

# Lifting the Burdens Task Force

Review of the Home Office and Youth Justice

final report – recommendations  
May 2008

Lifting  
the burdens  
task force

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# Foreword

Dear Home Secretary and Chair of the Youth Justice Board,

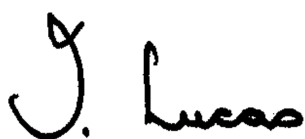
The Lifting the Burdens Task Force's review of the Home Office is our sixth review of a Government department. As with all previous reviews, the aim has been to take a view from the ground of the practical obstacles to delivering locally focussed public services which meet the needs of our communities and allow them to thrive. The actions of the Home Office have a major effect on local government services and local partnership working with the police, with the potential to enable services to work together flexibly towards the best possible outcomes for people.

The approach of this review has been to look at a very broad range of local services that are influenced by the Home Office and this report represents a snapshot of a very fast moving Home Office policy agenda. As all central departments adjust to the new world of increased local flexibility and public services which are closer to communities, it has been our aim to provide constructive challenge to developments as they emerge. We are fortunate that the consultation on the new Assessments of Policing and Community Safety (APACS) framework took place during the course of this review and have taken the opportunity to respond in detail to both parts of this consultation. In developing this report we have also engaged with the next wave of Home Office policy which is being developed through such means as the Flanagan Review, the Crime and Communities Review and the Police Green Paper.

In the course of this review we have seen and heard of many positive developments in the way that the Home Office works with local authorities and partnerships and we commend the Government and the Home Office for making significant strides to support the new Local Area Agreements to allow for genuine devolution of responsibility to the local level. We also recognise the challenge to local authorities to step up to the higher levels of responsibility that the new arrangements afford them.

Whilst recognising the good progress that has been made, we have felt it appropriate to apply further challenge to particular aspects of new and existing performance, funding and assessment arrangements. We have also sought to recommend on how the Home Office can work with the local government sector to ensure that real flexibilities are delivered in practice, particularly in the areas of support to local partnerships and guarding against the onset of new burdens on local authorities.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all those who have given generously of their time to contribute to this review. I would particularly like to thank Philip Bostock, Chief Executive of Exeter City Council for leading the review on behalf of the Task Force, as well as Bruce Luxton, Head of Policy at Exeter, Rob Andrew, Head of Policy at Cornwall County Council, and Ben Wilkinson, the Task Force's Project Officer, for their committed support throughout. Finally I would like to thank colleagues in the Home Office and Youth Justice Board for the positive and constructive way in which they have engaged with this review.



Irene Lucas  
Chair, Lifting the Burdens Task Force

# 1. Introduction and Context

The Lifting the Burdens Task Force was established in September 2006 by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and is chaired by Irene Lucas, Chief Executive of South Tyneside MBC. This specific review was led by Philip Bostock, Chief Executive of Exeter City Council.

It is reassuring that the rhetoric of this vision is now being actively implemented through the provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

The Task Force is charged with undertaking a review of the bureaucratic burdens that exist as a consequence of the current relationship between central and local government. The Task Force has initiated a range of projects examining the nature of the relationship between individual departments of state and local government with a view to identifying specific recommendations for change in the way in which local services are monitored, regulated and held to account by sponsor departments. Each project will undertake a review in order to identify those elements of current reporting arrangements and regulatory requirements that are core to the delivery of effective and accountable service outcomes. At the same time, each project seeks to specify changes to those arrangements and requirements that can help both central and local government to deliver those outcomes more effectively and efficiently.

The practical suggestions for reducing burdens recommended by the Task Force are not just things that should stop happening but are also about those things we can do differently in order to reduce the burden. For these to work and bring about the reduction in burden needed they need to be accompanied by a change in mindset, attitude and behaviour by all the players involved including central and local government, Government agencies and Inspectorates. A change in culture is much harder and takes longer to bring about than a change in policy but it is essential if we are serious about sustaining this new relationship between central and local government.

The Local Government White Paper 2006 set out a clear vision for the future role of local authorities both as deliverers of modern, relevant and value for money services and as providers of effective and accountable leadership for communities. The White Paper sets this objective clearly in the context of a changed relationship between national and local government and between local government and the communities it serves.

*“Our aim... is to reduce radically the number of nationally-required local targets, performance indicators and reporting, and to replace these with new opportunities for citizens to hold their local providers to account for the quality of services”*

(Section 6.6. Strong and Prosperous Communities October 2006).

## 2. Overview of the Review

In early 2007 changes to the architecture of Government had a significant impact on the role and functions of the Home Office. In May 2007 responsibility for the courts, prisons, probation, criminal law and sentencing were transferred to the new Ministry of Justice, leaving the Home Office to focus on policing and community safety, security and counter terrorism and immigration. Whilst all of these functions have an impact on local government it was evident from early discussions with practitioners that, in order to ensure greatest impact, the scope of the review should be limited to the core Home Office business of crime and disorder reduction and community safety.

Against this backdrop of structural change it became immediately clear that the review was being launched in a busy landscape of related work, including the Flanagan Review of Policing, the work of the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) and the Louise Casey Review around involving communities in the fight against crime.

The review has also spanned the emergence of entirely new performance management frameworks for the police and local authorities as proposals for Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), Assessments of Policing and Community Safety (APACS) and the content of the National Indicator Set (NIS) were issued for consultation. In this regard the review has been particularly timely and compilation of a Task Force response to these new proposals has been at the core of this review.

