

Councillors' Forum

Agenda

Thursday 17 May 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

www.local.gov.uk

Guidance notes for visitors

Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ

Welcome!

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Please don't forget to sign out at reception and return your badge when you depart.

Councillors' Forum

17 May 2012

The **Councillors' Forum** meeting will be held on **Thursday 17 May 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:	Luke Taylor: 020 7664 3264 email: luke.taylor@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

Fatima de Abreu (Tel: 020 7664 3136, Email: fatima.deabreu@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.

Hotels: The LGA has negotiated preferential rates with Club Quarters Hotels in central London. Club Quarters have hotels opposite Trafalgar Square, in the City near St Pauls Cathedral and in Gracechurch Street, in the City, near the Bank of England. These hotels are all within easy travelling distance from Local Government House. A standard room in a Club Quarters Hotel, at the negotiated rate, should cost no more than £149 per night.

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Councillors' Forum 2011 - 2012

Updated 08.05.12

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
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
Martin Hill OBE	Lincolnshire CC
Derrick Murphy	Norfolk CC
Keith Mitchell CBE	Oxfordshire CC
Gr. Uff. Marco Cereste OSSI OMRI	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
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 McMahon	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 (17)	
Roger Symonds	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Flick Rea	Camden 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	
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

17 May 2012

12.30 – 1.30pm

The Westminster Suite, Local Government House

	Item	Page	Time
1.	Directly Elected Mayors David Cowling, Editor, BBC Political Research David Cowling will attend to discuss the local election results and what they tell us.	3	12.30pm
2.	Chairman's Update	5	1.20pm
3.	LGA Board and Panel Chairs' Reports a: Children & Young People Board – Cllr David Simmonds b: Community Wellbeing Board – Cllr David Rogers OBE c: Culture, Tourism & Sport Board – Cllr Flick Rea d: Environment & Housing Board – Cllr David Parsons CBE e: Improvement Board – Cllr Peter Fleming f: Economy & Transport Board – Cllr Peter Box CBE g: Safer & Stronger Communities Board – Cllr Mehboob Khan h: Workforce Board – Mayor Sir Steve Bullock i: European & International Board – Cllr Dave Wilcox OBE j: Audit & Scrutiny Panel – Cllr Ian Swithenbank CBE k: Bonds Task & Finish Group – Cllr Edward Lord OBE JP l: 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games Task & Finish Group – Cllr Stephen Castle	9	1.25pm

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 14 June 2012, Local Government House

Item 1

Directly Elected Mayors

Purpose of report

For noting and discussion.

Summary

The 3rd of May, saw major elections across Great Britain. There were all out elections in Wales and Scotland. In metropolitan boroughs one third of seats were up for re-election. There were also elections in many other parts of England as well as the elections for the Mayors of London, Liverpool and Salford as well as the Greater London Assembly. These elections saw significant swings and many changes of political control.

Members will hear from David Cowling, Editor, BBC Political Research. David will give his analysis of the results and the conclusions he draws from those results.

Recommendation

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

Action

As directed by the Forum.

Contact officer: Joe Simpson
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Item 2

Chairman's update

6 March 2012 – 4 May 2012

LGA business

1. Firstly, I'd like welcome any newly elected councillors to the Local Government Association and extend my congratulations to you.
2. I was pleased to welcome Dr Jane Martin, Acting Chair and Local Government Ombudsman and Anne Seex, Local Government Ombudsman, to the March **Leadership Board** meeting. At the meeting we also considered our **Membership Offer** - a copy of which many of you will have recently received.
3. We also recently launched our **LGA business plan**, setting out a challenging agenda for the year ahead. I am confident we can deliver this to the benefit of local authorities, and ultimately the people we represent.
4. Focus last month fell heavily on **Budget Day** activity. Ahead of the Budget the LGA sent the Chancellor a submission emphasising the crucial role of councils in reducing the deficit, reforming services, and unlocking growth. We highlighted the action councils are already taking drive to growth and attract investment and set out how they could go further if given greater financial autonomy and the tools and levers for growth.
5. The next day I was pleased to travel to Wakefield alongside **Secretary of State, Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP** to meet with Cllr Peter Box CBE and Local Government Yorkshire and Humber Members to discuss their priorities across the region.
6. I chaired the first meeting of our new **Finance Task Group** and discussion focused on infrastructure funding, universal credit and the Local Government Finance Bill.
7. At the April Leadership Board meeting we considered a range of issues including the LGA Adult Social Care Campaign and the Government consultation on introducing a statutory register of lobbyists. In late April I travelled to Leeds to attend the **Commission on the Future of Local Government** and discuss their emerging findings on councils' role in revitalising local democracy and public services.

Ministerial/Parliamentary business

8. I had a useful meeting with **Rt Hon Chris Grayling** regarding ESF Families with complex needs provision.

9. I was also pleased to meet with **Rt Hon Danny Alexander** prior to the Budget statement. The agenda focused on spending and funding decisions post 2015, adult social care, Local Authority Bonds, pension funds and economic growth.
10. Momentum also continues to build behind the **Independent Local Government campaign**, working closely with the Chair of the Political and Constitutional Reform Select Committee, Graham Allen MP. I was able to join Graham at a Parliamentary roundtable and then giving evidence to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee. These provided important opportunities to press our message of the need for greater independence for local government.
11. I met with **Rt Hon Andrew Lansley, Secretary of State for Health**. It was very helpful to share our respective positions and further understand the Government's ambitions for the future, particularly on adult social care. At the end of April the LGA publicly called for urgent action on elderly care and warned against any further delays to reforming social care. Our cross-party letter to the Prime Minister made the front page of the Telegraph.
12. It was good to meet with **Lord Young** at No.10 to discuss council support for SMEs. We made clear that the LGA fully supports Government's objective of creating economic growth and good procurement practice. I also met with **Lord Heseltine** to discuss his review of UK competitiveness, as announced in the Budget and I was pleased to meet with our Vice Presidents to discuss future work in Westminster.

Meetings with other organisations and individuals

13. Alongside Group Leaders I attended a meeting with the **Audit Commission**. Following the liaison meeting the Commission has now published its work programme and fees for 2012/13. This confirms a 40% reduction in audit fees.
14. I was delighted to attend the **LGC Awards** in March. It was fantastic to see hard work which takes place every day across the country recognised.
15. I also spoke at a number of events including speaking alongside Rt Hon Vince Cable at the Centre for Cities Post Budget Briefing 2012. I addressed the European Local and Regional Government Finance Conference and took part in a panel discussion arranged by the Guardian to discuss commissioning. I also addressed the Society of Metropolitan Chief Executives conference.

