

10 December 2013

Item 3

Note of decisions taken and actions required

Title:	European & International Board
Date and time:	Thursday 15 October 2013, 11.00 am
Venue:	Westminster Suit, Local Government House, London

Attendance

Position	Councillor	Council
Chair	Clarence Barrett	Havering LB
Vice-Chair	Gr. Uff. Marco Cereste OSSI OMRI	Peterborough City
Deputy Chair	Richard Kemp CBE	Liverpool City
Deputy Chair	Sue Murphy	Manchester City
Members	Alan Melton	Fenland DC
	Roger Lawrence	Wolverhampton City
	Aaron Shotton	Flintshire CC
	Joanne Beavis	Braintree DC
	Nick Daubney	Kings Lynn & West Norfolk BC
	Sian Reid	Cambridge City Council
	Dave Allan	Sunderland City
	Gordon Keymer CBE	Tandridge DC
	Sir Albert Bore	Birmingham City
	Judith Wallace	North Tyneside MBC
	Chris Pillai	Calderdale MBC
	Chris Shaw	North East Lincolnshire Council
	John Kent	Thurrock Council
	Diane James	Waverly BC
Apologies	Keith Glazier	East Sussex CC
	Liz Eyre	Worcestershire CC
	Neil Clarke	Rushcliffe CC
	Sherma Batson MBE DL	Sutton LB
Speakers	Sue Baxter	Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
	Simon Nokes	Department for Business, Innovation & Skills
	Nicholas Cole	Department for Communities & Local Government
Officers	Ian Hughes, Jasbir Jhas, Richard Kitt, Ivor Wells, Russell Reefer, Rachael Donaldson & Frances Marshall	

Item	Decisions and actions	Action by
	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>The Chair opened the meeting with a round of introductions and noted the apologies that had been received.</p> <p>1. European and International Board Membership, Lead Member Priorities and Work Programme for 2013/14</p> <p>Ian Hughes (Head of Programme) introduced the report which set out the suggested priorities and work programme for the Board for the coming 12 months and invited Members' views these. In doing so, he noted that should additional priorities or reactive work arise mid-year, this would impact upon the scale and timing of the work to be delivered. Members were also invited to consider structuring the leadership of the Board's priorities, with individual Members leading on each of these portfolio areas.</p> <p>Members endorsed the core elements of the work programme and the Lead Member portfolio approach, as well as noting how the remit of the Board fitted within the overall LGA decision making structure. In doing so, they reflected on the range of EU laws and regulations which affect the way council and local services are run and highlighted the effective role of the LGA's Brussels's office in lobbying and influencing draft EU laws to get the best deal for local councils.</p> <p><u>Decision</u></p> <p>That Members agreed the Board's priorities and work programme for the 2013/14 meeting cycle and the Lead Member portfolio approach.</p> <p><u>Action</u></p> <p>Take forward in line with Members' direction.</p>	<p>Ian Hughes</p>
	<p>2. Future EU Funding, 2014 – 2020</p> <p>Cllr Sue Murphy introduced the report which provided an update on developments in the negotiation process for establishing the 2014 – 2020 EU funding programmes. In doing so, she gave an overview of developments in Greater Manchester and invited Members' comments on the proposed steps set out in the report to progress the LGA's lobbying.</p> <p>Cllr Sir Albert Bore, a member of the national Shadow Programme Growth Board (SPGB) which oversees EU funds, updated Members on the outcomes from the first meeting of the Shadow Board. The local</p>	

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government delegation had successfully set out their expectation that the Board have decision making powers and that the membership of the Board include Ministerial representation. He noted the intention to raise concerns regarding the lack of flexibility and responsiveness of the Government's 'opt-in' packages, as well as lack of viable alternatives, at the next meeting in November.

Sue Baxter, the senior civil servant leading the UK negotiations on structural fund reform from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), provided an update on the latest position in the EU-wide negotiations. In doing so, she welcomed the constructive dialogue with the sector and expressed optimism that the proposed new structure would better support councils and their partners to target need and drive growth in their localities. With reference to the issue of 'opt-in' packages, she stressed that these were optional and that over time it was hoped councils would be able to negotiate bespoke deals within these packages. She invited Members' feedback on the process thus far and on the proposed arrangements.

Simon Nokes, one of two local government secondees in BIS working as part of the UK negotiating team on behalf of the sector, provided some reflections on the future challenges and highlighted the key issues for local authorities to focus on in the coming months. Nicholas Coles from the Department for Communities and Local Government, touched upon the changes to the new programmes and on how these were designed to simplify administrative boundaries, streamline the application process and support cross LEP area collaboration.

In discussing the report, Members commented on a number of issues, including:

- the complexities caused by over lapping LEP areas;
- the central role of councils in driving LEPs forward;
- the importance that national strategies provide sufficient flexibility to enable local joined up activity, such as cross boarder working, joint LEP bids and joint LEP investment;
- concerns that national opt-in programmes lack flexibility to target local need or add value;
- the importance that match funding provide scope for innovation;
- concerns regarding the distribution of the UK's funding allocation, particularly with reference to meeting the needs of transition regions;
- the Welsh model of EU funding devolution;
- suggested that best practice from other European nations inform

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the development of the new application process; and

- asked for further information of the role and membership of the SPGB task and finish groups.

Decisions

That the Board:

- noted** the report;
- asked** that their comments inform the future development of the work programme; and
- agreed** that an LGA report be submitted to the next Programme Growth Board articulating local areas' key principles for engagement in the new programme and expectations for the content of the UK Partnership Agreement.

Actions

Circulate presentation and PGB Task and Finish Group membership to Board Members.

Frances Marshall

Submit report to the November meeting of the Programme Growth Board.

Jasbir Jhas

3. International Trade and Development: Local Government's Role

Cllr Richard Kemp presented the report which provided an update on the LGA's externally funded international cooperation work, as well as its support to councils in promoting trade and investment. In doing so, he outlined the background to the evolving themes in international development, the role of local authorities within this picture and the benefits to councils and the communities they serve.

In the discussion that followed, Members discussed the practical benefits of peer to peer support packages and the longevity of the current model in the fluid economic and political environment. Members endorsed the next steps set out in the report and highlighted a number of examples from their authorities of building international trade links through local-local relationships, which they were willing to share and explore further with the LGA.

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Decisions

That the Board **noted** the report and **endorsed** the next steps for progressing the work stream.

Action

**Ivor Wells /
Russell Reefer**

Take forward in line with Members' direction.

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

Ian Hughes briefly summarised the report which gave an overview of recent developments: in the Board's key priority topic areas; in the European and international bodies to which the Board nominates members; and the LGA's international activities.

In the discussion that followed, concerns were expressed regarding the EU's proposed new state aid rules which would further limit the support that councils could give to finance local airports. It was noted that CEMR and CoR were actively lobbying on the issue. Members' noted the LGA's submission to the Government's Balance of Competencies Review and a Member asked further details on the Government's review, which the Board had discussed at their previous meeting.

Decision

That the Board **noted** the report.

Action

Provide Cllr James with the further details on the Government's Balance of Competencies Review.

Jasbir Jhas

6. Notes of the last meeting

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

The Board asked that their gratitude to Cllr David Wilcox be formally noted for his hard work and commitment during his time as Chair of the European and International Board.

7. Date and Time of Next Meeting

Tuesday 10 December 2013 at 11.30am, Worcester.