
Chief Executive's Monthly Report – May 2011

Purpose of report

For discussion

Summary

This report highlights the LG Group's main achievements on behalf of local authorities during March and April and reports against the priorities of the LG Group Programme Boards and cross-cutting priorities.

Recommendation(s)

Members are invited to note the report

Action

Group Offices and communications officers to disseminate the report and its contents amongst our membership

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Summary

1. This report highlights the LG Group's main achievements on behalf of local authorities during March and April and reports against the priorities of the LG Group Programme Boards and cross-cutting priorities.

Children and Young People

2. Backed by Department for Education funding a new model for **sector led improvement** is being developed by a joint "commissioning board". The board includes members from the LG Group (Cllr David Simmonds for the CYP Board), SOLACE, Association of Directors of Children's Services and DfE. Members of the commissioning board have presented the model to the Secretary of State for Education. He has agreed to consider a bid for funding for the first three months of the new financial year which will give the programme some pump-priming.
3. The schools white paper proposes a strong, **strategic role for councils in education**. To prompt discussion on councils' changing role, a paper has been circulated to members and officers in local authorities. This suggests a programme of LG Group activities around school improvement, educational excellence, vulnerable children and young people, bringing forward new provision and access to school places.
4. **The Munro Review of child protection** will launch its final report on 10 May. It is likely to recommend a welcome reduction in the process surrounding child protection and more support for the professional judgement of social workers. The CYP Board met Professor Eileen Munro on 29 March and called for the Review to give greater emphasis to political accountability and the role of lead members for children and other councillors in providing leadership, challenge and accountability in an area of high risk.

Community Wellbeing

5. On 7 March, the LG Group hosted a consultative event for the Department of Health on the **public health white paper**. Anne Milton, Parliamentary Under

Secretary of State for Health, gave the keynote address and emphasised the key leadership role of local government in improving the health of their communities and reducing health inequalities. The meeting was an opportunity for senior elected members and officers to give clear messages to the Department of Health on the proposals in the White Paper. There was a clear consensus that local government was the 'natural home' for public health and that many councils already had a firm commitment to health improvement. Some participants expressed concern over the lack of clarity on the public health budget, the relationship between local Health and Wellbeing Boards and Public Health England – the national body that will have responsibility for health protection – and the lack of democratic accountability of GP commissioning consortia.

6. On 9 March we held a Smith Square Debate; ***As you like it: can we really achieve personalised social care for all?*** Chaired by David Brindle, Public Services Editor of The Guardian, over sixty attendees from councils, think tanks, Parliament, the third sector and the media heard from an expert panel of speakers including Stephen Dorrell MP, Dame Jo Williams and Professor Peter Beresford. With Andrew Dilnot's Commission on Funding of Care and Support due to report in July the debate explored what reform needed to achieve, the role of local government in a future system, and how the personalisation agenda should be taken forward.
7. On 25 March we hosted a high-level **roundtable meeting with Andrew Dilnot**, Chair of the Commission on Funding of Care and Support, and more than forty council Leaders, Chief Executives and Directors and Lead Members for adult social services. The session was an important opportunity to share their views and experiences with Dilnot and think about the practical implications of the Commission's emerging thinking.

Culture, Tourism and Sport

8. The LGA's message that councils were working hard to make sure anyone who wanted to hold Royal Wedding **street parties** could do so was covered widely in the press. Many papers carried LGA figures on the number of road closure applications. The figures were picked up in the Telegraph, Express, Times, Mail, Star, Metro, Evening Standard and the Wall Street Journal. Cllr Chris White, Chairman of the LG Group's Culture, Tourism and Sport board, appeared on various radio and TV bulletins. The strategy proved successful in countering claims that councils were obstructing party planners.

Environment and Housing

9. On 31 March, Board Members Cllr Clare Whelan and Cllr Mike Haines accompanied the Chairman to a meeting with Caroline Spelman and Bob Neill to discuss the Government's **waste review**. Among other things, they discussed how to promote excellence in local collection while maintaining local choice over methods, business waste, the need to minimise food and packaging waste, the range of approaches needed to ensure residents understand and work with local collection approaches, and tackling serious and organised waste crime. Ministers

expressed their gratitude for political and professional input from the sector to the review process.

