

Councillors' Forum

Agenda

Thursday 22 November 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

Welcome!

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

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Councillors' Forum
22 November 2012

The **Councillors' Forum** meeting will be held on **Thursday 22 November 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 & 4 (Ground floor)
11.00am	Liberal Democrat	Smith Square Rooms 1 & 2 (Ground floor)
11.00am	Independent	Millbank Room (8 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:	Group Office: 020 7664 3235	email: libdem@local.gov.uk
Independent:	Group Office: 020 7664 3224	email: independent@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

Zoe Glacken (Tel: 020 7664 3236, Email: zoe.glacken@local.gov.uk)

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Carers' Allowance: As part of the LGA Members' Allowances Scheme a Carer's Allowance of up to £6.19 per hour is available to cover the cost of dependants (i.e. 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 – 2012-2013

This Forum comprises a core group of around 100 members appointed by the LGA political groups in proportion to their political strength on the Association. However, all members are invited to attend meetings of the Forum.

Representative	Authority
Conservative (43)	
Sir Merrick Cockell (Chairman)	RB Kensington & Chelsea
Tony Ball	Basildon BC
Teresa O'Neill	Bexley Council
Paul Bettison	Bracknell Forest BC
Louise McKinlay	Brentwood 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
Kenneth Taylor OBE	Coventry City Council
Andrew Lewer	Derbyshire CC
Angus Campbell	Dorset CC
Stephen Castle	Essex CC
Peter Martin MBE	Essex CC
Ken Thornber CBE	Hampshire CC
Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
Robert Gordon CBE DL	Hertfordshire CC
David Simmonds	Hillingdon LBC
David Pugh	Isle of Wight Council
Paul Carter	Kent CC
Robert Light	Kirklees MBC
Clare Whelan	Lambeth LBC
Martin Hill OBE	Lincolnshire CC
Derrick Murphy	Norfolk CC
Gr. Off. Marco Cereste OSSI OMRI	Peterborough City Council
Ken Hudson JP MBE	Preston City
Neil Clarke	Rushcliffe BC
Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks DC
Kate Wild	Solihull MBC
Gary Porter	South Holland DC
Jeff Milburn	South Tyneside MBC
Philip Atkins	Staffordshire CC
Sir William Lawrence Bt	Stratford-upon-Avon DC
Joanna Spicer	Suffolk CC
Mark Bee	Suffolk CC
Kay Hammond	Surrey CC
David Hodge	Surrey CC
Gordon Keymer CBE	Tandridge DC
Ravi Govindia	Wandsworth LB

Louise Goldsmith	West Sussex CC
Melvyn Caplan	Westminster City
Labour [36]	
Stephen Houghton CBE	Barnsley MBC
Eion Watts	Bolsover DC
Linda Thomas	Bolton Council
Helen Holland	Bristol City Council
Dave Wilcox OBE	Derbyshire CC
David Sparks OBE	Dudley MBC
Simon Henig	Durham
Ann Lucas	Coventry City Council
Colin Lloyd	Crawley BC
Mayor Jules Pipe	Hackney LBC
Sharon Taylor	Hertfordshire City Council
Caitlin Bisknell	High Peak BC
Ruth Cadbury	Hounslow LBC
Catherine West	Islington LBC
Mehboob Khan	Kirklees MBC
Steve Reed	Lambeth LBC
Keith Wakefield	Leeds City Council
Mayor Sir Steve Bullock	Lewisham LBC
Tim Moore	Liverpool City Council
Sian Timoney	Luton BC
Sir Richard Leese CBE	Manchester City Council
Jim McMahon	Oldham MBC
Judi Billing	North Hertfordshire DC
Ian Swithenbank CBE	Northumberland Council
Graham Chapman	Nottingham City Council
John Merry CBE	Salford City Council
Bryony Rudkin	Suffolk CC
David Phillips	Swansea City and County Council
Paul Watson	Sunderland
Clyde Loakes	Waltham Forest LBC
Peter Box CBE	Wakefield MBC
Lord Peter Smith	Wigan MBC
Roger Lawrence	Wolverhampton City Council
James Alexander	York City Council
<i>Substitutes</i>	
Ian Ward	Birmingham City Council
Catharine Grundy	Birmingham City Council
Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
Mike Connolly	Bury MBC
Theo Blackwell	Camden LBC
Joe Hendry	Carlisle City Council
Chris Fegan	Chelmsford BC
Justin Madders	Cheshire West & Chester UA
John Mutton	Coventry City Council
Stewart Young	Cumbria CC
Paul Bayliss	Derby City Council
Anne Western	Derbyshire CC

Julie Young	Essex CC
Aaron Shotton	Flintshire CC
Michael Payne	Gedling BC
Tony McDermott MBE	Halton BC
Jagdish Sharma MBE JP MA	Hounslow LBC
Robert Khan	Islington LBC
Ron Round JP	Knowsley MBC
Judith Blake	Leeds City Council
Rory Palmer	Leicester City Council
Robert Parker	Lincolnshire CC
Mr Len Duvall	London Assembly
Hazel Simmons	Luton BC
Sue Murphy	Manchester City Council
Anne Schofield	Newcastle City Council
Sir Robin Wales	Newham LBC
Tudor Evans	Plymouth City Council
Roger Stone OBE	Rotherham MBC
Tony Page	Reading BC
Judith Blakeman	RB Kensington & Chelsea
Mike Roberts	Rushmoor BC
Steve Eling	Sandwell MBC
Richard Williams	Southampton City Council
Roger Hutchinson	South Gloucestershire Council
Iain Malcolm	South Tyneside MBC
Catherine McDonald	Southwark LBC
Marie Rimmer CBE	St Helens MBC
Barrie Grunewald	St Helens MBC
Mohammed Pervez	Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Brenda Warrington	Tameside MBC
David Edger	Tower Hamlets LBC
Tony Belton	Wandsworth LBC
Liberal Democrat (14)	
Roger Symonds	Bath & North East Somerset Council
Flick Rea	Camden LBC
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
Substitutes	
Tim Bick	Cambridge City Council

Councilman Edward Lord OBE JP	City of London Corporation
Hilary Jones	Derby City Council
David Rogers OBE	East Sussex CC
Chris White	Hertfordshire CC
Terry Stacy MBE JP	Islington Council
Stephen Knight	Richmond upon Thames LBC
Alan Connett	Teignbridge DC
Mayor Dorothy Thornhill MBE	Watford BC
Liz Tucker	Worcester CC
Independent [8]	
Peter Jones	Babergh DC
Julian German	Cornwall Council
Chris Townsend	Mole Valley/Surrey CC
Paul Cullen	Richmondshire DC
Pauline Dee	Shropshire Council
Christopher Newbury	Wilshire CC
Norman Bradbury	Wigan MBC
<i>Vacancy</i>	<i>TBC</i>
Marianne Overton	Lincolnshire County Council
Bob Dutton OBE	Wrexham County Borough Council
Apu Bagchi	Bedford Council

Agenda

Councillors' Forum

Thursday 22 November 2012

12.30pm – 1.30pm

The Westminster Suite, Local Government House

Item	Page	Time
<p>1. Housing the Nation</p> <p>Mark Prisk MP, Minister of State for Housing, Department for Communities and Local Government will speak to members about housing issues. This is an opportunity for members to raise any issues for local government.</p>	3	12.30pm
<p>2. Chairman's Update</p>	7	1.20pm
<p>3. LGA Board and Panel Chairs' Reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Children & Young People Board – Councillor David Simmonds b. Community Wellbeing Board – Councillor David Rogers OBE c. Culture, Tourism & Sport Board – Councillor Flick Rea d. Economy & Transport Board – Councillor Peter Box CBE e. Environment & Housing Board – Councillor Mike Jones f. European & International Board – Councillor Dave Wilcox OBE g. Improvement and Innovation Board – Councillor Peter Fleming h. Safer & Stronger Communities Board – Councillor Mehboob Khan i. Workforce Board – Mayor Sir Steve Bullock j. Finance Panel – Councillor Sharon Taylor k. Resources Panel – Councillor Stephen Castle l. 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games Task & Finish Group – Councillor Stephen Castle 	9	1.25pm
<p>4. Digest of Last Meeting</p>	33	

Date of Next Meeting: 10 January 2012, 12:30pm, LGH, The Westminster Suite

Item 1

Item 1

Housing the Nation

Mark Prisk MP, Housing Minister, Department for Communities and Local Government

Summary

Mark Prisk MP is speaking to the Councillors' Forum on housing issues.

