

**Board Priority Interventions 2006-7 - Decisions and Actions Required**

**Decisions**

**1. Decisions**

1. *Members are asked to discuss the suggestions in this report and to agree and recommend where appropriate to the incoming Board some proposed Board ambitions (paragraph 9).*

**Actions Required**

2. *Officers to action as directed by the Board.*

**Action by:** *LGA Secretariat*

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## **Board Priority Interventions and Objectives 2006-7**

### **Summary**

1. *At the Board meeting on 15 May members agreed that the current programme of work, set by the Board in September 2005, should continue until revised priorities were agreed in the autumn. The aim of this report is to allow the outgoing Board to discuss how the work programme might be developed and focussed to reflect the local delivery landscape and the messages of the LGA's 'People and Places' publication.*

### **Background**

2. *The priorities and objectives for the year 2005/2006 were based on the following three ambitions:*

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

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

3. *At their meeting on 15 May members noted that there had been many achievements during the year, and that work was still ongoing. The table at Appendix A sets out an overview of the main achievements to date; detailed activity reports for each of the objectives plus licensing reform, as requested at the last meeting, are attached as appendices B-E. Members also agreed that the incoming Board should hold an awayday, for all the Board members, to enable members to fully explore and debate the themes covered by 'Safer Communities' in relationship to the wider local government policy context, in particular People and Places and the forthcoming White Paper. This would enable the Board to establish well focused, 'future proofed' priorities for action in this area in the coming year. A successful format, used recently by the Community Wellbeing and Children and Young People's Boards, is a 24 hour event, held in Hitchin, Hertfordshire. It is suggested that this model be used and the proposed date is 18/19 September, as this date has already been booked for the Board's first meeting.*

### **Proposals for the Board's priorities 2006-7**

4. *On 22 May the LGA launched its vision of the future government of localities 'Closer to People and Places' setting out our ambitions for the people and places we represent. Our objectives, shared with the government, are to:*

- *secure more fundamental improvements in public services and make better use of public money;*
- *improve the quality of life and economic performance of cities, towns and villages;*
- *give people greater power and influence over their lives, their services and the future of the places where they live.*

5. At the heart of the new settlement we envision there would be a reinvigorated local government responsible for steering and joining the totality of public services in its area and getting 'up close and personal' with local people. We have already seen the success of Local Area Agreements (LAAs), we want to see the development of a next generation of LAAs that will see the joining together of public services and resources in an area to deliver improved outcomes, better access and efficiency savings. This would involve a contract between the LAA partners around a vision for the area to which the community has contributed, backed with a 'duty to co-operate' on Local Area Agreement partners.

6. People rightly expect high quality public services that are easy to access, provide choice and personalisation, and achieve the highest value for money for the taxpayer. Councils are already redesigning their services around the user, and this should be broadened to include those services delivered not by local government, but locally by the police, health service, Third or private sector. Achieving a step change in re-designing public services around the user means joining up all service providers, with local government in the driving seat.

7. 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. Local government's challenge is to ensure that people always feel they have mechanisms to exercise voice, choice, and influence, should they choose to use them. Responsiveness to local people means giving people the power to drive service improvement and value for money, and hold all local public service leaders to account for their performance.

8. Against the background of People and Places, and drawing on the state of play of existing Board priorities, members are asked to discuss the following ambitions, bearing in mind that the incoming Board is expected to limit itself to three deliverable priority interventions. Intervention teams will incorporate staff from across the LGA and central bodies as required in collaboration.

9. The interventions for discussion are:

- **Working together to build safer communities** (this would encompass ongoing work on anti-social behaviour, neighbourhood policing, police restructuring, Crime and Disorder Act review and preventing re-offending, as well as a new focus on the role of the Third Sector);
- **Community cohesion at the heart of safer communities** (in the context of community leadership, to look at how strong local networks, based on principles of trust and respect for local diversity, can nurture a sense of belonging and confidence in local people and tackle the fractures in communities which may lead to conflict and suspicion. This would present opportunities for cross-cutting work between Boards, for example the Children and Young People's Board and the Community Wellbeing Board.
- **Campaign to promote the installation of sprinklers in buildings accommodating vulnerable people** (to be seen in the context of local government working collectively and constructively on the issue and, by doing so, to demonstrate that joined-up local government can take forward a problem area on which leadership from central government has arguably been lacking, saving lives and safeguarding investment in schools and other important community facilities. Further details are at Appendix F);
- **Improving Regulatory Services** (ongoing threats to centralise regulatory services, such as pollution control and animal health and welfare, and the creeping of central control into the better regulation agenda, means high level political support for the contribution

*of regulatory services to community health, protection and economic vitality through local accountability will be needed into 2007).*

### **Stakeholder engagement strategy**

*10. 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, however the review of outside body appointments has shown that much of the Board's stakeholder work is still officer based and technically focussed. A new approach to create opportunities for Board members to engage stakeholders, particularly the Third Sector, will need to be identified.*

### **Implications for Wales**

*11. The implications for Wales will be fully addressed in the development of the work programme once the priorities are set in the autumn.*

### **Financial/Resource Implications**

*12. There are no exceptional financial requirements raised by these proposals in the LGA or central bodies*

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