Meetings with councillors and member councils

16. I addressed the **District Councils' Network** meeting at Local Government House to discuss the ongoing work of the LGA.
17. Mid March I took part in a Corporate Peer Challenge in Cornwall. I have also visited a number of councils over the last few weeks. I was pleased to be invited to **West Sussex County Council** and to meet Louise Goldsmith the

Leader, Cabinet Members and senior officers. I was also pleased to visit **King's Lynn and West Norfolk** and meet with Nick Daubney.

18. In April I visited, **Wiltshire** and met with Cllr Jane Scott and her Cabinet colleagues to discuss future work with the LGA and I was also delighted to take part in a very useful visit to **Kettering** where I met with Cllr Russell Roberts and Chief Executive David Cook along with private sector representatives.

Item 3

LGA 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 Boards; and the Audit and Scrutiny Panel. Also included are reports from the Chairs of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the Bonds 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 Boards email: helen.johnston@local.gov.uk	020 7664 3172
Ian Hughes, E & I and E & T Boards email: ian.hughes@local.gov.uk	020 7664 3101
Sandie Dunne, E & H and CWB Boards email: sandie.dunne@local.gov.uk	020 7664 3070
Dennis Skinner, Improvement Board email: dennis.skinner@local.gov.uk	020 7296 6531
Helen Murray, SSC Board email: helen.murray@local.gov.uk	020 7664 3266
Sarah Messenger, Workforce 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
Mark Luntley, LA Bonds Task & Finish Group email: mark.luntley@local.gov.uk	020 7664 3000

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

Children's Improvement Board/sector led improvement May 2012

1. I attended the meeting of the Children's Improvement Board (CIB) on 23 April with Cllr Rita Krishna from the Children and Young People Board. The Board agreed four priorities for 2012-13 which were:
 - 1.1. Reducing the number of councils in DfE intervention
 - 1.2. Establishing an effective system of peer challenge and support
 - 1.3. Better engagement of stakeholders including adult services
 - 1.4. Supporting councils in managing the impact of policies
2. Delivering on these priorities will depend on the active engagement of key councillors and senior managers. As happened last year, a significant part of the CIB's budget will be allocated to regions, based on delivery plans which will focus particularly on ensuring every council receives a peer challenge by December 2013 and that councils in the region are supported early when in difficulty. Following the publication of adoption score cards, CIB will be offering support to any council that falls below the performance thresholds set by the Government.

Action Learning Research

3. On 21 March we held an event for Lead Members for Children's Services on the council role in education and the LGA/DfE action learning research. A write-up of the event can be found on the LGA website.

Children and Young People Board meeting and sector-led improvement

4. The Children and Young People Board met on 28 March. The focus of discussion was the Government's response to the schools funding consultation and we agreed to ask authorities for evidence of how the proposed reduction of in the number of local factors in schools' formulae will impact locally to inform our response to the consultation.
5. Following the Board meeting I chaired an event on engagement with sector-led improvement. In all 32 Lead Members and member peers attended the event and the learning from the safeguarding children peer review programme was shared. Lead Members were able to identify the kinds of support they required to continue to engage in sector-led improvement.
6. Their ideas will be taken forward in the planned new Lead Member induction session in July on the Children's services focussed Leadership Academy programme, continuing links with regional networks and improvements to the safeguarding peer review guidance.

Care Leavers Roundtable

7. On 16 April, I attended a roundtable organised by the Care Leavers Association and partner organisations, alongside Children's Minister Tim Loughton MP. The roundtable was convened to discuss how care leavers can be more effectively supported. It focused on how Government departments can 'care-proof' their policies to make sure that they support, rather than hinder young people leaving care. Councils of course play a key role in this too and the LGA will be meeting Who Cares? Trust to explore some of the issues for young people.

All Party Parliamentary Group for Looked After Children and Care Leavers

8. On 18 April, I participated in a meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. Along with the Education Minister, Tim Loughton MP, stakeholders discussed whether "Every local authority offers different support to looked-after children and care leavers: is this right?"

Media

9. I have made numerous media appearances over the last couple of months discussing various issues of importance to the sector, including being interviewed by on 'BBC Breakfast', following news that half of the free schools due to open this year have not yet secured premises. I discussed how councils have been active in pupil place planning during an interview by BBC Radio 4's 'Today Programme' following a report that rising numbers of infants face missing out on preferred primary schools this year. I was also interviewed by the Guardian on 24 April following reports on the growing number of what it calls 'Titan' schools which are rapidly expanding to meet the increasing number of pupils.

Royal National College for the Blind

10. I visited the Royal National College for the Blind on 9 May 2012. The College provides specialist education to blind and visually impaired young people and the visit was arranged to develop a better working relationship between the College and councils. The Government aims to introduce, from April 2013, a funding and planning system which will apply in the same way to all types of providers: maintained schools, academies, free schools, special schools, Further Education colleges, and independent special schools or colleges. The new system will help local authorities to co-ordinate a single education, health and care plan for children and young people with a disability. The new model will provide a degree of stability for the providers but allow local authorities to provide a greater degree of choice to parents and young people, including access to residential provision.

Visits to councils

11. I have made several visits to councils over the last two months including Kent County Council, East Riding of Yorkshire and Cheshire West and Chester.

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Position: Head of Programmes **E-mail:** helen.johnston@local.gov.uk

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

Smith Square debate on social care / launch of our publication on care and support.

1. Early in April, the LGA held the third of our spring Smith Square Debate series: this time focusing on Adult Social Care reform. I was joined on the panel by Victoria Hart, Social Worker Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust, Caroline Abrahams, Director of External Affairs, Age UK and Matthew Young, Founder and Director, Public Policy Projects.

Children and Young People's Health Conference

2. Local Government House also hosted the LGA's Reducing Health Inequalities for Children and Young People Conference on 22 March 2012. This was jointly chaired by Cllr Liz Green and myself. 40 delegates attended and learnt about the latest policy e.g. children's health outcome strategy and School nursing programme. The conference was an opportunity for professionals and Cllrs to share knowledge, including on local authority approaches to children's trust arrangements. Key speakers included Mr Mark Davies, Department of Health, Prof Terence Stephenson, RCPCH, Margaret Carney, Sefton Council and Cllr Paul Lakin and Joyce Thacker, both Rotherham MBC.

