

Chairman's Update 7 June to 28 June 2011

1. On 8 June I met with the BBC News local government correspondent Mike Sergeant, to discuss my final weeks as Chairman of the Association and the challenges ahead.
2. Later that day I attended a reception for Vice-Presidents of the LGA at the House of Lords. It was a very useful opportunity to communicate our recent work to our new and existing Vice-Presidents, especially our work on the Localism Bill. That evening, I met with Lord Bichard to discuss Community Budgets and our aspirations for the future.
3. On 13 June I, along with Councilman Edward Lord, met with Rt Hon Danny Alexander MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury. We held very productive and helpful discussions on a range of issues including sector led improvement, approaches to commissioning, the Local Government Resource Review, community budgets and Local Enterprise Partnerships.
4. On 16 June I chaired LG Group Executive and the Councillors' Forum at which John Fisher, Director of the Local Futures Group, spoke. Later that day I attended the inaugural Bruce-Lockhart lecture at which Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, Minister for Decentralisation, gave a lecture on 'Winning the Peace'. It was good to see so many respected colleagues come to Local Government House to support the event.
5. On 20 June I took part in an interview with Emma Maier, Editor of the Local Government Chronicle which focussed on my time as Chairman as well as key legislation and policy issues.
6. On 21 June I, along with Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson, met Steve Webb MP Minister for Pensions, at the Department for Work and Pensions and Andrew Stunnell MP Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government, to discuss local emergency assistance schemes that will partly replace the Social Fund. The Ministers recognised that there would be additional administrative costs for councils and agreed to a new burdens analysis. Officials agreed to work with councils to encourage preparations.
7. On 22 June, the Group Leaders and I met Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, at the House of Commons to discuss the Local Government Resource Review and the Localism Bill. I subsequently wrote to the Secretary of State putting on the record some of the key points we made about the Local Government

Resource Review, noting his agreement to continue the full engagement at officials/officers level and to meet again on this subject in September.

8. On 23 June I took part in an interview with Polly Curtis, Whitehall Editor of the Guardian. The interview focussed on my time as Chairman and events during the LG conference week. Later that evening I attended the MJ Awards in London. It was extremely interesting to see the achievements of councils across the country celebrated at the event.
9. On Tuesday 28 June at the LG Group Annual conference I undertook my final duty as Chairman and gave a retiring address. It was wonderful to have the opportunity to personally say farewell to so many colleagues and fellow councillors.