



**Corporate Plan  
2009-12**

Moving Forward on  
Prosperity and Protection

**LBRO**

Local Better Regulation Office

## A message from the Chair and Chief Executive



The perceived failures of regulation associated with the crisis in global financial markets raise critical questions for the better regulation agenda. The crisis has heightened awareness of risk and the nature and role of regulation have been the subject of immense media scrutiny and public debate, with many calling for greater, more stringent regulation. It would be understandable if this weakened resolve to reduce the regulatory burden, and instead resulted in stronger regulatory protectionism.

At the same time, the current pressures on business make it all the more important that regulatory frameworks support economic efficiency without undermining key protections for consumers, workers and the environment. The debate should not be about more or less regulation, but about better regulation – regulation that is proportionate, accountable, consistent, targeted, transparent and based on a comprehensive assessment of risk. Better regulation can drive prosperity and support protection for communities and compliant businesses alike, as well as reducing the burden of red tape.

A great proportion of business regulation is delivered at a local level, with local authority regulatory services often being the visible face of the local authority in the business community. This provides regulatory services with a clear opportunity to demonstrate their contribution to creating vibrant local places through the innovative and tailored support they offer to business, consumers and communities.

The Local Better Regulation Office's (LBRO's) role is about supporting effective regulation within a complex landscape, addressing the consequences of local differences by improving co-ordination, alignment and consistency in the wider regulatory system.

We act as a catalyst for change, supporting continuous and sustainable improvement that is led by the sector itself.



This summary of our second corporate plan describes our achievements over the last 12 months and our planned activity for the next three years, focusing on delivery programmes, engagement and ideas about better local regulation.

August 2009

# What is the Local Better Regulation Office?

The Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) exists to support and encourage improvement in the complex landscape of local authority regulatory services – including environmental health, fire safety, licensing and trading standards – and to drive the regulatory reform agenda at the local level by acting as a catalyst for change.

Our main stakeholders are businesses, consumers, local authority regulatory services, and national regulators and other professional bodies. We work with our partners to improve the wider regulatory system within which the regulatory services operate. LBRO's system-wide approach has been highlighted as a critical success factor in regulatory simplification by a recent OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) review.

LBRO is accountable to the Secretary of State for Business through its sponsor, the Better Regulation Executive within the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).



### Our mission

Our mission is to secure the effective performance of local authority regulatory services in accordance with the principles of better regulation. Improved local authority regulatory services can demonstrate their significant contribution to the delivery of economic prosperity and community wellbeing, while unnecessary burdens on well-run compliant businesses can be significantly reduced.

### Our objectives

The next three years will be focused on achieving our three strategic objectives.

These are to:

- support the improvement of local authority regulatory services;
- deliver consistency across council boundaries; and
- enhance the local regulatory system.

To support these objectives, we aim to build an excellent organisation.

### Our values

In all our work we aim to be outcome-focused, evidence-based, creative, challenging and supportive.

Our aim is better local regulation for all. We will measure our success by how well we have achieved the following:

### For Businesses

- Legislation is simpler to understand and is interpreted and enforced consistently across the UK.
- Procedures are streamlined, saving businesses time and money.
- Access to expert advice on regulation is readily available, giving businesses more confidence to invest and grow.
- The burden on law-abiding businesses is reduced due to the curtailment of unnecessary intervention and protection from unfair competition.
- Companies have a greater say in local regulation so policy reflects their concerns.
- Many businesses benefit from working in partnership with their local authority.

### For Communities

- Communities are better protected from rogue traders.
- People are more satisfied with the service they receive and their voice is heard in local regulation.
- Proper consideration is given to the health and safety of employees.

- Improved air quality and reduced fly-tipping make local environments better places to live.

### For Local authority regulatory services

- Legislation is easier to advise on and apply.
- Time and cost savings result from agreement about streamlined procedures with national regulators and the adoption of common frameworks.
- Local authorities take a partnership approach to working with businesses and fewer appeals against sanctioning decisions are upheld.
- Self-assessment and development are the rule, with reference to a single standard of excellence.

### For National regulators and other partners

- Policy goals are achieved through the active engagement of national and local regulators in a cohesive system.
- Communication is open and direct. Consistent messages allow local authorities to use resources to meet community needs effectively.
- Clear relationships exist with local authority regulatory services.

# Key achievements

Our vision for success is ambitious, yet we are confident that the progress we have made to date places us in a strong position to deliver it.

Businesses are beginning to benefit from Primary Authority – one of the most significant developments in local regulation for a decade. For the first time, companies have the opportunity to form a statutory partnership with a single local authority, which then provides robust and reliable advice for other councils to take into account when carrying out inspections or dealing with non-compliance. This helps businesses to generate economic prosperity without compromising consumers' protection from harm and fraud. At the same time, councils can access better intelligence, allowing resources to be focused on the areas of greatest need while avoiding the duplication of effort.

