

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title: LG Group European & International Programme Board

Date and time: Monday 31 October 2011, 11.00am

Venue: Smith Square Rooms 3&4, Local Government House

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council
Chair	Dave Wilcox OBE	Derbyshire CC
Vice Chair	Richard Kemp CBE	Liverpool City
Deputy Chair	Marco Cereste	Peterborough City
Deputy Chair	Linda Gillham	Runnymede BC
Members	Gordon Keymer CBE	Tandridge DC
	Keith Glazier	East Sussex CC
	Sandra Barnes MBE	South Northamptonshire DC
	Liz Eyre	Worcestershire CC
	Phil Grove	Malvern Hills DC
	Sir Albert Bore	Birmingham City
	Guy Nicholson	Hackney LB
	Sherma Batson MBE DL	Stevenage BC
	Zulfiqar Ali	Rochdale MBC
Observer	Lord Graham Tope CBE	Sutton LB
Apologies	Nilgun Canver	Haringey LB

Officers: Ian Hughes, Jasbir Jhas, Sarah Messenger, Nick Porter, Drago Djekovic, Ivor Wells, Richard Kitt, Sarah Monaghan

The Chair welcomed Members to the first meeting of the cycle and detailed apologies received.

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
------	-----------------------	-----------

1 EIPB Membership, meeting dates and Terms of Reference

Decision

Members **noted** the:

- *Membership of the Board for 2011-12*
- *Dates for 2011-12, including meetings in Peterborough and Liverpool*
- *Terms of Reference for the Programme Board*

2 EU Workforce Issues

Sarah Messenger and Ian Hughes presented this report, which suggests a way forward for the LGA to coordinate its work on EU proposed policy and legislation which could impact on the local government workforce. Both emphasised the importance of joint working between the workforce and programme teams and Boards in these area, particularly on the Working Time Directive (WTD).

Members suggested that although the Working Time Directive should be prioritised by the workforce and programmes teams, other key issues such as new rules on the free movement of workers will also have a huge impact on councils and should be more clearly expressed in the policy objectives in this work area. Members also suggested that as well as working with the fire and rescue workforce to provide evidence to substantiate the LGA's lobbying work on the review of the Working Time Directive, the LGA should also work with adult social care teams to give the case more weight. As Chair of the CEMR Committee, it was suggested that it may be appropriate for Steve Cromer to attend a future Board meeting to discuss these issues in more detail.

Members agreed that although the Workforce Programme Board will have oversight of this work area, further work and an update on progress should be presented to the European and International Programme Board on a regular basis.

Decision

Item 6

*Members **noted** the LGA work on EU proposed policy and legislation which could impact on the local government workforce.*

Action

Officers to provide the Board with an update on progress in due course.

**Ian Hughes/
Sarah
Messenger**

**3 Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)
(the European LGA)**

Ian Hughes introduced this report which examines the benefits and costs of the LGA's membership of CEMR, the reform of the organisation, the current debate on its future budget and options that members may wish to pursue in 2012.

Ian highlighted current issues of contention between CEMR member associations with regard to the way in which the CEMR is currently run, including its financial situation. However, Ian stressed that the CEMR has genuine influence in the policy areas which the LGA tends to prioritise and has had a real impact for the UK.

Cllr Gordon Keymer CBE, current CEMR Vice-President and Vice-Chair of the CEMR Finance, added that real change is being proposed by driving through reduced fees for the UK and other larger nations who pay higher membership fees due to their higher GDP per capita. The UK are also continuing to push for reductions in back office staff, excessive overheads and the governance structures of the organisation in order to deal with the financial crisis.

In discussion, Members emphasised that the LGA must consult with COSLA, the WLGA and NILGA on these issues. Members agreed that the LGA should not serve a precautionary notice of withdrawal at this stage, but should continue to press for radical reform of the organisation and the condition of its 2012 reduced fee. Members also suggested that CEMR should make better use of experts from the individual European LGAs on specific issues in order to cut costs.

