

Councillors' Forum

Agenda

Thursday 12 September 2013
12.15pm

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

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Councillors' Forum
12 September 2013

The **Councillors' Forum** meeting will be held on **Thursday 12 September 2013 at 12.15pm** 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	Meeting Room 6 (6 th floor)

Lunch will be served in The Terrace Lounge (7th Floor) after the Councillors' Forum from 1.15pm 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

Jonathan Yeates (Tel: 020 7664 3236, Email: jonathan.yeates@local.gov.uk)

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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.

Social Media

The LGA is committed to using social media in a co-ordinated and sensible way, as part of a strategic approach to communications, to help enhance the reputation of local government, improvement engagement with different elements of the community and drive efficiency. Please feel free to use social media during this meeting. **However, you are requested not to use social media during any confidential items.**



Councillors' Forum 2013-2014

This Forum comprises a core group of 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 [39]	
Sir Merrick Cockell [Chairman]	Local Government Association
Tony Ball	Basildon Borough Council
Teresa O'Neill	Bexley Council
Paul Bettison	Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Geoffrey Theobald OBE	Brighton & Hove City Council
Martin Tett	Buckinghamshire County Council
Paul Findlow	Cheshire East Council
Mike Jones	Cheshire West and Chester Council
Ken Taylor OBE	Coventry City Council
Andrew Lewer	Derbyshire County Council
Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
David Simmonds	Hillingdon London Borough Council
Paul Carter	Kent County Council
Robert Light	Kirklees Metropolitan Council
Clare Whelan OBE	Lambeth London Borough Council
Martin Hill OBE	Lincolnshire County Council
Bill Borrett	Norfolk County Council
Marco Cereste	Peterborough City Council
Ken Hudson JP MBE	Preston City Council
Neil Clarke	Rushcliffe Borough Council
Peter Fleming	Sevenoaks District Council
Kate Wild	Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
Gary Porter	South Holland District Council
Jeff Milburn	South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council
Philip Atkins	Staffordshire County Council
Sir William Lawrence Bt	Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Joanna Spicer	Suffolk County Council
Mark Bee	Suffolk County Council
Kay Hammond	Surrey County Council
David Hodge	Surrey County Council
Gordon Keymer CBE	Tandridge District Council
Ravi Govindia	Wandsworth London Borough Council
Louise Goldsmith	West Sussex County Council
Melvyn Caplan	Westminster City Council
Andrew Bowles	Swale Borough Council
Jonathan Owen	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
David Finch	Essex County Council
Colin Noble	Suffolk County Council
Phillippa Roe	Westminster City Council

Labour [39]	
Sharon Taylor	Stevenage Borough Council
Bryony Rudkin	Suffolk County Council
Judi Billing	North Hertfordshire District Council
Caitlin Bisknell	High Peak Borough Council
Graham Chapman	Nottingham City Council
Eion Watts	Bolsover District Council
John Bevan	Haringey Council
Clyde Loakes	Waltham Forest London Borough Council
Claire Kober	Haringey Council
Steve Bullock	Lewisham London Borough Council
Jules Pipe	Hackney London Borough Council
Paul Watson	Sunderland City Council
Simon Henig	Durham County Council
Ian Swithenbank	Northumberland Council
Nick Forbes	Newcastle upon Tyne City Council
Jim McMahon	Oldham Metropolitan Council
Sue Murphy	Manchester City Council
Linda Thomas	Bolton Council
Richard Leese	Manchester City Council
John Joyce	Cheshire Fire Authority
Simon Blackburn	Blackpool Council
Peter Smith	Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
Colin Lloyd	Crawley Borough Council
Kate Haigh	Gloucester City Council
David Phillips	Swansea City and County Council
David Sparks OBE	Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
Ann Lucas	Coventry City Council
Sue Woodward	Staffordshire County Council
Roger Lawrence	Wolverhampton City Council
James Alexander	City of York Council
Keith Wakefield	Leeds City Council
Peter Box	Wakefield Metropolitan Borough Council
Mehboob Khan	Kirklees Metropolitan Council
TBC	ALC Rep
TBC	ALC Rep
TBC	ALC Rep
TBC	ALC Rep
TBC	ALC Rep
TBC	ALC Rep
<i>Labour Sub Pool [26]:</i>	
<i>Sian Timoney</i>	<i>Luton Borough Council</i>
<i>Julie Young</i>	<i>Essex County Council</i>
<i>Chris Fegan</i>	<i>Chelmsford City Council</i>
<i>Michael Payne</i>	<i>Gedling Borough Council</i>
<i>Anne Western</i>	<i>Derbyshire County Council</i>
<i>Paul Bayliss</i>	<i>Derby City Council</i>
<i>Rory Palmer</i>	<i>Leicester City Council</i>
<i>Lib Peck</i>	<i>Lambeth London Borough Council</i>
<i>Catherine West</i>	<i>Islington Council</i>
<i>Robin Wales</i>	<i>Newham London Borough Council</i>

<i>Jagdish Sharma</i>	<i>Hounslow London Borough council</i>
<i>Len Duvall AM</i>	<i>Greater London Authority</i>
<i>Iain Malcolm</i>	<i>South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough</i>
<i>Kate Hollern</i>	<i>Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council</i>
<i>Mike Connolly</i>	<i>Bury Metropolitan Borough Council</i>
<i>Ronnie Round</i>	<i>Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council</i>
<i>Tony McDermott</i>	<i>Halton Borough Council</i>
<i>Nick Crofts</i>	<i>Liverpool City Council</i>
<i>Barrie Grunewald</i>	<i>St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council</i>
<i>Mike Roberts</i>	<i>Rushmoor Borough Council</i>
<i>Roger Hutchinson</i>	<i>South Gloucestershire Council</i>
<i>Tudor Evans</i>	<i>Plymouth City Council</i>
<i>Aaron Shotton</i>	<i>Flintshire County Council</i>
<i>Steve Houghton</i>	<i>Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council</i>
<i>Roger Stone OBE</i>	<i>Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council</i>
<i>Judith Blake</i>	<i>Leeds City Council</i>
Liberal Democrat [13]	
<i>Barbara Janke</i>	<i>Bristol City Council</i>
<i>Lisa Brett</i>	<i>Bath and North East Somerset Council</i>
<i>Keith House</i>	<i>Eastleigh Borough Council</i>
<i>Jeremy Hilton</i>	<i>Gloucestershire County Council</i>
<i>Liz Green</i>	<i>Kingston upon Thames Royal Borough Council</i>
<i>Richard Kemp CBE</i>	<i>Liverpool City Council</i>
<i>Claire Hudson</i>	<i>Mendip District Council</i>
<i>Howard Sykes</i>	<i>Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council</i>
<i>Heather Kidd</i>	<i>Shropshire Council</i>
<i>Jill Shortland OBE</i>	<i>Somerset County Council</i>
<i>Cathy Bakewell MBE</i>	<i>South Somerset District Council</i>
<i>Stan Collins</i>	<i>South Lakeland District Council</i>
<i>Lord Graham Tope CBE</i>	<i>Sutton London Borough Council</i>
Liberal Democrat Sub Pool [11]:	
<i>Tim Bick</i>	<i>Cambridge City Council</i>
<i>Flick Rea MBE</i>	<i>Camden Council</i>
<i>Edward Lord OBE JP</i>	<i>City of London Corporation</i>
<i>Hilary Jones</i>	<i>Derby City Council</i>
<i>David Neighbour</i>	<i>Hart District Council</i>
<i>Chris White</i>	<i>Hertfordshire County Council</i>
<i>Abigail Bell</i>	<i>Hull City Council</i>
<i>Terry Stacy MBE JP</i>	<i>Islington Council</i>
<i>Jeff Reid</i>	<i>Northumberland Council</i>
<i>Alan Connett</i>	<i>Teignbridge District council</i>
<i>Mayor Dorothy Thornhill</i>	<i>Watford Borough Council</i>
Independent [9]	
<i>Paul Cullen</i>	<i>Richmondshire District Council</i>
<i>Norman Bradbury</i>	<i>Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council</i>