Alzheimers's Strategy Launch

3. The LGA was invited to the Launch of the Prime Minister's Alzheimer Strategy on Monday 26 March. I attended the launch, which reinforced the co-operation between Alzheimers' Society and the LGA on the Ageing Well and Adult Social Care reform agendas.

APPG inquiry into social care

4. On 17 April Cllr Gareth Barnard gave evidence to the social care inquiry being undertaken by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Local Government. Cllr Barnard stressed the importance of funding and reform going hand in hand to secure a sustainable future for care and support, and the crucial role councils play in coordinating a range of local services to support individuals and help them remain independent at home. Cllr Barnard was also clear on the need to invest in prevention and early intervention and take forward the integration agenda; not just in terms of health but also broader thinking about the key role of housing in individuals' wellbeing.

Alcohol Conference

5. Also on Tuesday 17 April I chaired the successful Alcohol Strategy Conference against the backdrop of continued media debate about the merits of minimum pricing. 80 participants and delegates attended. We continue to argue that Alcohol related problems can most effectively be addressed by giving councils

the powers and flexibility to tackle them locally, and that focusing solely on the price of alcohol will not go far enough to address the root causes of problem drinking and the associated anti-social behaviour and health problems it creates.

Obesity Review Group

6. Cllr Linda Thomas represented the LGA at the Department of Health's Obesity Review Group on 19 April. The group examines progress against the Government's aims for reducing Obesity using statistics and expert analysis and advises on future direction.

Final meeting of Commission for Dignity in Care

7. The Commission on Dignity in Care met for the final time in mid-April. The commission has highlighted the need for dignity to be built in to the ongoing and future reforms of the NHS and Britain's Social care system. With the media maintaining a welcome spotlight on this dignity for those in care, the focus should now shift to concrete actions to achieve the change we need. The Commission's Final report and action plan will be released in June.

National Sharing Event – Learning Sets

8. On 24 April, Cllr Gareth Barnard chaired sessions at a joint Department for Health / LGA event in Hammersmith, London. There were 225 delegates in total. Objectives for the day were to share the existing learning from regional networks/learning sets; to bring together stakeholders and partners; to explore what collective leadership of the system would entail; and to update on the latest national policy thinking related to health and wellbeing boards. There were also a number of exhibitors including LGA Health & Wellbeing Board Leadership offer, NHS Confederation, DH Knowledge Hub, NHS Leadership Academy plus demonstrations of the work of each of the Learning Sets.

National Inclusion Health Board

9. On 02 May Cllr Gareth Barnard attended the National Inclusion Health Board on behalf of the LGA. The board is the national level strategy board which looks at ways to improve the health of some of the most easily ignored groups in society. Set up under the last government, and continued with the support of this government, its membership includes Anne Milton MP, the Public Health minister and Steve Field, the Chair of the NHS Future Forum.

Widespread Media Coverage of the Adult Social Care Campaign

10. A joint letter submitted by Sir Merrick Cockell to the leaders of the UK's main political parties, with the support of all political groups of the LGA, called for urgent action over adult social care reform. Adult Social care was the subject of the Telegraph front-page story as a result on 27 April. The letter, which received cross-party support, stated that the proposals set out by Andrew Dilnot's Commission on Funding of Care and Support offer the only real solution to securing sustainable funding for care. In support of the Adult Social Care Campaign, Sir Merrick was also interviewed on Radio 4's Today programme.

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Position: Head of Programme **E-mail:** sandie.dunne@local.gov.uk

Culture, Tourism and Sport Board – report from Cllr Flick Rea (Chair)

The Visitor Economy

1. On 24 April, I met with Lady Penelope Cobham, Chair of VisitEngland. We discussed the important role local government plays in the visitor economy, which is the country's fifth biggest industry and a major source of jobs. I emphasised the importance of encouraging strong partnerships between Destination Management Organisations and Local Enterprise Partnerships. The LGA and VisitEngland will continue to work together to share innovative approaches to strengthening and investing in the visitor economy. I invited Lady Cobham to speak at a future meeting of the CTS Board.

Libraries and Culture

2. On 1 May, I attended a roundtable on workforce issues regarding libraries, hosted by Ed Vaizey MP, Culture Minister. Discussion focussed on the role of professional librarians in public libraries; how it is changing and what this means for service provision. I emphasised the importance of capturing and sharing the different ways in which the libraries' workforce is adapting.
3. I attended the first meeting of Arts Council England's (ACE) External Reference Group on 11 April, which was set up to consult on the impact of a 50% reduction in ACE's administration costs. I encouraged ACE to support a sector-led approach to improvement for local government arts, museums and libraries that enables as much funding as possible to reach the frontline to keep services open.

2012 Games and Sport

4. I met Jennie Price, Chief Executive of Sport England, on 30 April and am pleased to report that Sport England has agreed to fund a joint political leadership programme, building on the success of last year's Leadership Academies. We hope to work with around 100 councillors through a programme of events, peer support and sharing good practice.
5. Cllr Simon Henig and Cllr Stephen Castle met senior officials from London 2012 (LOCOG) and the Nations and Regions Group (NRG) on 17 April to discuss final preparations for the 2012 Games. Members highlighted the importance of sharing information about Local Leaders events with councils so that organisers can be supported to ensure events are safe and successful.

6. I attended the DCMS Disability Sports Summit on 19 April. The Summit was attended by leading sporting figures and we discussed how to tackle the low levels of disabled participation in sport. I highlighted the role that councils have played over many years to promote disability sports participation and encouraging more awareness of the barriers faced by disabled people. Councils are also using the 2012 Paralympic Games to raise the profile of disability sport. I am continuing discussions with Sport England to ensure that there is greater local sports connectivity to increase opportunities for disabled people.
7. On 2 May, I attended a meeting alongside Councillors Castle, Henig and Bagchi with Hugh Robertson MP, Sports Minister, and Bob Neill MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at CLG, to discuss the role that councils have played in the lead up to the torch relay and 2012 Games. We emphasised that councils are very positive about the torch relay and 2012 Games and contributed fully to the recent Olympic Torch Relay Dress Rehearsal, although there remain some concerns around increasing costs for staging the torch relay.
8. Councils have already received about 6, 500 road closures applications from people wishing to celebrate the Jubilee, building on the success of the 5, 000 events from last year's Royal Wedding. I used an article in *First* magazine to launch a new events handbook for councillors, which will help colleagues to think through how their council has responded to events and share some of the new ways of working that have emerged. It also showcases those councils that have truly gone the extra mile in supporting residents and removing traditional barriers to events, helping to challenge the many myths about council red tape blocking community events.

