

## Note of last Councillors' Forum meeting

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<b>Title:</b>	Councillors' Forum
<b>Date:</b>	Thursday 25 January 2018
<b>Venue:</b>	Westminster Room, 8th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

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### Attendance

An attendance list is attached as **Appendix A** to this note

Item	Decisions and actions
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<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest</b>
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The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting. There were no declarations of interest.

<b>2</b>	<b>Rishi Sunak MP - Minister of State for Local Government</b>
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The Chairman welcomed Rishi Sunak MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Local Government), to the meeting.

The Minister thanked members and the Chairman for inviting him to what was his first public speech since being appointed to his new role. The Minister also offered his thanks to councillors who give their time to build communities in which people are proud to live. He discussed his ambition to ensure that the voice of local government was heard across Whitehall and he acknowledged how difficult the last few years had been for local government. The Minister touched on the latest finance settlement and noted the £2 billion funding made available for adult social care, the introduction of the social care precept and the rural service delivery grant. He also emphasised the need to harness councillors' local knowledge in making sure the new funding formula was fair and he said he was keen to work with local government to work towards a higher level of business rates retention.

The Minister invited comments from members. In the discussion which followed, members made the following points:

- With another round of business rate pilots due, the Minister was asked whether feedback would be available to councils that were not chosen for the earlier round. The Minister said he would look into that and follow it up with colleagues.
- On fair funding, the Minister was asked whether there was any flexibility in using adult social care precepts for children's social care, and an objection to negative revenue support grants (RSGs) was raised. The Minister responded to say that on negative RSG, he recognised the pressure local authorities were under and that the Ministry was looking at fair, affordable options. He also said he would be looking into the question of flexibility on adult social care precepts and children's social care with the Department for Education.

- A point was raised about councils remaining the most cost effective way of providing local services, despite having seen funding reduced dramatically. Members wanted to see a move from 75 per cent to 100 per cent of business rates being retained by councils. The Minister said he shared the aspiration to move in that direction and that the pilots were an attempt to do that. He emphasised his view that local government ought to be self-sufficient.
- The Minister was asked what his view was on the changes taking place in relation to local government pensions. The Minister said that this process was ongoing and that he would engage with those going through the process to best determine how money could be saved through fees. He was keen to see pension funds invested in infrastructure projects which would ultimately benefit pension holders.
- Councils want to build more council houses but are unable to do so because of the cap. The budget suggests this may be lifted in a few years. Members asked the Minister if this could be brought forward. The Minister said he would be speaking to his colleague, Dominic Raab MP, the new Minister for Housing, and he noted that the £1 billion increase to the Housing Revenue Account was about to come into force. The Minister said he appreciated the sentiment of wanting the Government to deliver more homes and that he wanted to do more to support councils in that ambition.

The Chairman thanked the Minister and the discussion was drawn to a close.

### **3 Chairman's Update**

Members **noted** the Chairman's Update.

### **4 LGA Boards & Portfolio Chair's Reports**

Members **noted** the Board and Portfolio Chairs'/Chairmans' Reports.

### **5 Digest of the last meeting**

Members **agreed** the notes of the last meeting as an accurate summary of the discussion.