Decision

17 January 2012

Item 6

*Members **agreed** to initiate work on a radical reform of CEMR and to agree 2012 fees (but that fees be conditional on a radical reform process.)*

The Board also asked LGA delegates to the CEMR Policy Committee to pursue these agreed lines at the next meeting in December 2011.

Action

Chair

- The Chair and Cllr Keymer to meet with the Secretary General of CEMR to raise concerns and suggest ways forward.
- The LGA delegation to CEMR Policy Committee to agree LGA lines.

4 European economic and skills development funds, 2014 – 2020

Nick Porter introduced this item and discussed the proposed EU budget, Structural Fund regulations, and Rural Development regulations for the 2014-2020 programmes which the European Commission has recently published. Nick outlined the proposed twin-track engagement strategy which the LGA has devised in Brussels and Whitehall to influence the legislative process.

Cllr Sir Albert Bore added that although a twin-track engagement strategy was necessary, there would be many areas which require a more coherent strategy as this agenda develops. In particular, the UK should focus on working to 'encourage' national Government to ensure local authorities are involved at all stages of operational programmes and ensure that locally responsive delivery models are actually implemented.

Members welcomed the new options for integrating funds within functional economic areas, which follows on from LGA lobbying and is a real success for us, as this follows directly on from our publication on *EU Funds and Place Based Budgets*. However, members stressed that it was imperative to use both national and European allies that the UK Government should follow through on ensuring these options are made reality.

Decision

Members considered and commented on the outline programme of activity.

Action

- Members agreed to establish joint working arrangements with members of the Economy and Transport Programme Board to drive through this work at a member level.

5 EU Fines (Localism Bill): Update and next steps

Jasbir Jhas introduced this report which sets out the lobbying progress to influence EU fines policy in the Localism Bill through the House of Lords. Jas informed members that since the last update to the Board, LGA lobbying during the Bill's passage through the Lords has resulted in a major rethink of Government policy. This includes securing key concessions through Government amendments such as Designation Orders to ensure that fines are passed by Parliament before they are handed down to local authorities, and the establishment of an Independent Advisory Panel. The LGA has also submitted a proposal for a statutory statement of government policy to the House of Lords library to determine how EU fines will operate. Jas informed Members that the next steps in this process would be a Government consultation on the LGA proposal and also delivering a new partnership between central and local government on future EU laws.

Members thanked Jas and the team for all the hard work which has gone into this clause at all stages of the Bill, and congratulated them on this key achievement. Members also thanked Lord Tope for leading the debate in the Lords.

Decision

*Members **noted** the report and **endorsed** the proposals for a new central-local relationship on EU proposed laws.*

6 International Update

Ivor Wells introduced the item and together with Drago Djekovic

Item 6

gave a presentation based on the international work in the organisation, which has been reviewed and revitalised since the restructure of the organisation.

Current projects focus on the transitional countries of Eastern Europe, developing Commonwealth countries of Africa and South Asia and fragile and post-conflict states where the UK government has an interest. Ivor added that whilst members in the past have had a clear political overview, we have proposed that each international project should also have a member champion to ensure that work with members in sister associations has a clear political anchor in the LGA. The process of appointing member champions is still underway.

In discussion, the Chairman thanked officers for an impressive presentation and asked that in future meetings, update reports on international work were brought forward in the meeting, to allow time for a fuller discussion.

Decision

*Members **noted** the updates.*

6 Public Health

Ian Hughes introduced this report which sets out the current work of the EU committee of regions in the area of public health, explains LGA member involvement and influence and how we tap into the experience of councils outside the UK to establish new public health services.

Decision

Members noted the report.

Action

- Members and officers to disseminate best practice from other EU countries to councils to support the development of their new functions.

7 Notes of the last meeting

Members approved the notes of the last meeting as an accurate



**European and International
Programme Board**

17 January 2012

Item 6

record.