

Chairman's Update (25 June – 1 September 2010)

1. On 1 July Housing Minister Grant Shapps and I met LGA President and housing expert Lord Best about the Commission on the council role in housing development that he is leading at Communities and Local Government's and LGA's joint behest. The Minister and I agreed that the review should continue and it will report in September.
2. Later that day I also had an introductory meeting with Greg Clark MP, Minister for Decentralisation. We discussed place based budgets and the Decentralisation and Localism Bill and it was confirmed further meetings would take place.
3. The week of the 5 July was our very successful General Assembly and annual conference in Bournemouth. I met with many different representatives and addressed the conference. I used my speech to make clear that our offer is simple: top down cuts cross the public sector won't work. Radical reform is needed to slim down the system, make huge savings and give power back to people on the ground.
4. On 21 July I met with Theresa May, Home Secretary and Minister for Women and Equality. We discussed police accountability (including directly elected individuals); placed-based budgets; the role of councils in cutting crime; neighbourhood policing/future of PCSOs; and sector-led improvement/improving council performance.
5. Following the meeting I wrote to Theresa May regarding the publication of the policing consultation paper and improving police accountability.
6. On 22 July I was introduced to the House of Lords as Baroness Eaton of Cottingley. I took the oath, supported by Baroness Hanham and Lord Bates, and signed an undertaking to abide by the code of conduct.
7. On the 27 July I addressed the Chairman's summit which took place in Bevin Hall. The summit brought together local authority leaders, chief executives, ministers, MPs and key thinkers to discuss the current financial climate and the LG Group's offer to government. The summit was also addressed by Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.
8. That afternoon I met with Nick Hurd MP, Minister for Civil Society and Lord Wei, Government Adviser on Big Society at the Cabinet Office to

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discuss the role of local government in the Big Society agenda and the role of voluntary organisations in the community, as well as place based budgets.

9. In the evening I met with Dame Denise Platt, Chair of the Independent Advisory Panel for the Local Innovation Awards Scheme to discuss the Innovation Award. Dame Denise has continued these discussions with Councillor Parsons, which are soon to be considered by the Improvement Board.
10. On the 28 July, I had an introductory meeting with Oliver Letwin MP, Minister of State at the Cabinet Office to discuss place based budgets and the spending review.
11. Later that afternoon, as part of a series of ongoing meetings, I met with Communities Secretary, Eric Pickles, to discuss place based budgeting, formula grant and the Decentralisation Bill and following this I met with Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Baroness Hanham CBE, to catch up on progress on productivity.
12. On 12 August I appeared on Woman's Hour and discussed foster care and child protection.
13. On 17 August I had lunch with Councillor Colin Barrow CBE, Leader of Westminster City Council. We discussed place based budgets and the direction of the coalition government. That evening I was interviewed by GMTV regarding school uniforms.
14. On 18 August I met with David Frost, Director General of the British Chambers of Commerce and Adam Marshall, Director of Policy and External Affairs at Local Government House to discuss Local Enterprise Partnerships. It was a very useful meeting and there were substantial areas of agreement between LGA and BCC. Following the meeting a letter was sent to all council leaders, and BCC Chamber Presidents and Chief Executives regarding our position on LEPs.