

Councillors' Forum

Agenda

Thursday 14 March 2013
12.30pm

The Westminster Suite (8th floor)
Local Government House
Smith Square
London
SW1P 3HZ

To: Members of the Councillors' Forum
cc: Named officers for briefing purposes

www.local.gov.uk

Guidance notes for visitors

Local Government House, Smith Square, London SW1P 3HZ

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Councillors' Forum
14 March 2013

The **Councillors' Forum** meeting will be held on **Thursday 14 March 2013 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	Horseferry Room (7 th floor)

Lunch will be served in The Terrace Lounge (7th Floor) 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)

Guest WiFi in Local Government House

This is available in Local Government House for visitors. It can be accessed by enabling Wireless Network Connection on your computer and connecting to LGH-guest, the password is Welcome2010LG.

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.

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 OBE	Lambeth LBC
Martin Hill OBE	Lincolnshire CC
Bill Borrett	Norfolk CC
Gr. Uff. 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 OBE	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
Substitutes	
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
Paul Tilsley MBE	Birmingham City Council
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
Marianne Overton	Lincolnshire County Council
Bob Dutton OBE	Wrexham County Borough Council
Apu Bagchi	Bedford Council

Agenda

Councillors' Forum

Thursday 14 March 2013

12.30pm – 1.30pm

The Westminster Suite, Local Government House

	Item	Page	Time
1.	New Model for Local Government Members will be given the opportunity to discuss the LGA's work to develop a new model for local government.	3	12.30pm
2.	Chairman's Update	7	1.20pm
3.	LGA Board and Panel Chairs' Reports <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 OBE k. Resources Panel – Councillor Stephen Castle l. Bonds Task & Finish Group – Councilman Edward Lord OBE JP 	9	1.25pm
4.	Digest of Last Meeting	33	

Date of Next Meeting: 16 May 2013, 12:30pm, LGH, Westminster Suite

New Model for Local Government

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

Leadership Board of 13 March will receive a report on the following:

- a) Growth
- b) Good adult social care
- c) Future children's services
- d) Welfare reform
- e) Sustainable future funding
- f) Independent Local Government

This item is brought to Councillors' Forum in order that Members can be briefed on this important piece of work and provide their comments and observations. Any contributions will be used to inform this work as it progresses.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

Consider the report and presentation and to provide input to assist discussions and steer further progress.

Contact officer: Daniel Goodwin
Position: Executive Director, Finance & Policy
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New Model for Local Government

Background

1. At its meetings of 9 January and 13 February, the Leadership Board considered reports setting out a proposal for a New Model for Local Government and the associated timetable to deliver it. The proposal's purpose was threefold:
 - 1.1 Developing a clear case for the future national role of local government in order to inform party manifestos in the run-up to the next general election.
 - 1.2 Setting out Local Government's offer in order to inform the expected 2015 spending review immediately after the election.
 - 1.3 Providing the LGA national conference with a practical explanation of the above and informing its longer term planning processes.
2. Leadership Board agreed with the proposed work in broad terms and asked that it be developed further. It saw value in wide national communication of the work before conference in order to ensure that voices across the sector could be heard.
3. Leadership Board agreed that there should be a number of specific in-depth discussions about the various themes set out in the paper and that initial drafts of policy papers should be developed to provide the foundation for the work. It asked Group Leaders to nominate a members' group to review them. Policy papers are being prepared on the following key priorities:
 - 3.1 Independent Local Government;
 - 3.2 Growth;
 - 3.3 Good adult social care;
 - 3.4 Future children's services;
 - 3.5 Welfare reform; and
 - 3.6 Sustainable future funding.
4. A range of other supporting activities are either under way or planned including the following:
 - 4.1 Review of the papers by a small group of members nominated by the political groups;
 - 4.2 Presentation of relevant papers to Boards and Panels;

- 4.3 Discussion of the idea of the New Model at Regional Roadshows;
 - 4.4 Detailed discussions on the individual subject areas at specific 'Deep Dives'; and
 - 4.5 Other events where there is an opportunity to develop the initiative further.
- 5. By the time of the 13 February meeting, most Leadership Board members had received initial copies of these papers. They considered that in order to be successful we needed to present some more radical proposals. The policy papers do not yet reflect this observation, but the point is being taken on board fully in the various discussions outlined above.
 - 6. A verbal briefing on the latest position on this initiative will be provided at the meeting. Further reports will be brought to future meetings of Leadership Board to provide updates on progress and to seek formal endorsement of later iterations of these papers. The purpose of discussions at this meeting will be to help inform discussions at the events and activities outlined above.
 - 7. There will be a further opportunity for discussion at Councillors' Forum on 14 March, where this subject will be the main item on the agenda. Leadership Board may therefore wish to suggest issues and questions on which it would like Councillors' Forum's views.

Next steps

- 8. The New Model project is progressing according to plan and the contributions of Board members are sought.

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 **Councillor's 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.

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

Meeting with Minister Elizabeth Truss MP

1. I attended a meeting with Elizabeth Truss MP, Minister for Childcare on 30 February to discuss the Government's proposals on childcare reform. There was a focus on changes to the regulatory regime, improving transparency of funding for providers, creation of child minder agencies and encouraging schools to open up their premises for wrap around childcare provision. I emphasised to the Minister that councils do not duplicate Ofsted inspections at present but provide invaluable improvement support to providers to improve the quality on offer. As part of this many councils currently deliver support and training to local child minders similar to the role of the new proposed child minder hubs and so may be interested in setting up child-minder hubs offering services at a minimum cost. We also discussed how councils can play a greater role in influencing schools to open up their premises for childcare.

LGA tackling child sexual exploitation conference

2. On 13 February, I chaired the LGA's national tackling child sexual exploitation conference, which brought together delegates not only from councils, but also other partner agencies with a crucial role to play such as police, health and the voluntary sector. The high quality programme included the Children's Minister, Edward Timpson MP, All-Party Parliamentary Group Chair Ann Coffey MP and the Deputy Children's Commissioner Sue Berelowitz., along with several local areas who shared their experiences and learning. In addition, we launched the LGA's National Conversation, part of our campaign to support councils in raising awareness of this type of abuse, which is vital to preventing and stopping it. The event was hugely popular and over-subscribed; demonstrating how much interest there is in tackling this terrible crime.

£4 billion for school capital funding

3. I spoke to journalists on 1 March about the announcement by Michael Gove MP to put £4 billion into school capital funding. Whilst it is a step in the right direction that the government has acknowledged the huge pressures councils are facing in providing new and good quality school places we need to be clear that this announcement doesn't represent new money. Delays to already promised school funding means local government is working to address the basic repairs needed to keep schools open, such as fixing leaky roofs. However, we need to deliver much more quickly however this is difficult with funds currently tied up in government red tape. It's now vital that this funding flows quickly to ensure local authorities can work with schools to get on with the job of providing more school places where they are urgently needed.

