

Chairman's Update

5 November 2010 – 5 January 2011

1. On 10 November I met with Sir Michael Lyons and Hilary Cottam of Participle. I heard about the work Participle are doing on public service innovation and community budgets. In the afternoon I chaired LGA Leadership Board and later that day I met with Lord Bichard and Chief Executive, David Kester, of the Design Council to discuss working with local authorities.
2. On 11 November I met briefly with Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, Minister for Decentralisation and Bob Neill MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department of Communities and Local Government prior to their attendance at Councillors Forum to discuss the Decentralisation and Localism Bill. In the afternoon I acted as one member of the panel of judges for the Local Government Challenge shortlisting.
3. On 16 November I met with Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, Minister for Decentralisation to discuss planning reform and spoke briefly to Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on the telephone regarding the forthcoming CLG/LGA Housing Commission report. That afternoon I met with Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP, Secretary of State for International Development, to report the increased demand from councils in the developing world for UK support and to promote the use of local government practitioners to support councils abroad, rather than expensive consultants.
4. The morning of 17 November I had a very interesting visit to the Rathbone Centre in Hackney to discuss their work in the voluntary youth sector. I met with Dr Richard Williams, Chief Executive and Lee Willows, Director for London and the South and was given a tour of the centre by the students who attended. In the afternoon I met with Lord Warner to discuss the work of the Commission on the Funding of Care and Support.
5. On 18 November I spoke alongside Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government at the All Party Parliamentary Small Business Group breakfast in the House of Commons hosted by Brian Binley MP for Northampton South.
6. Later on I appeared as guest of the day on the Daily Politics show. We discussed top political stories of the day.

7. On 23 November I chaired a Local Government and the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sectors Seminar held at Leeds City Council alongside Nick Hurd MP, Minister for Civil Society, the Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, Minister for Decentralisation and Kevin Curley, Chief Executive of National Association for Voluntary and Community Action. Leaders and Chief Executives from councils in the North West, North East, Yorkshire and Humber and East Midlands were invited to attend, together with voluntary sector chief executives.
8. On 24 November I chaired a meeting of the Local Government Association leaders from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to discuss common issues after the Comprehensive Spending Review. In the afternoon the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Education rang me to brief me about the Schools White Paper published that day.
9. On 25 November I attended a Ministerial Advisory Group meeting with Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Education. We discussed the Schools White Paper and the spending review. I supported the proposal for a strong strategic role for councils outlined in the white paper. We agreed that we now need to work together to make a reality of the paper's vision of councils as champions of local children and families and of educational excellence.
10. That afternoon I attended a meeting with Richard Benyon MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Natural Environment and Fisheries and Rt Hon Lord Chris Smith, Chairman of the Environment Agency at Nobel House, to discuss the release of coastal erosion data and surface water flood maps.
11. On 29 and 30 November I met leaders from other Commonwealth Local Government Associations to discuss public service reform and support to developing local government across the Commonwealth.
12. On 30 November I, together with Group Leaders and Stephen Jones, Group Finance Director, met with Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government at Eland House to discuss the local government finance settlement.
13. In the afternoon I visited Eland House to attend a Ministerial Bill liaison meeting on the Decentralisation and Localism Bill attended by Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, Minister for Decentralisation.
14. Later on that day I spoke to Nick Herbert MP, Minister for Police regarding the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill.
15. On the morning of 7 December I addressed the Annual Finance conference held at Local Government House and spoke alongside Bob Neill MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department of

Communities and Local Government, Rt Hon Caroline Flint MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and Stephen Jones, Group Director of Finance and Performance. I emphasised the real challenges to councils coming from the front-loading of the settlement.

16. That afternoon I had a telephone conversation with Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, Minister for Housing and Local Government regarding the government's proposals to introduce affordable rents and reform to the Housing Revenue Account.
17. On 8 December met with Dr Therese Coffey MP for Suffolk Coastal to discuss planning enforcement. Later that day I led the discussion at Senior Women in Public Leadership lunch in House of Lords on the recent spending review and in the afternoon I chaired LGA Leadership Board.
18. On 9 December I was interviewed by the Local Government Channel, looking back over the past year.
19. On 13 December I appeared on the Daily Politics Show alongside Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP, Minister for Housing and Local Government and Rt Hon Caroline Flint MP, Shadow Communities and Local Government Secretary to discuss the Localism Bill and the Local Government Settlement. That afternoon I also appeared on BBC News 24, ITN and PM on Radio 4.
20. On 15 December I met with Dr Hamish Meldrum, Chairman of the British Medical Association Council, Vicki Chapman, Director of Representational & Political Activities, and Dr Keith Reid, Co-chair of the BMA's Public Health Medicine Committee to discuss the NHS and local government.
21. On 16 December I addressed the Employee Forum at Local Government House looking back over the last year and the changes that have taken place, internally in the Group and externally.