World War I Commemoration meeting

9. On 2 May, I attended met with Andrew Murrison MP, who has been appointed by the Prime Minister to lead the Government's planning for World War I commemorations in 2014-18, and the Heritage Lottery Fund. I emphasised that councils will commemorate World War I in different and locally appropriate ways and that the LGA would be happy to promote potential funding sources to councils.

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

The LGA responds to the Government's NPPF announcement

1. Cllr Sir Merrick Cockell, Chairman of the LGA, responded to the announcement of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 27 March. Following pressure from the LGA, the amended definition of sustainable development now strikes a better balance between economic, social and environmental benefits. Another key win for local authorities is that a timeframe of one year has been put in place to allow the development of local plans, and that plans will gain greater weight as they near completion. The future of localised planning and community development following the NPPF was also the focus on a panel debate I took part in, at the Westminster Energy, Environment & Transport Forum, on 26 April.

Rural Commission

2. The NPPF was also a main topic of discussion at the meeting of the LGA Rural Commission, where Cllr Terry Stacy gave a speech outlining the LGA's position on the NPPF and how it applied to rural councils. A breakout session also considered how best to meet local housing needs.

Meeting with Lord Best, Cllr Parsons, Placeshapers

3. Cllr Gary Porter, Cllr Tony Newman, Cllr Apu Bagchi, Cllr Terry Stacy and I met the President of the LGA, Lord Best, and the Placeshapers group of community-based housing associations in late March to discuss their key values and introduce them to the LGA's positions on social housing.

A discussion on Climate Change with Lord Krebs

4. Cllr Gravells and I met with the Chair of the Adaptation Sub-Committee on the 24 April, to discuss the third report on national preparedness for climate change due in July. This will focus on flood-risk – and a significant part of the sub-committee's analysis is about the role of local decision making. We will continue to work productively with the sub-committee.

Housing Masterclasses

5. The LGA delivered six free Housing Masterclasses, to over 90 elected members over the Spring in Leeds, Liverpool, London, Taunton and Birmingham, with Cllr Andrew Cooper, Cllr Richard Kemp, Cllr Tony Newman, Cllr Brian Hood, Cllr Terry Stacy and Cllr Roger Hollingworth all involved in chairing the events along with LGA member peers. The events received a satisfaction rating of over 90%.

Cross Government Group on Criminal Landlords and Migrant Rough Sleepers

6. A cross-Whitehall Ministerial Working Group has been convened to deal with the issue of criminal landlords and the problem of so-called 'sheds with beds'. Cllr Frances Roden attended the first meeting on 30 April on behalf on the board. Sir Robin Wales, Leader of the London Borough of Newham, and senior officials representing the Treasury, DWP and DCLG also attended.

Planning Peer Challenges

7. In April we concluded the last of this year's programme of six planning peer challenges, fully subsidised by the Planning Advisory Service. We were on site in Wiltshire, Sandwell, Warrington, Derby, Cornwall and Maidstone. The average overall satisfaction rating with the challenge process and outcome was 86%.

Housing

8. Cllr Terry Stacy attended a meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Housing and Planning Group (**APPHPG**), where he argued that there is no one size fits all solution to the housing crisis and, consequently, the solutions have to be finely tuned at the local level.
9. Cllr Ed Turner continues to contribute on the LGA's behalf to the Local Housing Delivery Steering Group. The LHDSG is a cross-sector working-group which seeks to produce advice for developers and local authorities on viability and local standards in plan-making. The group's advice on viability will be launched later in May.
10. Cllr Clyde Loakes headed the LGA's response to the successful transition to self financing system for local authority housing. The new self financing system reflects a long standing lobbying campaign by the board and is based on an acknowledgement that councils are best placed to make decisions about how they spend money raised locally.

Flood insurance

11. The Association of British Insurers (ABI) and Richard Benyon, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Natural Environment and Fisheries, have each sent letters to the LGA in response to the joint letters by Cllr Clare Whelan and Cllr Andrew Cooper highlighting councils' concerns with the current state of the flood insurance market. The LGA are following up separate invitations for further meetings with the Minister and the ABI to progress the issue.

High street clustering Campaign

12. In support of the High street clustering Campaign, Cllr Tony Newman spoke to the Today programme and Clyde Loakes, Vice Chair of the board highlighted the results of our high street survey, which showed clearly that clusters of certain types of premises are hitting the economic growth of local high streets, according to councillors and council staff.

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Improvement Board – report from Cllr Peter Fleming (Chairman)

Improvement

Localism summit

1. Councillor Roderick Bluh was a key speaker at a summit in Birmingham on 22 March, which explored the implications of the Localism agenda. The successful event, jointly hosted by the Local Government Association (LGA) and National Association of Local Councils, looked at how the different tiers of local government could use these powers and opportunities to work more effectively together to the benefit of the local community.

Sector-led improvement

2. Since publishing *Taking the Lead*, the sector's approach to sector-led improvement, was published over a year ago, we have made significant progress in taking this agenda forward and responding to councils' requests that we find a way to manage the risk of performance failure. As part of this progress, the Board was happy to endorse a single overarching framework publication for the new sector-led approach to improvement at its meeting in March. The framework will bring together the work of the Improvement Board with that of the Children's Improvement Board (CIB) and the Towards Excellence in Council's Adult Social Care Board. The framework is currently being updated to take into account the views of the CIB, the Towards Excellence Board and the Community and Wellbeing Board, after which I look forward to sharing the framework with the sector. I have written a short piece for the Local Government Chronicle which draws attention to this work.

Leadership

National Graduate Development Programme Alumni Event

3. On 31 March 2012, I gave a keynote presentation at an alumni event for the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP). The conference, attended by over 80 past NGDP trainees, brought together NGDP alumni and current trainees to network and share experiences. I was very impressed by the quality of the candidates and I am confident that with the NGDP attracting new talent into local government, the sector will be in strong position to tackle its challenges and provide councils with the high-calibre managers our communities need.