Commissioning of Children's Residential Homes

4. A number of concerns about the effectiveness of the system of residential children's care have been raised in the last year and it has become clear that some areas need improvement. The LGA has commissioned the office of Public Management (OPM) to work with a select group of local authorities to look into how to better support councils in the effective commissioning of residential children's homes. An advisory group has been established chaired by Councillor Robert Light from the Children and Young People

Board which also includes representation from the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives, the Association of Directors of Children's Services, the Department for Education, the Children's improvement Board and the Who Cares Trust, to oversee the research.

Shortage of Childcare

5. I continued to represent the LGA in the media this month including various interviews about daycare in response to a report by the Daycare Trust and on schools' capital. On 3 March I responded to the news story from the Daycare Trust that said councils were failing to provide sufficient childcare for parents who wanted to work. I made it clear that councils do not have a responsibility to provide childcare and our responsibility is to work with voluntary organisations, private providers and schools to increase supply. The LGA is working with the government to see how a big expansion in provision can be achieved. However, lack of funding in the system is making this task very difficult.

Corporate Parenting

6. On 5 March I met Enver Solomon, who leads on work around corporate parenting as the National Children's Bureau Delivery Partner with the Department for Education (DfE). We discussed DfE work in this area and how councilors can best fulfill their role as corporate parents.

Meeting with Andy Sawford MP

7. On 6 March I met Andy Sawford MP to discuss the provisions of the Children and Families Bill in detail and the LGA's proposed amendments in particular. The Children and Families Bill received its second reading on 25 February; whilst we welcome many of the provisions in the Bill, we still have a number of concerns about measures including the proposal which could allow the Secretary of State for Education to remove councils from the recruitment and assessment of adopters and that the Bill may not maximise the opportunity to reform the Special Educational Needs (SEN) system.

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Position: Head of Programmes
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E-mail: sally.burlington@local.gov.uk

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

Cap on Social Care Costs

1. On 11 February, the Government announced a significant step towards reforming adult social care funding, complementing the Draft Care and Support Bill reforms. The two central proposals are a £75,000 cap (2017 prices) on an individual's lifetime contribution to care costs, and an increase in the means test level at which those in a residential home have to pay for care, from £23,250 to £123,000 (also at 2017 prices).
2. With good communication to the public, the measures outlined can make the system simpler and the financial implications of care easier to understand. However, as I expressed in an Article for 'First' magazine this month, the cost-cap is just one part of the solution, and must be taken forward alongside a wider commitment to put the whole system on a sustainable financial basis in the medium as well as the long term.

Robert Francis Inquiry report into Mid-Staffordshire NHS Foundation Trust.

3. The long-awaited Francis report was published on 6 February and the LGA responded in the media. To care for people with dignity it is clear we need a major shift in our approach to health and social care which puts people at the heart of the system; which upholds a culture of care amongst staff; and which ensures that local partners listen and act upon the concerns of patients and their carers when things go wrong.
4. On 27 February, at a King's Fund conference on the report, I spoke alongside Chris Ham, the Chief Executive of the King's Fund and Dr Daniel Poulter MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health to emphasise the LGA's position. The Community Wellbeing Board also considered the Francis report in detail on 6 March and I will be chairing an adult safeguarding conference at Local Government House on 12 March.

Annual public health conference 2013: better local health; realising the ambition London - 26 February 2013

5. Over 150 delegates attended our flagship public health conference chaired by Sir Merrick Cockell, assisted by a number of Board members who chaired workshops and provided insight from their authorities. A highlight was when the Public Health Minister Anna Soubry noted in her speech that the decline in teenage pregnancy rates was the lowest for 40 years and attributed this primarily to the work of councils.

Achieving public health outcomes on fuel poverty and excess winter deaths

6. Cllr Gwen Hassall of the Environment and Housing Board attended a National Energy Action seminar on this cross-cutting issue which will certainly be an important topic in the future. Cllr Hassall emphasised that councils are well placed to bring services and agencies together to address fuel poverty in a holistic way. In addition to the benefits to quality of life, warmer homes help prevent higher health and social costs in the future.

Sector-led improvement

7. Work continues in both health and adult social care to develop the LGA's sector-led improvement offer, for and with the sector. This month a key step forward has been the

establishment of a joint improvement programme (in co-operation with the NHS Commissioning Board) to lead to service transformation in response to the scandal at the Winterbourne View hospital.

Department of Health/LGA workshop on Localising the Public Health Responsibility Deal

8. On 13 February, Cllr Steve Bedser, Cllr Gillian Ford and Cllr Catherine McDonald took part in a workshop which sought local government's input on a Toolkit for Local Businesses. The toolkit will help councils to implement a locally tailored version of the [Department for Health's Responsibility Deal](#) with businesses in their area.

cCLOA Sport & Physical Activity Roundtable event

9. Cllr Steve Bedser also attended the Chief Cultural and Leisure Officer Association's roundtable on sport and health on 14 February. The roundtable brought together senior sport and health professionals for a lively debate on how best to maximise the contribution of leisure services to achieving local public health outcomes.

Children and young people's health and wellbeing

10. On 19 February 2013 the Government published a system-wide response to the Children and Young People's Health Outcome Forum's report. The LGA response and a summary can be found [here](#). We are also holding a free conference on Teenage Pregnancy which is taking place on 23 April at which Anna Soubry, Public Health Minister is confirmed to speak and a young parent will also be contributing her perspective.

New resources

11. This month the LGA has launched a short resource sheet on how best to achieve [integrated care and support](#) successfully within local health and care economies. We have also launched a [sexual health commissioning FAQs](#) document online, supported by a group on the Knowledge Hub and the have now published [Health and Wellbeing Boards: a practical guide to governance and constitutional issues](#) to support local government members and officers interpret and implement their statutory duties in relation to the creation of Health and Wellbeing Boards (co-produced with the Association of Democratic Services Officers).

Show us you care campaign

12. As of 06 March, twenty-six local authorities have signed up to the LGA's flagship campaign. With the capping proposals not due to take effect until 2017, there remains an interim period during which pressures on the system will continue to mount. The LGA's social care funding campaign is far from over and we need your help to achieve its ambition for a care system fit for the 21st century. If your council has not already done so, please sign up at www.local.gov.uk/show-us-you-care.

