



Home Office

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MINISTER OF STATE

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Irene Lucas
Chair, Lifting the Burdens Task Force
Local Government House
Smith Square
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Dear Irene,

Please find attached the Home Office response to recommendations contained in the *Lifting the Burdens Task Force Review of the Home Office and Youth Justice*. I understand that the Youth Justice Board has responded separately.

The Home Office welcomes and accepts the vast majority of the recommendations in the report. We are committed to reducing burdens on local authorities and their partners. In many cases the Home Office has already met or is taking steps to meet the recommendations, for example through proposals contained in the Policing Green Paper *From the neighbourhood to the national: policing our communities together* (July 2008).

In respect of your recommendation on Local Area Agreements (LAAs), the Policing Green Paper reaffirms the Home Office commitment to LAAs. LAAs are an agreement between central and local government and necessarily need to contain a balance of national and local priorities. It is therefore only right that in places where the Home Office requires a significant improvement in performance to deliver Public Service Agreements (PSAs) and departmental strategic objectives that we maintain a firm position in LAA negotiations.

In respect of the recommendation on the Safer & Stronger Communities Fund, this is now included in the Single Capital Pot which is a non-ringfenced capital only grant. This provides local areas with the maximum flexibility to decide how capital funding is spent without breaking Her Majesty's Treasury fiscal rules. It was previously only possible to 'trade' capital for revenue as long as the overall proportion of capital and revenue was maintained under the old LAA grant.

I would like to thank you once again for the work of you and the Task Force on the review, particularly Philip Bostock for leading the review. The Home Office will continue to operate in the spirit of the review in order to reduce burdens on our partners. The proposal in the Policing Green Paper to drop top down targets for police forces with the exception of a target on confidence is evidence of our commitment to this.

Yours sincerely,

Vernon Coaker

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