

Councillors' Forum

Agenda

Thursday 12 January 2012
12.30pm

The Westminster Suite (8th floor)
Local Government House
Smith Square
London
SW1P 3HZ

To: Members of the Councillors' Forum
cc: Named officers for briefing purposes

Guidance notes for visitors

Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ

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Please read these notes for your own safety and that of all visitors, staff and tenants.

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Councillors' Forum

12 January 2012

The **Councillors' Forum** meeting will be held on **Thursday 12 January 2012 at 12.30pm** in the **Westminster Suite (8th floor), Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ.**

Please note: The Political Group meetings will be held **prior** to this, as follows:

11.00am	Conservative	Westminster Suite (8 th floor)
11.00am	Labour	Smith Square Rooms 3 and 4 (Ground floor)
11.00am	Liberal Democrat	Smith Square Rooms 1 and 2 (Ground floor)
11.00am	Independent	Meeting Room 6 (6 th floor)

Lunch will be served in The Terrace Lounge (Members' Lounge) after the Councillors' Forum from 1.30pm and coffee / tea will be available at the Group meetings.

Apologies

Please notify your political group office (contact information below) if you are unable to attend this meeting, so that a substitute can be arranged and catering numbers adjusted, if necessary.

Conservative:	Angela Page: 020 7664 3264 email: angela.page@local.gov.uk
Labour:	Aicha Less: 020 7664 3263 email: aicha.less@local.gov.uk
Liberal Democrat:	Evelyn Mark: 020 7664 3235 email: libdem@local.gov.uk
Independent:	Group Office: 020 7664 3224 email: independent.group@local.gov.uk

Attendance Sheet

Please ensure that you sign the attendance register, which will be available in the meeting room. It is the only record of your presence at the meeting.

Location

A map showing the location of Local Government House is printed on the back cover.

Contact

Virginia Ponton (Tel: 020 7664 3068, Email: virginia.ponton@local.gov.uk)

Carers' Allowance: As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme a Carer's Allowance of up to £6.08 per hour is available to cover the cost of dependants (ie. children, elderly people or people with disabilities) incurred as a result of attending this meeting.

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Councillors' Forum 2011-2012

Updated 04.01.12

Membership of Councillors' Forum – 2011-2012

This Forum comprises 100 members appointed by the LGA political groups in proportion to their political strength on the Association.	
Representative	Authority
Conservative (45)	
Sir Merrick Cockell (Chairman)	RB Kensington & Chelsea
Teresa O'Neill	Bexley Council
Les Lawrence	Birmingham City Council
Paul Bettison	Bracknell Forest BC
Geoffrey Theobald OBE	Brighton & Hove City Council
Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire CC
Shona Johnstone	Cambridgeshire CC
Richard Stay	Central Bedfordshire Council
Paul Findlow	Cheshire East Council
Mike Jones	Cheshire West & Chester Council
Peter Goldsworthy	Chorley BC
Ken Taylor	Coventry City Council
Andrew Lewer	Derbyshire CC
Angus Campbell	Dorset CC
Stephen Castle	Essex CC
Peter Martin	Essex CC
Ken Thornber CBE	Hampshire CC
Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
Rob Gordon DL	Hertfordshire CC
David Simmonds	Hillingdon LBC
David Pugh	Isle of Wight Council
Paul Carter	Kent CC
Rob Light	Kirklees MBC
Clare Whelan	Lambeth LBC
David Parsons CBE	Leicestershire CC
Brian Coleman	LFEP / Greater London Authority
Martin Hill OBE	Lincolnshire CC
Derrick Murphy	Norfolk CC
Keith Mitchell CBE	Oxfordshire CC
Marco Cereste	Peterborough City Council
Ken Hudson JP MBE	Preston City Council
Neil Clarke	Rushcliffe BC
Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks DC
Kate Wild	Solihull MBC
Ken Maddock	Somerset CC
Gary Porter	South Holland DC
Jeff Milburn	South Tyneside MBC
Philip Atkins	Staffordshire CC

Sir William Lawrence Bt	Stratford-upon-Avon DC
Frances Roden	Stroud DC
Mark Bee	Suffolk CC
David Hodge	Surrey CC
Andrew Bowles	Swale BC
Rod Bluh	Swindon BC
Gordon Keymer CBE	Tandridge DC
Labour [32] <i>(plus sub pool)</i>	
Rocky Gill	Barking & Dagenham LBC
Steve Houghton CBE	Barnsley MBC
Catharine Grundy	Birmingham City Council
Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
Eion Watts	Bolsover DC
Linda Thomas	Bolton MBC
Ian Greenwood	Bradford MDC
Helen Holland	Bristol City Council
Theo Blackwell	Camden LBC
Joe Hendry	Carlisle City Council
Justin Madders	Cheshire West & Chester Council
Ann Lucas	Coventry City Council
John Mutton	Coventry City Council
Stewart Young	Cumbria CC
Anne Western	Derbyshire CC
David J Wilcox OBE	Derbyshire CC
David H Sparks OBE	Dudley MBC
Simon Henig	Durham CC
Julie Young	Essex CC
Michael Payne	Gedling Borough Council
Mayor Jules Pipe	Hackney LBC
Tony McDermott MBE	Halton BC
Claire Kober	Haringey LBC
Caitlin Bisknell	High Peak BC
Jagdish Sharma MBE JP	Hounslow LBC
Ruth Cadbury	Hounslow LBC
Bryony Rudkin	Ipswich BC
Catherine West	Islington Council
Robert Khan	Islington Council
Judith Blakeman	Kensington and Chelsea RLBC
Mehboob Khan	Kirklees MBC
Ronnie Round JP	Knowsley MBC
Steve Reed	Lambeth LBC
Judith Blake	Leeds City Council
Keith Wakefield	Leeds City Council
Rory Palmer	Leicester City Council
Mayor Sir Steve Bullock	Lewisham LBC
Robert Parker	Lincolnshire County Council
Tim Moore	Liverpool City Council
Sian Timoney	Luton BC

Sir Richard Leese CBE	Manchester City Council
Sue Murphy	Manchester City Council
Anne Schofield	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Sir Robin Wales	Newham LBC
Judi Billing	North Hertfordshire DC
Ian Swithenbank CBE	Northumberland Council
Graham R Chapman	Nottingham City Council
Jim McMahan	Oldham MBC
Tudor Evans	Plymouth City Council
Tony Page	Reading BC
Roger Stone OBE	Rotherham MBC
John D Merry CBE	Salford City Council
Steve Eling	Sandwell MBC
Roger Hutchinson	South Gloucestershire Council
Iain Malcolm	South Tyneside MBC
Richard Williams	Southampton City Council
Catherine McDonald	Southwark LBC
Sharon Taylor	Stevenage BC
Marie Rimmer CBE	St Helens MBC
Mohammed Pervez	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Paul Watson	Sunderland City Council
David Phillips	Swansea City Council
Brenda Warrington	Tameside MBC
David Edgar	Tower Hamlets LBC
Peter Box CBE	Wakefield City Council
Clyde Loakes	Waltham Forest LBC
Tony Belton	Wandsworth LBC
Roger Lawrence	Wolverhampton City Council
Liberal Democrat (16)	
Roger Symonds	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Keith House	Eastleigh BC
Jeremy Hilton	Gloucestershire CC
David Neighbour	Hart DC
Abigail Bell	Hull City Council
Liz Green	Kingston upon Thames RBC
Kath Pinnock	Kirklees MBC
Duwayne Brooks	Lewisham LBC
Richard Kemp OBE	Liverpool City Council
Howard Sykes	Oldham MBC
Jill Shortland OBE	Somerset CC
Cathy Bakewell MBE	Somerset CC
Stan Collins	South Lakeland DC
Lord Graham Tope CBE	Sutton LBC
Alan Connett	Teignbridge DC
Liz Tucker	Worcester CC
Substitutes	
Keith Whitmore	Manchester City Council
Stephen Knight	Richmond upon Thames LBC

Terry Stacy MBE JP	Islington Council
Chris White	Hertfordshire CC
David Rogers OBE	East Sussex CC
Mayor Dorothy Thornhill MBE	Watford BC
Edward Lord OBE JP	City of London Corporation
Sian Reid	Cambridge City Council
Hilary Jones	Derby City Council
Independent [7]	
Peter Jones	Babergh DC
Apu Bagchi	Bedford Council
Julian German	Cornwall Council
Alan Seldon	Herefordshire Council
Roger Dennison	Lancaster City Council
Marianne Overton	Lincolnshire CC
Bob Dutton OBE	Wrexham County BC
<i>Substitute</i>	
Norman Murphy	Scarborough DC