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Position: Head of Programmes
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E-mail: Sally.Burlington@local.gov.uk

Item 3 (c)

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

The Arts and Growth

1. I met Sir Peter Bazalgette, the new Chair of Arts Council England (ACE), on 12 February. We agreed on the link between the arts and growth and restated our shared commitment to the principle of a single cultural conversation between ACE and councils. The economic role of the arts underpins the newly-signed agreement between ACE and the LGA, and was also the focus of my recent article in the LGA's First magazine.
2. We are looking forward to Sir Peter and Ed Vaizey MP, Arts Minister, debating the proposition that investment in the arts pays economic dividends at the LGA's annual Culture, Tourism and Sport Conference on 7 - 8 March in Chester. They will be joined by 150 councillors and senior officers for the launch of the LGA's new arts and growth publication, which provides an insight into the economic role of the arts, and local government's role leading this – from attracting visitors, to creating jobs and developing skills, attracting and retaining businesses, revitalising places and developing future talent.
3. I highlighted the link between local government investment in the arts and economic growth in a BBC interview on 27 February that was broadcast widely on local BBC radio.

Sport and Olympic and Paralympic Legacy

4. Councillor Stephen Castle, who chaired the LGA's 2012 Games Task and Finish Group, met Lord Coe, the Prime Minister's Legacy Ambassador, on 7 February. The meeting was an opportunity to highlight local government's leadership role in locking-in the sporting, economic and social benefits from the Games. Councillor Castle and Lord Coe agreed to work together to fully reflect and involve councils in national legacy activity.
5. I attended the Chief Cultural and Leisure Officer Association's roundtable on sport and health on 14 February. The roundtable brought together senior sport and health professionals for a lively debate on how best to maximise the contribution of leisure services to achieving local public health outcomes.

Libraries

6. Lead Members and I were very pleased to meet Yinnon Ezra MBE, the Culture Minister's new public libraries adviser, on 13 February. We discussed the key issues facing public libraries and identified potential joint working on supporting local political leadership, managing assets and property, procurement and commissioning and libraries' contribution to wider community outcomes.

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Economy and Transport Board – Report from Councillor Peter Box CBE (Chair)

1. We are a few days away from the budget which is bound to concentrate on how we drive growth. The Chancellor has big decisions to make including how he responds to the Heseltine Report on local economic growth. If he is brave, we will have a large single pot of funding to drive growth and more levers of economic growth will be localised. We await the statement with interest.

Local Growth Campaign – Staffordshire CC Town Hall Summit

2. On 5 March I chaired a Town Hall Summit alongside Councilor Philip Atkins, Leader of Staffordshire CC to discuss the importance of transport and connectivity to economic growth. Staffordshire was especially chosen as a venue for this discussion, being the location for the i54 South Staffordshire business park where the county council and Wolverhampton City Council are investing £40 million to build a motorway junction onto the site. Jaguar Land Rover is currently building its new engine plant at i54 South Staffordshire and this week announced it will be doubling the size of the plant to create 1,400 jobs. We were pleased that the Under Secretary of State for Transport, Norman Baker MP, was able to join us and stayed to listen to a good debate where the case for devolved decision making that enables councils to work quickly with partners to seize growth opportunities was well made.

Meeting of all Board Chairs

3. I attended a meeting of all Board Chairs with the LGA Chairman at which we discussed how we bring together all the important work that the Boards are doing to promote councils' role in growth. As a result, members will be aware that the LGA is currently consulting on a series of policy papers looking at a New Model for Local Government. One of the key papers looks at the council role in driving growth. At the last Economy and Transport Board meeting, we reviewed some of the thinking. Whilst Board members were pleased at the direction of travel on economic devolution with a range of schemes from Heseltine's single pot to City Deals, there was a real concern about the fragmented initiatives which are developing. The Board felt that we needed to be very robust and honest on this issue and ensure that we offered a more coherent approach to the current outbreak of "initiative-itis".

City Deals

4. On 18 February 2013 the Government announced that it will enter negotiations with all 20 cities who had been invited to bid for Wave 2 City Deals. The Government will now work closely with cities to develop the proposals in more detail and to negotiate a final deal. They will aim to complete deals in three rounds over the next year. The new deals are due to be signed on a staggered basis: in the next few months, the second in the autumn and the third by the end of the year/early 2014. Meanwhile, the Cities Policy Unit have been undertaking work to develop a core package/menu of options that cities will be able to draw down from to support and enhance their bespoke part of the deal. The menu of options is due to be published in March. We have submitted a joint proposal with the Centre for Cities which puts forward a comprehensive proposal for the core package which maximises councils' ability to drive growth.

5. I responded to the announcement saying, "The announcement is very positive and reflects the Government's increasing recognition that local areas are best placed to drive economic growth. We need to accelerate the pace and scale of devolution and make deals available to all areas that want them. The Heseltine Review identified £58 billion of Government funding for growth that could be better used if localities made the investment decisions rather than civil servants in Whitehall. There is clearly varying degrees of buy-in from different government departments. We hope that the March Budget will carry through the promise of the Autumn Statement by confirming that all of the tools and levers needed to drive local growth will be made available to councils, local businesses and their partners."

Budget and Spending Review

6. In the run up to the budget, we have also been meeting with officials from a range of government departments to press for the devolution of growth-related funding on the scale recommended by Lord Heseltine through the single pot and to signal the roll-out of local growth deals to all areas that want one. The LGA's outline submission for the next Spending Review, which is intended to be sent to Government ahead of the Budget, reinforces the case we have been making for a new deal on local growth.

High Streets

7. Deputy Chair of the Board, Councillor Mike Haines, has been discussing with the National Association of British Market Authorities (NAMBA) the LGA's support for the national "Love Your Local Market" campaign. This campaign runs over the coming months in the lead up to a Love Your Local Market Fortnight in May. He has also accepted the invitation of Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Minister, Mark Prisk, to represent the LGA on DCLG's High Streets Forum.

Cycling All-Party Parliamentary Group

8. Deputy Chair of the Board, Councillor Roger Symonds, gave evidence to the [Cycling All Party Parliamentary Group](#) (APPG) as part of the APPG's inquiry titled "Get Britain Cycling". Further information on the inquiry can be found [here](#). The LGA's written evidence to the inquiry, focused largely on the benefits for cycling which could be delivered if the Department for Transport were to implement Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA). Councillor Symonds called for a culture change to tackle intolerance of cycling and raise awareness and highlighted the need for political will and financial investment. He encouraged the APPG to back the LGA's call for implementation of Part 6 of TMA, which could help councils improve safety levels for cyclists through better enforcement of, for example, cycle lanes.