It is an opportunity for members to raise any issues for local government.

Recommendation

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

Action

As directed by the Forum.

Contact officer: Joe Simpson
Position: Principal Strategic Advisor
E-mail: joe.simpson@local.gov.uk

Item 1

Mark Prisk MP - Biography

Minister of State for Housing



Biography

Mark Prisk MP was appointed Minister of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government in September 2012. He is the Conservative MP for Hertford and Stortford.

Political career

Mark was elected as the MP for Hertford and Stortford in 2001. He served on the Conservative front bench from 2002, covering Treasury and Business portfolios.

Minister of State for Housing

The Minister of State is deputy to the Secretary of State across the Department for Communities and Local Government's responsibilities.

The minister is responsible for:

- Housing;
- Local growth, cities and regeneration and
- High streets, town centres and markets.

Item 2

Chairman's update 6 October – 9 November 2012

LGA business

1. Growth has been at the forefront of the agenda this month, with the new Growth Infrastructure Bill in the House of Commons. I was pleased to meet with **Rt Hon Lord Heseltine** in advance of the launch of his report, 'No Stone Unturned in Pursuit of Growth' and whilst we would not agree with all the report's recommendations, the LGA has been able to steer the report in a more localist direction. At the end of October the LGA held a joint conference with the British Property Federation – '**Unlocking Growth Through Partnership.**' The conference was attended by Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Rt Hon Danny Alexander MP. I emphasised that it is crucial that we press ahead with devolving economic powers and financial freedom to allow councils to implement economic strategies that kick start construction, draw in investment and support local businesses to drive economic activity. I also spoke at the first of our new series of **Smith Square debates** focused on the issue of growth, and the role local government can play in supporting the economic recovery.
2. At the October Leadership Board we considered the Collective Switching of Energy and the following day at Executive discussion focused on LGA work on Growth, Community Budgets and the **Armed Forces Community Covenant**. Early in November I met with Rt Hon Mark Francois MP, Minister of State for Defence Personnel, Welfare and Veterans to discuss work around the covenant and I later addressed LGA / Ministry of Defence Community Covenant conference that focused on the impact of Community Covenants. I outlined the long and lasting relationship councils have with our Armed Forces that it is only right that Service men and women have the support they deserve.
3. In mid October I was pleased to be able to speak at the **National Children and Adults Services Conference** and to meet with Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP, Secretary of State for Health at the conference. The conference threw the spotlight on a number of key issues for local government, one of which was fairer schools funding. The LGA has been campaigning for some time to secure fairer funding in this area. As a direct result of campaigning by councils, the LGA and other partners, the Government has pledged to review its arrangements and will make further changes in 2014/15 after it has assessed the impact the changes will have on schools. This is a welcome development and the Government's pledge to review these proposals and the extension of the Minimum Funding Guarantee beyond 2014/15 shows that the Government has heard some of our concerns about the potential impact on schools.
4. I participated in a joint LGA and NHS Commissioning Board event on **Commissioning for Integrated Health and Care**. The conference brought together local government and health commissioners to discuss good examples of integrated care and publicly launched the Concordat agreement between the LGA and NHS Commissioning Board. Later in the day I met with Professor Malcolm Grant, Chairman and Dame Moira Gibb, Non Executive Director of the NHS Commissioning Board to discuss future work.

Item 2

Ministerial/Parliamentary business

5. I attended a meeting with **Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP**, Deputy Prime Minister, alongside Graham Allen MP, Chair of the Political and Constitutional Reform Select Committee, to discuss the Political and Constitutional Reform Select Committee's inquiry into codifying the relationship between central and local government and the future of our joint independent local government work. I also met with **Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP** to discuss this further.
6. I held a useful meeting with **Rt Hon Maria Miller MP**, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. I took the opportunity to highlight the LGA's focus on growth and how the funding outlook for councils will impact on discretionary services provided by councils.
7. I met with **Esther McVey MP**, Minister for Disabled People to discuss the impact on local government of the Independent Living Fund (ILF) being brought to an end and the Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) funding system coming online.
8. I met with **Lord Taylor of Holbeach CBE**, Parliamentary under Secretary of State for Criminal Information, Home Office to discuss working with local government and the LGA on a broad range of Home Office issues. I also had a meeting with **Rt Hon Don Foster MP**, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Communities and Local Government to outline LGA key concerns and priorities. I was also pleased to meet with LGA Vice President **Henry Smith MP**.

Meetings with other organisations and individuals

9. I spoke at the **YMCA England** Local Government seminar focusing on the financial settlement for local government and the impact this will have on our voluntary sector partners, particularly in the children and young people sector.
10. I addressed the **CIPFA Pensions Network** Annual Conference – 'Reforming Public Sector Pensions: the Challenge' and spoke about challenging times for the Local Government Pension Scheme and for local authorities.
11. I was pleased to meet with Jeremy Newman, recently appointed Chairman, **Audit Commission** to discuss on-going relationships as the Commission approaches abolition and key aspects of the Draft Local Audit Bill. I also met with the **Environment Agency Board** to discuss future working.

Meetings with councillors and member councils

12. I enjoyed visiting **Bournemouth** to meet with Leader, **Cllr John Beesley** and other Leaders from across Poole and Dorset to discuss existing and potential opportunities for joint working across the area.
13. I spoke at an **Enfield Council** conference - 'Localism and the challenge for local government – within the context of the coordinating council' - I outlined the challenge of change in local government.

Item 3(a)

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

National Children and Adult Services Conference

1. The Children and Young People Board held a number of sessions at the National Children and Adult Services Conference (NCAS). I chaired several sub-plenary sessions on a variety of subjects including achieving permanence and stability for children in care, early years, driving sector-led improvement, children's health and Hidden Talents. I also took part in a panel discussion on the council role in education. The conference was well-received with over 1000 delegates attending over the three days. The conference heard from the new Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families, Edward Timpson MP as well as the Rt. Hon. David Laws, Minister of State for Schools and other Government speakers.
2. I chaired the Children and Young People Board meeting at NCAS, which gave Lead Members for Children's Services from across the country the chance to discuss the key issues affecting them in their work. Lead Members raised concerns about the changes to the early intervention grant, new duties to support Raising the Participation age, the new arrangements for funding pupils with high needs and the effects of court delays on adoption services. Just over fifty councillors attended the session and we used an electronic voting system to capture their views. The answers we got will help to inform our business planning. I would really like to thank all the Lead Members who attended and made the session such a success.