Agenda

Councillors' Forum

12 January 2012

12.30 – 1.30pm

The Westminster Suite, Local Government House

	Item	Page	Time
1.	<p>Troubled Families</p> <p>Louise Casey CB, Director-General, Troubled Families Team, Department for Communities and Local Government</p> <p>Louise Casey CB will speak on the Government's programme to tackle troubled families following the Prime Minister's announcement on 15 December 2011.</p>		12.30pm
2.	Chairman's Update		1.20pm
3.	<p>LGA Programme Board and Panel Chairs' Reports</p> <p>a: Children & Young People PB – Cllr David Simmonds</p> <p>b: Community Wellbeing PB – Cllr David Rogers OBE</p> <p>c: Culture, Tourism & Sport PB – Cllr Chris White</p> <p>d: Environment & Housing PB – Cllr David Parsons CBE</p> <p>e: Improvement PB – Cllr Peter Fleming</p> <p>f: Economy & Transport PB – Cllr Peter Box CBE</p> <p>g: Safer & Stronger Communities PB – Cllr Mehboob Khan</p> <p>h: Workforce PB – Mayor Sir Steve Bullock</p> <p>i: European & International PB – Cllr Dave Wilcox OBE</p> <p>j: Audit & Scrutiny Panel – Cllr Ian Swithenbank CBE</p> <p>k: Resources Panel - Cllr Stephen Castle</p> <p>l: 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games Task & Finish Group – Cllr Stephen Castle</p>		

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 9 February 2012, Local Government House

Troubled Families

Louise Casey CB, Director-General, Troubled Families Team, Department for Communities and Local Government

Purpose of report

For noting and discussion.

Summary

Louise Casey CB is speaking to the Councillors' Forum about the Government's programme to tackle troubled families that was announced by the Prime Minister on 15 December 2011. It is an opportunity for Louise Casey CB to outline the approach and for members to raise any issues.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the presentation and raise issues for local government.

Action

As directed by the Forum.

Contact officer: Paul Raynes
Position: Head of Programmes
Phone no: 0207 664 3037
E-mail: paul.raynes@local.gov.uk

Troubled Families

Louise Casey CB, Director-General, Troubled Families Team, Department for Communities and Local Government

The problem

1. The Government estimates that there are around 120,000 'troubled families' or 'families with complex needs' across the country. The estimate of the number of families in each upper tier local authority area has also been published, ranging from a handful to over 4,000. They cost the public purse approximately £75,000 per family annually or £9 billion in total. £8 billion of this is spent on reactive services, for example taking a child into care or police and court costs.
2. Up to 28 public services might engage with the members of one family, often uncoordinated, with separate interactions, assessments and funding streams. This is not only inefficient, but the fragmentation of each service addressing a separate symptom also hinders investment in tackling the root causes of the problems. There is a split incentive as the savings resulting from investment in prevention by one part of the public sector accrue to another.

Existing local action

3. Family intervention projects (FIPs) are not a new concept; 83 per cent of councils were operating them as of September 2011 (Department for Education). FIPs have a key worker acting as a single point of contact for a whole family, intensively working with them to identify and resolve problems, as well as coordinating the range of services. This approach has been demonstrably successful. An evaluation of 3,675 families published by the Department for Education this year showed a 58 per cent reduction in antisocial behaviour, 53 per cent reduction in truancy, 34 per cent reduction in child protection issues and 48 per cent reduction in alcohol problems.
4. A FIP coordinates services for a family, but it does not address the fundamental problems of fragmentation and split incentives within public services, something local government has long recognised. 16 areas (covering 28 councils) have been piloting community budgets for families with complex needs and more than 70 councils came forward to join them.
5. Community budgets offer an opportunity to bring together the myriad local public services in a different way, aligning outcomes and pooling resources to

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enable joint investment in services and joint sharing of the savings. This should allow both greater efficiency and investment in family intervention.

6. The first 16 areas have taken a variety of approaches, reflecting the different existing local priorities and arrangements. Lewisham has identified that not all families have the same problems and therefore need different interventions, for example one focuses on reducing involvement in gangs and another on getting families back into work. Some areas, such as Kent and Essex have focused on families in particular geographic areas, developing arrangements with the relevant district councils. Westminster has built on its successful Family Recovery Project and Swindon has continued to develop its work with the social enterprise Participle on the LIFE programme, which puts families at the heart of developing services. Many areas, such as Birmingham and Bradford are incorporating early intervention and prevention into their programmes to build resilience in communities.
7. Progress has been made, but the pace has sometimes been frustratingly slow and limited. Some areas, including 8 partners in Lincolnshire, have succeeded in pooling funding, as opposed to aligning budgets. However, in most cases this has not materialised. In the last year or so the development of integrated public services in pilot areas has been hindered by vested departmental interests, despite the determination of councils to help families with complex needs.

The changing context

8. The summer disorder dramatically altered the context for community budgets for families with complex needs. The Prime Minister's reiteration of his ambition to turn around the lives of 120,000 troubled families formed a central plank of the Government's response, throwing into sharp focus the work being undertaken locally. The Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP was given responsibility and a Troubled Families Team was established in CLG, headed by Louise Casey CB. Local government has not however been standing idly by, waiting for the Government to develop its own plans. Instead councils have sought to maintain the momentum behind existing local action.

The Government's programme

9. The Prime Minister's speech on 15 December 2011 announced the outline of the Government's approach. There is much detail yet to be finalised, but crucially, and in line with the LGA's position, it will enable existing local work to be scaled up, rather than a separate initiative being bolted on. Regardless of the language used, this programme will need to build upon the fundamental principles of community budgets and learn from the experiences of the pilot areas. The LGA will continue to work with CLG and councils on the detail of the model as it is developed.

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10. It is clear that this work is not just a priority for the Prime Minister; it is an important issue for councils too. However, there is likely to be tension between the pace required to meet the Prime Minister's commitment by 2015 and local government's desire to achieve longer-term transformation of public services locally.

Payments by results

11. The Prime Minister announced that £448 million will be allocated from existing Whitehall budgets to support this programme. This figure represents 40 per cent of the estimated £1 billion cost of intervening in the lives of 120,000 families and will be directed to councils, on the basis of results. It is intended to incentivise a shift of local spending from expensive reactive services that respond to the problems of these families to addressing the root causes earlier at less cost.
12. The speech stated that councils will need to match fund the other 60 per cent, however it is not just councils that need to invest to save, but local public services across an area. This includes for example health, police and Job Centre Plus, who will also realise the benefits of improving the families' lives. Local partners have been reluctant to meaningfully engage in community budgets and CLG's Troubled Families Team will need to ensure that a strong message is given to Whitehall departments and cascaded down to their local delivery agencies about the importance of multi-agency working, including financial contributions.
13. The speech identified four key outcomes to be delivered locally:
- 13.1 getting children back into school
 - 13.2 reducing criminal and anti-social behaviour
 - 13.3 getting parents on the road back to work
 - 13.4 reducing the cost to the taxpayer and local authorities.
14. These may sound straightforward, but are not easy to measure. At the same time, it will also be important not to create a system of inordinate bureaucracy. Outcome and progress measures and payment structures will need to be agreed that enable councils and local partners to sufficiently manage their risk and have the confidence to invest. The LGA will work with CLG and councils on the development of the model.

Identifying the families

15. The Government wants councils to have identified who the troubled families are, where they live and what services they use by February. However, the

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definition of a 'troubled family' for the purpose of this identification has not yet been agreed.

16. The LGA considers that councils, with information from their local partners, will identify the families to work with in its area, but that reporting a list to the centre is neither practical nor palatable. Assurance about progress will be provided by the Payments by Results mechanism, with councils providing information in order to receive payments. There is no need for additional reporting.
17. Furthermore the willingness of individual families to engage in programmes of support is critical to their success. The trust between families, councils and other local partners is likely to be undermined if receiving support automatically results in families being placed on a central list held by the Government.

Trouble-shooters

18. A national network of trouble-shooters will oversee the programme of action in their area, including making sure the right families are getting the right type of help, that sanctions are in place when needed, and that positive results are being achieved with the troubled families in their area. It is positive that these trouble-shooters are to be appointed by councils, but again details remain to be resolved, such as whether all upper tier councils will be expected to appoint one; the amount of grant funding available; and the nature of the relationship between the trouble-shooters and CLG.