Pauline Dee	Shropshire Council
Peter Jones	Babergh District Council
Chris Townsend	Mole Valley District and Surrey County Council
Julian German	Cornwall Council
Sir David Wootton	City of London Corporation
Pamela Hargreaves	Hartlepool Borough Council
TBC	
<i>Independent Sub Pool [3]:</i>	
<i>Marianna Overton</i>	<i>Lincolnshire County Council</i>
<i>Peter Reeve</i>	<i>Cambridgeshire County Council</i>
<i>Bob Dutton OBE</i>	<i>Wrexham County Borough Council</i>

Agenda

Councillors' Forum

Thursday 12 September 2013

12.15pm – 1.15pm

The Westminster Suite, Local Government House

	Item	Page	Time
1.	Nick Boles MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Planning, Department for Communities and Local Government Nick Bowles, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Planning at DCLG will speak to Councillors' Forum about planning issues. This is an opportunity for members to raise issues for local government.	3	12.15pm
2.	Chairman's Update	9	1.05pm
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 Katie Hall c. Culture, Tourism & Sport Board – Councillor Flick Rea MBE d. Economy & Transport Board – Councillor Peter Box CBE e. Environment & Housing Board – Councillor Mike Jones f. European & International Board – Councillor Clarence Barrett g. Improvement and Innovation Board – Councillor Peter Fleming h. Safer & Stronger Communities Board – Councillor Mehboob Khan i. Workforce Board – Councillor Jim McMahon j. Finance Panel – Councillor Sharon Taylor OBE 	11	1.10pm
4.	Digest of Last Meeting	37	

Date of Next Meeting: Thursday 24 October 2013, 12:30pm, LGH, Westminster Suite

Item 1

**Nick Boles MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for
Planning, Department for Communities and Local Government**

Summary

Nick Boles MP is speaking to the Councillors' Forum on planning issues. This is an opportunity for members to raise issues for local government.

A biography is included as **Appendix A**.

Purpose of report

To provide a summary overview of LGA work in relation to planning to inform the discussion.

Recommendation

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

Action

As directed by the Forum.

Contact officer:

Position:

Phone no:

E-mail:

Caroline Green

Senior Adviser

020 664 3359

caroline.green@local.gov.uk

Item 1

**Nick Boles MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for
Planning, Department for Communities and Local Government**

Overview

1. There has been significant reform to the planning system under the current government including: the streamlining of national planning policy and a new emphasis on local plans with the introduction of the national planning policy framework; abolition of regional spatial strategies and the introduction of the duty to cooperate and most recently consolidation of planning guidance in a web-based resource. The government have also extended permitted development rights and introduced a new performance regime for councils dealing with major applications.

Summary of LGA work on planning:

2. The LGA's work on planning is focused on:

Promoting a locally-led planning system

- 2.1 Making the case for local democratic decision making as a means of proactively driving growth whilst ensuring that residents and businesses have a say about development that affects them. This includes:
 - 2.1.1 Evidencing and promoting the work that is taking place by councils to get plans in place, work with communities and developers to secure infrastructure, homes and development to support local economies;
 - 2.1.2 providing evidenced arguments against measures which undermine local decision making on planning; and
 - 2.1.3 developing proposals for how tools and processes within the planning system could be simplified and improved to support councils in providing a fast and effective planning service.

Strategic planning for infrastructure and growth

- 2.2 Addressing the positive role that councils have in planning for and leveraging in funding and investment for infrastructure and working across local authority boundaries to meet wider needs and growth ambitions.

Supporting councils to drive improvement in planning

- 2.3 We also have a comprehensive programme of support for councils on planning through the grant funded Planning Advisory Service (PAS). Key priorities for the programme are support for plan making, leadership of planning, councils working together on strategic planning issues and improving planning services (including support for those at risk under the new performance regime for major applications).

Item 1

To ensure the support offered by PAS is sector-led, the programme is overseen by a Board with representatives from across local government the LGA and DCLG.

Item 1

Appendix A

Biography



Nick Boles was appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Planning in September 2012.

The minister is responsible for:

- planning and development
- local growth
- deregulation

He was elected as the Conservative MP for Grantham and Stamford in May 2010.

Education

Nick went to school at Winchester College before going on to study politics, philosophy and economics at Magdalen College, Oxford. He went on to do a Masters in public policy at Harvard University in the US after winning a Kennedy Scholarship.

Political career

Nick was elected to Westminster Council in 1998 and became Chairman of Housing. He was chairman of the Housing Committee from 1999 to 2001, before stepping down in 2002. In 2007, Nick was appointed as Head of David Cameron's Implementation Team, which drew up the Conservative Party's detailed plans for government.

In November 2010, he was appointed Parliamentary Private Secretary to Nick Gibb MP, the Minister of State for Schools. Nick is also a political fellow at the Institute for Government and is the founder, and a former director, of Policy Exchange, a centre right policy research institute.

Item 1

Career outside politics

Nick spent the first 10 years of his career in business. He worked as a merchant banker for a few years in Germany, Russia and Eastern Europe, helping state owned industries prepare for private ownership. He and a friend later formed a small group of companies supplying the DIY industry.

Personal life

Nick lives with his partner Shay Meshulam.

Chairman's Update July and August 2013

Local Government Association (LGA) business

1. With the LGA Annual Conference behind us, I embarked on a letter writing exercise in August to send our **Rewiring Public Services** publications far and wide. Reaching every government department, the diary is filling up with ministerial meetings now that the House has returned from recess.
2. The LGA has been working with the **Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)** on a new publication – '**Local Procurement, Making the most of small businesses, one year on**'. In July I spoke at a joint launch event for this report at Local Government House. During my speech, I welcomed the report's positive findings and the increasingly collaborative approach adopted between councils and small businesses.
3. Alongside MPs Eric Pickles, Greg Clark, Don Foster and Clive Betts and the LSE's Tony Travers, I gave a presentation at the **Independent Local Government Conference** held by the **Political and Constitutional Reform Committee** on 11 July. The day included roundtables on funding, the Select Committee's proposed Code, and on options for legislation.
4. At the end of July I hosted a joint LGA/NALC conference with **Eric Pickles MP** at Local Government House, titled '**Unlocking the General Power of Competence**'. My speech highlighted the challenges and opportunities that this power poses to local authorities to innovate and emphasised the importance of Whitehall's role in supporting this aim by providing stability of funding, protection from central interference and a "local is best" approach.
5. In August, both the **Leadership Board** and **LGA Executive** considered the outcome of the 2013 Spending Round announced in June, reviewing progress in each of the LGA's work areas and considering priorities for the next 12 months. The LGA Executive received very positive initial **feedback from the annual conference** and an oral update was given on the next steps for the *Rewiring Public Services* campaign, which was launched during the event.

Ministerial/Parliamentary business

6. As relationships continue to develop at the Department of Health, Carolyn and I met with **Norman Lamb MP**, Minister of State for Care and Support and **Dr Daniel Poulter MP**, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health, to discuss a number of matters including progress on Health Visitor transitions.
7. In July and August, I also met:
 - 7.1 **Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP**, Deputy Prime Minister, at a roundtable on youth unemployment. The Cabinet Secretary **Sir Jeremy Heywood** held a follow up meeting on the same subject which I also attended. The LGA will look to host a further roundtable with the Cabinet Office at the end of August.

