

Meetings with outside bodies

Summary

This paper is to inform the members of the Board of the activities that have been undertaken since the last meeting by Board members and officers.

Action

For Board members to note

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Meetings with outside bodies

Member activity

APA Local Accountability Strategy Group

Following the presentation from Cllr Burns-Williamson to the March Board, the Board agreed to work with the Association of Police Authorities (APA) on strengthening the links between police authorities and Councils. Cllr Tom Fox has been nominated to join the APA's Local Accountability Strategy and he attended the June meeting which discussed taking this forward.

Tackling Crime in a Recession

Cllr Graham Brown chaired the LGA conference on 23 April on tackling crime in a recession. Speakers included Alan Campbell MP, Under Secretary of State for crime reduction, Cllr Keith Ross on behalf of the LGA, as well as the Chief Economist and Head of Crime Strategy at the Home Office. A particular theme from the conference was the need to make the most of CDRP/CSP analytical capability to target efforts and resources where they would make the most difference.

Violence Against Women

Cllr Ann Lucas spoke at an LGiU conference on violence against women on 11 June to support the work that councils and their partners are doing. Half of local areas in England have prioritised tackling domestic violence through their Local Area Agreement. Cllr Lucas also highlighted the new Equalities Framework for local government, an initiative introduced in April, and promoted by the IDeA.

Criminal Justice Council

Cllr David Smith who represents the LGA on the Criminal Justice Council submitted a written response to an agenda item on Local Delivery welcoming the involvement of the criminal justice system in the appropriate local partnerships and proposing a joint meeting between the OCJR and members of the LGA's Safer Communities Board to gain a better understanding.

Tackling commercial cannabis cultivation and 'headshops'

In March, Cllr Allan Witherick represented the LGA at the Home Office event launching their guidance on the tackling of the commercial cultivation of cannabis and headshops (shops selling cannabis related paraphernalia) and the role of councils' planning, licensing, anti-social behaviour and trading standards powers can have in tackling headshops.

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Local Government Panel meeting with HSE Board Members

Cllr Allan Witherick attended the Local Government Panel meeting with HSE Board Members on 15 April. The meeting discussed the Statement of Commitment to the Partnership & Publicising Governance Arrangements, and subsequently launched at the LGA's Annual Conference. There was also a detailed discussion about raising awareness amongst Councillors and Chief Executives of their wider Health and Safety responsibilities and how to communicate positive messages about sensible health and safety. Cllr Witherick offered to work with LACORS to pilot an event in the East of England targeting Councillors including briefings on health and safety as well as other community safety issues.

LGA Annual Conference workshop on role of probation

At the LGA's Annual Conference Cllr Stacey chaired a workshop on the new role of probation as a responsible authority on CDRPs and CSPs. The delegates heard from Phil Wheatley, the Director General of NOMS, the Chief Executive of the Leicestershire and Rutland Probation Trust and the Assistant Director for Community Safety Services at Bolton council. A key concern was the level of engagement councils would have from the probation service and whether this could be sustained if there were also cuts in the probation service budget.

National Crime Reduction Board

The LGA is one of the few external bodies represented on the National Crime Reduction Board, which is chaired by the Home Secretary. At the last two meetings the LGA has been represented by Deputy Chair of the LGA, Cllr Richard Kemp. The meeting in March considered the latest crime statistics, the Home Office campaign to reduce burglary and violence against women. Crime statistics were also considered again at the May meeting along with the police confidence target, the review of the Drugs Intervention Programme and the revisions to update the Crime Strategy. Cllr Kemp has made the point that the National Crime Reduction Board could be made more of a partnership forum, and the LGA is looking to take a paper to a future meeting of the NCRB, though the topic for the paper has yet to be confirmed.