10. The LG Group's campaign to give councils more effective **powers to crack-down on motorists who litter** from cars received a boost with favourable coverage in the Times, Mail and Sun, alongside interviews with Cllr Clyde Loakes, LG Group Environment Board Vice Chariman, on Radio 2's Jeremy Vine Programme, 5Live and other regional and local radio stations. The LGA wants councils to be given the power to take action against the registered keeper of a vehicle from which rubbish is thrown if the offender can't be identified. The change would bring littering from a vehicle in line with speeding and fly-tipping.
11. The LG Group's work to highlight the amount of **unnecessary packaging and food waste** making its way to landfill was boosted by new analysis which revealed the £13.7billion cost of buying and discarding edible food. The LG Group released the figure along with a call on retailers to change the way they market perishable items. In particular we called for an end to buy-one-get-one-free deals, which encourage people to take more food than they need, replaced by discounts on individual products, which offer customers the same value without incentivising over-buying. The story received coverage in the Mail, Sun, Mirror and Telegraph.

Improvement

12. LG Group officers arranged an **Annual Improvement and Innovation Conference** which was held on 22 March 2011 in Leeds. The event saw the formal launch of '*Taking the Lead: self regulation and improvement in local government*'. The programme provided the opportunity to look in detail at the Group's seven point offer as we help councils to take responsibility for their own improvement.
13. Councillors taking leadership of a local authority for the first time after a change in political control are being offered five days of **peer support** to help them hit the ground running after the recent local elections. The Local Government Group will make experienced councillors and local authority leaders available to provide five days of mentoring. The support, which is free-of-charge, will be available within the first few weeks of a change of political control. It is part of the LG Group's new *Taking the Lead* approach to self regulation.
14. As part of *Taking the Lead*, the LG Group is offering to the sector a range of tools and support for councils. The Local Government Group Inform **LG Inform** service is being developed as part of this. This is an online service allowing councils to access and compare key performance information, and ultimately build the evidence needed to make informed decisions, reduce costs and improve services.
15. LG Inform will make available key data that can be compared at both a high level (in the form of a **core 'dashboard' of indicators** about the council and its area) and more detailed, service-specific levels. It will be accessible to a range of users; and we anticipate councillors and senior officers using it as well as performance staff.

16. The second phase of the **local productivity** programme focuses on three “big win” areas:
- Children, adults and families;
 - Procurement, capital and assets; and
 - Future ways of working.
17. A high-level workshop on Children, adults and families, facilitated by the LG Group, was held on the 18 April with representatives from councils, government departments, sector groups and the lead member for the Executive Board in order to scope the way forward.
18. The LG Group’s innovation programme **Creative Councils**, partnered by the National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts (NESTA) was launched on 14 April 2011 with an open call for ideas. There has been considerable interest already in this new initiative which allows councils to access expertise and support to put their innovative ideas into practice. The deadline for applications closes on 23 May 2011.
19. All but six local authorities in England & Wales requested and were sent copies of our annual **Councillors Guide** in April. The Guide is now available as a free download from the LGID website.

Economy and Transport

20. The LG Group’s campaign to tackle the £70million annual cost to councils of fixing **botched utility roadworks** received a big boost this week with Cllr Peter Box, LG Group Transport Board Chairman, highlighting the issue on Radio 4’s Today Programme, BBC Breakfast, 5 Live Breakfast and numerous regional radio programmes. The LG Group wants utility companies to pay town halls a bond which would be forfeited if repairs run over time or if the road is not returned to its original condition following maintenance work on water, gas and electricity infrastructure.

Safer and Stronger Communities

21. On 24 March, Cllr Les Lawrence (Vice-Chair of the LG Group’s Safer and Stronger Communities Board) and Dave Holland (Manager, Consumer Protection, Cardiff Council) appeared before the **Protection of Freedoms Bill** Committee on the local government response to the Bill and councils’ use of CCTV, surveillance and powers of entry.
22. Ahead of the **Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill** entering the Lords, meetings have been held with government, opposition and cross bench peers to highlight the LG Group’s concerns with the Bill and to seek assistance in tabling amendments to it. The Bill received its second reading in the Lords at the end of April, and a range of the changes the LG Group is seeking to the Bill were raised in the debate.
23. One major change in the Bill resulting from LG Group lobbying was the move by the government to table an amendment at report stage in the House of Commons which would introduce **flexible and locally set licensing fees**. The government’s amendment was similar to that the LG Group tabled at the committee stage of the

Bill, and not only allows recovery of the administrative costs of running the licensing system, but also of enforcement activity associated with it and reasonable costs associated with related activity. As the clause also includes provision for the government to cap the fees level, the LG Group will continue to work closely with the Home Office as the regulations are prepared to ensure that any maximum fees level allows councils to cover all the relevant costs they incur.