- 7.2 **Rt Hon David Laws MP**, Minister of State for Schools to discuss 16-19 yr provision and employer based training. I also took the opportunity to promote our Rewiring Public Services objectives.
- 7.3 **Rt Hon Greg Clarke MP**, Financial Secretary to the Treasury for a general discussion alongside Conservative Group Leader Gary Porter.
- 7.4 **Lord Currie**, Chairman Designate of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and based at the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills to hear how the CMA will be established in October 2013.

Meetings with other organisations and individuals

- 8. In August, I met with **Sir Tony Hawkhead CBE** to discuss how local authorities and Groundwork UK can work together to improve youth unemployment and services available for 16-24 year olds.
- 9. Continuing our series of meetings and events with the **Federation of Small Businesses**, I met with Policy Chairman **Mike Cherry** to discuss our recent body of work on Rewiring Public Services and how to support growth in the SME sector.
- 10. Michael Coughlin and I met with **Blackberry UK** on 20 August to discuss their **offer to local authorities**.
- 11. I also had a number of informal evening engagements and speaking events, including dropping in to the **Local Partnerships Summer Reception** held here at Local Government House.

Meetings with councillors and member councils

- 12. In July, I was invited to give the opening address at a conference at **Reading University** entitled '**Are universities good neighbours?**' This event focussed on the impact university has on its immediate neighbours and their role in shaping local communities.
- 13. I also provided a national perspective at the **Annual General Meeting of South West Councils** on 15 July.
- 14. During visits to London Boroughs in August, I met with **Ealing Leader Cllr Julian Bell** and **Chief Executive Martin Smith**, and **Havering Leader Cllr Michael White** to discuss current challenges and opportunities in their respective boroughs.

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

Safeguarding Children

1. On 1 August I appeared on a BBC Newsnight panel discussion to speak about what was being done to improve the way children are protected from abuse and neglect. Following on from tragic cases including Daniel Pelka, I explained the system in some areas needed to be better. Councils throughout the county are seeking to have a balance of staff with both the quality and experience to pick up these issues whilst having social services that responds quickly to matters brought to their attention. Councils are striving to improve coordination between departments with schools, health and social services communicating concerns between each other, effective safeguarding of children can only be achieved by understanding that the needs of children are paramount and every individual and agency need to play their part, working together and fully understanding their responsibilities.

Joint CYP/CWB Meeting on Children's Health

2. Since the last report we have held a joint CYP/CWB meeting where there was a discussion on transfer of Public Health Commissioning for 0-5 year olds to local government in 2015. Office holders agreed that the transfer needed to focus on the outcomes, looking at what we want to achieve instead of the bureaucracy of the process; make sure all sides including NHS England, the government, councils and the LGA are working together and sharing information in an open manner; stress the need to get this topic put on Health and Wellbeing agendas across the country; emphasise to councils how they can best help prepare the ground for the transition, including sharing best practice examples; demonstrate to NHS England that there is real enthusiasm from councils to make this process run smoothly using open communication, best practice examples and outcomes focused planning.

Action research into more effective commissioning of children's homes

3. In July we launched the final report on the LGA commissioned Office of Public Management's (OPM) work with ten local authorities in action research into more effective strategic commissioning of children's residential care homes. The report summarises the findings and some recommendations for the sector. Given the high profile recently placed on children's homes and the recent Government proposals affecting them, we hope this report will be a helpful resource to explore some of the issues affecting councils' commissioning of children's homes.

Population Increases putting pressure on local government finances

4. On 9 August I gave an interview to BBC Radio 4's The World Tonight about the news of a population increase in the UK and the impact these demographic pressures had on local government finance. I explained it was clear that with a growing population and people living to an older age we would need a fundamental rewiring of the way public services are provided and paid for in this country though taking financial distribution out of ministers' hands and replacing it with agreement across English local government.

Youth Unemployment

5. Over the summer we have pushed the case for local authorities to have a greater levers over services to help young people into work and learning. This has included publishing a poll of unemployed young people which found services too complicated and poorly targeted to their personal needs, a press release on how some councils are putting the Government's Youth Contract to shame in areas where local authorities are leading it rather than national

agencies, and recently a report highlighting a drop in the number of young people receiving support on national skills and employment programmes over the last three years.

6. Most recently, I spoke to the press regarding the reduction in the number of 16 to 24-year-olds on training or employment programmes from 605,354 in 2009-10 to 559,183 in 2012-13. It is clear that while there are a number of good initiatives, the Government has side-lined councils and incentivised a complicated series of 35 services and schemes to work in isolation of each other, with no clarity on who is responsible for leading the offer to young people on the ground. We have been using this evidence to make a case to the Deputy Prime Minister's Review of national schemes and services to 16-24 year olds, due to report in mid- September. Further information is available at www.local.gov.uk/hidden-talents.

Schools Urged to help parents keep uniform costs down

7. With many schools up and down the country becoming academies or free schools it is understandable that many will want to mark this with changes to their uniforms however this is leading to mounting costs for parents. This month I spoke to the press outlining that Head teachers have a responsibility to minimise any additional costs that occur because they change their school's name or status, for whatever reason. The LGA would like to see schools sticking close to an existing colour scheme, changing one item only such as a tie, or allowing parents to sew new badges and logos onto clothes. Offering uniforms from a number of retailers also brings in the necessary competition to keep costs down.

Workshop on Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation

8. I chaired a well-attended workshop on the sensitive and high profile issue of tackling child sexual exploitation at the LGA's Annual Conference. At the session, the LGA launched an online resource to support councils raise awareness with their wider communities, which attracted over 1,500 unique visitors during the remainder of July.

Rising Demand for Primary School Places

9. On 3 September I spoke to the media regarding the dramatic rise in demand for primary school places, which could see some parts of the country with nearly twice as many pupils as school places in just two years. I explained that while parents quite rightly expect their child to have access to a place in a good school, councils are facing unprecedented pressures in tackling the desperate shortage of new school places.
10. Councils across the country have been increasing places by expanding schools where possible through additional classes or new buildings. However, without enough resource to provide places we are seeing some schools having to take extreme measures including converting non-classroom space and reducing playground space. This seriously risks prioritising quantity of places at the expense of the quality of education we are providing. The process of opening up much-needed schools is being impaired by a one-size-fits-all approach and in some cases by the presumption in favour of free schools and academies. I warned that this could result in parents scrambling for places that just don't exist and threaten to seriously impact on our children's education.

Meeting with Edward Timpson MP

11. On 16 July Councillor Rita Krishna attended the first of four meetings with Edward Timpson MP about adoption reform with a particular focus on the challenge of adopter recruitment. This brought together central and local government with the voluntary sector to explore how we can work together to secure a sufficient number of adoptive families for the children waiting.

Visits to Council

12. During August, I have taken advantage of the lighter diary commitments to visit councils including Herefordshire, North Yorkshire and Kirklees, and hosted a visit from the Children's Commissioner, Maggie Atkinson, to discuss issues surrounding unaccompanied children.

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Position:	Head of Programmes
Phone no:	020 7664 3172
E-mail:	<u>Helen.johnston@local.gov.uk</u>

Community Wellbeing Board – report from Cllr Katie Hall (Chair)

Integration Transformation Fund

1. A major achievement for the LGA over the last year was the Government's commitment to a £3.8 billion pooled budget to fund a single pooled budget for health and social care services to work more closely together in local areas. On 9 August the LGA along with NHS England published our planning 'vision' for the 'Integration Transformation Fund', including a roadmap for local areas to plan in the run up to the fund taking full effect from 2015/16.
2. Our press release emphasised how the money could act as a catalyst for the transformation local government wishes to see, provided that the Government and key partners recognise the crucial role of health and wellbeing boards in local decision making on health and care and assurance.
3. Officers and Board Lead members will continue to attend regular Ministerial integrated care meetings throughout the year as the integration transformation fund and integration pioneers projects continue to develop.