Careers guidance transitions from councils to school

3. On 31 October, I gave oral evidence to the Commons Education Committee's inquiry into careers guidance looking at schools' new duty to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance from September 2012, which was previously the responsibility of local authorities. My evidence focused on the variety of transition arrangements local authorities have put in place to support schools to take on their duty, and ways in which they themselves are supporting the re-engagement with young people who have already dropped out of the system. The evidence I gave was based on local examples published in October 2012: *Hidden talents: examples of transition of careers guidance from local authorities to schools*:
www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=ed49b51d-629c-4608-b8ea-bbad383c9203&groupId=10171.

Confederation of Heads of Young People's Services

4. On 6 November I spoke at the Confederation of Heads of Young People's Services (CHYPS) annual convention. CHYPS represents the interests, and advocates on behalf of, all those who deliver, manage and commission youth work and those who are responsible for the effective delivery of all elements of Youth Services. I spoke about how councils can work with the voluntary and business sector to deliver youth support services and how this can be achieved in light of budget reductions. I set out the LGA's expectations and ambitions for youth services in councils and more broadly about how children's services fits in with broader agendas such as health, education, family and the community.

Item 3(a)

Media

5. My call for councils to be given back powers to monitor the performance of academies was picked up by a number of newspapers. This is especially important in areas where they form more than half of all secondary schools in order to prevent standards in education from slipping.

Visits to councils

6. I have continued to visit councils to discuss their work, including a recent visit to Birmingham City Council.

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Position: Head of Programmes
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Item 3(b)

**Community Wellbeing Board – report from Cllr David Rogers OBE
(Chairman)**

Health Select Committee's inquiry on public expenditure

1. Together with Andrew Cozens, LGA Associate, I provided oral evidence to the Health Select Committee's inquiry on public expenditure on 23 October, with representatives of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Care (ADASS) and the NHS Confederation. All three organisations were clear that the adult social system is facing considerable pressure and that efficiency alone is not sufficient to secure a sustainable future.

CLG Select Committee – written evidence submitted on public sector reform

2. This month the LGA also submitted evidence to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee Inquiry on the future role of English local authorities, in partnership with the ADASS. Our key messages were that the transfer of public health to local government was strongly supported by local government. Transition arrangements are well underway and local government is committed to ensuring a smooth transfer. We raised concerns regarding the accuracy of the baseline levels of public health expenditure and emphasised the importance of ensuring a fair and adequate distribution to enable councils to meet their new public health responsibilities.

Integrated commissioning conference

3. On 29 October the LGA hosted a conference on Integrated Commissioning, attended by approximately 100 delegates. Norman Lamb MP, Minister of State for Care and Support gave the morning plenary and was followed by a number of panels and workshops looking at new ways of working and service delivery. Sir David Nicholson (NHS Commissioning Board), Sarah Pickup (ADASS) and Professor Steve Field (NHS Future Forum) were some of the national figures who also addressed delegates.

Meeting with the Anna Soubry MP

4. I accompanied the Chairman and Chief Executive of the LGA to meet Anna Soubry, Minister of State with responsibility for public health on 13 November and discussed a number of the LGA's key priorities in this area. We reiterated the LGA's position regarding the total funding for public health; updated the Minister on the good progress of the Public Health assurance process; discussed the impact on local government of the duty to appoint medical examiners to oversee the death certification process; and also discussed the encouraging results from the whole-place community budget pilots which the LGA is supporting. The Minister was welcoming and receptive to our points.

From Transition to Transformation published

5. The LGA's suite of resources to assist the transfer of public health to local authorities has been updated. The focus is on transformation, showing how councils and public health are going beyond the practical steps of transition to develop a local vision for public health, supported by new models for implementation.

Item 3(b)

Department for Health's Physical Activity Network – Partners' Forum – 29 October

6. Cllr Steve Bedser attended the partners' forum on behalf of the Board and received details of the physical activity initiatives being developed by a diverse range of organisations from YMCA England to Morrison's supermarkets and Wiltshire Council, and their impact on health outcomes through prevention and rehabilitation.

National Learning Network for Health and Wellbeing (HWB) boards event

7. Cllr Jonathan McShane spoke on behalf of the Board on 8 November as part of a panel discussion with Anna Bradley, HealthWatch England and Carolyn Downs, LGA Chief Executive. I also took part in the day, which focused on shared leadership and was attended by an audience of Health and Wellbeing Chairs, public health and NHS professionals and representatives of third-sector groups.

National Children's and Adult Services Conference (NCAS)

8. The National Children's and Adult Services Conference was held in Eastbourne from 24 – 26 October. It attracted around 950 delegates from local government, central government and the third sector, including 170 councillors. It was generally judged to be a lively and stimulating conference, with considerable Ministerial presence including Jeremy Hunt, Norman Lamb, David Laws and Edward Timpson. Lead members for Adult Social Care had the opportunity to meet Norman Lamb to raise their concerns. I co-hosted a dinner for approximately 80 Lead Members and LGA representatives also contributed to a variety of conference plenary sessions.
9. At the National Children's and Adult Services Conference we launched a new publication, '[The reform of adult social care and support: a guide for council leaders and chief executives](#)'. The guide was produced jointly between the LGA, SOLACE and ADASS and sets out the background to the reform debate, the key headlines from the care and support white paper and draft bill, and some of the big implications for councils of the government's reform proposals. The guide was extremely popular with delegates. Alongside the publication we launched a template letter for councils and the public to send to their MP on the urgent need for care and support reform, and a template press release, which councils can use to raise the profile of the debate amongst their residents.

Draft Care and Support Bill – Response submitted

10. The LGA and SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers) submitted a joint response to the Government's consultation on the draft Care and Support Bill on 19 October. The response sets out our broad support for the draft bill but raises a number of issues and concerns that fall within three categories: matters of overall approach, including resources and funding; issues of scope; and issues of detail.
11. Read the response and contact us at: http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/health-wellbeing-and-adult-social-care/-/journal_content/56/10171/3756574/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE

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Position: Head of Programmes
Phone no: 020 7664 3099
E-mail: Sally.Burlington@local.gov.uk

Item 3(c)

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

Visitor Economy

1. Cllr Lewer and I chaired the LGA / VisitEngland visitor economy seminar on 19 October, which was attended by over twenty councillors and industry representatives. The seminar kick-started the CTS Board's year of focus on supporting councils to boost the economy through tourism. Councillors emphasised that they are closer to tourism businesses than any other part of the state and so are ideally positioned to take a lead role in joining up support for and listening to industry, providing information and reflecting their role within local strategic planning and priority setting. We will be developing further a visitor economy contribution to the LGA's growth campaign.

Arts Council England

2. CTS Board Lead Members met Alan Davey, Chief Executive of Arts Council England, on 18 October. We reinforced to ACE how important it is that its priorities and ways of working should reflect the fact ACE and councils are, together, this country's biggest public investors in the arts, libraries and museums. We agreed a shared focus on seeking out and sharing innovation, supporting local political leaders to drive economic growth through culture and encouraging greater collaboration between libraries, museums and the arts. To take this forward we have agreed a statement of purpose that commits us to supporting national and local collaboration and helping councils to boost growth through culture.

Sport and 2012 Games Legacy

3. I spoke at the LGA / Sport England leadership academy on 10 November. The event supported 15 portfolio holders for sport to develop further their understanding of the opportunities and challenges faced by local government funded and supported sport. This is the fourth leadership academy we have hosted with Sport England and again we received very positive feedback from delegates.
4. Cllr Henig and I attended the final meeting of the LGA's 2012 Games Task and Finish Group on 8 November, where Members noted the huge role councils played in ensuring the Games were such a success. The CTS Board will lead the LGA's work supporting councils to secure a sporting, tourism and community engagement legacy from the Games.