A particular area of concern to local authorities at the start of this review was what was reported to be a very burdensome performance management system from the Youth Justice Board. Although this is not in the direct remit of the Home Office, we felt it appropriate include the closely related area of youth justice in this review, and have been encouraged by the significant developments taking place to streamline performance and assessment arrangements for youth offending teams.

Within this fast changing landscape, the role of this review was identified as:

- Providing a clear channel through which local government practitioners could influence current policy developments such as APACS, CAA and National Indicators
- Supporting the Home Office in effectively implementing the new LAA framework in the spirit of a mature dialogue between equal partners by highlighting what does and does not work well from experience

- Ensuring that the next wave of Home Office policy which is currently being developed through policy reviews and the Police Green Paper incorporates the learning of the people who implement it in local partnerships

During the course of this review the Task Force has engaged with and gathered evidence from a wide range of people within local government from the operational to the strategic, in individual councils through the call for evidence and collectively from groups such as the LGA and the National Community Safety Network, so that a balanced view of the issues can be taken. A full list of those who participated is included in appendix B.

The review involved 4 main strands of activity:

- **Group Meetings** - 4 meetings of the review group (for membership see annex) were held to set the scope of the review, to gain vital input from practitioners and to engage with colleagues from the Home Office.
- **Call for Evidence** - This was sent out to all local authorities in England seeking the views of practitioners on the barriers to effective working. Over 30 responses were received and the results were discussed at a roundtable meeting with Home Office and local government representatives.
- **Response to APACS Strategic and Technical Consultations** - The review has drawn on its Call for Evidence and the input from practitioners to inform a strategic response to both of these consultations
- **NIS** - In December LBTF and the LGA led a workshop for over 90 local authority representatives to enable a detailed response on crime and community safety indicators, as part of a wider LBTF/LGA event on the NIS.

The key findings and recommendations are summarised on the following pages under the following headings:

- Assessments of Policing and Community Safety (APACS)
- Specific Grants and Funding
- Neighbourhood management, Neighbourhood policing and community Engagement
- Youth Justice

# 3. Assessments of Policing and Community Safety (APACS)

It is fortunate that the timing of this review coincided with the Home Office's consultation on the new APACS strategic framework and the technical consultation on performance indicators. We took the opportunity to respond to these consultations in some detail, and a summary of our technical comments can be found in Appendix C.

The Task Force recognises the Home Office's commitment to delivering the ambitions of the Local Government White Paper as represented by the APACS proposals. The Task Force strongly supports the overall strategic vision of APACS to promote joint working between public services at the local level, to align with the new performance framework for local government, to focus on priority outcomes and to balance national and local priorities. The Home Office has clearly taken a bold step forward in its approach to local delivery which is to be welcomed by all who are engaged in the effort to make our communities safer.

Whilst the principles of APACS are pleasing, we urge the Home Office to avoid at all costs the risk of faltering in the delivery of a proportionate and outcome focussed performance framework which allows local public services the flexibility and autonomy to focus on what really matters to local people. We recognise that it will not be easy for the Home Office to balance national and local priorities and that a new way of working will be required, but we cannot over-emphasise the importance of allowing space for locally led solutions which are closer to the real issues and which we believe will ultimately be more effective in delivering the safer communities which we are all working towards.

## Performance Indicators

Our main concern with the current proposals for APACS is that they leave the door open to additional performance indicators outside of the 198 national indicators agreed by Cabinet Ministers to be the only indicators for local government, as well as to additional inspections, for example of CDRPs, outside of the Comprehensive Area Assessment being developed by the joint inspectorates.

### Recommendation 1

**The Home Office should commit to not adding any new performance indicators against which local authority services will be judged. If the Home Office feels that a new national indicator is absolutely needed, this should be matched by the removal of an existing indicator on a one in one out basis.**

The Task Force is opposed to the inclusion in principle of Key Diagnostic Indicators as they are largely in areas covered by the National Indicator Set and therefore in practice could add to the National Indicator Set. There is a concern that nationally required indicators of this

nature may form a part of the performance assessment as they will affect the interpretation of the headline performance indicators. Local authorities will supplement the NIS and 'drill down' for context with other locally determined information but any national indicators outside of the NIS should be voluntary and local authorities must neither be required nor expected to collect it unless they feel it is useful for managing the business locally.

### Recommendation 2

**The Home Office should ensure that Key Diagnostic Indicators are in no way used as a part of performance assessment and that any indicators included as "Place Holders" are subject to the same consultation as those included in detail in the National Indicator Set.**

The frequent changes in the definitions of crime indicators in past years have made it very difficult to analyse trends in data, creating a burden on local service planning. If the new set of performance indicators is to support local delivery effectively, the indicators must remain consistent over time and should not be added to. If in exceptional circumstances the Home Office identifies the need to remove an existing indicator and replace this with a new indicator, local authorities should be fully consulted through a transparent and representative process. We recommend that the Home Office works with the Lifting the Burdens Task Force and the Local Government Association to create such a review function.

### Recommendation 3

**A representative and transparent local authority review mechanism should be established to act as gatekeepers, reviewing periodically with the Home Office the practical application of APACS and the new local performance framework, and their continued integration, to prevent burdens from creeping back into the system.**

One very real burden raised time and time again by Youth Offending Team (YOT) practitioners has been that of the conflicting and perverse incentives caused by the opposition of targets around offences, and in particular very minor offences, committed by young people. This relates to the police targets on sanction detections and offences brought to justice being in conflict with the YOT targets on first-time entrants to the criminal justice system. Not only has this caused bureaucratic burdens but it has had the potential to seriously disadvantage the young people concerned, potentially with adverse effects throughout their adult life.