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

Growth and Infrastructure Bill

1. LGA lobbying in the **Growth and Infrastructure Bill** has been reflected in a number of developments during the House of Lords stages of the Bill. The government has responded to LGA concerns by limiting the period of time available to applicants wishing to appeal to the Planning Inspectorate to have the affordable housing element of their S106 agreement revised. Government has also responded to LGA lobbying to simplify **Local Development Orders** by inserting new clauses in the Bill that will remove centrally set monitoring and approval requirements, making it easier for councils to apply permitted development locally.
2. We continue to lobby for amendments to the Bill and for a new clause which that would remove the housing borrowing cap to allow councils to increase investment in new council housing.
3. Government has also recognised in the debates on the Bill that sector led has a vital role to play in driving improvement in planning services and addressing poor performance where it exists. In reflection of that, DCLG and LGA have agreed to establish new governance arrangements for the Planning Advisory Service to ensure strong sector leadership of a package of support on planning that is responsive to councils' needs and supports them to avoid designation under the Bill.

Meeting with Minister of State for Climate Change

4. Cllr Keith House, Cllr Frances Roden and Cllr Andrew Cooper met with the Minister of State for Climate Change, the Rt Hon Greg Barker MP, on 4 March. The discussion was positive and constructive, with the Minister confirming that he believes that local government is a key partner in everything that the Department for Energy and Climate Change is trying to achieve. A Memorandum of Understanding between the LGA and DECC setting out shared objectives is expected to be signed shortly.

Climate Local conference

5. The LGA's first **Climate Local conference** is on 11th March: delivering growth, income and safer communities. With over 50 council signatories, the event marks the launch of a report highlighting the impact of council action on climate change on local growth, jobs, savings and protection of vulnerable communities

EFRA Select Committee and APPG on Water

6. The LGA continues to represent councils on flooding issues. We recently provided evidence to an EFRA Select Committee enquiry into water management at which Cllr Cooper of the Environment and Housing Board and Richard Wills of Lincolnshire County Council highlighted councils' leadership in protecting and helping their communities recover from recent floods and the sectors concerns in accessing funding for flood defences.

7. Cllr Eddy Poll has also presented on behalf of the LGA to the All Party Parliamentary Water Group on Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs). During his presentation, Cllr Poll highlighted councils' frustrations with the delays in implementation of the legislative framework and lack of a long-term solution for funding of SUDs maintenance.

Waste Judicial Review

8. The LGA has successfully supported Defra to win the Waste Judicial Review case, with judgment passed down on 6 March. The case decided that councils can determine of the recycling collection they choose based on their particular local circumstances in accordance with EU law. The LGA invested significant effort in helping DEFRA fight the challenge and as a result has prevented councils from incurring costs likely to be in the order of tens of millions.

LGA Local Waste Review

9. The Local Government Waste Review, chaired by Cllr Clyde Loakes on behalf of the Board, has met for a second time on 06 March to consider the issues raised in its Call for Evidence. Input from partners will be used to evidence our positions across the range of issues associated with waste management, as the review progresses.

LGA Urban Commission

10. At the LGA's Urban Commission on 19 February, Cllr Tony Newman represented the Board at a workshop on housing, alongside representatives of DCLG. He made clear that the local government is united in its belief that housing of the right type in the right location and at the right price is crucial for the sustainability of our communities and the success of our towns and cities. Councils are saying yes to applications and are also responding pragmatically to get stalled sites moving. The clauses in the Growth and Infrastructure Bill which allow applicants to appeal to PINS to renegotiate the affordable housing element of the S106 are unnecessary.
11. Cllr Newman also noted that the move to HRA self-financing is positive and will allow councils to take a more business-like approach to managing their assets. The Environment and Housing Board will continue to lobby for the borrowing cap to be removed and are investigating the impact and costs of the welfare reforms and their impact on the ability to invest in housing, commencing development.

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

Delivering Our Lobbying Priorities

EU Budget 2014-20

1. European issues took centre stage of national debate once again last month, with European leaders agreeing a budget deal for the rest of the decade that will lead to the first cut in EU spending in its 56-year history. The agreement represents a cut of €33 billion to €960 billion compared with the current period, but funds important to councils, such as regional development funds, remained largely intact. The UK will receive a similar allocation to the current period. The deal saw more funds for research and innovation as well as a new fund for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) called 'COSME'. The UK rebate was retained. The European Parliament now has to approve or reject the deal but cannot amend it.

EU Structural Funds 2014-20

2. The fact that the negotiations, which lasted over 25 hours, ended with a deal on the EU financial plan for 2014-2020 is great news for local authorities. This will ensure that a new round of EU funds can begin promptly and support local projects from the second half of 2014, something we have fought for.
3. Worth up to £8 billion, EU structural funds should play a significant contribution to local partners' efforts to bring growth to local areas, which is why the issue remains a top LGA priority. At our February Board meeting, colleagues and I heard from Sue Baxter (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills), the Civil Servant leading the UK negotiations on structural fund reform, on the latest position in the EU-wide negotiations. It was reassuring to hear that within Government our arguments regarding the principles of localism have won out; however this does not mean that we will reduce our efforts in this area. We will now be turning our attention to focus on working with our member authorities and with the relevant Whitehall departments on the detail of how a devolved EU funding system will work at a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area level.
4. With this in mind, the LGA would be interested in finding out from councils how discussions are progressing locally between you and your LEP on this issue. Please send any updates to nick.porter@local.gov.uk. On 7 February, Ministers from Whitehall departments managing EU funds wrote to LEP chairs outlining next steps for developing local investment plans for using future EU growth and skills funds. However, we understand that the Government did not send this letter to councils, which we had urged them to do.
5. At our February meeting, Board colleagues and I also heard about practical ways in which local areas use European Investment Bank (EIB) financial engineering instruments such as JEREMIE and JESSICA can help secure growth in local areas. Such instruments will play an important role in the future alongside the traditional grants from the structural funds. It is therefore important that councils and their partners understand the opportunities that exist and help shape these investments in their local areas.

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Council's role in supporting International Trade and Investment

6. On 18 February 2013, Councillor Richard Kemp, Vice-Chair of the Board, met with senior UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) representatives with responsibility for Africa and Turkey, to discuss ways in which councils can support UKTI activity in these areas. These discussions form part of the Board's activities on international trade and investment as a means to promote local growth, and will also form the basis of a wider roundtable discussion that I will be hosting with UKTI on 19 March. Key topics to be discussed at this round table include how to ensure councils as well as LEPs are better engaged on international trade and investment issues by national government, so that our collective effort to promote the UK is better coordinated and more effective. If you have ideas you would like to put forward on this issue, please contact Russell Reefer (Policy Adviser) on russell.reefer@local.gov.uk.

