

## Note of last Councillors' Forum meeting

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**Title:** Councillors' Forum  
**Date:** Thursday 19 July 2018  
**Venue:** 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

#### 1 Declarations of Interest

#### 2 Susan Emmett, Head of Engagement, Homes England.

Lord Gary Porter introduced Cllr Adele Morris (Deputy Chair of Environment, Economy, Housing & Transport Board) to take questions on the item and offer a perspective on behalf of the LGA.

Cllr Adele Morris introduced Susan Emmett, Head of Engagement, Homes England.

Susan Emmett spoke about affordable housing being one of the defining issues of our time and there is a lot of work to do. The average home costs eight times more than the average income and in places like London and Oxford this can be in double figures. There is a whole generation of young people who cannot get on the housing ladder. To tackle this the government aims to build 300,000 homes a year by 2025. While that target is not being reached, 74% more homes are being built than last year.

Susan Emmett stated that Homes England are moving away from the old model of grant distribution and individual investment programs. Homes England are supporting partners with land, expertise and investment in infrastructure. Homes England have a strategic partnership with 8 housing associations across the country, with over 40,000 affordable homes to be built. Homes England intends to bring to market more than 1,250 hectares of development opportunities over the next 12 months.

Susan Emmett highlighted that key partners in affordable housing will always be in local government and Homes England has extensive local government experience. For example, recently working with Mid Sussex District Council to obtain the 176 hectares site north of Burgess Hill in West Sussex. The site was a key location for new housing but it stood empty for 10 years, and working with local government it will go forward for development. Another example is in Plymouth, a 32 hectares site has been acquired, which will lead to over 400 Homes. These interventions do bring around new houses built but the impact on local activity is important too.

Susan Emmett asked councils with housing ambitions to work with Homes England to deliver these ambitious targets.

Cllr Adele Morris thanked Susan Emmett and opened the item to questions from members.

In the discussion which followed the following points were raised by Members

- Preferred Partner status is something more local councils are trying to achieve with Homes England and moving away from unstructured grant funding.
- Homes England needs to look at existing builds that are empty. Highstreets have lots of empty accommodation above shops in the town centre.
- Young people are not getting the skills to get into the house building industry.
- Skilled workers are leaving the UK who are vital to building new homes.
- Collaboration with investment funds who are interested in social housing should be part of partnerships with local government and Homes England.
- Derelict brownfield sites are prime for building new homes and local councils are supportive of working with Homes England.

Susan Emmett responded with

- Homes England is moving away from just grant funding and more to working with councils in a structured way with a more holistic approach.
- Urban regeneration is an issue but Homes England's remit right now is new developments.
- We have an ageing workforce in the house building industry and not enough young people are coming into the sector. Homes England are working on increasing industry wide apprenticeships and supporting schemes on worker retention.
- While there are many brownfield sites that could potentially be worked on, suitability of sites is what Homes England is concerned with.

Cllr Adele Morris commented

- Local Government Association has published [Revitalising Town Centres](#) to help local councils on urban regeneration.

Cllr Adele Morris thanked Susan Emmett for attending and speaking to Councillors' Forum.

Any questions should be directed to [Susan.Emmett@homesengland.gov.uk](mailto:Susan.Emmett@homesengland.gov.uk)

### **3 New Local Government Mutual**

Lord Gary Porter introduced Cllr Michael Payne from the Insurance Mutual Task and Finish Group.

Cllr Michael Payne introduced the New Local Government Mutual. He thanked the previous lead members for their hard work including the former leader of the London Borough of Haringey Claire Kober OBE. Cllr Michael Payne highlighted the importance of reducing cost to councils and the New Local Government Mutual was a way to do that. Cllr Michael Payne introduced James Alexander.

James Alexander highlighted three key messages

1. The New Local Government Mutual will save councils money
2. The New Local Government Mutual has learnt from previous schemes
3. Officers will have conversations with local authorities to make sure it works for all authorities.

James Alexander gave a background to the 17 local authorities working with the Local Government Association to develop the mutual since late 2017. Data analysis found that authorities are expected to take on losses and councils would save money through the mutual, with unexpected losses also being covered. Councils who sign up will not have to go through an expensive council procurement process.

The mutual will follow the Hybrid Discretionary Mutual model and aggregate stop loss cover will be included. The costs of the mutual will go down over the years and any surplus will go back to authorities or into the mutual. Officers will be visiting authorities and there is an event on 18<sup>th</sup> September at 18 Smith Square.

Lord Porter highlighted that the Local Government Mutual will save councils money and the tax payer.

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

Cllr Roy Perry, Vice-Chair of Children and Young People Board pay tribute to Cllr Richard Watts for his hard work as chair. Cllr Roy Perry highlighted the work the board has done on home education.

Members **noted** the LGA Board Chair's reports.

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

Members **agreed** the minutes as an accurate summary of the discussion at the previous meeting on Thursday 7 June 2018.

