

Notes of Decisions Taken and Action

Safer Communities Board

15 March 2010

Local Government House, London at 11.00

Present

Chair:	Cllr Les Lawrence (Birmingham City) (Conservative)
Vice Chair:	Cllr Sharon Taylor (Stevenage BC) (Labour)
Deputy Chairs:	Cllr Graham Brown (Powys CC) (Independent)
Conservative:	Cllr Roland Domleo (Cheshire East), Cllr Tom Fox (Scarborough BC), Cllr Joanna Spicer (Suffolk CC), Cllr Ian Gillies (City of York), Cllr Ann Stribley (Poole BC), Cllr Robert Sleigh (Solihull MBC)
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 Anita Lower (Newcastle City)

In attendance: Helen Murray, Mark Norris, Liz Hobson, Paul Johnston, Wendy Martin, Chris Williams (all LGA Group)

Apologies: Cllr Duwayne Brooks (Deputy Chair, Lewisham LB); Cllr Brian Coleman (Barnet LB / LFEPA); Cllr David Smith (Lichfield DC); Cllr Daisy Benson (Reading BC)

1. Safe and Confident Neighbourhoods Strategy

Members agreed to consider the third item on the agenda, "IDeA 'Joining up at the frontline' exemplar programme", in conjunction with this item.

Helen Murray introduced the report on the Safe and Confident Neighbourhoods Strategy recently published by the Home Office, noting that the Strategy had a number of proposals relating to Councils. The strategy also contained an action for the LGA to encourage Councillors to be integral parts of neighbourhood partnerships, and further consideration was needed as to how to accomplish this.

Chris Williams, IDeA, gave a presentation to Members on the IDeA's 'Joining up at the Frontline' exemplar programme. Chris said that 12 exemplar sites from across the country and with varying demographic profiles had been identified as the initial part of the programme, and that it was hoped that the exemplar sites would provide learning opportunities for other neighbourhoods across the country. Chris outlined the proposal to create regional hubs of excellence incorporating the current 12

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exemplar sites, and outlined four proposed models for these regional hubs, including a “kite mark” scheme.

Members noted the content of the Safe and Confident Neighbourhoods Strategy and stressed the importance of Police Community Safety Officers to successful neighbourhood policing.

Members also asked whether recent issues raised by Dennis O’Connor, Chief Inspector of Constabulary, regarding antisocial behaviour were addressed by the strategy. Officers said that an antisocial behaviour guide for Councillors would shortly be published, and that these issues would be considered within that guide.

Members made the following comments on the exemplar programme:

- Members asked about the definition of neighbourhoods. Chris acknowledged that qualifying neighbourhoods was difficult;
- Members raised concerns about any new regional model and agreed that the existing regional architecture e.g. RIEPs, should be integral in taking this work forward;
- Members were clear that local flexibility was vital in any local neighbourhood partnership working, and were concerned that the kite mark scheme might impose a further regulatory and inspection burden on local partnerships. Chris said that the idea of the programme was not to develop a ‘one size fits all’ approach, but to provide key learning points for local partnerships to consider;
- Members discussed the role of PACT meetings in ensuring cohesive neighbourhood policing;
- Members were concerned over the funding available for exemplar sites, noting that local strategic partnerships were already underfunded. Chris said that every area benefitted from some funding, and that the infrastructure, including staff, was largely in place to deliver the model;
- Members asked over the viability of exemplar sites within two-tier areas;
- Members asked about the tie-in with Community Safety Partnerships. Chris said that every area should have a clear governance structure and that CSPs should head up this structure;
- Members said that that people’s ambitions were an important consideration in this debate, and that neighbourhood management structures should look to address a lack of aspiration within certain neighbourhoods.

Decision

The Board noted the final version of the Safe and Confident Neighbourhoods Strategy, with the addition of an extra recommendation around endorsing the importance of neighbourhood policing and seeking appropriate arrangements for sustainable funding.

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The Board noted the learning from the Exemplar sites programme, and agreed to work with existing neighbourhood partnership structures to continue to spread good practice.

The Board agreed that LGA officers undertake further work on encouraging Councillors to be integral parts of neighbourhood partnerships.

Action

Officers to circulate a copy of the guide for councillors on anti-social behaviour.

Officers to progress with ACPO and HMIC the recent statements by HMIC around the need for the police to better address anti-social behaviour.

2. Police Authority Member Competencies

Mark Norris introduced the report, noting that it provided an update on the LGA's work on competencies for Councillor members on police authorities, and sought Members' steer on the draft outline of joint APA and LGA guidance to member authorities on competencies, and the competency framework being developed for the Yorkshire and Humber police authorities. The Board noted that the Government had recently laid regulations relating to elected Members' competencies.

Members said that this was a highly valuable piece of work, given the importance of ensuring that all Councillor Members who sat on police authorities were able, both in terms of their skills and expertise and in their time available, to add real value to the role.

Members made the following comments about the draft outline guidance and competency framework:

- Understanding the governance arrangements around the police was importance for police authority members and needed to be included in any training;
- The competencies for police authority chairs should include the requirement to represent the views of local people;
- Diversity should refer to geographic diversity as well as the other types of diversity so police authority members were not just drawn from one part of the force area;
- There needed to be a clear reference to the time commitment involved in being a police authority member.

Decision

Members noted the work undertaken to date on work on competencies for Councillor members on police authorities, and noted the competency framework being developed for the Yorkshire and Humber police authorities.

3. IDeA 'Joining up at the frontline' exemplar programme

This item was considered in conjunction with item 1.

4. Financial literacy project

Wendy Martin, LACORS, introduced the report, which sought Members' endorsement on the financial literacy work that the LGA Group was to undertake.

Members said that this was an important piece of work, and made suggestions over the role that the national curriculum and the third sector could play in improving financial literacy, and the need to link into credit unions and citizens' advice bureaux. Members also requested that issues relating to retail store cards and mortgage dealers be raised as part of the work, including looking at the way they deal with people in arrears.

Decision

Members endorsed the activity plan.

Action

Officers to circulate information on the recent work done by the Citizens Advice Bureau and progress the project as outlined in the plan.

5. Update on Regulatory Services Issues

The report was noted.

Members expressed some concern over the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' proposals over a new model for environmental health and trading standards, and said they would not support any move that removed local responsibility in these areas.

6. Meetings with outside bodies

The report was noted.

7. Overview and scrutiny of crime and disorder matters

The report was noted.

8. Notes of the last meeting

The note of the last meeting was agreed as a correct record.

Date of next meeting: 11am, 17 May 2010, Local Government House