The LGA Public Health Conference

7. I was pleased to be able to make a presentation at the LGA's Public Health Conference on Tuesday 26 February, highlighting the importance of localities addressing the increase in smoking that has occurred in younger age groups since 2005.
8. Of particular importance is the EU Commission's proposal on a new tobacco products labelling directive which addresses new developments in tobacco retailing, particularly in terms of products aimed at young women who perceive smoking and smoking products to contribute to an improved body image. I was able to highlight that new products on the market are clearly targeted at the junior end of the addiction ladder.

International Links: Learning and Sharing

Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)

9. On 30 January 2013, the CEMR Policy Committee agreed to the transfer of the CEMR Paris office to Brussels for reasons of efficiency and effectiveness. This has been a long-held ambition of the UK section, and represents a success for the LGA and its European Associations allies, particularly as it will be achieved at no cost to the subscribing associations.

Launch of 2014 RegioStars Awards

10. The European Commission has launched the 2014 RegioStars Awards. These awards aim to share good, innovative practices funded through the EU's Cohesion policy. The award categories for 2014 cover: SME innovation; green growth and jobs; creating jobs for young people; investment projects in sustainable urban public transport; and, energy efficiency and the low-carbon economy.
11. The deadline for applications is 19 April 2013. Further information on how to apply, including on the eligibility and awards criteria, can be found on the RegioStars website - http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/cooperate/regions_for_economic_change/regiostars_en.cfm. They can also be contacted at regio-stars@ec.europa.eu.

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Improvement & Innovation Board – Report from Councillor Peter Fleming (Chairman)

INNOVATION

Innovation Master Class

1. On 20 and 21 of February I attended the Innovation Masterclass for members under the Leadership Academy programme, giving the opening session on 'an introduction to innovation in local government' and the concluding remarks at the end of the second day. The Masterclass was well attended with over 20 members eager to learn about innovation and how politicians are pivotal to ensuring great ideas come to life. Members shared practical insights from Creative Councils who are exploring innovation in their own councils, as well as on behalf of the sector. On top of this members advanced their own innovation credentials by diagnosing how their council could be more innovative. Inputs were heard from the experiences of Nick Jankel - Ethical Entrepreneur at We Create, Robin Pharoah - Managing Director at Ethnographic Social Research Options (ESRO) and Melanie Oliver – Director of Local Innovation at Nesta. Alongside this the political challenges of innovation were explored by Councillor James Alexander, Leader, York City Council and Joan Munro. At the end of the Masterclass each member commenced upon a 30 day action learning set, supported by mentors, on a personal innovation challenge they wish to tackle using the techniques garnered during the sessions.

IMPROVEMENT

Taking the Lead – baseline evaluation

2. Last week I met with journalists from the Local Government Chronicle and Municipal Journal to brief them prior to publication of the baseline report of the LGA's evaluation of sector-led improvement. The findings of the baseline evaluation report have given us some very positive data. The sector-led approach to improvement is not a replacement for inspection, but rather it offers us the freedom to establish a constructive and positive environment in which to share new ideas, giving us a new way to ensure all councils meet the expectations and needs of their residents. The report demonstrates that there is strong support and confidence in the new sector led approach amongst council leaders and chief executives, with three quarters of council policy chiefs surveyed saying this approach is the best way to support improvement in the current climate. In addition to this, research also demonstrates that nearly two thirds of residents trust their local council and 72 per cent are satisfied with the way services are run. I think it is really encouraging to see senior officers and elected members engaging with the approach and taking up the LGA's offer of support. I have heard nothing but positive things from ministers and civil servants in the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Working together – local government and parliament

3. On 13 February 2013, along with Carolyn Downs, Chief Executive at the LGA, I was pleased to be able to speak at a joint LGA Houses of Parliament Outreach Service 'Working together – local government and parliament' event. The event was designed to find out more about how local government and parliament can work together effectively covering: the launch of the Parliamentary Outreach local government strategy, the work of select committees and how councils can get

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involved and how local government can benefit from engaging with parliament. Delegates also had the opportunity to sit in on a Select Committee in progress at the House of Commons.

LEADERSHIP

4. My fellow board member Councillor Helen Holland and former board member Councillor William Nunn both took part in the final interviews on 22 and 23 January to appoint the new providers for the Leadership Academy. The Leadership Academy is a skills development programme for leading councillors and has enhanced the leadership skills of over 2,200 members since its launch 13 years ago.

PRODUCTIVITY

Commissioning Academy Launch

5. A very successful launch of the Commissioning Academy was held at Local Government House and I am very pleased to say the Academy is now open for applications from councils across the country. Participants have to be sponsored by their Chief Executives, and on completion will implement 100 day change programmes to improve their organisation's commissioning practices – aimed at delivering better outcomes for local communities while increasing value for money. A key feature of the Academy will be the alumni network, where delegates will gain access to a supportive group of peers from across both local and central government who can share experiences and help each other deal with new challenges. The Commissioning Academy will begin in April 2013 and is now open for applications from senior level commissioners. If you want to find out more about applying to the Commissioning Academy please visit <https://www.gov.uk/the-commissioning-academy-information>.

Troubled Families Programme

6. It is great news that the Troubled Families Programme has selected a consortium of six organisations to be the provider that undertakes the evaluation of the national programme. The consortium will be able to bring strong expertise in collecting large amounts of data from hard to reach groups as well as experience of working with local authorities and partners across the UK as well as in Europe. The data from the first full quarter of activity shows local authorities have identified over 60,000 troubled families and to date 23,000 of them are receiving help through the programme. I think it is very positive that the number of families being helped is rising so rapidly and we are on target to reach 120,000 by 2015.

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

Communications Data Bill

1. Following the initial Home Office decision to reject the business case for councils to retain access to communications data, the Board's Vice-Chair Councillor Joanna Spicer met James Brokenshire MP, the responsible minister at the Home Office, at the end of February. Councillor Spicer highlighted how access to communications data helped councils protect residents and taxpayers from fraud, loan sharks, commercial flytippers and counterfeit goods. She pointed out additional safeguards in place since November, meaning local authorities now have to apply to magistrates' courts to access communications data. The Board will continue to press local authorities' case as the draft Bill progresses.

Horsemeat

2. The Board became involved in the horsemeat scandal in mid-February when the Chairman and Chief Executive of Iceland sought to blame local authorities and the price they were willing to pay for food for the presence of horsemeat in beef products. In addition to the LGA Chairman's appearance on the BBC, I appeared on Channel Four news alongside Iceland's Chairman to discuss the issue. In the interview I highlighted the inaccuracies in Iceland's claims, the legal responsibility on retailers to ensure what they were selling matched the description and the need for all parties involved to work together to restore public faith in the food industry. I also gave evidence to the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee on the role of councils in supporting businesses, enforcing food regulation, testing and the impact of financial pressures on these services.