Louise Casey CB, Director-General, Troubled Families Team, CLG

Louise Casey CB joined Shelter, the housing charity in 1992 and in 1999, she joined the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister as director of the Rough Sleeper's Initiative. In 2002 she was appointed to run the Government's Anti-Social Behaviour Unit and subsequently worked as Neighbourhood Crime and Justice Adviser at the Home Office. She has been the independent Commissioner for Victims and Witnesses from March 2010, until her appointment to head CLG's Troubled Families Team.



Chairman's Update

1 November – 20 December 2011

LGA business

1. On 1 November I chaired the **Armed Forces Community Covenant** Conference. The Covenant is a statement of mutual support between civilian and Armed Forces communities. During the event I emphasised the ongoing support local government is pleased to offer our forces and the work we have been involved in around the Covenant.
2. During the November **Leadership Board** we discussed a new approach to communications which would provide a stronger, sharper and more co-ordinated focus to LGA communications. We also considered proposals for individual electoral registration and the implications for local government.
3. On 10 November I chaired the **LGA Executive** where we considered items on Transport and Localism, Community budgets, the LGA's Local Growth Campaign and an update on the Icelandic banking situation. This followed the **Councillors' Forum** which gave councillors the opportunity to hear about the latest LGA analysis showing how councils have been responding to the cuts in public spending and the issues facing councillors setting budgets for 2012-13 and beyond.
4. On 16 November the LGA held a **conference on top pay** which was designed to show that as a sector local government fully grasps the need to set top reward packages in an open and accountable way and has been leading the way in developing good practice.
5. On 23 November I participated in the **Smith Square debate** "Stimulating local economic growth at a time of global economic uncertainty" which highlighted the LGA campaign to identify what needs to be done to promote local growth.
6. At December's **Leadership Board** we were joined by representatives from SOLACE to discuss issues of common interest, and Cllr Keith Mitchell gave a presentation on the Sustainable Communities Act.
7. The following day, the **LGA Executive** considered work on Children and Young People, Adoption and a progress report from the Children's Improvement Board. There was also an update on the recently released Chancellor's Autumn statement.
8. John Ransford retired and it was a great pleasure to welcome Carolyn Downs to the LGA, taking over as the **new Chief Executive**. Both Carolyn and I are excited by the challenge of taking the organisation forward to the benefit of all in local government.

Ministerial/Parliamentary business

9. On 2 November I met with Graham Allen MP to explore the possibility of working with his **Constitutional Reform Select Committee** to foster a debate about the relationship between central and local government and the possibility of a new Code to regulate it.
10. I attended the Ministerial recovery group on 8 November to discuss and approve the measures being taken by local and national Government to support and facilitate recovery from the **public disorder in August 2011**. Later in the month I also met with Darra Singh to inform his interim report specifically on the local experience, impact and lessons from the civil disturbances.
11. On 16 November I met with Louise Casey CB to talk about her work on **troubled families** and I stressed that councils and their local partners are uniquely positioned to turn round the lives of troubled families.
12. On 24 November I attended a Cabinet Office conference exploring the key issues facing central and local government, with a clear overall emphasis on delivering **better services at less cost**.
13. Later that day I met with Chris Grayling MP to talk about the **Lofstedt Report** – an independent review of health and safety legislation. I was pleased to see that the Government response recognises that we must not create a delivery system that is removed from local businesses and communities.
14. On 7 December I attended the **SE7 meeting** which is a partnership of upper tier Local Authorities in the south east region that are committed to working together on a number of priority areas.
15. On 12 December I met with Danny Alexander, Chief Secretary to the Treasury and Eric Pickles on the current reform process for public sector pensions and in particular the **Local Government Pension Scheme**. The next day I met with Lord Freud to discuss potential joint work with local authorities to prepare for **universal credit delivery**.

Meetings with other organisations and individuals

16. On 14 and 15 November I attended the **UK Forum** of national LGAs. The key discussion points were structures and priorities for each of the Associations and their respective financial settlements.
17. On 17 November I met with Stuart Etherington, Chief Executive, **National Council for Voluntary Organisations** to talk about our shared aim for improved outcomes for local communities and greater local discretion over how services are delivered. Later that day, along with Group Leaders, I met with **Audit Commission** commissioners to talk about greater involvement for the sector in arrangements for the future of local public audit.
18. On 22 November I spoke at the Localism Conference of the **National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA)** to outline the opportunities and challenges for local partnerships with the voluntary and community sector.

19. I met with Lady Cobham, Chair of **Visit England** on 28 November and stressed that local government recognises the economic value of tourism but a tough financial settlement means that we need to encourage the private sector to play a much bigger role.
20. On 30 November I took part in a panel session on Local Councils and the General Power of Competence at the **National Association of Local Councils (NALC) conference** and later that day I met with the **NHS confederation** for our regular liaison meeting at what is a significant period of change within both the NHS and local government.

Meeting with councillors and member councils

21. I was fortunate enough to meet many County Council leaders during a brief visit to the **County Council Network Conference** in St Albans and look forward to spending more time at the conference next year.
22. On 11 November I attended **South West Councils** where I spoke about the LGA's Taking the Lead programme of self regulation and improvement; and on 25 November I visited **Derbyshire County Council** where I met a number of councillors and officers as well as opening their new library and council services hub.
23. I have held **meetings with Leaders and councillors** from a variety of authorities including meeting with Cllr Ken Maddock, Somerset CC; Cllr Duncan McGinty, Sedgemoor DC; and Cllr Roger Begy OBE and Cllr Terry King, Rutland County Council.
24. Finally, I am delighted to report the **return of three councils into LGA membership** – Kings Lynn & West Norfolk, Torrington, and North Somerset. I'm looking forward to working with their respective Leaders – Cllr Nick Daubney, Cllr Barry Parsons and Cllr Nigel Ashton and their teams so that the sector benefits from their expertise and experience.

Item 3

LGA Programme Board Chairs' Reports

Purpose of report

For information.

Attached are reports from the Chairs of the LGA Children and Young People; Community Wellbeing; Culture, Tourism and Sport; Environment and Housing; Improvement; Economy and Transport; Safer and Stronger Communities; Workforce; European and International Programme Boards; and the Audit and Scrutiny and Resources Panels. Also included is a report from the Chair of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Task and Finish Group.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the attached reports.

Action

Further report to the next meeting of the Councillors' Forum.

Contact officers: Heads of Programmes –

Helen Johnston, CYP and CTS Programme Boards email: helen.johnston@local.gov.uk	020 7664 3172
Ian Hughes, E & I and E & T Programme Boards email: ian.hughes@local.gov.uk	020 7664 3101
Sandie Dunne, E & H and CWB Programme Boards email: sandie.dunne@local.gov.uk	020 7664 3070
Dennis Skinner, Improvement Programme Board email: dennis.skinner@local.gov.uk	020 7296 6531
Helen Murray, SSC Programme Board email: helen.murray@local.gov.uk	020 7664 3266
Sarah Messenger, Workforce Programme Board email: sarah.messenger@local.gov.uk	020 7187 7342
Stephen Jones, Audit & Scrutiny and Resources Panels email: stephen.jones@local.gov.uk	020 7664 3171
Liz Hobson, 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games Task & Finish Group email: liz.hobson@local.gov.uk	020 7664 3229

Item 3a

Children and Young People Programme Board – report from Cllr David Simmonds (Chairman)

Children's Improvement Board

1. On 19 December I attended a meeting of the Children's Improvement Board, which leads the programme of sector-led support for children's services funded by DfE. Following the discussion at the last meeting of the LGA Executive and a separate meeting I had with Tim Loughton MP, the Minister for Children and Families, I stressed the need to increase the level of councillor involvement in children's services improvement. A further meeting is planned with Tim Loughton, involving LGA senior members and Carolyn Downs, to focus on the role of Lead Members for Children's Services in driving improvement at a local and national level.

Early Intervention Foundation

2. Graham Allen MP was asked by the Government to carry out an independent review of early intervention and has written two reports on the subject, with the second focusing on how early intervention programmes can be financed. Both reports highlighted the importance of locally determined action and the core role of councils. One of the Review's recommendations was the establishment of an Early Intervention Foundation to build the evidence base for early intervention programmes, support commissioners and help develop a social finance market. In late November, I met with Graham to discuss this and the LGA will continue to work with his office as the proposals develop, to ensure that a Foundation can offer effective support to councils.

Annual Youth Justice Convention

3. On 2 November, I attended the Annual Youth Justice Convention, where I participated in a plenary debate about the civil disorder in August alongside representatives from the police, voluntary and community sector and the justice system. The debate recognised that only a very small proportion of young people in our communities were involved and the importance of not perpetuating negative stereotypes of all young people. The discussion also picked up on the impact of the youth justice system and the need to effectively support young people that have entered the criminal justice system for the first time and who may be vulnerable as a result.

