

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title:	European & International Board
Date and time:	Tuesday 21 May 2013, 11.00 am
Venue:	Smith Square 1&2, Local Government House, London

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council
Chair	Dave Wilcox OBE	Derbyshire CC
Deputy Chair	Gr. Uff. Marco Cereste OSSI OMRI	Peterborough City
Members	Guy Nicholson	Hackney LB
	Roger Lawrence	Wolverhampton City
	David Shakespeare OBE	Wycombe DC
	Joanne Beavis	Braintree DC
	Sandra Barnes MBE	South Northamptonshire DC
	Lord Graham Tope CBE	Sutton LB
	Sian Reid	Cambridge City Council
	Dave Allan	Sunderland City
	Sue Whitaker	Norfolk County Council
	Sir Albert Bore	Birmingham City
	Sue Murphy	Manchester City
	Gordon Keymer CBE	Tandridge DC
	Liz Eyre	Worcestershire CC
	Roger Dennison	Lancaster City Council
Apologies	Keith Glazier	East Sussex CC
	Sherma Batson MBE DL	Stevenage BC
	Richard Kemp	Liverpool City
	Cllr Shirley Flint	North Kesteven DC
Speakers	Jeremy Smith	Advocacy International
Officers	Ian Hughes, Ivor Wells, Nick Porter, Drago Djekovic, Russell Reefer, Juliet Whitworth, Stephen Richards and Frances Marshall	

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
1.	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone present and noted the apologies that had been received.</p>	
2.	<p>Council of Europe review of UK Local Democracy</p> <p>The Chair briefly introduced the report which summarised the planned Council of Europe (CoE) peer review of local democracy in the UK which would be taking place at the end of the month. In advance of this review, the European and International Board had commissioned Mr Jeremy Smith (Director of Advocacy International) to produce an independent report on UK compliance with the Charter of Local Self-Government. Copies of this report and a summary of its main conclusions had been circulated to Members.</p> <p>In introducing his independent report, Mr Smith gave a brief summary of his Article-by-Article analysis, drawing attention to those issues which were of particular interest to local government. He explained that in his judgment, the UK was broadly in compliance with the large majority of the Articles with regards to local government in England; however, there were a number of important areas which required action in order to come into compliance, such as legal recognition of the principle of local self-government; and adequate financial resources. Additionally there were several border-line areas where action would enhance the degree of compliance.</p> <p>In considering the report, Members discussed a number of specific areas, including consultation duties, planning regulations and long term sustainable funding. Members thanked Mr Smith for his report, endorsed the key messages with it, and highlighted the value of the report as a tool for future LGA's lobbying. They asked that the findings of a similar evaluation Mr Smith had undertaken in 1998 be shared with Members as a means of comparison and as an indication of progress.</p>	
<p><u>Decision</u></p>		
<p>That the Board noted the forthcoming peer review by the Council of Europe to scrutinise UK compliance with the Charter of Local Self-Government and agreed the independent report on UK compliance for submission to the Delegation.</p>		

3. EU Funding 2014 – 2020

Nick Porter (Advisor) presented the report which updated Members on a number of significant developments in the process for establishing the 2014 – 2020 EU funding programmes. In doing so, he summarised the outcomes from a recent meeting with the Minister for Business and Enterprise and invited Members to update on ways in which their local authority was working with its Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to influence forthcoming thinking on investment strategies.

In discussing the report, Members welcomed the inclusion of local authority representatives on the National Growth Board, however raised a number of concerns relating to: the disparity in skills, capacity and accountability of LEPs across the country; the level of local authority engagement in investment strategies across the piece; the role of the LGA in supporting LEPs with performance challenges; the need for further clarity on process and procedures around ITI's and financial instrument; and the impact of central government control of funding on councils' ability to integrate funds. Members asked that a report be brought to a future Board meeting capturing LEP's performance across the country.

Decisions

That the Board:

- i. **noted** the report;
- ii. **asked** that their comments inform the development of the work programme; and
- iii. **asked** that a report be brought to a future Board meeting capturing issues relating to LEP capacity.

Action

Bring a report to a future Board meeting.

Nick Porter

4. LGA Lobbying

The Chair moved the report, which at the direction of the LGA Executive, tasked the Board with investigating the possibility of closer working between English local government offices in Brussels.

With reference to the Dutch model of local government representation in Brussels, Members highlighted the opportunity to maximise the influence of English local government in Brussels through a more joined up approach to

use of local authority resources.

Decision

That the Board **noted** the report and **agreed** to investigate possible closer working between English local government offices in Brussels and to report back to the Executive.

5. International Development Opportunities and International Trade and Development Update

Due to time constraints, the item was deferred to the next meeting.

Decision

That the item be **deferred** to the July Board meeting.

6. Round-up of activity: Board EU lobbying priorities, institutions and international activities

The item was moved without further comment.

Decision

That the Board **noted** the report.

7. Notes of the last meeting

The notes of the last meeting were **agreed** as a correct record.

8. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday 11 July 2013 at 11am, Local Government House, London, SW1P 3HZ.

INFORMAL SESSION

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
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9. Informal Board discussion on European policy on Roma communities and accession states to the European Union

In introducing the themed session, the Chair explained that at the February Board meeting, Members had requested a more detailed discussion on the lobbying work that the Board could undertake at EU level in light of proposals from the EU on the rights of Roma children.

Cllr Roger Stone (Leader of Rotherham Council) spoke about local government's role in addressing the challenges facing Roma communities at a national and European level. In doing so, he drew on his own experiences at a local level as well as through the National Roma Network. With reference to the failings of many member states to provide basic standard of living and access to education, housing and health care for Roma communities, he emphasised the importance of having a united pan-European approach to the issue.

Councillor John Warminsham (Salford Council and Leader of the UK Delegation to the Congress of the Council of Europe) spoke about the work of Congress to promote inclusion of Roma populations. He drew on his experiences as a thematic Rapporteur on Roma/Travellers and underlined the important role of local and regional government in promoting Roma inclusion, particularly around education.

The Board thanked Cllrs Stone and Warmisham for their valuable contributions and discussed the issue at length. In doing so, Members provided examples from their own local areas and highlighted the role of local authorities in providing a duty of care to communities. Particular emphasis was made to providing training and education to Roma population both in "emitting" and "receiving" countries. Whilst Members were in agreement that it was important the sector be proactive in addressing the issue, they also indicated that funding should be sought from both national and European sources. With this in mind, Members were united in their view that the LGA play a role in raising the profile of the issue on a national and a European level. In terms of next steps, it was agreed that the LGA organise a lobbying visit to Brussels to: develop a better understanding of the existing EU activities initiatives and programmes regarding Roma population; see how UK local authorities could benefit from those programmes; and to share challenges and experiences of UK councils in dealing with issues related to Roma population. The outcomes from this lobby would be reported back to a future Board meeting.

Decision

The Board **agreed** that the LGA organise a fact-finding and lobbying visit to Brussels and report back to a future meeting.

Action

Organise a fact-finding and lobbying visit to Brussels.