Commissioning

5. As part of our political leadership offer on culture and sport, twelve councillors attended a commissioning workshop on 17 October. Its purpose was to support councillors to understand better the commissioning landscape and how to enable their culture and sport services to better engage with the commissioning process locally.

Item 3(c)

Libraries

6. I spoke at the latest in a series of joint LGA / Arts Council leadership seminars for library portfolio holders on 5 November. Fifteen councillors attended and shared innovative delivery models. The seminar increased awareness of how members can re-design their libraries, alongside a better understanding of the tools and support available to help them from the LGA and Arts Council. We are on track to support nearly all library portfolio holders through seminars or peer support by the end of this financial year.
7. The LGA responded to the Culture, Media and Sport Committee's inquiry into library closures by highlighting the impressive level of innovation and commitment shown by councils. We also said the LGA has been and will continue to work closely with its members, the Arts Council and central government to encourage and support further improvement and innovation. The future of libraries is best served by councils continuing to innovate and work with their communities to come up with services which meet local needs.

Heritage

8. I attended the Magna Carta 800th Anniversary Stakeholder Event on 26 October. From specially commissioned symphonies to Magna Carta tours, BBC dramas and local street parties; organisers hope there will be hundreds of events – big and small – taking place across the whole country in 2015. The Magna Carta towns, where key events took place and/or original or later copies survive, are already very advanced in their local planning. I emphasised that councils across the country will be extremely keen to engage with the celebrations, and the Committee agreed to work with the LGA to achieve this. As well as leading libraries, museums and archives services, councils are very experienced at convening the local partners who will be essential to local celebrations and learning opportunities.
9. I was delighted to address over eighty councillors at English Heritage's annual conference for heritage champions on 12 November. I led a session on how councillors can ensure heritage services are engaged more effectively in the priorities of councils and delivered more efficiently in the future. We are looking forward to discussing how the LGA and English Heritage can build upon this when Baroness Andrews, Chair of English Heritage, attends the CTS Board on 21 November.

London CLOA

10. I gave the keynote address at the annual meeting of London Borough Directors of Sport, Tourism and Culture on 6 November. My speech was an opportunity to highlight the work of the LGA representing councils' interests nationally and to emphasise the importance of positioning culture and sport as central to achieving wider political priorities, especially economic growth.

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

1. The Board has some very clear lobbying objectives to support councils in their ambition to deliver local economic growth. These include more City Deals (especially for counties and non-urban areas), greater devolution in transport and skills and better working partnerships with higher education and on overseas investment. In the run up to the Autumn Statement, we have been ensuring that these issues are high on the priority lists of government departments as they put forward their ideas for growth to the Chancellor.

Winter Weather

2. I announced the findings of the LGA's winter weather survey on the BBC's Today programme on 27 October, confirming that local authorities are well prepared and have 1.3 million tonnes of salt in stock, which is twice the amount used in the most severe winters.

Hidden Talents

3. The Lead Members of the Children and Young People Board and Economy and Transport Board have agreed the next stages of the Hidden Talents campaign. Over the last year the programme has been successful in influencing debate and gaining support from partners, but government has asked for more detail and evidence on the benefits of devolved approaches to reengaging young people. Looking ahead, members will make more specific and well evidenced recommendations for policy change, driving the campaign forward based on what councils are already doing locally that work.

Distressed Town Centre Property Taskforce

4. I represent local authority interests at the Distressed Town Centre Property Taskforce, a group convened by the retail property industry to look at new ways of leveraging investment into the growing amount of poor quality retail space. Councils will play an increasingly critical role - the localisation of business rates will lead businesses to look to councils in influencing how rates are invested. The taskforce offers a number of opportunities to build new relationships nationally, as well as to protect council interests – it has commissioned research into the issue, planned for early next year.

Lord Heseltine Review

5. Lord Heseltine was commissioned by the Prime Minister to review UK competitiveness. The LGA worked extensively with his review team to plant ideas about greater devolution, especially more City Deals and greater devolution in skills and transport policy. On 31 October, Lord Heseltine published his report 'No stone unturned in pursuit of Growth' setting out a series of radical proposals for economic growth which calls on Government to pool £50 billion of Whitehall money to support local growth. Whilst the LGA has dismissed his call for local government re-organisation and competition for funds, there is much to welcome especially in his call for greater devolution of transport and skills budgets. Government will respond to the report in 2013. Thus we need to ensure that the case that Lord Heseltine has made for economic devolution is not lost in Whitehall. I have invited the senior civil servant who has been given responsibility for the follow-up of the report to the next Board to discuss next steps with our leading members.

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City Deals

6. The LGA has been pressing Government to extend City Deals to councils that have transformational ideas for growth. We have worked extensively with the Cities Unit putting this case in advance of the Autumn Statement. On 29 October the Deputy Prime Minister announced a further 20 cities which had been invited to bid for a Wave 2 City Deal. Cities and their wider areas have been invited to submit innovative and ambitious proposals around the key issue facing their area. This responds to the LGA's call for the expansion of the City Deal process. We have offered support to the 20 cities to assist them where required. We have developed a menu of options for bidders. For more information, please contact kamal.panchal@local.gov.uk. We were disappointed that deals were not extended to all councils with big ideas, especially counties and other rural areas. We continue to press ministers for a further extension of these deals and for a mainstreaming programme of measures from Wave 1 that just 'make sense' for all councils.
7. Just after the Wave 2 announcement, I, and the Board Vice-Chair, Cllr Tony Ball, chaired a successful LGA conference on City Deals and Local Growth, providing the opportunity to hear from cities with deals and from Government about their hopes for the next wave.

Local Growth Campaign - Basildon Town Hall Summit

8. On the 13 November Basildon council hosted the second Town Hall Summit as part of the LGA's ongoing work with councils on economic growth and recovery. This Summit explored how councils work well with overseas investors and national promotional agencies (e.g. UKTI) to maximise the potential of inward investment and export opportunities. We know from the evidence collected as part of last year's campaign that councils are working directly with overseas businesses and that there is evidenced demand from investors from developing economies to engage directly with civic leaders and councils. The Basildon Summit explored how councils are building long term relationships with businesses and councils overseas, and how councils in this country are placing inward and outward investment at the heart of their economic strategy.

Universities UK - Economy and Transport Board

9. To develop our work on better engagement of higher education in local growth, Universities UK have been invited to our next Board to discuss the role of Higher Education institutions in local economic growth and how they, businesses and local authorities can work better together on supporting local growth priorities, commercialising innovation and preparing graduates for work. Recent reports, such as the Wilson review of university-business collaboration, and IPPR North's 'Beyond bricks and mortar boards' have shown that more can be done through greater joint working.

National Sustainable Transport Conference

10. On 31 October, I spoke at the National Sustainable Transport Conference, detailing the LGA's lobbying work on transport devolution, in particular the importance of transport for promoting growth, looking at transport as a whole and linking to other policy areas such as Health. Local authorities are best placed to help the Government deliver transport solutions. Norman Baker MP delivered the keynote speech on the DfT's White Paper 'Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon: Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen', focussing on linking transport across policy areas, investment in cycling and the need to take decisions at a local level with a devolved programme of work.