Officer activity

National CCTV Strategy Programme Board

The government is taking forward the recommendation in the National CCTV Strategy to establish a national body to oversee the use and deployment of CCTV, to include an advisory panel structure to raise public awareness of what CCTV does, and provide best practice guidance, training and a complaints and redress system. A further update should be provided at the next programme board in July. In addition a section on the Home Office

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website is now dedicated to the National CCTV Strategy and can be found at: <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/cctv/index.htm>

Home Office Public Confidence and Satisfaction Board

Discussions at the Board at its meeting in April continued to focus around how councils could be engaged to help deliver the police confidence target. LGA officers have continued to stress that councils are already engaged as over 80% of LAA areas have at least one of the four confidence measures in their targets, but that it is also a police target, not a Council target. There has also been continuing discussion about how confidence is measured. Currently it is being measured by the British Crime Survey and the Place Survey. However the police want more detailed and lower level information. The Home Office has consequently agreed they can conduct quarterly surveys at a CDRP level, and is currently discussing with the police how these surveys can be standardised.

CDRP Steering Group

The Home Office's CDRP Steering Group has been looking to develop a National Support Framework for CDRPs and CSPs setting out what the government will be doing to support them in improving performance. This was due to be launched at the Home Office's CDRP Conference in May but has been delayed. However the delay has been of benefit as the Home Office are now clearly moving to embracing sector-led improvement as the way forward for improving performance in the longer term. This should therefore be reflected in the Framework once it is finalised.

Violence Against Women Strategy

Officers have met with the Home Office around the government's response to the results of the violence against women consultation, which closed at the start of June. The Home Office are at very early stages in developing policies to tackle some of the issues arising from the consultation findings, but are keen to engage with the LGA. Initial indications suggest that the Home Office will be looking at the funding of small voluntary organisations which are an important provider of services to women who have been victims of violence. Responses from individual women victims seem also to have been critical of public sector services and the Home Office will also be looking at this area.

IPPC stakeholders group on revisions to statutory guidelines

The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) is responsible for producing the statutory guidance for the police on how to handle complaints. The IPCC will be consulting over the summer on the proposed guidance, but before then have sought views from stakeholders including the LGA, on the approach they are taking on the new guidance. This will seek to change the culture of dealing with complaints in the police from the way it is currently

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treated as being a disciplinary matter. The IPCC wish to see it mirroring complaints procedures in other public services and view the guidance as an opportunity to improve performance.

Centre for Public Scrutiny Annual Conference

The introduction of the provisions for crime and disorder scrutiny from the Police and Justice Act 2006 featured prominently in the CfPS annual conference at the start of June. The LGA was invited to contribute to a workshop alongside the APA on the police confidence target, and the role of scrutiny in helping to deliver improved performance in this area.

Integrating Neighbourhood Policing and Neighbourhood Services Conference

Following successful lobbying by the LGA and IDeA to lead a programme to encourage councils and police forces to integrate neighbourhood policing teams with other local public services, the LGA hosted a conference on the 11 June to highlight the exemplar programme developed by the IDeA and the National Police Improvement Agency. Chaired by Cllr Kemp, and attended by the new Policing Minister, David Hanson MP, the conference considered specific issues around bringing neighbourhood policing teams and councils together, including the use of community contracts and participatory budgeting.

Bail Accommodation and Support Service (BASS)

The LGA has been working with the Ministry of Justice on a protocol for Councils to use as a template to underpin their working relationship with Clearsprings and NOMS. The MoJ has accommodated the vast majority of the LGA recommendations and the protocol as it stands is a vast improvement from the initial position. The protocol clearly outlines expectations, responsibilities, contact points and dispute resolutions for both parties involved. We are currently discussing its adoption in Wales with WLGA.

Swine Flu

LGA Members and officers have been attending a number of meetings since the outbreak of swine flu in April 2009. This includes both Members and LGA officers attending the Cabinet level Civil Contingencies Committee, which currently meet several times a week. The LGA, working with IDeA and LACORS, are also in touch with over 300 councils, and we are providing support and information widely to our membership and to Councillors, so that everyone has up to date information, and we can raise emerging issues at national level. This includes ensuring that up to date swine flu briefings are available via our website.

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