

Minutes of last Executive Advisory Board meeting

Executive Advisory Board

Thursday, 25 January 2024

Westminster Room, 8th Floor, 18 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3HZ

Attendance

An attendance list is attached as [Appendix A](#)

Item	Decisions and actions
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1 Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Cllr Kevin Bentley, Vice-Chair of the LGA, welcomed Members to the meeting of the Executive Advisory Board. He explained that Cllr Shaun Davies, Chair of the LGA, had to send his apologies. Cllr Kevin Bentley would Chair the meeting of the Executive Advisory Board.

Apologies were received from the following: Cllr Marianne Overton MBE, Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen, Cllr Louise Gittins, Cllr Abi Brown, Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE, Cllr David Baines, Cllr Tony Saville, Cllr Bridget Smith and Cllr Rob Stewart.

2 Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes were agreed as a correct record of the previous meeting.

3 LGA Lobbying Headlines

Sarah Pickup, Acting Chief Executive, introduced the LGA Lobbying Headlines. Sarah highlighted the additional £600million funding for Local Government, which had been announced since the 2024/25 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement and had been achieved by lobbying from across the sector.

Sarah noted that the LGA Board had requested that updates on Asylum and Resettlement and Debate not Hate/civility in public life should be brought to a future meeting of the EAB.

Sarah highlighted concerns on the management of asylum and resettlement and the increasing pressures on temporary accommodation. She raised the issue of care agencies having their licences to sponsor international recruits revoked leading to workers losing jobs and accommodation.

In the discussion that followed, the following concerns were raised:

- In relation to waste, there was uncertainty around the new

Extended Producer Responsibility scheme. In response Sarah referred to ongoing work by the LINZ Board and DCN. Sarah emphasised that the Board's comments would be fed into that work.

- Work on asylum seekers should emphasise that Local Government welcome everyone fleeing conflict, rather than focus solely on Ukrainian refugees. Sally Burlington, Director of Policy, explained that currently the LGA did not have an agreed line on who should have access to asylum.
- The update on asylum resettlement does not expand on some key concerns, including particular pressures on Councils in the East Midlands region. In response Sally agreed that more work was needed and that current funding was wholly inadequate. Sally emphasised we have had significant impact on securing funding for resettlement routes so far. Concerns were raised over proposed changes to the Government's approach to equalities and diversity. The importance of EDI in ensuring recruitment practices are fair and legal was highlighted. Sarah confirmed that those concerns would be shared.
- It was noted that many Ukrainian guests were in the UK on three-year visas and that clarity from the Government on what will happen once these visas expire was needed.

Decision

The Executive Advisory Board noted the LGA Lobbying Headlines.

Action

A report on Asylum issues to be brought to the next meeting of the Executive Advisory Board.

4 LGA Local Government White Paper update

Sonika Sidhu, Assistant Director of Policy, gave a presentation updating Members on the progress of the LGA Local Government White Paper.

In the conversation that followed, the following points were made:

- The LGA White Paper and its progress was praised as an excellent piece of work.
- Views were expressed that the focus should be on what is deliverable and what Councils need to deliver statutory services.
- In response to views expressed that the LGA should not focus on asking for more money from Government the Chair reassured Members that conversations had moved more towards integration and the future of Local Government.
- Members emphasised that the LGA White Paper should refer specifically to 'equal' partnerships.
- Views were expressed that Devolution should focus on powers being devolved too Local Government as opposed to powers already in Local Government being moved into Combined

Authorities.

- Views were expressed that Councils need the autonomy to raise revenue in new and different ways.
- Members raised that we use the word 'convene' many times in the LGA White Paper where we could use the word 'leads'.
- Officers were asked to carefully balance the calls for the end to multiple funding pots with the existing LGA ask for a specific prevention funding pot.
- A view was expressed that a new constitutional framework of relationships governing the country is needed so that local, regional and national government were better defined and less centralised.
- Members raised that the LGA White Paper needs to be clear in expressing that given the right powers local government can achieve many things more efficiently than central government. It was emphasised we need to communicate what we can do and why we can do it better.
- Members raised that we need to maintain a focus on prevention.
- A Member raised that purdah is not the proper term for the pre-election period.
- Views were expressed that the top five asks would benefit from a degree of nuance, and that the LGA White Paper should have more offers as opposed to just having asks.

Sonika thanked Members for their feedback and explained the LGA would work to ensure the LGA White Paper is of interest to a Government of any political party after the next election.

5 2024/25 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement

Cllr Peter Marland, Chair of the Economy and Resources Board, introduced the report on the 2024/25 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement. He emphasised a huge amount of work from both the LGA and key partners had led to £600 million additional money for local government that had been announced since the provisional settlement. This includes:

- £500 million for social care
- £15 million increase in the Rural Service Delivery Grant
- £3 million outside of the Settlement to support those experiencing the biggest pressures due to Internal Drainage Board levies
- An increase in the Funding guarantee from 3 to 4 per cent.

Cllr Marland raised there had been some announcements around local authorities publishing productivity plans. He expressed a view that there was an element of micromanagement in this approach. He also highlighted that Government had asked councils to consider whether spending on equality, diversity and inclusion posts and programmes offered good value.

In the conversation that followed, the following points were made:

- Members questioned whether the additional money was a one-off.

Sarah Pickup, Acting Chief Executive, responded that the LGA needed to continue to emphasise the need for ongoing funding to pay for ongoing services.

- A view was expressed that additional money for local government being awarded as councils were tabling their budgets was evidence of a broken system.
- Members asked for clarity on allocations to Fire Authorities.
- Members raised the need for multi-year settlements.
- Concerns were raised about the significant pressures facing councils due to demand for temporary accommodation.

Decision

The Executive Advisory Board noted the update.

Action

Officers will proceed with the delivery of the LGA's work following the Local Government Finance Settlement, and in advance of the Spring Budget.

Appendix A -Attendance

Position/Role	Councillor	Authority
Senior-Vice Chairman in the Chair	Cllr Kevin Bentley	Essex County Council
Vice-Chair Deputy-chairman	Cllr Joe Harris Cllr Bev Craig Cllr Michael Payne Cllr Tudor Evans OBE	Cotswold District Council Manchester City Council Gedling Borough Council Plymouth City Council
Members	Cllr Darren Rodwell Cllr Peter Marland Cllr Kevin Bentley Cllr David Fothergill Cllr Morris Bright MBE Cllr Martin Tett Cllr Heather Kidd MBE Cllr Andrew Cooper Cllr Jason Smithers Cllr Alan White Cllr Tim Oliver	Barking and Dagenham London Borough Council Milton Keynes Council Essex County Council Somerset Council Hertsmere Borough Council Buckinghamshire Council Shropshire Council Kirklees Metropolitan Council East Midlands Councils West Midlands County Councils Network
Apologies	Cllr Shaun Davies Cllr Nesil Caliskan Cllr Georgia Gould Cllr Louise Gittins Cllr Satvir Kaur Cllr Izzi Seccombe OBE Cllr Abi Brown OBE	Telford and Wrekin Council Enfield Council Camden Council Cheshire West and Chester Council Southampton City Council Warwickshire County Council Stoke-on-Trent City Council

Cllr Bridget Smith
Cllr Marianne Overton
MBE
Cllr Tony Saffell
Cllr Robert Stewart
Cllr David Baines
Sir Stephen Houghton
CBE
Cllr Sam Chapman-Allen

South Cambridgeshire District Council
North Kesteven District Council

North West Leicestershire District Council
WLGA
North West Regional Leaders' Board
SIGOMA

District Councils Network