#### **Appendix A -Attendance**

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Chairman	Lord Gary Porter CBE	South Holland District Council
Vice-Chairman	Cllr Marianne Overton MBE	Lincolnshire County Council
Members	Cllr David Simmonds CBE	Hillingdon London Borough Council
	Cllr Sean Anstee	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
	Cllr Peter Fleming OBE	Sevenoaks District Council
	Cllr Philip Atkins OBE	Staffordshire County Council
	Cllr John Beesley	Bournemouth Borough Council
	Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council
	Cllr Paul Bettison OBE	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
	Cllr Morris Bright MBE	Hertsmere Borough Council
	Cllr Gillian Brown OBE	Arun District Council
	Cllr Vanessa Churchman	Isle of Wight Council
	Cllr Neil Clarke MBE	Rushcliffe Borough Council
	Cllr Simon Cooke	Bradford Metropolitan District Council
	Cllr Deborah Croney	Dorset County Council
	Cllr Tom Fitzpatrick	North Norfolk District Council

Cllr John Fuller	South Norfolk District Council
Cllr Peter Golds	Tower Hamlets Council
Cllr John Hart	Devon County Council
Cllr Mark Hawthorne MBE	Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr Martin Hill OBE	Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr James Jamieson	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr Rebecca Knox	Dorset County Council
Cllr Robert Light	Kirklees Metropolitan Council
Cllr Rory Love	Shepway District Council
Cllr Teresa O'Neill OBE	Bexley Council
Cllr Jonathan Owen	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Cllr Stephen Parnaby OBE	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Cllr Roy Perry	Hampshire County Council
Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
Cllr David Renard	Swindon Borough Council
Cllr Glen Sanderson JP	Northumberland Council
Cllr Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Geoffrey Theobald OBE	
Cllr Barry Lewis	Derbyshire County Council
Cllr Catherine Rankin	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Cllr Colin Riley	Castle Point Borough Council
Mayor James Palmer	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
Cllr Nick Forbes	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Cllr Lib Peck	Lambeth London Borough Council
Cllr Michael Payne	Gedling Borough Council
Cllr Peter Box CBE	Wakefield Metropolitan District 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 Alice Perry	Islington Council
Cllr Alan Rhodes	Nottinghamshire County Council
Cllr Clare Coghill	Waltham Forest London Borough Council
Cllr John Merry CBE	Salford City Council
Cllr Sabia Hussain	Slough Borough Council
Cllr Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
Cllr Aaron Shotton	Flintshire County Council
Cllr Sue Woodward	Staffordshire County Council
Sir Stephen Houghton CBE	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Bryony Rudkin	Ipswich Borough Council
Cllr Helen Holland	Bristol City Council
Cllr Anne Western CBE	Derbyshire County Council
Cllr Judi Billing MBE	North Hertfordshire District Council
Cllr Roger Lawrence	Wolverhampton City Council
Cllr Amy Cross	Blackpool Council
Cllr Richard Henry	Stevenage Borough Council
Cllr Tudor Evans OBE	Plymouth City Council
Cllr Howard Sykes MBE	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
Cllr Heather Kidd	Shropshire Council
Cllr Alan Connett	Devon County Council
Cllr Paul Tilsley CBE	Birmingham City Council

Cllr Richard Kemp CBE  
Cllr Claire Hudson  
Cllr Abigail Bell  
Cllr Keith Aspden  
Cllr Chris White  
Cllr Jon Hubbard  
Vacancy  
Cllr Colin Mann  
Cllr Alan Seldon  
Cllr Wayne Davies  
Cllr Carolyn Rule  
Cllr Chris Townsend

Liverpool City Council  
Mendip District Council  
Hull City Council  
North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service  
Hertfordshire County Council  
Wiltshire Council  
Liberal Democrats  
Caerphilly County Borough Council  
Herefordshire Council  
Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council  
Cornwall Council  
Surrey County Council

Apologies

Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE  
Cllr Nigel Ashton  
Cllr Keith Glazier  
Cllr Donna Jones JP  
Cllr Colin Noble  
Mayor Tim Bowles  
Cllr Rishi Shori  
Cllr Graham Chapman  
Cllr Linda Thomas  
Cllr Judith Blake CBE  
Ms Fiona Twycross AM

Cllr Vince Maple  
Cllr Susan Hinchcliffe  
Cllr Debbie Wilcox  
Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE  
Cllr Robert Bucke

Warwickshire County Council  
North Somerset Council  
East Sussex County Council  
Portsmouth City Council  
Suffolk County Council  
West of England Combined Authority  
Bury Metropolitan Borough Council  
Nottingham City Council  
Bolton Council  
Leeds City Council  
London Fire and Emergency Planning  
Authority (LFEPA)  
Medway Council  
Bradford Metropolitan District Council  
Newport City Council  
Stevenage Borough Council  
Tendring District Council