It appears that the recent changes in the APACS performance framework should have gone a long way towards addressing this problem, by virtue of the police Statutory Performance Indicators now being limited to

the more serious end of the offending spectrum. This is welcome progress on an issue which has troubled many practitioners for some time - both in YOTs and within the police service. However, sanction detection and Offences Brought to Justice in relation to lesser offences will still be captured by the Key Diagnostic Indicators (KDI) in APACS and a risk still remains that the interpretation and implementation of KDIs by the police could cause the problem to persist. Equally there may be a risk of "up tariff" charging by the police, taking offenders into a more serious crime bracket captured by the sanction detection and OBTJ targets. Whilst these are unlikely to be major risks, such is their potential impact on the lives of the young people concerned that there should be close monitoring and review of the impact of these welcome adjustments to the performance management system.

### **Negotiating Local Priorities**

This review has also coincided with the negotiation of the new Local Area Agreements for 2008-11. During this process the Task Force has heard from a number of authorities of different types and in various regions that the Home Office's approach to LAA negotiations has not always been based on sound evidence and a thorough understanding of the specific needs of each area. Whilst we recognise the Home Office's engagement in the new LAA process, we are aware that there are still lessons that can be learnt on all sides as to how the LAA process can be further improved. We would encourage the Home Office to further develop a more robust approach to identifying the particular needs of each local area.

### **Recommendation 4**

**The Home Office should develop a more nuanced and local evidence based approach to negotiating LAAs and their understanding of the specific needs and priorities of different places.**

### **Inspection**

Local government, as the highest performing and most efficient part of the public sector, is now at a stage where the burden of inspection must be reduced in order to free up resources and create the local flexibility to continually improve local services. It is also clear that the next level of improvement cannot be reached unless the system of inspection and performance management is fundamentally restructured to support local partnership working and to focus on local needs as expressed by the public locally.

We welcome developments from the Home Office to use the same performance indicators in APACS as in the National Indicator Set to this end, but more needs to be done to fully deliver this vision. In particular the Home Office must fully support the delivery of the Government's commitment to significantly reduce future inspection burdens through a proportionate and joined up local

inspection process under the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).

### **Recommendation 5**

**The Home Office should follow through its commitment to align APACS with CAA to ensure that the overall assessment framework:**

- is coordinated between inspectorates
- works with clear protocols
- is a proportionate inspection that draws on far fewer national performance indicators and uses information already being used by local public services
- has coordinated inspection activity so that multiple requests for information are avoided
- focuses on outcomes considered most important for local people in local areas i.e. a shift of emphasis from national/regional performance monitoring of inflexible mandatory targets to the delivery of locally agreed targets, local area performance and assessment
- uses the same 'joint assessment of the prospects for the local area' as CAA
- places significant reliance on effective self-assessment
- reduces overlap in inspectorate contact, information gathering and reporting (e.g. avoids multiple interviews of some key staff)
- ensures that there is no duplication, overlap or conflicting judgements in the assessment of local community safety outcomes.

The delivery of this vision through CAA would be seriously undermined by any form of performance monitoring and inspection outside of this process. We therefore call on the Home Office to make a clear commitment not to add any new programmes of monitoring or inspection outside of CAA.

### **Recommendation 6**

**The Home Office should clearly commit to only monitor and inspect local government services through the CAA process.**

### **Supporting Improvement**

The experience of Home Office partnership support, as given to the 44 'priority areas' during 2007/08, has been welcomed by some CDRPs, whereas others have indicated that it was counter-productive. It would appear from evidence submitted to us that there are lessons to be learnt in the following areas:

- A centrally mandated emphasis on volume crime reduction, as opposed to local priorities, resulted in an over-emphasis on largely police-led responses on autocrime, violence, criminal damage and burglary.

This was largely irrespective of any previously agreed partnership priorities. Little activity was directed at promoting public reassurance, addressing fear of crime or dealing with low-level anti-social behaviour.

- Some partners perceived the PSA1 focus as primarily a police issue. In some cases this has undone existing partnership development - resulting in reduced participation from non-police/community safety agencies and reinforcement of the perception that community safety is primarily a policing and criminal justice responsibility. As a result, agencies that prefer to adopt a more holistic 'neighbourhood management' concept (including the health and social care sectors), remain on the fringes of activity.
- Focus on one acquisitive crime type inevitably produces a spike in another - '*Crime-type displacement*' - with offenders seeking alternative methods of generating income when their normal modus operandi becomes too risky or ineffective. This displacement was experienced by a number of CDRPs/CSPs, as offenders swapped between burglary in a dwelling and autocrime. The potential unintended consequences of setting crime type priorities are therefore to risk provoking corresponding increases in alternative and perhaps more serious crimes such as street robbery, drug dealing or prostitution.
- In some cases, high reported crime rates were more a reflection of high reporting rates

Policy developments such as the new PSA 23, the Hallmarks of Effective Partnerships guidance and APACS suggest that some of these lessons are being addressed – particularly the need to place much more focus on the wider community safety agenda, and setting strategic priorities that address the key drivers of crime, such as deprivation, substance misuse and mental health problems. The next step will be to develop a model of support for CDRPs which goes beyond centrally led targets and guidance, towards improvement and innovation which is led by the local government sector.

