

Chairman's update 5 March 2011 to 6 May 2011

- On 7 March I visited Bradford College and spoke to Public Service and Management students about the LGA report 'Local Freedom or Central Control?', which sets out our vision for the future council role in education. It was very interesting to hear the views of the students who had been set the task of comparing our proposals with those that the government's subsequently published in the Schools White Paper 'The Importance of Teaching' and to discuss the extent to which our report influenced government thinking.

That afternoon I participated in a broad ranging interview with the [Local Government Chronicle](#) which touched on issues including local government relations with central government and the increase in the capitalisation fund.

- On 8 March I took part in a short listing meeting to identify the successful candidate for the new Baroness Margaret Eaton Young Adult Learner of the Year Award, sponsored by the Local Government Association and Reed in Partnership. The discussion at the meeting was very interesting and we have found very a worthy winner. I will be presenting the Award, which is in its inaugural year, at the main Adult Learners' Week Awards Ceremony. The Ceremony is arranged by NIACE and will take place on 16 May.

That afternoon I met with Dame Jo Williams, Chair, Care Quality Commission, Alan Rosenbach, Special Policy Lead and Matthew Trainer, Head of Public Affairs alongside Cllr David Rogers to discuss recent work amongst a significant period of change within both the NHS and local government. That evening I met with Eugene Sullivan, Chief Executive, Audit Commission to discuss possible options for the future of local audit.

- On 9 March I met with Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, Minister for Decentralisation at the Department for Communities and Local Government to discuss EU Fines. That evening I met with Dr Robert Chilton, Chair, Standards for England to discuss Standards for England work and share his perspective on the implications of the end of the current standards regime for local government.
- On 10 March I met with Margaret Hodge MP, Chairman, Public Accounts Committee, to discuss community budgets and local government. Later that day I met with Mike Freer MP, [Finchley and Golders Green](#) to discuss the Localism Bill.

- From 14 -16 March I attended and spoke at the Commonwealth Local Government Forum conference in Cardiff. In the afternoon of 16 March I chaired LGA Leadership Board and attended a reception at Downing Street to mark the Centenary of International Women's Day.
- On the morning of 17 March I chaired LG Group Executive and Councillors' Forum with Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, Minister for Decentralisation at the Department for Communities and Local Government speaking.

That afternoon I attended a meeting with Baroness Hanham CBE, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government alongside Cllr Ann Lucas at Eland House to discuss how local authorities and the voluntary and community sector (VCS) can work closer together on the violence against women and girls (VAW) agenda, in particular on the provision and commissioning of services.

- On 22 March I took part in an interview with Jill Sherman, Whitehall Editor from The Times on local government issues including the finance settlement. That evening I attended and spoke at the Improvement and Efficiency South East (IESE) 2011 Awards Ceremony.
- On 23 March I attended the Local Government Chronicle Awards recognising and celebrating the hard work of those in local government across the country throughout the past year.
- On 24 March I attended a meeting with Baroness Hanham CBE, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government and Lord Adebawale, Chief Executive of Turning Point at Eland House to discuss work on Local Integrated Services (LIS) to join up services around local community needs and priorities. Lord Adebawale has subsequently been invited to join the senior official level group, chaired by Lord Bichard, that provides the governance for community budgets.

That afternoon I met with Lady Cobham, Chair and James Berresford, Chief Executive of Visit England alongside Cllr Chris White to discuss how the work of Visit England relates to local government in the light of significant changes to how support for tourism is organised.

- On 30 March I met with Derek Twine, Chief Executive and Sam Mowbray, Head of Public Affairs of the Scout Association to discuss the impact on local scout groups of councils increasing ground rent, the cost of renting council-owned buildings and removing discretionary rate relief.

- On 31 March I, together with Cllr Clare Whelan and Cllr Mike Haines, met with Rt Hon Caroline Spelman MP, Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Bob Neill MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at Department for Communities and Local Government to discuss emerging themes in Defra's response to the waste review which we expect to be published in June.

Later that morning, I was interviewed by Polly Curtis, the Guardian's Whitehall Correspondent regarding the impact of the finance settlement and how councils are trying to mitigate the effect of cuts to services.

In the afternoon I, together with Stephen Jones, LG Group Finance Director met briefly with Olafur Eiriksson, a partner in Logos Legal Services and Virginia Cooper, partner in Bevan Brittan LLP, Solicitors to discuss Landsbanki and Glitnir.

- On 5 April I attended a Community Capability Roundtable with Jo Miller, Deputy Chief Executive at the Cabinet Office. Nick Hurd MP, Minister for Civil Society attended alongside representatives from the Voluntary Community Sectors, private sector and think tanks. We discussed how we can build the capacity of local communities to engage and take advantage of the various new powers and flexibilities that are being taken forward as part of the decentralisation and localism agenda.

In the afternoon I, alongside Rob Whiteman, Managing Director, Local Government Improvement and Development and council leaders attended a meeting with Baroness Hanham CBE, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government in her role as chair of her new Community Budgets Group.

- On 11 April I attended the Local Government Chronicle '50' reception, to launch their list of most influential people in local government.
- On 12 April I met with Tony Hawkhead, Chief Executive of Groundwork UK to discuss how local government can work more effectively with Groundwork UK in responding to the economic climate, reductions in public spending and changes in the policy landscape. We will be working closely with Groundwork as we develop the next phase of Hidden Talents programme on engaging all young people aged 16-25 years in productive work, learning and volunteering.

Later that day I met with Philip Collins, Chairman, Office of Fair Trading. Discussion focused on the impact of the spending review and the Government's proposed consultation on the institutional changes to the consumer landscape in the provision of consumer information, advice, education, advocacy and enforcement. I then met with Jenny Watson, Chair of the Electoral Commission to discuss the Localism Bill. That evening I met with Anthony Mayer, Chair and Claer Lloyd-Jones,

Chief Executive of the Tenant Services Authority discussion focused on performance and improvement in councils' housing functions.

- On 19 April I had very interesting day visiting Havering council. I met with Cllr. Michael White, Leader of the Council alongside officers and was given a tour of Havering's reablement service and heard about their work on adult social care and anti-social behaviour.