

## **Chairman's Update - October 2013**

### **Local Government Association (LGA) business**

1. In the first few days of October, the Conservative Party Conference rounded off an exceptionally busy **conference season** for the LGA. I met with a number of Ministers and MPs during my four days in Manchester. More importantly, our Public Affairs and Campaigns team secured a total of **105 speaking platforms** at the Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Labour Party conferences.
2. October's **Leadership Board** business included a review of the LGA's business plan and **budget for 2014/15**, focusing on high level priorities and the budget framework. Members continued to debate the review of **LGA Governance Arrangements** and commented on the LGA's **Autumn Statement submission to HM Treasury** which has now subsequently been shared with Secretaries of State across Whitehall.
3. At **LGA Executive**, Cllr David Simmonds and Cllr Katie Hall provided an update on the well-attended **National Children and Adults Services Conference 2013** in Harrogate. The agenda also included the Law Commission's **Programme for Law Reform**, our submission to the Treasury and discussions continued to focus on our governance review.
4. At this month's **Councillor's Forum** we invited **David Laws MP**, Minister of State for Schools at the Department for Education and Minister of State at the Cabinet Office to answer a range of questions on the cuts to the **Education Support Grant**, School Improvement, Schools **Funding** and Place Planning.

### **Ministerial/Parliamentary business**

5. Throughout Conference Recess and the month of October, I took up meetings with a number of MPs, including Nadhim Zahawi MP, Stephen Dorrell MP, Margot James MP and Rt Hon Oliver Letwin MP. I also met:
  - 5.1. **Jo Johnson MP**, Head of the No.10 Policy Unit, to introduce our Rewiring Public Services programme of work.
  - 5.2. **Lord Freud**, Minister for Welfare Reform (Lords) at the Department for Work and Pensions to discuss **Universal Credit and the Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS)**. Following the reshuffle, conversations regarding the SFIS have also included **Baroness Stowell** at DCLG.
  - 5.3. **Hon Mike Rann, Australian High Commissioner**, ahead of my visit to Cairns for the 117<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Local Government Association Queensland (LGAQ).

6. I also attended the **East of England LGA Parliamentary Reception** at the House of Common, at the end of the month which was hosted by **Stephen McPartland MP**.

#### **Meetings with other organisations and individuals**

7. I also took on a number of engagements during conference which included speaking at events hosted by Homes for Britain, Prospect, Reform and Localis.

#### **Meetings with councillors and member councils**

8. During a regional visit to Devon, I visited **Exeter** to accept Cllr Pete Edwards invitation to speak with councillors from across Devon and public sector colleagues about our **Rewiring Public Services** programme. As a follow up to that event, our Rewiring work will also be taken to the **Devon District Forum**. The visit also included dinner with Leaders and Chief Executives of neighbouring authorities. The varied itinerary showcased the impressive **regeneration of the Guildhall** and a tour of the **Royal Albert Memorial Museum**.
9. Over in **Plymouth**, I met with Leader Cllr Tudor Evans and Chief Executive Tracey Lee. I was pleased to engage with Cllr John Hart and Phil Norrey, Leader and Chief Executive of **Devon County Council** who also attended the dinner. Throughout the visit, conversations touched on a number of areas including **integrated health and social care, economic development** and the physical regeneration of North Prospect and Millbay.