

## **End of Year Board Report**

### **Purpose of report**

For information and discussion.

### **Summary**

This report provides an overview of the issues and work the Board has overseen during last year. It sets out key achievements in relation to the priorities for the Safer and Stronger Communities Board in 2013/2014, and briefly looks forward to next year's priorities.

### **Recommendation(s)**

Members are invited to:

- (a) Note the achievements against the Board's priorities in 2013/2014;
- (b) Note the Board's broad priority areas for 2014/15;
- (c) Agree the programme of meetings for 2014/15; and,
- (d) Propose 2 or 3 innovative projects or campaigns they consider would best support councils in the coming year.

### **Action**

Officers to action as appropriate.

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## **End of Year Board Report**

### **Background**

1. Although the state of the economy is improving, and issues such as unemployment, housing and education have continued to dominate the political environment in the last year, crime remains a key concern for communities and the councils that serve them.
2. The Business Plan 2013/14 set out a number of priorities for the Safer and Stronger Communities Board including, supporting businesses by reducing unnecessary red tape and regulatory burden at the local level as well as by fighting crime, and by improving the ability of fire and rescue authorities to protect people and places from harm; promoting community safety partnership working including with police and crime commissioners; and building the resilience of communities so they are able to thrive in the face of challenging economic conditions and the significant restructuring of services.
3. As previously stated the Board has had to respond to unanticipated events the year. For example LGA supported councils during the flooding crisis, the biggest such event to hit the UK in more than 300 years. In addition the LGA has helped support local authorities tackle ongoing concerns with betting shops and explored further the role that councils and their regulatory functions have in supporting local businesses.

### **Strategic Issues**

4. As the Business Plan set out, the core of the Board's work over the past year has included helping councils to implement the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013; bringing together local authorities and betting shop companies to discuss issues around betting shop clustering and fixed odds betting terminals; working with leading politicians on the Deregulation Bill; running a number of leadership academies for the fire sector; developing a new vision for regulation, Open for Business, and detailed proposals for the reform of licensing frameworks. There has been engagement with Police and Crime Commissioners through joint strategic meetings; continued working with Community Safety Partnerships and working with other LGA Boards such the Children and Young Peoples Board and Community Wellbeing Board on shared issues.

### **Achievements**

#### **Regulatory Work**

5. We set up a taskforce to look at the clustering of betting shops, as well as the harm caused by fixed odds betting terminals. This has brought together council representatives and government officials with the leading high street betting shop firms and industry bodies for the first time.
6. We worked closely on the Deregulation Bill currently going through Parliament, which aims to free businesses and councils from unnecessary and unwanted red tape.

7. We assisted councils in implementing the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 by 1 October 2013. This included publishing guides to the application process and enforcement, publishing template application forms and licences, speaking at conferences and answering questions from officers responsible for the licensing process. Councils have issued over 6,000 licences to date.
8. We launched 'Open for Business: Vision for local regulation' which aims to recognise and build on the contribution local trading standards, environmental health and licensing teams can make to economic growth and job creation.
9. We developed well received proposals for comprehensive reform of local authority licensing frameworks, and secured government funding for councils to pilot the proposals.
10. We successfully lobbied for the Government to amend the Draft Consumer Rights Bill to ensure councils can continue to act on intelligence and target high-risk businesses through unannounced visits.
11. We provided a number of masterclasses for councillors on licensing committees as well as developing an online module on licensing.

### **Domestic Violence and Violence Against Women and Girls**

12. We established a cross-Board working group to look at the role councils can play in tackling female genital mutilation (FGM), which has heard evidence from a range of councils and charitable organisations involved in this field.
13. We participated in a range of national panels including the Home Office's national group on preventing the sexual exploitation of children and vulnerable people, HMIC's reference group on their review of the police response to domestic violence and the Home Office's panel on improving the commissioning of domestic abuse services.

### **Fire and Rescue Services**

14. We successfully ran a number of Fire Leadership Essential programmes across the country, involving Chairs and senior members of local fire and rescue authorities.
15. We established an online resource for councils to use to keep up to date with the latest developments on flooding. Supported and kept in contact with local authorities affected by the flooding crisis and participated in the national recovery groups convened by the government.

### **Police and Crime**

16. We gave oral evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee's Inquiry on Police and Crime Commissioners, setting out a range of recommendations for strengthening the

ability of Police and Crime Panels to hold Police and Crime Commissioners to account. The Committee adopted many of these recommendations in their final report, including the suggestion that PCCs should have to publish a forward plan of key decisions in the same way councils do.

17. We persuaded the government to amend the injunction provisions in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill to give councils greater powers to tackle anti-social tenants in private rented accommodation, which was one of our key requests in the evidence we gave to the Bill Committee.
18. We established the joint LGA and Association of Police Crime Commissioners joint strategic partnership board, which has discussed a range of issues including domestic violence.
19. We presented key evidence at a number of parliamentary Select Committees and public bill committees where Board members represented the LGA, including the Justice Select Committee's inquiry into the co-ordination of crime reduction policies across Whitehall and the potential impact of the government's Transforming Rehabilitation agenda on reducing re-offending, as well as participating in the Home Office's expert panel on new psychoactive substances.

### **Events and Media**

20. We held a range of successful conferences to support councils in introducing the Scrap Metal Dealers Act, implementing the new tools and powers for tackling anti-social behaviour (including the community trigger provisions) in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act, as well as running the annual Licensing, Fire and Safer Communities conferences.
21. We issued press releases and statements on topics ranging from the Scrap Metal Dealers Act, Police and Crime Commissioners, taxi and private hire vehicles, betting shop clustering, fire service funding, licensing fees and food safety.

### **Programme of work 2014/15**

22. Building on these achievements the Board agreed a number of overarching priorities which form part of the LGA Business Plan for 2014/15:
  - 22.1 Councils work with businesses to determine the right level of risk and regulation for a local area balancing community protection with economic growth.
  - 22.2 Councils and fire and rescue authorities protect people and places from harm, providing the safe environment in which businesses and communities can thrive.
  - 22.3 Councils work effectively with partners to deliver safe and cohesive communities.
23. As well as completing the work started in 13/14, Members have given a steer on the following broad priorities for 14/15: championing the work of councils in tackling serious and organised crime and crimes against vulnerable people (including domestic abuse, FGM, trafficking, working with the children and Young People's board on child sexual

exploitation); continuing to work on the reform of policing and the blue light services; and responding to civil contingency situations. There are some important new issues which Members will want to discuss such as cohesion and values debates (as a result of events in Birmingham schools) and Prevent. We will submit detailed proposals for consideration at the September Board meeting.

24. This provides significant scope for the Safer and Stronger Communities Board to identify innovative projects or campaigns to be delivered over the next year, particularly in the run up to a General Election. **Members are asked to discuss the priorities and propose 2 or 3 innovative projects or campaigns they consider would best support councils in the coming year.**

### **Board Cycle**

25. Lead Members have proposed the following dates for Board in the 2014/15 cycle:

04 September 2014	Councillors' Briefing
15 September 2014	11.00am
01 December 2014	11.00am
23 February 2015	11.00am
08 June 2015	11.00am

26. Rooms in Local Government House have been provisionally booked for each of these dates, however the venue can be rearranged if Members would prefer to meet outside of London for any of the meetings.

### **Financial Implications**

27. All work programmes are met from existing budgets and resources.