24. LG Group officers have been supporting a cross party working group tasked by the Fire Commission to look at the **future of the Fire Service College**. The group is examining the strategic position of the college, potential models for governance, structure and financial viability of the college and will make recommendations to the Commission in June.

25. LG Group officers arranged a very successful Group-wide **Annual Fire Conference and Exhibition**, which was held on 8 and 9 March 2011 in Gateshead. Maintaining its place as one of the most popular events run by the LG Group, the conference served up a very diverse and exciting programme for delegates on the most topical issues facing the fire and rescue service.

Workforce

26. **'Workforce Matters'** has won the 2010-11 Community of Practice (CoP) of the year. The CoP exists to help councils deliver better services by effectively managing and developing their workforces. Its remit and innovative approach to sharing learning has attracted 1,900 members to date, representing 77 per cent of councils.

27. LG Employers has been acting on behalf of affected fire and rescue authorities in the negotiations around the **Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment Regulations**. This was requested by the Employment Tribunal service, to identify a resolution to these cases as regards the terms and conditions issues.

28. Agreement has now been reached with the Fire Brigades Union on both a settlement and a mechanism to facilitate withdrawal of cases supported by the FBU. Negotiations have been taking place separately with the Retained Firefighters' Union to facilitate withdrawal of the cases supported by the RFU and formal agreement has now also been reached on both the settlement and mechanism for withdrawal of the RFU supported cases.

European and International

29. Spending pressures are encouraging councils to work more innovatively to find efficiencies. However sharing services and buying goods and services are guided by sometimes confusing EU procurement rules, which is why we welcome the EU procurement review as an opportunity to get things right. Based on evidence from councils, LG Group responded to an **EU green paper on modernising EU public procurement policy**. We are campaigning for a radical simplification of EU procurement rules; clear exclusion for public-public cooperation contracts in the new upcoming law; and a reduction of legal uncertainty which has encouraged legal challenges through the remedies Directive.

30. LG Group is lobbying to shape the DWP's policy to spend £200m **European Social Fund** (ESF) to be delivered between now and 2013 to help support the employment prospects of families with multiple problems. LG Group is lobbying for local authorities to work hand in hand with DWP locally to co-commission provision, rather than their role being confined to that of referral agencies. Our view has been expressed at various officer level meeting involving a wide range of local authorities. The Chairman has written to the Secretary of State.
31. The LGA has initiated the first cross-Whitehall department working group to explore how future **EU funding programmes** (2014-2020), expected to be worth billions to local communities and businesses, can be invested in a more locally responsive, joined-up way. Our initiative will include local pilot projects to explore ideas on the ground. Also, in concluding its inquiry into the future of EU funding, the House of Lords supported several LGA lobbying aims in its final report calling for a continuation of well-resourced funds, and limiting the EU's involvement in setting criteria to determine how money should be spent.

Local Government Finance

32. In March, government published terms of reference for its **Local Government Resource Review (LGRR)**. The LG Group has subsequently published two consultation papers seeking views on the LGRR. The first paper looks at the main strategic questions associated with the relocalisation of business rates; the second is a more detailed paper looking at some of the technical challenges arising from relocalisation. Both consultation papers have been circulated to authorities.
33. On 1 April, the Icelandic District Court ruled that deposits placed by UK wholesale depositors have priority status in the winding up of the **Icelandic banks**, Landsbanki and Glitnir. This is a significant step towards recovering local authority deposits in these two banks, as priority creditors will be at the front of the queue when the administrators start paying distributions. However, as we expected, the decisions have been appealed by other parties. The cases have now been transferred to the Supreme Court, although a date for the hearing has not yet been set. We would expect the Supreme Court to deliver its decision later this year, likely in the autumn.
34. LG Group **finance and housing** officers have been working with councils and CLG to work through some of the technical challenges arising from HRA reform, specifically the transaction that will see authorities buy themselves out of the current HRA. Good progress has been made, and we will continue to liaise with government and councils to ensure that appropriate support is provided.
35. In March 2011, the 326 authorities in England that maintain a **land charges register** were advised by the Department for Communities and Local Government that £11.2 million would be provided to them to cover expenditure for new burdens associated with the revocation of the personal search fee of the local land charges register. Each authority should have received £34,355.83 last month. The LGA lobbied hard for this new burden to be recognised, but we have strong concerns about the adequacy of the funding amount and the proposal to distribute funding without regard for authorities'

