

Notes of Decisions Taken and Action

Safer Communities Board

9 November 2009

Local Government House at 11.00

Present

Chair:	Cllr Les Lawrence (Birmingham City)
Vice Chair:	Cllr Sharon Taylor (Stevenage BC)
Deputy Chairs:	Cllr Duwayne Brooks (Lewisham LB), Cllr Graham Brown (Powys CC)
Conservative:	Cllr Roland Domleo (Cheshire East), Cllr Tom Fox (Scarborough BC), Cllr David Smith (Lichfield DC), Cllr Brian Coleman (Barnet LB / LFEPA), Cllr Joanna Spicer (Suffolk CC), Cllr Ian Gillies (City of York), Cllr Ann Stribley (Poole BC)
Labour:	Cllr Mehboob Khan (Kirklees MBC), Cllr Nilgun Canver (Haringey LB), Cllr Mark Burns-Williamson (Wakefield MDC), Cllr Dave Lancaster (Salford City)
Liberal Democrat:	Cllr Daisy Benson (Reading BC), Cllr Anita Lower (Newcastle City)

In attendance: Councillor Paul Porgess (Stockport MBC); Helen Murray, Mark Norris, Liz Hobson, Trish O'Flynn, Paul Johnston (all LGA); Wendy Martin (LACORS)

1. The Policing White Paper

Mark Norris introduced the report and outlined the three themes that were expected to form the basis of the White Paper. Mark noted that the White Paper was not likely to include proposals for elected policing and crime representatives, proposals that the LGA had long objected to. Mark outlined other measures likely to be incorporated in the Paper, including proposals to strengthen police authorities and ensure that they better reflected the communities they serve.

Cllr Taylor informed the Board of a recent meeting that she had attended with the Minister for Crime and Policing, and the discussions held at this meeting.

Members made the following comments on the proposals:

- Discussions were held over the quality of political appointees on police authorities. Members agreed that competencies for all members of police authorities was important, as was making training opportunities available for Members on police authorities, though did note that the quality of Members was

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not a significant concern on numerous Authorities. Members also felt there should be discussions with the APA on the proposals to strengthen police authorities.

- Members noted that it was essential that police authorities work collaboratively with partners on a range of issues, including shared services. Though this had happened to varying degrees already across the country, Members felt there was still significant work to do on this. Similarly, police authorities should continue to engage further with their communities, particularly with regard to the proposals on community contracts set out in the White Paper.
- Members discussed how police authorities were accountable both to the Council and to the public. It was noted that Councillor members of police authorities fed back on their work through full Council or area based meetings at certain Local Authorities, although this was not necessarily the case across the board.
- Members noted that the community safety local delivery landscape was complicated, with some concern expressed over possible duplication of roles for Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs). Cllr Lawrence asked LGA officers to look at the work of the various local bodies involved in tackling crime, their cost and who they were accountable to so that this could feed in to the response to the White Paper.
- Cllr Tom Fox, the LGA's representative at meetings of the Association of Policing Authorities (APA), noted that the last APA Steering Group had been cancelled at short notice and Cllr Mark Burns Williamson agreed to address this to ensure momentum was maintained on this agenda.
- Cllr Taylor stated that she felt it would be useful for clarification from the shadow ministerial team over prospective plans to remove ring-fenced funding for Police Community Support Officers.
- In summarising the discussion, Cllr Lawrence invited Members to continue to share their thoughts on the proposals as set out in the White Paper with LGA officers. Officers informed the Board that the majority of proposals as currently positioned in the White Paper would not require legislative changes as they could be implemented through changes in policy.

Decision

The Board agreed that the draft LGA response to the proposals set out in the Policing White Paper be circulated to all Board members for their comment, prior to being sent to the Home Office.

