes:	Cllr James Ashton (Northamptonshire CC) (Lab) and Cllr Anne Burns (Cumbria CC) (Lab).
Apologies:	Cllr Ann Lucas (Coventry City Council) (Lab) and Ms Val Shawcross (LFEPA) (Lab).

1. LGA Member Arrangements for Fire and Rescue Services

The Board received a report setting out proposals for the new LGA Member arrangements for Fire and Rescue Services.

Members congratulated officers on the fact that the process of reviewing the LGA Member arrangements for fire had now been concluded and that the proposals represented an opportunity for the fire community to take a leading role on its agenda. The Board was keen that, once the new arrangements were implemented, the LGA undertook some work on communicating to the wider membership the purpose of and relationship between the various Member bodies with an interest in fire.

Members also asked that the terms of reference for the new body recognise that the Chair of the new body to be a Member of the Board.

Decisions

That:

- (i) the new member body be named the Fire Services Management Committee;
- (ii) The new body be formed of 14 members, including 2 Regional Management Board (RMB) Chairs with political group membership thereof;
- (iii) Membership should satisfy the following criteria:
 - Representation must include Combined Fire Authorities (CFAs), County Councils, Metropolitan Fire and Civil Defence Authorities and LFEPA;
 - The Chair of the Employers' Organisation NJC (Employers Side) (appointed by the LGA as the majority group) will be a Member of the new body;
 - The Chair of the new body should also be the Chair of the Fire Services Forum; and
 - The Chair of the new body should also be a Member of the Safer Communities Board.
- (iv) The terms of reference for the Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC), and the necessary revisions to the Safer Communities Board terms of reference be agreed, subject to the terms of reference for the FSMC being amended to show that the Chair of that body should also be a Member of the Safer Communities Board;
- (v) The interim arrangements for the new Fire Services Management Committee be noted;
- (vi) The allowances to be paid to Office Holders and Members of the new Committee be noted;
- (vii) There every effort be made to ensure regular contact between the Chairs of the Safer Communities Board and the Fire Services Management Committee; and
- (viii) Once the new arrangements were place the LGA undertake some work on communicating to the wider membership the purpose of and relationship between the various LGA Member bodies with an interest in fire.

Actions

That:

- (i) The LGA's political group offices be invited to make appointments to the Fire Services Management Committee in accordance with the LGA's political balance for a body of 14 Members, with the RMB representatives forming part of the groups allocation and the criteria set out under decision (iii) above; and CG/ JRa
- (ii) Safer Communities Board Office Holders be informed of future meeting dates of the new Committee, once agreed; CG
- (iii) the terms of reference for the FSMC be amended to show that the Chair of that body should also be a Member of the Safer Communities Board; CG
- (iv) Once the new arrangements were place the LGA undertake some CG/ JRa

work on communicating to the wider membership the purpose of and relationship between the various LGA Member bodies with an interest in fire

2. Delivering on our Post-election Pledges: Cutting Crime and the Fear of Crime

The Board was presented with a discussion paper looking at how the LGA can best deliver on its post-election pledge: cutting crime and the fear of crime. During discussion the following issues were highlighted:

- **Funding – the ability of local government to deliver on this pledge would depend on the level of funding available through Local Area Agreements (LAAs), or other sources. Members emphasised this issue a number of times;**
- **Target setting – Members expressed concern that the current way in which targets were set (i.e. the focus on numbers of crimes committed) encouraged police officers to downgrade certain crimes. The Board agreed that this was an issue that could be dealt with appropriately through the joint meetings with the Association of Police Authorities. The Board also noted, in relation to targets, that it was important for police authorities and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) were working to the same targets;**
- **Neighbourhood Policing – the Board emphasised neighbourhood policing, which linked with the role of elected Members discussed below, as the method through which local government could make its most significant impact on the fear of crime;**
- **Low level crime – Members highlighted low level (i.e. small, petty, nuisance incidents) as a major factor behind increasing fear of crime and suggest that this sort of crime needed to be tackled before fear of crime could begin to fall;**
- **The leadership role of local Councillors – in relation to neighbourhood policing and low level crime, Members agreed that there was a central role to be played by the ward Member. Examples of good practice included being the neighbourhood conduit with the police, joint surgeries with the police, joint ward walks with the police and joint newsletters with the police. The Board noted that for Members to do this there would need to be some training provision as well as some work done on gathering and disseminating examples of good practice, and that the IDeA would be vital to achieving both these tasks; and**
- **Section 17 – the Board felt that work was required to improve the knowledge among Member of the importance of section 17 to the work of every local authority. Equally, if not more, importantly local government needed to work together to spread the concept of section 17 more widely throughout central government.**

A summary of discussion grouped issues around the following:

- Funding streams;
- Freedom/flexibilities (priorities and targets);
- Cross-cutting work (i.e. work between the LGA's Boards on cross-cutting issues);
- Leadership/champions (the role of local Members);
- Accountability pilots; and
- Section 17 at local and central government level.