Better health outcomes for children and young people pledge

4. It remains hugely concerning that childhood mortality in this country is among the worst in Europe. The transfer of public health responsibilities begun last year puts local authorities and health and wellbeing boards in a prime position to tackle the poor health outcomes experienced by children and young people. Over the summer The Local Government Association, Department of Health, Royal College for Paediatrics and Child Health and the Children and Young People Health Outcome Forum have jointly written to Lead Members for Children's Services and Chairs of Health and Wellbeing Boards to urge them to sign the 'Better health outcomes for children and young people' pledge.
5. The pledge sets out a number of shared ambitions which seek to put children, young people and their families at the heart of decision-making; highlight preventative action and early intervention; and established person-centred services which are clearly accountable and well-led. It is hoped that working in that way can lead to reduced child deaths, whilst improving children and young peoples' long-term health and mental health as well as providing better care and support for the most vulnerable.
6. Health and wellbeing boards are encouraged to sign up to the pledge and also to share their learning. Email a short description of what your local authority is doing or planning to do to improve health outcomes for children and young people to Samantha.Ramanah@local.gov.uk.

Health Visitors and transfer of responsibility for public health for 0-5 year olds

7. April 2015 will mark the last public health function to transfer to local government; local authorities will take on responsibility for commissioning children's public health services for under 5 year olds and commissioning the health visiting service and Family Nurse Partnership.
8. The LGA is working with colleagues in councils and local authority principal advisers to support and inform councils to implement the new duty. LGA Leadership are also

negotiating a transition and assurance process for the 2015 transfer that provides effective assurance to Ministers regarding Health Visitors and other top governmental priorities whilst delivering a proportionate and collaborative approach appropriate for local government.

Meeting with NHS Confederation

9. I met with Michael O' Higgins, the Chair of the NHS Confederation on 3 September to build on the good working relationship between our organisations, including building a strong relationship at national level with representatives of clinical commissioning groups, and gaining maximum value for each organisation from the partnerships and forums both organisations are already involved in. Work will continue to coordinate our support to health and wellbeing boards (HWBs) and clinical commissioning groups (CCGs).

Ageing well, dementia and musculoskeletal health

10. Meetings have continued over the summer to ensure that local government's work to improve health and care services is recognised and that Government and charity initiatives take the needs of older people into account. Cllr Gillian Ford attended a Ministerial roundtable on the Vulnerable Older People Plan, in support of work being undertaken by the DH/ADASS/LGA.
11. Cllr Gillian Ford also spoke to the Alzheimer's Society Conference on the subject of dementia friendly communities. Cllr Ford emphasised the importance of councils and service providers designing their services with end-users in mind, and with the involvement of people with dementia at all stages. She highlighted how this was in keeping with one of the key messages of the LGA's 'Rewiring public services' campaign – that all health and social care should be consistently coordinated around the needs and wishes of the individual. Changes are needed at both a national and local level so that public services can help communities to meet people's future needs and aspirations.
12. Cllr Doreen Huddart represented the Board at a Public Health England hosted roundtable which looked at the impact of arthritis and musculoskeletal health which will feed into PHE's three-year priorities setting process.

Looking forward

13. As the new Chair of the Community Wellbeing Board I look forward to getting to grips with the many challenges and opportunities which local government faces across the Board's remit. Board Lead Members have already begun discussions on our priorities for the forthcoming year, and this will be the focus of our first board meeting.
14. I would also like to welcome the new faces from around the country on the board, and pass on behalf of the team, pass on my thanks for the work of those Councillors who are no longer on the board, and who contributed hugely to the work undertaken last year.

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

Heritage, the visitor economy and growth

1. I was delighted that 25 councillors attended a joint LGA / English Heritage seminar on 10 July at Old Sessions House, London, at which we also launched a new good practice publication. Councillor Andrew Lewer and I spoke about how heritage has the ability to help councils achieve a range of local priorities – from boosting economic growth through tourism, jobs and attracting businesses, to improving the attractiveness of places and engaging communities. The case studies in our new publication also show that in the context of severe budget pressures, councils are finding new ways of working that brings together specialist conservation, planning and archaeological advice in a coordinated, place-based approach to heritage and planning.
2. I met Kate Pugh, Chief Executive of the Heritage Alliance, on 24 July. The Alliance represents some 90 members – from larger bodies such as the National Trust, to many smaller organisations, such as the Association of Building Preservation Trusts – which are in turn supported by over five million members, thousands of local groups and over 450,000 volunteers. We discussed how councils are working in partnership with local heritage bodies to drive growth and the importance of supporting heritage organisations to be clear about how they are helping to achieve local outcomes.
3. I attended the second Magna Carta 800th Anniversary Stakeholder Event in St Albans on 2 August. The event was an opportunity to hear about the latest national plans to mark the anniversary and to highlight the role of councils across the country in engaging communities in the anniversary events and activities and the potential to boost tourism. The CTS Board will be considering a further update and the role of the LGA at their meeting on 9 September.

The Arts

4. I had an extremely positive meeting with Sir Peter Bazalgette, Chair of Arts Council England (ACE), on 30 July. I said that LGA was very encouraged by the Spending Review outcome for the arts, which was testament to our joint advocacy on the links between the arts and growth. The five per cent cut to arts funding is a good result for councils because as so many organisations are co-funded, less pressure from the ACE side means less knock-on pressure on councils.
5. Of course there are still tough spending decisions ahead and we agreed the importance of ACE working in partnership with councils to ensure that difficult investment decisions are taken in the context of a place's wider approach to public investment and growth. We also confirmed our strong support for our joint improvement activity which so far has supported over 100 councillors to lead transformational change of libraries and cultural services. We are very pleased to be jointly running two new Cultural Leadership Academies in 2013/14 and already 16 councillors are signed-up for the 22/23 October Academy, as well as offering a further two libraries leadership seminars. We also agreed to take stock of local government representation on ACE's new hubs next year.

Item 3c

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

1. As we start the new year on the Board, I have been reflecting on the big priorities that we have to address over the next year. In June and July, the Government made announcements about extending Local Growth Deals to all LEP areas (a long-term lobbying objective of the Board) and localising EU funding (again, a long-term objective of the LGA). Whilst both of these announcements provided a good direction of travel, they did not reflect the scale of ambition found in councils or the breadth of devolution called for by Lord Heseltine.
2. In the coming months, councils will be engaged in the detailed work of producing the first drafts of their EU spending plans and the Strategic Economic Plans which need to be delivered in the autumn. But we must remember that the remit of these plans (as set out by Government) does not reflect local government ability to deliver growth and jobs, which was set out so clearly in our conference document, *Rewiring Public Services*.
3. At the last Board meeting, we discussed the most effective work that the LGA could deliver and we felt that we needed to twin-track our work over the coming months.
4. In terms of the immediate need, councils will need support in delivering these Strategic Economic Plans. I have heard from colleagues who have attended BIS and CLG workshops over the summer on local growth funds and there continues to be confusion about the aligning funds, departmental rules and future resources. It is some distance from the joined-up £70 billion proposed by Lord Heseltine. The LGA has prepared a prospectus of support on growth that can be drawn down by councils, available [here](#) and I would be keen to hear from councillors about any further support they might need.
5. However, the Board was clear that we need to maintain the pressure on national parties for further economic devolution. Local Growth Deals are a good step forwards, but we need further devolution to support growth. For example, there are so many funding streams which were identified for devolution by Lord Heseltine that remain in the hands of Whitehall civil servants rather than local businesses and partners. Members were very clear that the spirit of the Heseltine work needed to be revived, especially the work to ensure that localities had a greater powers to support skills and employment.
6. At our September meeting, we will be looking to push forward on the LGA's Rewiring agenda and to have a clear work and lobbying programme with our business partners for future economic devolution.

