

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title:	LGA European & International Board
Date and time:	Tuesday 17 January 2012, 11.00am
Venue:	The Millbank Room, Local Government House

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council
Chair	Dave Wilcox OBE	Derbyshire CC
Vice Chair	Richard Kemp CBE	Liverpool City
Deputy Chair	Marco Cereste	Peterborough City
Deputy Chair	Linda Gillham	Runnymede BC
Members	Gordon Keymer CBE	Tandridge DC
	Keith Glazier	East Sussex CC
	Sandra Barnes MBE	South Northamptonshire DC
	Phil Grove	Malvern Hills DC
	Nilgun Canver	Haringey LB
	Guy Nicholson	Hackney LB
	Zulfiqar Ali	Rochdale MBC
	Roger Dennison	Lancaster City
Apologies	Liz Eyre	Worcestershire CC
	Sherma Batson MBE DL	Stevenage BC
	Zulfiqar Ali	Rochdale MBC
	Lord Graham Tope CBE	Sutton LB
Apologies for late arrival	Sir Albert Bore	Birmingham City

Officers: Ian Hughes, Jasbir Jhas, Drago Djekovic, Ivor Wells, Dominic Rowles, Virginia Ponton

The Chair noted apologies, that Cllr Roger Dennison was present as a substitute and that Sir Albert Bore would be late to the meeting. He welcomed Carl Wright, General Secretary, Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) and Frédéric Vallier, Secretary General, Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR). Members agreed to change the order of the agenda so that item 1 could be taken after items 2 and 3.

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
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2 International Issues

Ian Hughes introduced the item and Carl Wright thanked the Board for the invitation and circulated his presentation. Carl outlined recent collaborative work between CLGF and the LGA (the Chair, Cllr Wilcox, sits on the CLGF Board). He gave an overview of CLGF, highlighting that it has local government ministries in its membership and has good links to governments, attending high-level meetings to represent local government issues. CLGF prides itself on its value for money including in-kind support and its wealth of experience and expertise. Carl outlined CLGF's commitment to and promotion and monitoring of the 'Aberdeen Principles'; Commonwealth principles on good practice for local democracy and good governance. He detailed CLGF's learning and knowledge sharing offer and its future work.

The Chair thanked Carl and asked members for their comments, which included:

- The importance of the Commonwealth on the political agenda. CLGF has good relations with the Commonwealth minister and despite the lack of local government section, DFID is opening up.
- The move away from local authority engagement towards country engagement. A pool of councillors and officers could develop this collaborative work abroad. CLGF could explore the role of the LGA in relation to this pool.
- Members highlighted the need for a mandate for the pool of individual councillors, which the LGA could provide.
- The LGA could also provide help with press relations as members highlighted the need to increase citizens' and the press' understanding of the benefits of this work.
- Ian Hughes said that the Local Growth Campaign had identified the need for local authorities to be involved in international work in order to attract international investors.

Ian Hughes said that work would continue with Carl, in particular to ensure that:

- DFID funding is renewed
- learning from the Commonwealth is taken on board
- links to Cyprus are actively sought in preparation for their term of EU Presidency as well as to influence the distribution of EU Structural Funds.

The Chair thanked Carl for meeting with the Board and

endorsed the priorities as set out by Ian, which were also agreed by members.

Action

- Officers to continue to work with CLGF.

Officers

3 European Union 2012 lobbying programme

Jasbir Jhas introduced item 3 and the Chair welcomed Frédéric Vallier, who thanked the Board for the invite.

Frédéric set the context of all countries focussing on the financial crisis and that the continued level of EU funding to the regions and local authorities demonstrates the importance of local issues at the EU level. He hoped for the same, if not increased, levels of regeneration funding as well as increased influence on how funding could be spent. Frédéric outlined how CEMR structures have been reframed and how the LGA can influence these new structures. He outlined the work programme priorities; seminars which members could attend and he invited members to the General Assembly in September. The Chair thanked Frédéric and invited members' questions and comments, which focussed on the need:

- to ensure awareness of the work of CEMR ('European LGA')
- to focus on the future of the European Social Fund and the role of local government as a key partner of investment
- to work with other local government associations and to mainstream European and international work across other LGA Boards
- for CEMR to exchange more good practice
- for clarification on housing for local authorities as strategic housing authorities within an EU context
- to explore the opportunity of engaging with CEMR on workforce issues.

