

15 May 2006

Priorities and Objectives 2005/2006 – Progress report

Decisions

1. To note the progress on all the Board's priorities ;and agree that this programme of work should continue until any revised priorities are agreed by the Board in the autumn.

Actions Required

2. Continuing work on the activities by the Safer Communities Team and intervention teams.

Action by: Safer Communities Board Secretariat

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Priorities and Objectives 2005/2006 – Progress report

Summary

1. This report updates members on progress made in meeting the Boards' priorities agreed by members at their meeting on 12 September 2005.

Background

2. At the meeting of the Safer Communities Board held on 12 September 2005 members agreed priorities and objectives for the year 2005/2006. These were based on the following three ambitions for the Board

- Making every neighbourhood a safe neighbourhood;
- Reducing the rate of re-offending; and
- Modernising regulatory services.

3. Within the framework of these ambitions, the Board agreed that priority would be given to the following intervention activities:

Making every neighbourhood a safe neighbourhood;

- Police Reform: 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.
- Ensure that the National Community Safety Plan clearly sets out, in a nonprescriptive 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.

It has subsequently been agreed that this project will be led by LACORS.

Additionally the Board agreed to the continuation of the projects on **licensing reform**, **domestic violence** (a Home Office funded project) and **prostitution**.

4. Adjustment to the priorities

Shortly after the Board meeting the Government announced plans for a major restructuring of the police service, following which the Board agreed at its meeting on 14 November to restructure the police reform intervention to take account of this. In addition the government announced its proposals for reviewing the role and structure of crime and disorder reduction partnerships in January 2006 in conjunction with the publication of the Police and Justice Bill. These two strands of work have also been incorporated in the police reform intervention

5. Progress

The following is a summary of progress made in meeting the Board's agreed objectives:

Intervention activity	Progress
Police reform	
Develop model on BCU accountability and submit to Home Office	Achieved. Following discussions with Home Office and partner organisations it was agreed that the CDRPs and overview and scrutiny committees would be the primary vehicles for strengthening strengthen accountability. Agreed by SCB on 16 January
Produce a rough guide to the Police and Justice Bill and implementing lobbying strategy	The second reading of the Bill was on 6 March. It is expected that the timetable for the committee stage will be published shortly
Plan and hold a one day conference	The conference will be held on 12 July
CDA review: Lobby on our vision for the enhanced role of CDRPs and overview and scrutiny committees Influence the development of national standards for CDRPs	Being progressed through LGA participation in CDA Review bodies (reported separately on this agenda)
Neighbourhood policing: Ensure that Home Office commitment to pilot neighbourhood policing reflects LGA objective of recognising local authorities as taking the lead in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.	LGA has participated in the drafting of guidance on the development of neighbourhood policing for elected members and officers
Establish an advisory group from the neighbourhood policing pilot authorities	Due to be achieved by May 2006
Reducing reoffending	

Intervention activity	Progress
Establish a powerful inter-agency coalition in support of LGA sponsored approach	Coalition has been established and three meetings held. Participating organisations include: Howard League for Penal Reform, Prison Reform Trust, Clink, Probation Board Association
Produce a short publication putting across coalition message and outlining how the relationship between local authorities/NOMS/LAAs would work in practice	Work in progress. Publication expected in May 2006
Seminar with Charles Clarke and Home Office Ministers agrees approach on joint LGA/NOMS work programme	The seminar was held on 1 March. The SCB Programme Director has subsequently met Helen Edwards, Head of the National Offender Management Service and a draft joint workplan has been drawn up. This will form the basis of a revised plan for this intervention.
Approach to be tested with authorities and partners in the East Midlands and other areas	The East Midlands demonstration project has begun and is being monitored by the LGA. Discussions are proceeding with other areas, including the North West and North East to gather information on current experience and potential examples of good practice.
Development of joint LGA/NOMS/Government civic Alliance Action plan that puts local authorities at the heart of reducing re-offending work using LSPs and CDRPs as the mechanism	This will be progressed as part of the joint programme of work agreed with NOMS. The LGA is playing a leading role in the Civic Society Board, the first meeting of which will be held on 8 May.
Modernising Regulation (jointly with LACORS and LG Employers)	
Local government retains responsibility for regulatory services	The LGA/LACORS have successfully lobbied for the retention by local government of responsibility for trading standards. This objective is now being pursued through participation in the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) which has superseded the Local Authority Better Regulation Group
Government promotes a single set of regulatory priorities that recognises the need for local initiatives	Achieved in principle. This objective is now being pursued through participation in the Local Better Regulation Officer (LBRO) which has superseded the Local Better Regulation Group.
LGA/LACORS represented on all relevant working groups with the objective of promoting the LGA/LACORS' key messages in relation to regulatory services.	Achieved. The LGA/LACORS is represented on the LBRO and its sub groups

Intervention activity	Progress
Raising the profile of regulatory services	Partly achieved through closer working with media team. See separate report on agenda re reputational work.
Building workforce capacity and skills	Partly achieved through take up of capacity building funding but this has now ceased. Alternative proposals are being developed.
Licensing (jointly with LACORS)	
Secretary of State to agree to an early review of the new licensing regime	Achieved. An early review of the statutory function has commenced. Further review, including legislation, will be carried out later this year. Evidence submitted to ODPM Select Committee and Better Regulation Commission's investigation.
Influence the review of fees to achieve the LGA/LACORS' objective that fee income should cover local authorities' licensing costs	The LGA/LACORS are working with the Elton review to ensure that evidence of the costs to councils is robust. High level lobbying has resulted in Ministerial statements that costs will be recovered. We are supportive of the review's interim recommendations. An alternative fees model is in development.
Councils receive adequate support through the transitional period	Achieved. LACORS has provided this support.
Domestic Violence (funded by the Home Office)	
Identify and promote good practice of councils and partner organisations in addressing domestic violence	Published research examining the programme of support to ten local partnerships along with a checklist for self assessment
	A second programme of consultancy has now commenced.
	Held a one day conference in February 2006 on the domestic homicide review
	Developed commissioning guidance designed to help meet the needs of children who have experienced domestic violence
	LGA is now represented on the Corporate Alliance Against Domestic Violence
Ahead of the Game (Prostitution)	
Promote the role of local authorities in tackling prostitution	Achieved. A five point plan aimed at tackling prostitution was published in January 2006 to good media coverage

Intervention activity	Progress
Influence Home Office review	Achieved. The Home Office strategy emphasises the role of councils in tackling prostitution
This project will shortly be completed	

Other work

6. Members also noted at their last meeting that other activities for which the Board is responsible would increasingly be undertaken with the assistance of advisers and professional bodies. This has been achieved in the areas of building control and emergency planning. High profile/high risk issues would remain the responsibility of the LGA Safer Communities team (and LACORS where applicable), a recent example of which has been working surrounding avian flu and a potential human flu pandemic. Responsibility for environmental protection (including pollution control) issues has now been transferred to LACORS.

Implications for Wales

7. The Welsh dimension of each activity is reflected in its work programme.

Financial/Resource Implications

8. There are no specific financial implications identified at this stage.

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