*"We would like to see more sector-led support and intervention – rather than partnership support directly from the Home Office. We believe that such a peer-led approach to partnership development would better support the Home Office emphasis on local priorities and accountability, and could provide a welcome boost to the emphasis on CDRP/CSP knowledge and skills."*

National Community Safety Network

All performance monitoring, support and challenge must operate within a framework of support agreed by local and central government, which gives priority to sector led challenge and support with Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs) at the heart of delivery arrangements. The Home Office will need to support the development of the RIEPs in order to fulfil this role. The Government's National Improvement and Efficiency

Strategy commits to the principle that "improvement of public services is led by councils working in partnership with local communities and other public service providers. And that improvement will be made more effective by devolving more resources as close to the front line as possible and creating space for greater local decision making by councils together with their partners". Practically this means giving the sector space to tackle areas of risk before central intervention.

The Home Office will need to support the development of the RIEPs in order to fulfil this role and will need to engage RIEPs in existing support work. There will be a need for information sharing on performance management and support related issues between the Home Office Partnership Support Unit and the respective RIEPs. We welcome steps already taken by the Home Office in committing to the National Improvement and Efficiency Prospectus and showing a willingness to support early efforts to build the capacity of RIEPs.

#### **Recommendation 7**

The Home Office (Partnership Performance Support Unit), CLG, Government Offices and Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs) should clarify their respective roles and responsibilities in relation to the oversight of CDRPs, their powers of support and intervention and the links with Comprehensive Area Assessment.

#### **Recommendation 8**

The Home Office and Government Offices should maintain their measured approach to the application of the new CDRP regulations in recognition of the potential burden for CDRPs in low crime areas and those with limited resources.

#### **Recommendation 9**

The Local Government Association, IDeA and the Home Office should work together to review current partnership support arrangements and develop a proposal for shifting the emphasis from central government to local government led support in line with the approach set out in the National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy, by building the capacity of the new Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships. Sector led partnership support would be facilitated if the Home Office shared national CDRP (iQuanta) data and statistics with the national and regional local government bodies that are seeking to develop such an approach, such as the LGA, IDeA and RIEPs.

## 4. Specific Grants and Funding

The Task Force welcomes the pooling of the Crime Reduction, Drugs Strategy and Anti Social Behaviour specific grants into the new Area Based Grant (ABG). However, there are still several practical issues around other Home Office funding streams which have been brought to our attention. This chapter sets out a series of steps which we urge the Home Office to consider seriously in order to ensure that there is sufficient flexibility for resources to be allocated to priority needs locally.

The Safer and Stronger Communities Fund (SSCF) capital element has now become a direct capital ring-fenced grant, outside of ABG. There is considerable frustration amongst community safety practitioners that the Home Office have long insisted on prescriptive capital/revenue splits in the funds they allocate when, in reality, the primary need locally is almost always seen as being revenue, rather than capital, funding. Compliance with this prescription has undoubtedly skewed some community safety spending in the past away from the highest local priorities. In 2007/08, however, it was possible for that capital element to be swapped for revenue from elsewhere in the wider LAA funding pot, to the mutual advantage of different LAA themes and priorities. From 2008 it appears that this flexibility will again be removed. This is a retrograde step which is out of kilter with the purpose and spirit of the ABG and the LAA and which should be corrected for future years.

The BCU Commander's Fund remains outside of the Area Based Grant for 2008-2009 and is therefore not fully integrated into the LAA process. We welcome the very recent confirmation from the Home Office of local flexibility to pool this funding stream with the ABG and the encouragement from the Home Office to align the spending of this fund with LAA priorities. Fully incorporating this fund into the ABG at central government level from April 2009 would give local partners greater flexibility in directing the funds towards locally identified priorities and would help to strengthen the LAA process.

The Task Force welcomes the recent inclusion of the Home Office element of the Young Persons Substance Misuse Partnership Grant into ABG. During the course of the review there was some concern expressed by local authorities about the status and allocation of this grant and whilst we are pleased that this has now been resolved, the delay in this announcement served to hamper service planning and budget setting.

An example of the real difficulties for practitioners caused by erratic or delayed funding decisions by the Home Office is that of the funding given for accredited Special Domestic Violence Courts, in respect of the annual contribution towards the cost of employing Domestic Violence Advocates. This funding of £20,000

per Advocate (which must be matched by a local authority contribution) has been administered in a way which has caused these important appointments to be delayed or to be made on a speculative basis, because funding has not been confirmed until half way through the financial year in which it is to be spent. Conversely, in other cases the funding for employing the Advocate has been confirmed two months ahead of the start date for the new Court, but the formal announcement of the new Court itself has still not been forthcoming by the start of the year in which it is meant to operate. This sort of erratic and disjointed decision making clearly causes unnecessary uncertainty and inefficiency in the delivery of Home Office supported programmes by local government.

The late announcement of Drug Interventions Programme funding allocations was also a significant hindrance. We also suggest that the Home Office gives careful consideration to pooling this specific grant into the Area Based Grant from April 2009.

Sudden reductions in grant funding from the Home Office to particular services have not been uncommon in the past. Where this has occurred, local service delivery has been significantly hindered and services have been unable to effectively manage the impact due to the short notice given. To mitigate against the negative impacts of funding reductions on local services and therefore on local outcomes, any future reduction in funding should be announced with sufficient notice and local partnerships should be consulted about arrangements for the tapering of funds over an agreed period.