Joint meeting with the Office Holders of the Community Wellbeing Programme Board

4. On the 23 November I co-chaired a meeting with the office holders of the Community Wellbeing Programme Board and the Children and Young People Programme Board to discuss the support offer to councils on children's health. We agreed the importance of looking at children's safeguarding within a wider context, with the full range of agencies involved. The two Programme Boards will continue to work together on this issue.

Media appearances

5. I gave a number of interviews on the BBC News Channel, Sky News and BBC London Radio to discuss the Prime Minister's announcement on tackling troubled families following Sir Merrick comments on the announcement in December. My comments were also featured in the Guardian in a piece discussing whether the funding the Prime Minister had announced would be enough. I said that we are not looking to do this in a bureaucratic way and that the challenge is to do this without a substantial injection of new money.
6. I have also responded to a number of other media stories on adoption week, academy funding, and care proceedings which have featured in the national and trade press.

Visits to councils

7. I visited Cheshire West and Chester to discuss our improvement work and we will be working with the council in the coming months. In Derbyshire I met with two portfolio holders to discuss the work of the Children and Young People Programme Board and our support offer for improvement.

Capital Revenue Task and Finish Group

8. I have continued to chair the Capital and Revenue Task and Finish Group element of the Ministerial Advisory Group. We have been discussing local flexibility, schools forums and capital procurement and delivery.
9. The next meeting will be taking place on 11 January.

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Community Wellbeing Programme Board – report from Cllr David Rogers OBE (Chair)

The House of Commons Health Select Committee

1. The House of Commons Health Committee met on 8 November, and I gave evidence as the LGA representative, on the topic of social care. The quality and value-for-money of care services provided by local authorities, as well as monitoring/safeguarding methods emerged as key themes. On the proposed new structures such as the Health and Wellbeing Boards, I highlighted the LGA's belief that there is enormous potential to drive integration. The importance of dignity in care and societal attitudes to the elderly was also highlighted during the session.
2. Questioned on the Dilnot Commission's outcome I explained that the LGA sees the recommendations as an element of the jigsaw that needs to be put into place in order to bring about reform. An emerging political consensus agrees that a way forward needs to be found, however key details of future funding levels are as yet unclear. I also urged those present to view the services that local authorities provide, across a whole range of different areas, as being part of the care and support that individuals have within their communities to keep them living in their homes where that is possible.

Meeting with the Public Health Minister

3. I met the Public Health Minister, Anne Milton, on 7 December to raise the LGA's concerns on two key issues: public health funding and the proposed new duty on local authorities to appoint medical examiners to oversee the death certification process. We are pressing hard to ensure that forthcoming public health grant is adequate to meet our responsibilities and that the allocation formula is equitable, transparent and robust.
4. The Health and Social Care Bill places a new duty on local authorities to appoint medical examiners to oversee the death certification process and we are keen to work with the Department of Health (DH) and our advisers from local authorities to minimise any risks to local government arising from the new duty and to improve the quality and independence of death statistics.

Joint Public Health and GP Stakeholder Roundtable

5. The DH and GP stakeholder meeting scheduled for 13 December was postponed until the New Year, and a date has now been arranged in February. This decision was taken because the current public health environment had not moved on sufficiently since our last meeting in October.

6. Having taken on the role of chairing the group following Richard Kemp's retirement, I think there is great value in using the group to help build relationships at a national level and the meetings as an opportunity to share views, concerns and relevant information with one another.

Healthy Communities – Building on the past, shaping the future together

7. On 25 November 2011 I attended the 'Building on the past, shaping the future together' conference, which was jointly organised by the LGA's Healthy Communities programme and NHS South West. It marked the completion of the Healthy Communities Programme in its current form.

Future of Adult Social Care Roundtable

8. On 14 November the LGA hosted an exclusive roundtable session at Local Government House to discuss the future of adult social care and support. The event took place with the government's 'Caring for Our Future' engagement exercise in progress. It thus provided an opportunity for senior local government figures to feed in directly to the DH on a range of issues surrounding the reform debate, including their views on integration, personalisation and prevention.
9. A range of very valuable points were made by attendees, covering issues from the importance of local freedom in designing the specifics of a future model to the absolute necessity of keeping this debate at the top of the political agenda. Leaders, Chief Executives and other senior Members and officers also heard from Ministers Paul Burstow MP and Baroness Hanham; David Behan from the Department of Health; Frances Patterson QC from the Law Commission and Lord Norman Warner from the Commission on Funding of Care and Support.

Councils' efforts to help veterans 'hampered by a lack of information'

10. In early November, the LGA issued a release outlining that more than 4 million veterans could be missing out on the support they are entitled to because of a lack of government information and published a map showing the concentrations of ex-servicemen and women across England and Wales based on those limited records.
11. This new map is a step forward in helping councils ensure that veterans suffer no disadvantage as a result of their service to our country. Council efforts to support to our Armed Forces community will continue to be hampered unless we have more accurate information on where they live. The story was covered widely by the national media plus more than 100 regional and local papers.

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Culture, Tourism and Sport Programme Board – report from Cllr Chris White (Chair)

Libraries

1. The LGA and Arts Council England (ACE) have jointly launched the Libraries Development Initiative – a £200,000 fund to build upon our already highly successful Future Libraries Programme. We have received over 100 expressions of interest. Projects will explore new and more efficient ways of delivering library services with LGA capturing and sharing the learning.
2. Portfolio holders for libraries from around the country came together at the LGA on 6 December to share their experiences of modernising library services. In my opening speech, I emphasised that councils are already transforming libraries and the need for the outdated statutory framework to be reformed. In response to very positive feedback we will run a similar event in Leeds next year.
3. I met Miranda McKearney, Chief Executive of the Reading Agency, on 13 December. We discussed the changing role of public libraries in supporting literacy and agreed to explore a summit and conference in 2012.
4. I attended the launch of the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on libraries on 14 December. The LGA has offered to participate in the APPG's work.

Ed Vaizey MP, Culture Minister

5. I met the Culture Minister on 7 November and said that the LGA is working with Arts Council England to ensure that new programmes for museums and libraries continue to support councils to lead their own improvement and share good practice. I also updated the minister on the challenges councils are facing with the roll out of superfast broadband, including access to European funding and concerns about microtrenching.

Sport and 2012 Games

6. Cllr Simon Henig (Vice-Chair) and I spoke at the member leadership academy for portfolio holders for sport on 29/30 November, which the LGA organised in partnership with Sport England. I highlighted the importance of strong local political leadership and the event supported councillors to make the most of the opportunities for sport presented by localism, public health reforms, commissioning and the 2012 Games.
7. I attended the Nations and Regions (NRG) meeting on 6 December, where I reiterated the LGA's position that we will continue to work in partnership with NRG to ensure a safe and successful Games are delivered, with councils playing a full part in making this happen.

8. I met Charles Allen, Chair of the NRG on 14 December, to discuss the latest preparations for the 2012 Games. I raised councils' concerns about engagement in planning the Torch Relay and the economic impact on London of people staying away from the city during the Games. We agreed on the importance of joint communications to councils on key issues in the run-up to the Games.
9. I represented the CTS Board at the first meeting of the LGA's 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Task and Finish Group on 15 December. I highlighted CTS Board lobbying on the Torch Relay and the need for transport operators to work much more closely with councils when planning how services will be altered during the Games.

The Visitor Economy

10. Sir Merrick Cockell and I met Penelope, Viscountess Cobham, Chairman of VisitEngland on 28 November. We emphasised the importance of VisitEngland fully involving local enterprise partnerships in the 'growing tourism locally' project.
11. I attended the inaugural meeting of the Visitor Economy Forum on 1 December. Representatives from industry and the public sector discussed key issues facing the visitor economy, including the opportunities presented by Tourism Business Improvement Districts, which the CTS Board is keen to explore.

CTS Board 23 November

12. Alan Davey, Chief Executive of Arts Council England (ACE), said that ACE's new responsibilities for libraries and museums presented an opportunity for them to have a single, coherent conversation with local government. He stressed the importance of partnership working with councils and their commitment to support innovation.

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Environment and Housing Programme Board – report from Cllr David Parsons CBE (Chairman)

Housing finance conference

1. I chaired the LGA's Housing Finance Conference on the 14 December. This was an extremely successful event, where we heard the latest thinking from, and had an opportunity to put our questions and comments to, those involved in shaping the transition to self financing at the highest level. Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Danny Alexander MP provided a key note address and delegates also heard from LGA President Lord Best on the countdown to self financing.