individual circumstances. The Chairman has written to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to register the sector's concerns and seek a commitment for the Government to cover the costs of all successful refund claims.

36. Following the publication of the **Welfare Reform Bill** the LGA has continued lobbying activity. In particular we have been:
- working to influence the DWP decision on the delivery mechanism for Universal Credit in favour of a model which would build upon local authority customer contact
 - working with DWP and advisers on the transition to universal credit, particularly the effect on the councils' existing benefit services
 - working with CLG and advisers on the replacement for council tax benefit
37. One of the most controversial aspects of the 2011-12 local government finance settlement is the removal of money for the **academies top-slice**, which amounts to £148m in 2011-12 and a further £265m in 2012-13. Despite LGA representations the Settlement was confirmed by Parliament and, following a discussion at the LG Group Executive the LGA sought legal advice. As a result the LGA wrote to all relevant member authorities to establish whether they would be willing to take part in an action. 23 authorities have now commenced an action for judicial review. Although the LGA has covered the cost of the initial legal advice, the substantive action will be undertaken by the member councils and the LGA will not be a party.
38. One of the grants that was incorporated in the Dedicated Schools Grant in 2011-12 is the **Standards Fund**. In March authorities learned that the DfE would not be paying the final Standards Fund payment for 2010-11. Some authorities were saying that they would have to recalculate schools' budget shares to take account of the cut. Following a letter from the LGA, ADCS and Solace to Michael Gove the LGA, ADCS, and CIPFA met with DfE and agreed the text of a letter where the DfE apologised for not discussing the issues earlier with local government and agreed that within the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2011-12 it would identify a sum as the final Standards Fund payment for 2010-11, thus enabling authorities to close their accounts in the same way as if the Standards Fund had remained separate. The DfE also agreed to work with the LGA on a definitive solution to the issue to be implemented not later than 2012-13 which would not mean additional pressure falling on council tax payers.
39. The first coherent picture of how the cuts are affecting services up and down the country appeared with the publication of the LGA's **survey of council finance directors**. It showed that councils were cutting the costs of senior and middle management while protecting services for the most vulnerable. The Times and the Guardian's coverage of the survey coincided with interviews both papers had carried out with LGA chairman, Baroness Margaret Eaton, who was also quoted in the Daily Mail and on the BBC website. The Financial Times continued the cuts theme, conducting its own survey of 20 councils and quoting LGA vice-chairman Cllr David Sparks.
40. Sixteen places, involving over thirty councils, have now developed proposals for **community budgets** to improve the lives of over 10,000 families with multiple problems. Council leaders have had two very positive meetings with the

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and other Ministers to discuss community budgets.

41. Key points to emerge from the first meeting with the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 24 March were that community budgets are the prototype for the localisation of public funding. Ministers see them as a “real game-changer” capable of rapid expansion into other priorities.
42. At the second meeting with, Baroness Hanham, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government it was decided to prioritize 4 issues: the development of community budgets into other policy/spend areas and the link to payment by results funding, data-sharing, governance taking account of police and health service reforms and assessment procedures. We expect the group to meet again in June, possibly feeding into a further meeting between council leaders and Cabinet ministers in July.