Action

Officers to reflect the Board's views in the LGA's response to the Policing White Paper, and circulate this response to Board Members for their consideration. **Mark Norris**

Officers to clarify shadow ministerial plans for funding for Police Community Support Officers. **Helen Murray**

Officers to work on identifying the various local bodies involved in tackling crime, their cost and who they are accountable to in order to inform the LGA's response to the White Paper. **Mark Norris**

Officers to arrange a joint meeting between the Board's Lead Members and the APA to discuss areas of common interest including the White Paper proposals.

2. Total Place programme

The Board received a presentation from David Bolger from the Leadership Centre for Local Government on the Total Place programme. In his presentation, David covered the areas piloting the programme, the aims of the programme and the evidence coming out of those piloted areas.

The Board thanked David for his presentation, and raised the following points:

- Members agreed that this was an important initiative as any government would need to be looking at something similar as part of the reduction in public spending. Some Members also expressed the view that the Total Place pilots thus far undertaken had not been sufficiently radical.
- Members noted that one issue that would need addressing as the concept developed and some services were merged was how any overspends and budget deficits were dealt with.
- Members also felt the Total Place programme should be used to enhance the role of councillors. The information resulting from the pilots would be useful in enabling Members to challenge partners over delivery, and it was felt to be important that local authority officers appreciated the value that members could add to the programme.
- A query was raised over the difference between Total Place and what Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) should be doing. David responded that there were limited differences between the two, with some Total Place pilots being led by the LSPs, but other areas now looking at what local partners could do on their own.

Decision

The Board agreed that its comments be forwarded to the Improvement Board for their consideration.

Action

Officers to prepare a draft letter to the Chairman of the Improvement Board on the discussions held.

3. Safer Communities Board Business Plan priorities 2010 – 11

The Board commented on the priorities, and agreed that the public confidence and financial inclusion work needed to be taken forward.

The following issues were identified by Members as priorities currently missing from the list and asked for these to be considered:

- Issues relating to LACORS' area of work such as animal health;
- Prevention of crime, including the probation and prison service;
- Government proposals around speedy and summary justice;

In responding to concerns expressed by certain Members, Helen informed the Board that Members had, in light of limited resources, to prioritise efforts on areas that the LGA felt it could best make its influence felt. Helen then went on to outline the process for finalising the Business Plan for the next year.

Decision

Lead Members to feed Board priorities into the Business planning event on 19 November.

Action

Officers to prepare a letter to Cllr Domleo addressing concerns about LACORS work which would not be prioritised in the next year.

4. Operation Vigilance

Members noted the report, and the LGA Conference earlier in the year on tackling crime in a recession. Members suggested there should be a review one year on to ascertain what activity had been taken, and what impact this had had.

5. Update on Regulatory Services Issues

Members sought clarification on the powers granted within the proposed Policing and Crime Bill to local Councillors as an “interested party” in licensing applications, and the area on which a local Councillor might be entitled to make representations. Members also asked for clarification on the future of the Local Better Regulation Office.

Action

Officers to provide clarification on the scope of the powers granted in the Policing and Crime Bill to local Councillors **Wendy Martin, LACORS**

Officers to add discussions over the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) to the agenda for the January Board. **LGA**

6. Meetings with outside bodies

The report was noted.

7. Notes of the last meeting

The note of the last meeting was agreed, subject to the following amendment on page 1:

“Cllr Roland Domleo (Congleton BC)” to read “Cllr Roland Domleo (Cheshire East)”

8. Any other business

Cllr Lawrence noted that Cllr Ann Stribley would serve as the Board’s nomination on the European and International Strategy Group, with Cllr Nilgun Canver to serve as a substitute Member on the Group. Cllr Lawrence noted that Cllr Ann Lucas would serve as the Board’s Domestic Violence Champion, and that her work would be fed into the Board by Cllr Joanna Spicer.

Cllr Lawrence informed the Board that Mark Norris had produced a paper that was available to Members on the financial cost of violence against women.

Cllr Lawrence added that the LGA had published its response to the RIPA consultation, and that the majority of suggestions in that response had been taken on by the Home Office. Updates on this would be provided in this month’s LGA Group bulletin.