Productivity

Procurement

4. We have recently funded a study to examine if procurement savings can be achieved through further sharing or the development of procurement hubs. The Improvement Board expects to examine the business case for this in the autumn.

Procurement pledge

5. I am happy to announce that we have recently developed a Draft Local Government Procurement Pledge as a means of stimulating economic growth. You may be aware that the Government has issued its own draft Procurement Pledge which it envisaged the sector signing up-to; however, Board Members and I remain unconvinced that Government's pledge reflects the strengths and aspirations of the sector. The LGA's draft Pledge, which recognises local government's desire to support social enterprises and the voluntary sector, is out to consultation until 8 June 2012.

New social care and waste pilots announced

6. As announced on 5 April, we will be supporting eight new council-led projects to help improve care for the elderly and make waste collection more efficient by providing £20,000 funding. These innovative pilots should lead to improvements in the services which matter most to the public – such as rubbish collections, roads and elderly care - and will help find further savings in addition to the millions already saved by sharing services.

Local fight against fraud stepped up

7. Details of a new strategy to help councils hit back against fraudsters and prevent losses of over £2 billion a year were announced on 3 April by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Home Office. The strategy, 'Fighting Fraud Locally' provides a blueprint to better equip local authorities to fight a range of frauds including housing tenancy, council tax, and blue badge parking fraud. It draws on the best practices of councils already successfully tackling fraud, offers practical anti-fraud advice and is accompanied by a set of supporting online products that councils can use to more aggressively tackle fraud.

Transparency

Local Transparency

8. Councillor Tim Cheetham, the Board's lead member for Transparency, is currently working with the Transparency team and with members and local authorities to develop a policy framework for transparency, update guides on transparency and encourage authorities to make use of the data. Additionally, there are plans to work with DCLG to get a better understanding of the impact of transparency on local authorities and how the data can benefit authorities.

Innovation

Creative Councils

9. After months of hard work, the Creative Councils Programme with NESTA has now entered a vital stage as the selection process gets underway. The intention is to provide more significant support for the 5 or so best ideas. On 8 May Councillor Richard Stay and I reviewed the Action Plans of the 17 Creative Councils and made recommendations to the Creative Councils Steering Group, which in turn advises the Creative Councils Selection Panel. I look forward to being able to inform you of the successful proposals in my next update, as the Selection Panel is due to make its final decision by the end of May.

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

Local Growth Campaign

1. Whilst the latest economic growth figures and our double-dip recession have caused much political controversy, the Treasury's latest economic projections should send national policy makers to investigate the excellent work that is being driven at the front-line of the economy by councils. Our Local Growth Campaign has shown that not only are councils "just doing it", we also have an unlimited appetite for new powers and responsibilities at the local level to drive growth.
2. The Board's Local Growth Campaign is reaching its conclusion and we will be looking at the recommendations at the Board and Executive meetings in May. When we set out on the campaign, we envisaged publishing a Green Paper which set out the role that councils could play. The evidence of the campaign is that we have not only embraced the devolution agenda, but also have the ideas and ambition to demonstrate how councils can intensify the drive for economic growth at a local level. Thus our Green Paper needs a better name. A Green Paper tends to symbolise policy ideas from the centre rather than the front-line. Our Campaign's conclusions will, therefore, become an invitation to business and government to talk about action and delivery. The detail of our recommendations will be available in both May's Executive and Economy and Transport Board papers.

CLG Select Committee

3. On Monday 30 April I gave oral evidence to the CLG Select Committee inquiry into the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). I made the case for a well resourced ERDF pot shaped by local authorities, and talked about the role it has played in the renaissance of places like Birmingham, Sheffield, and Liverpool. Over 20 years my authority, Wakefield, has created around 10,000 jobs, with £120 million of structural funds leveraging an additional £1 billion of private sector match-funding. This funding is vital, and I warned the committee that a lack of match-funding will lead to projects not going ahead, with funds being returned to Brussels rather than invested in communities.

Hidden Talents

4. Over the last month we have been building consensus with partners around the proposals set out in our Hidden Talents report, for supporting the most disengaged young people into work and learning. Looking ahead we will be working with councils to build the evidence case for this approach, engaging

with councils joining-up services for these groups - we have a roundtable with councils, partners and David Miliband, who chaired the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations' (ACEVO) Youth Unemployment Commission. We are also planning some work around the skills mismatch for our young people, and have commissioned research to assess the extent of this mismatch across sectors and places.

Transport projects

5. Transport is central to the growth agenda and the government has recognised the importance of local decision-making in ensuring that solutions are fine tuned to match the economic, social and environmental needs of an area. The LGA is working with Cornwall, Cambridgeshire, Staffordshire and Leeds city region on demonstration projects to understand what works well, what is transferable and what barriers remain, on which we need to work with government.

Office of Rail Regulation (ORR)

6. All of the Board's Group Leaders met the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) to ensure that councils play a bigger role in influencing how future rail investment is regulated. ORR was genuinely interested in working with groups of councils to discuss future economic growth issues and how investment decisions across the public sector can be joined up. We volunteered to deliver a number of sub-regional consultation events at which councils could set out their local investment plans to help influence future Network Rail investment decisions.

Cllr Kevin Lynes

7. It is with great sadness I heard of the sudden death of Cllr Kevin Lynes from Kent CC. Kevin was an excellent and active member of the Board and the portfolio member for economic development in Kent. He could be relied upon at the Board to suggest new ideas and to quickly get to the real economic issues facing councils. He was far too young to leave us and we will miss his contribution to our work. On behalf of the Board, I would like to send my condolences to his family, his friends and colleagues in local government.

