

## **Operation Vigilance**

### **Summary**

In order to counter the rise in acquisitive crime that has occurred during the recession the Home Office announced a programme in May to assist those areas with the greatest increases in burglaries, robberies and vehicle crime. Operation Vigilance provides a package of support to those areas. This report provides the Board with an update on the development of the programme and the role the LGA Group is playing in delivering support.

### **Recommendations**

Members are asked to note the launch of Operation Vigilance by the Home Office and the LGA Group's role in supporting those areas participating in it.

### **Action**

LGA officers to action any points arising from the Board's discussion.

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## Operation Vigilance

### Background

1. At the start of the year Jacqui Smith launched the 'Real Help in Hard Times' initiative to help people feel more secure in the tougher economic times. As acquisitive crime rates have tended to rise in previous recessions the Home Office was looking to take action to limit any increases in burglary, robbery and car crime rates. The LGA were involved in discussions with the Home Office from an early stage about what the initiative should look to achieve and the role councils could play in reducing acquisitive crime rates.
2. One issue that arose from the 'Real Help in Hard Times' initiative was support provided to those areas seeing the greatest increases in acquisitive crime. The Home Office therefore announced in May that it would be establishing a programme to provide assistance to Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships which were experiencing sharp increases in these levels of crime. The LGA argued that, rather than following the traditional Home Office model with a central intervention team, the areas assisted should volunteer for help instead of having it imposed on them, and that there should be sector-led improvement support as part of the assistance provided to the areas concerned.

### Operation Vigilance

3. Operation Vigilance was launched by the Home Office in July with the aim of addressing the increase in acquisitive crime, most notably burglary and robbery that has occurred as a result of the recession. Operation Vigilance is a £3 million programme of interventions and assistance designed to intensify the targeting and management of offenders, target harden vulnerable premises, and help partnerships improve their processes in working together to tackle acquisitive crime. This project is aimed at the 35 partnerships across the country that have seen the greatest increases in acquisitive crime rates. The plan is for this programme to run for a year, with any identified best practice then being shared nationally.
4. As a result of LGA lobbying with senior officials ahead of the launch of the Operation Vigilance project, we were able to secure agreement for £150,000 for the IDeA to complete 12 Peer Challenges and provide 50 days of Peer Support to the partnerships in the programme. In addition to the approximately 20 accredited community safety peers already present in the Peer Clearing House, IDeA are currently training three tranches of Community Safety Managers in London, Manchester and Coventry. This will raise the total number of accredited peers to over 70. A joint initiative with National Police Improvement Agency has enabled IDeA to access accredited police peers to ensure that each peer review

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team has a wide range of partners. Each peer review team will consist of a Community Safety Manager, Elected Member with Community Safety responsibility, Police Borough Commander, Specialist Peer (e.g. an expert in burglary or robbery, or a fire officer/drug and alcohol manager, depending on the requirements of the area) and an IDeA Review Manager.

5. The following boroughs have agreed to host a Peer Challenge: Croydon, Merton, Basildon and Waltham Forest. There will be further advertising of the Peer Challenge in order to ensure that take-up is complete, and the LGA has advertised the support available through the Board's first newsletter sent out in October.

## **Financial Implications**

6. There are no financial implications for the LGA Group from Operation Vigilance as the peer reviews teams are funded by the Home Office.

## **Implications for Wales**

7. None of the 35 areas are in Wales, so there are no implications for Wales arising from the operation of the programme.

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