### **Recommendation 10**

The Home Office must ensure that local authorities are given appropriate notification of any additional funding or any reductions in funding that may emerge in the middle of the LAA period to facilitate planning and synchronisation with the budget cycles and processes of local authorities, the police and other partners.

### **Recommendation 11**

There should be a general presumption that any new funding streams from the Home Office to local authorities be included in the Area Based Grant unless there are clear and widely agreed reasons not to do so. This should also apply to the existing DIP fund, as well as to the police funding represented by the BCU Commander's Fund.

### **Recommendation 12**

The Home Office and CLG should work together to find a way of restoring flexibility in the use of the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund Capital Grant, within the context of the overall LAA pot.

**Recommendation 13**

The Home Office should work with other Government Departments to bring clarity and early notice as to funding streams for activities, such as substance misuse by young people, to facilitate planning and synchronisation with the long term budget cycles of local authorities, police, health and other partners.

# 5. Neighbourhood Management, Neighbourhood Policing and Community Engagement

The Task Force welcomes the final report of the Flanagan Review, in particular we support the recognition of the need for greater local flexibility, which increasingly complex problems demand, as well as the many recommendations which are set out to promote more effective partnership working at the local level. We also welcome the recognition that neighbourhood management and community engagement models vary greatly between different areas and that solutions must be tailored to each locality individually to meet local circumstances.

The effectiveness of the Home Office's increased focus on neighbourhood policing will depend in large part on how it is implemented. Whilst we recognise that local implementation will be determined by local negotiation, we would emphasise the need for the Home Office to make full use of its influence to ensure that activities are effectively co-ordinated on the ground. The recent experiences of the police led Police and Communities Together (PACT) panels have served to illustrate some of the challenges.

Responses to our call for evidence and subsequent discussions have led us to a view that, whilst many areas have had positive experiences of recent community engagement initiatives such as PACT panels or Safer Neighbourhood Panels, an equal number of local authorities have had real difficulties in co-ordinating community engagement with the police, as our two case studies below illustrate. In this section we aim to highlight the balance of the feedback that we have received on this subject, including the positive experiences, challenges encountered and successful local solutions.

*"It is felt the partnerships were very successful and meaningful, empowering and involving local people in decision making and activity to improve their neighbourhood."*

City of Bradford MDC

*"Locally the PACT work undertaken has proved very beneficial in determining local priorities. Where possible, PACT groups or opportunities for consultation regarding PACT has been undertaken with existing groups."*

South Devon and Dartmoor CDRP

## **Case study 1: The roll out of PACT panels**

This example of the implementation of PACT panels gives an illustration of the burden that can be created for local authorities when local partnership working and community engagement is poorly implemented.

The police have chosen their definition of a 'neighbourhood' themselves, without consultation, although they are trying to modify what they are doing now we have pointed out the problems. [The council] already has an established community partnership approach, with market towns as a hub, and this was not looked at by the police before designing their approach so is difficult to join up with the PACTS. The police tell us that the guidance for PACTS is extremely prescriptive. They are using district wards as a definition of a neighbourhood although would like to use smaller areas. We have, say, 30 wards. 13 PACT panels are planned now, with more to follow. PACT panels meet every 6 weeks and identify 3 priorities for action to be reported back at next meeting. The emerging priorities are all, so far, district or county problems,

So, 13 PACT panels will create 39 priorities every 6 weeks, 312 priorities per year. If they implement 30 PACT panels, these will create 90 priorities every six weeks and 720 priorities per year. We are a small council with 65,000 residents. We have a very small number of people to service this (3, of whom it is only one small part of their jobs). The problems are all of the complex sort which will require gathering community support and multi agency action.

We recognise that the challenge to make local community engagement and partnerships work effectively lies very much with the local organisations concerned. We therefore put the challenge to local government to take ownership of such issues and to make use of their freedoms to find local solutions. The case study below shows that this can be achieved even across a large county with three tiers of local government.

However we would also encourage the Home Office to ensure that any guidance that is issued to the police on partnership and community initiatives fully recognises and supports the central role of local authorities and locally elected members in community leadership. Such guidance must also be designed to take account of the need for the police to work flexibly between different local authority areas.

**Case Study 2: The roll out of PACT panels**

This example of the implementation of PACT panels gives an illustration of effective local partnership working between the police and local authorities that can be achieved through locally led solutions.

In Shropshire, the County Council has led on the establishment of 'local joint committees' across the county. These are meetings of county, district and town and parish councils who have a delegated budget and meet on a quarterly basis.

One of the early and strong pieces of feedback from the public attending these meetings was that this was a crowded field with the same people going to PACT meetings, these meetings and other consultation events raising the same issues. The Whitchurch and Prees local joint committee took this challenge on and with agreement from West Mercia Constabulary they piloted combining the PACT meeting into the local joint committee meeting. The PACT session is held at the start of the meeting and the police are able to deal directly with the policing issues and the representatives from the three layers of local government are able to deal with non-policing issues.

Issues raised are either dealt with there and then or follow up action is taken. One such example followed a complaint being raised by local people concerning the widening of a pavement in Tilstock by the Highways Development Control service as part of recent housing development. The widened road was causing problems for buses to stop and the police were concerned. A site visit resulted in agreement to take the pavement back to the original width. This was greeted very positively by both local parish councils and the public.

The meetings are publicised jointly and the administration arrangements are shared between the Police and County Council. The public's response has been very positive with attendance levels between 50 – 100 people per meeting. The success of this initiative has led to an agreement that the PACT can continue to be combined into the local joint committee.