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Item 3g

Safer & Stronger Communities Board – report from Cllr Mehboob Khan (Chairman)

Transition to police and crime commissioners

1. Board members continued to be involved in the Home Office's transition programme in March and April, and to highlight the support available to councils from the LGA. Cllr Joanna Spicer attended the project group looking at checks and balances which met in March to look at the issues that had been raised at the road show events the Home Office had organised in February and March, what regulations the Home Office are looking to produce that relate to police and crime panels and specifically at what local government legislation on how committees operate should apply to panels. One issue that was repeatedly raised at the Home Office road shows was how to calculate the political make up of police and crime panels. Although the Home Office have produced a legal clarification on this issue, this has raised further questions about how it should be applied, which the Home Office were asked to consider at the meeting.
2. The Board was represented at the Home Office project group looking at what partnerships will need to do to prepare for police and crime commissioners by Cllr Canver. At the meeting Cllr Canver highlighted as a continuing risk the lack of information available from the Home Office about what funding would be removed from councils in addition to the community safety fund, and the impact this might have on community safety activity due to lack of certainty about what funding would be available. In addition Cllr Canver highlighted the opportunities for the Home Office and Department of Health to work with the LGA on helping link police and crime commissioners with the new health structures such as health and well being boards.
3. As well as being involved in the Home Office transition work, the Board's Deputy Chair Cllr Duwayne Brooks, spoke at an ITW Networks Justice and Community Safety event on police and crime commissioners about the preparations councils are making to set up police and crime panels, about what community safety partnerships need to do to prepare for commissioners and the support available from the LGA. The Board's chair, Cllr Mehboob Khan, also highlighted in a press release aimed at the local government trade press the peers who would be available from the end of May to support areas in setting up their police and crime panels.

Fire and Rescue

4. The successful and well attended annual LGA Fire and Rescue Resilience Conference took place over two days in March 2012, in Bournemouth. It is a popular event in the fire sector attracting over 250 Chief Fire Officers, Fire and Rescue Chairmen and elected members and Service Directors. The resilience themed conference hosted an array of relevant and current sessions relating to key fire policy areas including industrial relations, preparedness for the Olympics and Paralympics, environmental challenges and the impact of the Localism Act.

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Workforce Board – report by Mayor Sir Steve Bullock (Chair)

Pensions

1. Good progress is being made in the discussions between the LGA, the principal local government unions and government. Proposals have been submitted to government for a new scheme design with proposals on future cost control and governance to follow later in May. It is hoped that consultation on scheme design with both employers and union members will commence in the very near future.

Proposed Final Agreement for new Teachers' scheme

2. Discussions have now concluded between the government and the unions and a Proposed Final Agreement (PFA) has been published. The first year of contribution increases for employees has been implemented. Although some unions have agreed to the PFA, the NUT and NASUWT remain opposed and are calling for further industrial action.

Local Government Services

3. The Employers' Secretary is next due to meet with the unions on 9 May for exploratory discussions on reform of pay, conditions and the national machinery. In the coming weeks and months, the views of local authorities in England, Wales and N Ireland will be sought on a number of possible scenarios resulting from the joint discussions.

Public Health Workforce Issues

4. The LGA continues to play a key role in ensuring that the right climate exists for local engagement between councils and PCT clusters on transitional public health workforce issues. Considerable progress has been made in several key areas:
 - 4.1 Group leaders in the LGA have now agreed that existing public health staff will retain access to their NHS pension at the point of transfer;
 - 4.2 The LGA is working with the Department of Health to ensure that the key lessons from an early review of the transition plans being put together by various out-going Strategic Health Authority groups are made available to help councils in local discussions;
 - 4.3 Work is continuing to ensure that the processes for future appointments of Directors of Public Health involve maximum local discretion, whilst allowing for national requirements around the delivery of public health;
 - 4.4 A "welcome guide" to working in local government for public health staff has been finalised and will be published as soon as possible.

School teachers

5. The National Employers' Organisation for School Teachers (NEOST) has now submitted its evidence to the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB). The NEOST evidence will be considered alongside that of other statutory consultees to inform the STRB's recommendations in respect of the following issues:
 - 5.1 How the pay framework for teachers should best be made more market-facing in local areas;
 - 5.2 How the pay scales, including the main and upper pay scales, should be reformed to more effectively link pay and performance; and
 - 5.3 What other reforms should be made to teachers' pay and conditions in order to raise the status of the profession and best support the recruitment and retention of high quality teachers in all schools.
6. In addition to the NEOST submission, the Workforce Team has submitted an LGA response to the government's wider call for evidence on how to make pay more market-facing in local areas for certain groups of public sector workers.

Fire

7. The FBU submitted a pay claim for 2012 on 13 March. The claim is for the Retail Price Index figure as available on 7 June to be applied to all NJC rates. The claim will be considered at the next meeting of the National Joint Council for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services on 7 June 2012.

Youth and Community

8. The Staff Side submitted a pay claim for 2012 on 27 March. The claim is for '*A substantial rise on all grades and allowances from September 2012*'. There are other elements to the claim which include a payment of £250 to staff that earn £21,000 or less as well as the removal of the bottom two pay points on the scale. The Employers' Side will formally respond to the claim when the JNC for Youth and Community workers next meets on 20 June.

Soulbury

9. A joint circular with the Soulbury Officers' Side has been issued to authorities which provides an update on pay for 2011, an update on the Soulbury structure and includes advice on consultation and negotiation at local level.

Standards for Employers of Social Workers

10. This advisory group has now taken on board the work of the SWRB career framework, previously hosted by the Department of Education. Implementation of the standards is happening at different paces and the work of the LGA will be to promote them to councils and dovetail some of the SWRB products in sector-led improvement.

LGA conference

11. Topics and speakers have now been confirmed for both of the sessions which the Workforce team is hosting at the annual conference.

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European & International Board – report from Cllr Dave Wilcox OBE

EU Funds

1. You may recall that in my last update I mentioned that 2012 is the key year in finalising the arrangements for future EU funding. I am happy to report that both Members and officers have been focusing their efforts in this area to good effect.
2. On 19 April, Board members (Cllrs Bore, Keymer and Nicholson) were part of a delegation of Councillors who met with Commissioner Johannes Hahn, the EU Commissioner for Regional Policy. The delegation represented both urban areas such as Birmingham and Manchester as well as rural areas, counties and smaller district authorities. It was a positive discussion, with Members reaffirming to the Commissioner the willingness and capacity of Local Government to play a leading role in the formulation and delivery of future EU structural funds. The Commissioner has sought to make the funds more local, and although Government has a good deal of discretion in how the funds are designed and managed, it must be agreed by the European Commission.
3. We have submitted evidence to the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) Select Committee inquiry into European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and will offer oral evidence on 30 April. In doing so, we have emphasised the positive role that councils have played in accessing and using the Fund to benefit local businesses and communities, and will offer to show the Committee Members around some projects. We have emphasised the need for Government to focus on making the future ERDF programmes work for local economies and implementing them in a way that fits with the wider devolution of local growth levers.
4. We will be submitting a response to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' (BIS) informal consultation on Local Government's role in the future EU funds, as will be negotiated in the Partnership Agreement. Within it we will emphasise the need for Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships to have the freedom – as individuals or in clusters – to decide what role they would like to play in future programmes, so that spending can be shaped around the needs and aspirations of places.
5. I am also happy to report that two experienced local authority EU Structural Funds practitioners will be seconded to BIS for up to 2 years to be part of the UK negotiation team on the future of EU funds. This is to help Government develop a UK-wide 'Partnership Agreement' - which is required by the EU to set out a national business plan for spending EU Funds. The secondment is actively supported by the LGA, and we will be working with them closely to ensure the views of local authorities are taken into account.

