

Digest of Meeting

Title:	Councillors' Forum
Date and time:	18 October 2012, 12.30pm
Venue:	The Westminster Suite, Local Government House

Item

Welcome and Introductions

Councillor David Sparks OBE, Vice-Chairman of the LGA, welcomed members to the Forum meeting and introduced speakers Councillor Peter Box CBE, Chair of the Economy and Transport Board, Councillor Keith Wakefield, Leader, Leeds City Council, and Giles Roca, Secretary to the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Local Growth and Head of Strategy at Westminster City Council.

1 City Deals and localising the levers of economic growth

Members received a talk from Councillor Peter Box CBE in which he addressed the need to focus on regions when discussing the potential for local growth. He highlighted how many local authorities are conducting good practice in this area, especially by listening and responding to their constituents. He emphasised the need for local authorities to take advantage of City Deals and that this can often mean working together across boundaries as well as with the private sector. He also stressed how a one size fits all approach to boosting local growth will need finer tailoring on a local level.

Councillor Box then moved on to discuss the second wave of City Deals to be announced soon. He also spoke about the potential of similar deals for counties becoming available in the future and working towards allocating deals by using economic rather than Local Government boundaries, considering areas' appropriateness and re-tailoring Deals to reflect areas' needs.

On the topic of bidding for City Deals, Councillor Box explained that Government is not only seeking to achieve jobs and growth but also innovation, emphasising that creative ideas will be looked upon favourably.

Councillor Box praised the LGA for its work on the jobs and growth agenda.

This was followed by a presentation from Councillor Keith Wakefield who began by expressing that he sees City Deals as one of the most interesting and exciting current challenges and opportunities for Local Government with a lot of potential for boosting local growth.

He gave members a presentation on the Leeds City Region Deal and highlighted three key components of the deal which were investment, apprenticeships and transport. Within this he discussed the steps Leeds have taken to achieve aims set out in their City Deal, including the setting up of an Apprenticeship Academy and

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Retail Academy.

Councillor Wakefield finished by emphasising the enormous potential for Local Government presented by City Deals.

Members then received a presentation from Giles Roca who ran members through an introduction to the APPG, observations on the current context and timescales in relation to local growth and thoughts on the future of the APPG and Local Government including how they can work together.

Mr Roca emphasised how the APPG can act as the bridge between Parliament and Local Government and highlighted the importance of input from Local Government to the debate on local growth. He welcomed ideas from Local Government as the key agency for driving local growth and expressed the APPG's desire to be an avenue through which Local Government's views can be heard.

The Chairman invited questions from the Forum and Members raised several issues which were addressed in turn.

Key issues raised in discussion were as follows:

- The potential of non-City Deals and County Deals;
- Problems arising from delayed funding following securing of schemes and deals and
- The value of working across Local Authorities as well as with businesses in the private sector and Local Enterprise Partnerships.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Peter Box CBE, Councillor Keith Wakefield and Giles Roca for their presentations and for providing councillors with the opportunity to discuss City Deals and issues surrounding localisation of economic growth.

2 Chairman's Update

Members noted and accepted the Chairman's report.

3 LGA Board and Panel Chairs' Reports

Members noted the updates from each of the LGA's Board Chairs.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 22 November, 12:30pm, The Westminster Suite, Local Government House