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Environment and Housing Board – report from Cllr Mike Jones (Chairman)

LGA responds to the Growth and Infrastructure Bill

1. The LGA has responded to the Government's new Growth and Infrastructure Bill published on 18 October. We believe that further changes to the planning system will not address the key issues stalling development and will lead to delay and uncertainty. The bill represents an enormous opportunity to empower local areas to drive growth from the ground up but that opportunity will be missed unless the bill focuses on the things that can tackle the real barriers to growth. The LGA will be putting forward proposals to refocus the Bill on more issues that will make a real impact, and drive growth.
2. On 13 November, I gave oral evidence to the Growth and Infrastructure Bill Committee, supported by LGA officers. I highlighted to the Committee that the planning system was only now settling down following a number of wide ranging reforms and that the planning system is not holding up growth; highlighting that 400,000 homes are awaiting construction and 87% of applications were approved last year. I also expressed the LGA's opposition to the extension of the powers of a quango, the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), at the expense of local decision making, as proposed in the Bill.
3. I argued strongly that Clause 5 of the proposed bill which allows PINS to renegotiate the affordable housing element of section 106 agreements is completely unnecessary and counterproductive as the vast majority of councils are already renegotiating voluntarily, and that an appeal process based on viability already existed. The Environment and Housing Board, supported by officers will continue to lobby on the Bill and put forward amendments as it moves through its Parliamentary stages.

LGA Inland Flood Risk Management Group annual event

4. Cllr Andrew Cooper, Deputy Chair of the Environment and Housing Board chaired the Annual Event of the LGA Inland Flood Risk Management Group on 25 October. This event brought together more than 80 delegates from central government, local government and national partners, all with an interest in flood risk management.
5. Delegates were able to hear from a range of speakers including local authority colleagues from Calderdale and West Sussex who provided a timely reflection on the summer 2012 floods which affected their local areas.
6. Defra Minister Richard Benyon addressed delegates in the afternoon session and announced a new flood insurance community pathfinder grant scheme that will be launched shortly. He also provided clarification that the sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) implementation will not commence in April 2013.

NEA Parliamentary Reception

7. Members of the Board also attended the National Energy Action Parliamentary Reception on Tuesday 6 November at the House of Commons. One of the Environment and Housing Board's stated priorities is action on fuel poverty and the related issue of the impact of energy costs on councils' spending.

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EFRA Select Committee

8. On 7 November, Cllr Keith House, Deputy Chair of the Environment and Housing Board provided oral evidence to the EFRA Select Committee's inquiry into rural communities. His contribution highlighted the barriers to rural growth, the crucial role of councils in overcoming these, the need for rural areas to be given the same opportunities as cities to negotiate their own deals to support development and the importance of moving further and fully localising business rates.
9. Cllr House's evidence also re-emphasised concerns that the Growth and Infrastructure Bill, as drafted, is a missed opportunity to empower local areas to drive economic growth. To achieve the desired impact, the Bill should focus on initiatives that can tackle the actual barriers to growth, such as access to finance, and not the planning system, which is not a barrier.

Ash Tree Dieback

10. The LGA has also attended and contributed to two key governmental COBR meetings relating to the Chalara Fraxinea 'Ash Tree Dieback' virus. The Government has now committed to producing an action plan to combat the spread of the disease. This will involve further monitoring of trees by owners and managers of land, and the destruction of (only) diseased trees that have been recently planted. Councils will want to consider their role in this. The LGA will be working to ensure that the views of those responsible for combating Ash tree dieback in council-owned parks, woodland and roadsides are taken into account in shaping the government's action plan.

Royal Town Planning Institute Politicians in Planning Conference

11. During November I also attended a number of engagements on behalf on the board, notably the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Politicians in Planning conference, where I spoke regarding the opportunities presented by the Localism Act and the National Planning Policy Framework, the importance of local plan preparation, the support the LGA can offer to councils and the vital role elected members have in ensuring the democratic legitimacy of the planning system.

Planning guidance roundtable at the Department for Communities and Local Government

12. Cllr Ed Turner and I attended a local authority round table discussion on planning guidance with Lord Matthew Taylor and members of his review group on 13 November. The discussion was an opportunity to discuss the Government's Review of Planning Practice Guidance, led by Lord Taylor, and the shape of planning guidance and support going forward. Local authority attendees stressed that, whilst there are a small number of priority areas where guidance is valuable, local authorities should be provided with the space and flexibility to make local decisions.

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European & International Board – report from Cllr Dave Wilcox OBE (Chair)

Delivering Our Lobbying Priorities

Commission Work Programme 2013

1. October was a busy month across the range of our activities, particularly with the publication of the European Union's (EU) 2013 work programme, which sets out the legislative and policy proposals which will be dealt with over the coming year.
2. EU policy and legislation can have a huge impact on the day-job of councils; recent examples include the Landfill Directive, which radically changed the way we treat waste, and procurement directives which shape how we buy goods and services. It is therefore vitally important that we identify those EU proposals which will have the greatest impact on councils and build these into the LGA's lobbying programme. With this in mind, Board colleagues and I will meet this month to refresh the LGA's approach to EU lobbying by agreeing new policy priorities based upon the EU's 2013 work programme. In my next update, I will report back to you on our new lobbying programme and the new challenges and opportunities it may bring. I would welcome colleagues' input on how best to take this lobbying programme forward and integrate it throughout all aspects of the LGA's work.

EU Funding 2014-2020

3. We are continuing our lobbying work on future EU funding. With Whitehall departments set to make crucial decisions about the management of the 2014-2020 EU funding programme, the LGA organised a timely roundtable for councils on Thursday 18 October to discuss emerging ideas with lead officials from BIS, DCLG, DWP and DEFRA. The session provided an opportunity for councils to articulate their ideas to use future EU funds through existing and new delivery mechanisms. Feedback from this session will inform how we take this work forward.
4. The roundtable was timed to take place ahead of the Government organised road shows which are taking place during November and December. This is a chance for the sector to input its views to ensure that local perspectives are built into future delivery arrangements in England. To find about a roadshow near you, please contact Stephen Cross at Stephen.Cross@bis.gsi.gov.uk.

Procurement update

5. Our lobbying continues on EU procurement rules and I am happy to note that following meetings with the LGA, the local government Minister (Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP) recently wrote to the Cabinet Office Minister (Rt Hon Francis Maude MP) to further press the local authority case for simpler EU procurement rules. It is vitally important that the proposed new EU legislation minimises new burdens on councils and does not slow down procurements in areas such as social services which are currently excluded from the Directives. With a committee vote in the European Parliament due to take place by the end of the year, the LGA and other European associations are working closely with several MEPs who are championing the local authority case in discussions in the European Parliament.

Data protection

6. We have also started working with similar associations across Europe to ensure proposed new EU data protection rules will be workable for councils. The new rules further strengthen the rights of individuals to access their personal data as stored by councils. However the EU proposals look likely to require costly changes in the way councils process and make data available. The new Regulation will also include a provision to fine councils up to €1 million for non-compliance.

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International Links: Learning and Sharing

African Peer Review Project

7. The African Peer Review Project, which was commissioned by United Cities & Local Governments Africa (UCLGA) through a programme funded by Luxembourg, is now well underway. Since June 2012 the LGA has successfully supported UCLGA to deliver three pilot peer reviews. The fourth peer review is taking place this month in Uganda, led by the Board's Vice Chair, Councillor Richard Kemp and John McBride, Chief Executive of Poole Borough Council.