6. We have launched an online platform for council officers and Members to access, share and talk about the issues associated with the establishment of the new EU funding programmes for 2014-20. The Knowledge Hub forms part of the new integrated online offer from the LGA. Please do join in. To register, please click on the link below:
<https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/web/councilroleinfutureeufunds201420>

International links: learning and sharing

7. The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR - the 'European LGA') has appointed me as its lead member for twinning. This is a real opportunity to refresh what we mean by twinning. It should not be based on the 1950s idea of Mayors exchanging flags, but it should be a means of councils learning about public service reform across the globe. I am convinced that English councils have some great ideas to showcase across Europe, but equally there is much that we can learn from our European partners.

The local role in global trade

8. It is a time to refresh this debate and to test how we can help turning old-fashioned twinning into new trade links. As part of our Local Growth Campaign, I spoke at an EU-sponsored debate on the role of councils in attracting inward investment into communities. As well as a presentation by Councillor Box, Chair of Economy and Transport Board, the event also featured feature robust and lively debates with contributions from overseas peers and speakers from UK business, Germany and New Zealand.
9. Councillor Kemp, the Vice Chair of the Board, and I have recently been involved in discussions with the Foreign Office about how to take forward the role that councils can play in opening up new markets for local firms. Many local authorities are being approached by councils abroad about partnerships with the private sector. There was a recent request from Mexican local government on this issue. We will be exploring how these approaches to councils can open up new markets for UK firms and help the national drive for growth.

Commonwealth Symposium on Local Government in Colombo

10. Much of our international work is done in partnership with the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF). In April, CLGF asked for our input into a high level local government training programme for councils across Asia. The event, supported by the Commonwealth Secretariat, focused on sharing of good practices policies on local government. This is another good example of how the demand for expertise of UK councils continues to grow.

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Audit and Scrutiny Panel – Report from Cllr Ian Swithenbank CBE (Chairman)

1. At its last meeting on 6 March, the Panel reviewed the second report for 2011/12 from the LGA's new internal auditors, Parkhill, covering audits of the LGA's corporate governance, key financial controls and risk management. Substantial assurance opinions have been given for the LGA's corporate governance and key financial controls and adequate assurance for risk management.
2. The internal auditors also reported on implementation of the recommendations from the 2010/11 internal audit, with 69 recommendations having been implemented, 6 still outstanding and 3 not accepted. A substantial assurance opinion has been provided by Parkhill for management's own tracking and reporting on completed internal audit recommendations.
3. The Panel received feedback on the two scrutiny reviews for 2011/12 that are now underway – one on the LGA's overheads, and the other on the LGA's offer to councils. The Panel noted the progress being made with the reviews which are due to report with their final recommendations to the Panel's July meeting.
4. The Panel reviewed the LGA's strategic risk register which has been amended so it aligns with the LGA's business plan for 2012-13 and also the LGA's key performance indicators. The risk register will be kept under review by the Panel and also regularly reported to the LGA's Leadership Board.

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Local authority bonds task and finish group – report from Cllr Edward Lord OBE JP (Chairman)

The budget announcement

1. The 2012 Budget proposed a 20 basis points (0.2 per cent) reduction in interest rates for loans from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) with the prospect of further interest rate reductions for councils demonstrating quality or value for money. It is unlikely that these proposals would have emerged were it not for LGA/WLGA pressure.
2. LGA and Local Partnerships staff have paused work on developing the main business case until it is clearer what these proposals comprise and whether they provide a genuine opportunity for local government.
3. The original business case identified the need for at least implicit Government support for any proposed collective agency, without which it is harder for it to raise funds at competitive rates.

The original business case.

4. Discussions have taken place with the independent “Treasury Advisors” and leading local authority Finance Directors to test whether the original model would be attractive to the profession. All have commented positively on the thinking behind the business case.
5. A number of leading councils have also indicated frustration with the frequent shifts in PWLB policies and the difficulties this creates when seeking to make long-term planning decisions. They have highlighted that there can be a wider merit in more diverse sources of finance for the local government sector.

Understanding Government proposals

6. In order to determine the Government position LGA officers have been in discussion with Treasury and other officials, but their thinking appears to be at an early stage. We have made clear in those discussions that any change to previously stated LGA positions would need to be decided by LGA elected Members.
7. It will be particularly important to ensure that any Treasury proposals do not end up undermining aspects of the “prudential code” - which gives councils flexibility to decide capital spending priorities. Councils rightly regard this as a hard won freedom, and of course capital spending is now largely financed by locally generated resources.

International perspectives

8. The experience from local government collective agencies in other countries is that, whilst a business case is a necessary part of a proposal, councils should expect resistance from within Finance Ministries.

Conclusion

9. The work on this project is at a pivotal point. It has resulted in a proposal from Government for a modest reduction decrease in rates and the possibility of further reductions. However the key is to establish if the proposed arrangements are likely to be something that is of long-term benefit for local government.