Skills and youth unemployment

7. Joint work between the Economy and Transport Board and the Children and Young People Board has continued over the summer, where we have pushed the case for local authorities to have greater levers over services to help young people into work and learning. This has included publishing a poll of unemployed young people which found services too complicated and poorly targeted to their personal needs; a press release on where some councils are putting Government's Youth Contract to shame in areas where local authorities are leading it rather than national agencies; and recently a report highlighting a drop in the number of young people receiving support on national skills and employment programmes over the last three years.

8. We have had a good deal of press attention on our work, which has been beneficial in our efforts to influence the Deputy Prime Minister's Review of national schemes and services to 16-24 year olds, which is due to report in mid- September. The LGA Chairman has met with Sir Jeremy Heywood to discuss the review, our officers have fed in evidence and held a roundtable with local authorities and the review team, and on 5 September a Lead LGA member will meet the DPM, the Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP, to discuss the review and its recommendations.
9. We have also sent in a submission to the new construction and youth unemployment parliamentary inquiry chaired by LGA President Lord Best, and former Labour housing minister Rt Hon Nick Raynsford MP (Greenwich and Woolwich). Our submission assesses the challenges, including the poor responsiveness of the skills system as a major barrier to local economic growth, and recommends a way forward that builds on local partners' capacity to support young people into work, as advocated by the LGA's *Rewiring Public Services* campaign.

Streetworks

10. I, along with other Board and Lead Members, attended the second Streetworks Task Force on 25 July. We have developed a common understanding between Highway Authorities and utilities of what good reinstatements look like, based on five principles: cooperation; communication; quality; safety and impact reduction. Business partners asked for improvements in communication and access to information on compensation and what to expect from different companies and public sector organisation if they are affected by streetworks. A framework is being drafted on engaging and communicating with businesses. There were also discussions around contractor performance, which will be looked at in more detail at the next meeting in September.

Parking

11. A number of statements relating to proposed new guidance on parking were issued by DCLG ministers during August.
12. On 30 July, I responded to stories suggesting that Communities Secretary Eric Pickles was considering relaxing rules on double yellow lines so that motorists could park on them for up to 15 minutes when visiting local shops. My message focused on how yellow lines keep traffic moving and people safe and how each local area needs to decide how best to draw more shoppers to the high street.
13. On 1 August, I responded to a report on council parking charges published by the RAC Foundation, which was picked up by much of the national media.

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

Unimplemented planning permissions and housing finance

1. The LGA secured significant media coverage and highlighted our arguments that planning is not a barrier to growth, when we published initial findings of updated research on the number of unimplemented planning permissions in August ([400,000 homes with planning permission still waiting to be built](#)). The full report will be available in September.
2. We also highlighted our research which shows that local authorities could build up to an additional 60,000 homes over the next five years if they were allowed to invest in housing under normal borrowing guidelines And presented our arguments for the removal of the housing borrowing cap.

Meeting with Nick Boles MP

3. On 4 September I met with the planning minister Nick Boles to discuss to highlight the positive work that councils are doing to work with developers and to support growth through the planning system. We discussed potential areas in which we could work with councils and developers to simplify processes and improve tools within the planning system and the support provided to councils through the planning advisory service.

Meeting with Greg Barker MP

4. On 2 September, I met the Energy minister, along with Cllr Andrew Cooper, Cllr Terry Stacy and Cllr Tony Newman. We put forward LGA proposals to support locally-led action on fuel poverty; pressed for the extension of access to the ECO brokerage to councils and also had a productive discussion on the Green Deal and expressed the Board's interest in developing proposals for how delivery could be improved.
5. The LGA and Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) have signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) that recognises that councils have a unique insight and reach into communities that can ensure carbon reduction policies and programmes benefit communities and protect the most vulnerable.

Rogue Landlords

6. The Communities and Local Government Select Committee backed our warnings of the impact of letting agent rip-offs and rogue landlords in their report on the private rented sector published this week. The Committee endorsed a number of LGA calls (written evidence, oral evidence) including urging government to give councils greater powers to tackle bad landlords.

Dealing with the deluge

7. On 25 July we published 'Dealing with the deluge' - a report which illustrates the huge variety of ways in which councils supported their communities during the 2012 floods and highlights the results that can be achieved through effective partnership working to reduce flood risk. It draws out lessons and good practice for councils, other flood risk

management authorities and partners on how their communities can be made more resilient to flood risks. Download the report at: <http://www.local.gov.uk/publications>.

LGA Annual Rural Commission & Conference 2013

8. With economic recovery a priority across the country, the focus of this year's Rural Conference was growth. Owen Paterson, Secretary of State for Defra gave the keynote address on rural growth. Cllr Andrew Cooper spoke on behalf of the Board at the LGA Rural Conference, at a plenary panel session on Green growth, alongside Lord Robin Teverson, Liberal Democrat spokesperson on energy and climate change in House of Lords and Chair, Rural Coalition and Mike Smyth, Chairman, Energy4All. The event also hosted a number of other sessions on broadband investment, rural housing, infrastructure planning and delivery, and fuel poverty.

Environment and Housing Board at the party conferences

9. The Board will have a strong presence at each of the party conferences, with Members representing the LGA on a variety of platforms, many focused on the need to deliver housing where it is needed most. We are also participating in events on food waste; housing and dementia care.

2013-14 Priorities

10. The Environment and Housing Board Lead Members and wider Board have already begun discussions on our priorities for the forthcoming year, and this will be the main focus of our first board meeting. We will look to continue our work in four key areas:
 - 10.1 **Housing**; Work to increase the Housing Supply, secure a better deal for tenants in the private rented sector, and support the sector in managing the housing implications of welfare reform;
 - 10.2 **Planning**; We will promote a locally led planning system, work to safeguard councils' role in strategic planning for infrastructure and growth, and to support councils to drive improvement in planning, alongside work to ensure that communities benefit from fracking, where this takes place, and are resilient in the face of flood risk;
 - 10.3 **Waste**; We will continue to communicate the key messages from the Waste Review, and establish a Reuse commission to investigate the opportunities for councils in this area, alongside work to reduce packaging and get a better deal for councils; and
 - 10.4 **Energy**; We will seek to lead the debate on energy efficiency with a view to securing changes to current programmes which deliver greater value for money for the tax and energy bill payer and support vulnerable households more effectively. The LGA's Climate Local programme will play a key role in providing evidence and input to this work.

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European & International Board – report from Cllr Clarence Barrett (Chair)

1. As this is my first report since becoming Chair of the European & International Board in September, I would like to start by paying tribute to the work of Cllr Dave Wilcox, the outgoing Chair, for championing the Board's work since its beginning in November 2010.
2. I am delighted to have taken on the chairmanship of the Board and am looking forward to the challenge of leading the European and international work, drawing on the wealth of expertise of fellow Board members, and working with the wider LGA membership as we seek to further consolidate and advance local government's interests in Europe and further abroad.
3. Whilst the European Union (EU) 'in-out' debate is never far from the UK headlines, it is important to remember that this issue is beyond local government's remit and therefore not for debate within this arena. Our core focus is on directing LGA resources most effectively to ensure that we get the best deal for our member councils through: lobbying and influence draft EU laws; supporting UK councillors who play a formal role on European and international bodies; and in bringing learning from international practice to support service delivery in councils.
4. We have a full programme of work ahead of us, with the European Commission's work programme (Brussels' equivalent of the Queen's Speech) due out in October, the European elections looming in May 2014 and the next few months being a critical time for ensuring that local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) are given the levers to ensure the new EU structural funds programmes for 2014-2020 deliver maximum growth for their local areas.