Congress of the Council of Europe

8. I would like to pay tribute to Keith Whitmore, who has completed his term as Congress President. He has successfully overseen an impressive reform of the Congress, which is the local government arm of the Council of Europe, to make it leaner and more effective in its core duty. The new term sees a new UK team at the Congress, with 50 per cent gender parity and with Cllr John Warmisham (Labour, Salford) taking the UK place on the Congress Bureau. Although having had the Presidency is a hard act to follow, having a member on the Bureau and as vice-President on one of the three committees will ensure that we continue to have influence.

Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)

9. I am pleased to confirm that after much LGA pressure CEMR (the European LGA) is currently preparing to close its Paris Office and relocate fully to their Brussels office, for reasons of efficiency and effectiveness. The LGA has strongly supported this decision, a long-held wish of the UK section, but insists that it should be achieved at minimal cost to the CEMR and its subscribing associations.

Swedish delegation to LGA

10. On 25 October the LGA hosted a delegation from Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR). The delegation included Mr Håkan Sörman, Director General of (SALAR). Whilst Swedish colleagues were interested in hearing about current issues local authorities are facing in England and Wales and how the LGA is supporting them, it was also an excellent learning opportunity to hear about Swedish experiences and the support offered to Swedish local authorities.

Commonwealth Local Government Forum

11. As part of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum's (CLGF) Executive Committee meeting in London on 17 October, I hosted a meeting at the LGA with the Chairman of CLGF and President of Local Government New Zealand, Cllr Lawrence Yulle and Cllr Phillip McPhee, President of the Caribbean Association of Local Government Authorities. We discussed a wide range of recent developments in local government across the Commonwealth, including the local economic leadership role of councils in stimulating local growth and promoting inward trade and investment. We also discussed a number of potential opportunities for British local government to contribute to development programmes in Africa and South Asia.

African Commission for Local Government Improvement

12. On 24 October I attended the launch of the African Commission for Local Government Improvement at Portcullis House in London, a new organisation in the early stages of developing programmes to support municipal development in Africa. The following day I also met with the South African Deputy Minister for Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Dr. Yunis Carrim and representatives from the South African High Commission in London to discuss recent financial and legislative developments in local government in both countries and opportunities for future collaboration between the UK and South Africa.

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Improvement and Innovation Board – report from Cllr Peter Fleming (Chairman)

Innovation and Productivity

Joint meeting with the Community Wellbeing Board

1. I was delighted to co-Chair, along with Councillor David Rogers OBE, a joint meeting of the Improvement and Innovation and Community Wellbeing Boards on 2 November. It seems fitting that, as the Board tasked with strategic oversight of the LGA's improvement, innovation and productivity work streams, we should pioneer the first full joint meeting of two programme Boards.
2. The joint Board was an excellent example of the benefits of cross working and how improvement and innovation has been successfully mainstreamed through a particular policy area, in this case, adult social care and health reform. With an update from John Bolton (visiting Professor at the Institute of Public Care) on the Adult Social Care and Efficiency Programme, collectively Members from both Boards were able to push forward the debate on efficiency in adult social care within the context of government spending cuts and demographic challenges. The joint meeting also provided a unique opportunity for Members from both Boards to feed in their views on the future scope for sector-led support on the health improvement role for local authorities, given the imminent transfer of public health responsibilities.
3. Feedback from Members of both Boards was overwhelmingly positive. I hope to work with colleagues from other policy areas in a similar cross cutting manner to further develop and embed the work of the Improvement and Innovation Board within all of the LGA's work.

Local Audit

4. We submitted written evidence to the ad hoc committee established to provide pre legislative scrutiny to the draft Local Public Audit Bill and this was followed at an oral evidence session on 6 November.
5. These were useful opportunities for promoting council's concerns about key elements of the draft Bill proposals – in particular the proposed requirement on all councils to appoint an independent audit panel to recommend audit appointments to councils, the proposed remit of the NAO which would enable it to undertake studies into 'improvement' in local government (potentially duplicating the LGA's role) and councils' concerns that audit fees could rise once the existing audit contracts come to an end.

Transparency

Consultation on code of practice on transparency

6. October has been a busy month with regard to transparency. On 25 October the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) issued a consultation

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on making the code of practice on transparency mandatory – requiring local authorities to publish spending over £500, contracts and tenders, salaries etc. I am sure you will all support me when I say that councils are already the most open, transparent and directly accountable part of the public sector. Board colleagues and I were very clear at our most recent meeting that we believe local transparency should be driven by local needs and demands, and not through central control. We will be seeking views from across the sector to inform the LGA's response to the consultation.

Towards local transparency: learning from each other

7. Cllr Tim Cheetham, the Board's Lead Member for transparency, recently ran a workshop with delegates from within the sector which evidenced how councils are going well beyond the statutory minimum in terms of publishing and using open data. Feedback from the workshop demonstrated that councils are aware that simply putting information in the public domain results in local people becoming swamped with so much information and data that they have real difficulty making anything of it – they become 'information rich but knowledge poor'. That is why I have been so encouraged by the responses to our recent transparency survey and the range of practical examples of how councils are providing the necessary tools to help local people understand and use data. We will be bringing this together in a publication early next year; however there is still time to input your views and examples. To share your story of how open data is used effectively in your local authority, please email transparency@local.gov.uk.

Guidance on voluntary and community sector spending

8. We are currently consulting on practical guidance for publishing voluntary and community sector (VCS) spending. The publication of grants to the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector is recommended in the code of practice on transparency. The LGA is proposing to extend its existing guidance on publishing spending data more generally to include reference to VCS grants which will allow those authorities who choose to use it to compare their VCS spending with that of other authorities more meaningfully. We are seeking views from the sector on this matter. To comment, please email transparency@local.gov.uk prior to 14 December 2012.

GeoPlace Exemplar Awards 2012

9. On 25 October Councillor Ruth Cadbury, Vice-Chair of the Board, attended the GeoPlace Annual Conference - 'Everything Happens Somewhere' - to present a GeoPlace Exemplar Award. The Exemplar Awards ceremony, which forms part of the conference, celebrates excellence in address and street information enabled service delivery across local government.

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

Police and Crime Commissioners

1. The new Policing Minister, Damian Green MP, chaired his first and the last of the Home Office's Transition Sponsorship Board meetings at the start of November, which was attended by the Board's Vice-Chair Councillor Joanna Spicer. The Transition Sponsorship Board heard that, while much of the work to transition to police and crime commissioners had been completed, there were still some outstanding pieces of work on the handling of non-criminal complaints against PCCs by police and crime panels and regulations in parliament setting out what local government committee related legislation applies to police and crime panels. There will be one further meeting of the Transition Board in February to ensure all work is complete.

Ministerial Meetings

2. The Board's Chair, Councillor Mehboob Khan, has been meeting the new Home Office ministers. At the end of October he and the LGA's Chairman met Lord Taylor, the new Home Office Minister in the Lords, who is also the Home Office lead on local government and communities. A range of Home Office policy initiatives were discussed with the minister including the forthcoming Anti-Social Behaviour Bill, the Communications Data Bill and the Scrap Metal Dealers Bill, as well as a regular mechanism for keeping the minister informed of issues related to local government.
3. The second ministerial meeting took place in mid-November with Jeremy Browne MP, the new Minister for Crime Prevention. At this introductory meeting Councillor Khan discussed the proposals to update the tools and powers available for tackling anti-social behaviour, what can be done to further reduce alcohol related crime and disorder and addressing domestic abuse and violence against women and girls.

Domestic Violence

4. The Board's domestic violence champion Councillor Ann Lucas and the LGA's Chairman will be meeting the Home Secretary again in December to discuss the impact of the election of police and crime commissioners will have on the provision of services for the victims of domestic abuse and how councils, the police and other public services can be provided with the appropriate financial incentives to ensure these services continue to be supported.