In the build-up to the launch of Primary Authority in April 2009, we rigorously tested the framework with major retailers and local authorities. Our draft guidance on the scheme was issued widely for consultation, and we worked with the Better Regulation Executive to refine the supporting secondary legislation. Together with our IT supplier, we also developed the secure website needed for registering partnerships and facilitating dialogue between councils. The commitment of our stakeholders across the regulatory landscape during this period was invaluable.



Separately, we have worked with a large number of local authorities to develop tools to help their regulatory services. These include a common framework for excellence, mechanisms to identify the results and impact of local regulation, and the Trading Places programme, which gives regulatory officers the opportunity to visit businesses to improve their understanding of the business environment.



We continue to support capacity building in the sector. Our work with the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACoRS), the Trading Standards Institute (TSI) and the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) includes support for leadership development and competency. We also encourage greater collaboration between authorities including regional co-ordination and shared working.

We have launched a research and evaluation programme to identify further areas of improvement. This has included publishing our first 'map' of the local regulatory system, commissioning a survey of business and consumer perceptions, exploring the use of the national enforcement priorities, and initiating our national threats project that studies how local authorities tackle problems that cross council boundaries, such as animal diseases, internet scams and illegal imports.



LBRO uses research evidence to advise the Government. In the past year, we have provided advice to the Health and Safety Review, the Consumer Law Review and the Anderson Review. Our national threats and shared services research provided key evidence for the recently published White Paper, A Better Deal for Consumers.

Open and transparent engagement with partners and stakeholders underpins all our programme activity. We work closely with business representatives, the Department for Communities and Local Government, LACoRS and other local government bodies.



We bring partners together in a coalition to build consensus on steps to support 'world-class' local authority regulatory services. The coalition receives crucial input from our reference panel, comprising officers from a cross-section of regulatory services.

## Coalition and panel members

### World-class coalition

- Animal Health Agency
- Audit Commission
- Better Regulation Executive
- Chartered Institute of Environmental Health
- Chief Fire Officers' Association
- Department for Communities and Local Government
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Environment Agency
- Food Standards Agency
- Gambling Commission
- Health and Safety Executive
- Institute of Licensing
- Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services
- National Measurement Office (formerly the NWML)
- Office of Fair Trading
- Trading Standards Institute
- Welsh Assembly Government

### Local government reference panel

Local authorities represented:

- |                                      |                             |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ■ Barnsley                           | ■ Hertfordshire             |
| ■ Birmingham                         | ■ Monmouthshire             |
| ■ Brighton                           | ■ Newham                    |
| ■ Cambridgeshire                     | ■ North Lanarkshire         |
| ■ Cannock Chase                      | ■ North Norfolk             |
| ■ Ceredigion                         | ■ North West Leicestershire |
| ■ Chelmsford                         | ■ Omagh                     |
| ■ City of London                     | ■ Southampton               |
| ■ Cornwall                           | ■ Suffolk                   |
| ■ Coventry                           | ■ Torfaen                   |
| ■ Derbyshire                         | ■ Westminster               |
| ■ Dundee City                        | ■ Wigan                     |
| ■ East Hampshire                     | ■ Worcestershire            |
| ■ Essex                              |                             |
| ■ Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue |                             |



A comprehensive summary of our recent work can be found in our Annual Report and Accounts 2008-2009, available online at [www.lbro.org.uk](http://www.lbro.org.uk).

## Our focus for the year ahead

In the current economic climate, it is vital to support businesses and communities through the recession and towards recovery, preparing for the opportunities that lie ahead. This can be best achieved by working with both businesses and communities to design regulatory interventions that achieve better outcomes.

In the year ahead, we will contribute to the delivery of the BIS mission to build a dynamic and competitive UK economy by:

- creating the conditions for business success;
- promoting innovation, enterprise and science; and
- giving everyone the skills and opportunities to succeed.

We will support the New Industry, New Jobs strategy, which includes the aim to make UK regulation simpler and more proportionate. We will also retain our focus on the BIS Enterprise Strategy, ensuring that the UK is the best place in the world to start and grow a business.

We will provide advice to government on better local regulation and address the recommendations of relevant reviews, including the Regulatory Reform Committee's report, the Anderson Review, the Pennington report and the Health and Safety Review.



