

16 January 2012

**Item 8**

**Note of decisions taken and actions required**

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**Title:** LGA Safer and Stronger Communities Programme Board  
**Date and time:** Tuesday 13 September 2011, 11.00am  
**Venue:** Smith Square rooms 1 & 2 (Ground Floor), Local Government House

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**Attendance**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Council</b>
Chair	Cllr Mehboob Khan	Kirklees MBC
Deputy Chair	Cllr Duwayne Brooks	Lewisham LB
	Cllr Les Lawrence (Vice Chair)	Birmingham City Council
Members	Cllr Joanna Spicer	Suffolk CC
	Cllr Brian Coleman	Barnet LB / LFEPa
	Cllr Nilgun Canver	Haringey LB
	Cllr Lisa Brett	Bath & NE Somerset Council
Substitutes	Cllr Henri Murison	Newcastle City
	Cllr Crada Onuegbu	Lewisham LB
	Cllr Marianne Overton	Lincolnshire CC
Apologies	Cllr Goronwy Edwards (Deputy Chair)	Conwy
	Cllr Paul Bettison	Bracknell Forest
	Cllr Tom Fox	Scarborough BC
	Cllr Robert Gordon	Hertfordshire CC
	Cllr Jim Harker	Northamptonshire CC
	Cllr Ann Lucas	Coventry City
Cllr Mark Burns-Williamson	Wakefield MDC	

**Officers:** Helen Murray, Mark Norris, David Lock, Stephen Service (all LGA)

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
1	<p data-bbox="284 719 1209 792"><b>Safer &amp; Stronger Communities Board membership, terms of reference and appointments to outside bodies 2011/12</b></p> <p data-bbox="284 831 478 864"><b>Membership</b></p> <p data-bbox="284 904 1067 938">Chairman Khan welcomed new members to the Board.</p> <p data-bbox="284 978 588 1012"><b>Terms of Reference</b></p> <p data-bbox="284 1052 1155 1164">Helen Murray introduced this part of the paper and asked the Board to note that a specific reference to domestic violence had been added as this was a key area of the Board's work.</p> <p data-bbox="284 1205 520 1238"><b>Outside bodies</b></p> <p data-bbox="284 1279 1166 1536">On Member Champions, some Members asked if licensing and regulatory services would be better served by a single champion as the issues involved in these areas often overlap. Helen Murray said that as Cllr Bettison, the Chair of the Regulation Board was not present it would be more appropriate to postpone a decision on this suggestion until his opinion had been sought.</p> <p data-bbox="284 1576 1166 1794">Members asked if there were any issues with having 2 champions for each area of the Board's work, including a lead champion and a substitute to be called on if the lead was unavailable. Helen Murray responded that there was no reason not to do this from an Officer perspective if Members wished to.</p> <p data-bbox="284 1834 1018 1868">The following Champions were agreed for 2011/12:</p> <p data-bbox="284 1908 1177 2092">Community Cohesion &amp; Prevent – in light of the recent riots, Members agreed to defer the decision on a Member champion until the November Board meeting, when the results of the interim report on the civil disturbances would give a better indication of what Community priorities were.</p>	

Domestic Violence – Cllr Ann Lucas to remain as champion, with Cllr Joanna Spicer as deputy.

Licensing – Cllr Nilgun Canver to remain as champion, with Cllr Paul Bettison to be consulted on whether taking up a co-champion role here would be beneficial to link into his work on Regulation.

Emergency Planning – Cllr Tom Fox to remain as champion, with Cllr Mark Burns-Williamson as deputy.

Anti-social behaviour – While she was not reappointed to the Safer Communities Board this year, Members agreed it was appropriate for Cllr Anita Lower to remain as champion with Cllr Goronwy Edwards as deputy.

The following outside body appointments were agreed for 2011/12:

On the **Police and Crime Commissioners Transition Sponsorship Board**, Cllr Brooks explained that there were a number of sub-groups under the main board. The board therefore agreed it would be appropriate for several Councillors to be involved rather than having one single representative.