A particular theme raised by many local authorities seeking to work in partnership with the police in community engagement was the recognition of the role of councillors. In a number of cases, democratically elected representatives of the local public were not always appropriately recognised by community panels which were led by the police. There is a need for the Home Office to consider how to support the police to engage effectively with the local public and their elected representatives, and we look forward to the findings of the Crime and Communities Review in this area.

**Recommendation 14**

The Home Office and Cabinet Office should ensure that PACT panels, Safer Neighbourhood Panels, and any new neighbourhood engagement initiatives that emerge from the Flanagan Review and the Crime and Communities Review, dovetail with local authorities' neighbourhood engagement arrangements, and are consolidated to avoid confusion of responsibilities and excessive consultation of the local public.

## 6. Youth Justice

At the start of this review, the Task Force expressed serious concerns about the high number of individual data items which local authorities were expected to report to the Youth Justice Board annually outside of the National Indicator Set, and the approach to LAA negotiations with local authorities which had been taken. However, during the course of the review we have been encouraged by the approach which YJB have taken to design a new, more proportionate performance framework to align with CAA, which will be based on a self assessment to support local management decisions.

### **Context – the Youth Justice Performance Framework**

Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) were created by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and became fully operational in April 2000. For the first time, the strategic direction of locally delivered and funded youth justice services was driven nationally with targets set by the YJB to meet the agreed national targets and objectives.

Targets set for YOTs were a combination of operational process targets which YOTs are entirely responsible for achieving, and aspirational targets which put the onus on partnership delivery, such as education, training and employment (ETE), accommodation and mental health. For the financial year 2007-08, there are 12 national KPIs which are reported on quarterly to the YJB.

Since 2000, YOT services have expanded significantly, with some aspects funded directly by the YJB. In 2002 the YJB introduced a rolling “Effective Practice Quality Assurance Programme” (EPQA) requiring YJB validation on key areas of service delivery. In addition YOTs are subject to a number of audits such as the National Standards quarterly and annual audit, Race Action Plan audit and they are required to submit vast quantities of operational throughput data as defined in the 2007-08 YJB Counting Rules.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places a statutory requirement on local authorities to submit an annual Youth Justice Plan, detailing performance and planning to meet the KPIs. Exemptions have been introduced in England for 3 and 4 star authorities.

### **The burden on front line case management**

These requirements have influenced the development and use of electronic case management systems within YOTs and in particular there has been an emphasis on ensuring that the recording of casework and all interventions is done in a way that satisfies YJB reporting requirements. To some extent this has put the emphasis on satisfying quantitative data collection at the expense of the qualitative aspects of casework recording. It has become apparent that this is a significant tension for

managers and one which needs addressing if they are to be able to give clear and consistent messages to frontline staff about priorities for casework recording. The two aspects are not mutually exclusive and the development of a new case management system for YOTs needs to enable both to be satisfied. This will be aided if YJB reporting requirements are prioritised and significantly reduced.

YJB has calculated that that there were 728 data items that YOTs reported on quarterly in 2007/08, which has been reduced to 365 in 2008/09, plus 127 annual items in 07/08, reduced to 92 in 08/09. The reduction in individual data items reported per year has therefore been from 3039 to 1552, approximately half. These are headline figures so do not necessarily reflect the actual proportion by which the burden on the front line will be reduced. We welcome the YJB’s commitment to continued consultation with practitioners as to how the burden can be reduced as far as possible.

The frequency of data reporting from YOTs to the centre is also of concern to the Task Force. The Government’s commitment to reducing the burden on local services and treating local government as an equal partner should be matched by a reduction in the frequency with which data is required to be reported, which should be no more than once per year, in line with the National Indicator Set. The Task Force sees no need for a greater frequency of national data reporting, given that these are locally managed services. The need to answer parliamentary questions with quarterly data is not sufficient grounds for making any such requirement.

### **Recommendation 15**

**The development of a new case management system for YOTs needs to enable both quantitative data collection and qualitative aspects of casework recording to be satisfied. The current review of YJB reporting requirements should lead to a more effectively prioritised and significantly reduced reporting system.**

### **Recommendation 16**

**The YJB and Ministry of Justice should reduce the required frequency of youth justice data to an annual report, as is the case for all of Government through the National Indicator Set.**

### **The burden on strategic management**

Since the creation of YOTs there have been significant changes for all YOT partners. Police, Health, Education, Social Services, Probation and local authorities have all undergone significant changes and developments. We have also seen the introduction of LCJBs, and a raft of new community safety and anti-social behaviour policy and legislation.

These changes have altered the strategic positioning of YOTs, with many of them more strategically integrated than ever before both with criminal justice partners and with children's services and health partners. In addition, the heightened profile of CDRPs and their role in tackling anti-social behaviour has created greater potential for YOTs' contribution to the community safety agenda.

With increasing integration of strategic planning through the LCJB, LAA and Children and Young People's Plans, many of the original YJB targets, and particularly those that required partnership delivery to meet them, are subsumed into other plans. For example, the LCJB delivery plan includes the PYO performance, LAAs can include youth justice targets relating to offending and re-offending, and children's plans can include targets relating to education for young offenders, suitable accommodation, substance misuse, mental health and parenting support. It is therefore timely for the YJB to review its reporting requirements and to rationalise these to, wherever possible, avoid duplication of reporting for YOTs.

#### **Recommendation 17**

The proposals for the new Youth Justice Planning Framework must enable YOTs to demonstrate how they will achieve national objectives at a local level, whilst allowing sufficient flexibility to meet local priorities according to identified needs.

