

**Item 2**

**Chairman's Update**

5 May 2012 – 1 June 2012

**LGA business**

1. Over the last couple of weeks, tens of thousands of people have enjoyed street parties and taken part in other celebrations to mark the **Queen's Diamond Jubilee**. It was wonderful to see so many people coming together with such great community spirit to organise and take part in these events. Councils, as ever, facilitated much of the activity, by smoothing the way for road closures, providing safety advice and guidance, and directly organising many of the festivities. I was delighted to be interviewed by the BBC at Buckingham Palace regarding the events and to take part in the celebrations.
2. During the May **Leadership Board**, we discussed the Governance of Cities and the Growth Agenda and the Independent Local Government Campaign. The following day I chaired **LGA Executive** at which we considered the impact of the Local Elections and LGA Political Balance 2012-13, the Local Growth Campaign, Welfare Reform and community budgets. Work is continuing with Leaders and Chief Executives regarding community budgets.
3. I briefly attended a roundtable on **Hidden talents** that brought together leading policy-makers to discuss practical steps to build on findings from the LGA Hidden Talents publication, where the LGA made an offer to pursue a community budgeting approach to support the 260,000 most disengaged young people back into work.
4. I also chaired the second meeting of our **Finance Task Group**; the task group again had a very full agenda, with items including the future funding outlook for councils, social care funding, and schools funding to consider.
5. Finally the end of this month sees our **LGA annual conference** take place in Birmingham. Bringing together over a thousand delegates from across local government, I look forward to seeing many of you there.

**Ministerial/Parliamentary business**

6. The **Queen's Speech** set out the Government's legislative agenda for the coming parliamentary year. After a busy two year first session for the Coalition Government this year's Queen's Speech was thinner than usual, containing significantly fewer Bills than the 23 announced in the 2010 Queen's Speech. We will be continuing our parliamentary lobbying work to ensure that the legislation proposed delivers the best possible outcome for our council members.

7. I took part in a **Climate Summit** organised by the LGA with DEFRA and attended by Rt Hon Caroline Spelman MP and Andrew Stunell MP. We discussed and shared national and local perspectives on the opportunities and challenges posed by a changing climate and 'Climate Local' the LGA's council-led initiative to drive action on climate change in the local government sector.
8. In late May, I also met with Rt Hon Greg Clark MP to discuss devolution and localism.

### **Meetings with other organisations and individuals**

9. I attended a meeting with the **British Property Federation** as part of our programme of work to help local authorities develop strategies to drive economic growth. The partnership has been working with Cornwall, Kettering and Barnsley councils to address the barriers to growth in those areas and we are already starting to see how devolution could enable new ways of working and the opening of new opportunities.
10. Alongside Group Leaders, I met with the **Electoral Commission** to discuss a range of issues including performance at this May's elections, Individual Electoral Registration, Police and Crime Commissioner elections and future elections.
11. I was pleased to speak at the **National Association of Pension Funds** Local Authority Conference 2012 about the LGA's vision for the Local Government Pension Scheme. Through our tripartite work with government and the unions, we have now agreed proposals that provide for a fair and affordable scheme, which I'm confident will be endorsed by employers and scheme members through the forthcoming consultation. I stressed the essential role that pension schemes can play in funding investment to drive growth
12. I met with Sir Michael Pitt, Chief Executive of **Planning Inspectorate** and Chair Infrastructure Planning Commission and Peter Burley, Chief Inspector, Planning Inspectorate to discuss collaborative work and information sharing between the planning inspectorate (PINS) and the LGA and Planning Advisory Service (PAS) to support councils to get their local plans in place.
13. I also met the new Chief Executive of **NAVCA**, Joe Irvin and discussed his plans to help NAVCA members respond to the changing environment and updated him on LGA's work with NAVCA and future possibilities for joint working. We must work together with the sector to develop innovative and shared approaches to the 'new ways of working' in the Localism Act and the Open Public Services White Paper, and to support the progress the councils and their partners have already made.

### **Meetings with councillors and member councils**

14. I was pleased to meet with David Tutt, Leader of Eastbourne Borough Council and to hear about their exciting internal and external transformational initiatives. David has kindly invited me to visit the local area to see the progress being made and I look forward to visiting Eastbourne in the future.