Delivering Our Lobbying Priorities

EU Structural Funds

5. Government has published detailed guidance for LEPs on the process for agreeing local strategies for spending their notional allocations of EU funds. Alongside this, Government also published an 'opt-in prospectus' which sets out options for the provision of match-funding from a series of national agencies. LEPs can buy into sources of match-funding using their allocations of EU funds.
6. This represents a success for the sector. Nevertheless there is a lot to do to ensure spending is genuinely locally-led in practice. For example, there is still an inherent risk national administrative processes will trump local strategies, and that national co-funders, which have not always meaningfully engaged local partners in the past, may seek to dictate activity from the centre. We will be working on these issues over the coming months, to ensure that local councils, their communities and partners are able to make best use of this investment in their areas.

Role of councils in addressing the challenges facing Roma communities

7. In May Cllr Roger Stone (Leader of Rotherham MBC) addressed the Board on the challenges facing Roma communities, which helped to inform our lobbying on the issue and to identify steps to coordinate the sector's influencing efforts in Brussels.

8. Since then, Cllr Stone, a member of the UK delegation to the Committee of the Regions, has been appointed a rapporteur to draft an opinion on the "Steps forward in implementing national Roma Integration Strategies", and on the "Proposal for a Council Recommendation on effective Roma integration measures in the Member State". These two documents have been drafted by the European Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.
9. Cllr Stone has had preliminary meetings with the European Commission and Roma lobbying groups in Brussels. Main points in the document will include: requests for more decisive action in eradicating discrimination against Roma; more support for integration programmes; and for more European funds for local authorities in the countries with higher level of Roma population immigration (i.e. UK).

State aid to aviation

10. Our European Association, the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), is set to challenge a new set of rules from the European Commission which severely limit the amount of financial support local authorities can give to regional airports and airlines. The LGA is playing a leading role in this work and is consulting with local authority advisors from airport regions.

EU birth, marriage, and death certificates

11. We are currently consulting local authority registrars on EU proposals to standardise birth, marriage, and death certificates into a common multi-lingual EU format. The proposals will mean that civil documents issued in one EU country can be instantly accepted in another without requiring an official translation. The LGA is pushing to ensure a minimum of new administrative burdens. The proposals could also replace national symbols with the EU flag at the top of civil documents and have proved contentious.

International Links: Learning and Sharing

UKTI Update

12. International trade and export are proven routes for business growth; however, the role of local government in facilitating this is often underplayed. Following a successful meeting between Sir Merrick Cockell and Lord Green of Hurstpierpoint (Minister of State for Trade and Investment), the LGA and UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) have developed a comprehensive collaboration strategy.
13. The first output from this will be a joint document aimed at encouraging local government and partners to support inward investment into areas and assist local SMEs to become exporters.

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Improvement & Innovation Board – report from Cllr Peter Fleming

INNOVATION

Radio 4 World Tonight

1. This month I did a live interview on the world tonight for radio 4. On the show there was a discussion about innovation in local government and the LGA's rewiring agenda. I warned that the cuts to funding would cause untold damage and that it was important we further develop and implement the ideas set out in Rewiring Public Services, which aim to make services sustainable, keep people at the heart of decisions and strengthen the role of families and communities in supporting each other.

PRODUCTIVITY

Economic Growth Advisors

2. Since the last chairs report it has been announced that Councils will now be able to apply for up to 14 days of free consultancy time with a crack team of specialist economic advisers. They will help them put together local strategies to boost growth and access finance for projects ranging from town centre regeneration to major infrastructure developments like building new roads. Support will also be offered to those authorities that have identified economic growth opportunities but need to develop a proper business case to support investment.
3. I spoke to the press about the positive news outlining that local government has great ambition to get on with the job of building homes, creating jobs, supporting businesses and investing in new infrastructure, but we have been hamstrung by deep funding cuts which have forced us to prioritise statutory services like collecting the bins or caring for the elderly. This scheme will provide councils with the extra support they need to diversify their local economies, bring in new investment and stimulate growth which will help not just the local community but will also relieve some of the pressure on local services and the growing reliance on benefits.

IMPROVEMENT

National Graduate Development Programme

4. I am very pleased to say that we currently have 91 trainees for the NDGP 2013 intake. 84 of these have been recruited through the national scheme and 7 have been recruited locally by the sponsoring councils with potentially a further 5 trainees to be appointed. To date 43 councils are taking trainees this year with the LGA itself also taking 2 trainees.

Meeting with the Design Council

5. I recently held a meeting with the Design Council to talk about their current projects and start a conversation about a couple of new projects that I am trying to get off the ground. The Design Council are looking to work with the LGA on a number of projects over the next year and I will update the forum on these as they progress.

TRANSPARENCY

Councils use of Bailiffs

6. Earlier in the month, I appeared on both ITV's Daybreak and BBC Radio 5 to defend the use of bailiffs by Councils. A report by the Money Advice Trust had claimed local authorities used bailiffs 1.8 million times in the last year to collect council tax arrears, business rates arrears and parking fines. I explained that councils only used bailiffs as a last resort and any suggestion that they were being used too frequently was misleading and irresponsible.

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

Joint Strategic Partnership Board

1. The joint Strategic Partnership Board which the LGA agreed to establish with the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners met for the first time in early September. The Partnership Board considered how the police and local authorities could work better to address child sexual exploitation, and also looked at links between police and crime commissioners (PCCs), councils and the health service following the health reforms implemented earlier in the year, which for example see clinical commissioning groups taking over from primary care trusts as the responsible body on community safety partnerships. As part of this discussion the Partnership Board heard from Hertfordshire on the structures they have established to link the councils, the PCC and the health structures in the county together.

Justice Select Committee

2. As part of the Justice Select Committee's inquiry into crime reduction policies and whether government departments are coordinating their approaches, the Board's Vice-Chair Cllr Joanna Spicer attended the Committee's evidence session in early September to talk about the links between government departments on reducing crime, how this affects local partners in their work and what could be done to ensure there is greater coordination going forward. Cllr Spicer was also able to highlight the importance of community budgets as a key plank in our Rewiring work and how this facilitates stronger local partnerships and multi-agency working.

Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013

3. The Board hosted a second fully booked conference on the new Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 in late-July. The conference, which was held in Leeds, resulted from a request for a repeat of the event held in London. The event was chaired by Cllr Michael Payne and addressed by Cllr Anita Lower. The delegates who came from across northern England and Wales received presentations from the Home Office and British Metal Recycling Association giving an overview of the Act, while speakers from Blackpool and Sandwell Councils, British Transport Police, Gwent Police and the Environment Agency looked in more detail at what the legislation requires councils to do. The Home Office were also able to provide details of the transitional provisions between the 1964 Act and the new one. The 2013 Act is due to come into effect on 1 October, from which dates councils will need to accept applications. Guidance on fees and the Commencement Order were made available by the Home Office in mid-August.

Regulatory services

4. In August, Cllr Khan wrote to Michael Fallon MP, the Minister for Business and Enterprise setting out the LGA's new vision for regulatory services, which outlines the cultural changes that will be needed as these services move to a new form of growth-focussed delivery. He has responded positively supporting this work.

Communications Data Bill

5. Following publication of the 2012 Report from the Interception of Communications Commissioner, which delivers a positive picture about the approach taken by councils, Councillor Khan and Councillor Spicer wrote to Home Office Ministers to reinforce the Commissioner's reassurance that there have been no instances of councils inappropriately using these powers and to highlight the lengthy waiting times for magistrates to approve requests. We again reinforced the importance of councils retaining access to this data.

