

## Note of decisions taken and actions required

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<b>Title:</b>	European & International Board
<b>Date and time:</b>	Wednesday 11 July 2012, 11.00 am
<b>Venue:</b>	Smith Square Rooms 3&4, Local Government House, London

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### Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council
Chair	Dave Wilcox OBE	Derbyshire CC
Deputy Chair	Marco Cereste	Peterborough City
Deputy Chair	Linda Gillham	Runnymede BC
Members	Nilgun Canver	Haringey LB
	Sherma Batson MBE DL	Stevenage BC
	Sir Albert Bore	Birmingham City
	Gordon Keymer CBE	Tandridge DC
	Sandra Barnes MBE	South Northamptonshire DC
	Keith Glazier	East Sussex CC
	Phil Grove	Malvern Hills DC
	Lord Graham Tope CBE	Sutton LB
Apologies	Cllr Richard Kemp OBE	Liverpool City
	Guy Nicholson	Hackney LB
	Liz Eyre	Worcestershire CC
External Representatives	Sue Baxter (BIS), Kevin Richardson (BIS) and Adrian Cannard (EELGA)	
Officers	Ian Hughes, Jasbir Jhas, Richard Kitt, Dominic Rowles, Ivor Wells, Drago Djekovic and Frances Marshall	

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
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## **Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted all those apologies received.

### **1 Update on International work**

Ivor Wells and Drago Djekovic (Advisors) provided a presentation on the current international work being undertaken by the LGA, the principles underpinning this work, and potential future opportunities based on demand and external funding.

Ivor provided a detailed overview of the delivery phase of the African Peer Review Project and lessons learned so far. Feedback from the first Peer Review had been very positive and provided a solid foundation for the continued delivery of the next stages of the programme.

With reference to a number of approaches from private sector companies expressing an interest in collaborating with the LGA on international projects, Drago outlined some of the potential collaborative opportunities open to the LGA, through public and private sector financing. The Chairman drew attention to the potential availability of funding for a project around conflict resolution in Sri Lanka as well as current work ongoing between the LGA, the Foreign Office and British Embassy in Mexico to explore the role that councils can play in opening up new markets for UK firms in Mexico. Members were asked to provide a steer on the appropriate level of LGA involvement in externally funded international projects.

A detailed discussion followed, in which Members made a number of comments, which were responded to by officers, relating to issues including:

#### **African Peer Review**

- With reference to the successes of the first African Peer Review, Members thanked officers for their hard work.
- In terms of maximising the learning gained from the programme, it was suggested that any project evaluation include an external element.

### **Future International Opportunities**

- With reference to the lengthy process, and uncertainty of success in securing external contracts, it was suggested that subject to appropriate due diligence measures, any appropriate opportunities for further international work should be pursued.
- Members also advised that in forming future partnerships, reputational issues need to be considered.

### **Decisions**

That the Board:-

- i. **noted** the report; and
- ii. **endorsed** exploring further opportunities for externally funded international projects within the bounds of the policy set out in the report.

### **Actions**

Officers to take forward in line with Members' comments.

**Ivor Wells /  
Drago Djekovic**

## **2 EU Funds Post 2013 - Update and Lobby Strategy**

Sue Baxter, the senior civic servant leading the UK negotiations on structural fund reform from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), provided a detailed overview of the latest position in the EU-wide negotiations and legislative timescale. In doing so she highlighted a policy shift, with a greater focus on structural funds as a driver of EU growth in the global market. Sue outlined the 11 themes within the Common Strategic Framework for 2014-2020, noting, however, that the final list of priorities for the UK had not yet been confirmed. In outlining the Commission's proposed changes to the funds and tools for implementation, she highlighted potential challenges and opportunities for local councils as a result of these changes.

Kevin Richardson, a local government employee seconded to BIS as part of the UK negotiating team on EU structural funds reform updated Members on how local authorities could engage in the negotiations and highlighted a number of common themes from the sector's contribution to BIS's

informal consultation in April. He expressed cautious optimism regarding levels of engagement and understanding across the sector, however highlighted the need to connect with councils currently not engaged in the debate.

A detailed discussion arose in which Members made a number of comments, which were responded to by officers, relating to the following issues:

- A discussion arose regarding the EU legislative timescale and Whitehall processes and timescales for UK Ministerial approval. It was noted that at present, there were different lines of thought in the key Government Departments.
- With reference to the Commission's proposed changes, Members emphasised the importance of developing mechanisms for more integrated programmes.
- In discussing how to connect with councils not currently engaged in the negotiations, Jasbir Jhas (Senior Advisor) outlined a number of LGA activities to engage councils as well as develop a strong evidence case to demonstrate how local approaches can deliver better outcomes and efficiencies to help make this case in Brussels and Whitehall.

Adrian Cannard, from the East of England LGA (EELGA) updated Members on the support the EELGA provides to councils in making EU funding applications. He explained that the support offered to councils, (including training, workshops, bid writing and external expertise), was designed to help councils build up their own capacity to equip them with the expertise to secure EU funding without additional support in future. He outlined a number of successes as well as challenges the programme has faced and suggested how such a programme could be rolled out to other areas post-2013.

In the discussion that followed Members made a number of comments, which were responded to by officers, relating to the following issues:

- With reference to the level of demand on specific funding streams, Members expressed concerns about the sector's overall uptake of EU funding opportunities.

- The Chair noted that as part of the LGA's programme of lobbying activities, lead members were to agree a delegation of members from the Board to lobby key MEPs and European Commission officials in Brussels in September.

**Decision**

That the Board **noted** the report.

**3. Board EU lobbying priorities – Round-up of activity**

Members noted the report which provided an update on recent developments on each of the Board's six key priority topics.

**Decision**

That the Board **noted** the report.

**4 End of Year Review - 2011/12**

Members noted the report which set out the progress made in delivering the European and International Board's contribution to the LGA's 2011/12 business plan priorities.

**Decision**

That the Board **noted** the report.

**5 Notes of the last meeting**

The notes of the last meeting were **agreed**.

**6. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Monday 17 September 2012 at 11am in Local Government House, London.