Scrap Metal Dealers Act

3. With the Scrap Metal Dealers Act receiving Royal Assent at the end of February, I attended a reception hosted by Richard Ottaway MP at the beginning of March to mark the successful passage through parliament of his private member's bill, which became the Act. The reception was attended by a range of other organisations and bodies with an interest in reducing metal theft. The Home Office indicated that they plan to implement the new licensing regime the Act creates in October. LGA officers are already in discussion with civil servants over the implementation programme.

Better Regulation Delivery Office

4. I attended the Better Regulation Delivery Office (BRDO) Business Reference Panel to lead a discussion on the role of councils in promoting growth and supporting local businesses, in the specific context of regulation. These discussions link directly to work the LGA is doing to ensure that regulation is put at the core of the growth offering, with the aim of ensuring councils have the freedom and tools to respond to the unique needs of local businesses and target resources at the areas that are of most concern to residents.

Licensing and locally-set fees

5. The Board has continued to support peer-led improvement in the licensing system with a sold out conference on 5 February. Chaired by Councillor Spicer, and with speeches from Councillors Canver, Huddart, and Haines, the conference addressed key changes in the licensing system that will allow councils to take a strategic overview of the sale of alcohol in their areas, particularly linking it for the first time with their new public health responsibilities. The Board also took the opportunity to press the Government to deliver on its commitment to introducing locally-set fees, allowing councils to address the imbalance that has seen taxpayers subsidise the industry by over £100 million.

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Peer Support

6. Councillor Shona Johnstone participated on a new peer challenge with Gloucestershire Office of the PCC and Gloucestershire Safer and Stronger Justice Commission from 20-22 February, resulting in a more efficient community safety delivery structure across the force area.
7. Councillor Kay Hammond attended a fire peer review in Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service from 26 February to 1 March. This identified new opportunities for the Fire Authority to develop its leadership role, engage in wider partnerships such as with the new Police and Crime Commissioner and Health and Wellbeing Boards, and streamline the Committee structure. It found notable practice around arson and restorative justice which will be shared more widely.

Fire Services College

8. Councillor Hammond, Chairman of the Fire Services Management Committee attended the formal signing of the sale of the Fire Service College to Capita. The sale follows recommendations from the Fire Services Management Committee to government on options for securing the future of the college.

Annual Fire Conference

9. Councillor Hammond will chair the LGA's Annual Fire Conference from 12-13 March in Brighton. This flagship event has attracted over 260 delegates, with all English Fire and Rescue Authorities attending. The Minister, Brandon Lewis is due to make a keynote speech on the second day. Other speakers and sessions include the new Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser, PCC David Lloyd talking about interoperability between the blue light services; the merger of the Scottish Fire Service; peer challenge; shared Chief Fire Officers; and shared control arrangements. Councillor Hammond will announce a new Leadership Academy for September as part of the LGA's strengthened fire offer; and publish a financial outlook for fire booklet.

Sir Ken Knight's Review

10. Councillor Hammond met Sir Ken Knight to discuss the emerging findings of his review into efficiencies in the fire service. He will attend the Fire Services Management Committee on 11 March to share thoughts in more detail. Recommendations are likely to focus on the need for sharing good practice; workforce; governance arrangements; and scrutiny.

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

Pensions

1. The third reading of the Public Service Pensions Bill took place in the House of Lords on Tuesday 26 February. The LGA, working with local government trade unions, has been successful in lobbying for amendments to the Bill.
2. The Government has amended clauses on retrospection, negative revaluation, scheme managers and boards, member representation, and the extension of other schemes. The Government has also given assurances and clarification around the issue of scheme closure, the employer cost cap for the Local Government pension Scheme (LGPS), and provision for fair deal in the LGPS.
3. The Bill now returns to the House of Commons and is expected to be enacted in the coming weeks.
4. Work continues between the LGA, local government trade unions and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on putting in place scheme regulations for the LGPS from April 2014. Two further consultations are expected this month; one is a second iteration of the draft LGPS Membership, Contributions and Benefit regulations (originally issued for consultation on 21 December 2012) and also a consultation on draft LGPS Transitional Provisions covering the protections in place for existing scheme members.

Local Government Services

5. At a meeting of the National Joint Council Executive on 21 of February, the National Employers asked the Trade Union Side of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services to consider two options in response to their pay claim. These are set out below:

Option 1

- 5.1 1.0 per cent on all pay points from 1 April 2013;
- 5.2 National Joint Council (NJC) mileage rates replaced by HMRC Approved Mileage Rates (<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/rates/travel.htm>) for those councils currently applying NJC rates, from a date to be agreed (*Green Book Part 2 Para 12 and Part 3 Para 6 refers*);
- 5.3 Unilateral arbitration clause replaced by bilateral reference, from date to be agreed (*Green Book Constitution Para 17 refers*);
- 5.4 An increase in the minimum paid annual leave entitlement from 21 days to 22 days, from a date to be agreed (*Green Book Part 2 Para 7.2 refers*);
- 5.5 Increase in continuous service entitlement for the purposes of calculation of entitlements to annual leave, occupational maternity leave / pay and occupational sick pay from return to service within five years to within ten years of the original transfer, from a date to be agreed (*Green Book Part 2 Para 14.2 and 14.3 refers*);
- 5.6 Joint statement providing a list of the issues on which both Sides agree to commence immediate serious discussions.; and
- 5.7 All dates for implementation of changes to be agreed as part of final deal.

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Option 2

5.8 1.0 per cent on pay points 4 to 10 from 1 April 2013; and

5.9 0.6 per cent on pay points 11 and above from 1 April 2013.

6. The meeting was adjourned and the unions have undertaken to consider the options before them and to give us their response in the next few weeks.

Public Health Workforce Transition

7. The Secretary of State has issued the final version of the transfer schemes that will be used to move public health staff to local government, as well as other NHS staff moving elsewhere, on 1 April. The documents have been made available to councils who are urged to study them carefully before making decisions on their local options. Advice is available from the LGA which has sought to ensure that councils have as much flexibility as possible in making local changes, whilst acknowledging the need to provide Transfer of Undertaking (Protection of Employment Regulations (TUPE) - like protections for staff.

