

Notes of Decisions Taken and Action

Safer Communities Board

16 January 2006

at Local Government House

Item 6

Present

- Chair:** Cllr Bryony Rudkin (Suffolk CC) (Labour).
- Deputy Chairs:** Cllr Caroline Seymour (Hambleton DC) (Liberal Democrat) and Cllr Graham Brown (Powys CC) (Independent).
- Conservative:** Cllr Roland Domleo (Congleton BC), Cllr Robert Light (Kirklees MBC), Cllr Clare Whelan (Lambeth LB), Cllr David Smith (Lichfield DC) and Cllr Les Byrom (Sefton MBC).
- Labour:** Cllr Ann Lucas (Coventry City Council), Cllr Mehboob Khan (Kirklees MBC) and Cllr Mark Burns-Williamson (Wakefield MDC).
- Liberal Democrat:** Cllr Paul Porgess (Stockport MBC) and Cllr Christina Jebb (Staffordshire CC).
- Substitutes:** Cllr David Dewdney (West Sussex CC) (Conservative), Cllr David Lancaster (Salford City Council) (Labour) and Cllr Peter Young (Tyne and Wear FRA) (Labour).
- Apologies:** Cllr Andy Sutton (Vice-Chair) (Isle of Wight UA) (Conservative), Cllr Audrey Lewis (Westminster City Council) (Conservative), Cllr Milkinder Jaspal (Wolverhampton City Council) (Labour) and Cllr Audrey Lewis (Greater Manchester FRA) (Liberal Democrat).

Action

1. Feedback from Board Members

The Board discussed the following issues:

- Ahead of the Game (Prostitution) Task Group – the Board noted that this Task Group was continuing its work and that the Home Office appeared to be taking a zero tolerance position on prostitution, which was much closer to the LGA position than it had been previously. Concluding discussion on the Ahead of the Game Task Group, Members requested that a written report be published on the work of this group, including, in particular, information about best practice;
- Fire and Rescue Services – the Board received feedback on FBU action on proposed changes to fire fighters' pensions, the financial settlement for fire and rescue authorities, ministerial support for co-responding, the ODPM Select Committee on fire modernisation, arrangements for an NJC meeting with the FBU and ongoing work on business continuity management in the event of industrial action. Members requested that notes from meetings of the Fire Services Management Committee be submitted to Board meetings;

- Health and Safety – the constitution of the officer body was being updated to become more representative. The new body would have a formal relationship with the Health and Safety Commission and Executive. The Member body was also being reconstituted and nominations would be invited later in the year. This new body would hold meetings with the Commission twice a year;
- Policing – Members received a report from a policing conference. It was reported that there were two ongoing pilots looking at business crime. Crime statistics showed that violent crime and criminal damage continued to rise;
- Licensing – it was reported that there had been a number of instances of police authorities withdrawing objections to applications. In relation to the licensing of sex shops, Members were advised to ensure their authority had a policy in place since, in the absence of a specific policy on sex shops, applications would have to be considered within a framework that is not tailored to the specific implications of sex shops; and
- Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign – this campaign had had a positive impact. Discussion was ongoing in relation to the use of young people in covert operations.

Decisions

That:

- (i) a written report be published on the work of the Ahead of the Game Task Group, including, in particular, information about best practice;
- (ii) contact be made with Anti-slavery UK to discuss prevention of sex trafficking and other areas of joint interest; and
- (iii) notes from meetings of the Fire Services Management Committee be submitted to Board meetings.

Actions

That:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a written report be published on the work of the Ahead of the Game Task Group, including, in particular, information about best practice; (ii) contact be made with Anti-slavery UK to discuss prevention of sex trafficking and other areas of joint interest; and (iii) notes from meetings of the Fire Services Management Committee be submitted to Board meetings. | <p>TO’F</p>
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2. Neighbourhood Policing

The Board was addressed by Jerry Kirkby, Programme Director of ACRO Neighbourhood Policing teams. The Neighbourhood Policing strategy was focused on dedicating resources into neighbourhoods. It was a strategy that, while partially about implementing a visible force into neighbourhoods, was equally about the intelligent identification and targeting of local concerns in partnership with other local agencies. Furthermore, neighbourhood policing was intended to, in addition to reducing crime, raise public confidence in policing and to reduce the fear of crime. At present, each police authority had a nominated BCU piloting

neighbourhood policing.

