

Safer Neighbourhoods Update Report

Background

2. *The Board has received and discussed reports on Police Restructuring and the Crime and Disorder Act (CDA) Review at the previous four meetings and made decisions concerning the strategic direction of the LGA work. At the last meeting in May members endorsed arrangements for LGA participation in the Home Office reference and project groups working on the detailed implementation of the CDA review. The Board discussed and refined the LGA's objectives for participation in the implementation phase.*

Police Restructuring

3. *Home Secretary John Reid announced on 19 June that he does not intend to lay before Parliament any Orders for enforced mergers of police forces before the summer recess. Whilst he has reiterated his long term commitment to the creation of strategic police forces, the Home Secretary has said that he wants to continue discussions with forces and police authorities over the summer on how best to improve protective services. Therefore the original timetable for mergers will be modified. The Home Secretary still plans to lay an Order providing for the voluntary mergers of Lancashire and Cumbria with effect from 1 April 2007.*

Crime and Disorder Act Review Implementation

4. *The review is currently in a stakeholder consultation phase. The Government Offices and the Welsh Assembly Government are hosting stakeholder events where invited stakeholders will be asked for their views on how best specific proposals within the Police and Justice Bill might be implemented. These events are scheduled to take place in June and July. The Home Office are also inviting comments and suggestions from stakeholders regarding the specific questions posed in the discussion papers to be submitted by 19th July 2006.*
5. *The Board received a presentation at the last meeting on the next steps with the CDA Review and endorsed arrangements for LGA participation in the Home Office reference and project groups working on the detailed implementation of the review. The Board discussed and refined the LGA's objectives for participation in the implementation phase. They were agreed as:*
 - *keep things simple, creating partnership arrangements that reduce rather than add to current complexities, and which minimise bureaucracy*
 - *reinforce local political leadership for community safety and policing as key public concerns on which 'hearts and minds' need to be won, as well as efficient services delivered*
 - *ensure that the local government scrutiny function develops a key role in making the activities of CDRP partners accountable to local communities*
 - *see that adequate resources are available to support these extended roles*
 - *achieve arrangements for the 'community call for action' that avoid the risk of abuse over very minor or unrepresentative issues*

- *establish the right balance between county, district, and neighbourhood functions in two tier areas*
 - *integrate and align the new measures with the central/local settlement emerging around LAAs, positioning community safety activity in the mainstream of joined-up public service activity*
 - *maximise the scope for locally generated solutions, and minimise central prescription on the detail of implementation, with an assumption of 'presumed competence' on the part of local agencies and partner.*
 - *integrate any inspection of CDRPs within wider arrangements for streamlined and locality based performance management, as proposed in the LGA paper Driving Improvement*
 - *communicate effectively on the outcome of the review, to build public trust and support for the changes.*
6. *The LGA is arguing for a couple of themes to underpin the implementation stage of the CDA review:*
- a) *exploiting to the full the changing relationships between councils, LSPs, and Government Offices and the new framework of LAAs. This context provides the levers for delivery and the performance management information required by central Government, without the need to introduce additional and separate processes. It gives scope for a reduction in paper-based target setting and monitoring, in line with Gershon and HMT's Devolved Decision-making Review.*
 - b) *looking forward to a post CSR07 scenario, in terms of a potentially more ambitious second generation of LAAs, with reinforced local leadership and scrutiny and extending across the totality of locally applied public expenditure, within streamlined national performance management of a reduced set of key national outcomes*
7. *For the LGA, these themes point to a framework of secondary legislation, regulation, and guidance for the CDA Review that is lighter in touch than has often been the case in the past. The LGA will continue to provide as much input and resource as it can to the implementation stage of the CDA Review, as part of a wider programme of joint work with the Home Office.*
8. *Full details of the implementation programme (including a list of Frequently Asked Questions) can be found on the crime reduction website at <http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/regions00.htm>*

Police and Justice Bill

9. *The Police and Justice Bill is now in committee stage in the House of Lords. During debate on 20 June peers agreed a Conservative amendment which would require both the Home Secretary and the police authority to approve any force mergers. The government will seek to reverse the amendment at report stage. The remaining days for committee stage will take place before summer recess. The LGA has been briefing on the bill at all stages and has provided briefings to MPs and peers. Royal Assent is expected in the autumn.*

Neighbourhood Policing

10. *From December 2005 to April 2006, the LGA was closely engaged with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), now Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), Home Office and Association of Police Authorities to develop three sets of*

guidance, aimed at police commanders, neighbourhood policing teams and community safety partners. The guidance offers some general suggestions as to how community safety partners might work together more effectively at the local level to implement Neighbourhood Policing.

11. In May 2006, the LGA sent copies of the final guide for Community Safety partner guide to each local authority in England and Wales. A special Welsh only guidance will be distributed in late June 2006. Further information on Neighbourhood Policing and the Partnership Guide can be found at www.neighbourhoodpolicing.co.uk
12. In addition to the work on the partnership guides, the LGA has been keen to ensure that early lessons from Neighbourhood Policing pilots are learnt, to inform the LGA position during the wider roll-out. In May 2006, the LGA established an advisory group of local authority representatives from the 43 Neighbourhood Policing Pathfinder pilots. The core objective of this advisory panel is to aid the LGA in representing the specific interests of local authorities involved in the delivery of Neighbourhood Policing at the appropriate national level.

LGA/APA Member Meeting

13. LGA and APA leading members met on 14 June and discussed the LGA People and Places publication, Police Restructuring and the Crime and Disorder Act Review Implementation. It was agreed that:
 - The LGA will hold a workshop with APA and other partners to discuss the relationship between People and Places and the police reform/ CDA review implementation agenda
 - There should be more joint badging of events and positions where possible

Police Authorities in Corporate Membership (PACM)

14. The PAICM meeting scheduled for 5 June was postponed in light of the uncertainties around the government's plans to merge police forces. It has been suggested that PACM next meet once a clearer picture emerges about how police force mergers will proceed.

Single Non-Emergency Number (SNEN)

15. The LGA remains closely involved in the national rollout of the 101 Single Non-emergency number, primarily through membership on the main programme board and steering groups. In May 2006, the LGA established an advisory group of local authority representatives from participants of the Wave 1 of the Single Non-Emergency Number pilots to aid our lobbying and policy work throughout the implementation of Wave 2 and to horizon scan SNEN beyond 2008. Overall the LGA and its advisor network are supportive of the programme and remain optimistic for its potential. The main points the LGA has raised throughout are, ensuring there is a fair balance of risk between all local community safety partners involved in SNEN service delivery, clarity from central government over long term funding and tacit realisation from the centre that the scope of the service must be dictated by the needs of the people and places it serves, not centrally prescribed.

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