

11 September 2006

Priorities for 2006-7

Decisions

1. *Members are asked to discuss the priorities proposed in this report and to agree and recommend where appropriate further action by officers. The priorities are:*

- *Working together to build safer communities;*
- *Campaign to promote the installation of fire suppression systems in schools, including the establishment of a member Task group;*
- *Transforming Regulatory Services (to led by LACORS).*

Actions Required

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

Action by: *LGA/LACORS as required*

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Priorities for 2006-7

Summary

1. *This report sets out proposals for ambitions for the Safer Communities Board for 2006-7; members are asked to agree the proposed priorities.*

Background

2. *On 22 May 2006 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.*

3. *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.*

4. *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.*

5. *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.*

6. *The Board's priorities and objectives for the year 2005-6 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. Much was achieved during the year, see **Appendix A (attached)**.*

7. Against the background of People and Places, and drawing on the state of play of existing Board priorities, members were asked at the Board meeting on 17 July to discuss how the 2005-6 work programme might be developed and re-focussed to reflect the emerging local delivery landscape and the messages of the LGA's 'People and Places' publication. Bearing in mind that the Board is expected to limit itself to three deliverable interventions; the Board's recommendations are set out in paragraph 8 below.

Proposals for the Board's priorities 2006-7

*8. The interventions which were agreed to be recommended to the incoming board, with proposed workplans set out in **Appendices B-D (attached)** are:*

- *Working together to build safer communities;*
- *Campaign to promote the installation of fire suppression systems in schools to be carried out under the supervision of a Task group, with work in successive phases on promoting the installation of fire suppression systems other buildings accommodating vulnerable people and the sustainability of buildings;*
- *Transforming Regulatory Services (to led by LACORS).*

Work will also continue on the Home Office funded Domestic Violence project until the end of the year when the funding ends. A final project report will be produced for the Board at that time.

9. Intervention teams will incorporate staff from across the LGA and central bodies as required in collaboration. Arrangements for dealing with other business that falls within the Board's remit will be the responsibility of a newly appointed business manager who will manage lobbying and policy development for those issues that are not being pursued as priority interventions. This would include 'hot topics' such as emergency planning, licensing (jointly with LACORS) and coroner reform. A more detailed explanation of the opportunities to develop external relationships within the boards remit is included elsewhere on this agenda.

Implications for Wales

10. 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

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

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