Fire

8. The NJC for Local Authority Fire and Rescue Services is currently working on two joint reviews. The first relates to reform of pay and terms and conditions and a workshop for members of the Employers' Side and advisers was held recently to continue formulation of the Employers' Side aspirations in preparation for joint discussion. The second relates to identification of an appropriate mileage rate for Grey Book staff. The Employers' aspiration is to move to HMRC rates.

Youth and Community

9. The National Youth Agency (NYA) continues to coordinate the development of an Institute for Youth Work. The National Employers are seeking greater clarity on the role and status of the Body but in principle has given it its support.
10. The annual workforce survey is being undertaken of the youth and community workforce employed in both local authorities and the voluntary sector in England and Wales. The results of the survey are expected to inform the 2013 pay round.

Soulbury

11. At the last Soulbury Committee meeting, the National Employers agreed to hold Joint Secretarial discussions on elements of the Officers' Side 2012 claim. As a result of this, joint guidance is to be produced on consultation and negotiation with the Soulbury unions at a local level and guidance on the employment of Trainee Education Psychologists has been reissued. The Officers' Side has also asked for guidance on job evaluation and will provide a specification on this for consideration by the National Employers.

Workforce Podcast

12. In our spring edition of our Workforce News podcast we look at what councils are doing to prepare for the radical changes facing our sector. Joanna Killian, Chief Executive of Essex County Council, and Kieran Humphrey, Partnership Contract Manager from Bournemouth Borough Council, talk about the service transformation work they are undertaking and explain the impact of this on their workforces. We also talk to Adam Barker from the LGA about how some councils are changing to deliver their services through employee mutuals.

Management levels of accountability, layers and spans

13. The workforce team are working with Stanton Marris to develop a cost effective tool for local authorities who wish to review the number of layers and spans of control within their organisations.

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Finance Panel – report from Councillor Sharon Taylor OBE (Chair)

The local government finance settlement

1. The Local Government Finance Settlement was debated and approved by Parliament on 13 February. The LGA briefed parliamentarians and our briefing was quoted extensively on all sides of the House, as was the comment by LGA Chairman Councillor Sir Merrick Cockell that the finance settlement for 2014-15 is unsustainable. The LGA will now be working on the detailed implications of the settlement. One key issue is the announcement by the Government that they intend to change the way levies are dealt with in the calculation of the council tax increase. Ministers have said that they will look closely at any authorities who increase their basic rate of council tax by more than 2 per cent as a result of levies but do not volunteer to hold a referendum under the 2011 Localism Act. The LGA will be having detailed discussions with Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) officials on exactly how it will work.

The spending review

2. At the Finance Panel Office Holders meeting on 13 February, we discussed the potential content of a spending review submission. Officers were asked to share a submission covering the key themes of growth, community budgets, the risks from welfare reform, social care funding and local discretion over local taxes with the Panel for comment in advance of the LGA Executive meeting on 14 March.
3. We also agreed to extend the panel meeting on 22 March to discuss the new model for local government which is currently the subject of the LGA's regional roadshows.
4. Officers have also set up an officer level spending review reference group made up of chief executives, service heads and finance directors. It will meet for the first time on 12 March.

Public Accounts Committee

5. On Monday 25 February LGA Chief Executive Carolyn Downs appeared before the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) to discuss the National Audit Office report on the financial sustainability of local government, alongside Tony Travers from the London School of Economics.
6. As you would expect from the PAC, a robust discussion was held between Carolyn and the Committee, touching on a broad range of subjects such as personal service contracts, reserves, and the long term funding model for local government. The session went well and Carolyn was able to give a strong account of the sector. In particular she defended the rationale for local authorities holding reserves and was able to set out the financial reality behind the perception from some MPs that money was being held back due to bad planning or management. The session is available to watch online on the following link - <http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Main/Player.aspx?meetingId=12660&player=windowsmedia>.

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Universal Credit - Local Support services Framework

7. At the November 2012 meeting of the Finance Panel, we instructed officers to work with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to develop an account of the possible future role of councils in the delivery of Universal Credit (UC), and to open up a process of co-design and debate with the sector. The Local Support Services Framework was developed by a joint DWP/LGA task group and shaped by a reference group of local authorities which was chaired by a Chief Executive (Alan Graham – Rushcliffe). The Framework describes the sort of support services councils might need to provide or commission for UC claimants, and how those services might be paid for and managed.
8. The Framework was published on Monday 11 February, with a Foreword from Lord Freud and an Introduction from Sir Merrick Cockell. A separate letter was sent out from the Chairman's office to all Leaders inviting their comments on the document. I presented the framework to the LGA Executive on 14 February, at which there was a really useful discussion. Members raised a number of unresolved issues which are of concern to local councils. With the first phase of consultation concluding on 15 March 2013, the Executive has mandated the Finance Panel to aggregate councils' responses to the Framework and set out a collective sector view. I will be presenting the consultation responses to the 14 March Executive meeting.

Local authority led Universal Credit Face to Face Pilots

9. The local authority pilots are progressing well. Each of them are at different stages of progression. The DWP will be publishing the first round of findings from the pilots in April. An update on all of the pilots will be available by the end of the week. In particular it is worth noting that Birmingham has been able to identify £6.4 million in unclaimed benefit through their work.

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Resources Panel – Report from Councillor Stephen Castle (Chairman)

1. Liberata currently provides Finance, Human Resources, ICT Facilities and Print and Design services to the LGA. In November 2012, the Resources Panel agreed to a fundamental renegotiation of the Liberata contract subject to savings in the region of £5 million being achieved over the remaining five years of the contract. The contract has now been renegotiated in line with the steer given by the Resources Panel. To achieve this, Liberata are making some service changes, and also introducing incentives for the LGA to reduce costs in a number of areas, moving away from the original fixed-price nature of the contract. The Resources Panel will continue to monitor progress with the contract and in particular, progress with delivering the agreed savings.
2. The Panel reviewed the LGA's medium-term financial strategy and final proposals for the 2013/14 budget, for recommendation to March Executive. Reductions in the cost of the Liberata contract mean that the LGA has a stand-still budget for next year in spite of reductions in subscription income and also Revenue Support Grant topslice. Securing a balanced budget in 2013/14 will therefore be challenging but achievable.
3. The Panel reviewed the LGA's performance against the current year's business plan for the third quarter, including financial performance. On current projections the LGA is expected to manage within its resources in 2012/13 including the one-off costs associated with the Liberata changes.
4. Members reviewed progress with ICT at the LGA and noted that progress has been made in improving the LGA's governance arrangements in this area, and that an ICT strategy for the LGA has now been agreed.
5. Members received a report on progress with the LGA's internal audit programme for 2012/13. "Substantial assurance" audit opinions have been provided for Procurement and Human Resources, and an "adequate assurance" opinion for Income Generating Activities, where action is being taken to implement the internal auditor's recommendations.

