

Chairman's Update March 2013

LGA Business

1. February saw the first **LGA regional roadshow** event take place in Nottingham. This was the first in a series of ten roadshows we are hosting with our regional partners across the country, which outlines a **New Model for Local Government**. The events aim to involve the whole of English local government in a wide-ranging discussion about what modern local government will need to look like in the future.
2. The events are shaped around the five main issues identified by members, where we need to have greater influence as a sector. They are:
 - 2.1. Sustainable funding;
 - 2.2. Growth;
 - 2.3. The future of social care;
 - 2.4. Welfare reform; and
 - 2.5. A new, independent model for local government.
3. The discussion on these topics at our events will help shape our agenda and in turn the public debate. I hope you can join us at one of the future events in March.
4. At February's Leadership Board **David Prout**, Director General and **Alison Munro**, CEO at HS2 Ltd, presented to the Board on the latest HS2 issues, including the planned phase 2 route and the programme plan for the New Model for Local Government was discussed.
5. The following day at the **LGA Executive** meeting, we discussed the Political and Constitutional Select Committee Report on codifying the position of local government where we decided to continue our work with the Chairman and members of the Select Committee as we take forward our campaigning.
6. I held a Social Justice roundtable here at the LGA which was attended by the **Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP**, Chair of the Social Justice Cabinet Committee. The Secretary of State shared his overarching vision of changing lives, not just reforming welfare, before Councillor Roe, Lord Smith and Councillor Aldridge gave an overview of local action on social justice issues.
7. Lord Smith of Finsbury, Chairman of the Environment Agency (EA), spoke at February's **Councillors' Forum** outlining the climate challenges facing local government. He spoke about cultural changes at the Environment Agency and how the EA were moving towards better partnerships with communities and their local authorities.
8. Carolyn Downs and I also attended a session for Cohort 9 on the Leeds Castle Leadership Programme in Warwickshire.

Ministerial / Parliamentary business

9. During February I met the following:

- 9.1. **Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP**, Minister of State at the Cabinet Office, to discuss the Whole Place Community Budgets work. I gave him advance sight of the LGA Whole Place Community Budgets Cookbook and the accompanying website and asked him for a more centrally-driven approach to the asks.
- 9.2. **Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP**, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, to join and discuss at a roundtable event the response to the adulteration of processed beef products with horsemeat with a number of delegates throughout the food industry.
- 9.3. Carolyn and I met with **Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP**, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government and **Sir Bob Kerslake** to sector led improvements and new approaches to children's services.

Meetings with other organisations and individuals

10. Carolyn and I welcomed London Councils' **Mayor Jules Pipe**, Chair, and **John O'Brien**, Chief Executive, to discuss a variety of subjects including pensions, the LGA's Community Budgets work and Independent local government in London.
11. I chaired the **National Public Health Conference** held at Local Government House. A number of expert speakers spoke at the event including **Anna Soubry MP**, **Mike Farrar** and **Duncan Selbie** amongst many others.
12. I attended the **Federation of Small Business** Annual Dinner where **Rt Hon George Osborne MP**, Chancellor of the Exchequer, spoke before dinner.
13. Together with **Graham Allen MP**, I was interviewed by Information Daily on the production of the Political and Constitutional Reform Select Committee report on codifying the relationship between central and local government.

Meetings with councillors and member councils

14. Carolyn and I visited **Portsmouth City Council**. Under the watchful eye of the LGA's Liberal Democrat Group Leader **Councillor Gerald Vernon-Jackson**, we met Portsmouth's Cabinet as well as viewing a number of regeneration projects throughout the city.
15. I visited **Woking Borough Council** and met the Leader and the Chief Executive, **Councillor John Kingsbury** and **Ray Morgan** respectively. We had a quick tour around the town centre before discussing the current issues in Woking.
16. I was invited by **Councillor Alex Collingwood** to meet with councillors at **Wycombe District Council**. Whilst there I discussed public service reform, council tax and business rates to full council before observing the Conservative group's meeting.