Digital inclusion round table in social housing

2. Councillor Frances Roden attended a ministerial roundtable on behalf of the Environment and Housing Programme Board on the issue of encouraging digital inclusion in social housing. The roundtable which included representatives from the National Housing Federation (NHF), Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) and Race on Line provided a useful opportunity to discuss ways to encourage a greater proportion of social tenants to access on line services and the role landlords play in this. Following this meeting I sent a joint letter with Grant Shapps MP, Martha Lane Fox, CIH and NHF to social housing landlords emphasising the support and information on offer to them.

Meeting with Lord Taylor, National Housing Federation

3. I met with Lord Matthew Taylor, Chair of the National Housing Federation recently to discuss a wide range of issues important to councils, including the National Planning Policy Framework and the role of councils in developing places people want to live, work and visit. This successful meeting will lead to more collaborative working between our two organisations, crucial given the importance of partnership working between housing associations and councils on the ground.

Smith Square debate

4. The final Smith Square debate of the Autumn 2011 series was held recently in Bevin Hall entitled '*Building for the future: How do we solve the housing crisis?*' The lively debate, attended by around 50 delegates included speeches from Genesis Housing, BPF, Cllr Vernon Jackson and Cllr Tony Newman from the Environment and Housing Programme Board. The wide ranging debate covered key topics including the impact of the welfare reforms, section 106 payments and joint work between housing associations and councils.

NPPF Select Committee report

5. The Communities and Local Government Committee published its report on the National Planning Policy Framework, on Wednesday, 21 December 2011. The LGA provided written and oral evidence to this committee. The report endorses many of the arguments put forward by LGA; in particular support for a reasonable transition period, a balance between the three pillars of sustainability to allow local authorities the flexibility to make local trade off's and decisions and the definition of viability. I have written to Greg Clark MP seeking a discussion on the report and in particular to agree reasonable transition arrangements which would allow local authorities to put up to date local plans in place.

Evidence Financing Housing Supply Select Committee Inquiry

6. Cllr Clyde Loakes gave evidence on behalf of the Environment and Housing Board to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee on the subject of financing the new housing supply. Alongside him on the panel were the Home Builders Federation, the British Property Federation, and the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH). Cllr Loakes emphasised the LGA's message on the need to establish a level playing field between local authorities and housing associations in terms of accessing funding, and the constraints placed on councils by the current financial rules which mean that local authority borrowing is considered as government debt.
7. Cllr Loakes highlighted the important work councils undertake to make development viable and the significant steps councils are already making in this respect, working in partnership with developers and offering land to stimulate supply. The inquiry also provided an opportunity to press the LGA's position for the retention of 100 per cent of capital receipts from the right to buy.

All Party Parliamentary Group on Regeneration through Innovation

8. On 13 December I presented to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Regeneration through Innovation on the subject of waste and recycling. I highlighted several key messages:
 - 8.1. Waste management is a real success story for councils: 78 per cent of householders are either very or fairly satisfied with their waste service. Local authorities are rightly proud of our achievements to date with household recycling at 40 per cent nationally - an increase of 32 per cent in 13 years.
 - 8.2. Waste is the most recognised service by householders that local authorities provide – it is the doorstep issue.
 - 8.3. Councils need the freedom to decide what waste and recycling collection model, infrastructure and frequency is best suited to their area and work with the community, producers and the managers of waste to deal with the challenges all stakeholders face.

Mary Portas Review of High Streets

9. Also on 13 December, the Mary Portas Review of High Streets was published. The report puts forward a series of recommendations, ideas and challenges for local and central government on revitalising the high street economy. A number of these relate to planning, including a direct reference to the issue of clustering of betting shops, an issue on which the LGA has been campaigning. The review has generated a lot of press and the LGA position has been picked up in a number of media reports.

LGA Green Deal Conference

10. I also chaired the LGA's conference entitled 'Making the Green Deal a fair deal' on 29 November, which was very successful and fully booked. In the morning the conference received a presentation from the Rt Hon Gregory Barker MP, Minister of State for Energy and The Green Deal. There followed a panel discussion with a number of high-profile representatives of the energy and insulation industries, and in the afternoon a number of well-attended workshops.

Town and Village greens

11. On 16 December the LGA press release on town and village greens was picked up by the Telegraph, the BBC, the MJ and many local papers. Councils are keen to protect genuine village greens and pieces of community land in local areas, to encourage new affordable housing and to stimulate local economies through housing and job creation. The LGA has long lobbied for reform of the village greens system to enable this and has responded to the recent DEFRA consultation on this issue making the case for reform.

Feed in Tariffs - Solar Panels

12. On 21 December, the High Court ruled that the Department for Energy and Climate Change, in setting a 'reference date' for 12 December when their proposed changes to halve the FITs rate would come into force, as a date before the end of their consultation (23 December) was not legal. The reference date is the only element of the consultation judged not to be legal.
13. The changes to the feed-in tariffs were introduced on 12 December. The worst affected are social housing projects, where councils and social housing providers simply will not be able to cover their costs. DECC can still consult on reducing the tariff, the multi-installation additional reduction and the energy efficiency requirement. We await further details on the implications for the consultation. The LGA submitted our response to the consultation on 23 December.

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Improvement Programme Board – report from Cllr Peter Fleming (Chairman)

New style “corporate” peer challenges

1. We have completed the first tranche of new style “corporate” peer challenges and I have been impressed with the innovative ways some councils are using this resource. The feedback from those receiving and providing peer challenge has also been overwhelmingly positive – see the testimonials at www.local.gov.uk/peer-challenges. We are now in active discussions with around 100 councils to book their peer challenge slots for next year, so please make sure your authority books its slot soon. Email andy.bates@local.gov.uk or paul.clarke2@local.gov.uk to begin the process.

Managing the risk of underperformance

2. We are also making good progress to deliver councils' request that we develop some light touch arrangements to manage the risk of underperformance – and avoid the resulting reputational damage to the sector. Following discussions through the independent Advisory Board on self regulation and improvement our strengthened team of Principal Advisers will be the focal point for gathering intelligence about performance in their area and identifying councils facing performance challenges - so that the LGA is able to offer improvement support at the earliest possible stage. We have also had some very positive discussions with Government departments and the Inspectorates to explore how they can support this approach by sharing information with us and with the Children's Improvement Board to align approaches and activities.

The future of local public audit

3. We are expecting DCLG to publish its proposals for local public audit in early January. The paper will set out how DCLG propose to pursue the proposals in the light of the earlier consultation responses from the sector. We will be considering the proposals at the next meeting of the Improvement Programme Board on 17 January.

Creative Councils

4. We are continuing to work with NESTA on the promotion and development of council led innovation through the Creative Councils' initiative. Spring 2012 will see a series of events (Camps, Conferences and Events) to showcase, develop and seek the sector's and others' options on viability and replicability of the

ideas. Late April 2012 will see the selection of between 5-7 finalists. The finalists will receive additional resources and support.

Productivity

5. The National Advisory Group for Procurement (NAGLGP) has held its inaugural meeting. The meeting agreed to take forward a number of actions on behalf of the Improvement Programme Board, including publishing a guide to EU procurement to dispel procurement myths and examine the impact of the Localism Bill on procurement initiatives that support the local economy.

Adult Society Care Efficiency Programme

6. The Adult Society Care Efficiency Programme has been launched and gained significant attention from councils. The Department of Health agreed to match fund the LGA's £300,000 for this programme, allowing us to support up to 30 councils. 52 applications were received from a wide range of councils of all sizes and from all regions.

Children's Improvement Board - sector-led commissioning and productivity

7. Working with funding from the Children's Improvement Board we have let a contract to deliver sector-led commissioning and productivity. The delivery partner will mobilise quickly in the new year and deliver our early priorities: identifying commissioning champions in the regions and working with the National Youth Association to support commissioning in youth services.

LG Inform

8. Further improvements have been made to LG Inform prototype, the free online service that allows anyone in the sector to access, compare and analyse data, and present their findings. The improvements include increased speed, additional data, user guides, new reports on themes (such as waste and children's services), and the ability to export and print reports. There are now around 1,000 users from 285 different organisations. The procurement process for the next phase of LG Inform has just started, to develop LG Inform prototype according to the feedback from the sector that we have received.

Making Open Data Real

9. The LGA has responded to the consultation on Making Open Data Real, endorsing the use of open data to make government more transparent and to foster localism, but arguing that transparency should be decided locally based on local needs and demands. The LGA continues to lobby to reduce the burden placed on local authorities to meet centrally driven prescription of technical requirements. However, we are also identifying and promoting emerging best practice of the opening up of data at local level – e.g the publication of spending data helps local authorities to procure their services more efficiently, while the location of public land and property joins up where public services are provided.