Members noted that this issue could be subject to further discussion at the Board away day on 15 July 2005.

Decisions

That:

- (i) A community safety project, along the lines set in the report, be pursued;
- (ii) The discussion noted in the above minute be taken into consideration when drafting a detailed scoping paper for the project; and
- (iii) Officers give consideration to further discussion the proposed project at the Board's away day on 15 July 2005.

Actions

That:

- (i) Proposals be amended to reflect discussion at this meeting of the Board and be submitted for further discussion at the Board away day on 15 July 2005; and KF
- (ii) Following discussion at the Board away day, officers produce proposals for the consideration of the Board's consideration at its meeting in September 2005. KF

3. LACORS Review

The Board was addressed by Cllr Geoffrey Theobald OBE, Chair of LACORS Board of Directors. Cllr Theobald provided a summary of the recently completed quinquennial review of LACORS, with particular focus upon the review recommendations to which the Board was being asked to respond.

Decisions

That:

- (i) the findings of the LACORS Quinquennial Review be noted;
- (ii) the response to the review by the LACORS Board of Directors be noted; and
- (iii) the decision and agreed actions of the LGA Improvement Board that LGA and LACORS officers form a project group to develop an implementation plan for the recommendations be endorsed.

Action

LGA Safer Communities Board and LACORS officers develop an implementation plan for the key recommendations of the LACORS Quinquennial Review that were appropriate to the Board.

LACORS/
LGA

4. Implementation of the Licensing Act 2003

Members were provided with an update on the implementation of the Licensing Act 2003, including the current rate of application (10%) and the range of media of activity undertaken both in trade press and locally and nationally.

With regard to further work that could be done to raise awareness of the implications of the Act, the following suggestions were made:

- local radio was a vital conduit for the message, as was regional breakfast TV;
- popular national daily newspapers would be very useful in raising awareness;
- local authorities could target licence holders with a postcard campaign; and
- each local authority could be provided with the basis of a press release that press officers could tailor to their locality, perhaps with the input of the Chair of the Licensing Committee, and circulated through the local media.

Members noted that the current application rate of 10% presented a problem in terms of local authorities' ability to cope with the likely high level of applications in a short space of time as the first appointed date approached. This would be exacerbated by the fact that the first appointed date was due to fall during the traditional local government recess period, and therefore authorities should be encouraged to put in place plans to deal with both the high level of applications and the possibility of Licensing Committee Members being on leave.

In discussing a number of complex technical aspects of the Act, the Board was informed that LACORS was in regular contact with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport about such issues. On the LACORS website there was a facility for submitting such questions, and a database was being built up of answers to those questions.

Decisions

That:

- (i) the current situation and action plan be noted;

- (ii) local authorities should be encouraged to put in place plans to deal with both the high level of applications and the possibility of Licensing Committee Members being on leave; and
- (iii) the suggestions in relation to raising awareness of the Act be taken in consideration when further media activity was being planned.

Action

That:

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| (i) | Action be undertaken as set out in the action plan; | TO'F
/LACORS |
| (ii) | Consideration be given to the best way in which local authorities could be encouraged to put in place plans to deal with both the high level of applications and the possibility of Licensing Committee Members being on leave; and | TO'F
/LACORS |
| (iii) | the suggestions in relation to raising awareness of the Act be taken in consideration when further media activity was being planned. | TO'F
/LACORS |

5. Planning for an LGA Sustainable Communities Event in February 2006

In addition to the proposals set out in the report for the LGA Sustainable Communities Event in February 2006, the Board put forward the following thoughts for consideration:

- Regional Development Agencies needed to be involved in the event;
- When looking at the issue of building control the event should look at enforcement in the wider context; and
- Fire issues needed to be embedded in the programme for the event.

Decision

That the Boards proposals for the LGA Sustainable Communities event in 2006, both those set out in the report and those in the above minute, be noted and taken forward to the next stage of event planning.

Action

That the suggestions for the event programme be taken forward to the next stage of event planning. TR

6. Other Business of the Board

Decision

That the report be noted.

7. Notes of the Previous Meeting

Decision

That the notes from the previous meeting of the Board be agreed.