

End of Year Report

Summary

This report provides an overview of the work of the Board over the last year including councillor and stakeholder engagement and provides an update on the progress to date of the LGA Business Plan priorities for safer communities for 2009-2010.

Recommendations

Board Members are invited to:

- a. note progress to date on the range of Business Plan priorities for safer communities
- b. consider areas where further progress remains to be made.

Action

LGA, IDeA and LACORS officers to action as necessary

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Background

1. At the start of the current Board cycle a key priority for the Board, and for the LGA, was the prospect that the Policing and Crime Bill would contain clauses amending the membership of police authorities by introducing directly-elected crime and policing representatives. The Board gave its backing to a vociferous campaign that was successful in opposing the proposals. The Board also agreed a range of other strategic priorities including for the 2008-2009 cycle of meetings, including: neighbourhood policing; community safety improvement support; reducing re-offending; preventing violent extremism; emergency planning and regulatory services. In addition, there has been a corporate priority to increase engagement with member councillors and key stakeholders.
2. Priorities agreed by the Fire Services Management Committee included work to promote equality and diversity and establishing long term funding and guidance for national functions.
3. The Safer Communities Board's priorities were considered as part of the LGA Group's business planning process at an event for Board lead members in December 2008. The Board held a further discussion on priorities for the LGA's business plan for the forthcoming year in January 2009. The LGA's business plan for 2009-10 came into effect in April 2009.

Our focus for 2009-10

4. The priorities in the group business plan are firmly based on evidence and research, identifying the issues most important to our member councils. This year's overarching priorities for the LGA group are the recession, the reputation of local government and the need for even greater value for money.
5. Crime and the fear of crime has remained a top priority for councils and local communities and it is one of the most visible areas of partnership working, and one on which the public judges the success of councils. Councils also emphasise the need to strengthen communities to withstand the insidious threat of extremism in whatever form it takes, and to build capacity in this area.
6. The LGA business plan for 2009-10 sets out a commitment to renew our focus on helping councils tackle crime, and continue work on policing and partnerships. With the IDeA, we will develop programmes to help councils meet community safety targets, to find new and innovative ways to tackle crime and disorder, and to build capacity locally to respond to the challenge of migration and violent extremism. We will continue work on examining how councils can build public confidence on tackling crime. In the run-up to the General Election we will work with all political groups to find the best outcome for local government from any future police accountability arrangements. A new civil

emergencies strategy will include local planning, response and recovery, and mechanisms to ensure that resources are available where they are most needed. We will continue to support equality and diversity in fire and rescue authorities.

7. The table in **Appendix 1** sets out a performance report for the first quarter to 30 June 2009 against the commitments in the LGA's Business Plan.

Councillor and Stakeholder engagement

8. There have been a number of initiatives over the last year to strengthen engagement and communication with member councillors, councils, partner organisations and other stakeholders and we have:
 - established new networks to ensure that our work on community safety and preventing violent extremism is informed by the real experience of councils;
 - held three successful two-day residential conferences on safer communities, emergency planning and fire;
 - organised well-attended Smith Square debates and one day events on police accountability, preventing violent extremism, faith, public confidence, the Coroners and Justice bill, information sharing with the police; tackling crime in a recession and neighbourhood policing;
 - established positive relationships with the Association of Police Authorities, the Police Federation, the Association of Police Officers, Catch 22, the Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science;
 - represented the LGA on a number of outside bodies including member representation on high level groups including the National Crime Reduction Board and the Criminal Justice Council;
 - robustly defended councils against unfair media coverage, exposing serious flaws in the Equalities and Human Rights Commission research on services for women victims of violence;
 - launched a five point equality and diversity charter to improve equality and diversity in the fire service;
 - played an important role in the Cabinet Office's civil contingencies plans to ensure adequate salt stocks around the country during severe weather.

Financial Implications

9. All work programmes are met from existing budget and resources.

Implications for Wales

10. A number of these issues impact on Wales and we will continue to work closely with the WLGA on those issues affecting both English and Welsh local authorities.

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