# Programme overview 2009-12

## Objective 1: To support the improvement of local authority regulatory services

We will focus on working with local authorities to provide the tools and techniques that regulatory services can use to support their own improvement, concentrating on:

- outcome focus – shaping service delivery around the needs of local communities and businesses to deliver better results and providing local authorities with the tools to measure the impact of local regulatory activity;
- leadership – supporting a cadre of innovative leaders across the sector;
- capacity and collaboration – seeking greater efficiency through collaboration, co-ordination, co-operation and sharing of services; and
- risk-based regulation – embedding a risk-based approach across all regulatory activities, providing evidence and ideas for defining a comprehensive approach to risk in a post-Hampton world.

## Objective 2: To deliver consistency across council boundaries

Through Primary Authority we aim to provide services that will deliver direct benefits to businesses by reducing costs and unnecessary administrative burdens. Work will include:

- supporting the set-up of partnerships and undertaking determinations;
- supplying ongoing training and development support to local authorities; and
- promoting the scheme to new sectors.



## Objective 3: To enhance the local regulatory system

We will focus on the wider system in which regulatory services operate, including relationships with national regulators and central government. We will work with our coalition partners to reach agreement about common systems that have an impact on the regulatory services, including a common framework for excellence, data requests, risk assessment, competency frameworks and prioritisation.

Using analysis and evidence, we will also provide advice to government on the creation and review of regulations affecting local authority regulatory services, including advice on alternative options to regulation.



## Organisational objective: to become an excellent organisation

To support our strategic objectives, we will build an excellent organisation, focusing on:

- stakeholder engagement – understanding the needs and interests of our stakeholders, maximising opportunities to work collaboratively with both regulatory partners and those affected by regulation, including business representatives;
- organisation and governance – operating effective policies and processes; and
- strategy and research – influencing the regulatory system through clear thinking and analysis, acting as a catalyst for change.

## How we will be measured

Our success in achieving prosperity and protection will be measured through a series of performance indicators. By 2012, we intend that:

- 85 per cent of businesses state that regulatory services understand their business;
- 85 per cent of businesses report that the advice they receive is fairly/very easy to understand;
- 400 Primary Authority partnerships exist, covering at least 200 businesses;
- 80 per cent of businesses and local authorities within a Primary Authority partnership report satisfaction;
- 85 per cent of Primary Authority businesses report that the advice they receive from local authorities is consistent;
- demonstrable progress in performance has been made against the national enforcement priority indicators 173, 183, 184, 190 and 194;
- 50 per cent of English local authority regulatory services are engaged in local area agreements; and
- there is a 10 per cent reduction in the actual burdens on local authority regulatory services.



Our progress is measured each year through one-year performance indicators that can be found in our full corporate plan, available online at [www.lbro.org.uk](http://www.lbro.org.uk).

## How we work

The Board and the Chair, who is directly accountable to the Secretary of State, are responsible for our statutory and corporate leadership. The Board is LBRO's primary control mechanism and senior management report to it every six to eight weeks to discuss strategic issues.

Stakeholder engagement, including working through innovative partnerships and networks, is an essential dimension of all our activity. High-level engagement is led by the Board whose members act as ambassadors for the organisation and ensure that clear benefits are delivered for all stakeholders in the regulatory landscape.

Determining risk is a cornerstone of effective governance. Our risk management strategy is relevant, proportionate and manages risk at corporate and programme levels. Independent audit has praised our risk management reporting as best practice.

### Financial management

As a non-departmental public body, LBRO receives most of its income as grant-in-aid from our sponsor, BIS. In 2008-09, the first full year of operation, LBRO received £4.4 million. We strive to adopt high standards of accountability, transparency and governance.



## Board

**Clive Grace**  
Chair



**David Thurston**



**Uday Dholakia**



**Michael Gibson**



**Rebecca Marsh**



**Ann Hemingway**



**Robin Dahlberg**



**Robert Leak**



## Senior Management Team



**Graham Russell**  
Chief Executive



**Carol Brady**  
Project Director



**Jane Martin**  
Deputy Chief Executive  
Director of Policy and Engagement



**Sarah Smith**  
Director of Delivery and  
Performance



**Wendy Rimmer**  
Head of Board Support  
and Strategy



**Richard Wilson**  
Head of Resources and  
Corporate Services

For further information on LBRO's activities, please visit [www.lbpro.org.uk](http://www.lbpro.org.uk). Alternatively, contact Kate Cross at [kate.cross@lbpro.org.uk](mailto:kate.cross@lbpro.org.uk) or via our Birmingham office on 0121 226 4000.



Local Better Regulation Office

The Axis  
10 Holliday Street  
Birmingham  
B1 1TG

0121 226 4000

[enquiries@lbpro.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@lbpro.org.uk)

[www.lbpro.org.uk](http://www.lbpro.org.uk)

**LBRO**

Local Better Regulation Office