

LGA Special Interest Group Annual Report to LGA Leadership Board

SIG Name:	The Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities (Outside London) within the LGA
Lead Member:	Sir Stephen Houghton
Lead Officer:	Frances Foster

Aim

To represent the interests of our members, seeking to influence, in particular, fairer funding and better growth opportunities on their behalf. This core aim is supported by the following ongoing objectives:

- To analyse current and proposed government policy for its impact on member authorities.
- To brief SIGOMA member authorities, at appropriate levels, on the impact of current and proposed policy
- To obtain wherever possible the consensus views of members and represent these to the LGA, government departments and the government of the day
- To work with the LGA, government departments other authority representatives and other stakeholders to ensure that regulations and other policy initiatives are considered and effectively and efficiently implemented with regard to member interests
- To engage with members of all political parties via our parliamentary group so as to represent the particular issues facing our membership and the impact upon them of policy proposals.

Key Activities / Outcomes of work undertaken

Local government funding

- Involvement in the design of the local government finance systems most notably the Business Rate Retention Steering and Working Groups, ALATS and the CLIP finance group
- Continuing to analyse the unequal impact of funding cuts on different authority types, arguing that greater account should be taken of the unbalanced burden falling on high needs and low tax base authorities
- Hosting officer and leader group meetings to explore and highlight the plight of Councils facing financial distress
- Responding to all funding consultations including the 2016 Spending Review consultation, December 2016 settlement and Business Rates consultations
- Supplying on the day briefing notes on the 2016 Spending Review, the 2016 Autumn Statement and the 2016 Budget to members, MPs and Chief Officers

- Engaging in national debates on funding issues.

Education

- Canvassing and representing member views on National Fair Funding Formula
- Responding to consultations on the Schools National Funding Formula and High Needs reform
- Assessing the impact for members; obtaining and publicising their views.

Adult Social Care

- Published articles, maintained active engagement on social media and wrote to the minister regarding the underfunding of Adult Social Care and its impact on our members.

Housing

- Canvassing member views on the impact capping allowances at LHA rates would have on supported housing, using feedback received to respond DCLG's Funding for Supported Housing consultation.

General

- Creating a new website and giving all members access to its secured private members' area and the opportunity to interact on a members blog
- Maintaining and improving an active presence on social media
- Representing member' views at Business Rate Implementation Working Group
- Attitude and impact polls within SIGOMA
- Providing updates on the progress and potential impact of Brexit
- Other press opinion articles and technical explanations to press
- Technical updates and information sharing to officers and Members within SIGOMA
- Hosting Regular officer meetings
- Website publications