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Item 3 (I)

**Local Authority Bonds Task and Finish Group – Report from
Councillor Edward Lord JP OBE (Chairman)**

The business case

1. The Leadership Board considered a report on progress in this area. The meeting restated its desire for this work to continue and to be given a high priority by the LGA. The Task and Finish Group were instructed to continue to oversee this work.
2. In agreeing this it was recognised that a local authority agency supports the LGA's proposals of a new working arrangement for local government. Councils in other countries are trusted to manage their affairs in this area - and we believe similar arrangements should apply here.

The task and finish group

3. The Task and Finish group instructed officers across the LGA to develop a set of activities to take this project forward.
4. A fuller briefing will be reported at the next Councillors' Forum.

Pre-budget

5. The LGA is pressing Government for a commitment to jointly develop an agency. The economic case for that agency will form a key part of the pre-budget submission.

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Digest of Meeting

Title: Councillors' Forum
Date and time: 14 February 2013, 12.30pm
Venue: The Westminster Suite, Local Government House

Item

Welcome and Introductions

Councillor Sir Merrick Cockell, Chairman of the LGA, welcomed members to the Forum meeting. The Chairman introduced speaker Lord Chris Smith, Chairman of the Environment Agency (EA), for a talk on the role of councils and the EA in planning for and responding to climate risks, including flooding, with a question and answer session to follow.

1 Climate Challenges

Members received a talk from Lord Chris Smith in which he spoke about cultural change at the EA towards better partnership working with communities and their local authorities. He opened by discussing how 2012 began with three months of drought, with residents being subject to hosepipe and sprinkler bans and ground water levels at their lowest for a decade.

However, this was followed by rainfall being at 161 per cent of the normal amount in the last nine months of 2012. The MET Office reported that 2012 was the second wettest twelve month period ever recorded in the UK and the wettest ever recorded in England. Lord Smith particularly emphasised how this was concentrated over the last three quarters of the year.

On the impacts of this extreme weather, Lord Smith explained how there were 11 major flooding events across 2012 and 7,950 properties were flooded. However, he mentioned that 200,000 properties were successfully protected by defences which had been built in the last 20 years.

Lord Smith noted that one lesson to be learnt from this is that flood defences can result in enormous economic and wellbeing benefits. He also said that we need to be more prepared for future extreme weather and that working together on flood risk management can help us to do this.

On the causes of flooding, Lord Smith talked about how out of the 7,950 houses that were flooded last year, 3,000 were flooded solely by rivers bursting, 167 from sea water and 4,750 from a variety of sources, largely including surface water and drainage overflow, thus an important area for partnership working between local authorities and the EA.

Highlighting that flooding does not respect different flood protection remits of different agencies and authorities, Lord Smith emphasised how important it is to work together, as is being done in many areas, when protecting residents from the threat of flooding. Lord Smith gave particular mention to the joint working arrangements in Lincolnshire, where they pool their expertise and resources in maintenance work. He described this as a very good example of getting synergy out of joined-up thinking and working together to take a common approach to managing climate challenges, emphasising that there is scope for this to happen up and down the country. Lord Smith commended the work being done in Lincolnshire, which was initiated by Leicestershire as part of the Total Environment initiative

which the LGA championed.

The Chairman opened the floor for questions from the Forum and members raised several issues which were addressed in turn.

Key issues raised in the discussion were as follows:

- The importance of inland as well as coastal protection;
- Equal treatment for rich and poor areas;
- Difficulties in discouraging developers from building in flood-risk areas; and
- The impact on the economy of flooding.

The Chairman then invited Councillor Robert Light, Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council and Deputy Chair of the Environment Agency Board to say a few words on local government's role. He told members that he would continue to drive for cultural change at the EA towards working with local authorities and councillors, because it is local councillors who make a difference on the ground. Councillor Light thanked the LGA's Environment and Housing Board, and its Chairman Councillor Mike Jones, for their work in this area.

The Chairman thanked Lord Smith and Councillor Light for their contributions and thanked members for a lively and interesting discussion.

2 Chairman's Update

Members noted and accepted the Chairman's report and in addition discussed the current Horsemeat Investigations and Food Testing.

3 LGA Board and Panel Chairs' Reports

Members noted the updates from each of the LGA's Board Chairs. In addition to the reports:

- 3.1** Councillor David Rogers OBE, Chair of the Community Wellbeing Board, updated members of the Dilnot announcement this week on the housing cap. Members also discussed the release of the Frances II Report;
- 3.2** Councillor David Wilcox OBE, Chair of the European and International Board, updated members on structural funds and their availability;
- 3.3** Councillor Mehboob Khan, Chair of the Safer and Stronger Communities Board, updated members on the Scrap Metal Dealers Bill receiving Royal Assent and reported this as a win for the LGA following its successful campaigning;
- 3.4** Mayor Sir Steve Bullock, Chair of the Workforce Board, updated members on national negotiations; and
- 3.5** Councillor Sharon Taylor OBE, Chair of the Finance Panel, updated members on the LGA's joint document with the Department for Work and Pensions on Universal Credit. She invited members' responses and comments and asked for them to be sent to Paul Raynes at paul.raynes@local.gov.uk. Councillor Taylor also mentioned the conference on Universal Credit on 8 March, of which more details can be found at www.local.gov.uk/events.

Date of next meeting: Thursday 14 March 2013, 12:30pm, Local Government House

LGA location map

Local Government Association

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Bus routes – Millbank

87 Wandsworth - Aldwych

3 Crystal Palace - Brixton - Oxford Circus

For further information, visit the Transport for London website at www.tfl.gov.uk

Public transport

Local Government House is well served by public transport. The nearest mainline stations are: Victoria and Waterloo: the local underground stations are

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

Buses 3 and 87 travel along Millbank, and the 507 between Victoria and Waterloo stops in Horseferry Road close to Dean Bradley Street.

Bus routes – Horseferry Road

507 Waterloo - Victoria

C10 Canada Water - Pimlico - Victoria

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

Cycling facilities

The nearest Barclays cycle hire racks are in Smith Square. Cycle racks are also available at Local Government House. Please telephone the LGA on 020 7664 3131.

Central London Congestion Charging Zone

Local Government House is located within the congestion charging zone.

For further details, please call 0845 900 1234 or visit the website at www.cclondon.com

Car parks

Abingdon Street Car Park (off Great College Street)

Horseferry Road Car Park
Horseferry Road/Arneway Street. Visit the website at www.westminster.gov.uk/parking

