

## Building a society for all ages

### Summary

This report outlines LGA activity to date on responding to *Building a society for all ages*, the Government's strategy for addressing the needs of an ageing society. It summarises the current progress with a key components of the strategy, namely the 'National Commitment' to be signed by Ministers of all key departments and a range of key partners which underlines their shared commitment to encourage and support Local Strategic Partnerships to develop their own areas as good places in which to grow older.

It seeks the Board's views on how the LGA should respond to the request to consider signing the National Commitment.

### Recommendations

Members are recommended to agree a course of action in relation to signing the National Commitment.

### Action

Officers take forward appropriate actions as requested by members.

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## Background

In July 2009, the Government published *Building a society for all ages*, a consultation paper on older people. The paper does not constitute new policy: rather, it builds upon and updates *Opportunity age*, the cross-Government strategy to address the challenges of an ageing society, published in 2005. *Building a society for all ages* includes a number of proposals:

- being active at 60;
- putting older people at the heart of families;
- supporting older people to plan for later life;
- recognising the contribution of older people to the economy;
- improving financial support;
- delivering better public services for later life; and
- building communities for all ages.

The LGA, IDeA and LGE submitted a joint response in October 2009 broadly in support of the strategy, stating that: “We believe that there are many positive aspects to *Building a society for all ages*. We share and support the vision of ‘a society for all ages, where people are no longer defined by age and everyone is able to play a full part’ ”.

This paper focuses on two particular proposals: the proposed Innovative Service Delivery Programme and the National Commitment, referred to as the National Agreement in *Building a society for all ages*.

## Innovative Service Delivery Programme (ISDP)

The ISDP will be a three-year improvement and support programme, commencing in 2010 to identify and disseminate good practice in local plans and services to address the needs of an ageing population. The LGA Group response strongly welcomed the ISDP to support innovative local projects and sector-led improvement. We stated our commitment to working in partnership with Government to identify projects and disseminate good practice to the local government sector. We emphasised that the LGA Group, in particular the IDeA, have a proven track record in effective sector-led improvement and is, therefore, well placed to develop the ISDP.

The DWP invited the IDeA to develop an outline project proposal to act as national delivery agents for the ISDP. In response, the IDeA submitted their outline proposal on 27 November, after gaining approval from the Chair and Vice Chair of the IDeA Management Board to proceed with the bid. The IDeA is currently awaiting a

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response from the DWP and will continue to work with them to refine and agree the project outline.

If approved by Ministers, the ISDP represents a significant work stream for the IDeA over a three-year period. It will provide targeted and specific support for a selected group of upper-tier and district councils and an LSP in each region, and will provide universal good practice support for all councils and LSPs.

### **The National Commitment**

The LGA Group response gave qualified support to the proposed National Commitment, referred to in *Building a society for all ages* as the National Agreement. While we highlighted a number of concerns regarding this proposal we stated that: “we would support a National Agreement that is a restatement of our commitment to supporting councils to promote age friendly strategies if it did not place any unnecessary constraints or burdens on local areas in developing their own priorities and plans. We believe that it could be a useful lever at local and national level for engaging other key partners”.

### **LGA Group activity on Building a society for all ages**

Since then, officers have been involved in the development of the National Commitment, participating in a strategy workshop to agree the framework and providing extensive comments and suggestions on its scope and content. The second draft of the Commitment was received by LGA officers on 2 December for comments and approval by 9 December. The officer considered that the second draft to be close enough to the final draft agreement to be sent to the Political Group Offices for their approval.

On the advice of the Group Offices, the matter was discussed by the LGA's Office Holders. They referred the decision back to the Community Wellbeing Board's Lead Members. After discussion just before Christmas, they decided the matter of signing the Commitment should be discussed by the full Board.

The Chairman has written to the Department of Work and Pensions confirming that the principles of *Building a society for all ages* have the continued support of the LGA but that the decision on formally signing the commitment would be made by the Board at this meeting.

## **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications for the LGA. This issue is a priority in the draft Business Plan for the LGA Group. The IDeA is awaiting a response to the proposal developed at the request of DWP for a support programme for local authorities and local strategic partnerships.

## **Implications for Wales**

The strategy is for England only. The Welsh Assembly has previously adopted a similar strategy.

Contact Officer: Alyson Morley  
Phone No: 020 7664 3230  
Email: [alyson.morley@lga.org.uk](mailto:alyson.morley@lga.org.uk)