Peer challenge for Regulatory Services

5. The LGA peer challenge for Regulatory Services was launched in October 2012. It has evolved into a flexible model that helps councils examine whether their service can meet the challenges of the future.
6. Environmental health, trading standards and licensing services are intrinsically linked to local economic growth, public health and community safety. The LGA's 'future focused'

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approach considers how regulatory services can deliver the best outcomes for their communities across all of these areas in very difficult financial times, including options for other delivery models such as shared services.

7. The LGA currently have a limited number of challenges available at no cost to the council to trial this new approach.

Metal Theft

8. Members of the Board undertook some urgent lobbying work ahead of the Third Reading of the Scrap Metal Dealers Bill to persuade MPs not to talk the Bill out. This involved Members talking to local MPs, engagement with the LGA's Vice Presidents, sending briefing notes to MPs, liaising with other organisations with an interest in the Bill and meetings with the Home Office to reiterate the importance of the Bill successfully completing its passage through the House of Commons. As a result of this work the Bill completed its Report Stage and Third Reading on 9 November, and will now start its passage through the House of Lords.

Surveillance Powers

9. Following new requirements for councils to seek magistrates' approval each time they want to use powers available under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act, Councillor Mehboob Khan stressed in an article for LG First the need for local authorities to make the case for surveillance powers increasingly transparent to their residents and highlighted good practice in councils including Sheffield City Council, Brighton and Hove City Council and Charnwood Borough. He stressed the LGA's continued role in explaining the importance of council use of these powers to government and correcting the misconceptions that frequently appear in the media.

Fire

10. Councillor Kay Hammond spoke at the Combined Fire Authority Conference on 17 October. In her address she outlined the LGA's role in addressing the most important priorities for the year ahead as defined by Fire Authorities and emphasised the importance of the sector dealing with these challenges as 'one voice'.

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

Pensions

1. The Public Service Pensions Bill which is intended to enable the implementation of all of the new public service schemes including the LGPS from 2014 and the Teachers Pension Scheme from 2015 is now in committee stage.
2. There are aspects of the Bill which are a cause for concern in respect of the agreement we have reached with the trade unions for the LGPS. We are currently in the process of agreeing with the trade unions a set of proposed amendments to the Bill for submission when it reaches the Lords. We are also continuing to meet with the Bill team to try and reach agreement on government sponsored amendments.

Local Government Services

3. On 17 October the Trade Union Side of the National Joint Council (NJC) formally tabled their pay claim for, 'a substantial flat rate increase on all scale points as a step towards the longer term objective of restoring pay levels and achieving the living wage as the bottom NJC spinal column point'.
4. Over the course of the past few months we, along with colleagues in the Regional Employer Organisations, have been discussing with councils what approach the Employers should take in negotiations with the unions. As a result of those conversations we understand that the consensus view of most councils is that there should be an appropriate pay offer but that pay should be just one element of a broader package that would include reform of some terms and conditions.
5. Whilst those informal discussions have given the Employers an indication of councils' views, the Employers are mindful that councils have begun the budget-setting process for next year so have agreed with colleagues in the Regional Employer Organisations not to hold regional pay consultation briefings this year. We believe that councils would be better served by the negotiating process getting under way quickly so that any agreement with the unions is achieved in good time ahead of the end of the financial year. However, the Employers are clear that should we reach the stage of getting a potential deal with the unions, the final say will rest with councils. The Employers will at that time conduct a formal consultative ballot that sets out the proposals in detail.

Public Health Workforce Transition

6. As the transfer date for public health services approaches, the LGA has been running a series of regional workshops on practical HR issues jointly with the Department of Health and the trade unions. Events in London and Birmingham were heavily over-subscribed and well-received. Further dates are planned to give councils up-to-the-minute information on, for example, the process for transferring staff and future pension options.

Fire

7. The NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services reached agreement in September to commence work on two reviews:

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- 7.1 Commitment to work jointly and with a view to reaching agreement on reform of the pay framework, alongside terms and conditions. That review to be concluded by June 2013 and
- 7.2 Commitment to a separate, evidence-based, shorter-term review on appropriate mileage rates.
8. Substantial work has already been carried out jointly in respect of the mileage rates review and negotiations are expected to conclude shortly. Work has also commenced on the second longer term review with the National Employers continuing to consider their approach to this review. Joint discussion is at an early stage.

Youth and Community

9. The National Youth Agency (NYA) is coordinating the development of an Institute for Youth Work which is aimed at raising the profile and status of youth work, support for professional development and an opportunity to shape youth work policy. The NYA has agreed to provide support to the project with resources for the next two years following which the Body would require membership income and donations.

Soulbury

10. On the 23 October the National Employers formally responded to the Officers' Side claim for 2012 which was for a 'significant increase on all Soulbury pay scale points and the London allowances from 1 September 2012. Following a consultation the National Employers stated that they were unable to make a pay offer for this year. The Soulbury Committee did agree to have further joint secretarial discussions, without prejudice, to look at joint guidance in respect of some conditions of service.

School Teachers

11. The School Teachers' Review Body submitted its 21st report to the Secretary of State on 26 October. It has yet to be published but will include recommendations on a more market facing pay framework, reform of the pay scales to more effectively link pay and performance and other pay and conditions reforms to raise the status of the profession and support recruitment and retention of high quality teachers. Once the report has been published the National Employers' Organisation for School Teachers (NEOST) will submit a response.

Health and well-being

12. The LGA has put in a joint bid for funding to Sports England with the Fitness Industry Association to launch a 'Great Stuff' offer to councils.

Social Impact Bonds

13. The Department of Health will be inviting expressions of interest from councils this month to join the trailblazer scheme for Social Impact Bonds as a method of funding and delivering adult social care.

Social enterprise/mutuals

14. The programme of research is now complete and eight case studies are available on both the LGA website and the workforce pages of the Knowledge Hub. We are working with colleagues in the programmes team to deliver four regional events promoting good practice in this area.

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Finance Panel – report from Cllr Sharon Taylor (Chair)

Local Government Finance Bill

1. Last month, the Bill came back to the House of Lords for the Report Stage. We analysed the proposals for the local schemes of 200 councils, which showed that impacts on working age claimants were unavoidable, given the funding cut and limited discretion for councils over the entire system of reliefs. That analysis bolstered the evidence base for our efforts to try to secure support for an amendment tabled by LGA President Lord Richard Best that would have provided councils with the flexibility to reduce the single person's discount for non-pensioners from 25 to 20 per cent. Late in the process, the Government announced an extra £100 million in funding for councils that limited the cut to working age households' support to 8.5 per cent. LGA analysis suggests the Government's package substantially underfunds the 8.5 per cent cap and a substantial number of councils will need to make cuts in other areas in order to afford that limit.
2. The LGA Chairman, Group Leaders and I all went to great lengths to try to persuade national politicians to support Lord Best's amendment, but unfortunately we could not overcome the strong resistance of Government Ministers or the shadow front bench. The Local Government Finance Bill is now an Act, having received Royal Assent on 2 November. Our focus is now on ensuring that Government officials get the forecast for Council Tax Benefit expenditure in 2013-14 right, as this will affect the total size of the grant that councils receive.