Mark Norris gave assurances on behalf of the LGA that given the number of Cllrs involved, he would ensure a co-ordinated approach. Cllr Brooks reminded Members that they should brief Mark immediately after any meetings so that any implications for the LGA could be determined quickly.

The representatives were agreed as follows:

Transition Sponsorship Board – Cllr Henri Murison with Cllr Joanna Spicer as deputy.  
Checks and balances – Cllr Joanna Spicer  
Police and Crime Commission capability – Cllr Joanna Spicer  
Complaints – Cllr Dwayne Brooks to remain  
Elections – Cllr Goronwy Edwards  
Partnerships (if the LGA is given a place on the project group) – Nilgun Canver

Members also agreed that Cllr Edwards should be appointed to the working group on the implications of the transition for Wales if the LGA gets a place on this body.

Cllr Les Lawrence was reappointed to the **Criminal Justice Council**, with Cllr Nilgun Canver volunteering to deputise if allowed by the council.

For the **Local Government Panel for Health & Safety**, Cllrs Paul Bettison and Lisa Brett were appointed, with the Labour place left vacant at present.

Cllr Crada Onuegbu was appointed to the **Urban Commission Steering Group**.

### **Decision**

*The Board formally noted the membership and terms of reference for the forthcoming year.*

### **Action**

Officers to inform outside bodies of any changes in or confirm continuation of LGA representatives **LGA Officers**

Officers to confirm appointments with Members and via a paper at the next appropriate programme Board **LGA Officers**

## **2 Civil Disorder**

Helen Murray summarised this item. She said the LGA had collected and presented some excellent case studies to Ministers from LAs involved in the riots. She invited members to commend the work of councils and comment on the group's community safety work ahead of the LGA Executive meeting which was also considering the issue.

Members praised the work of LAs in areas such as civic leadership, waste clearance, traffic management and regulatory services, and local community figures such as Council Leaders and PCSOs. Cllrs said that community cohesion was the "real story" of the riots and that the LGA should ensure Local Government "sings its own praises".

On the various groups being set up by the government to look at particular issues related to the civil disturbances, Cllrs said that this move was understandable, but more clarity was needed on how these would work. Regarding the Community

Victims panel, some Members felt that there were already groups in existence which the panel could draw on for information. Officers agreed to invite the Chairman of the panel, Darra Singh to the board in November to discuss its initial findings.

On the government's proposed "gang injunction" for under-18s, many Members objected to the word "gang" to describe the rioters as there was no defined sense of purpose to the actions to justify this description. Members noted that there were many different underlying factors for the disturbances cited in different parts of the country.

Helen responded by saying that the LGA can feed this point on the language used into Ministerial discussions.

Members criticised some television broadcasters' reporting of the rioting and the weight they put on cuts as an incentive for the looters. Some felt that the media focus on young people was deceptive as the number of under-18s involved was miniscule in comparison to adults. Members cautioned against giving prison sentences to young people without serious consideration as this could create entrenched behaviour and give individuals criminal status in their communities.

On Ministerial visits following the riots, Members felt that protocols should be established to ensure councils were not overburdened with VIPs during a time when they were recovering from the effects of the disturbances.

On compensation, some Members were wary of sidetracking the issue of communities and victims. They felt that an approach to fairness would need to be carefully considered when awarding funds, particularly to businesses which were uninsured, as companies who have been attacked in the past but have not been entitled to compensation might have cause to feel aggrieved.

In response, Helen said that any examples that Members could provide of businesses being refused compensation would be helpful to register with Ministers.

Members said that there were wider lessons to be learned about prevention, shared intelligence and working together between the public services.

### **Action**

Officers to share practice from Local Authorities involved in post-riot community action

**LGA Officers**

Officers to invite Darra Singh to the November Safer Communities Board to discuss the initial findings of the Community and Victims panel.

**LGA Officers**

### **3 Government consultations on regulatory matters**

Mark Norris summarised this item.

Responding to the Empowering and Protecting Consumers consultation, members noted that Citizens Advice Bureaux would need support as local cuts mean they would need support around governance and other structures.

