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Briefing 06/55

TO: ALL CHIEF EXECUTIVES, MAIN CONTACTS AND EMAIL CONTACTS (England)

CC: ALL CHIEF EXECUTIVES, MAIN CONTACTS (Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland)

'Strong and Prosperous Communities' - The Local Government White Paper, DCLG

Community safety

Key issues:

- *The DCLG has published the White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' and this briefing focuses on Community Safety*
- *Promotes neighbourhood policing and neighbourhood management*
- *Strong leadership expected at executive level*
- *Duty to prepare Local Area Agreement*
- *A duty to co-ordinate with partners*
- *A single set of national outcome indicators for Community Safety*

1. Introduction

The Local Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' was issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government on 26th October, 2006. This briefing is accompanied by a series of other APSE briefings including an executive summary on the White Paper. This Paper focuses on Community Safety.

A full copy of the White Paper is available by clicking on the following link: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1503999>. The Paper provides a framework for local action which will strengthen partnership working and gives communities more say. This is because even though overall crime is down by 35% since 1997, performance of local partners on community safety is too varied. There are problems associated with the large number of different partnerships, performance frameworks and funding streams.

2. Responsive services and empowered communities

The Paper promotes both neighbourhood policing and neighbourhood management;

- Promoting pathfinders
- All areas will have neighbourhood policing by April 2007
- They will promote the wider use of neighbourhood management (rather than this being limited to deprived areas)
- They will develop good practice guidance and model approaches to the integration of neighbourhood management and neighbourhood policing.
- Encouraging local authorities, the police and other relevant partners through new guidance to co-ordinate their consultations

There are also plans for the Community Call for Action to cover all local government matters.

3. Effective, accountable and responsive local government

The DCLG want to see local authorities demonstrating strong leadership on community safety with a single, highly visible figure taking responsibility for community safety at executive level, so that the public know who to hold to account. Regulations are being made through the Police and Justice Bill 2006, which will require the portfolio holder for community safety on the councils' executives to play a key role on the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP). In addition, they expect local authorities to appoint appropriately skilled and representative members to sit on police authorities.

4. Local government as a strategic leader and place-shaper

Local Strategic Partnerships will be the forum for setting the strategic vision for an area and for agreeing priorities for improvement in the Local Area Agreement. The CDRP will be responsible for driving delivery of community safety outcomes.

The Paper intends to build on the reforms set out in the Review of the Crime and Disorder Act Provisions on Partnership Working (<http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/partnerships60.doc>) with:

- A duty on the local authority to prepare the LAA as well as the Sustainable Community Strategy in consultation with others.
- A new duty on the local authority and named partners (including chief constables, police authorities, local probation boards, youth offending teams and fire and rescue authorities) to co-ordinate with each other in agreeing the relevant targets in the LAA.
- Statutory guidance stating that the Sustainable Community Strategy and other regional and national plans should have regard for each other.
- A new duty on the local authority and named partners to have regard to specific targets agreed in the LAA. Where there is sustained underperformance by individual partners against agreed targets, a range of intervention measures are available. However, there is flexibility in the framework to react to changing circumstances.

- The development of a community safety co-ordination structure at county council level in two-tier authorities.

More area-based funding will be brought into the LAA pooled funding pot by April 2009.

5. Performance Framework

It is intended to align the community safety elements of the new performance framework with the community safety elements of the APACS (Assessment of Policing and Community Safety) so that the police, local authorities and other partners are all working towards the same set of indicators and targets. There will be:

- An agreed, single set of national outcome indicators for community safety
- A single agreement between the government and local public service providers on community safety priorities (in the LAA), for which partners will be held jointly responsible.
- An aligned assessment regime – a single way of reporting on and judging performance against each indicator and a single route for using those judgements to inform targets.
- An aligned intervention regime

The aim is for local authority, police and other relevant plans to reflect the same priorities, to have a single set of indicators, agreed priorities to be set out in the LAA and for all relevant partners to have regard to these priorities.

6. Comment

The proposals build on the Respect agenda and on the 46 current commitments to deliver on this across Government departments. The main features include the desire for better communication and co-ordination of services to the public and a focus on neighbourhood management and neighbourhood policing. The emphasis on managing at neighbourhood level as opposed to centrally will be broadly welcomed by local authorities. This local co-ordination is not new to local authorities. The crucial roles of both PCSO's and street wardens in tackling the community safety agenda and having an impact on the liveability agenda and using powers in the Clean Neighbourhoods Act, will be given greater emphasis.

Matt Collins from the Respect Taskforce at the Home Office spoke at the recent APSE Community Safety and Security Advisory Group meeting on 14 November 2006. Matt spoke about the need to tailor services towards local peak times (for instance, evenings and weekends) and the need to set up visible leaders in the local community.

Matt spoke of the need to also engage with those people who don't attend public meetings through engagement with local service providers – for instance, housing officers - and the need to communicate action as opposed to just listening and responding to feedback. APSE has continually stressed the importance of local democracy and the problems associated with the more vociferous communities demanding changes of providers. Other forms of

communication were also highlighted at the meeting, such as communicating action taken by service providers, such as leaflet drops and use of the local media.

The importance of having an accessible route to service providers is highlighted by research (Policing and the criminal justice system – public confidence and perceptions: findings from the 2004/05 British Crime Survey) showing that those members of the public who are more informed also feel more confident in services. There is evidence from previous BCS research which suggests that people who are better informed about crime and the criminal justice system tend to rate the system more highly (Mattinson and Mirlees-Black, 2000). Further research has shown that giving people access to accurate information about crime and the criminal justice system can improve confidence in at least some aspects of the criminal justice system (Chapman *et al.*, 2002; Salisbury 2004).

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