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

1. The lead Members of the Task Group attended a meeting with Hugh Robertson MP Minister for Sport and the Olympics at DCMS and Bob Neill MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at DCLG on 2 May 2012 to discuss how preparations for staging the torch relay are progressing and how councils are using the opportunity to promote their localities.
2. Members said that there was much enthusiasm to make the torch relay a success, but there were different challenges in hosting the relay in different parts of the country and some concerns around increasing costs. It was suggested that the torch relay sponsors also need to engage fully with councils and make sure that they have all the information they need to stage successful events for the public. The recent dress rehearsal on the route from Leicester to Peterborough gave councils a taste of what to expect and the opportunity to test their own traffic management systems and crowd control. The rehearsal also showed the need for good communication between councils. When the torch relay is underway, we are making sure that a process is put in place for learning from the start of the journey to be shared with councils that are later on the route. The LGA is keen to ensure that councils have all the support required to ensure that the torch relay and events run smoothly.
3. Councillor Castle and Councillor Henig (via conference call) met the Head of Nations and Regions, Angela Salt and Government Relations Manager Sarah Bartholomew on 17 April 2012, as one of a regular series of meetings that have been held with officials from the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG). Progress on joint working was discussed, including the torch relay, emergency planning and resilience. Also discussed were the plans for sessions on the Games at the LGA Annual Conference in June.

Emergency Planning

4. As the final preparations for the Olympic Games are made, there have been a number of test events including the third and final large scale multi-agency exercise testing the joint approach to mitigating any risk to the Olympics which took place on 24 – 26 April. The National Local Authority Olympic Resilience Team, which is supported by the LGA, London Councils and London Fire, played an active part in the exercise. The focus over the three days was on a number of fictional incidents around London including transport disruption at London airports, a diplomatic incident and an explosion at a fuel facility.

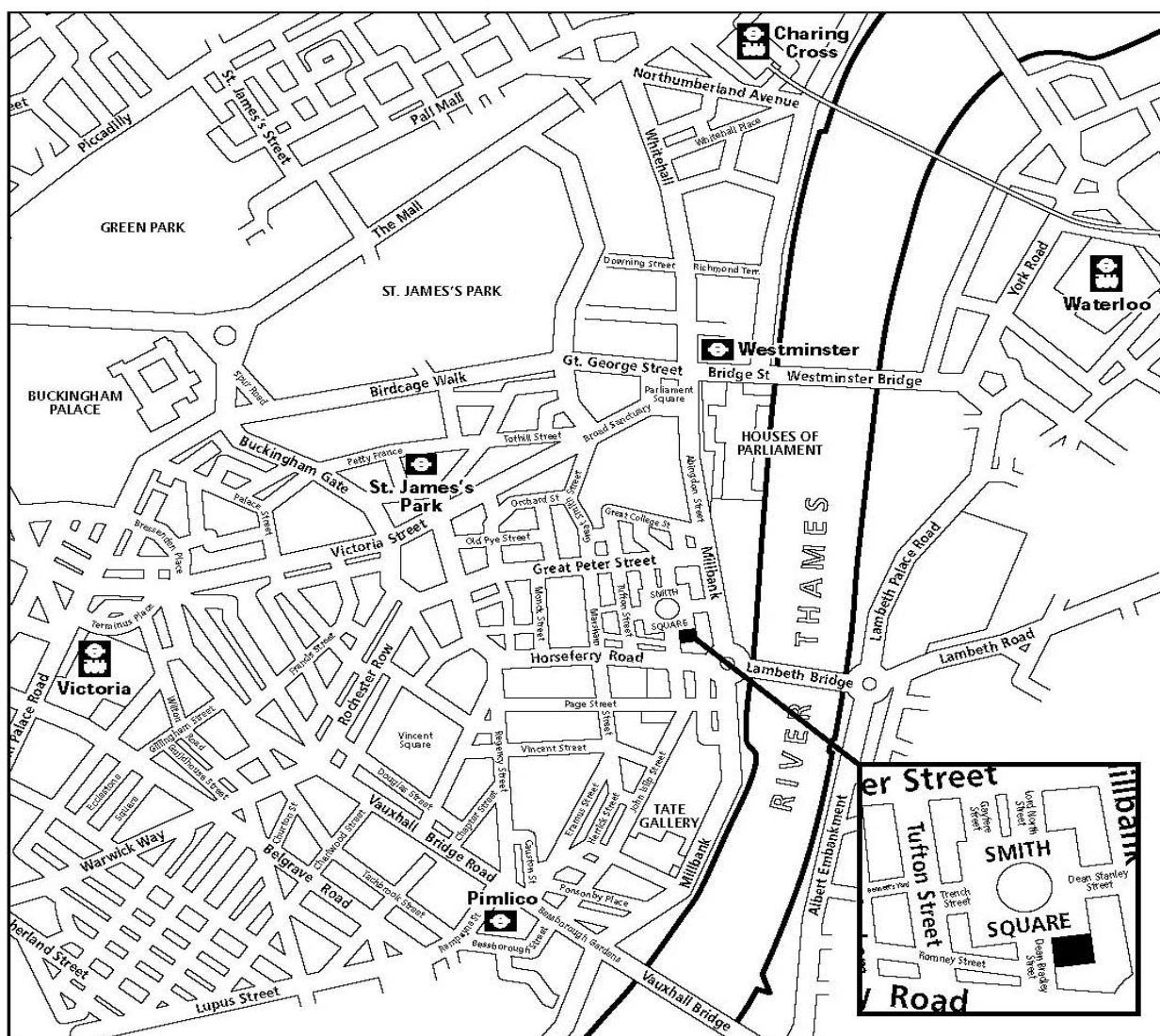
5. The LGA was represented at official level Olympic Committee meetings by the Chief Executives of the London Boroughs of Merton and Barnet. The Team provided the same briefings to Greater London Authority attendees to ensure our lines were consistent and immediately following the meetings we gave the London Operations Centre a full brief on decisions and actions, to ensure a joined-up approach was maintained.

London 2012 Sustainability Conference

6. Cllr Castle attended the annual London 2012 Sustainability Conference on 24 April. The London bid for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games promised that London would be 'the first sustainable Olympic and Paralympic Games'. Sustainability has underpinned all London 2012 activities, from the most sustainable Olympic Stadium ever built to a commitment to a 'zero waste to landfill' target. The full pre-Games Sustainability report (See link: http://www.london2012.com/mm/Document/Publications/Sustainability/01/25/43/65/pre-games-sustainability-report_Neutral.pdf) which was published to coincide with the conference, focuses on performance up to April 2012, three months before the start of the Games. It sets out the achievements on the key themes including carbon reduction and waste. The LGA Environment and Housing Board will be discussing the Games and Sustainability at their May meeting and there will be a report on sustainability to the next meeting of the Task and Finish Group.

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LGA Location Map



Local Government Association

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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