

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

Contact Officer: Helen Murray
Phone No: 020 7664 3266
Email: helen.murray@lga.gov.uk

23 4

Meetings with outside bodies

Member activity

Implementing crime and disorder scrutiny committees

In July Cllr Brown spoke at a House Magazine / Westminster Briefing conference on implementing the Councillor Call for Action and crime and disorder overview and scrutiny committees. Other speakers included the lead civil servant from the Home Office, a representative from the Centre for Public Scrutiny and a scrutiny officer from Birmingham City Council. Issues raised by delegates included relations with local police commanders and the police authority; how the scrutiny and Councillor Call for Action provisions tie in with other community engagement activity councils are undertaking; and, whether there would be a review by the Home Office of procedures to see how they were working.

Swine Flu

A rota of elected members continues to represent the LGA at the Cabinet level Civil Contingencies Committee. The number of new swine flu cases has fallen due to school holidays and the warm weather but we expect to soon start seeing rising numbers of cases as schools go back and the weather gets colder. Government's latest planning assumptions expect the second wave to hit middle/end October but there might be local variations. Priorities for local government, which our members have advised the Civil Contingencies Committee on, include assisting with the distribution of antivirals, distributing facemasks to frontline social care staff, assessing the readiness of the social care sector, preparing plans to vaccinate frontline social care staff, supporting schools and planning to manage excess deaths. Members have also offered the LGA's help with disseminating a Foreign and Commonwealth Office leaflet containing advice for Hajj pilgrims travelling to Saudi Arabia.

The LGA continues to provide advice and information to councillors, so that everyone has up to date information, and we can raise emerging issues at national level. 100 councillors and officers attended the LGA Group's swine flu briefing in Birmingham on 24 July. Delegates heard from a range of speakers from the Department of Health and local authorities. The event was a valued opportunity to share good practice and a learning note has been circulated. A guide on swine flu for elected members was also launched at the event and is available to download from the IDeA website.

23 4

Officer activity

Sustainable Communities Act - community safety bids

The Sustainable Communities Act was a private members' bill which attracted cross party support and became law in October 2007. It provides a process where by communities, organisations, and public bodies can, through their council, propose changes to national policy or legislation to help deliver sustainability at a local level. Sustainability is widely defined and covers anything that encourages the improvement of the economic, social or environmental well being of an area, with social well being including civic and political participation. Proposals under the act can include requests for additional powers, changes in policy, removing barriers (financial, legislative or bureaucratic) and transfers of function from one public body to another.

The LGA is now undertaking a unique role as the selector of the shortlist of proposals to go forward for consideration by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. The selector function will be carried out by a new panel of four councillors (one from each political group). To assist the panel LGA officers are making an initial assessment of the proposals and making recommendations to the panel. Around 300 proposals have been received from councils, a number of which relate to the work of the Safer Communities Board. These proposals cover a wide range of topics, including a number relating to regulatory services. They range from proposals to tackle noise nuisance, through allowing councils and the police to apply for non-molestation orders on behalf of domestic violence victims, the creation of Community Safety Designated Zones, to allowing council civil enforcement officers to carry out civil and criminal enforcement duties. The proposals will be consider by the selector panel over September and October and a shortlist of proposals then submitted to the Secretary of State.

National CCTV Strategy Programme Board

Work to establish a national body to oversee the use and deployment of CCTV continues, though there has been a delay due to ministerial changes. A possible model for the national body could be the Forensic Science Regulator. The Forensic Science Regulator operates independently to ensure consistent standards in forensic science services used by the criminal justice system. The regulator identifies the need for and develops new standards, provides advice and guidance and monitors standards. The CCTV body could have a similar role but would also look at registration schemes, standards and the need for any new legislation. We would be opposed to any new

23 4

inspectorate regime and so will keep in close touch to influence and lobby as this develops.

Audit Commission 'Policing: more for less' study

One of the Audit Commission's national studies for the year ahead is being jointly undertaken with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary to look at obtaining value for money from policing. The study will consider any potential for police forces and authorities to maintain or improve effectiveness while delivering savings. LGA views have been sought on the study's objectives as councils are a key partner of the police and deliver community safety services themselves. A key part will be looking to make maximum use of the resources frontline practitioners from a range of agencies have at local level to prevent and tackle crime. The LGA will be kept informed of the development of the study as an external adviser, with the final study being published in spring 2010.

Neighbourhood policing and neighbourhood management conference

The independent Flanagan Review of Policing recommended that neighbourhood policing be integrated with other neighbourhood services. This recommendation was repeated in the Crime and Communities Review and picked up in the Policing Green Paper. As a result the Home Office committed to establishing an exemplar programme with the LGA (through the IDeA) and National Police Improvement Agency (NPIA) to identify best practice for the police and local authorities to use to improve local partnership working. This programme was launched earlier this year and concludes next spring. Officers have been working with colleagues in the IDeA and NPIA on a joint conference to highlight the findings from the programme on 25th March 2010.

Home Office Public Confidence and Satisfaction Board

The Home Office has now developed a delivery plan to ensure that the police confidence targets are met. One strand of work will be to improve the collaboration between police forces and local authorities, and has therefore looked at what assistance and support can be given to local authorities. Officers have been in discussion with the Home Office, CLG and colleagues in the IDeA about the development of sector-led support and the identification of good practice by local authorities on increasing public confidence and reducing the fear of crime. These discussions are at an early stage and members will be appraised of any future developments.

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23 4

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