LGA shared services web resource and shared services map

10. We have commissioned two pieces of research looking at shared services. The first, due to report at the end of January 2012, looks at why some shared services' experiences succeed and others do not. The second, due to report at the beginning of April, looks to assess whether the financial benefits to shared services have been realised. The LGA's shared services web resource and shared services map have been updated and revamped – demonstrating at least £160 million of savings to date and that district councils lead the way with shared services, particularly corporate and back-office services.

Food waste disposers

11. We have launched a 12 month pilot project to find a council to trial the use of food waste disposers in residential kitchens and therefore take food waste out of the residual waste stream.

Wave 2 Capital Asset Pathfinders

12. Analysis of the business cases has suggested that strong progress is being made by the pathfinders and most are on track to deliver savings of 20 per cent NPV and 25 per cent reduction in CO2. It is apparent that some of the pathfinders will require more support to do this and we are considering how best to achieve this.

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Economy and Transport Programme Board – report from Cllr Peter Box CBE (Chair)

1. Will 2012 be another year that is dominated by the economy? I cannot imagine that any other issue will be top of the agenda over the next six months. Thus the Board's Local Growth Campaign will continue into 2012, with our Green Paper on Growth being delivered in July.

Local Growth Campaign

2. In December, we held two town hall debates on councils' role in stimulating growth. I chaired our debate in Leeds, where our host was Metro (the local ITA). Around 35 councillors and officers debated ideas about the role of transport in employment and economic development. The most interesting issue for me was the difference in political will behind the Scottish and Dutch models, compared to our own DfT. The objectives of DfT relate to developing the transport infrastructure, while in the Netherlands and Scotland, there are objectives about the infrastructure being developed as a lever for economic growth. Our starting point in our campaign has been that we have to see transport not as road, rail and buses, but as a tool of economic development and growth. As a result of this debate, I will be raising these issues with the new Secretary of State when I see her in February (more details below).
3. The Board's Vice Chair, Cllr Shona Johnstone, chaired the debate in Birmingham, hosted by West Midlands Councils. The Chair of West Midlands Councils, Cllr Philip Atkins (Leader, Staffordshire County and LGA Board and Executive member) led the seminar of 30 local councillors. Philip set out the unique role that councils and their local partners can play in developing the right environment for business confidence and investment. In the West Midlands, councils have worked together across boundaries and with their partners to help secure a £355 million investment in low-emissions engine plant capacity creating 750 skilled jobs. Strong, local political leadership was key to this deal and is one of the big messages coming out of our debates. The role of local government in creating the right environment for growth is vital to reviving national prosperity.

Transport

4. Later this month, we will be following up the issues from our Leeds debate with the new Secretary of State for Transport, Justine Greening MP. After some discussion with senior civil servants at the Board late last year, we have agreed to run a joint, real-time localism programme with DfT. Whilst we recognise there is a new drive for localism in DfT, for example, through the devolution of schemes like the local major transport scheme funds, DfT tends to devolve on a project by project basis. This means that we are unable to join things up systematically at the local level and thus the full potential of transport as a lever

of growth cannot be realised. After the Board raised these issues with DfT, we have been invited to hold talks with ministers to see how a more advanced localism agenda can be developed.

5. Councils are better prepared than they have ever been for winter weather and have already stockpiled 1.4 million tonnes of grit, more than was used throughout all of last winter and 200,000 tonnes more than this time last year. Councils have also invested in dozens of new gritters, thousands of extra salt bins, more community schemes and better on-line communications to keep residents up to speed with all the latest updates on weather, road closures and gritting routes. We have also established a network for councils so that good practice can be disseminated.
6. It is estimated councils will have to spend £5.5 million upgrading parking machines to accept new thicker 5 and 10p coins. The Board has called on the Treasury, which expects to save about £176 million, to foot the bill. The LGA also wants clarification over similar proposals to introduce a new £1 coin sometime in the near future. I appeared on the breakfast show of BBC Three Counties Radio (Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire) just after Christmas to talk about this issue.

Mary Portas

7. Mary Portas' review of high streets was published in December. Despite pressure from the Board, she did not consult councils well during her review. The press picked this up and her failure to consult councils dominated the press coverage of the launch. I, along with Cllr Shona Johnstone (Vice-Chair) and Cllr Chris White (Chair, LGA Culture, Tourism and Sport Programme Board) covered most of the media that day and showed that, at a local level, there was real cross-party consensus on the vital role that councils play in managing our high street. The Government will respond to her recommendations in early Spring.
8. The Board will be working with partners to ensure that BIS civil servants are better informed about our vital role. While some of the report's recommendations are positive, such as an increased role for businesses and cracking down on the number of new betting shops, we are very concerned that removing regulations around market stalls will result in rogue traders taking advantage of cash strapped families and flooding the market with counterfeit goods.

Post Office

9. The Board has won a major lobbying victory on the role of councils in supporting the future development of post offices. It has been a longstanding objective of the Board for councils and local people to have a bigger say over the local post office network. Ed Davey MP, the Minister for Postal Affairs, and Paula Vennells, Managing Director of Post Office Limited have written to 25 council leaders offering them an opportunity to pilot a new strategic partnership with the post office. All 25 councils have accepted the offer. I will be meeting the Minister and representatives of the Post Office with Lead Members to discuss the objectives for the pilot and how the LGA can help network the participating councils and share their learning.

Safer and Stronger Communities Programme Board – Cllr Mehboob Khan (Chair)

Transition to Police and Crime Commissioners

1. Board members continued to be involved in the LGA's work around the transition to police and crime commissioners. Two guides with forewords from the Board's chair Cllr Mehboob Khan have been published over the last couple of months. One produced in conjunction with the Centre for Public Scrutiny explores the questions councils need to consider in setting up a police and crime panel, while the other guide looks at the implications for community safety partnerships of the introduction of police and crime commissioners.
2. The Board was also invited to contribute to the Association of Police Authorities' transition seminar held at the start of December outside Coventry. Cllr Les Lawrence, the Board's Vice-Chair, spoke about the responsibility on English councils to set up police and crime panels, as well as the role police and crime commissioners will have in commissioning key local services including those on community safety.
3. Cllr Henri Murison represented the Board at the Home Office's Police and Crime Commissioners Transition Sponsorship Board meeting in December. One of the issues for consideration at the Board meeting was the commissioning role that police and crime commissioners will have. The need for councils to have clarity as soon as possible on what funding will be transferred to police and crime commissioners and from when was made to the meeting by Cllr Murison. It was agreed that councils needed better communication on this issue and the Home Office would be looking to address it.

Safer Communities Conference

4. The annual LGA Safer Communities Conference was held in November and looked at the changes facing community safety partnerships over the next year, and how they could go about meeting them. The conference was chaired by Cllrs Les Lawrence and Duwayne Brooks from the Board, and Cllr Mehboob Khan addressed the conference to set out the LGA's view of what councils and partnerships need to do in the year ahead. Delegates also heard from Glasgow Community Safety Partnership on the City Council's outsourcing of their community safety function, lunchtime sessions on metal theft and gang violence and workshops on digital engagement, restructuring and merging partnerships, working with colleagues in health, commissioning services and the assistance the LGA is able to provide to councils.

Metal theft

5. The Board has been promoting the need for action to be taken to address metal theft in conjunction with the Environment and Housing Board. The Board's chair Cllr Mehboob Khan was quoted in the national media about the need for changes in the legislation governing scrap metal dealers, which is the route by which stolen metal is often sold on. Cllr Khan along with the chair of the Environment and Housing Board also wrote to the Home Office Minister, Lord Henley on the need for greater powers for councils and the police over scrap metal dealers to ensure that the minority of dealers who buy stolen metal are discouraged from doing so in the future. In his response Lord Henley agreed with the need to strengthen the regulations around scrap metal dealers, and is looking to meet the LGA on the issue this month.

Fire

6. Councillor Jeremy Hilton attended the WLGA Fire Panel meeting on 29 November. This was a useful opportunity to share the work of the FSMC and Fire Commission with the 3 Welsh Fire authorities and to join up on issues such as business continuity, national resilience and peer review.