Frédéric understood and appreciated members' comments, highlighting in particular the need for best, or worse, practice to be shared. He emphasised CEMR's communication and representation of local views with the European Commission before decisions are made and that CEMR works with the officers who draft the papers.

Members then considered the list of EU lobbying priorities. Whilst the short list of priorities were agreed, members were concerned that there was a lack of corporate priorities to steer

the European and International contribution to the LGA. This was being addressed through the business planning process and members agreed to revisit the priorities once finalised.

Action

- Officers to revise the work programme table to be more explicit (regarding priorities and working briefs)
- Officers to circulate the presentations.

Officers

1 LGA Business Plan 2012/13

The Chair asked Cllr Kemp to take item 1 while he left the room briefly. Cllr Kemp introduced the item and Ian emphasised that this is a first draft. The Business Plan will go to the LGA Executive in March.

The Board welcomed the opportunity to feed into the development of the plan, which was seen as a “first draft”. Thus, at this early stage, members were keen to provide some “big messages” to help the development of corporate priorities.

- Members welcomed the development of tangible, corporate priorities and endorsed broadly the six priorities presented in the draft plan. In looking at the Board’s own priorities for next year, members have examined the issues in the EU legislative programme which will have the biggest impact on councils and the opportunities to raise resources to support local government abroad. However, there is an urgent need for the work of the Board to fit into a much bigger picture and to be joined up to other Boards’ work. The development of clear corporate themes was a welcome direction of travel and members felt it would be worth re-visiting the Board’s work once these are established in order to ensure a clearer “golden thread” through the LGA. For example, the Board could consider the best international examples to support the corporate priorities and campaigns and how the Board could add an international challenge to peer reviews.
- Under “Public Service Reform”, the most important issue was the public health agenda and the reform of adult social services which provide both an opportunity and major threat to every English council. This must be the key theme of this work. Climate change is also critical, especially as new EU regulations are expected in this area.

- The business plan also needs to consider how fund raising both in councils and in the LGA can be supported. For councils, the raising of external resources is a priority and the Board is developing work with regional LGAs to secure more EU funds for councils. Within the LGA, there are opportunities to raise external resources to support priorities. There is a need to consider how to establish an entrepreneurial framework within the LGA which is rewarded and supported by the budget process.
- On a wider issue, both business and government are pressing councils to forge new links with the tiger economies. This is something that can be addressed through the Board's work through international LGAs.

The Board would like to return to the detail of the business plan once the corporate priorities are agreed.

Action

- Officers to relate board members' comments to the Chairman.

Officers

4 European and International Programme Board update

The Chair reminded members about the training session on election monitoring on 13 February. He said the Groups should think about CEMRs invitation to get involved with their committees and that the Group Leaders had agreed to establish a relationship with the Economy and Transport Board.

Action

- Officers to send members an invitation to the training session on election monitoring on 13 February.
- Joint working arrangements with members of the Economy and Transport Board to be established through the Group Leaders.

Officers

5 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Liz Hobson gave some background to the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics Task and Finish Group which provides support to local authorities in the run-up to the Games. Areas where the European and International Board can provide support and make an impact include providing training grounds for the

opportunity for international teams to visit and train; get involved in 'host a nation' week to establish stronger links abroad and get involved with heads of state visits.

Members expressed an opportunity to revive ambassadorial visits and establish connections and networks. The Chair thanked Jas and Liz on their helpful suggestions and officers will draw up a proposal on this.

The Chair reminded members that the next meeting will be in Liverpool and thanked the speakers for attending.

6 Notes of the last meeting

Decision

*Members **agreed** the notes of the last meeting.*