Decentralisation and Localism

43. The LG Group continued its work to support **youth engagement in democracy** through holding a round table with representatives from member councils, civil society organisations. This follows the publication of a suite of research, publications and tools for councillors to promote youth engagement in democracy locally. The work of the LG Group has focused on how youth engagement can strengthen democracy, in particular through valuing young voices in decision making and service design, identifying and overcoming barriers to voter participation, engaging young people in scrutiny, demonstrating the value of youth engagement and supporting councillors to better engage young people.
44. The LG Group responded to CLG consultation on the **community right to buy and community right to challenge** provisions in the localism bill. We argued that both provisions were unduly complex and bureaucratic and called for a more localist approach to achieve the outcomes sought.
45. The Smith Square debate ‘**Much ado about nothing. How revolutionary is the localism bill**’ drew a packed crowd. The speeches from Lord Heseltine, Hazel Blears MP and David Ward MP prompted a lively debate about localism and specifically the mayoral provisions in the localism bill.
46. Further to the LG Group’s publication ***Essential Localism*** Greg Clark addressed the Councillors Forum on the decentralisation agenda. *Essential Localism* called for government to address the need to promote culture change across central government, consider extending the principle of diversifying provision across the public sector, tackle barriers to diversifying supply, reverse dependency on central government grant and make community budgets a reality and matching transparency in the local government sector with transparency across government and the public sector more widely. The Minister’s response to *Essential Localism* has been very positive and we are continuing to work with the department and partner organisations to influence the shape of the localism bill before it re-emerges at report stage.

47. The LG Group submitted a response to the **consultation on statutory duties**. We recognised that the use of a statutory duty is an appropriate policy tool in some cases but there are many examples of unnecessary, outdated and ineffectual duties. Our response called for an end to unnecessary prescription and regulations and that all statutory guidance should be revoked. We estimated that halting unnecessary policy activity could save in the region of £1.5bn.
48. The LGA gave evidence to the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Employee Ownership informal inquiry to help identify policy challenges and practical solutions to ensure employee ownership can be both meaningful and successful for public sector workers. We argued that 'Business as usual' just isn't an option any more – employee ownership can help deliver the change. It is critical however that the government in their attempt to encourage **new models of service provision** does not over engineer and limit the ability of councils to contract out in a way that is locally appropriate.
49. The LG Group submitted written evidence to the Public Administration Select Committee inquiry into the Big Society. We argued that councils play a key role already as strategic commissioners of the **voluntary and community sector** in their locality, the central enabling role that Councils can play in facilitating and encouraging a diverse market of providers and the critical role of the ward councillor in facilitating and supporting engagement and participation locally.

LG Group Business

50. On 30 November 2010 the LG Group published its proposals for a **future organisation** in response to the 38% reduction in topslice funding and further 11% reduction in subscription income. Following a statutory consultation with staff that ended on 4 March, a new structure, that brings together the operation of the LGA, LGID, LGR, LGE and LG Leadership into a single organisation was confirmed. With the majority of roles in the new structure changing, staff went through a rigorous external assessment followed by an internal interview. All but the final 24 posts have now been filled, with the remainder expected to be confirmed by the end of May.
51. There are 269 permanent posts in the new structure, with a further 37 fixed term posts working on grant funded programmes. This represents a 40% reduction in posts since 1 November 2010. Staff from Layden House moved into a new flexible working environment in Local Government House over the weekend of 8/9 May, freeing up Layden House to generate commercial income. The new integrated LG Group organisation will formally come into effect from 1 June 2011.
52. The **LGA membership** year ended on 31 March 2011. Of the 10 councils originally on notice, three - Doncaster, Windsor & Maidenhead and Slough - confirmed their intention to withdraw from membership from 1 April. This brings the total number of councils out of membership to seven. 419 local authorities remain in membership including councils, fire & rescue authorities, integrated transport authorities, national parks authorities, the 22 Welsh unitaries in corporate membership through the Welsh LGA and one Town Council. 22 councils are currently on notice to withdraw in 2012.

53. The third and fourth rounds of the **Local Government Challenge** took place in March and April. The March challenge was hosted by the Department for Communities and Local Government, the first ever hosted by a central government department. Contestants were asked to propose solutions to a number of scenarios where local communities are experiencing barriers to taking a more active role in local decision making and local service delivery.
54. The April challenge was hosted by County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service. Contestants were based in two different community fire stations and developed proposals for ways in which facilities attached to the fire stations could be used to for better community use, and to promote some of the strategic objectives of the Service. Both hosts were impressed with the recommendations that contestants formulated and County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service have committed to taking some of the suggestions forward.