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Workforce Programme Board – report from Mayor Sir Steve Bullock (Chair)

Pensions

Heads of agreement for new LGPS

1. A Heads of Agreement document was submitted to Government on Monday 19 December and following clarification of the response was accepted by them on the 21 December. The agreement contains principles relating to both the design of a new scheme and its future cost management. It sets out a timetable for detailed agreements to be reached during 2012 and provides for the new scheme to come into effect from April 2014 and in doing so avoid the need for action on short term savings before that date. For their part Government have agreed to take no action as a result of the recent consultation on contribution increases whilst the process is underway. There still remains a lot of work to do in terms of the detail with the period up to April particularly crucial as this is when items with a major impact, such as accrual rates, are due to be agreed.

Heads of agreement for new Teachers' scheme

2. The Government's proposed Heads of Agreement document for the Teachers' scheme was published on 20 December. The document set out those elements of the new scheme which may be subject to further negotiation, for example the structure of employee contribution increases in 2013-14 and 14-15 and which elements are not, for example a career average basis to the scheme. The NUT has not signed up to the document and will consider what action to take in response to it in January.

Mainstream staff in local government

3. The Employers' Side met on 14 December and received feedback from the Regional Pay Consultation Briefings. In light of the views expressed by local authorities, members are due to have further discussions with political colleagues over the next few weeks before formally responding to the unions.

Reviewing local reward strategies

4. We believe that the time is now right to take a look at the reward structures that are needed in changing organisations. Further advice will be offered by the LGA and a number of regional workshops are planned to provide further support to local authorities in this context.

Public health workforce issues

5. The process for appointing Directors of Public Health in the run up to the transfer of public health functions to local government and beyond remains quite contentious. As a result of intense lobbying at the highest level, a joint letter between the Department of Health and LGA has been agreed which sets out a number of considerations and emphasizes the importance of local discretion and decision-making.

Social Workers

6. The first meeting of the advisory implementation group for the Employer Standards for all employers of social workers was hosted by the LGA on the 19 December 2011. The Employer Standards will be re-launched in January 2012 through a variety of media; in the meantime they can now be viewed on the Workforce pages of the LGA website.

School teachers

7. The next remit to the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) is expected soon. The STRB will be asked to consider the one per cent pay 'cap' and "how to make pay more market-facing in local areas for teachers" as part of a detailed remit which may also raise other pay reform issues. Members of the NASUWT teachers' union began a campaign of industrial action short of a strike on the basis of "adverse changes to pensions, workload, and conditions of service, including pay and pay progression and job losses" on 1 December 2011. Advice for employers is available on the LGA website.

Fire

8. In the light of the delay in issue of the relevant cost ceiling, sector specific discussions continue on the general matter of reform of uniformed fire service personnel pension schemes. Accordingly, at this time, the Fire Brigades Union continues to maintain a position of not balloting its members with a view to taking industrial action.

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European and International Programme Board – report from Cllr Dave Wilcox OBE (Chairman)

European legislation in 2012

1. This is my first report of 2012 and another year brings a new legislative programme at the EU. Each year we await and try to influence the proposals which the European Commission will put before the Parliament and member states. Whilst the debate about Europe of the 26 or the 27 goes on, European regulation will continue to account for 50 per cent of all regulation affecting councils.
2. The highlights of this year's legislative programme are the ongoing reform of the EU structural funds, new energy regulation for the public sector and a major review of EU procurement.
 - 2.1. EU Structural fund review: EU regeneration funding (to the value of £8 billion in the UK) is one of the few remaining sources of funding for councils to regenerate their local areas. This is why lobbying to maintain the UK take of the budget and to allow councils to deliver locally is a top priority for the Board. I am very pleased that Cllr Flo Clucas OBE (Liberal Democrat, Liverpool City) has been leading this debate in Brussels on the Committee of Regions on behalf of all EU local councils. She has been advised by LGA officials. Her report on the EU budget calling for councils to be given more control of structural fund spend was agreed in Brussels in late December and has become the official "opinion" of EU local government in the EU budget debate.
 - 2.2. I was pleased that the LGA was able to host the formal UK launch debate on the reform regulations in early December. Both Cllr Peter Box CBE (Chair, LGA Economy and Transport Programme Board) and I spoke with CLG, BIS and EU officials to put a marker down about the need for local management of future funds.
 - 2.3. Energy: The Commission is proposing better energy efficient programmes in all public buildings. Whilst we cannot be against such a good idea, the question of costs and timing is the real concern of the LGA. My colleague, Cllr Gordon Keymer CBE (Con, Tandridge DC) has led this issue in Brussels. Again, he won the argument in the Committee of Regions where he ensured that the formal EU report rejected quantified targets set for the public sector and ensured that new burdens (such as local councils verifying suppliers' energy performances) were rejected.
 - 2.4. Procurement: The LGA has been arguing for a long time that the EU procurement rules need to be amended so that they can allow councils to support local firms. The Commission has heard our call and we are awaiting the formal review report from the Commission which should be published in early January.

Working with other LGAs

3. In order to maximise our lobbying in Brussels, we work with other LGAs through our European association, Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR). Whilst CEMR is an effective lobbying force, it sometimes needs a little push. One push from the LGA was that we asked for a 20 per cent reduction in fees in 2011 and further reductions in future years. I am happy to report that this was agreed by the CEMR Policy committee in Brussels in December – to the relief of the UK delegation (as our request was heard two days after the UK veto at the European summit).
4. We also work effectively with the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) which, over the last three years, successfully secured over £2 million of Department for International Development (DFID) funds for local government in the UK to support councils in developing nations in the Commonwealth. Most commonwealth councillors, like us, understand that practitioner-to-practitioner support is better than costly consultants. This £2 million programme, the Commonwealth Good Practice Scheme, came to an end in late 2011 and CLGF is about to enter discussions with DFID about a possible future scheme. If you have been working with CLGF or would like to get involved in the future and you have any ideas about what a future programme may look like, please let me have your ideas.
5. The Chief Executives of both the European and Commonwealth LGAs will be speaking at our January Board so that we can maximise the value of our membership.

Congress of the Council of Europe

6. We send a delegation of councillors to the Congress of the Council of Europe. This is an important body as it monitors the European Charter of Local Self-Government. 2012 will be an important year as the UK Government takes over the presidency of the Council of Europe, one of our own members Cllr Keith Whitmore (Liberal Democrat, Manchester City) chairs the Congress and there will be a peer review of the UK to look at the standard of our local/central settlement against the Charter. An important year and I will report on key issues in future reports.
7. Our delegation of councillors to Congress is renewed every two years (Strasbourg rules). Again 2012 is an important year as we have to provide new nominations to Congress and the tenure of the 2012 nominees will be four years (a change in Strasbourg rules). The LGA coordinates these nominations on behalf of the Foreign Office and they will be made through the LGA political group offices after the May elections.

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**Audit and Scrutiny Panel – report from Cllr Ian Swithenbank CBE
(Chair)**

1. At its meeting on 6 December, the Panel reviewed the first report from the LGA's new internal auditors, Parkhill, covering audits of the LGA's financial sustainability, Liberata contract management, ICT Health Check and ICT infrastructure. Adequate assurance opinions have been given for all of the audits apart from the ICT Health Check where a limited assurance opinion was given in view of the need to strengthen the LGA's client-side arrangements for ICT. Management has accepted this recommendation and is taking immediate action to address this issue.
2. The Panel has been developing terms of reference for the two scrutiny reviews that are to be undertaken in the final quarter of 2011/12 – one on the LGA's overheads, and the other on the LGA's offer to councils. The Panel welcomes the fact that the LGA's Chairman is keen to support the reviews and engage with the Panel in developing the LGA's scrutiny programme.
3. At its December meeting the Panel reviewed the six month performance report for the LGA, covering delivery of the LGA's programmes, financial performance, and key corporate health indicators. Members welcomed the information presented but asked for the performance reports to be developed so they are clear about the impact of the LGA's work, and also areas where targets have not been achieved. The Panel also reviewed the LGA's strategic risk register.
4. Following a tendering exercise, the Panel has recently appointed new external auditors, Littlejohn, for the LGA and its associated organisations. Littlejohn will be undertaking the audit of the 2011/12 statutory accounts.