Primary Authority Scheme

6. Cllr Kay Hammond met with the Fire Minister Brandon Lewis MP and representatives from CFOA on 9 August to consider the application of the Primary Authority Scheme to fire safety. The meeting was an opportunity to set out some of the Fire Services Management Committee's concerns, particularly around the timing of the implementation of the extension of the scheme to fire safety, and has led to the implementation being put back to April 2014.

CLG Select Committee

7. Cllr Kay Hammond gave evidence to the Select Committee on Sir Ken Knight's Review on 9 September, alongside the London Fire Commissioner. She highlighted the importance of service reform being designed and led locally.

Visits to Member Authorities

8. Over the summer period, Councillor Khan has undertaken visits to a series of authorities and partners to discuss community safety activity. These include Newham; Wandsworth; Cleone Foods to discuss regulation; and Matthew Grove, PCC for Humberside.

Industrial action in the fire service

9. Members will be aware that the FBU have been balloting their members for industrial action in relation to reform of the firefighters' pension scheme. Although this is a dispute between Ministers and the FBU, because of the potential risks to the public and businesses of industrial action, the Fire Services Management Committee has reminded FRAs about their responsibilities in relation to business continuity. The outcome of the ballot is expected on 30 August and an oral update will be provided at the Forum.

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Workforce Board – report by Cllr Jim McMahon (Chair)

Pensions

1. Work continues on regulations to implement the new LGPS from 2014 with consultations on both the benefit regulations and governance recently completed. Regulations are expected to be made in October.
2. The shadow LGPS Scheme Advisory Board had its first meeting on 15 July followed by the first round of its five sub-committees. Details of the board, its members and its meetings can be found on the board microsite www.lgpsboard.org.
3. We are maintaining pressure on government to commit to a solution for the increase in National Insurance Contributions of £800 per annum that employers will face from 2016 due to the abolition of contracting out. The next steps will be taken while the Pensions Bill makes its way through the House of Lords in September.

Local Government Services

4. **Local Government Pay 2013:** Agreement has been reached in respect of the pay awards for local government services ('Green Book') and Craft & Associated employees ('Red Book') with effect from 1 April 2013. The new rates of pay can be found online here: <http://www.local.gov.uk/workforce-local-government>
5. **NJC Job Evaluation Scheme:** The NJC has produced a number of important updates and clarifications to the NJC JE Scheme Guidance, along with 59 new School Model Role Profiles and two new Technical Notes. Details are online here: <http://www.local.gov.uk/workforce-local-government>

Public Health workforce transition

6. The National Joint Council for Local Government Services public health sub-committee, which is designed to ensure that local government takes the lead on public health workforce issues, met in June and July. To date, the sub-committee's work has focussed on supporting local authorities through, for example, the production of job evaluation guidance and the design of a series of regional seminars on public health workforce issues.

Fire

7. The Fire Brigades Union (FBU) has registered trade disputes with Government Ministers in England, Wales and Scotland on the matter of pension scheme reforms. As a consequence it is currently undertaking a ballot of its members with a view to taking strike action. The ballot closed on 29th August.
8. Recognising that this is a dispute between the union and Ministers, the LGA is nonetheless mindful of the implications for the public and businesses should the ballot result in a yes vote and strike action is taken. Therefore in addition to FRAs putting in place appropriate contingency arrangements at local level, we have approached the FBU seeking agreement to general minimum level of cover arrangements at local level during periods of strike action. In addition, we have been in discussion with the FBU on providing support in respect of attendance at very large scale incidents (usually referred to as Gold Command incidents). These discussions have been in the context of taking sensible precautions given it is possible that should the ballot support strike

action then such action could begin with as little as 7 days' notice. It should not be interpreted as pre-judging the outcome of the ballot.

9. To assist fire authorities that may wish to provide information to employees in relation to the pension scheme reforms, the LGA has issued information outlining where relevant DCLG information can be found as well as a number of useful point in respect of a very specific issue in relation to maintaining fitness levels.

School Teachers

10. In its 22nd Report, the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) recommended an uplift to all pay points and allowances. The consultation on the Report and the latest draft 2013 School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) ended on 26 July. The National Employers' Organisation for School Teachers (NEOST) supported the recommendations in the Report and asked for changes or clarifications in respect of a number of provisions of the STPCD. A copy of NEOST's response can be obtained from Anita Jermyn (anita.jermyn@local.gov.uk). The 2013 STPCD has now been published and came into force on 1 September.
11. NEOST representatives will attend an oral evidence session with the STRB on 20 September in respect of the latest remit on the pay framework for school leaders, the provisions for allowances, other pay flexibilities and pay safeguarding and the framework for non-pay conditions of service.

Youth and Community

12. The JNC Youth and Community Trade Union Side's claim for 2013 was for 'A *substantial rise on all grades and allowances from September 2013*' and for the 'removal of the bottom pay points, so that the starting salary point for a Youth Support Worker would be pay point 5'. The National Employers have made an offer of 1% for this year. The Trade Union Side is undertaking a consultation with its members before it responds in September.
13. The 2013 JNC Workforce Survey has been completed and will be published shortly. The survey gathers information on staff numbers, pay and workforce characteristics and provides the JNC with accurate pay and workforce details for national negotiations. This year there has been a 52% response rate and a key finding from the survey was that overall the total number of both full and part time employees had decreased by 7% in the last year. The decreases in workforce were within the support worker range and professional range but were offset by numbers moving to NJC terms and conditions as well as other pay schemes in the sector.

Soulbury

14. The Soulbury Trade Unions have submitted a claim for 2013 which is for:
 - 14.1 On pay, a significant increase on all Soulbury pay scale points and all pay-related and London allowances from 1 September 2013;
 - 14.2 On conditions of service, the restoration of the Essential Car User Allowance where travel and work patterns justify it; and
 - 14.3 A new Soulbury workforce survey which will seek a clearer picture of the changes affecting the workforce in terms of job losses, out-sourcing and changes to pay and conditions at a local level.

15. The National Employers are undertaking a consultation of local authorities through the regions on the claim and aim to respond formally to the Trade Union Side in October.

Strategy Team

16. In the latest edition of the Workforce News podcast, three local authority Chief Executives, Joanne Rooney from Wakefield Council, Martin Reeves from Coventry City Council and Kersten England from York City Council give us an insight into the conversations at the LGA/PPMA/SOLACE round-table events in May about managing workforce issues at a local and a national level. And Phil Bundy, Employment Law Adviser, explains the main points of the Government's planned reforms of employment law. View the podcast on our website (www.local.gov.uk/workforce).

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

1. It has been a busy few months since my last report to the Forum, with the Government launching three key consultation documents at the end of July with deadlines from mid-September through to early October.

Local Government Financial Settlement Consultation

2. Further details of the allocation of the local government finance settlement for 2014/15 and 2015/16 were released for consultation and have added some alarming details to the figures announced in the Spending Round.
3. The main headline is the allocation of around £1 billion in funding from the main settlement in 2015/16 is for a variety of purposes, including paying for the new burden of Dilnot reform implementation and contingencies to pay for safety nets and New Homes Bonus. This means that the real terms reduction in Settlement Funding Assessment for most local authorities will be more like 15% rather than the 10% figure implied by the Spending Round. The LGA's consultation response will include concerns that the scale of the reductions implied for most local authority services was not clear from the original Spending Round announcement.