#### **Recommendation 18**

The Youth Justice Board must follow through with its commitment to develop a much more proportionate performance framework which aligns with CAA, reduces significantly the data reporting burden and which is based on a self assessment which supports local management decisions.

For this to be effective, YJB and the Ministry of Justice must make a commitment not to add any new performance indicators, or programmes of inspection to this framework.

## 7. Conclusion

This review has found much evidence of a growing momentum in the Home Office towards increasing local flexibility in order to allow local public services to work more effectively and closely with each other and with the local communities that they serve in order to create a safer environment for all. The alignment of performance indicators for the police and local authorities, and the pooling of some specific grants into the Area Based Grant for Local Area Agreements are testament to this. The clear vision to continue to increase community safety through a greater focus on neighbourhoods and the integration of neighbourhood management with neighbourhood policing also supports the aim of working more flexibly to meet local needs.

There is very significant scope for building on these developments in the next 12 months as we move to the introduction of the Comprehensive Area Assessment and the full introduction of APACS in April 2009. The Home Office must fully support CAA as the single inspection framework for local authorities and their local partnerships and not add any new forms of inspection or assessment outside of this process. Likewise it is vital that no new indicators are added to the agreed set of 198 national indicators for local government, and that any changes to the existing set are agreed with local government through a transparent process.

It will also be a very important year for the developments of the new youth justice performance framework and we strongly urge the Youth Justice Board to see through their commitment to radically reduce information demands and to ensure that the new arrangements not only free up time and resources to be focussed on delivering outcomes, but also support strong local strategic management and planning.

There is an urgent need for the Home Office to consider its approach to monitoring and supporting areas of low performance and to ensure that the Government commitment in the National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy to give priority to local government led improvement initiatives is delivered in this area. There is a real need for agreeing clear roles for all players involved in inspection, assessment, support and intervention and for a longer term agreement to rebalance the management of poor performance towards the local level, with increasing emphasis on working through the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships.

Finally, in order to see through the successful development of all of these strands and for maintaining the flexibility of the new performance framework, we would reiterate the suggestion that the Home Office works with local authorities to review periodically the

practical application of the new arrangements and to prevent burdens from creeping back into the system. Local authorities must also ensure that they respond effectively and efficiently to the enhanced policy framework before them.

# Appendix A

## Summary of Recommendations

1. The Home Office should commit to not adding any new performance indicators against which local authority services will be judged. If the Home Office feels that a new national indicator is absolutely needed, this should be matched by the removal of an existing indicator on a one in one out basis.
2. The Home Office should ensure that Key Diagnostic Indicators are in no way used as a part of performance assessment and that any indicators included as "Place Holders" are subject to the same consultation as those included in detail in the National Indicator Set.
3. A representative and transparent local authority review mechanism should be established to act as gatekeepers, reviewing periodically with the Home Office the practical application of APACS and the new local performance framework, and their continued integration, to prevent burdens from creeping back into the system.
4. The Home Office should develop a more nuanced and local evidence based approach to negotiating LAAs and their understanding of the specific needs and priorities of different places.
5. The Home Office should follow through its commitment to align APACS with CAA to ensure that the overall assessment framework:
  - is coordinated between inspectorates
  - works with clear protocols
  - is a proportionate inspection that draws on far fewer national performance indicators and uses information already being used by local public services
  - has coordinated inspection activity so that multiple requests for information are avoided
  - focuses on outcomes considered most important for local people in local areas i.e. a shift of emphasis from national/regional performance monitoring of inflexible mandatory targets to the delivery of locally agreed targets, local area performance and assessment
  - uses the same 'joint assessment of the prospects for the local area' as CAA
  - places significant reliance on effective self-assessment
  - reduces overlap in inspectorate contact, information gathering and reporting (e.g. avoids multiple interviews of some key staff)
6. The Home Office should clearly commit to only monitor and inspect local government services through the CAA process.
7. The Home Office (Partnership Performance Support Unit), CLG, Government Offices and Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs) should clarify their respective roles and responsibilities in relation to the oversight of CDRPs, their powers of support and intervention and the links with Comprehensive Area Assessment.
8. The Home Office and Government Offices should maintain their measured approach to the application of the new CDRP regulations in recognition of the potential burden for CDRPs in low crime areas and those with limited resources.
9. The Local Government Association, IDeA and the Home Office should work together to review current partnership support arrangements and develop a proposal for shifting the emphasis from central government to local government led support in line with the approach set out in the National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy, by building the capacity of the new Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships. Locally led partnership support would be facilitated if the Home Office was able to share national CDRP (iQuanta) data and statistics with the LGA, IDeA and RIEPs.
10. The Home Office must ensure that local authorities are given appropriate notification of any additional funding or any reductions in funding that may emerge in the middle of the LAA period to facilitate planning and synchronisation with the budget cycles/processes of local authorities, the police and other partners.
11. There should be a general presumption that any new funding streams from the Home Office to local authorities be included in the Area Based Grant unless there are clear and widely agreed reasons not to do so. This should also apply to the existing DIP fund, as well as to the police funding represented by the BCU Commander's Fund.
12. The Home Office and CLG should work together to find a way of restoring flexibility in the use of the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund Capital Grant, within the context of the overall LAA pot.
13. The Home Office should work with other Government Departments to bring clarity and early notice as to funding streams for activities, such as substance misuse by young people, to facilitate planning and synchronisation with the long term budget cycles of local authorities, the police, health and other partners.