Pension fund investment in infrastructure

3. Finance Panel members have taken a keen interest in this issue, which we have established as one of our priorities for this year. We will be discussing the issue further at our next meeting, including looking at future work in this area.
4. The Department for Communities and Local Government launched a consultation this month on two options for amending the regulations governing local authority pension funds in order to enable greater investment in infrastructure projects. On 7 November, the LGA Chairman gave an address to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy conference on pensions, at which he signalled our aim to play a leadership role in exploring the potential for and tackling the barriers to greater pension fund investment in infrastructure and development. To that end, we are currently in the process of drawing together a range of experts on pension funds, investment vehicles, risk management, finance and infrastructure projects for a series of workshops to try to resolve the key issues.

Transitional Grant Scheme for Local Council Tax Support

5. We responded to the Government's announcement on 16 October that they would create a Transitional Grant of up to £100 million for councils who developed local council tax schemes in line with a number of Government conditions. The LGA responded that whilst we welcomed any additional help, the lack of flexibility for councils in implementing the benefit reduction puts them in a very difficult position. Under the proposed scheme, even with the additional money, most councils will have

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no choice but to ask people on lower incomes to pay more council tax than they currently do.

6. The LGA continues to have significant concerns about how the new council tax support arrangements will impact on collection rates for council tax, which historically have been maintained at very high levels.

Welfare Reform

7. The local authority-led pilots for Universal Credit have been announced, and the participating councils are bringing together local partnerships looking at various models for face-to-face support for claimants, as well as examining ways to help them use an online service.
8. Terms of reference for a Task Force composed of officers from the Department for Work and Pensions, the Welsh LGA, Convention of Scottish Local Authorities and the LGA have also recently been agreed. The Task Force will look at how a future face-to-face Universal Credit service may operate and how this might be funded. The Finance Panel will be discussing this further at our next meeting.

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Item 3(k)

Resources Panel – report from Cllr Stephen Castle (Chairman)

1. At the first meeting of the new political cycle in October, the Resources Panel considered the level of LGA membership subscriptions for 2013/14. Members noted that since 2010, there have been major changes in this area with subscriptions being more directly related to the population of member authorities along with a significant reduction in the overall level of subscriptions. At this meeting, members discussed the impact of the 2012 Census data on the subscription calculations and also the possible introduction of a new loyalty discount for those members currently not on notice to withdraw. Final proposals are currently being developed prior to a formal recommendation being made to the LGA's Leadership Board in December.
2. The Panel received a report on the six month performance against the business plan, including financial performance, where there is currently a projected underspend for a number of programme budgets. The Panel will continue to keep the LGA's financial performance under close review in the second half of the year.
3. The Panel reviewed progress with the renegotiation of the Liberata contract for the LGA's back office services, which is currently underway following the completion of an independent benchmarking review.
4. The Panel received an update on progress in managing the LGA's pension deficit and confirmed that the LGA should continue with its current strategy of making additional contributions to the relevant pension schemes for the foreseeable future.
5. The Panel agreed a consistent Scheme of Delegation for the LGA and its associated companies, and also policies for managing risk in relation to grant-funded programmes and strategic and commercial partnerships.

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Item 3(I)

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

1. The Task and Finish Group held its final meeting on 8 November 2012 to discuss recommendations and suggested focus for LGA activity, to help secure the long term benefits from the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.
2. The task group was set up by the LGA Executive in November 2011 to make sure that the LGA supported councils to play their part in hosting a successful Games and to ensure that councils had the latest information and shared experience and knowledge of local operational issues. The Culture, Tourism and Sport Board was represented on the task group and continued to have policy oversight of community sports participation and tourism, promoting the UK wide calendar of events, and the Games legacy. Members of the Task and Finish Group were all LGA Board members and the task group encouraged each LGA Board to consider what needed to be addressed to support councils in the period before and during the Games.
3. The strong leadership role of councils in bringing local areas together to keep the country moving and ensure the safety of events was absolutely fundamental to the success of the Games and the torch relay. The task group focused on key issues for councils all over the country hosting the Olympic torch relay and competition venues in and outside of London. Dialogue was maintained with LGA Boards to support information and guidance on a wide range of issues, including advice on transport and workforce that were shared with LGA membership.
4. Emergency Planning was a standing item on the agenda, with regular reports from the National Local Authority Olympic Resilience Programme which was a strategic partnership between the Home Office, the London Fire Brigade, the LGA and London Councils. At the final meeting of the task group Mary Ney, Chief Executive of Greenwich and Lead Chief Executive for Olympic Resilience and Security suggested that the key to success was the communication structure that was established and supported by Andrew Huddart. This ran from practitioner level right up to the Cabinet Committee for the Olympics meetings where chief executives and members were well briefed and supported. The task group agreed that a similar communication structure might prove to be a useful model for other resilience issues in the future.

Games legacy – recommendations

5. Working to secure the long term benefits of the Games was always an integral part of the bid to host London 2012 and a lot of attention is now being focused on ensuring that efforts to secure the legacy remain on track. From the outset, the LGA has supported councils to use the inspiration of the Games to encourage participation in sporting and cultural activities, to engage young people and to boost the economy through increased tourism.
6. The LGA is therefore in a strong position to ensure that councils are fully involved in national discussions on legacy. Councils all over the country were involved in the Nations and Regions Group that co-ordinated activity from 2005 onwards in the English regions and in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. However, with the dismantling of the nations and regions structure after the Games, only local government is in a position to ensure that the legacy of the Games continues and is delivered on the ground in local areas.

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7. The Prime Minister has appointed Lord Coe as Legacy Ambassador to advise on how best to secure longer-term sporting, economic and cultural benefits from the Games. He will be supported by an Olympics and Paralympics Legacy unit in the Cabinet Office. The unit will also support a new Games Legacy Cabinet Committee which is being set up to oversee the Government's plans for the legacy which will focus on four areas identified in the government's legacy plan published in 2010: sport and physical activity, economic growth, community engagement and the regeneration of East London.
8. In pursuit of the legacy objectives, a large number of policies and initiatives continue to be developed and implemented by a range of organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors. In order to avoid the risk of fragmentation, the task group agreed at its final meeting to recommend that the LGA should have a clear focus on: sport and increasing physical activity, boosting economic growth through the visitor economy and promoting community engagement. These were all at the core of the winning bid and the plans that were developed over the last seven years with legacy in mind.
9. The LGA's Culture, Tourism and Sport Board has already agreed that the sporting legacy and the visitor economy are priorities for the year ahead. The task group recommends that the LGA's work should form part of the local government 'offer' to the new Cabinet Office legacy unit to ensure that the vital contribution of councils is recognised and national legacy programmes are developed in a coordinated way that enhances existing local activity.
10. A report is being taken to the November meeting of the LGA Executive which also recommends that the LGA should share the learning from the resurgence in popularity of community events and volunteering in order to shape involvement in future national occasions and celebrations.
11. A conversation is being arranged between the LGA Chairman, Sir Merrick Cockell, Chair of the Task Group, Cllr Stephen Castle and Lord Coe. Ahead of this, an LGA briefing has been submitted to officials in the new unit to make sure they understand that councils have invested in facilities and in partnerships and have the democratic mandate to rally support for local legacy priorities.

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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

LGA location map

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Public transport

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Victoria and Waterloo: the local underground stations are

St James's Park (Circle and District Lines), **Westminster** (Circle, District and Jubilee Lines), and **Pimlico** (Victoria Line) - all about 10 minutes walk away.

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Bus routes – Horseferry Road

507 Waterloo - Victoria

C10 Canada Water - Pimlico - Victoria

88 Camden Town - Whitehall - Westminster - Pimlico - Clapham Common

Bus routes – Millbank

87 Wandsworth - Aldwych

3 Crystal Palace - Brixton - Oxford Circus

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