

Chairman's update 5 February to 4 March 2011

1. On 7 February I visited the City of York Council. I had a very interesting meeting with Kersten England, Chief Executive, Cllr Andrew Waller, Leader of the Liberal Democrats and Cllr Ian Gillies, Leader of the Conservative Group. It was a useful opportunity for me to discuss the council's priorities at this time.
2. On 8 February I appeared on the Today programme and discussed funding for the voluntary sector.
3. In the afternoon I met with Andrew Stunnell OBE MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government and Steve Webb MP, Minister for Pensions alongside Cllr Richard Kemp to discuss localisation of aspects of the Social Fund.
4. Later that day I attended a meeting with Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP, Minister of State, Cabinet Office to discuss public service reform.
5. On 9 February I attended an introductory meeting with Emma Harrison CBE and in the afternoon I chaired Leadership Board.
6. On 10 February I met with Eugene Sullivan, Chief Executive of the Audit Commission to discuss the current work of the Audit Commission.
7. Later that morning I chaired LG Group Executive and Councillors' Forum at which Rt Hon Lord Heseltine spoke about directly elected mayors.
8. On Friday 11 February I appeared on the BBC News Channel to discuss the new local authority publicity code and in the afternoon I attended and spoke at the Strategic Supplier Summit at HM Treasury alongside the Prime Minister and Rt Hon Francis Maude MP, Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General.
9. On 15 February I attended and spoke at the LG Group Discussion Seminar: 'Building your community with your community - what does the Decentralisation and Localism Bill mean in practice?' held at Local Government House.
10. On 16 February I met with Laura Kuenssberg, Chief Political Correspondent at the BBC to discuss recent local government issues.

11. That afternoon I met with Nick Hurd MP, Minister for Civil Society and Rt Hon Francis Maude, Minister for the Cabinet Office and Paymaster General at the Cabinet Office, discussion focused on the Public Service Reform White Paper and Big Society.
12. On 22 February I attended and spoke at the Prince's Regeneration Trust and Local Government Association's Heritage Conference at St James's Palace alongside HRH The Prince of Wales and announced, jointly with Baroness Kay Andrews OBE, Chair of English Heritage, a new joint initiative to help modernise and improve local heritage conservation services.
13. In the evening I attended a NHS Confederation dinner with Nigel Edwards, Acting Chief Executive, Sir Keith Pearson JP, Chair and Jo Webber, Deputy Director for Policy. This provided an opportunity to explore the scope for enhancing our joint working around the Health and Social Care Bill.
14. On 23 February I attended the Senior Women in Public Leadership lunch.
15. On 24 February I travelled to Wakefield to attend the Local Government Yorkshire and Humber full membership meeting.
16. On 1 March I met with leading members of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum to discuss my contribution to the forthcoming conference in Cardiff in March. In the afternoon I attended a meeting with Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith, Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions and Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP, Minister for Employment at Caxton House to discuss localisation of council tax benefit, housing costs within universal credit, the social fund, ESF funding for complex families and Health and Safety.
17. On 2 March I attended a meeting with National Council for Voluntary Organisations, Chief Executive, Sir Stuart Etherington and officers alongside Lord Richard Best OBE, President of the Local Government Association at the House of Lords to discuss their work with local government.