Local Authority Reference Panel – Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Local Authority Reference Panel (LARP) is a group of 25 senior local authority environmental health, fire safety, licensing, port health and trading standards officers drawn from across England and Wales with representatives from Scotland.

The LARP provides:

- an opportunity to share practitioner experience of better regulation initiatives in practice; and
- a forum for identifying expertise to shape the work of the Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO) from a range of frontline perspectives.

Aim

To enable BRDO to engage with local authority regulatory services in the development of its products and policies.

This will allow for better communication, coordination, challenge and insight from the professions engaged in the local delivery of regulation.

Particular areas of interest include:

a) identifying and exploring where there is commonality and alignment between regulators' approaches, systems and processes that affect delivery of regulatory services at both the national and local level;
b) sharing information on, improving understanding of, and discussing differing approaches to regulation, and its benefits, at all levels;
c) suggesting priority areas impacting on the regulatory environment for discussion / problem solving;
d) identifying, evaluating and disseminating good practice between local authorities and other regulators;
e) identifying barriers and challenge to suggested improvements and areas of shared concern and formulating collective solutions to tackle these; and
f) identifying approaches to better regulation and creating greater clarity around the benefits of better regulation and the work of regulators locally and nationally.

Proposed working arrangements

The LARP will meet up to four times per year and will be chaired by BRDO, which will also provide secretarial support.

Links between BRDO's reference panels will be transparent and dialogue between them will be enabled through joint meetings or discussion of common agenda items, as appropriate.

The panels are:

- Regulatory Excellence Forum
- Welsh Regulators' Forum
- Business Reference Panel
- Local Authority Reference Panel
- Primary Authority User Group

Between meetings, they may communicate by email.

In addition, members of the LARP may provide representatives to task and finish groups organised by BRDO to support the development of common approaches to regulatory challenges.

Membership

The LARP comprises practitioners with individual expertise who lead and deliver local authority regulatory services. It will reflect the range of local authority regulatory services and draw in those who can offer specific expertise and advice.

It is proposed that the functional areas covered include:

- environmental health;
- fire safety;
- licensing;
- port health; and
- trading standards.

Membership will be drawn primarily from officers in local authorities in England and Wales, with representatives from local authorities in Scotland and Northern Ireland invited as observers. Local authority organisations are welcome to send representatives to the panel if they wish.

Members can choose to engage via correspondence only.

Links to external groups

As expert stakeholders informing BRDO's work the LARP may support the work of the Representative Steering Group (RSG) on issues relating to regulatory enforcement. The RSG is a non-executive group created to advise the Minister for Business and Enterprise and the Chief Executive of BRDO on matters relating to regulatory enforcement. Further information about the RSG can be found on the BRDO website.

Through the BRDO secretariat, the LARP will monitor its relationship with any similar groups or networks and establish liaison arrangements as appropriate.

Review

The membership of the LARP will be reviewed annually to check that it is representative and in order to ensure it is of a manageable size.

The terms of reference for the LARP will be reviewed annually to ensure that it is fulfilling its objectives and its working arrangements are fit for purpose.