14. The Home Office and Cabinet Office should ensure that PACT panels, Safer Neighbourhood Panels, and any new neighbourhood engagement initiatives that emerge from the Flanagan Review and the Crime and Communities Review, dovetail with local authorities' neighbourhood engagement arrangements, and are consolidated to avoid confusion of responsibilities and excessive consultation of the local public.
15. The development of a new case management system for YOTs needs to enable both quantitative data collection and qualitative aspects of casework recording to be satisfied. The current review of YJB reporting requirements should lead to a more effectively prioritised and significantly reduced reporting system.
16. The YJB and Ministry of Justice should reduce the required frequency of youth justice data to an annual report, as is the case for all of Government through the National Indicator Set.
17. The proposals for the new Youth Justice Planning Framework must enable YOTs to demonstrate how they will achieve national objectives at a local level, whilst allowing sufficient flexibility to meet local priorities according to identified needs.
18. The Youth Justice Board must follow through with its commitment to develop a much more proportionate performance framework which aligns with CAA, reduces significantly the data reporting burden and which is based on a self assessment which supports local management decisions. For this to be effective, YJB and the Ministry of Justice must make a commitment not to add any new performance indicators, or programmes of inspection to this framework.

# Appendix B

## Acknowledgements

In researching and drafting this report we are indebted to the assistance and submissions given the following colleagues and organisations:

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County Durham Youth Engagement Service  
East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership  
East Sussex Youth Offending Team  
Exeter Community Safety Partnership  
Greater Manchester YOT Managers  
Hampshire County Council  
Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership  
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames  
National Community Safety Network  
North Dorset District Council  
Newcastle under Lyme CDRP  
Police Federation  
Redcar and Cleveland Safer Stronger Communities Partnership  
Rochdale Safer Communities Partnership  
Safer Communities North East Lincolnshire  
Sandwell MBC  
Shropshire County Council  
South Devon and Dartmoor CDRP (including the YOT)  
South Somerset District Council  
Surrey Police  
Taunton Deane Borough Council  
Thurrock Council  
Tunbridge Wells Community Safety Partnership  
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For further information please visit: [www.communities.gov.uk/liftingburdens](http://www.communities.gov.uk/liftingburdens)

# Appendix C

## Summary Response to the APACS Technical Consultation

1. The Lifting the Burdens Task Force has worked jointly with the LGA to generate the commentary on the indicators for this response (see templates below). The material we are submitting is drawn from two workshops for councils attended by around 100 individuals covering policy and performance, research and service specialists. In addition, we have consulted with our Policy Associate network and drawn upon responses received through the LGA's "adviser" contacts, their monthly improvement newsletter, the County Council's Network and the IDeA's policy and performance online community of practice. We hope that views contained in this document will lead to further, necessary revision to the indicators to ensure they provide a workable basis to agree LAA targets and support the delivery of better local outcomes for local people. We would like to work further with the Home Office to support this before the set is finalised.
2. The reporting level for the shared APACS and National Indicator Set (NIS) PIs should be by default the CDRP as this is where the most effective action can be taken. Where this is not immediately possible every effort should be taken to move to a CDRP reporting level by 2010.
3. Relying on one partner to collect information may be problematic – information sharing depends on partners working to the same priorities – and the LBTF is not convinced that consistency and accuracy can be relied upon yet and will need to be tested.
4. The definitions used need to be much clearer and more consistent – particularly that of 'anti-social behaviour', which is treated differently in different indicators. For example in NI 17 there is a clear definition. In NIs 21 & 27 the definition of what constitutes 'anti-social behaviour' is left up to the respondent.
5. A number of the PIs in APACS are perception indicators. The LBTF has concerns about the usefulness of perception based indicators, and believes that in those indicators using them it would be better to ask for people's direct experience of the type of crime involved, rather than collecting information on perceptions formed by second-hand evidence and media reporting.
6. A number of indicators are expressed as results per 1000 population. For example the crime rate indicators NI 15, 16 and 20. This is quite sensible as it allows more meaningful comparison between authorities. On the other hand some indicators such as NI 47 and 48 have their results reported as percentages which allow neither meaningful tracking of progress nor comparison between

authorities. The comments on NI 47 provide further detail. Generally too little care has been taken to normalize indicators to ensure that meaningful comparisons can be drawn both over time and between authorities.

7. There are a number of indicators that duplicate others or measure very similar things. The LBTF believes the Home Office should carefully review the indicators on this basis and eliminate any duplicate indicators. Indicators for consideration should include NIs 24 & 25 which are very similar to NIs 17 & 21.
8. The LBTF also believes that the Home Office should, in reviewing the proposed be able to delete some of the proposed indicators. For example NI 31 will be unable to capture meaningful information, and should therefore be scrapped.
9. The LBTF does not believe there are any gaps in the proposed set of indicators.
10. To summarise, the most problematic indicators for the LBTF are:

NI 24/25	Satisfaction with the way in which ASB has been dealt with	Major issues with how this information will be recorded and how meaningful it can be. Needs a lot more work before it can be implemented	New PI
NI 35	Resilience to violent extremism	Replace with a measure of partnership work in the area of cohesion. Must not just focus on Muslim communities	New PI
NI 38	Drugs related offending rate	Delay introduction until publication of National Drugs Strategy so strategy and indicators align, currently pulling in different directions	New PI

Our specific comments on individual indicators are available on request.





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