Political Group updates

Conservative Group

55. In March the Conservative Group organised a successful regional seminar for Conservative councillors in the South West at Devon County Council. Over 50 councillors attended and there were a variety of sessions covering changes to the planning system, councils role in the Big Society and perceptions of local government. Cllr David Shakespeare spoke about the work of the LGA and the Group Office.
56. Cllr Shakespeare has continued to attend weekly meeting with Eric Pickles and in April he had a meeting with the Special Advisers at the Home Office to discuss a number of issues.
57. Cllr Clare Whelan has attended weekly meetings with Defra ministers, Cllr Les Lawrence has met Mary Macleod (PPS to Nick Herbert, the Minister for Policing and Criminal Justice) and Cllr Gary Porter has has a number of meeting with Greg Clark, the Minster for Decentralisation.
58. The Group Office arranged a number of meetings in March and April for groups of Conservative Group Leaders with Eric Pickles. The next of these meetings will take place on the 10th May.

Labour Group

59. During the course of March, David Sparks held meetings with the following council and/or Labour group leaders: Terry O'Neill (Warrington), Robert Polhill (Halton), Chris Roberts (Greenwich), Mayor Sir Robin Wales (Newham), Rob Anderson (Slough), Russell Roberts (Rhonffa-Cynon-Taf), Roger Stone (Rotherham), Julie Dore (Sheffield) and Sandra Holland (Doncaster).
60. The Labour Group organised a dedicated local Labour section at the TUC 'March for the Alternative' on 26 March. Over 150 Labour councillors, their friends, family and other Labour activists joined in the march to Hyde Park. David Sparks also addressed a separate anti-cuts rally held at the Methodist Central Hall in Coventry.

61. The Group office organised two events for health, wellbeing and/or social care leads: one in London on 16 March, which was also attended by shadow ministers Dianne Abbott MP and Emily Thornberry MP, and one in Bolton on 31 March.
62. Shadow Culture Secretary Ivan Lewis MP attended the Labour Group Councillors' Forum meeting on 17 March, where he helped kick-start a debate about how Labour councils should be safe-guarding cultural services in the face of central government cuts.
63. Cllr John Merry (Salford), our lead member on the Children & Young People Board, met with representatives from UNISON to discuss upcoming changes to schools, and Cllr Ed Turner (Oxford) from the Environment & Housing Board met with Jack Dromey MP to discuss planning aspects of the Localism Bill.
64. Head of Office Nathan Yeowell attended two meetings convened by the Rt. Hon. Tessa Jowell MP to help outline the Labour Party's response to the government's 'Big Society' initiative.

Liberal Democrat Group

65. The Group had another busy Spring Conference in March. The office arranged meetings between councillors, ministers and parliamentarians for each of the six LG Group policy areas. Chaired by the Group's lead member on each of the LG Group policy boards, the agendas covered good practice and party policy for each area.
66. The office has worked with councillors and others to produce the 8th edition of the "Liberal Democrats in Education" booklet.
67. In conjunction with Nick Clegg's office, the office produced a booklet outlining the commitments Lib Dem ministers have made to localism in each of their respective departments. Traffic through exhibition stand has led to the reprint of this and other publications.
68. The office is now preparing for our Liberal Democrat Local Government conference to be held in Bristol on 18 June.
69. Prior to the election period, the office began our consultation with senior councillors around the country on the Government's resource review.
70. The Liberal Democrat Group has held conference calls between ministers and councillors, including one with Sarah Teather on her Special Educational Needs proposals.
71. Group Leader and Deputy have met with Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg to discuss the localism bill and the role of local democracy in the health reforms.

Independent Group

72. Up to forty Independent Group members attended the Group's conference in York on March 9 - ***Big Society / all in it together?*** Delegates received presentations on enabling communities and councils to fully embrace the opportunities and complexities arising in changed processes for service planning and delivery in the public sector. Maintaining standards and Codes of Conduct post the prospective abolition of Standards for England was also discussed. We also received an update on local government in Wales from two group representatives. Afternoon workshops looked at the twin themes of greater civic engagement in the delivery of public services and the risks and accountabilities arising.
73. Our current Group Leader, Keith Ross OBE, stands down from his post at the end of June. Elections for the positions of Leader, Deputy Leader and Treasurer will be held between May 6 and June 28. We anticipate a very well subscribed election.
74. Independent Group arrangements for the LG Group Summer Conference are also taking shape. We will hold group meetings as part of the conference covering the reputation of local government, health delivery and local authority planning. The Independent Group Annual General Meeting takes place on Tuesday 28 June at 11am in Birmingham.

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