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Priorities 2012/13

Purpose of report

For discussion and direction.

Summary

This report sets out the suggested priorities for the Safer and Stronger Communities Programme Board, which will feed into the LGA business plan for 2012/13.

Recommendation

Board members are asked to provide a steer on the priorities for the Board for 2012/13 in the light of the direction of travel for local government and the LGA presented in the outline business plan (attached as **Appendix A**).

Action

To feedback the Programme Board discussion to Leadership Board, to inform the final business plan which is due to be signed off by the LGA Executive in March.

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Priorities 2012/13

Background

1. Work is currently underway on the LGA's Business Plan for 2012/13. As part of this, each of the Programme Boards is asked to identify the headline priorities for their areas of work for next year in the light of the LGA's overall direction of travel.
2. An outline business plan, attached as **Appendix A** to this paper, is being presented for initial review at the January Executive. This has been developed through discussions at Leadership Board and through the political group offices. This work has informed the statement of our vision for local government and, given this, initial proposals as to where the LGA can have most impact.
3. Through this work, six priorities have emerged as the focus for the LGA's work in 2012/13:
 - 3.1 Public Service Reform
 - 3.2 Growth and Prosperity
 - 3.3 Funding for local government
 - 3.4 Efficiency and Productivity
 - 3.5 Sector-led Improvement
 - 3.6 The LGA's own effectiveness and efficiency.

Safer and Stronger Communities Programme Board Priorities

4. Members have been extremely committed to delivering the current work programme, particularly around extensive lobbying activity that has taken place in order to influence the arrangements for Police and Crime Commissioners and Police and Crime Panels; and our work on licensing. We have taken this year's plan as a starting point for developing a coherent programme of activity for next year, and adopted a working assumption that resource allocations will remain broadly as this year, although there will be room for negotiation on this.
5. Now that the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act is on the statute book, a significant proportion of this year's work moves naturally into a new phase for 2012/13, advising councils about the implications of the legislation and supporting them to make the necessary preparations for changes. Other elements of the current workplan may also be carried forward to next year to facilitate implementation; and a number of other projects can be regarded as completed.

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6. The Board has previously taken the approach that the business plan sets out specific areas of activity, and is clearly focused on delivering those outcomes. However, provided resources allow, a flexible approach in order to respond effectively to issues which arise throughout the year should be adopted. This has served community safety in local government and the LGA well as a more dynamic response is often needed.
7. In considering the priorities for the year ahead, Members will want to consider the Government's planned legislation for 2012/13, particularly the lobbying we may wish to do in relation to anti-social behaviour legislation and community payback reforms; further work arising from Darra Singh's final report on last year's civil disturbances which is due in March; and the profile now accorded to metal theft. There are now further indications that crime levels, particularly acquisitive crime, are starting to rise and work to counter that will be of the utmost important to Community Safety Partnerships and communities. The Board will also wish to consider the new consumer landscape and how the Government's drive to reduce health and safety regulation will impact on councils.
8. Given this context, this paper sets out proposals for a Safer and Stronger Communities programme of work against the six priorities identified in the draft LGA Business Plan. Links will be maintained with the other relevant programme boards on a range of cross-cutting issues. Members are asked to comment on these priorities for 2012/13.

Public Service Reform

9. Supporting councils and community safety partnerships to **prepare for Police and Crime Commissioners** (PCCs). The election of PCCs in November 2012 brings radical changes for councils and their work to reduce crime and disorder. Councils in England are responsible for establishing Police and Crime Panels and there is a Government imperative to have these arrangements in place by July. Work has already started through LGA seminars and publications but it is clear that dedicated bespoke advice, support and guidance is an area where the LGA can add real value. Over the next year the Board will be in a strong position to broaden and deepen this engagement with our member authorities through work on rules of procedure, and developing training and leadership packages. We also have an important role to play in mapping out interdependencies and debating how other Whitehall reforms, such as elected mayors, join up at the local level.

Growth and Prosperity

10. Working with councils to **strengthen community resilience**. Crime and disorder can impact both directly and indirectly on businesses and town centres, and can

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significantly affect the viability of enterprises. At a time when nurturing economic growth and helping businesses to develop is an important priority for communities, the Board will be helping councils and community safety partnerships tackle crimes that can hinder such economic development and affect the economic prosperity of areas. Working with other public services such as Fire and Rescue Authorities, the Board may wish to focus on preventing and tackling priority crime types such as metal theft, gang related violence, anti-social behaviour and alcohol related crime and disorder to clearly promote the economic as well as the social benefits of tackling crime. Close links with the work on families with complex needs, work on re-offending and tackling the corrosive effects of violence against women and girls will be important here.

11. An important strand of this work will be understanding the **underlying causes of the civil disturbances** in the summer of 2011 and supporting councils to tackle these issues. Following the disturbances in August 2011 an initial analysis of factors which led to the disturbances and recommendations to prevent further incidents was set out by Darra Singh and the Communities and Victims Panel. The final report is due in March 2012.
12. Working to ensure that **regulatory services** can remain flexible and accountable to the needs of businesses and communities. We will continue to influence policy through a number of advisory groups on a wide range of issues to ensure that communities are afforded proportionate protection through regulation.

Efficiency and Productivity

13. Working with community safety partnerships (CSPs) to make them **more efficient and effective** so they are able to deliver safe and secure communities. CSPs saw grant funding from the Home Office reduce by 20% this year and it will fall by a further 40% in 2012/13 before being handed to PCCs the year after. The LGA will continue to work with CSPs to examine their structures and provide advice on alternative models such as merged partnerships, shared services and outsourcing. Support will be provided by paid for community safety peer reviews, conferences and events and through low-cost sector-led support through the peer mentor approach established over in 2011.
14. The Ministry of Justice are currently undertaking work to better understand **payment by results** in the crime reduction arena. Sharing the outcomes of the pilots and translating this and expanding this into other geographical areas is an area where the LGA can help.
15. Supporting councils to respond to **civil emergencies**. The LGA will continue to take a visible role in civil emergencies, and the Board will work with the LGA's

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2012 Olympic/Paralympic Task and Finish Group on councils' preparations for the Olympic/Paralympic Games.

Sector-led Improvement

16. A refreshed peer support programme for Fire and Rescue Authorities is now in place with one free Peer Challenge available to all FRAs every three years. The community safety sector-led improvement is more limited, although we continue to provide the Community Safety Peer Challenge on a paid-for basis, and have developed a free national mentoring programme and desk top reviews for member authorities, and a range of other support work which will continue.

The LGA's own effectiveness and efficiency

17. With partnership working being vital to reducing crime, and the risk that existing partnership arrangements fragment with the election of PCCs, bringing together councils and PCCs at a national level offers significant advantages in sustaining and developing collaborative work on tackling crime and anti-social behaviour. The LGA will therefore be looking to establish a shadow national representative body for PCCs.

Conclusion and next steps

18. Members' views on the Board's priorities will be feed into the Executive to inform their discussions about the LGA's Business Plan.

Financial Implications

19. Budget allocations for 2012/13 will be discussed in the context of all the Programme Boards' proposed priorities. However, it is clear that the support programme for councils on the transition to PCCs is likely to require additional resources beyond those currently available to the Board. Various elements of this activity are currently being costed.