## **Appendix A -Attendance**

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Lord Gary Porter CBE	South Holland District Council
Senior Vice-Chair	Cllr Nick Forbes	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Howard Sykes MBE	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Marianne Overton MBE	Lincolnshire County Council
Members	Cllr David Simmonds CBE	Hillingdon London Borough Council
	Cllr Sean Anstee	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Paul Carter CBE	Kent County Council
	Cllr Peter Fleming OBE	Sevenoaks District Council
	Cllr Philip Atkins OBE	Staffordshire County Council
	Cllr John Beesley	Bournemouth Borough Council
	Cllr Kevin Bentley	Colchester Borough Council
	Cllr Paul Bettison OBE	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
	Cllr Gillian Brown	Arun District Council
	Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick	North Norfolk District Council
	Cllr John Fuller	South Norfolk District Council
	Cllr Peter Golds	Tower Hamlets Council
	Cllr Martin Hill OBE	Lincolnshire County Council
	Cllr James Jamieson	Central Bedfordshire Council
	Cllr Donna Jones JP	Portsmouth City Council
	Cllr Robert Light	Kirklees Metropolitan Council
	Cllr Rory Love	Shepway District Council
	Cllr Colin Noble	Suffolk County Council
	Cllr Roy Perry	Hampshire County Council
	Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
	Cllr Sue Murphy CBE	Manchester City Council
	Sir Richard Leese CBE	Manchester City Council
	Cllr Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
	Cllr Richard Watts	Islington Council
	Cllr Simon Henig CBE	Durham County Council
	Cllr John Merry CBE	Salford City Council
	Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
	Sir Stephen Houghton CBE	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Helen Holland	Bristol City Council
	Cllr Linda Thomas	Bolton Council
	Cllr Roger Lawrence	Wolverhampton City Council
	Cllr Vince Maple	Medway Council
	Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr Amy Cross	Blackpool Council
	Cllr Debbie Wilcox	Newport City Council
	Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE	Stevenage Borough Council
	Cllr Tudor Evans OBE	Plymouth City Council
	Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
	Cllr Alan Connett	Devon County Council
	Cllr Paul Tilsley CBE	Birmingham City Council
	Cllr Richard Kemp CBE	Liverpool City Council
	Cllr Keith Aspden	North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service
	Cllr Peter Reeve MBE	Huntingdonshire District Council
	Cllr Colin Mann	Caerphilly County Borough Council
	Cllr Alan Seldon	Herefordshire Council

	Cllr Wayne Davies Cllr Chris Townsend Cllr Robert Bucke	Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council Surrey County Council Tendring District Council
Apologies	Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE Cllr Morris Bright MBE Cllr Vanessa Churchman Cllr Simon Cooke Cllr Keith Glazier Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE Cllr Stephen Parnaby OBE Cllr David Renard Cllr Glen Sanderson JP Cllr Barry Lewis Cllr Catherine Rankin Mayor Tim Bowles Cllr Claire Kober OBE Cllr Alan Rhodes Cllr Aaron Shotton Cllr Timothy Swift Cllr Graham Chapman Cllr Bryony Rudkin Cllr Anne Western CBE Ms Fiona Twycross AM  Cllr Jon Hubbard Cllr Carolyn Rule Cllr Lisa Duffy	Warwickshire County Council Hertsmere Borough Council Isle of Wight Council Bradford Metropolitan District Council East Sussex County Council Gloucestershire County Council Bexley Council East Riding of Yorkshire Council  Swindon Borough Council Northumberland Council Derbyshire County Council Tunbridge Wells Borough Council West of England Combined Authority Haringey Council Nottinghamshire County Council Flintshire County Council Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council Nottingham City Council Suffolk County Council Derbyshire County Council London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) Wiltshire Council Cornwall Council Huntingdonshire District Council
In Attendance	Cllr Kenneth Taylor OBE Cllr Daniel Humphreys Cllr Chris Saint Cllr Michael Wilcox Cllr Lucy Nethsingha Cllr Anita Lower Cllr Katrina Wood Cllr Isobel Darby Cllr Dick Madden Cllr Stephen Parker Cllr Colin Riley Cllr John Clarke Cllr Paul Crossley Cllr Teresa Heritage Cllr Joanne Beavis Cllr Nick Rushton Cllr Samantha Dixon Cllr Paul Smith Cllr Shabir Pandor	Coventry City Council Worthing Borough Council Stratford-Upon-Avon District Council Lichfield District Council Cambridgeshire County Council Newcastle upon Tyne City Council Wycombe District Council Buckinghamshire County Council Essex County Council Hart District Council Castle Point Borough Council Gedling Borough Council Bath & North East Somerset Council Hertfordshire County Council Essex County Council Leicestershire County Council Cheshire West and Chester Council Colchester Borough Council Kirklees Metropolitan Council