On the report's assertion that the risks to the LGA of taking on a political oversight role "outweighed any benefits", some Members said the risks needed to be more clearly explained, and were concerned that if the LGA did not provide political oversight to the proposed arrangements, it would fall to councils to provide it.

Officers agreed that trading standards are keen for the LGA to take on this role, but cautioned that this would move the LGA's function into an enforcement role. Given the risks of indemnity, it would be wise to find out first if other groups would be prepared to take this on – for example, whether LAs can take on this role themselves and the money go to them directly.

On the proposed £15-20 million budget, Members asked how much of this would be made available to LAs. Mark responded that this depended on a number of factors, including how much the set up costs would be for LAs. At present, the LGA is not clear whether this figure will be sufficient to implement the proposals, as other costs such as legal insurance against court losses may also need to be taken into account. Members agreed that Option 3 was the right framework, but there needed to be further discussion with BIS on what the impact would be on the LGA and all tiers of local government.

Mark next drew Members attention to the proposal to abolish the Local Better Regulation Office, establishing a new body outside of BIS and extending the primary authority scheme.

Some Members questioned whether the success of the primary authority scheme was yet proven, saying that more research was needed and greater detail on how the scheme would work.

On the Representative Steering Group for the BRDO, Members asked whether the LGA saw the LG representative as a Member or Officer. Mark responded that they would look to approach professionals involved in this area and agreed to build this into the response.

On the consultation on transforming regulatory enforcement to free up business growth, Members felt that LEPS should be referred to as one of the alternative ways councils and business could work together.

#### **Action**

Officers to take account of Members comments in consultation response. **LGA Officers**

#### **4 Update on the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill**

Helen began by saying that it looks likely that the Bill will receive royal assent next week. The focus was now on ensuring councils would be ready for the challenge and understand the legislation involved.

Members commented that many Councils are still unaware just how much the process of receiving funding would change and that they will need to go to the Police and Crime Commissioner for money.

Councillors noted cross party concern at the increase in cost within the Bill and the lack of clarity over where money was going to come from.

The proposed elections date of November was criticised, due to the process involved in a mid-year change of Commissioner and the difficulty of getting the public to vote at this time of year. Members argued that the date would mean every electoral register will be published late.

Some Members felt the cuts would undermine police work by forcing authorities to concentrate on response alone.

Chairman Khan proposed that the LGA send a letter to the Home Office signed by himself and the Vice Chairs capturing the issues discussed in a powerful statement and advocating a postponement of the elections until 2013.

**Action**

Chair and Vice Chairs to sign letter to Home Office proposing postponement of elections until 2013

**Update on Regulatory Services issues**

**Chair/Vice  
Chairs/LGA  
Officers**

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Members noted the report.

6 **Meetings with Outside Bodies**

The Board noted the activities outlined in the report.

On **enhanced CRB checks**, Members urged the LGA to ensure its response regarding the legality of requesting these did not contradict Local Authorities' positions.

On **Metal Theft**, Cllr Khan announced that he is set to meet with the Environment Board shortly. Examples of good practice have already been collected in areas such as Coventry and Leeds.

Members' own examples of work in this area included projects being undertaken by SITA, and an operation between the police and Haringey council to check on licenses for transporters of waste.

Chairman Khan brought to the board's attention a request from Cllr Ann Lucas for Members to question the cuts to the **legal aid budget due to the impact it would have on Law Centres Federation**, which has an impact on domestic violence and consumers under consumer protection. The Board agreed to write to central government on this issue.

On the forthcoming **Safer Communities Conference**, Officers agreed to establish which members planned to stay overnight on the previous day to enable those in London to meet up in the evening.

**Action**

7 November 2011

Officers to prepare letter establishing the Board's support for the Law Centres Federation legal aid budget.

**LGA Officers**

Officers to check which Members will be in London on the evening of 7 November to enable those present to meet up.

**LGA Officers**

**7 Notes of the last meeting**

The notes of the last meeting were agreed as a correct record.

**Date of next meeting: Monday 16 January 2012**