New Homes Bonus Consultation

4. The announcement of the Local Growth Fund on the day after the Spending Round brought the news that £400 million worth of the £2 billion fund was intended to be top-sliced from New Homes Bonus in 2015/16. Under the Government's proposal, the New Homes Bonus will continue to be paid to authorities in accordance with the current scheme, but recipients will be required to pass on a proportion to their Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) who will have responsibility for spend this funding in accordance with the local growth plan. We have expressed serious concerns with the proposals, not least because Government had originally indicated that authorities would be able to use this money for their own priorities, but also because it reduces the incentive for authorities to build and convert new homes as well as that it disrupts authorities' medium term planning.

Consulting on use of capital receipts to invest in reforming services

5. The Government is also consulting on the proposal to enable local authorities to use the proceeds from asset sales to pay for the one-off costs of service reform or transformation. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has told us that this is an opportunity for local authorities to put forward proposals for how this scheme should work. Capital receipts can currently only be used to invest in new capital assets or to pay off borrowing. This seems unnecessarily restrictive at a time when many services are being reformed in a way that makes less use of buildings and more use of technology and shared facilities. The proposals would provide a useful flexibility for local authorities, albeit one that needs to be used prudently.

Welfare Reform Developments

6. I was pleased to launch the LGA's and the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion's (CESI) latest research in August on the cumulative impact of the Government's welfare reforms, not because the research reveals a pleasant picture, far from it, but because it is an important contribution to the on-going debate.

7. The research found that less than a quarter of welfare recipients will be in a position to mitigate reductions in benefit payments by finding work or moving to cheaper accommodation. In many areas welfare reform is not encouraging people into work because the jobs simply don't exist, while the opportunities for people to downsize their homes to cope with reductions in benefits are severely limited by a lack of affordable accommodation.
8. We in local government can help generate the necessary jobs and new homes but the Government has to give councils more influence over employment schemes and more freedom to borrow to build new houses, which is the case will be making to Government on the back of this report. Details of the study may be found here:
http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/media-releases/-/journal_content/56/10171/4097215/NEWS-TEMPLATE.

Universal Credit funding announcement

9. This month the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) made the important announcement of guaranteeing the level of funding required to manage the full administration of Housing Benefit in 2014 to 2015. This is good news for the sector as it recognises the impact of the phased rollout of Universal Credit (UC) and enables councils to start planning for the future whilst being able to maintain current service levels.
10. As announced in July, a further 6 Jobcentres will start to accept new UC claims from single claimants from October 2013. The DWP will also publish an updated version of the Local Support Services Framework (LSSF) in October 2013, which will share learning and thinking so far. However, definitive baselines which will enable local authorities to carry out detailed service planning will not be available until the Autumn 2014 version of the LSSF is published.

Tax Collection Rates

11. We already know that local government is the most efficient part of the public sector, so it was no surprise that new LGA analysis shows that the public purse would be more than £20 billion per year better off if Government was able to match the tax collection rates achieved by councils. Government's own figures show it is missing out on 6.75 per cent of the tax it should be collecting every year. By comparison, local authorities last year collected 97.5 per cent of the council tax and business rates they were due to receive in-year, with the majority of the remainder to be recouped in following years.
12. We have therefore called for Government to give a commitment to at least halving the uncollected tax deficit by the end of this Parliament. Our analysis shows that if Government was able to increase tax collection rates to the level local authorities have achieved (97.5 per cent), the Exchequer would bring in an extra £20.145 billion per year.

Council Tax Referendum and Levying Bodies

13. Work to oppose Government's changes to legislation on Council Tax referenda is continuing. The LGA opposes Council tax referenda in principle because they interfere with the established local electoral process, but we also oppose DCLG's tinkering with the rules around levying bodies and the threat of retrospection imposed in the Local Audit & Accountability Bill.

14. We opposed the clause at committee and report stages in the Lords and worked with sympathetic peers to provide constructive amendments to the proposal (removing the retrospective element of the clause/introducing a sunset clause). So far the Government has “dug in” and opposed any changes to the clause but we will continue to oppose the clause as the Bill continues its journey through Parliament. It is due to receive its second reading in the House of Commons in October after party conference season.

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Digest of Meeting

Title:	Councillors' Forum
Date and time:	18 July 2013, 12.30pm
Venue:	The Westminster Suite, Local Government House, Smith Square

Item	Action by
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Welcome and Introductions

Councillor Sir Merrick Cockell, LGA Chairman, welcomed Members to the meeting.

The Chairman introduced Charles Farr, Director General of the Office of Security and Counter Terrorism at the Home Office.

1 Serious and Organised Crime

Members received a presentation from Charles Farr in which he spoke about serious and organised crime and the government's reworking of the organised crime strategy called 'Local to Global: Reducing the Risk of Organised Crime'.

Charles explained how the Home Office were in the process of rethinking their strategy on dealing with organised crime and invited Councillors to feed back their thoughts and experiences from a local level.

Charles assisted with defining this agenda and explained that all organised crime is serious but not all serious crime is organised. He highlighted that organised crime is very common in the UK, more than other countries, explaining that the precise levels of organised crime are currently unknown. However, it is estimated that 30,000 people in the UK are working as an organised criminal with around 3,500 organised groups.

Charles went on to tell the audience of the changes being made in the operational landscape in fighting organised crime. He highlighted that the National Crime Agency will begin its work in October 2013. This is being set up to better deal with the rising threat from organised crime and would bring together the operational and strategic approaches to tackling organised crime.

'Local to Global' is the current organised crime strategy launched in 2011. He hopes the new Strategy, due to be published this Autumn, will bring together collective efforts from across Government, the police and the security services to have a greater impact on serious criminality.

Charles highlighted the big role local authorities have played in counter terrorism operations and strategy and understanding of the CONTEST strategy and compared this with the limited levels of engagement around tackling organised crime. Home Office Ministers and senior officials are keen to change this and Charles would like to work with the LGA and local government to enable this to happen. He highlighted the important work local authorities can play in helping preventing and disrupting organised crime, such as using local government powers such as licensing and regulation and making links with other programmes such as the Troubled Families work. But he also highlighted how local authorities have a protective role as well in building resilient communities and tackling money laundering and recovering proceeds of crime. He urged Councillors to be involved in this work since work in Scotland has revealed that local government procurement contracts can inadvertently have links to organised crime groups.

Charles was very keen to provide local authorities with information and products to enable them to raise this up agendas. He referenced the success of the counter terrorism local profiles as a key milestone in local government having access to information on the Prevent agenda; and the regional organised crime units. He emphasised a two way dialogue and is committed to listening to the needs of local authorities and providing local leaders with information they need.

Charles Farr hoped with the LGAs involvement and support of this particular strategy we would together be able to prevent and reduce the amount of organised crime in the UK.

Sir Merrick Cockell then took to the floor for a discussion and questions in relation to the forum.

The following topics were mentioned:

- How much of crime is cyber-crime and noted that some organised crime is currently recorded in national statistics;
- The role of education and schools in preventing children and young people getting involved in organised criminal networks and what more can be done upstream;
- The levels of importing crime and the effect it may have; and
- The current legislative framework around proceeds of crime and offshore money laundering;
- The role of enablers – lawyers and accountants – in organised crime;
- The role of organised crime gangs in areas of deprivation and the status these have; and
- The importance of local government retaining communications

data powers.

The Chairman thanked Charles for his fascinating presentation and felt the LGA and local government as a whole could do a lot to help the Government's plans to reduce organised crime.

2 Chairman's Update

Members noted and accepted the Chairman's report.

3 Programme Board Chairs' Reports

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

Date of next meeting: Thursday 12 September 2013, 12:30pm – 1:30pm
The Westminster Suite (8th Floor), Local Government House

LGA location map

Local Government Association

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

Bus routes – Millbank

- 87** Wandsworth - Aldwych
- 3** Crystal Palace - Brixton - Oxford Circus

Public transport

Local Government House is well served by public transport. The nearest mainline stations are:

40 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

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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.

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