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Resources Panel – report from Cllr Stephen Castle (Chairman)

1. At its last meeting on 23 November, the Panel agreed final recommendations on the levels of LGA membership subscriptions for 2012/13, which were accepted by the LGA Executive in December. Major reforms to the structure of LGA subscriptions were put in place in April 2010 and consolidated in 2011/12. Panel members have endorsed the previous Panel's recommendation that over the next two years further subscription reductions should be implemented, with a reduction of 6 per cent in 2012/13, to achieve an overall reduction between 2010/11 and 2013/14 of 20 per cent.
2. The Panel reviewed the LGA's medium term financial strategy and initial proposals for the 2012/13 budget. Further work will be undertaken on the LGA's strategy and priorities, prior to a final budget being presented to the next meeting of the Panel to enable members to make a recommendation on next year's budget to the Executive in advance of the new financial year.
3. The Panel received an update on work that is underway to reduce the LGA's overheads, following the significant reduction in its funding base in the current financial year.
4. The Panel reviewed the financial performance of the LGA and its associated organisations for the first six months of 2011/12. The Panel noted that budgets were underspent for the first half of the year and that this needed to be set in the context of quieter summer months and a cautious approach to spending the aftermath of the substantial reduction in core funding. The Panel suggested that management should take action to address this and also review the underspend after nine months to allocate funds in a more appropriate way if necessary.
5. The Panel explored options for the LGA's investment strategy and came to the conclusion that the LGA should continue to be cautious with this, particularly in view of the current economic climate.
6. The Panel agreed that from 2011/12 the LGA should prepare consolidated accounts for LGA and the bodies under its direct control, subject to a final review of the implications of the change being considered at the next meeting.

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2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Task and Finish Group – report from Cllr Stephen Castle (Chairman)

1. The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games Task and Finish Group, which was set up to provide a 'check and challenge' to LGA Programme Boards had its first meeting on 15 December 2011.
2. The Games will be the country's biggest ever peace-time logistical exercise. Although the key focus is on the dates of the Olympic Games on 27 July – 12 August and the Paralympic Games from 29 August to 9 September, the arrival of the torch on 18 May 2012 will mark the start of an 18 week period that the Games organisers are calling 'business as unusual'. The scale of the events will have an impact on councils across the country. In addition to the London Boroughs where the main venues are located, there are nine venues outside London, the torch relay will be stopping overnight in every county in England, 22 areas will be hosting large screens for public viewing and a number of councils are hosting international pre-games training camps.
3. The first meeting of the Group discussed key operational issues, including emergency planning, the torch relay, transport and communications and agreed a work programme for the months ahead.
4. The Group wants to encourage each Programme Board to consider what activities are already underway or remain to be addressed to support councils in the period before and during the Olympic and Paralympic Games to ensure that the LGA provides a coherent offer to councils. The Culture, Tourism and Sport Programme Board will continue to have policy oversight, including the legacy (e.g. community sports participation and tourism) and on aspects such as promoting the UK wide calendar of events and encouraging councils and communities involved in the Games.

Emergency Planning and Resilience

5. A significant amount has already been done to support emergency planning activities in the run up to the Games, which has been overseen jointly by the Culture, Tourism and Sport Programme Board and the Safer and Stronger Communities Programme Board. The National Local Authority Olympic Resilience Programme has been established which is funded by the Home Office, backed by the LGA and London Councils and hosted by the London Fire Brigade. This Programme is also supporting the national representation of local government during the Games, for example in the Cabinet Office Briefing Rooms (COBR) Olympic Coordination Group (OCG). This builds upon existing working (the LGA routinely attends COBR when relevant issues arise) but

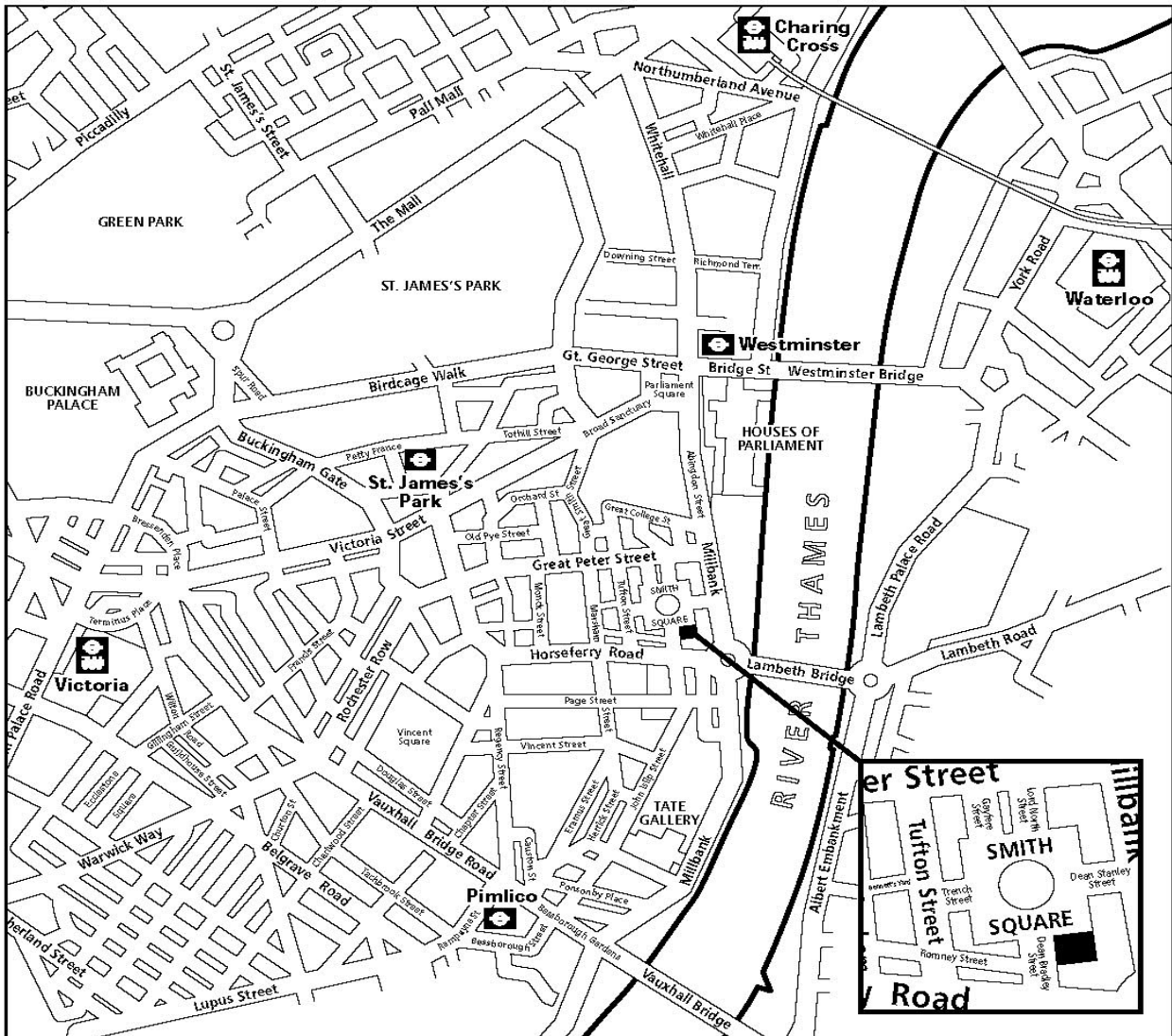
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reinforces the current arrangements by providing continuous support to the National Representative for Local Government (either a Member or a Chief Executive, depending on the nature of the meeting being convened). Cllr Stephen Castle represented the LGA at COBR at a national exercise held in December 2011 and demonstrated that councils have much to contribute to the success of the Games in 2012. Cllr Chris White will represent the LGA at the next exercise which is due to be held in the Spring which will look at a significant civil contingencies scenario. Subject to diary commitments, a rota of senior members will be needed for COBR OGC during the Games.

6. The next meeting of the Task and Finish Group will be on 18 January 2012.

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LGA Location Map



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Public transport

Local Government House is well served by public transport. The nearest mainline stations are;

Victoria

and **Waterloo**; the local underground stations are **St James's Park** (District and Circle Lines); **Westminster** (District, Circle and Jubilee Lines); and **Pimlico** (Victoria Line), all about 10 minutes walk away. Buses **3** and **87** travel along **Millbank**, and the **507** between Victoria and Waterloo goes close by at the end of **Dean Bradley Street**.

Bus routes - Millbank

87 Wandsworth - Aldwych **N87**
3 Crystal Palace - Brixton - Oxford Circus

Bus routes - Horseferry Road

507 Waterloo - Victoria
C10 Elephant and Castle - Pimlico - Victoria
88 Camden Town - Whitehall - Westminster - Pimlico - Clapham Common

Cycling Facilities

Cycle racks are available at Local Government House. Please telephone the LGA on 020 7664 3131.

Central London Congestion Charging Zone

Local Government House is located within the congestion charging zone. For further details, please call 0845 900 1234 or visit the website at www.cclondon.com

Car Parks

Abingdon Street Car Park
 Great College Street
Horseferry Road Car Park
 Horseferry Road/Arneway Street