

## Note of last Councillors' Forum meeting

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**Title:** Councillors' Forum  
**Date:** Thursday 25 January 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 Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest

The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting. There were no declarations of interest.

#### 2 Rishi Sunak MP - Minister of State for Local Government

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

8 March 2018

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**

\*Please note that you must sign the attendance sheet at meetings in order for your attendance to be registered. If you have any queries about this, please contact the Member Services team: [ms@local.gov.uk](mailto:ms@local.gov.uk).

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	

8 March 2018

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



## Councillors' Forum

8 March 2018

Cllr Nick Rushton  
Cllr Samantha Dixon  
Cllr Paul Smith  
Cllr Shabir Pandor

Leicestershire County Council  
Cheshire West and Chester Council  
Colchester Borough Council  
Kirklees Metropolitan Council