

## **European and International Board Membership, Lead Member Priorities and Work Programme for 2013/14**

### **Purpose**

For discussion and agreement.

### **Summary**

This report sets out proposals for the Board's priorities and key areas of work for the 2013/14 year, set against the available resources. The Board's Membership for 2013-14 is attached at **Appendix A** for noting.

### **Recommendation**

That the Board agree its priorities and work programme for the 2013/14 meeting cycle.

### **Action**

Over the course of the next year officers to progress the Board's agreed priorities and projects in line with available resources.

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## **European and International Board Membership, Lead Member Priorities and Work Programme for 2013/14**

### **Background**

1. This is the first Board of the new LGA year and it is the opportunity for Members to prioritise the work of the Board over the next year.
2. At the LGA Conference in July, the launch of *Rewiring Local Services* was well received by councils, parties, business and other organisations. It set out a radical agenda for public service reform, demonstrating how local partners could provide more effective services at the local level. The full publication is available here: <http://www.local.gov.uk/campaigns>.
3. The steer from the LGA Executive is for the Board to help move the 'Rewired' agenda to the next stage, examining how local government and its partners could offer better outcomes for communities.
4. With much of the legislative framework for local services originating in Brussels, it is important to the achievement of our *Rewired* agenda that we influence the legislative process in Brussels and ensure that the view from localities is strong in formulating the UK position in Brussels.
5. There is also a wider international agenda where the local role in securing new international trade needs to be recognised.

### **Priorities**

6. With this brief, it is suggested that the work of the Board has four clear priorities in 2013-14:
  - 6.1. **EU funding:** From next year, local areas across England will access £5.3 billion of EU structural funds for 2014-20. This budget will form a large proportion of any new public resources available for local regeneration. The LGA has already scored a major lobbying victory in securing the local delivery of EU funds from 2014 - through Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) areas. However, much of the detail of the UK programme has yet to be agreed. (A later report on this agenda sets out the details of a programme of work in this area for Members' consideration.)
  - 6.2. **European legislation affecting councils:** Every year the European Commission publishes an annual work programme which sets out its legislative programme for the next year; this is the EU equivalent of the Queen's Speech. From this programme, the Board will advise the LGA Executive on the EU lobbying priorities based upon those proposals which will have most impact on councils. For example, for 2013, the Board's priorities have included the reviews of procurement and state aid rules to support local growth, the work on environmental regulation to ensure no new financial and regulatory burdens on councils and the structural funds review to

ensure new regeneration funding in local areas. The 2014 legislative programme is likely to be announced in late October and it is suggested that the December Board looks in detail at the proposed programme and the likely impact on councils.

- 6.3. International trade and development:** There is much demand from local government in developing nations for support from English councils. The LGA has championed the idea of peer-to-peer support in international aid as an effective way of using resources. We have delivered a number of externally funded programmes which have demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach. For example, the pan-African LGA (UCLGA) commissioned the LGA to support the development of peer reviews between councils in Africa to secure better services - work which was funded through external sources. Increasingly there is a trade link to this work, with councils in emerging economies wanting to secure both capacity-building support and to develop trade links with English towns and cities. The leadership role of councils in this area has been promoted by the LGA. In recent months, there have been a number of positive developments. For example, the European Commission has announced a new policy which develops a clearer role of localities in the delivery of aid and the UK Trade Minister, Lord Green, has encouraged the LGA to develop a better partnership with UKTI to ensure that the local role in developing new trade links is utilised more effectively. Our '*Rewired*' agenda sets out our ambition for a stronger local approach to economic development. A later report on this agenda sets out the details of a programme of work in this area for Members' consideration.
- 6.4. Supporting LGA representatives on EU and other bodies:** There are a number of important EU and international bodies to which the LGA nominates elected members and which play a formal role in international decision making. For example, the LGA makes nominations to two formal European bodies, the EU Committee of Regions (COR) and the Council of Europe's Congress of Local and Regional (Congress). COR is consulted on all EU proposals which affect councils and has great influence in ensuring that councils' views are heard in the development of EU proposals. The LGA support to these bodies is based on the policy priorities set by the European and International (E&I) Board. Given the importance of both the EU and international agenda to achieving the agenda set out in *Rewiring Public Services*, there will be a report to each Board on the on-going work of these bodies and to ensure that there is an alignment of the domestic work of the LGA with the work of our representatives on these bodies.
7. We currently believe that the above projects can be delivered within the available resources. However, the work programme will be constrained by the overall resource envelope of the LGA, which may have implications for the scale and timing of the work to be delivered should unforeseen reactive work be required or new priorities arise during the year.

#### **Leadership of our work**

8. Members may also wish to consider how we structure the leadership of these issues. European and International Board Office Holders considered this issue and suggested that the Board agrees Lead Members for particular issues. For this meeting, the EU funding work will be led by Deputy Chair, Cllr Sue Murphy, and the international aid and trade report will be led by Deputy Chair, Cllr Richard Kemp.

9. It is suggested that once the EU legislative programme is considered and priorities set, lobbying priorities are assigned to a Lead Member, who would be responsible for, as an example, aligning the work of LGA Boards and international bodies to secure the most effective voice for councils. Officer support would be provided. Broadly, issues could be grouped around five areas:
  - 9.1. EU funding;
  - 9.2. Environment, energy and waste;
  - 9.3. EU procurement and state aids;
  - 9.4. Employment law; and
  - 9.5. Trade and aid.
  
10. Should this principle be agreed, the allocation of portfolios would be agreed through the European and International Board Office Holder's meeting.