The Board raised the following points in relation to neighbourhood policing:

- difficulties in making the vision of neighbourhood policing a reality, particularly in rural areas where the local presence can often be called to react to events in surrounding urban areas;
- appropriate scrutiny of neighbourhood policing units needed to be implemented;
- post-2008 funding for community support officers (CSOs) needs clarity;
- that the move to neighbourhood policing, particularly in terms of needing to work more closely with partner organisations and the emphasis on the qualitative as well as quantitative impact of policing, would require a cultural change in many police forces;
- the concept of each “neighbourhood” should be determined locally rather than enforced by the police; and
- consultation on local priorities needed to be balanced and to account for the full range of opinion within each neighbourhood.

Jerry Kirkby noted the concerns expressed. With regard to the issue of policing in rural communities, the need to address public confidence was reinforced, which meant that Chief Constables would need to ensure that policing addressed that issue in all areas, including rural communities. Furthermore, police restructuring would ensure that, in future, police authorities would be able to react to major events without having an impact on neighbourhood policing levels.

In relation to funding, it was noted that post-2008 funding for CSOs only would be mainstreamed to the level of 75%, leaving a funding gap of 25% (approximately £300 million) to be resourced at the local level.

On the question of ensuring that neighbourhood policing was accountable, he expressed the view that it welcomed some type of trigger mechanism for scrutiny action provided that appropriate checks were in place.

He also concurred that definitions of neighbourhood should be flexible.

Decisions

That:

- (i) the principles on which work relating to the introduction of neighbourhood policing be based be approved as set out in the report; and
- (ii) the recommendations on developing the next stage of the LGA’s work on neighbourhood policing be approved as set out in the report.

Action

That action be undertaken as necessary to continue the representation of local government interests during the development of neighbourhood policing.

**SC
Team**

3. Police Restructuring

The Board noted that following a meeting with Hazel Blears MP, Minister of State for Crime, Security and Communities, the APA and ACPO on 12 January, the LGA position on police restructuring, as set out in the report before Members, would need to be updated, in particular to reflect the fact that the Home Office had now made a commitment to achieving accountability through the existing governance infrastructure. Central to accountability therefore, would be Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. However, it was noted at the meeting with Hazel Blears that many CDRPs would need to improve performance and would need to develop as a vehicle for delivering national targets and standards, as well as ascertaining and implementing local priorities. Through restructuring it was likely that CDRPs would undergo a process of re-branding.

The Board was invited to give guidance on the content of the LGA's updated position statement, noting that the fundamental issues to address were finance and accountability. Fundamentally, the LGA was keen to see new structures emerge that gave primacy to elected Members through the local authority.

In discussing the LGA's position on restructuring, the Board highlighted the following points and issues for further exploration:

- Joined-up working in two tier areas needed addressing;
- The most appropriate level of precepting needed to be clarified, whether it should remain with the police authority under a new structure or at the BCU level, where local people would be in a stronger position to set taxation levels in accordance with local priorities. During discussion of this issue Members noted that the Board had previously agreed a principle of no taxation without representation and that it needed to be mindful of the increasingly stretched link between neighbourhoods and police authorities under new structures;
- The new position statement should focus on the central role CDRPs and how that body established robust links with all appropriate partners; and
- The new LGA position needed to clarify which issues were operational and which were not, and how, under the new structure, some consistency could be established on how this was defined.

The Board agreed that the new LGA position statement be circulated to Members at the earliest convenient opportunity and that Police Authorities in Corporate Membership should meet to discuss the new LGA position on police restructuring.

Decisions

That:

- (i) The feedback from the meeting with Hazel Blears on 12 January be noted;
- (ii) The LGA position on police restructuring be updated to reflect the discussion at the meeting with Hazel Blears and discussion at this meeting of the Board;
- (iii) The updated LGA position statement be circulated to Board Members at the earliest opportunity; and
- (iv) A meeting of Police Authorities in Corporate Membership be arranged to

discuss the updated position on police restructuring.

Actions

That:

- (i) The LGA position on police restructuring be updated to reflect the discussion at the meeting with Hazel Blears and discussion at this meeting of the Board; **EV/KF**
EV/KF
- (ii) The updated LGA position be circulated to Board Members at the earliest opportunity; and **DW**
- (iii) A meeting of Police Authorities in Corporate Membership be arranged to discuss the updated position on police restructuring.

4. Notes of Previous Meeting

Decision

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